



Upward Scholars

BAY AREA

Tutor Orientation

Upward Scholars is a Latinx-led nonprofit that provides **adult immigrants** the boost they need to **move up** the **economic ladder** through **education** and **career development** support.

Four Pillars of Support



Upward Scholars

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Financial

Academic

Career
Development

Holistic

Program Impact

Demonstrated Results for Students

- Improve their English language fluency
- Build confidence
- Stay in college
- Advance to higher-paying jobs
- Better advocates and serve as positive role models for their children
- Connect with other community members



“Because I didn’t have the chance to go to high school to learn English, everything is so much harder for me. But I’ve never wanted English to get in the way of reaching my goals. Thankfully, my tutors explain everything in a way I can understand, so I do better in class.”

I’ve been on the Dean’s list three times. That wouldn’t have happened if I didn’t have amazing tutors to help me.”

Yeny Henriquez Ramos

Program Overview

Over 1,200 students served since 2010

- Free of charge
- Adults, immigrants, and non-traditional backgrounds
- English language learners
- Low-income households
- Students studying at community colleges in San Mateo County or northern Alameda County



- New students typically request help with English as a Second Language (ESL): grammar, writing, reading, listening, and speaking
- More advanced students may request help with specialized classes (e.g., biology, early childhood education, economics, business administration, accounting, statistics, math and calculus)
- Some students transfer to 4-year universities (e.g. San Francisco State, San José State, UC Berkeley, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo)

Expectations

Tutors

Respond to emails/texts/calls from assigned student or Upward Scholars staff and to program surveys

Commit to tutor at least one hour/week for the term

Notify Upward Scholars of issues or concerns

Adhere to Upward Scholars policies (e.g., confidentiality, code of conduct)

Students

Respect tutor's time. Arrive to scheduled sessions prepared (e.g., assignments started or completed and ready for tutor review)

Notify tutors in advance if unable to make a scheduled tutoring session

Respond to email/text/calls from tutor or Upward Scholars staff

Most Common Issues/Concerns/Frustrations

- Students appear overwhelmed – lack the time to study and/or find the class moves too quickly
- Students cancel sessions often because they're juggling other priorities, such as work and family responsibilities
- Students suddenly disconnect and stop responding to emails and calls from tutors
- Some students can be distracted during their tutoring sessions

Tutoring Sessions

Scheduling

- Upward Scholars pairs tutors and students based on their stated preferences.
- Tutor/student pairs agree on timing, frequency, and format (e.g., virtual, in-person, or hybrid).

Curriculum

- Content, scope, pace is set by tutor/student pairs and generally focuses on class assignments
- Students may share course content and assignments with tutors during the tutoring session
 - Note: Community colleges use Canvas, an online curriculum management system. Some students have shared their login credentials with tutors or emailed assignments to tutors.
- Upward Scholars offers a library of general English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching tools, available to tutors on the Tutors page of the Upward Scholars website

Language

- Spanish fluency is not necessary for tutors, but can be helpful with some ESL learners

Mentoring

- Some students request tutors with specific professional goals or careers outside of their class work. If you are comfortable providing that help, we will gladly support you or help match that student with a mentor while you continue to focus on tutoring.

Next Steps

Tutor/Student Matching

- Tutors and students independently complete application forms and specify their preferences (e.g., format, schedule, and classes)
- Upward Scholars makes tentative matches and reconfirms availability and fit
- Upward Scholars sends email match notification and contact information
- Tutors and students connect directly and schedule their tutoring sessions
- Tutors notify Upward Scholars when they have successfully connected with their matched students

Ongoing Communications

- Tutors may reach out for guidance on match-specific tutoring strategies and resources
- Tutors keep Upward Scholars updated on progress via periodic check-in requests (e.g., issues, tracking hours) or when issues arise
- Tutors help Upward Scholars improve by completing end-of-term feedback form
- Upward Scholars may share information on other opportunities to engage with our students

Ongoing Communications from Upward Scholars

- Periodic quick check-ins and surveys
 - Hours volunteered
 - Issue identification or additional support/resource needs
- End-of-term feedback and future plan form
- Email and notices of opportunities to participate in other programs or events
 - In person or virtual English Conversations Club
 - English Conversation Partners



Tutoring Tips

Relationship building

- Ask student about their life and academic goals
- Inquire about their tutoring goals and how you can best help them. This can be a good time to ask for permission to correct their pronunciation, grammar, and word choices
- Confirm preferred communication methods and timing

Vocabulary building

- Check and re-check for understanding. Students sometimes say they understand when they might not fully grasp a concept
- Ask your students to use the new word in a sentence and define it with their own words
- Work with a Thesaurus
- If you can, use Spanish initially when needed
- Don't hesitate to refer students to community resources

Maintain communication with Programs Team

- Issues/concerns
- Need for support or teaching tools
- Suggestions for training that would be helpful to you as a tutor

Upward Scholars

855 Jefferson Ave

Box 506

Redwood City, CA 94064

Info@upwardscholars.org



Adriana Luna, Programs Coordinator

Adriana@upwardscholars.org

(650) 200-3444

Diana Viscarra, Programs Director

Diana@upwardscholars.org

(650) 254-6149

@UpwardScholars



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