



A publication of the

Arlington Education and Employment Program

**Our Vision:**

Our learners will be able to access and use information from a variety of sources, voice their ideas and concerns, act independently and continue learning in an ever-changing world.

**Our Mission:**

To provide for the education and employment related needs of limited English proficient adults who live and work in Arlington.

**Our Goals:**

Consistent with their aptitudes, interests and educational needs, Limited English Speakers in Arlington will:

- develop communication and literacy skills needed to function in the workplace, home, and community;
- apply social and civic knowledge and critical thinking skills in order to become an empowered citizenry.
- acquire skills to become independent lifelong learners; and
- gain skills to use technology in their lives and learning.



# REEP Quarterly

*REEP students form a close bond with classmates, which helps them work on language and life goals.*

## The First Word: Student voices/Student goals

The start of a new year is a great time to set goals. As language learners, we regularly set short-term goals as a way to measure our progress and maintain our motivation for the long and complex process of learning a new language as an adult. When we identify exactly how and where we want to use English—writing a note to our child’s teacher or talking with a leasing agent to rent an apartment—we have concrete evidence of our growth. Short-term goal setting is important, but we also want those smaller achievements to build and lead us to our larger aspirations in life.

At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, we gather information about students’ employment goals through our annual Economic Survey (see Program Highlight, page 3, for more details). In addition to participating in the formal survey, REEP students throughout the program spent time talking about their intentions for the new year.

As you’ll see below, their ambitions are both modest and grand, and are as diverse as the REEP student body. Whether preparing for the citizenship exam, working towards a graduate level degree, or just enjoying American music, the one thing they have in common is the role REEP plays in helping them build the skills they need to achieve their goals.

**Daniela Duran Soliz, TSTF 3A** My personal goal is get the GED and going to NOVA to start study nursing. But first I have to continue learning more English.



**Farah Tahir, level 200** My name is Farah. I live in Arlington but I was born in Pakistan. My resolution goal in 2019 (is) learn more English because I want to in future be child (care) provider.

**Adil Hussein, level 400** I’m from Sudan. I live in Arlington now ... My resolution (is) to learn more English in college and get work (as) a TV cameraman.



**Marie Agnes Ndour, TOEFL student** For 2019, I would like to pass the TOEFL and enroll in a master's degree program. Attending the TOEFL Preparation and Advanced English Classes organized by REEP will help me to reach my goals."

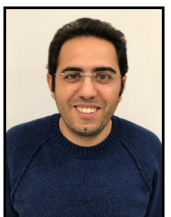
**Lidia Calderon, TSTF 3A** I have (to) study, study, study English for my citizen test and to learn more English.



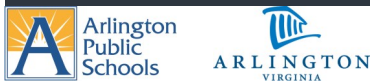
**Madlen Altaish, level 200** My New Year resolution (is) learn English ... (so) when I take my children at clinic I can speak with doctor about health (of) my children.

**Lina Rojas, Outreach student** Try to read a book in English.

**Mahmoud Baeilashak, level 450** My name’s Mahmoud...I have a lot of American friends and I need to learn more English to have a better time with them and listen to country music together.



— Emily Beckett, REEP Supervisor



**Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)**  
2110 Washington Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22204  
Phone: 703-228-4200  
Fax: 703-228-8049  
www.apsva.us/reep  
reep@apsva.us



# Statistical Report

**Table 1. Goals and Year-To-Date Progress**

Progress toward our goals by June 30, 2019	
Annual Goal	Year to date
Provide <b>3,385</b> ESL class slots	<b>1,776</b> slots provided
Provide <b>820</b> intensive scholarships	<b>410</b> slots provided
Intensive ESL class slots	<b>857</b> slots provided
Non-intensive ESL, workplace literacy, family literacy, detention ESL, Specialty classes, and/or Outreach classes	<b>509</b> slots provided
<b>70%</b> of Intensive, Non-Intensive, and Specialty ESL students complete 12-week session	<b>85%</b> completed
<b>75%</b> of Intensive, Non-Intensive, and Specialty ESL students who complete 12 weeks achieve course competencies	<b>77%</b> attained
<b>55%</b> of all Intensive, Non-Intensive, and Specialty ESL students progress to next level	<b>65%</b> progressed
<b>50%</b> of all Workplace Literacy and Family Literacy enrolled will complete the competencies necessary for their course.	<b>80%</b> attained

REEP operates ESL classes at Syphax Education Center (SEC), Arlington Mill Community Center (AMCC), Wakefield High School (WHS), Arlington County Detention Facility (ACDF), and Gates of Ballston.

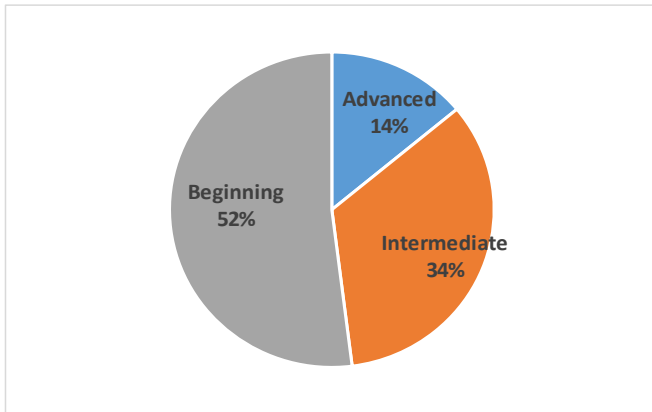
## 2nd Quarter Enrollment

During the 2nd Quarter, 973 ESL enrollments were provided, 681 (70%) in intensive classes and 292 (30%) in Non-intensive, Specialty, Workplace, and Outreach classes. Of the 681 intensive enrollments, 69% were tuition slots (472 slots) and 31% were scholarship/voucher slots (209 slots).

## Performance Goals

Intensive and non-intensive students completed their courses this quarter at 83%. REEP completions continue to well exceed the goal of 70% and to demonstrate a high level of student satisfaction. Of the students who completed their courses, 79% attained the course competencies needed to move to the next instructional level this quarter. Of all students enrolled (completers and non-completers), 66% attained the course competencies needed to advance to the next instructional level this quarter.

**Table 2. Breakdown by English proficiency level**



## Workplace and ESL Contract Classes:

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, REEP provided intensive instruction to four students with workplace vouchers. These students were referred by Arlington Public Schools. In addition, the following businesses/agencies sponsored students this quarter: Arlington Employment Center, Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, ORS Interactive, East Coast Iron, Gryphon Contracting and Catholic Charities.

**Table 3. Demographic Information**

<b>Ethnicity:</b>	66% Hispanic	13% African
	8% Pacific Asian	13% Other
<b>Age:</b>	0% 17-18	11% 19-24
	61% 25-44	17% 45-54
	13% 55 and older	
<b>Gender:</b>	35% Male	65% Female
<b>Educational Background:</b>	13% Less than 7 years of education	
	48% 7-12 years of education	
	39% 13 or more years	
	63% High School Diploma	
<b>Employment Status*:</b>	45% Employed full-time	
	19% Employed part-time	
	64% Employed	

\* Employment information is collected from new students upon initial REEP registration and does not reflect changes in employment status during a student's continued enrollment in the program.

## ✦ SPONSOR A STUDENT ✦

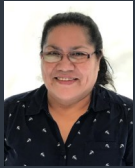
Are you interested in sponsoring a REEP student's studies? Companies, organizations or individuals can make tax deductible donations. Contact Natalia Benefiel at [natalia.benefiel@apsva.us](mailto:natalia.benefiel@apsva.us) or call (703) 228-8024

## More Student Voices (from page 1)

**Hirut Abebe, level 450** My goal is to improve my English language, specially speaking and listening skills, which helps me to find a job because I have a plan to start a job.



**Judith Alcocer, TSTF 3A** I will speak better English and my communication with people (will be) more fluent. After that I will want to take the test for citizenship.



**Andreia Farias, Conversation class** I will ... read more books and be a volunteer.

**Maria Ibar, level 200** I want to learn more English for get one better job and for helping more people.

**Hugo Barrios, level 400** My personal goal for 2019 is learning air conditioning and refrigeration (and) find a building maintenance technician job.



Follow REEP on  
Instagram!



@reepworld



*A student and volunteer practice a mock interview.*

For many people, a job interview is the most intimidating part of looking for employment. Sitting across the table from complete strangers can be a scary experience for anyone. For English language learners, it's even more daunting and an interview is the biggest hurdle to landing a dream job.

REEP volunteers came together on October 25 to help students in Lyle Ring's intermediate class at Syphax overcome their interview anxieties through practice. The volunteers, who had an array of public and private work experience, collaborated with Lyle to put on

## Volunteer Program

**Volunteers** play a vital role in all components of the REEP Program – as teachers' aides in the Intensive and Non-intensive Programs, as literacy teachers in the Extended Literacy Program, and as Outreach ESL teachers.

realistic mock interviews.

"All the volunteers were great," said Lyle, who teaches an Evening intensive class. "They were very patient, enthusiastic and kind."

REEP teachers are always eager for opportunities to help students prepare for the workplace through hand-on activities. Look for more opportunities in the coming months.

In other 2nd Quarter news, 78 volunteers served with REEP during the quarter ending Dec. 31, with 17 being first-time volunteers. Thirty-seven volunteers served as teaching assistants, 31 served as outreach teachers, and five as job coaches.

The Outreach Center teachers at Gates of Ballston and Arlington Mill Community Center provided instruction to 142 students and the teaching assistants supported 16 classes.

## Program Highlight: Economic Survey shows wages lag

In remarks at the Arlington County Board organizational meeting, new Board Chair Christian Dorsey highlighted the importance of collecting and analyzing data to understand the challenges that people face and to work towards building equity in our community.

Collecting and using data to drive decision-making has been at the heart of our work at REEP for many years. We identify student needs through a variety of assessment tools and activities. Our annual Economic Survey is the largest of these. Since 2008, we have surveyed students in December to determine how they are affected by economic challenges, their goals for employment, and how we can best meet their needs through English and job skills instruction.

This year, 453 students responded to questions about their employment and financial situation. Mirroring national trends, REEP students experienced a 6% drop in unemployment from last year. While unemployment is at the lowest it's been since 2014, at 15%, the unemployment rate for REEP students far exceeds the national (3.9%) and Arlington (1.8%) rates. Even more significant is the fact that at \$475, REEP students' median weekly earnings lag considerably behind the national rate by about 50%. According to the Economic Policy Institute's 2018 Family Budget Calculator, a family of four in Arlington needs to earn \$113,915 to cover basic living expenses. For most of our students, reaching that level of income would require at least four members of the household to be working full time.

The majority (70%) of REEP students are working in low wage industries (food service, construction, cleaning and maintenance). In contrast, students report that they would like to be working in the higher earning fields of health care and education.

To address our students' employment goals, we have implemented programming that combines English language instruction with job skills development and the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials that lead to better paying jobs.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, we've expanded that programming to include an English and Workplace Computer Skills class that combines English and soft skills instruction for the workplace, technology skills training, and individual career and job coaching with a trained volunteer. Students in the class prepare for the industry-recognized Microsoft Office Specialist certification, and receive instruction on workplace culture from REEP's advanced ACCESS curriculum, which combines language, academic and technology objectives.

## Staff News

REEP teachers and coordinators focused on continuing curriculum revisions and student privacy issues during an October in-service. It was one of several activities during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter for staff development.

The program's Adult ESL Curriculum, first published in 1982, is going through a revision to bring it in line with new standards put forward by the U.S. Department of Education in response to the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Over the past year, teams of teachers have tweaked objectives and written new lesson plans in several units. At the in-service, teachers focused on a number of changes to the Health unit.

Other curriculum work included changes to REEP's technology instruction. Teachers became more familiar at the meeting with digital literacy material that is incorporated into every unit.

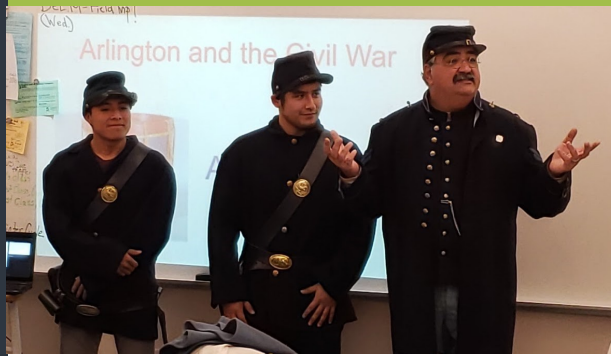
At the meeting, staff also reviewed student privacy issues, including safeguards for student records, getting permission when posting student photos or written work to social media, and how to approach confidentiality when using communication apps with classes.

During the 2nd Quarter, new teachers and volunteers attended a two-part workshop on Teaching and Assessing Oral Skills. The sessions, which were held in October and November, gave participants an overview of key classroom techniques such as dialogues and information grids. The presenters were Program Coordinator Ruth Sysak and REEP Supervisor Emily Beckett.

Other training was done by Syphax teachers Micayla Burrows and Sharon McKay. They participated in on-line professional development offered by LINC (the Literacy Information and Communication System).

Editorial staff: Emily Beckett, Phil Cackley  
Contributors: Emily Beckett, Natalia Benefiel and Amanda Rayborn.

Arlington Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy or marital status.



Peter Vaselopulos, right, taught students about local history

## Community Links & Success Story

### Community Links: Civil War history is local in Arlington

REEP students heard from guest speakers — including a Civil War re-enactor — went on field trips and spoke at an Open Door Monday meeting with a county board member during the 2nd Quarter.

Peter Vaselopulos talked to two advanced classes at Syphax about Civil War history in the Arlington area. He wore a Union corporal's uniform and brought extras for students to try on. He got students to participate in some military drills at the end of his presentation in December.

"[He] made the students see Arlington in a new light and made them appreciate our community even more," said Nina Sheppard, one of the advanced class teachers who taught a three-week unit on Civil War history (part of REEP's ACCESS curriculum).

A beginning level class at Arlington Mill attended an Open Door Monday meeting with then County Board Chair Katie Cristol in October. The students spoke about a variety of issues and were happy afterward to see a quick response to some of their concerns.

Other guest speakers in classes included Dulce Carrillo, who presented on community engagement for REEP students who are APS parents; Karen Vlaskamp, from Northern Virginia Community College, about college programs and career pathways; and three Arlington police officers, who did a question-and-answer session about community safety, traffic stops and immigration issues.

Two Arlington programs had information tables at Syphax during the 2nd Quarter. Two Arlington librarians came to hand out flyers and signed up 48 students for new library cards. A representative from the county's Car Free Diet program gave students information about transit options.

In addition, classes went on field trips to the Arlington Public Library and to museums.

### Success Story ~ Douglas Felizardo

Douglas Felizardo traded good weather and fresh food for winter cold and American cuisine; but in return, he found a career path in the health care profession that holds an exciting future.

Douglas moved from Brazil to Arlington in November 2016 with relatively basic English, a high school education and some experience as a restaurant worker. He immigrated because he was engaged to a U.S. citizen; they married after he came here.

His first memories of being in Arlington center on the winter weather: "It was cold! I got my first time in the 20s (temperatures)," Douglas said. In addition, he missed the fresh food normally served in Brazil, very different from processed food here in the U.S. Most of all, he missed his family.

But he knew he needed English to make a new life and he came to study at REEP after his husband did a search on the internet. He started as a low-intermediate student in January 2017 and a year later had finished the 550 advanced level.

Although writing in English was (and still is) difficult, he enjoyed how the teachers at REEP engaged students in learning and how he made friends in class.

"I felt comfortable to be around people I didn't know," Douglas said. "I felt **good!**"

After finishing at REEP, he took an accelerated certified nursing assistant course through the American Red Cross and applied for a position at Virginia Hospital Center. A week later, he had a job.

Now he works full-time as a CNA/clinical technician with stroke patients at the hospital and studies part-time at Northern Virginia Community College. His goal? To earn a degree as a physical therapist assistant, a process that will take several years.

"I'm excited to do the course," he said, adding that he likes having a future in the health care field doing direct care with patients.

