

# Guide for MN Adult Basic Education Representatives to Local Workforce Development Boards

*This is intended to be a document that is co-created over time, to serve you as reps to the LWDBs. Much of the information and insight will come from you. Some we can gather and share out on your behalf.*

*See the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) Orientation Guide (<http://mwca-mn.org/Orientation%20Guide.pdf>) for an overview of the public workforce system and workforce development boards. Quotes below are from this guide (which unfortunately does not have page #'s – sorry!).*

## 1. How ABE fits in the work of LWDBs

Here are some of the ways that ABE clearly needs to be at the table at the LWDB, based on information from the LWDB orientation guide:

- a. The LWDB is charged to “better align workforce resources...; direct resources in a way that is most responsive to the needs of local employers and jobseekers....; [and] align and improve employment, training and education programs to promote economic growth.”
- b. LWDBs must work to “develop and implement activities such as incumbent worker training programs, industry partnerships, on-the-job training programs and career pathway programs.”
- c. “WIOA strives to strengthen education and workforce services for individuals with significant barriers to employment...”
- d. According to Anne Kilzer, MN Workforce Council Association, local and regional workforce development plans are to focus on
  - i. Industry led sector partnerships – with in-demand occupations and pathways to family sustaining wages.
  - ii. Career Pathway Models - focused on the selected industry and occupations in demand.
  - iii. Employment Equity – addressing populations not benefiting from the economic recovery.
  - iv. Technology – program data integration and better access to services
- e.

- f. It is essential that ABE be an active, recognized partner and take a role in sector partnerships, career pathways, employment equity and integrated data systems. We can and should take leadership in those areas where we have particular expertise and capacity -- in literacy, transitions and digital literacy skill development.
- g. (The LWDB governance functions are broad, so there will at times be topics of discussion that do not pertain to ABE.)

## **2. Roles and responsibilities of the ABE rep to the LWDB**

- a. It is the role and responsibility of the ABE rep to the LWDB to ensure that ABE is recognized and becomes part of the leadership and decision-making on the LWDB. ABE should be an integral part in career pathway program innovation and in the broader alignment of employment, education and training programs.
- b. It is your responsibility to represent all ABE consortia located in the LWDA.
- c. Each consortium fiscal agent represented within the LWDA signs the MOU. The ABE representative may help coordinate getting these signatures for the WDB.
- d. Provide input and give feedback in the development of the local and regional workforce development plan.
- e. You will need to work collaboratively with other ABE managers in your LWDA, along with the WDB director, to decide who the ABE rep will be, or to create a process for determining who will serve as the ABE rep.
- f. You should be aware of the RFP process for your local one-stop operator, and you will need to inform the other ABE partners in your LWDA about it as well. Background: One-Stop Centers must have a one-stop operator. One-stop operators may be single entities or a consortium of entities. If the consortium of entities includes one-stop partners, it must include three or more one-stop partners. Adult Basic Education can be one of the partners in a consortium of entities. One-stop operators must be selected through a competitive RFP process at least once every four years.

## **3. Strategies for effectively representing all ABE consortia in your locality on the LWDB**

- a. Create an email distribution list of all ABE managers within the area covered by your LWDB.

- b. If/when you get LWDB meeting agendas in advance, forward the agenda to ABE colleagues in your LWDA. Request input on any items of relevance to ABE.
- c. Also share minutes after meetings, as well as any other pertinent information, labor market info, etc.
- d. Set up regular (e.g., quarterly, semi-annual) times to meet with all ABE managers in your LWDA to confer on matters related to the LWDB. You can do this remotely by phone, Google Meet or other online tool.
- e. Invite ABE colleagues to meetings with agenda items of relevance.
- f. Invite and advocate for ABE colleagues to serve on LWDB subcommittees - e.g., Operations Committee, Youth Council. This ensures that ABE is well represented across the LWDB.

#### **4. Roles ABE reps take on their LWDBs**

Feel free to contact those listed below about their roles, how they got them, etc.

- a. Patty Fleege (WDA-4 City of Duluth) serves on the Executive Committee, Career Pathways Committee (health care), Youth/Education Committee (experiential learning) and regional leadership team.
- b. Karen Wolters (WDA-7 South Central) chairs the Career Pathways Committee. She invites other ABE managers and staff to join committees and ensures that ABE is represented as necessary on the sub committees of the WDB: Executive Committee, Operations Committee, the Workforce Development Committee, the Youth Council, Career Pathways Committee, and Regional Leadership Team. Karen also reviews RFPs for services in the area; works with the WDB on joint staff trainings; and keeps the Workforce Council website updated with ABE information.
- c. Pamela Moriarity (WDA-5 Central Minnesota) serves on the Community and Government Relations (CGR) committee. She also serves on a One Stop Operator Committee (charged with defining the roles and duties of the OSO and making sure WIOA rules/guidelines are being followed) and on a health care task force (a spin-off committee of the CGR). She is given time each month on the agenda to give a “partner report” - a time she can share information about ABE (see #5 below for content ideas).
- d. Pat Adams (WDA-12 Anoka County) serves on the Executive Committee. She also chairs the county’s youth standing committee, which she can do because she is on the LWDB.
- e. Eric Lind (WDA-14 Dakota-Scott Counties) serves on the Business Services and One Stop Operations subcommittees.

## 5. Information to share with LWDBs about ABE

- a. Basics - what ABE is, who ABE serves, programs offered, etc.
- b. Distribute the ABE Impact Report, highlight a few things in the report, then show how people can access further information about ABE on the MDE website.
- c. Explain the options for adults in Minnesota to complete a secondary credential.
- d. Share student success stories.
- e. Invite ABE managers or regional transitions coordinators (RTCs) in your LWDA to attend a board meeting and present about their local programs

## 6. Examples of LWDBs convening stakeholders to address workforce needs

- a. WDA-5 Central Minnesota (Pam Moriarity) - "For 2 years, the LWDB's Community and Government Relations (CGR) committee focused on the health care crisis in our area and how Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS), WIOA partners and others in our region could work together to address those issues. We put together several Health Care Sector Summits that brought together partners, employers, and community members to increase awareness about this crisis and to begin work on solutions. A task force was put together to continue this work so that the CGR committee could now focus on manufacturing. Manufacturing is another sector with not enough people skilled and trained to fill positions."
- b. WDA-7 South Central (Karen Wolters) - "We are currently planning a *Power of Different* opportunity for employers where we bring businesses together to share strategies they are using to diversify and fill their workforce needs. Jessica Miller, the DEED Business Strategy Consultant is organizing with many of us from the WDB assisting in the effort. ABE is critical to this conversation as we recommended which businesses are 'refugee and immigrant friendly' and they will be serving on the panel at the event."
- c. WDA-7 South Central (Karen Wolters) - "Our LWDB Adult Career Pathways Committee is hosting an *Adult Career Pathways Partnership Networking Day* for staff from multiple WIOA partner organizations - ABE, the community and tech college, workforce and others." Plenary session will provide an overview of career pathways, and multiple break-outs will allow the organizations to tell what they do.
- d. WDA-7 South Central (Karen Wolters) - "We are holding multiple focus groups with both students in our ACP programming and with employers, conducted by WDB members. The employer focus group will engage the

Southern MN Area Human Resources Association to get feedback on what they see as critical pieces of On-Ramp and Bridge programming.”

## **7. Models of strong LWDBs**

- a. The LWDB leadership “must develop a platform in which all members actively participate and collaborate closely with the required and other partners of the workforce development system, including public and private organizations.” We know that this is not the modus operandi of all LWDBs. But strong models exist in Minnesota. If you are struggling with a weak LWDB (e.g., “My board doesn’t engage members in any meaningful way – we approve the agenda, a few questions are posed, and we vote”), you may want to find ways to help your board leadership learn from a strong program. Share a referral to one of the LWDB leaders below.
- b. WDB for WDA-7 South Central is led by Diane Halvorson, the Executive Director of the South Central Workforce Council. Karen Wolters is the ABE rep to this board. The LWDB has several committees to carry out the work. At monthly meetings, on an annual cycle, each WIOA partner organization is invited to present about what they do, who they serve, programs offered, etc.
- c. WDB for WDA-4 City of Duluth was led by Paula Reed, Manager of Workforce Development in Duluth; Carol Turner is currently serving as interim. Patty Fleege is the ABE rep to this board.

## **8. Ways to impact how your LWDB does business**

- a. Request a meeting with the chair of the LWDB. Build a relationship so you feel like you can communicate with each other about LWDB business.
- b. Find out how items can be added to the agenda. Request / advocate for agenda items to discuss things you think are especially important.
- c. Refer your chair to one of the strong WDBs listed above, encouraging him/her to explore ways to effectively engage the players around the table beyond just the required meetings.
- d. Suggest creating a career pathways committee under the umbrella of the LWDB and offer to serve on that committee.
- e. If your LWDB has guest speakers, ask to be on the agenda to talk about ABE and promote the field as a whole at least once per term.
- f. Contact Anne Kilzer at MWCA as another helpful resource.

## **9. Build relationships with other members of your LWDB**

- a. Regardless of how well your LWDB functions, you can use your membership on the board to develop relationships with other board members with whom ABE may be able to collaborate.
- b. Are there employers from a sector that clearly needs a career pathway program that includes ABE? Talk to that employer at the end of a meeting and set a time to talk about ABE, career pathways and ways you could partner to meet their employment needs. This might in turn create an ally on your board to bring career pathway and related efforts to the agenda.
- c. Is there an especially thoughtful person from Title I on the board? Invite them to your ABE site for a 30-minute tour-and-talk to orient them to your learners and discuss ways to connect across Title I and Title II “silos.”
- d. Look for other opportunities

## **10. Tools to help those on the LWDB understand the role ABE can play in preparing the local labor force**

- a. The [\*Minnesota ABE Impact Report\*](#) is a useful 12-page nicely designed document with these sections (could use portions or the whole):
  - i. Overview of MN ABE and our participants
  - ii. Increasing employment and earnings
  - iii. Preparation for higher education, training and credentialing
  - iv. Addressing poverty
  - v. Serving new Americans
  - vi. Digital literacy
- b. A 7-minute narrated [\*slide presentation on career pathways\*](#) and an accompanying 2-page guide includes the WIOA definition of career pathways, useful graphics and a brief overview of career pathways in Minnesota

## **11. Critical questions to be addressed:**

- a. How do we move people from “the way it has always been done” to the new WIOA shared measurables and mandate – that we work together to create career pathways and collaboration among systems to best benefit participants (students/clients)?
- b. How do we describe our ABE/ELL populations and make a case for serving them across WIOA partners, when often they want to focus on populations with education and job experience (e.g., dislocated workers – easier to serve)?
- c. How do I articulate very clear, concrete ways that ABE can and will support WIOA mandates?

- d. How do I ensure that I am included in the planning stage of grant projects, rather than just asked for a letter of support with no input?

## **12. Additional tools requested**

- a. Flow charts or structure diagrams to help understand the complex set of players represented on the LWDB
- b. Easy-to-understand description of each of the Titles, what each does/can do
- c. Examples of collaboration among titles that is working, roles each title is taking
- d. MN ABE PowerPoint presentation that reps could present to LWDBs about the role ABE plays throughout the state