

# D.C.'s adult public charter schools

Who they serve, how they serve, and what they achieve



D.C. POLICY CENTER

Education Policy Initiative

D.C. is unique in offering adult public charter schools that are funded in the same way as PK-12 schools. Nine such schools in D.C. serve adult learners through a combination of academic and workforce supports and connect learners to postsecondary and workforce opportunities. These schools complement other offerings at training programs and alternative schools.

## D.C.'s adult public charter school learners at-a-glance:

### 5,100 learners

9 schools serve 5,100 learners—5% of all public school students.

### Majority-Latino

55% are Latino  
42% are Black  
2% are white

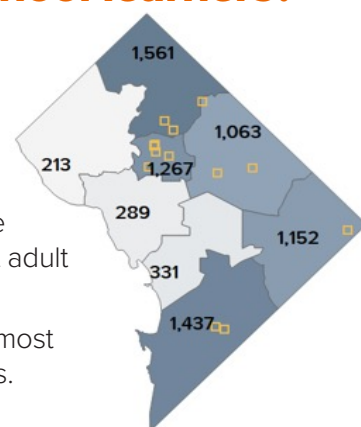
### English learners

70% speak a language other than English at home.

### Parents

54% are parents of school-age children.

## Where are these adult public charter school learners?



Wards 4 & 8 are where the most adult learners live.

Ward 1 has the most school locations.

## WHY IT MATTERS

## Large numbers of D.C. residents lack the qualifications to access most jobs in the District—especially jobs that pay well:

**25%**

of D.C.'s public school students do not graduate from high school.

**7%**

of D.C. residents aged 25 and older lack a high school diploma.

**96%**

of jobs in D.C. require a high school diploma or more.

**\$5K**

How much a high school diploma can boost incomes for D.C. residents.

**\$46K**

How much postsecondary degrees can boost incomes above a high school diploma.

## Adult public charter schools provide a bridge to college, a first job, or a better job. These schools offer programs including:

### Pathways to a high school equivalency certificate

At more than half of the adult public charter schools, 71% of those who took a secondary credential test, such as the GED or NEDP, passed.

### Literacy and numeracy instruction

At more than half of the adult public charter schools, at least 61% of the learners enrolled in these courses advanced their literacy and numeracy skills.

### English language instruction

At more than half of the adult charter schools, 64% or more than their ESL learners improved their English language competency.

*Outcomes refer to school year 2021-22.*

## Adult public charter schools also offer workforce and postsecondary supports, including:

**Helping adult learners acquire career assets that employers value.**

**Enrolling learners in credential-granting programs in healthcare, construction, and IT.**

In school year 2018-19, 76% of adult learners who completed adult public charter schools got a job for the first time, or enrolled in a postsecondary institution.

## The barriers that adult learners face are most commonly-related to economic pressures and stress.

Adult learners face many barriers to enrolling and staying enrolled. Barriers are most commonly-related to economic pressures and stress. School leaders identified changing work schedules, the need to work additional hours, availability of quality childcare, housing, and transportation as common barriers for adult learners.

## Adult public charter schools provide a variety of other supports to encourage greater persistence and to help learners navigate local resources, including:



Rolling enrollment options, hybrid schedules, and re-enrollment opportunities for learners whose learning was interrupted.



Connections to food, healthcare, and childcare resources.



Community building within the school, sometimes bringing multiple generations together.



Tools immigrant parents can use when communicating with their children's teachers.

## How the pandemic changed adult public charter schools

### Flexible and hybrid schedules

Several adult public charter schools initiated hybrid schedules in school year 2021-22 (two days in-person and two days virtual) or offered virtual options to better fit with learners' preferences.

### Technology supports

Post-pandemic, schools have continued offering more flexible virtual options alongside increased investments in technology supports for learners.

### Basic needs

In response to concerns around meeting basic needs during the pandemic, adult public charter schools in school year 2021-22 distributed food and supplies to learners and increased case management support.