

CONSORTIUM

Providing free basic education and English classes for adults from all backgrounds.

Practicing Partnerships

with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Implementing
WIOA Standards

Metro North
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

– Sponsored by Community Education –

Blaine Learning Lab students experience learning outside of the classroom

ESL students take an educational bus trip

On Wednesday, November 23, 2016, 36 learners enrolled in the Blaine Learning Lab morning ESL program had the opportunity to visit a former student living her dream-come true success story.

The ESL learners, staff, and volunteers climbed onto the number 25 Metro Transit bus for a trip to downtown Minneapolis. Crêpes Up Delicious, located in the Canadian Pacific Building, was the final destination. Earlier in the fall, a former ESL learner, Oksana Goldenstein, reached out to her teachers to inform them that she had opened a crepe shop and invited them and current learners to visit. After much persistence, Blaine teacher Polina Huffman was able to make that invitation a reality.



Once there, the learners were able to purchase delicious crêpes and meet with the successful business owner. However, the bus trip served a dual purpose. When looking for a way to transport the learners to Minneapolis, Polina reached out to our partners at Metro Transit. For the past 4 years, representatives from Metro Transit have partnered with the Blaine Learning Lab to provide yearly public transportation education. The students learn the transit rules, how to purchase passes, and how to navigate transit schedules — all while riding on an official city bus. This has been proven to be a very useful lesson, and is truly appreciated by all who participate.

Through partnerships like the one with Metro Transit, Metro North ABE is able to provide real life experiences that enrich the educational opportunities for all learners.

*Articles about this trip (complete with pictures and interviews with learners and staff) ran in the November 24th StarTribune, the November 30th Anoka Shopper, and was featured on the KARE 11 News at 6:00 PM on the day of the trip.

About Metro North ABE

Our mission is to inspire and challenge all learners to reach their full potential. We will teach the skills needed to succeed as responsible citizens in our changing world.

Our vision is to provide programs that effectively develop the skills needed by individuals to achieve their goals.

Location Supervisors & Site Coordinators

Pat Adams: Community Education Asst. Manager, Anoka-Hennepin

Patrick Hobot: Supervisor, Anoka Technical College and

Anoka Ramsey Community College

Kathleen Moriarty: Supervisor, Columbia Heights & Brooklyn Center

Pam Moriarity: Site Coordinator, Elk River

Melody Panek: Site Coordinator, St. Francis

Cori Sendl: Director of Community Education, Centennial

Molly Stewart: Supervisor, Blaine

ABE 101

Approved Adult Education & Literacy Activities under WIOA

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act defines what programs, activities, and services can be offered through Title II (Adult Basic Education programs) funding including the following:

- **Adult education**
- **Literacy**
- **Workplace adult education and literacy activities**
- **Family literacy activities**
- **English language acquisition activities**
- **Integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/Civics)**
Current IEL/Civics grants have provided this type of programming. It includes education services provided to English language adult learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.
- **Workforce preparation activities**
ACES/TIF addresses this component of programming, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.
- **Integrated education and training (IET)**
This service approach provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Federal Adult Education Provider Application Workshop, MN Department of Education, December 8, 2016

Standards Implementation Under WIOA

In compliance with WIOA, Metro North ABE has provided professional development to increase understanding of each strand of the ABE standards: the Academic, Career and Employability Skills (ACES) and Transitions Integration Framework (TIF); the College and Career Readiness standards; and the Northstar Digital Literacy standards.

The digital literacy standards were first developed in Minnesota in 2010. While the initial focus was on proctoring assessments of learners’ digital literacy skills, programs continue to strengthen their integration of digital literacy skill instruction across levels in ESL and ABE classes.

After the launch of ACES/TIF in 2013, Metro North ABE required all classroom instructors to participate in a two year, six study circle sessions, to learn how to integrate these skills across all levels of programming.

Minnesota adopted the third strand, the CCRS for English Language Arts and Math, in 2014. During this time programs were implementing the new 2014 GED® exam and planning for the new state competency based diploma; both aligned with Core State Standards. Staff from the Blaine, Elk River, St. Francis, and Anoka Technical College sites participated in (or led) cohort trainings on CCRS for implementation in state diploma programs. Several staff continue to serve as leaders; training others throughout the state.

While state diploma programs have been actively implementing the CCR standards, the level of implementation for other class levels varies. Consortium staff have participated in CCRS 101 workshops, Foundations of English Language Arts Standards, and Foundations of Math Standards through state offerings during ABE Summer Institute, regional trainings and the state Language and Literacy Conference. Metro North ABE also has offered individual sessions on the key instructional shifts reflected in the standards during in-house staff development events.

This year the state offered its first round of cohort training open to all levels of instruction. Metro North ABE has a team of five ESL staff currently participating from the Adult Education Center- Columbia Heights/Fridley site. The standards implementation efforts will continue over the next few years as Metro North ABE aligns course offerings with the content standards to assist adult learners on their pathways to success.

Practicing Partnerships and WIOA

Impact of WIOA: History, Intention, Impact on Internal Systems

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law on July 22, 2014, is the first legislation reform of the federal public workforce system in fifteen years. It supersedes the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 and amends Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Beginning July 1, 2015, the transition began into the full implementation of WIOA.

Nationally, WIOA presents the opportunity to improve job and career options for our nation’s jobseekers and workers by supporting an integrated system to link diverse talent (people) to businesses (jobs/career paths). It supports a high quality, one-stop center system aligning investments in workforce, education, and economic development. It reinforces the partnerships that are es-

sential to provide job seekers and workers with high-quality education, training, and supportive career services. Businesses are also able to find skilled workers and access support, such as education and training for their current employees. WIOA establishes structures for core programs to more effectively work together. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has issued guidance on the timeframes for implementation of changes in WIOA. Each state has been charged with submitting a State Unified Plan and Common Performance Accountability provision. WIOA has empowered State and Local elected officials and private sector-led workforce boards with the responsibility of developing strategic, integrated plans that support economic growth and labor force needs



intended to grow the capacity and performance of the workforce system.

What does this mean for adult basic education and Metro North ABE?

WIOA requires that ABE programs have representation on local Workforce Development Boards and actively participate in local strategic planning. ABE, as a core program, is charged with supporting specific activities on the local boards including participation

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in the development and implementation of career pathways; promotions and referrals among providers; access to services through the one-stop system, enhanced coordination with education providers; understanding and awareness of local and regional economic conditions; and participation in efforts to engage employers.

We are fortunate to be an ABE program in the state of Minnesota where we have ABE state funding and leadership that prior to WIOA supported activities now required in WIOA. For over 30 years Metro North ABE has had a representative on the local Anoka County Workforce Investment Board, now called the Anoka County Workforce Development Board. During this time Metro North ABE has been an active, contributing partner in developing strategic planning, responding to and supporting the economic needs of our local area. During this time Metro North ABE has participated in a strong, innovative partnership with the Anoka County Workforce Center, Anoka Technical College, and Anoka Ramsey Community College focusing on transitioning individuals into the workforce focusing on local in-demand career pathways, upgrading skills, and providing postsecondary training. Within those partnerships we have practiced required WIOA concepts, technical and academic instruction to support workforce and postsecondary efforts; participated in grants that assist adults to prepare for local in-demand positions, actively promoted and referred students to partner services and programs leading to career pathway participation, and collaborated in client intake to streamline individual access to providers’ services.

Those assets and activities mean that Metro North ABE is already implementing some of the changes outlined in WIOA. Metro North ABE’s current approach to meeting student and com-

munity needs, partnering with local agencies, and providing quality instruction fully align with WIOA. Fundamentally, the work we are doing does not change. We do have more accountability in demonstrating our implementation of WIOA; we are required to continue to integrate standards into our instruction, and we do need to more closely align our student and program outcomes more deliberately with other WIOA partners. WIOA has influenced the data we are collecting on our students. Our state ABE student database (SID) is currently in a state of change as new reporting fields are added to align with WIOA.

This spring 2017, all Minnesota ABE programs will participate in a new competitive grant process, required under WIOA. ABE programs will need to provide evidence of their proven success in adult literacy services and indicate how their programming aligns to and supports the thirteen service considerations outlined in WIOA. Many of the thirteen considerations have been part of the past Minnesota annual ABE grant application and five-year ABE Narrative. The thirteen areas require us to provide evidence we are serving our community’s needs; our programming is effective, sufficient and of high quality, we are collaborative in our response to serving the community needs, our instruction is contextualized and done in coordination with other educational or training resources, we use technology to increase our quality of learning, and we maintain a high-quality information management system.



WIOA Partners Review

Adult Basic Education is one of six core programs in WIOA. Other core programs include the Adult Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Programs, Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services, and Rehabilitation programs. Additional programs authorized by WIOA include Job Corps program, the Youth-Build program, Native American programs, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs.

Metro North ABE has a history of collaboration and partnership with many of these and other local programs and resources. Because WIOA places greater

emphasis on one-stops achieving results for jobseekers, workers, and partnerships, WIOA will support our continued work together.

WIOA will continue to support the practice of career pathway development. Specific career pathway development is promoted by the workforce center based on local needs and economics. ABE can continue to support this development by offering contextualized, career-specific instruction to individuals entering (bridging) into postsecondary training, and assisting those same students after the transition

into postsecondary to ensure success (integration). ABE’s work in this area



not only aids individuals’ success, but provides support to the postsecondary schools, and increases the number of qualified and needed employees.

WIOA will also provide local programs the ability to provide incumbent worker training. Those training opportunities will promote collaboration between the six core WIOA programs and other local programs. Metro North ABE, and other ABE programs, will be active in understanding how and when they can assist in these effort.

Get to Know Metro North

Metro North: Elk River

Connecting with WIOA Partners to Address Challenges and Opportunities in the Healthcare Industry

Metro North ABE-Elk River is a member of the Local Workforce Development Area(WDA) #5 and the Regional Workforce Development Area #3 and aligns with Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services(CMJTS) whose central office is located at the Monticello Workforce Center. These two WDA's cover a vast territory and include several Adult Basic Education programs and two different Workforce Centers and work together to promote the mission of WIOA.

One example of their shared vision and partnership is the Healthcare Sector Summit held on October 14th, 2016; planned and hosted by the Region 3 Leadership and Planning Board, Stearn-Benton Employment & Training Council and CMJTS, Inc. Workforce Development Board. This first in a three part series focused on gaps in the healthcare industry in hospitals, while future summits will focus on healthcare industry in nursing home and assisted living facilities and private sectors.

The Healthcare Summit began with Labor Market Information and Gap analysis presented by Luke Greiner, a Regional Analyst, DEED. Then representatives from CentraCare Health, Fairview Health Services, and Renville County Hospital and Clinics addressed a group of 150 participants about the shortage of healthcare employees and opportunities in the healthcare industry. Participants who represented a wide range of organizations and individuals that provide community support—healthcare providers, workforce development providers, education(colleges, universities, technical colleges), Adult Basic

Education, economic development professionals, community foundations, chief elected officials, and others discussed solutions on how to train and prepare individuals for employment in the central Minnesota health care sector.

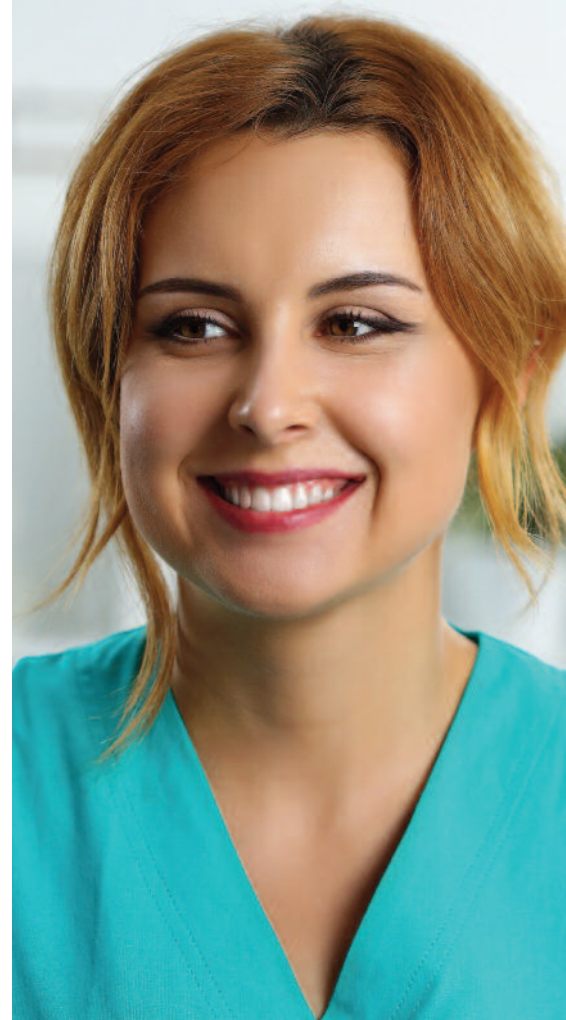
Metro North: Anoka

Building innovative partnerships to move learners forward in post-secondary pursuits

Metro North ABE is evolving in its partnerships with our college sites. With ABE campuses at Anoka Technical College and Anoka Ramsey Community College, Metro North is ideally situated to support adult learners who need Accuplacer brush up, TEAS (Test of Essential Academic Skills) preparation, and Developmental Education support.

Currently, Accuplacer prep is offered at both sites, but beginning at the end of January 2017, Metro North is partnering more directly to develop and offer Accuplacer “bootcamps” designed as short (20 hour) intensive courses to improve student skills, particularly in Arithmetic level and Algebra level mathematics. The college partner handles enrollment and partners with Metro North to schedule and to develop curriculum. We intend to offer Accuplacer bootcamps for each semester Fall, Spring, and Summer.

Metro North has also partnered with ARCC for the past two years offering supplemental instruction and co-teaching for the Developmental Ed English Language Learners program. ABE instructors partner with the ARCC instructors to develop curriculum, deliver instruction, and collaborate on student needs and achievement. College credits are offered for the coursework, which allows for an earlier



Data with Linda

WIOA legislation was effective July 1, 2016. In order to continue receiving federal funding, ABE programs are required to collect additional data not previously asked for as part of WIA.

The ABE database (which housed students, attendance, classes, buildings, volunteers, and staff) used since 2006 was rebuilt to add additional state and federal data fields and would include the new NRS (National Reporting System) tables. The new system, SID (Student Information Database), was launched in Minnesota in July.

A new feature (person search) was added to SID that allows ABE staff in local programs to share testing, site and attendance information about ABE learners. This means when a learner arrives at a MN ABE location to enroll, and has attended ABE classes elsewhere in Minnesota, staff can complete a “data merge.” The “person

search” and “data merge” features have proven challenging to staff managing databases but are invaluable to our learners for accessing their records as ABE learners frequently move between programs.

Local data had historically been collected on our learners for the purpose of evaluating and reporting to our Community Education Board of Directors. With SID, our ABE Learner Entry Data Collection Form needed updating.

The new form was developed in January 2017 to include the updated WIOA, State, and local data collection requirements including:

- Identify barriers to employment.
- Have you exhausted TANF benefits?
- Do you identify as homeless/runaway youth?

- Are you considered low income?
- Are you a single parent?
- Are you disabled?
- Are you a youth in foster care/ or have you aged out of the system?

Our registration/intake/orientation staff script also received an update. This script provides staff key language to incoming learners to help them understand what information is recorded on the data collection forms.

The previous federal reporting tables, which had reported on skill gains, GED® completions, Diploma completions, entering employment, retaining employment, entering post-secondary, and/or training, will now include measurable skills gains, periods of participation (exiting and re-entering ABE), and credential attainment indicators.

Student Spotlight: Anny Robinson

There are just some people who you know will fulfill their dreams. **Lakkhana Robinson, or “Anny”** is originally from Sisaket province, in northeast Thailand. Her father worked as a mechanic and her mother had a restaurant in the only room that served as her family's home. During the day, people would come to their home to eat at the restaurant. At night, Anny and her family slept on the floor in the same room.

Anny's grandmother took care of her while her parents were working. They would dig up frogs and crabs and cook them for dinner. Anny says that her grandmother was a very good cook. Anny states, “It's still the best food I have ever eaten!”

After Anny graduated from high school, she went to Maharakhan University to

earn a degree in Science Statistics. After college, Anny met and married an American man. They moved to Chicago, but the marriage didn't last. Anny moved to Nantucket, Massachusetts to nanny for a famous author's (who shall remain unnamed!) children. Eventually, Anny met a Minnesota man, Paul, with whom she fell madly in love. Since he was from Minnesota, Anny came here to get married. They have a beautiful 4 year old daughter, Lalana.

Anny came to ABE with the goal to pass the Para Pro test, which she has and found a full time job as an Educational Assistant in Special Education with the St. Francis school district. Anny's family recently purchased 20 acres of land to begin working towards her dreams of farm life. She wants to start an organic vegetable

greenhouse to sell produce at farmer's markets and other local shops.



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Postal Area

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CONSORTIUM

Providing free basic education and English classes for adults from all backgrounds.

- Anoka Ramsey Community College
- Anoka Technical College Student Success Center
- Blaine Learning Lab
- Brooklyn Center Community Corner
- Brooklyn Center Lutheran Church of the Master
- Centennial Adult Continuing Education
- Columbia Heights Adult Education Center
- Elk River Community Education Center
- St. Francis Lifelong Learning Center

