

MWCA Best Practices

WIB Name/WSA _____ 6 – SW MN _____

Submitted by _____ Rebecca Weber _____

Building upon the Healthcare Career Academy project, we developed and implemented a nursing assistant training program for English language learners, as a way to introduce them to an entry-level position in healthcare, and show them opportunities for career advancement in healthcare. This was a partnership project between four workforce service areas (SBETC, CMJTS, WDI, and SW).

- Jobseeker or employer impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

By incorporating a work-based language component along with the Certified Nursing Assistant course, non-native English language speakers are better able to learn the skills and pass the course. In addition; the intensified training has created an opportunity for significant improvement in English literacy skills. For many of these students, it is the first time that they have completed any type of certification program. Healthcare employers benefit by increasing the diversity of their workplaces and having a larger pool of health care workers.

- Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

This project is introducing a new group of workers to the healthcare field, and will ideally help some of them move up the healthcare career ladder. The project also brought together workforce centers, Adult Basic Education, educational institutions, health care facilities and key community players and gave them an opportunity to focus on how best to prepare and recruit our newest immigrant population for the health care workforce.

- Identification of those involved, including collaborators

ELL-CNA sites have been developed in eight communities throughout central, southwest, and southeast Minnesota. Each site has an advisory group made up of representatives from the WSA, Adult Basic Education, local healthcare facilities, community college, community-based organizations, cultural diversity groups, and others.

The project has received funding from the McKnight Foundation (Healthcare Career Academies), the Otto Bremer Foundation, and the Job Skills Partnership.

- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

This is truly a community-based project. In many sites, the healthcare facility partners volunteer to teach some of the classes, such as the pre-Academy classes or job search classes. This not only helps the students, but it helps the employers make connections with future potential employees, and facilitates placement. In another site, that did not have a CNA program established there (the nearest site was 30+ miles away), the partnering college and other community groups came together to find a classroom site and obtain equipment for the class.

- Ideas for replication/lessons learned

The curriculum model of having ELL instructors team with subject matter instructors could easily be replicated in other areas. The model also focuses on having the ELL instructor present the key words or vocabulary, and an overview of each unit prior to the subject matter instructor's class. The students

are able to come to class with background knowledge and vocabulary. The model also includes study skills, test taking skills and job seeking and keeping skills. The soft skills of job seeking are frequently presented by volunteer Health Care Facility Human Resource Directors, thereby helping students develop a connection prior to applying for a position.

The model could easily be adapted in other short term training areas such as welding, forklift, culinary arts or manufacturing operator. In fact, it is already being explored for welding training, as well as using it to help those native English speakers, with low level English language skills; to be successful in the nursing assistant program.