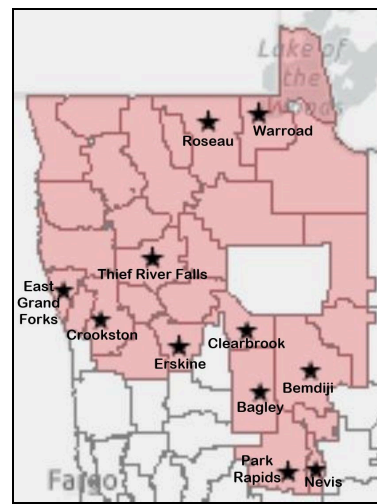
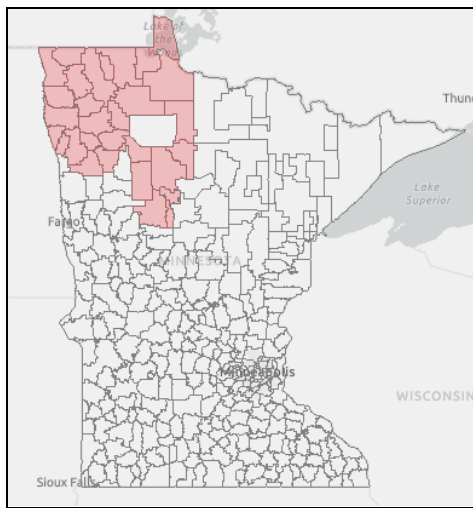


## Narrative Item 1.1 - Overview of the Northwest Service Cooperative ABE Consortium

***Provide an overview of the consortium's geographic area of service including, as appropriate, Tribal Nations located partially or completely within that area.***

The Northwest Service Cooperative agency located in Thief River Falls, MN serves as the fiscal agent for the Northwest Service Cooperative (NWSC) Adult Basic Education (ABE) consortium, consisting of 29 member school districts located in 10 counties in northwest Minnesota. The consortium oversees ABE programming in two Workforce Service Areas, WSA1 (formerly known as the Northwest Private Industry Council) and WSA2 (Rural MN Concentrated Employment Programs). The consortium service area is geographically large, encompassing a 16,400 mile<sup>2</sup> service area. The following graphics depict the scope of the consortium's service area in Minnesota and the current on-site classroom locations::

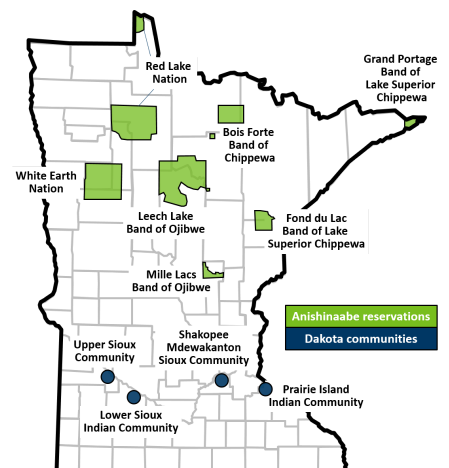


The 29 member school districts include: Badger, Bagley, Bemidji, Blackduck, Clearbrook-Gonvick, Crookston, East Grand Forks, Fertile-Beltrami, Fisher, Goodridge, Greenbush-Middle River, Grygla, Kelliher, Kittson Central (in Hallock), Lake of the Woods (in Baudette), Lancaster, Laporte, Marshall County Central (in Newfolden), Nevis, Park Rapids, Red Lake County Central (in Oklee), Red Lake Falls, Roseau, Stephen-Argyle, Thief River Falls, Tri-County (in Karlstad), Warren-Alvarado-Oslo, Warroad and Win-E-Mac (in Erskine).

The 10 counties served include: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau.

None of Minnesota's eleven recognized Tribal Nations are direct members of the consortium, however, several are partially located within or adjacent to the consortium's service area and may utilize ABE services, including:

- Gaa-zagaskwaabiganikaag / Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe who share land with Beltrami and Hubbard counties
- Mis-Qua-Mi-Saga-Eh-Ganing / Red Lake Nation who share land in Beltrami and Clearwater counties, and
- Gaa-waabaabiganikaag / White Earth Nation who share land in Clearwater county



(Map image address: [https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/chsadmin/images/iv\\_17\\_aicommunities\\_rsz.png](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/chsadmin/images/iv_17_aicommunities_rsz.png))

***Provide a description of and data about the target population for ABE services who reside within the geographic area served by the consortium (such as individuals with low levels of literacy, adults without a secondary credential and/or adult English language learners).***

Annually, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provides an ABE State Entitlement Calculation report to local consortia which provides detailed information by school district. This report serves as not only the basis for funding but can help consortia make important decisions regarding the placement of adult literacy programs and services for students who have less than a high school equivalency or demonstrate limited proficiency in the English language. The Northwest Service Cooperative [2023-24 State Entitlement Report](#) highlights the following areas of need:

- **Over 20, No Diploma:** The consortium hosts a base population of 147,464 people, 15,774 of whom are reported as adults over the age of 20 without a high school diploma or GED, which is roughly 10.7% of the region's population. There is no information about the age or socio-economic status of these individuals and whether they might benefit from adult education programming in their communities, but one can clearly infer a need from this information. The report provides some additional clarity by providing school district level details which can be used to calculate the percentage of residents in a school district's boundary who lack a high school diploma using the Over 20, No Diploma count and districts' census counts. In communities where the percentages climb particularly high, more investigation is needed, often by contacting local school district officials to discuss the local area's need for adult literacy services.
- **Limited English Proficient:** Each of the consortium's 29-member school districts annually report to MDE a number titled the "*2nd prior year K-12 school district Limited English Proficiency (LEP) count*" which indicates the number of children enrolled in the district for whom English is not the primary language spoken in their home. This is included in the ABE state funding formula because it provides an indication of the need for adult English language services, based on the assumption that for each K-12 student who is LEP, there are at least two parents who are also in need of English language acquisition. For the current program year, the entitlement report noted that the LEP count provided by school districts in the consortium was 336 students. The report drills down the data to specify which communities demonstrate the most need for English language acquisition. Because this information is provided annually, it is often a more accurate and representative indicator of immediate need. For example, in the current program year the consortium's entitlement calculation indicates that 328 of the 336 LEP counts reported by our 29-member school districts come from seven communities in the consortium, including: Bemidji (10), Park Rapids (52), Thief River Falls (30), Crookston (39), East Grand Forks (156), Roseau (22) and Warroad (19). Three other smaller communities report much smaller, often individual LEP counts, and all are located within driving distance of a nearby ESL classroom, minimizing the need for small classrooms to be established in every single community, which is cost prohibitive.

Classroom locations have been established in a number of communities throughout the consortium, however, not all of the member school districts host or have a need for an ABE classroom site. The consortium has long instituted an unwritten policy of establishing classrooms across the consortium where they are in greatest need. In recent years, many classrooms in the more rural parts of the consortium have experienced declining enrollment and have been put on hiatus, while other classrooms have opened. Many of our classrooms are long-standing, and attendance and participation in these classes has remained fairly static from year to year, with only very small tweaks in programming. Instructional staff at all sites are trained to serve the literacy needs

of any client who comes through the door. Each site takes on its own unique design in response to the needs of the adult learners in that area.

In addition to the State ABE Entitlement Report, the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census provides additional evidence and information relevant to the ABE target population and illustrates the need for high school completion (through GED or Standard Adult Diploma programming), English Language services, college preparation, and workforce preparation programs within each of the ten counties included in the consortium's geographic service area. A summary of the data is included in the table below, with links provided to each county summary:

County	Total Population	% of residents in the county who are Foreign-Born	% of residents (5 and older) who speak a language other than English at home	% of residents in the county who are people of color	% of residents (25 years and older) who do not have a high school diploma	% of residents (25 years and older) who have a high school diploma but have not attended college	% of residents living below the poverty line	% of labor force (16 years and older) who are un - employed
<a href="#">Kittson</a>	4,207	1.8%	3.5%	4.7%	4.3%	36.6%	10.2%	3.4%
<a href="#">Roseau</a>	15,331	4.1%	3.9%	10.2%	6.6%	36.2%	8.4%	4.4%
<a href="#">Lake of the Woods</a>	3,763	0.9%	1.2%	9.3%	2.4%	33.0%	12.6%	3.1%
<a href="#">Beltrami</a>	46,228	1.4%	4.7%	29.1%	7.0%	27.6%	16.8%	3.4%
<a href="#">Marshall</a>	9,040	1.2%	3.9%	6.3%	8.2%	39.0%	7.5%	2.9%
<a href="#">Polk</a>	31,192	3.0%	6.6%	12.7%	7.2%	30.0%	11.9%	4.4%
<a href="#">Pennington</a>	13,992	2.3%	4.5%	11.1%	5.0%	31.4%	10.3%	2.0%
<a href="#">Clearwater</a>	8,524	1.1%	5.2%	15.6%	13.7%	36.0%	12.9%	4.8%
<a href="#">Hubbard</a>	21,334	1.4%	3.5%	9.7%	5.6%	28.9%	11.0%	4.4%
<a href="#">Red Lake</a>	3,935	0.9%	2.7%	7.3%	5.5%	35.8%	10.1%	2.0%

In addition to information garnered through reports and databases, the consortium strives to collaborate locally with agencies who are recruiting, resettling, retraining or employing ABE target populations. For example:

- The ABE Coordinator serves as the Adult Literacy representative on the Local WorkForce Investment Board. In this capacity, she participates in sub-committees designed to seek out opportunities to help adults overcome employment barriers and seek out career pathways.
- Area employers routinely reach out to local ABE providers to maintain familiarity with locally available ABE programming for their employees, and instructors are often asked to meet with talent personnel from various agencies to maintain connections and learn about services in need for local employees, especially those for whom English is a second language.
- In the largest classroom community of East Grand Forks, staff participate in informational stakeholder meetings with area agencies working to resettle refugees in the greater Grand Forks area. These meetings include representatives from area schools, healthcare agencies, higher education, and city

government. These meetings provide providers with insight to plan for refugee resettlement. At a recent meeting, facilitators shared that 800 additional refugees are slated to arrive in North Dakota in 2024 to be resettled in the communities of Fargo, Bismarck, and Grand Forks. The number is nearly double the number who were resettled in 2023, and relevant to the NWSC ABE program, as many learners find their way across the border (a bridge over a river that divides Grand Forks and East Grand Forks) to participate in English language classes. Locally, 42 individuals from 12 households were resettled in the Grand Forks community in 2023, arriving from the countries of Venezuela, Syria, Pakistan, Columbia, El Salvador, and Guatemala. In 2024, the Grand Forks community is approved to resettle a total of 100 refugees, with at least 41 individuals coming from Venezuela, Guatemala, Columbia, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. While they are encouraged to reach out to the adult literacy program in Grand Forks, we anticipate many will find their way to the East Grand Forks classroom, as the other classroom reaches capacity and institutes a waiting list. All newly resettled refugees are required to enroll in English classes within 10 days of arrival, and the East Grand Forks ABE program is able to work with the Grand Forks ABE classroom to meet these requirements.

***Describe the ABE students typically served (including number, demographics and common goals).***

In the most recent Program Year (PY) that ended April 30, 2023, the Northwest Service Cooperative ABE program enrolled 429 adult learners who participated in programs for a total of 17,274.25 annual contact hours. Of those enrollees, 220 (or 51.3%) became participants in the program, staying for more than 12 hours of instruction. However, those participants generated 94.7% (or 16,356.25) of the annual contact hours!

Participant/Enrollee	# of Students	%	Hours	%
Participants	220	51.3%	16,356.25	94.7%
Students With Less than 12 Hours	209	48.7%	918.00	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>		<b>17,274.25</b>	

The largest number of students were between the ages of 25-44 and left high school somewhere between 9th and 12th grades.

Age Group	# of Students	%
16-18	73	17.0%
19-24	99	23.1%
25-44	194	45.2%
45-54	34	7.9%
55-59	9	2.1%
60+	20	4.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	

Ed Level	US Ed	Non US ed	#	%
Grades 1-5	0	15	15	3.5%
Grades 6-8	4	11	15	3.5%
Grades 9-12 (no diploma)	222	15	237	55.2%
No Schooling	0	10	10	2.3%
Postsecondary or professional degree	12	47	59	13.8%
Secondary School Diploma or alternate credential	28	25	53	12.4%
Secondary School Equivalent	5	1	6	1.4%
Some Postsecondary education (no degree)	24	10	34	7.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>429</b>	

The largest ethnicities served were White (43.1%) or Hispanic (21.4%), and the consortium served less male (39.4%) than female (59.9%) students.

Race Ethnicity	# of Students	%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	47	11.0%
Asian	30	7.0%
Black or African American	57	13.3%
Hispanic	92	21.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	0.5%
Two or More Races	16	3.7%
White	185	43.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	

Gender	# of Students	%
Female	257	59.9%
Male	169	39.4%
Other Gender Identity	3	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	

In a change from recent years, the majority of students, 72%, were enrolled in ABE programming, while 28% enrolled in ESL programming. It is interesting to note that while the minority of the enrolled students participated in ESL programs, they generated nearly half, 47%, of the consortium's annual contact hours!

Pre Test EFL		# of Distinct Students	Hours
⊞ ABE Level 1		11	812.50
⊞ ABE Level 2		30	1,499.00
⊞ ABE Level 3		79	2,729.75
⊞ ABE Level 4		99	3,170.75
⊞ ABE Level 5		27	569.00
⊞ ABE Level 6		26	388.75
⊞ ESL Level 1		12	1,027.00
⊞ ESL Level 2		11	793.00
⊞ ESL Level 3		23	2,229.75
⊞ ESL Level 4		19	1,501.75
⊞ ESL Level 5		20	911.00
⊞ ESL Level 6		20	1,545.75
<b>Subt Total</b>		<b>377</b>	<b>17,178.00</b>

Students came from a wide range of backgrounds, including 42 different countries, and spoke 23 different languages! Populations of refugee students have been resettled into various communities throughout the consortium, including a large number of Somali learners who have been resettled in the East Grand Forks area by Lutheran Social Services, as well as populations of immigrant students who have moved to the area for employment, including many Laotians who have settled in the Warroad area to work for Marvin Windows and Doors, an area manufacturing employer, and Mexicans who work in area meat processing facilities, beekeeping and nursery businesses, and manufacturing facilities. The following graphics depict countries of origin and languages spoken by NWSC ABE enrolled learners in PY23.

Country Of Origin (Top 20 Displayed)	# of Students	%
United States	270	62.9%
Somalia	22	5.1%
Mexico	22	5.1%
Ethiopia	9	2.1%
China	9	2.1%
Ukraine	7	1.6%
Colombia	7	1.6%
Vietnam	6	1.4%
Honduras	6	1.4%
Venezuela	6	1.4%
Laos	6	1.4%
Iraq	5	1.2%
Thailand	4	0.9%
Brazil	4	0.9%
Liberia	4	0.9%
Cameroon	3	0.7%
Unreported	3	0.7%
Kenya	3	0.7%
Cuba	3	0.7%
Moldova	2	0.5%
Nicaragua	2	0.5%
Iran	2	0.5%
India	2	0.5%
Panama	2	0.5%
Canada	2	0.5%
Philippines	2	0.5%
<b>Total Number of Countries: 42</b>	<b>429</b>	

Primary Language (Top 20 Displayed)	# of Students	%
English	280	65.3%
Spanish	51	11.9%
Somali	29	6.8%
Arabic	8	1.9%
Chinese-Mandarin	8	1.9%
Ukrainian	7	1.6%
Vietnamese	6	1.4%
Lao	5	1.2%
Russian	5	1.2%
Unreported	5	1.2%
Oromo	4	0.9%
Portuguese	4	0.9%
Thai	4	0.9%
French	3	0.7%
Hindi	2	0.5%
Farsi	1	0.2%
Ladino	1	0.2%
Lingala	1	0.2%
Other	1	0.2%
Salishan	1	0.2%
Swahili	1	0.2%
Tagalog	1	0.2%
Yoruba	1	0.2%
<b>Total Number of Languages: 23</b>	<b>429</b>	

**Describe the current number and roles of staff, indicating which positions are full-time and part-time.**

(For the most current list of on-site ABE Program Staff, visit <https://www.northwestabe.org/abe-staff>)

Northwest Service Cooperative ABE currently employs individuals in a variety of roles to provide direct instruction, navigation and support, and administration of the program. As the consortium has grown and the expectations placed upon adult education programs has increased, a model of “shared responsibility” has emerged, in which staff may take on more specialized roles or responsibilities to provide better support for both staff and students. For example, one instructor may travel to three communities to offer ABE classes and expand the service area, another teacher with a strong math background may teach all online math courses, a specialist will monitor and support the use of all distance learning platforms, and a technology coordinator will oversee mobile device management of an ever expanding cadre of technology devices, etc... This “divide and conquer” strategy of sharing responsibilities by breaking down a complex task into smaller tasks handled by various staff members has helped the staff feel better supported and able to serve their students (and colleagues) while focusing on their areas of expertise and strength. It has also allowed the consortium reach to expand to areas where access to local ABE classes has been limited or non-existent.

Staffing for the 2023-24 NRS year (7/1/23 - 6/30/24) is outlined in the following chart:

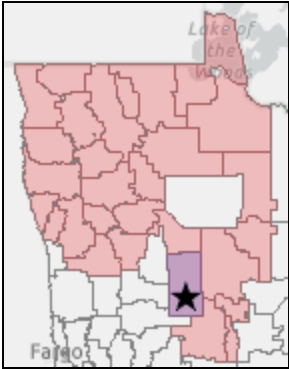
Staff Type	Title	Role	Part-Time	Full-Time
Administrative	ABE Coordinator	Coordinates ABE programming, supervision, budgeting and reporting for all sites throughout the consortium.	0	1
Administrative	ABE Data Specialist	Supports management of the Statewide Information Database (SiD) for all sites.	1	0
Administrative	ABE Technology Coordinator	Oversees the development and implementation of the consortium technology plan.	1	0
Counselor	ABE Specialist	Provides online intake and assessment of new students, serves as the Distance Learning Coordinator and Adult Diploma advisor for the consortium.	1	0
Teacher	ABE Instructor	Provides on-site, virtual/online, and distance learning instruction to ABE enrolled learners.	5	5




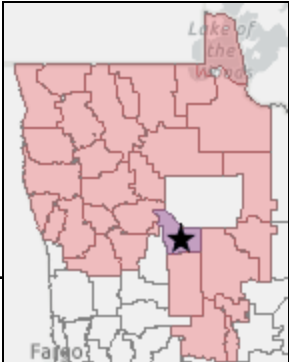
***Provide a brief overview of ABE Program Sites across the consortium.***

(For the most current list of on-site ABE Program Sites, visit <https://www.northwestabe.org/locations>)

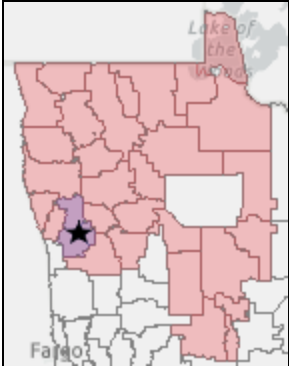
The following provides an overview of ABE Program Sites for the 2023-24 NRS year (7/1/23-6/30/24). All sites offer instruction at all levels of ESL and ABE, in addition to Distance Learning and online learning to offer extended class hours and opportunities to their students. All sites offer GED prep. Additional locally offered programs are listed on the chart by site:

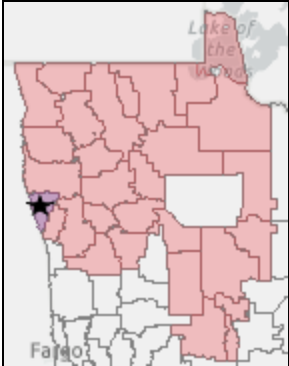
<b>Location</b>	Bagley ALP East Classroom 204 Park Ave NW, Bagley, MN 56621	<b>Bagley ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 P/T instructor travels between Bagley, Clearbrook-Gonvick and Oklee	
<b>Students</b>	15-25 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Mondays, 9 AM to Noon and Thursdays, 12:30 - 2:30 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	Primarily serves ABE level learners	

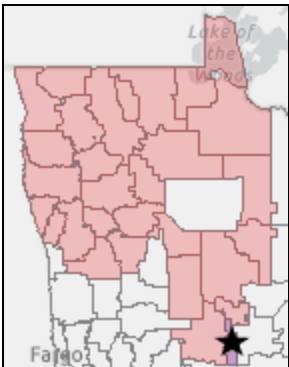
<b>Location</b>	Northwest Technical College, Room 220 905 Grant Avenue SE, Bemidji MN 56601	<b>Bemidji ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 F/T instructor who teaches on-site and as the online Fast Track GED Reasoning Through Language Arts instructor, and is a certified instructor/proctor for ServSafe	
<b>Students</b>	75-100 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Monday through Thursday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	ServSafe, Citizenship & Standard Adult High School Diploma	

<b>Location</b>	Clear Waters Life Center 256 2nd Avenue, Clearbrook, MN 56634	<b>Clearbrook - Gonvick ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 P/T instructor who travels between classroom sites in Bagley, Clearbrook, Gonvick, and Oklee	
<b>Students</b>	20-25 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Tuesday from 6 to 8 PM, and Wednesday from 12 to 2 PM	

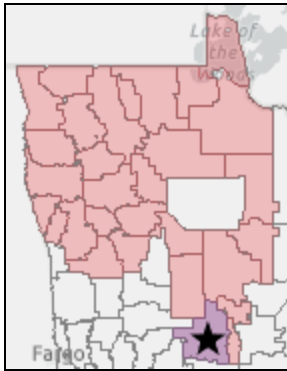
<b>Programs</b>	This program serves the literacy needs of residential students of the Mustard Seed Homes, a long-term transitional recovery center	
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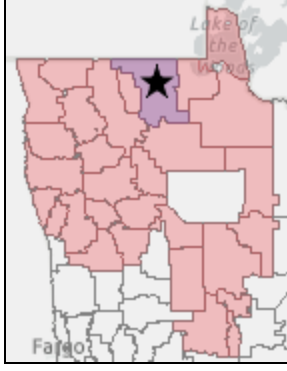
<b>Location</b>	Crookston CareerForce 2015 Sahlstrom Drive, Suite 5, Crookston MN 56716	<b>Crookston ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 P/T ABE/GED instructor who also teaches online GED Fast Track Social Studies, 1 P/T online GED Fast Track Math instructor, and 1 F/T ESL instructor who travels between classrooms in East Grand Forks and Crookston	
<b>Students</b>	35-50 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	ABE: Mondays and Wednesdays, 5 to 9 PM ESL: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 - 6:30 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	Standard Adult High School Diploma, Citizenship Prep	

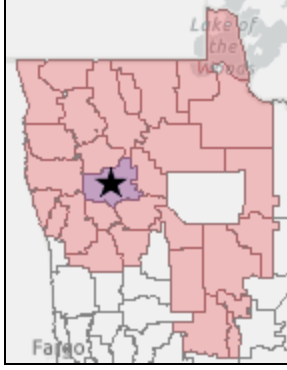
<b>Location</b>	Northland Community & Technical College 2022 Central Avenue NE, East Grand Forks MN 56721	<b>East Grand Forks</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	2 F/T Instructors, one instructor travels to Crookston twice a week for ESL classes	
<b>Students</b>	150 - 200 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Monday through Thursday, 9 AM to 4:30 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	Standard Adult High School Diploma, Citizenship Prep, Accuplacer Prep	


<b>Location</b>	Nevis Community Education Classroom 315 3rd Avenue, Nevis MN 56467	<b>Nevis ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 P/T instructor who travels between classroom sites in Nevis and Park Rapids and is a ServSafe certified instructor/proctor	
<b>Students</b>	3-5 adult learners/year *This is a newly established classroom.	
<b>Schedule</b>	Monday through Thursday, 9 AM to 4:30 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	Standard Adult High School Diploma, Citizenship Prep, ServSafe	

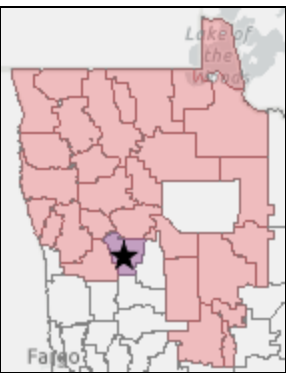


<b>Location</b>	Park Rapids High School, Room 708 401 Huntsinger Avenue, Park Rapids MN 56470	<b>Park Rapids ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 P/T instructor who travels between classroom sites in Nevis and Park Rapids and is a ServSafe certified instructor/proctor	
<b>Students</b>	35-50 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Monday through Wednesday, 3:30 to 7:30 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	Standard Adult High School Diploma, ServSafe, Citizenship Prep	

<b>Location</b>	Roseau City Center meeting room 121 Center Street East, Roseau MN 56751	<b>Roseau ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 F/T instructor who travels between classroom sites in Warroad and Roseau, teaches online Fast Track GED Social Studies, and is a ServSafe certified instructor/proctor	
<b>Students</b>	10-20 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Thursdays from 9:30 - 11:30 AM	
<b>Programs</b>	Standard Adult High School Diploma, ServSafe, Citizenship Prep	

<b>Location</b>	Northland Community & Technical College, Room 115 1101 State Highway 1, Thief River Falls MN 56701	<b>Thief River Falls ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 F/T instructor	
<b>Students</b>	50-75 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Monday through Thursday, 8 AM to 4:30 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	Standard Adult High School Diploma, ServSafe, Citizenship Prep, Accuplacer Prep as well as past integration into college developmental math courses	

<b>Location</b>	104 Roberts Avenue NE Warroad, MN 56763	<b>Warroad ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 F/T instructor who travels between classroom sites in Warroad and Roseau teaches online Fast Track GED Social Studies and is a ServSafe certified instructor/proctor	
<b>Students</b>	20 - 35 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Monday through Thursday, 11 AM to 5 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	Standard Adult High School Diploma, ServSafe, Citizenship Prep; Serves First Nation Peoples from Canada who cross into Warroad for services under the Jay Treaty	

<b>Location</b>	104 Roberts Avenue NE Warroad, MN 56763	<b>Win-E-Mac ABE</b> 
<b>Staffing</b>	1 P/T instructor	
<b>Students</b>	5 -15 adult learners/year	
<b>Schedule</b>	Monday through Wednesday, 4:30 to 6:30 PM	
<b>Programs</b>	Standard Adult High School Diploma, ServSafe, Citizenship Prep	