

Narrative Item 5.3 - Coordination and Collaboration with Other Programs

Describe how instructional programming is developed and delivered in coordination and collaboration with other educational, training, social services, and employment resources in the community. Partner entities could include K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and faith communities. (Refer to data collected about student barriers in item 2.4.)

There are many decisions that take place when developing programming, and ABE coordinates and collaborates with other agencies and resources in a multitude of ways:

Local School Districts

- Superintendents and other administrative personnel from each of the consortium's member school districts gather four times per year for administrative forums hosted by the NWSC agency. These meetings serve as an opportunity for all agency staff, including the ABE Coordinator, to meet with district administrators and discuss relevant issues, concerns, initiatives and updates, and to answer any questions the administrators might have.
- Aside from the administrative forums mentioned above, the consortium organizes no other large scale consortium meetings. Occasionally, the ABE Coordinator may set up individual meetings with a school district administrator, especially when there are changes to local programming, such as the opening or closing of an ABE classroom, the hiring of a new instructor, or issues related to district provided classroom space.
- Each year, the superintendents from the member school districts receive a summary and copy of the ABE annual report that is submitted to the state.
- Local School Districts provide access to free resources such as classroom space, printing and photocopy services, referrals, and promotion of the ABE program through their Community Education brochures.
- School districts often provide teacher licensure submission for their local ABE instructors. In addition, the agency has its own Continuing Education Committee, which is also able to provide these services for the ABE instructional staff.
- ABE has established partnerships with several local school districts over the years to provide Family Literacy services. The long-standing Family Literacy classroom in Thief River Falls has not reopened since COVID-19 forced its closure, and there are currently no immediate plans to do so.

Post-secondary Institutions

- As mentioned previously, ABE classrooms are co-located on all of the MN State campuses within the consortium's boundary lines. Classroom space is rented at a nominal cost negotiated with the colleges, and varies by college.
- ABE programs on campuses have established referral processes between ABE and the college faculty and administration, and regularly refer learners back and forth between programs.
- In the recent past, ABE instructors have been integrated into college classes on all three campuses, including Developmental Education math courses, Imagery Analysis programming, and other specially developed certificate programming which is typically funded through special grants. Currently the college is undergoing a review and revision of its Developmental Education programs and it is anticipated that ABE will play a role in the new plans established.
- ABE classrooms prepare adult learners to take/retake the Accuplacer assessment tests used for college placement. This is often done by referral.

- The ABE Coordinator meets regularly with the ABE Regional Transitions Coordinator, faculty and administration from the colleges, and other entities, such as WorkForce partners, employers, and so forth, to plan for programming that transitions learners from ABE to the college or workforce, often by building specialized “bridge” courses to align instruction and content to an industry recognized credential or job.

Local WorkForce Development Boards

The ABE Coordinator serves on the WSA 1 Board of Directors along with the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Northland Community and Technical College and a multitude of other representatives from organized labor, business and industry, including representatives from the region’s largest employers, Marvin Windows and Door of Warroad, and DigiKey of Thief River Falls.

The ABE Coordinator also serves on the Regional Workforce Alliance team, consisting of representatives from both WSA 1 and 2. This allows for the sharing of information and development of connections and resources which help drive the design and implementation of local programming.

One Stop Centers

- There are three comprehensive One Stop (CareerForce) locations in the entire consortium service area, including one in Thief River Falls and two in Bemidji. There are a number of DEED locations spread throughout the region which serve in much the same capacity, however. Staff at the CareerForce and DEED offices are very familiar with ABE services in their local areas, and the two entities regularly make referrals to one another for client / student services. As mentioned elsewhere in this document, there are ongoing conversations taking place that allow for the sharing of information about barriers to participation, and this information is used to re-design programming that better serves the needs of our collective clientele.

Other

- ABE has long established relationships with many community based organizations, non-profit, and social service agencies in the communities it serves. This includes refugee support organizations, homeless shelters, mental health facilities, halfway houses and residential treatment centers, local businesses, housing agencies, and others too numerous to mention. This collaboration ranges from referrals between agencies, to presentations at local events, to serving on committees. By better understanding the partner systems and resources in the consortium’s service area, we find we are able to easily pick up the phone and connect with the right people who can best help us identify gaps in service and design robust programming to meet those gaps.
- The consortium is currently in discussions with the Office of Refugee Services, responsible for refugee resettlement in North Dakota, to name the East Grand Forks ABE classroom location as the education provider on record for English language services for refugees resettled in the greater Grand Forks area. This designation is a nod to the strength of the program and its ability to deliver services for New American learners in the larger Grand Forks community.