

California is Failing Adult Learners; Harming Today's and Future Workforce



Affordable and Flexible 100% Online College Programs Are Key to Opening the Door to Higher Education for Rural California Residents

California is last in the nation for adults in need of education... We Can Do Better

- California ranks last in the nation with over half of adults (57%) needing more adult education according to a 2018-2019 Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey of adults 18-65 with less than an associate degree and who were not currently enrolled in college courses.
- California faces a shortfall of over two million degrees and certificates to meet employers' needs and promote economic mobility for its residents. [Source](#)
- 64% of Californian rural adult learners have some college, but no degree – while over a third of California adult learners wanted to pursue adult education, but never got the chance.

California rural residents are seeking higher educational opportunities.

- 35% of rural residents who do not have a college degree are likely to pursue adult education in the near future.*
- 81% of rural residents surveyed said they are interested in pursuing higher education because it will lead to a better job and higher income.*
- Half (56%) of rural residents surveyed who were negatively impacted by the pandemic are considering going back to college or some kind of adult career education.*

Increased access to financial aid for online learning will help more rural residents return or enroll in a college program.

- Nearly half (46%) of rural residents surveyed would be interested in some kind of college or adult career education if barriers such as affordability and flexibility were removed.*
- 86% of rural residents surveyed stated that financial aid or scholarships would help with the costs of education; and the same percentage prioritized an affordable college program due to tight budgets would help them to return to school.*

Increased access to flexible online courses is key to helping more rural residents return or enroll in a college program.

- The single most common reason cited for having stopped pursuing higher education was difficulty balancing studies and work at the same time for adults ages 25 to 64 with some college background but no degree. [Source](#)
- Rural Californians often may be living in an education desert such as in the Northern Coast and Eastern Sierra. This means that there are not enough physical colleges to meet the demands and needs of the population. [Source](#)
- While 40% of California community college students transfer to California public universities, the percentage is far lower in rural areas. [Source](#)
- Distance from brick-and-mortar universities is associated with lower university attendance, particularly among low-income families. [Source](#)
- 73% of rural residents surveyed said that a flexible course schedule to fit into their own schedules is a priority making it easier to attend a college program.*
- 59% of rural residents surveyed said that it would be easier to attend a college program that was online rather than having to travel to a class. **54% of rural residents also said they would likely enroll into a 100% online college program.***

Join CAL Network: Support Creating New Higher Educational Opportunities for Rural California Adult Learners

CAL Network (California Adult Learners Network) is a coalition advocating for a new state grant program for California adult learners who need financial support and the flexibility of online courses to attain higher education for more lucrative and rewarding careers while strengthening California's skilled workforce. For more information, go to www.CAL-Network.com.

* Heart+Mind Strategies completed n=1065 interviews with a representative sample of Californians with some or no college matching age, gender, and ethnicity of the US Census for California. Additional oversample interviews were conducted with key groups, including: veterans, single mothers/fathers, foster children, rural residents, low-income rural residents, Asians, 1st and 2nd generation immigrants. Respondents participated via an online survey conducted June 15 to July 20, 2021.