



MWCA 2006 BEST PRACTICES RECOGNITION NOMINATION FORM

WIB Name/WSA: Workforce Development, Inc., WSA 8

Submitted by: Jakki Trihey, on behalf of Randy Johnson, Executive Director

Attach a description (no more than two pages) describing the initiative.

Please return via e-mail or fax to Anne Olson by **Thursday, July 27.**
aolson@mncounties.org or (651) 224-6540

 (Leave this section blank -to be completed by judges)

Judge # _____

Criteria for Selection of Outstanding Best Practices	Maximum Points	Points Awarded
Overview describing the innovative best practice	25	
Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)	25	
Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)	20	
Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15	
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10	
Ability for use or replication by others	05	
TOTAL:	100	

The Healthcare Sub-Committee of the SE MN Workforce Investment Board (SE MN WIB) identified an employment problem related to healthcare licensing in Minnesota. Professionals are arriving in Minnesota with the training, skills, and desire to work in much needed healthcare positions. These professionals have been trained, and, in numerous cases, licensed, in their country of origin or in another state. Unfortunately, the process to transition a license from another country or state into a Minnesota license is an extremely complicated and cumbersome quagmire, especially if an individual has limited English skills.

As a result of this need for assistance to transition healthcare licenses/credentials into the State of Minnesota, the SE MN WIB Healthcare Subcommittee recommended the establishment of a Transitioning License Healthcare Academy in Olmsted County (Rochester). This academy serves individuals trained and licensed in a healthcare profession in another country and/or state who have not yet received jobs specifically in their profession in Minnesota. Such positions have ranged from LPN to Nurse Educator to MD.

Candidates for the academy come from a variety of places – some are referred to the academy by the area Adult Basic Education program, others from Rochester's Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA), the Rochester Work Force Center, and other area Work Force Centers.

Initially, candidates meet with the Academy Coordinator, Deb Long. Deb has experience as a Licensed Practical Nurse, a licensed social worker, and is also a certified Career Development Facilitator. She provides a primary assessment to each academy candidate to identify strengths and barriers. After the completion of the primary assessment, an employment plan is developed that states the targeted healthcare job and the course of action required to achieve that job. Deb then becomes a case manager to the participant and refers the participant to the Work Force Center services necessary for their goal achievement based upon their individual need (needs will vary) whether it be literacy assistance, workplace literacy, or a combination of several services.

Deb determines the participant's eligibility for other employment and training programs and enrolls the students where appropriate. She then researches the Minnesota licensure requirements for the profession of choice, and the feasibility of a direct transition from the licensure of origin. If direct transition is not feasible, Deb researches additional requirements necessary to obtain a Minnesota license. Her findings are being documented to establish a database so that information will be available to streamline the process for other individuals with similar backgrounds and goals.

Next, Deb provides a secondary assessment in which the steps necessary to achieve licensure are integrated into the existing plan. At this time, if additional training is required, course work will be outlined and funding sources explored, and the participant will be referred to appropriate classroom training. Upon obtaining a Minnesota license, candidates are referred to relevant Work Force Center services to find employment within the Minnesota healthcare industry. The participant will become involved within the full spectrum of Job Search activities from resume development to success at the job interview. If work experience or on-the-job-training services are in the best interest of the participant, these opportunities will be initiated. Upon employment, a mentoring program is established, and retention services are provided. Formal follow-up occurs within six months. During the course of the academy's services to the participant, WDI staff maintains regular contact with the participant, preferably upon a weekly basis, but monthly at the very minimum. The goal of the academy is to place the participant in the workforce within an appropriate healthcare profession as soon as possible. Though individuals will vary, the time of a student's entry into the academy, until the appropriate healthcare job placement occurs, should take no more than two years.

At this time, over forty participants have been enrolled in the Transitioning License Healthcare Academy. Deb Long has testified before a State House of Representatives Committee about the need for such an academy, resulting in legislative funding for two additional Transitioning License Academies around the state, along with the expansion of the Rochester academy. The two new Transitioning License Academies will be using the Rochester model as a template.

The job-seeker benefits have been tremendous, providing a path and assistance in transitioning existing licenses/credentials to many qualified healthcare professionals and providing hope to those just starting within the academy.

In terms of the community impact, this academy is helping healthcare employers fill much-needed positions with qualified workers. It also promotes a better understanding of the barriers to healthcare licensure and employment for foreign trained professionals among educators, healthcare employers and licensing agencies.

Leveraged funds that have helped support the good work of the Transitioning Licenses Healthcare Academy include WIA funds for those participants who are eligible, WIA Incentive Grant monies and some funding from the Southwest Private Industry Council (SW MN PIC). Additionally, the Center for Integrated Health Science Education and Practice (CIHSEP) is funding the development of a shared database of resources based upon the research done by Deb Long and, as stated previously, the state legislature has committed funds to expand this project as well as add two more identical academies within the state.