

June 22, 2021

Carroll County Adult Education
680 White Mountain Hwy
Tamworth, NH 03886

Carroll County Commissioners
Carroll County ARPA Committee
95 Water Village Road
Ossipee, NH 03864

RE: ARPA Committee Collaboration

Dear Commissioners:

We are grateful to have this opportunity to introduce you to Carroll County Adult Education and Carroll Academy. It is on the heels of a pandemic that a funding opportunity has come to our attention through our non-profit networking activities. Under your direction a County Committee has been formed to determine possible recipients of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). We realize that this fund is a new responsibility for the commissioners, and we are grateful that you accepted the money on behalf of the community. The pandemic recovery and funding opportunity seems to have hastened our meeting, yet in reality it is overdue.

We would like to introduce our school and programs that have been serving Carroll County for over 20 years. **Carroll Academy:** The Program formed a high school, **Carroll Academy**, in February 2003. Carroll Academy provides evening high school classes for adult learners to obtain a high school diploma. In the first year of existence, Carroll Academy opened with 12 students and graduated 6 in June 2003. This past academic year (2020-21), 60 diploma learners enrolled with a graduating class of 29 Carroll Academy Diploma students; others are transferring credits to other programs/schools or are still enrolled to complete this summer. Many of these adult learners need to take several courses in order to earn their high school diploma. Carroll Academy offers a variety of online courses. In addition to online classes we are offering in school classes at our Tamworth location this fall that include: The Ancient Honey Bee and Beekeeping, Food & Nutrition, English I/II, AHLEI's START Certified Hospitality Training course and Future Leaders of NH.

Carroll County Adult Education: Provides instruction in HiSET, English for Students of Other Languages (ESL), Citizenship, Basic Literacy and computer classes, college/job application aid, assistance with studying for a driver's license, and resume writing.

There are approximately 40-70 adult learners, each year throughout Carroll County, who are seeking these services. Approximately 80% of our adult learner services are students in need of their HiSET (High School Equivalency Test- same as GED) credential. This past school year we had 27 HiSET students and 17 obtained their HiSET by June 7th, 2021. In addition to teaching basic literacy classes for Northern Human Services clientele, this past school year, CCAE also partnered with the UNH Cooperative Extension and Vaughn Community Services to provide an online Basic Cooking Class so that developmentally disabled individuals could learn how to prepare meals by themselves without the assistance of their caretakers and become more independent.

Our mission as a WIOA (Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act) partner is to improve literacy, guarantee job placement and needed social services, help find childcare, housing security, and everyday necessities for our students. To ensure that every student achieves a high school education and life's necessities during and after their educational journey, we have secured partnerships with the community, for and non-profit organizations, local foundations, volunteers, social services and other literacy groups which have been vital. In addition to being a member of the Chamber of Commerce, CCAE is active in the following community groups: Mount Washington Valley Job Development Coalition (share information and resources to resolve barriers to employment; in particular hard-to-place individuals, Northern Carroll County Provider's Network (core group of 25 service providers that collaborate and aim is to find solutions to the community's needs), United Ossipee Round Table, and Carroll County Regional Coordinating Council. We are here not only to provide a high school education but to help families with all aspects of their life. These community partnerships have been vital to our adult learners taking full advantage of transportation to and from school, WIOA work programs, apprenticeships, free certification courses, childcare, veteran assistance, and basic literacy classes.

Pre-pandemic funding of our program was tenuous at best, and nearly fatal. Our budget was reduced by 65%. We were able to continue services by problem solving a sleeker budget that included shutting down our North Conway office, seeking outside grants from organizations like the Tamworth Foundation, and relying on some dedicated volunteers. Sustaining this program financially to the point that it has grown and projecting into the next few years, where we will see continued effects of increased enrollment due to disrupted education across all age levels, is possible with support. However, the LEA-ESSER funds as directed thru the NH Dept of Education have missed us entirely and the school administration units that we serve are not sending dollars to our program directly. At the very minimum we ask that you support Adult Education funding in general at the State Level, but more than that we are happy to discover this opportunity, because our program distinctly qualifies us for the SLFRF

funds that are available to non-profits in our county. We are optimistic that this is an opportunity for us to be able to move forward, rather than retract.

Carroll County's participation in the SLFRF program has provided our county with resources to meet pandemic response needs and rebuild a stronger, and more equitable economy. By supporting the programs at Carroll County Adult Education and Carroll Academy with these dollars, the county would be directly addressing the negative economic impacts caused by the pandemic to the public sector. Often we are the catalyst from isolation and anxiety to a passing score on the next exam, full participation in the workforce, getting a driver's license, scholarship, college acceptance, or interview. In addition to serving the underserved throughout Carroll County, since 2016 we have run our HiSET and diploma classes at the Carroll County Corrections. But furthermore, we are the preventative medicine to keep those who have had their education disrupted away from a stay in that facility.

Thank you for your careful consideration on how the SLFRF will be used to address the efforts that lead to a robust recovery from an unprecedented pandemic. We are confident that this meeting is the beginning of an understanding between our two organizations and how we can cooperate to the benefit of individuals that are built up to succeed in our local economies and places of higher learning. We have documented evidence of distinct growth patterns and individual success that fit together in an overall achievement that uplifts an entire community. We would like to share with you our budgetary needs over the next three years. We will ask that you restore the funding that we lost due to budgetary neglect at the state level. This funding will allow us to continue our program and realize the positive outcomes for the prospective students that reach out to us and ask for a hand up at ever increasing rates, so that they too can participate in the recovery that they see happening around them.

Sincerely,

Crystal Sawyer

Crystal Sawyer, Director
Carroll County Adult Education