

## About Adult Education

First established as a component within the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, then formalized in the Adult Education Act of 1966, Adult Education is a broad educational program that services a vastly diverse population. Most recently reauthorized as Adult Education and Literacy, Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), Adult Education's primary purpose is:

- (1) Literacy
- (2) Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- (3) Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and High School Equivalency (HSE)
- (4) English Language Acquisition (ELA), formerly English as a Second Language (ESL)
- (5) Career Pathway Instruction, Bridge Programming, Integrated Education and Training, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education, and Employment Training for High Demand Occupations

## Adult Education in Illinois

Adult Education fills a very specific set of needs in Illinois:

- Almost 1.2 million of Illinois' 10.1 million adults have less than 12 grades of formal education, including 497,870 people with less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education.\*
- Approximately 2.73 million Illinois residents speak a language other than English as the primary language in their homes. English literacy skills for entry and advancement in the labor force are needed by many of these residents.\*
- More than 370,379 immigrants are currently residing in Illinois. English literacy and civics education provides individuals with a pathway to citizenship, improved education and employment.\*

In addition, Illinois Adult Education programs provide a number of additional educational and training opportunities.

- Bridge programs provide contextualized education tailored to specific workforce fields, assisting students in gaining workforce preparation.
- Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) programs provide students with both basic skills and professional technical training for specific career pathways, leading to both technical credentials and HSE preparation.

\* U.S. Census, Index of Need, 2014

# NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY WEEK

SEPTEMBER 21-26, 2015



Illinois  
Community  
College  
Board  
[www.iccb.org](http://www.iccb.org)





**Sinai Rodriguez**  
 Elgin Community College  
 Accelerating Opportunity / ICAPS  
 program graduate  
**Age:** 32 **Family:** Single, no children  
**Adult Ed. Starting Point:**  
 High School Equivalency Preparation  
**Adult Ed. Finishing Point:**  
 High School Equivalency Completion  
**Highest level of completion:**  
 Basic Vocational Specialist (BVS)  
 Certificate in Welding  
 (17 credit hours)  
**Current status:**  
 Pursuing A.A.S. Degree in Welding

I hadn't been to school in years. I came back to school to get a career and make a better life for myself. I got my GED, my basic Vocational Specialist Certificate in welding with Honors, I also got my Basic Vocational Certificate in MIG welding with honors. I want to keep going and get my associate's degree. I am determined to keep studying and working hard to excel in all of my classes.

I am in the welding program because I want to turn it into a career and not a hobby. I have learned a lot in my classes, not only from the books but also from what my instructors have talked about in class, and I have tried to do my best to learn at ECC. I feel that I can learn a lot here since my instructors are also great welders.

I am involved in several activities at ECC and I enjoy helping others. I also have been inducted into the Rho Kappa Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. I volunteer at the Spartan food pantry that the Phi Theta Kappa just opened this February. I also have donated blood several times I try to do it as many times as possible because my blood type is O positive which means that they can give it to anyone without been rejected I chose ECC because I heard that they have a lot off great programs including the welding program. At first I decided to register for the dental assistant program, but I changed my mind when a friend asked me to help him weld the frame for a go-kart that he was building. I told him that I didn't know anything about welding, and he told me not to worry because he was going to weld the frame, and all I had to do was help him get the material ready. Once he was done, he showed it to me, and it looked really great. That's when I decided to register for the welding program. I am giving everything I have to excel in my classes. I have also been to all the demos that the instructors have given. I have learned a lot, not only from this program but also from the instructors. They give us good tips on techniques for welding in different positions.

I got my certificate. I am close to getting my associates degree. I hope that I could be hired to weld bridges or buildings or maybe even weld something here at ECC. I also hope to open my own shop, and I would be glad to help ECC in what I can, just like it has helped me out a lot.



**Isael Vazquez**  
 Parkland College  
 Accelerating Opportunity / ICAPS  
 program graduate  
**Age:** 31 **Family:** Married, 2 children  
**Adult Ed. Starting Point:**  
 English as a Second Language (ESL)  
**Adult Ed. Finishing Point:**  
 High School Equivalency Completion  
**Highest level of completion:**  
 Industrial Welding Certificate  
 (16 credit hours)  
 AWS Certifications 1G - 3G and 1F - 3F  
**Current status:**  
 Employed Full-Time as Welder

I am Isael Vazquez. I live in Urbana with my wife and our 4 year old daughter and 1 week old son.

I started taking ESL classes at Parkland College to improve my English skills. I was working two restaurant jobs. Once I felt ready, I enrolled in GED class. It was hard since the class and everything was in English, but I passed the GED test in October, 2013. Even though I was working hard to make a better life for me and my family, I always felt like something was stopping me -- like I could go so far before I hit my head. But I knew if I kept working hard I could make it. I wanted a better life for my family. I found out about the chance to take welding through Adult Education since I had just gotten my GED. I had never done welding before, but I signed up for the Accelerating Opportunity Program so I could be in the welding classes and get extra help. The books were hard and sometimes it took me longer than the other guys to read the chapters and take the tests, but the teachers were so great and helpful. They made sure my welds were good and Cletus always took extra time to help me.

Taking college classes, working full time, and being there for my family was a challenge, but I was determined to finish the program because it would help me to find better jobs to support my family. I studied hard, and made close relationships with my instructors who supported me in so many ways. In the second semester of enrollment, I was the first student to earn the Adult Student Transition Scholarship at the college, which helped a lot since I paid for all my classes myself. When I finished the AO welding program in May 2015, I earned American Welding Society Certification in 1G, 2G, 3G, 1F, 2F, and 3F positions. I was hired FT as a welder in a local company and in 3 months earned certification at the 6G position. And I just found out that I was on the Dean's list at Parkland for last semester.

I know that through hard work I can do many things to provide for my family and be successful. I am thankful to Parkland for this Accelerating Opportunity program and will take additional coursework when I can to get even better at my job.