



Adult Basic Education Navigating and Advising
Support Services Legislative Grant

Grant funds must be expended by June 30, 2019. Complete this report after all grant funds have been expended, no later than July 15, 2019. Submit via email to Cherie.Eichinger@state.mn.us Please address the following items in a final report of three pages or less.

Please briefly describe your project.

The title of our grant was “Providing ABE Advising & Navigation through Sustainable Community Partnerships”. Mankato Area ABE was awarded \$11,200 over a 2.5 year period and proposed three goals through this grant.

- 1) Develop and document strong inter-agency referral systems in order to connect ABE learners to community navigators to improve student attendance/retention by June, 2019**
- 2) Partner with outside agencies to provide career awareness and employment readiness learning opportunities in the ABE settings.**
- 3) MN Standard Adult Diploma Program advising will be available to New Ulm ABE participants onsite.**

What were the implementation challenges?

- Staff turn over and training of new staff on the referral system is on-going; the ACP Networking event will help with connections in the future**
- Advising takes time and space; we needed space onsite for partners to meet with clients and we creatively figured that out**

What were the successes in implementation?

Although this was a small amount of funding, this particular grant was one of the best things that we ever did in the 25 years I have worked in ABE. We did not ask for funds to support wages (except for some professional development) because we knew we would not sustain a position beyond the grant period. What we did was leverage funding and supported the many good things we have going here, and strengthened our partnerships with other agencies so that we can continue to advise and support learners with OTHER systems once this grant is over. The ABE Leadership team agrees that

this particular grant has changed our thinking system-wide and it stretches beyond ABE to include the way we work with surrounding agencies and staff. Some of the wonderful successes include:

- Shared advising sessions with Drug Court, House of Hope, MVAC Youth Program staff and DEED Job Service - in some cases our staff actually attend meetings (such as drug court team meetings) and in some cases we have shared google docs that allow staff from multiple agencies to learn about the day-to-day happenings of the individuals who are co-enrolled in our systems. This is done through a release of information between agencies.
- A common referral form that we use between all agencies - we use this with our Minnesota Valley Action Council, DEED Job Service, Blue Earth County Employment Services, and South Central College partners. We have shared this form with all involved and some use it, while some make the referrals electronically via email.
- Development of an Adult Career Pathways Networking Day where all agencies collaborate to host an annual event (we have done this for 2 years now). The target audience for this event includes front-line staff who work directly with shared clients (teachers, job or career counselors, advisors, helpers, navigators, secretaries, etc) who need to get to know each other by networking as well as get to know all resources that shared clients can be connected to as they work towards achieving their goals.
- Strengthened partnerships with DEED and MVAC Youth programs. We have partner staff in our building daily meeting with new referrals we have made and case managing right from our ABE site. We were able to leverage funding to remodel some space to use for on-site meetings with our students who have transportation issues.
- Mankato Area ABE has seen an increase over the past 2 years in post testing rates, and in level gains among all student groups. We have a lot of interventions going on right now, but we believe that the Navigation and Advising grant has impacted our student achievement data in a very positive way.

What were the lessons learned from this implementation?

- Through a focus group conducted in spring of 2018, we learned that students engaged with multiple agencies to support them through their journey of ABE to higher education to job placement. EVERY student mentioned needing multiple agencies (more than 2 agencies were stated by each client) to get what they needed to make it through their career pathway goals. This confirmed for us that co-enrollment is very important and should be recommended.
- Networking among the staff who make direct referrals to each other is extremely important. If staff have relationships, they will work together to help each other's clients succeed. Relationships are so important, however we need PROCESSES in place behind the scenes so that when staff change over, we immediately recognize that and bring them into the established processes right away. We witnessed this happen throughout this grant period and it worked seamlessly.

- **Administration needs to OVERTLY state to the case workers that we ENCOURAGE CO-ENROLLMENT between WIOA and all community-supporting programs. Siloed work is OUT and shared case management is IN. That message has been clear to our systems and stated by administration for the past few years and it's helped our systems work together to ensure that clients have the support they need to make it.**

Please identify any promising practices, tools, resources, materials and/or recommendations for colleagues in the field to use?

- **The “Adult Career Pathways Networking Day” event will be shared at the Summer Institute in August of 2019. It has already been shared at the Regional Transitions meetings, and with the Administrator ACP Cohort in 2016-2017. It has been replicated by other partnerships across the state of MN, most recently in Marshall and Willmar.**
- **Shared referral form has been shared state-wide at these events and through the groups mentioned above. When the DEED and ABE group met to discuss the referral form for the CareerForce System, we were asked to join and describe our work and the referral form we had developed.**
- **Through our regional transitions team, we have revised and shared (also presented at regionals and Summer Institute) a new student PEP form and process. There is one PEP for ESL and one for ABE. This tool helps to dig deeper at intake and advising sessions so that ABE staff can identify needs early in the goal setting process.**

Please identify a contact person (name, email, phone number) for any questions regarding this project:

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