

The Antelope Valley Adult Education Regional Consortium (AVAERC) (composed of Antelope Valley Adult Education and Antelope Valley College) has received a \$350,000 Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. government's independent science agency. The three-year grant will fund the consortium's AV Information Technology Bridge Pathway Program (AV IT BPP).

Jo Morgan-Kim, Regional Director of College and Career Preparation and Adult Education stated, "We are unique among grant recipients and this is a notable accomplishment for the Antelope Valley Adult Education Regional Consortium. Our gratitude extends to the National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education Program for believing in the work we can accomplish through this collaborative effort."

The mission of AVAERC is to meet the needs of the community by providing academic and career training opportunities for students to fulfill their personal and professional goals. Specifically, the Information Technology Bridge Pathway Program will fill a need of regional employers while strengthening the relationship with industry partners. Additionally, this innovative project will demonstrate how two institutions can collaborate in order to overcome institutional barriers in service of our community. Our unique collaboration takes Adult Education students and sets them on a pathway not only toward IT certification but also toward success at AVC and beyond. Students benefit from inter-institutional collaboration, gaining access to a Bridge Pathway Program that increases their likelihood of academic and career success.

Enrollment to earn your industry-recognized CompTIA® certifications is currently open to begin classes in the second semester in Computer Repair, Networking, and Cybersecurity. Enroll now at [AVadultED.org](http://AVadultED.org).

As Principal Investigator and IT Instructor for Adult Education, Leonard Moreno will lead the new initiative with Jimmie Bowen, a Computer Applications faculty member from AVC. The initiative will (1) increase enrollment in and successful completion of IT certification programs, (2) increase both the number of our industry partnerships and the quality of those relationships, (3) improve recognizability and favorable attitudes towards the IT program within the community, and (4) improve articulation of coursework between the institutions to ensure transferability, course equivalency, or where possible, dual enrollment.

Leonard Moreno, Jo Morgan-Kim, Elisa Frias, Kathryn Mitchell, and Jimmie Bowen began preparing the grant proposal in 2023 with mentoring and technical support from Mentor-Connect, which provides mentoring and technical resources to help two-year college faculty write competitive grant proposals. Mentor-Connect is an ATE project led by Florence-Darlington Technical College in partnership with the American Association of Community Colleges.

Leo Moreno thanked their mentors, "Mentor-Connect provided invaluable guidance throughout the process of writing the new ATE NSF grant. Their expertise and mentorship helped clarify complex requirements, improve the proposal's quality, and strengthen our chances of success. We are deeply grateful for their support, which was instrumental in navigating the grant writing process."

The ATE program focuses on the education of technicians who work in high-tech fields that drive the nation's economy. Because two-year community and technical colleges are the leading sources of technician education in the United States, faculty from these higher education institutions have had leadership roles in most ATE projects since the program began in 1993.