

Flexible Educational Options Key to Successful GED and Industry Training

Overview describing the innovative best practice

MaRCH (Manufacturing, Retail/Customer Service, Healthcare) to Success FastTRAC grant was a collaboration between CMJTS and three regional Adult Basic Education (ABE) consortia in WSA 5: Cambridge/Isanti ABE, WEST ABE (Monticello), and Glacial Lakes ABE (Willmar/Hutchinson). Funds were used to improve education and employment outcomes of adults in central Minnesota, specifically adults who lacked basic (reading, writing, math, and computer literacy) skills and/or academic and employment readiness skills to enter and be successful in occupational skills training programs. The emphasis was on enabling as many people as possible to earn their GED and successfully complete industry training. The ABE consortia offered FastTRAC GED classes in conjunction with one or more certification courses. Courses included Machine Theory, Pre-Certified Nursing Assistant, and Customer Sales and Service. Students were also encouraged to consider further educational programs in Workforce Service Area 5 demand industries.

The three industry specific trainings were held in each of what CMJTS calls its three regions: north (Pine, Kanabec, Isanti, Milles Lacs, Chisago counties), central (Sherburne and Wright counties), and south (Kandiyohi, Renville, Meeker, McLeod counties). The central region hosted Machine Theory training and the north and south regions each offered Customer Service Training and Pre-CNA classes. All offered FastTRAC GED. Students were welcome to attend the class of their choice in any region.

Jobseeker impact (i.e. benefits, outcomes for job seekers)

MARCh To Success far exceeded its original goals to deliver short-term industry training and GED preparation to 62 students. 124 students enrolled in classes, 101 students successfully completed industry training, and 110 students earned their GED. Twenty-four students successfully completed additional training as a Certified Nursing Assistant. One continued in RN training.

Community impact (i.e. benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

Communities and businesses benefited by having a workforce that increased its education and job skill levels. Students were introduced to jobs and potential careers in central Minnesota thus heightening the students' awareness of skills in demand in central Minnesota.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services – grantee and fiscal agent
Cambridge/Isanti ABE
WEST ABE (Monticello)
Glacial Lakes ABE (Willmar/Hutchinson)

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Cambridge/Isanti ABE used the pre-CNA curriculum developed by the Community Based Job Training Grant of which CMJTS is a subcontractor of Workforce Development Inc.

Glacial Lakes ABE used a pre-CNA curriculum previously developed by a partnership of Willmar healthcare providers and ABE.

WEST ABE used the Machine Theory curriculum developed in 2007 through a grant from the Department of Education and the Workforce Initiative for a Leadership and Mentoring Alliance (WILMA) and enhanced through a subsequent 2007 ETC grant.

CMJTS leveraged WIA Adult and dislocated worker program funds for eligible students

Ideas for replication/lessons learned

The Customer Sales and Service class is very valuable to entry-level job seekers. In addition to learning customer service skills, students exit the training with a job search portfolio, an awareness of job search strategies, and knowledge of the WorkForce Center System.

It is helpful for students taking the customer service certification exam to have a 9th grade reading level and computer skills.

Any Workforce Service Area can be certified to administer the Customer Sales and Service certification exam by contacting the National Retail Federation.

The Machine Theory class, a competency-based, contextual, industry-verified curriculum in manufacturing provides post-secondary college credit for the completion of the Introduction to Manufacturing program through articulation with St. Cloud Technical College.

The three ABE consortia and CMJTS consider this grant to be a huge success. Enrollments in FastTRAC greatly exceeded the plan. The variety of trainings offered at convenient geographic locations attracted unemployed, underemployed and dislocated workers.