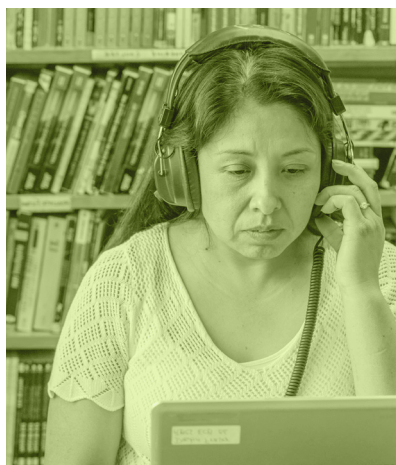
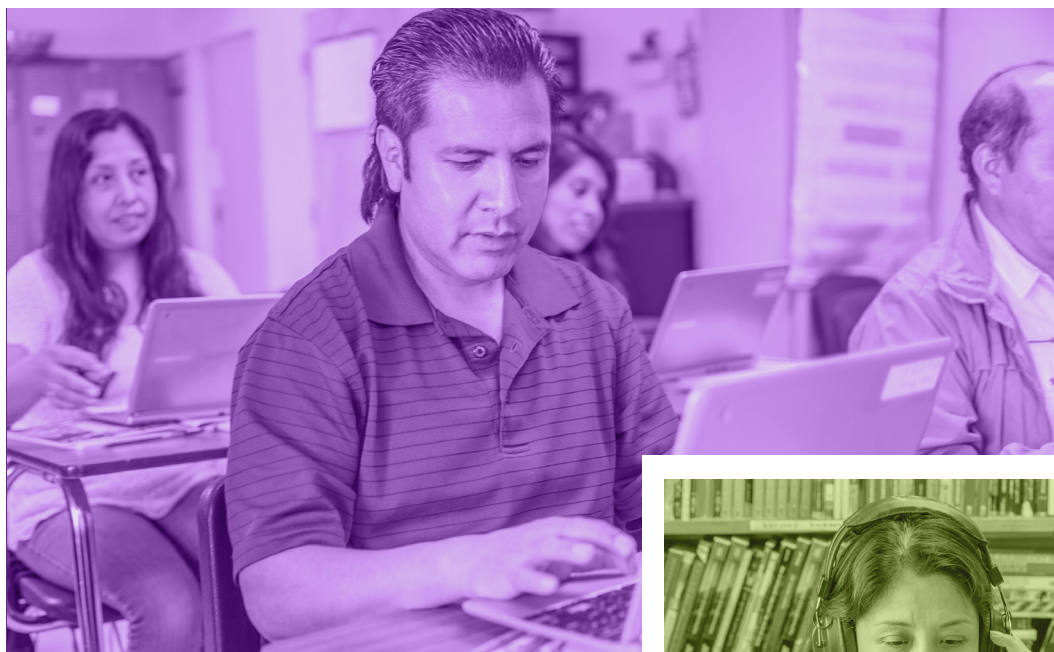
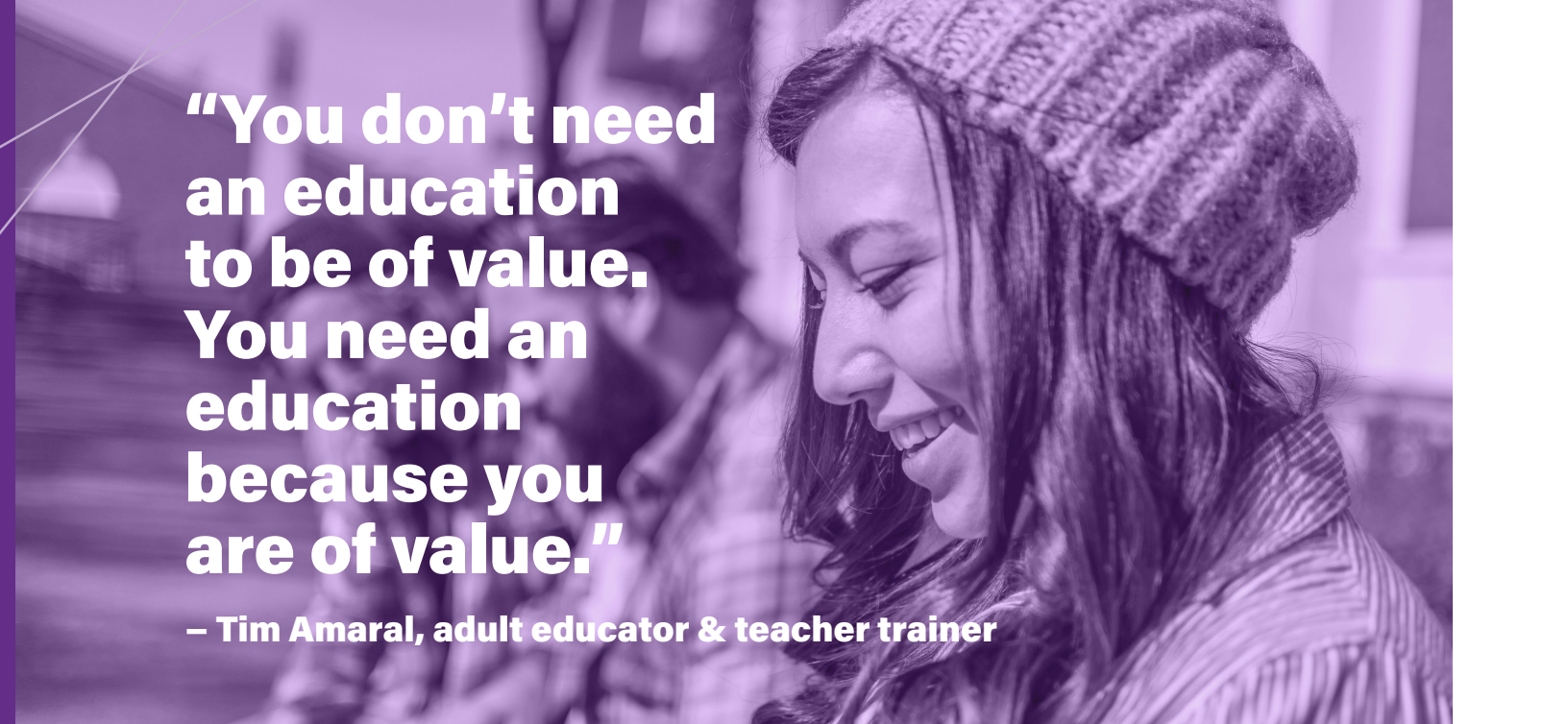


CLOSING THE EDUCATION AND WAGE GAP

for Salinas Valley Adult Learners



COMMUNITY NEEDS REPORT



**“You don’t need
an education
to be of value.
You need an
education
because you
are of value.”**

– Tim Amaral, adult educator & teacher trainer

In the Salinas Valley, we have the potential to harness the benefits of adult education to create a vibrant workforce and thriving local communities.

As the lead facilitators of adult learning for the region, the Salinas Valley Adult Education Consortium is deeply committed to addressing inequities by bridging the educational and employment gaps that exist in our communities. Our members consist of Hartnell Community College, Monterey County Office of Education, and the five K-12 adult schools in the Salinas Valley. Our work helps adults improve their English and other basic skills, prepare for citizenship, obtain high school diplomas or the equivalent, transition to college, improve their literacy, support their children’s success in school, and train for viable careers that increase their earning potential.

We deeply believe in the potential adult education holds for individuals. We also recognize the widening opportunity gap for many members of our community. In 2018, we conducted a survey focused on understanding the educational and training needs of the diverse adult population in the Salinas Valley.

CONTENTS

Survey Snapshot	3
Our Focus	4
Demographics	4
Educational Attainment	5
Outreach	5
Creating Access to Education	6
Employment	6
Goals	7
Recommendations	10
Authors	11
Acknowledgments	11

SURVEY SNAPSHOT

The survey's strong response rate was driven in part by the relationship-based, in-person, culturally responsive approach taken to engage community members. Proctors were a mix of bilingual and trilingual professionals and volunteers, including high school and college students, that were familiar with Salinas Valley communities. As proctors traveled from site to site, they were prepared to take extra time to support individuals with low-literacy levels or translate the survey into indigenous languages as needed. Proctors were also diligent about fostering trust and building safe spaces where people felt free to share their experiences and perspectives.

**1,243
surveys**

PARTICIPANT CRITERIA

- **18+ years of age**
- **Not currently enrolled in adult education programs or services**
- **First-time survey participants**

TOTAL # OF QUESTIONS

33

NUMBER OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

29

LANGUAGES

- **English**
- **Spanish**
- **Indigenous languages of Triqui and Chatino (via interpreters)**

KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Surveys were administered at various public schools, employment and benefit centers, nonprofit organizations, churches, community centers, community housing, farmworker housing, post offices, residential areas, and shopping centers.

Public school districts

- Gonzales Unified School District
- Greenfield Union School District
- North Monterey County Unified School District
- Salinas City Elementary School District
- Salinas Union High School District
- Soledad Unified School District
- South Monterey County Joint Union High School District
- Hartnell Community College District

Publicly funded agencies

- Monterey County Head Start
- Monterey County Free Libraries
- Salinas Public Libraries
- Monterey County Food Bank
- Monterey County Workforce Development Board and AJCC (America's Job Center of California)
- Monterey County Housing Authority
- CHISPA (Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association, Inc.)

Faith-based organizations

- Our Lady of Solitude Catholic Church in Soledad
- Our Lady of Refuge Catholic Church in Castroville
- St. Theodore's Catholic Church of Gonzales
- First United Methodist Church of Salinas

OUR FOCUS

Focusing on adult learner needs

The first-ever Salinas Valley Adult Education Needs Assessment is a milestone in collecting data on the backgrounds, perceptions, goals, and motivations of potential adult learners in the Salinas Valley.

The survey methodology signaled progress in our ongoing efforts to better partner with government agencies and community organizations that reach underserved communities. The consortium was intentional in meeting adults in the places they frequent most. Our findings indicate individuals are thirsty for educational and job opportunities. The community members we spoke with were deeply interested in and committed to paving new roads to success for themselves and their families.

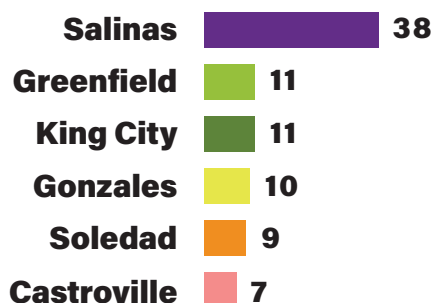
Our findings indicate we have just begun to scratch the surface of understanding how to better serve and support this population in realizing their true potential. We believe the data in this report have the capacity to help educational institutions, businesses, government agencies, and community agencies take the next step toward more fully uplifting adults and our region as a whole through educational and career opportunities in the Salinas Valley.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Who Participated?

Partnering with community organizations and publicly funded agencies provided survey data that offer greater insight into an untapped population of adult learners based in the Salinas Valley.

TOP SIX SALINAS VALLEY CITIES REPRESENTED (%)



GENDER



68% of participants were female and 29% were male; 3% did not indicate

AGE



Most participants were between the ages of 35-44 (31%) and 25-34 (27%)

DISABILITIES



9% of participants indicated they have a disability

PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN



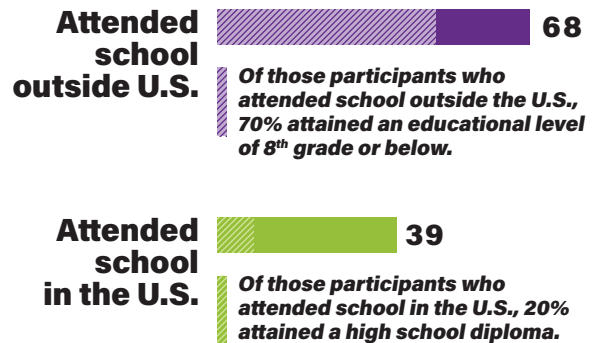
75% of participants primarily spoke Spanish, 18% English, 4% indigenous languages

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Unfinished learning journeys

Nearly seven out of 10 participants (68%) attended school outside of the United States. Of those participants, 70% had an educational attainment level of 8th grade or below. Of the 39% of participants who attended school in the U.S., one in five (20%) had attained a high school diploma.

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY (%)



OUTREACH

Communicating with communities

Schools were identified by participants as the best places to reach people and communicate information (48%), followed by libraries (32%) and social media channels (30%).

TOP THREE PREFERRED COMMUNICATION METHODS (%)



CREATING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Best months and times for learning



Participants cited winter months (December, January, February) as the best months to take classes, with weekday evenings offering the most convenient times. Approximately 43% also said they would take classes on Saturday.

Barriers to the pursuit of education

MOST COMMON FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES DESCRIBING ENTRY AND COMPLETION BARRIERS:



Transportation



**Conflicting
work schedules**



Childcare



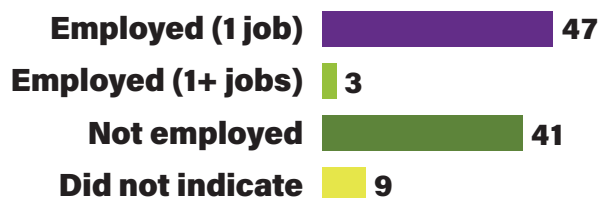
**Inconvenient
class locations**

EMPLOYMENT

Where people work

Half of the participants indicated they were currently employed. Of those currently employed, agriculture (24%) is the most common industry.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS (%)



TOP FIVE IDENTIFIED EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES (%)



Agriculture (24)



Education (4)



Healthcare (3)



Childcare (3)

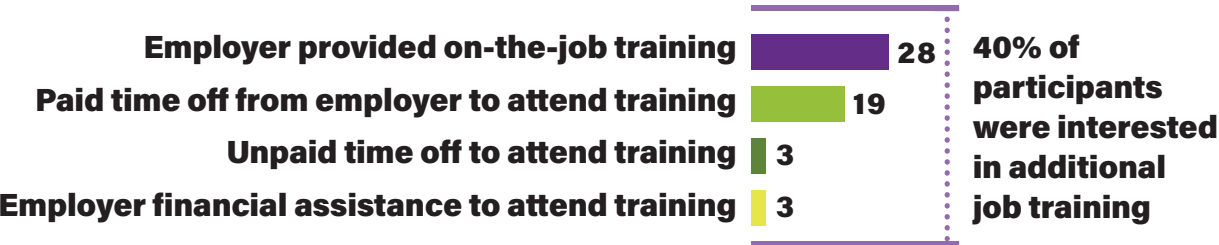


Retail (3)

Workplace learning

While 40% of our participants were interested in obtaining additional job training or skills, our survey found the availability of job training for incumbent workers was lacking.

EMPLOYER JOB TRAINING RECEIVED, BY TYPE (%)



GOALS

Aspirations for career and life

Creating more opportunities for themselves and their families remains the key motivation for adults returning to an educational setting. Nearly six out of 10 (58%) participants said mastering English was a top goal. Following that, gaining the skills to help their children with schoolwork is a major priority (45%). Additionally, programs that provide basic computer training were also highly desirable (37%).

TOP THREE MOTIVATIONS FOR ADULT LEARNERS (%)



Desired educational skills and classes

While local adult participants were interested in taking classes, In many cases, they didn't know how to enroll.

TOP THREE DESIRED EDUCATIONAL SKILLS (%)



Learn how to enroll in an adult school (41)



Learn how to enroll in community college (26)



Learn how to study effectively (25)

TOP THREE CLASSES OF MOST INTEREST (%)



English as a second language classes (57)



Basic computer classes (51)



Literacy (47)

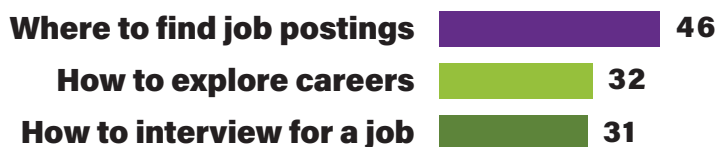
Career goals

The top career goals among survey participants were to get better jobs or learn new skills or trades.

TOP THREE CAREER GOALS (%)



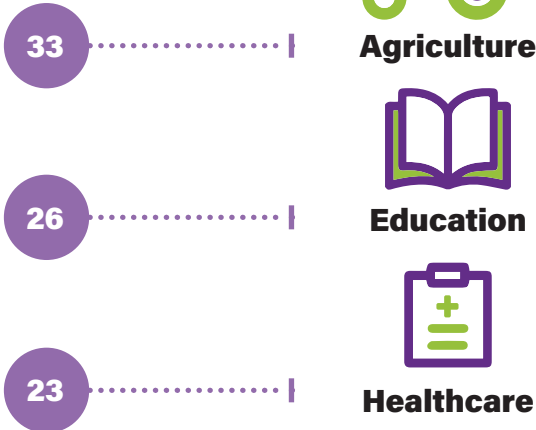
TOP THREE DESIRED JOB SEARCH/CAREER-ADVANCEMENT SKILLS (%)



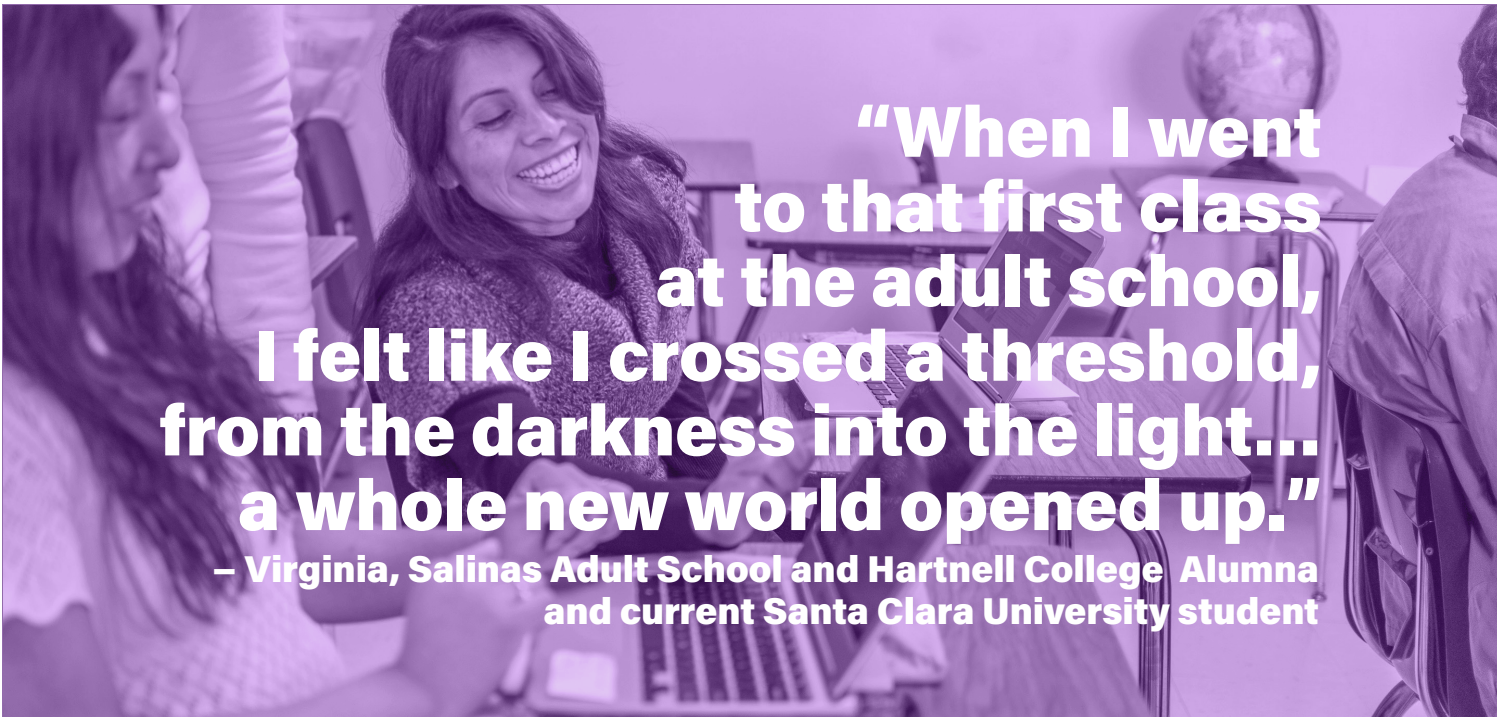
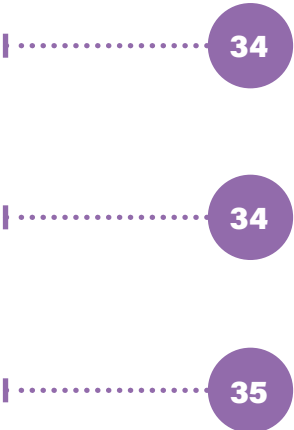
Where people want to work or train

Data suggest local adults were most interested in both working in and receiving career training in the agriculture, education, and healthcare sectors.

TOP THREE INDUSTRIES OF INTEREST FOR EMPLOYMENT (%)



TOP INDUSTRIES OF INTEREST FOR CAREER TRAINING (%)



RECOMMENDATIONS

Moving forward

For the Salinas Valley to make substantial progress in closing equity gaps and creating a more prosperous economy for all, adult education programs must go beyond standard methods of enrolling students. Instead, they must take an increasingly tailored and culturally intelligent approach in order to meet community members where they are in their educational journeys. Strategies for improved education and training opportunities for adults include:

Education Providers

- 1 Increase outreach and enrollment efforts for Spanish speakers with low literacy levels and low levels of educational attainment**
- 2 Expand outreach and services at K-12 schools, libraries, and other community hubs**
- 3 Increase academic support, English as a second language (ESL), programs and basic computer classes**
- 4 Expand career training offerings related to healthcare, agriculture, and education**
- 5 Improve class access with focuses on evenings and winter months, shorter term classes, non-traditional locations, and providing childcare**

Industry Partners

- 6 Grow the number of strategic partnerships between employers and adult education providers**
- 7 Increase advancement opportunities for current and prospective employees**

Community Partners

- 8 Partner with adult education providers to establish a robust cross-referral system**
- 9 Support increased access to basic needs such as transportation, childcare, and parent programming**
- 10 Champion community-based and culturally intelligent approaches to outreach and service**

We believe these recommendations are practical and within reach -- particularly when educational institutions, employers, public agencies, and community partners work together. Increasing collaborative efforts across sectors will expand opportunities for individual economic prosperity, create a more robust workforce, and strengthen our local economy.

Ultimately, empowered community members mean a higher quality of life and a more resilient Salinas Valley for generations to come.

ABOUT SVAEC

The Salinas Valley Adult Education Consortium (SVAEC) fosters the expansion, improvement, and accessibility of adult education services in the Salinas Valley. Consortium members collaborate in regional planning, implementation, and evaluation of adult education programs and services to ensure all adults receive equitable access to the education, training, guidance, and support needed to set and achieve their educational and career goals.

The seven members of the SVAEC include the adult schools of North Monterey County Unified School District, Salinas Union High School District, Gonzales Unified School District, Soledad Unified School District, and South Monterey County Joint Union High School District; Hartnell Community College; and the Monterey County Office of Education. Our consortium was formed in 2014 by the State of California (along with 71 other adult education consortia statewide) under AB86 and later AB104 legislation, as part of its California Adult Education Program (CAEP). CAEP funding is allocated to consortia based on regional need.

Explore the consortium's work and adult learning opportunities by emailing SVAEC Director Kristen Arps at karps@hartnell.edu or visit svaec.org.

For more information about CAEP, go to <https://caladulthood.org/>

AUTHORS

Teresa Ruiz Decker

Owner,
Dream Catch Consulting

Kristen Arps

Director, Salinas Valley Adult Education Consortium

Alicia Gregory

Program Assistant, Salinas Valley Adult Education Consortium

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The SVAEC would like to give special thanks to Aidee Farias for developing, implementing and writing the technical report and for her collaboration in this effort. We also would like to acknowledge the proctors and the community partners who helped make the needs assessment possible.

COMPREHENSIVE RESULTS

To view the comprehensive technical report on the survey findings, go to <https://svaec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/communityneedsreport.pdf>



CLOSING THE EDUCATION AND WAGE GAP

for Salinas Valley Adult Learners

2019 COMMUNITY NEEDS REPORT



Report prepared by:
Dream Catch Consulting