

About Us

The Academy of Hope was founded in 1985 by two teachers who believed that education could empower those most marginalized in Washington, D.C. It was clear that people trapped in the cycle of poverty lacked basic reading, writing and math skills, and they needed to acquire jobs that paid living wages.

Today, one in five adults in the district lacks a high school diploma, and one in three adults cannot read a newspaper or a map, much less complete a job application. The need for adult education programs is still great.

The Academy of Hope Difference

Academy of Hope is considered one of the most successful programs of its kind. Students become part of a learning community where everyone is valued, adds value and is both a teacher and a learner. Our curriculum is experiential and focuses on life skills, which means that students can immediately begin applying what they're learning to their own lives—and reap the benefits.

- **We provide outstanding training** for all teachers, tutors and volunteers, which results in better understanding of adult-learner needs and creative approaches to helping them meet educational goals.
- **We offer a flexible schedule**, providing classes mornings, afternoons and evenings, because we know that adult learners juggle many family and work responsibilities.
- **We allow students to take as much time as they need** to learn and integrate instructional material. Because we know that learning happens in the greater context of a person's life, we provide supportive services to students so that they can focus on learning.

Our Mission

The Academy of Hope changes lives and improves our community by providing high-quality adult education in a supportive and empowering environment.

Our Values

Since its beginning in 1985, the Academy of Hope has been powered by adult learners, volunteers, donors and staff who are dedicated to building one of the most respected not-for-profit organizations in the Washington, D.C., area. Our award-winning program has become a model for adult literacy programs in the region.

Academy of Hope's core values guide our decisions and our work:

- **Support:** Academy of Hope creates a supportive and caring community that allows students to feel comfortable and able to focus on their learning.
- **Empowerment:** We give students the tools and support they need to feel confident about returning to the classroom.
- **Commitment:** We never give up on our students. We work with them in the classroom and one-on-one until their learning goals are met.
- **Personal Attention:** We take the time to get to know each individual, and together, we set a course for learning that is right for them.
- **Professionalism:** We hold everything we do to the highest standards.
- **Results:** Academy of Hope is focused on results. We follow strict state standards and measure success by each student who achieves his or her personal goal, whether that is testing for a higher level of literacy or passing the GED.
- **History:** Academy of Hope has been teaching Washington-area adults since 1985, longer than most other schools in the region.



Adult Education Programs

The Academy of Hope provides a variety of programs and services to meet the needs of our adult learners.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

ABE students develop basic reading, writing and math skills. Students also may learn basic computer skills. The main goal of this program is to acquire skills for daily life. In addition, the ABE, sometimes referred to as the pre-GED, prepares students with the skills needed to advance to the GED level, which requires a 10th-grade-level competency in reading and math. Click [here](http://aohdc.org/class-info) for more information about ABE classes (aohdc.org/class-info)

General Educational Development (GED)

Classes in the GED Program help students pass the eight-hour GED examination and earn a GED certificate. Classes in all subject areas found on the GED exam—math, science, writing, social studies and reading—are offered each week. The test is often considered a high school equivalency test because the certificate you receive is recognized by most employers and colleges as being the same as a high school diploma. The GED is an eight-hour test that must be taken at the University of the District of Columbia.

External Diploma Program (EDP)

The EDP provides a unique way for adults to earn a high school diploma. This national program allows adults to demonstrate their high school-level skills by applying their experiences to real-life situations. EDP awards a traditional high school diploma to adults who have acquired many of their high school-level abilities through work, family and community experiences. EDP is not a traditional instructional program. Instead, it provides the opportunity for participants to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Because EDP participants are adults, the program structure offers considerable flexibility.

Pathways to Success

Pathways is designed for individuals 18 and older who, despite having a high school diploma or GED, need to improve their academic skills or upgrade their job skills to enter college or to obtain living wage employment.

Our Outcomes



Academy of Hope alumni are on the move and seeing the results of their education. Seventy-seven percent of our graduates report that they have enrolled in college, certificate programs or vocational training. Nearly three-quarters of these students anticipate completing their studies within the next three years.

Before obtaining their GEDs or high school diplomas, only 33 % of Academy of Hope graduates earned more than \$15,000 annually. However, armed with their high school equivalencies, 71% earned between \$15,000 and \$30,000, and 32% earned more than \$30,000 each year. In addition, the percentage of graduates on public assistance dropped by 90%.

Programs and Services Results

At Academy of Hope, our team is dedicated to helping students realize their life goals by providing quality adult education in a supportive and empowering environment that focuses on the whole student.

Achievements in FY 2008

- 23 adults earned high school credentials (*Learners take an average of 2 years to earn their high school credential*)
- 70 adults advanced at least one grade level in reading and math
- 36 adults obtained a new job or promotion
- 24 adults entered vocational training

The number of employed students rises from 58 % upon enrollment to 84 % upon graduation. Of those who are unemployed, 83 % are enrolled in college or training programs.