

Impact

ABE in Minnesota



Literacy Needs in Minnesota

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is a cost effective “investment program.” By providing Minnesotans with basic academic skills and high school equivalency, ABE Programs help participants improve their economic condition and become contributors to the economy and to their families and communities. This report will explain that the need for basic skills education in Minnesota is growing. Although ABE programs serve approximately 80,000 learners annually, programs are struggling to keep pace with:

- The lack of basic skills among employees.
- The growing numbers of Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) clients with low literacy skills.
- Increasing numbers of young adults who must take fee-based remedial college courses.
- Significant numbers of high school drop-outs.
- Increasing numbers of parents with low literacy skills that directly affect their children’s academic performance.
- An increasing English as a Second Language (ESL) population.
- The growing numbers of incarcerated individuals, most of whom lack basic literacy skills.
- The number of adults who lack basic health care, as well as information on and access to the health care system.

“Overall, one’s quality of life is impacted by their employment. By providing *free* basic skills and English language instruction, ABE goes a long way to help people improve their life and the kind of life their children will experience.”

–Minnesota State Representative Barb Sykora

Contents

Overview

2

Overview of ABE Programs & Services

3

ABE Program Structure & Assessment

Impact

4-5

Employment & Earnings

6-7

Poverty & Welfare

8-9

Transition to Higher Education & Training

10-11

Children & Families

12-15

New Americans

16-17

Corrections

18

Health

Summary

19

Summary of ABE Impact

20

Service Providers & Acronyms

Current Year Statistics

Back Folder

Participation Client & Statistics

Fiscal Resources

Challenges for the Future

Overview

ABE in Minnesota

ABE Programs

ABE participants are 16 or older, not enrolled in secondary school, and functioning below the 12th grade level in any of the basic academic areas: reading, math, writing, and communication English.

Programs include:

GED — General Educational Development Diploma

Preparation for and examination of the GED, the national high school equivalency program that includes a set of 5 tests: Math, Reading, Writing, Social Studies, and Science.

Adult Diploma

Programs for eligible adults leading to a high school diploma from a sponsoring Minnesota school district.

ESL — English as a Second Language

Instruction to those whose native language is not English. Sometimes referred to as English Language Learning (ELL). ESL classes, from pre-literacy level to the advanced level, help learners develop speaking, listening, reading, writing, and grammar skills to communicate effectively in English within their workplaces, communities, and families.

Workforce Preparation

Program that builds literacy skills related to learners' need to obtain, retain, or improve their employment. *Workforce Education* provides basic academic and literacy skills to learners who are already employed by a specific business, industry, or company — typically provided at the learner's place of employment. *Employment Readiness* programs include general employability skills and instruction in soft skills that are essential in the workplace.

Family Literacy

Program for adults and their children. Features instruction for adults in literacy, instruction in parenting, and educational/developmental services for children. ABE partners with Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Even Start, Head Start, and other agencies to provide family literacy services.

Basic Skills Enhancement

For learners who need goal-specific elementary- or secondary-level basic skills such as work-related math, functional literacy (e.g. banking skills), reading, or writing assistance.

Citizenship / Civics Education

Programs which prepare Minnesota non-citizens for U.S. citizenship. Includes application preparation and English language instruction. Civics Education includes content related to general civics knowledge and participation in a democratic society.

Mission

The mission of Adult Basic Education in Minnesota is to provide adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve their literacy skills necessary to be self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members, and citizens.

ABE Impact

Through these ABE programs, a wide variety of individual learner outcomes are addressed. Adult Basic Education programs help learners to:

- Attain employment and/or better their current employment.
- Achieve high school equivalency (GED or Adult High School Diploma).
- Attain skills necessary to enter post-secondary education and training.
- Exit public welfare and become self-sufficient.
- Learn to speak, read, and write the English language.
- Master basic academic skills to help their children succeed in school.
- Become U.S. citizens and participate in a democratic society.
- Gain self-esteem, personal confidence, and a sense of personal and civic responsibility.

Overview

ABE in Minnesota

Program Structure, Instructional Delivery & Collaboration

Census information reveals a need for Adult Basic Education services in all Minnesota cities and counties. Therefore, a delivery system of ABE providers has been established for statewide access to literacy services:

52 ABE Consortia

Adult Basic Education is delivered statewide at over 500 sites located in public schools, workforce centers, community/technical colleges, prisons/jails, libraries, learning centers, tribal centers, and non-profit organizations. Programs have voluntarily formed ABE “consortia” (52 administrative units throughout the state) to maximize efficiency and to share resources.

1,200 ABE Teachers

Public school ABE programs are required to use K-12 licensed teachers. About 300 teachers hold the ABE teaching license in addition to their K-12 license. Many other non-school district providers (Community-Based Organizations and prisons) use licensed teachers if they are available. Most teachers are part-time.

3,600 Trained Volunteers

In addition to professional teachers, over 3,600 trained volunteer literacy tutors assist in ABE programs annually. Volunteers assist licensed teachers in the classroom as well as provide one-to-one tutorial help.

Collaboration and Partnerships

ABE is one of the most collaborative educational programs. Partnerships are developed to share resources and to refer clients. Typical collaborations include ABE relationships with Workforce Centers, school districts, community and technical colleges, welfare providers, correctional institutions, libraries, employers, community- and faith-based organizations, and the judicial system.



Assessment & Learner Progress

The system that Minnesota ABE uses for measuring and reporting learner success is rigorous. Only pre- and post-standardized test results may be used to determine learner basic skill acquisition.

Other measures of learner economic gain, diploma attainment, and movement from ABE into post-secondary education are equally stringent and must follow specific standards for reporting.

Over the past four years Minnesota’s ABE system has continuously improved on these “core indicators,” and the state has met its performance goals negotiated with the federal ABE office. Local program results are monitored closely by the state ABE office and all programs are subject to a “continuous improvement” model prescribed by state and federal data collection standards.



Impact

The Minnesota Economy Employment & Earnings

Reality

Educational attainment, especially attainment of an educational credential, is one of the most important influences on economic well-being. Prospects for individuals with less than a high school diploma are not good.

- One study, *Findings from Education and the Economy: An Indicators Report*, found that workers with the lowest literacy levels (NALS Level 1) in quantitative literacy have an unemployment rate of nearly 20%. Those at NALS Level 2 (of 5) have 12% unemployment.

Minnesota private and public sector companies are facing the problem of a workforce severely lacking workplace skills. The report *Turning Skills Into Profit – Economic Benefits of Workplace Education Programs* found that:

- More than 40% of the US workforce and more than 50% of high school graduates do not have the basic skills to do their jobs.

- Even college graduates suffer from the skills gap: 16% have inadequate basic skills.

U.S. businesses demand workers with adequate literacy levels.

- The U.S. Department of Labor states that the average worker spends two hours of every workday reading and one hour writing. In addition, 80% of workers use some type of math on their job every day.
- The limited literacy skills of employees cost business and taxpayers \$20 billion annually in lost wages, profits and productivity.

According to *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings*, over the past 25 years, earning differences have grown among workers with different levels of educational attainment. The trend has shown that the earning gap has widened between those who have a college degree and those who have not graduated from high school.

Impact Life

Employment & Earnings



Florence Moat has been in the GED program for two years. This is something she has always wanted to do since she was unable to finish high school when she was younger. The last grade she completed was 11th grade.

After working for 16 years she was laid off. She was 1 of 1,000 people that were affected by the three-plant closure in Southwest Minnesota.

Through the Marshall Workforce Center, she was referred to ABE. She started reading comprehension classes to better prepare for GED studies. Since then she has increased her reading skills along with her writing skills.

To date, Florence has completed and passed three of the official GED tests. She recently completed the fourth test and is anxiously awaiting the results.

Impact

Job Attainment and Job Retention

Increasing literacy skills through ABE programs, such as GED, ESL and workplace literacy, lead adults to job attainment and job retention. Participation in a Minnesota ABE program is a good tactic for finding and retaining employment for a low-literate, unemployed adult. Minnesota ABE programs not only focus on the specific academic skills needed for employment success, but also incorporate many job attainment and retention skills into the academic curriculum that lead to better and more sustained employment.

- According to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), in the 2004 program year almost half of those Minnesota ABE students who listed “Entered Employment” as a goal, met that goal within the year.
- In the 2004 program year MDE reported that two-thirds of those ABE students who listed “Retained Employment” as a goal, met that goal within the year.
- The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) figures indicate that a high school diploma or a GED nearly doubles the probability of working and staying employed.

Higher Earnings

Increased literacy skills delivered through ABE lead to higher earnings and economic self-sufficiency for the learner. Improved speaking, math, reading, and writing skills are strongly connected to earning power.

- A national study by the Adult Education Act, found that the salary and earnings gap between the lowest literacy level (NALS Level 1) which is an average wage is \$240/ week and the highest level (NALS Level 5) which is an average wage is \$650 per week or 2.5 times higher.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development states that “the higher the education, the higher the pay.” This is true for Minnesota Adult Basic Education graduates who obtain a GED or adult diploma.

- A Minnesota resident with no high school diploma can expect to earn \$16,640 annually. Once that resident obtains their GED or high school diploma, their annual earnings can increase 25% to \$20,800 annually.
- In the last three years, MN ABE programs issued 22,773 GED and adult high school diplomas. Applying the wage differential reported above, these GED graduates will earn over \$91 million more in taxable income in 2004 than if they remained without a diploma.

More Productive Workforce

Through partnerships with businesses, ABE provides training, such as workplace literacy, towards a more productive workforce. Minnesota ABE Programs partner with area businesses to provide workplace education programs that improve the language and academic skills of employed adults.

According to the *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*, the impact of workplace education programs can be measured in a number of ways:

- **From the individual’s perspective:** Continued employment, skill building, wage growth, and promotion.
- **From the company’s perspective:** Individual productivity/job performance, teamwork, retention/reduced turnover, attitudes/commitment/loyalty, and reduced recruitment costs via internal promotions.
- **From society’s perspective:** Reduced welfare and unemployment costs if the program keeps people employed who otherwise might lose their jobs and possibly greater tax payments and lower health care costs that may occur because of increased skills.



Partners Employment & Earnings

In October, 2003, a customized English Language Learning project in a manufacturing environment began at St. Jude Medical, Daig Division. This initiative was specifically designed to improve the communication and performance of St. Jude’s increasingly diverse 1,200 employees, of which over 50% are immigrants or refugees from 26 countries.

The project was driven by St. Jude Medical in collaboration with Dakota County Technical College, and a team of language development facilitators from four ESL programs in the Twin Cities: Robbinsdale, Adult Options, South St. Paul, and St. Paul.

Each 12-week session involves approximately 120 production staff and is conducted on site to make it cost effective and easily accessible for participants. Providers assess, develop, deliver and evaluate English language training which addresses the communication needs required for productive employees. In addition, supervisory staff also receives training focusing on the multicultural aspects and challenges inherent in a diverse workplace. Supervisors are actively involved in feedback and vocabulary learning activities on the production floor.



Impact Poverty & Welfare

Reality

In 2001, 81% of the adult caseload on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the state's welfare program, was comprised of single parents, the majority of whom were women with very low educational skills and preschool children at home. About half of the adult recipients on MFIP have never finished high school and about 1/6 of the caseload are from new immigrant communities, mostly Hmong and Somali refugees. MFIP recipients who have low-level educational skills face significant barriers to escaping poverty and achieving economic self-sufficiency.

- A study of low-income women called *Making Ends Meet: How Single-Mothers Survive Welfare* found that “almost half of all welfare reliant women had fewer than 12 years of education.”
- *U.S. Adult Literacy Programs: Making a Difference* stated 70% of adult welfare recipients function at the lowest level of literacy.

In 2003, 11% of adults enrolled in Minnesota ABE programs self-reported (probable undercount) that they received some form of public assistance.

Partnership Poverty & Welfare



In early 1997, a small group of forward-thinking agency representatives began to meet regularly to share information about implementing welfare reform in Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine Counties. Now called “Communities Investing in Families” (CIF), this task force has evolved from a small group to more than 150 agencies dedicated to helping families make the transition from welfare to work. Adult ABE is one of the CIF agencies that has played a significant role in more than 22 CIF initiatives.

The most recent initiative involved obtaining and refurbishing over 100 computers from major corporations. These computers are given to adults who have a plan for education and/or employment that this technology will help them accomplish. According to Martha Harding, CIF Director, “The ABE staff in our region don’t seem to see boundaries—for themselves, their students or with other agencies. That’s why it’s so easy to work with them to solve problems. Hundreds of families in east central Minnesota have been positively impacted by the initiatives of this partnership!”

Impact

Economic Self-Sufficiency

Minnesota ABE programs help improve the educational skills of adults in poverty and on public assistance. Improving literacy and overall educational skills is one of the most effective strategies for assisting families in poverty to become economically self-sufficient and exit public welfare.

When adults on welfare improve their basic education skills, they tend to improve their earnings situation.

- Over the last three years, MFIP clients who enrolled in a literacy activity and who exited the MFIP system with employment, earned an average wage of \$8.85 per hour, which is \$3.70 per hour above the minimum wage in Minnesota.
- *Improving Basic Skills: The Effects of Adult Education in Welfare-to-Work Programs*, a study of welfare recipients without high school diplomas, found that when recipients increase their basic skills, they tend to make substantial improvements in employment, earnings, and self-sufficiency.
- In “*Will Wages Grow with Experience for Welfare Mothers?*” a study of mothers receiving welfare, each additional year of schooling led to an approximated 7% wage increase.
- In *Literacy in the Labor Force*, Andrew Sum found that literacy skills were strongly related to weekly and annual earnings overall, and the literacy proficiencies of the employed were positively and strongly associated with their weekly and annual earnings.

As adults on public assistance enter and stay with literacy programs, their need for welfare tends to decline.

According to The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, since 2000 there have been 13,968 MFIP clients who have participated in literacy or educational activities throughout Minnesota.

- Of this total, 9,038 (65%) clients have satisfactorily completed their educational goals, which are identified locally between MFIP counselors and the individual clients.
- Of this total 3,347 (25%) of the MFIP clients with educational goals were identified as employed and no longer received any public assistance.



Economic Development & Partnerships

ABE programs are working in close partnership with public and private organizations across the state to accomplish broad state goals of economic development. For example, ABE programs actively collaborate with faith-based organizations and other non-profit agencies to provide literacy programs to help community members achieve economic self-sufficiency. Partnership agreements vary from area to area. In some places actual dollars are given to provide services, in other instances space, transportation, volunteers, food and/or materials are provided by these agencies.

Minnesota Workforce Centers located throughout the state, collaborate with ABE programs to provide training and education opportunities in the areas of English as a Second Language instruction, work literacy, basic academic skills and high school equivalency programs such as the GED or Adult Diploma programs. These services are not only for MFIP clients but also for those community members who are unemployed or underemployed. These partnerships may include the exchange of funding, space, materials, or referrals.

Return on Investment

The annual cost for one adult on MFIP is \$4,392 and the average family on MFIP (one parent, two children) costs the state approximately \$7,500 in state fiscal year 2003. During 2003, 1092 MFIP clients participating in literacy activities exited the welfare rolls saving the state almost \$4.8 million on reduced MFIP benefits for these adults. When you account for their children, the potential state savings increases to more than \$8.1 million. These savings were achieved with just a \$546,000 investment in these 1092 learners, or an average of \$500 spent per adult enrollee in ABE services.



Impact

Transition to Higher Education & Training

Reality

According to Minnesota Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), a majority of entering students are not passing entrance tests:

- 85% are not ready for college level *mathematics*.
- 43% are not ready for college level *writing*.
- 24% are not ready to *read* at the college level.

These startling statistics reveal the lack of preparatory skills among this population of adults seeking post-secondary education and training. Nationally, 34% of immigrants lack high school credentials as compared to 8% of American-born. Only 40% of immigrants have any post-secondary training or education as compared to 59% of American-born.

According to the 2000 US Census, there are currently 381,345 Minnesotans 25 years and older with less than a High School diploma. More than a quarter of a million Minnesotans — 12% of the adult population — are eligible for ABE services.

MN FACT

Impact Life Transition to Education



Kimberly Mahoney from Granite Falls, Minnesota was referred to the Adult Basic Education Learning Center by her counselor while in treatment at Project Turnabout. At first, obtaining a GED was never a goal she dreamed would be possible for her, but with the coaxing and positive support from her teachers, within two months Kimberly left treatment with her GED in hand.

“The instructors really gave me the confidence I needed to believe in myself and my abilities. Getting my GED has opened so many doors for me that I never felt would be possible. My family is so proud of me and I can see the positive effect this has had on my children. They now want to study and do better for themselves as well.” Kimberly is now a full-time student attending Minnesota West Community & Technical College, studying for an LPN degree.

Impact

ABE Reduces Costs for Learners Entering Post-Secondary

ABE programs, such as GED and Adult Diploma, reduce the need for fee-based remedial classes at state colleges and universities by assisting adults in brushing up on their basic skills to pass the entrance and placement tests.

ABE programs help adults master the basic academic skills assessed by a college placement test. Minnesota ABE programs focus on math, writing, reading, study and communication/ language skills for both English as a Second Language speakers and native English speakers.

ABE Programs are a Stepping Stone

Minnesota ABE programs offer GED preparation and Adult High School Diploma courses in order to provide the necessary instruction to further an adult's educational career path. Participation in a Minnesota ABE program represents many adults' first educational success in a school setting. ABE programs are a stepping-stone for some adults to enter post-secondary education and training.

- ABE programs in Minnesota are key in encouraging students to prepare for, enroll and persist in post-secondary education. MDE reports that 26% of those ABE students that listed "Enter Post-secondary Education or Training" as their goal met that goal in 2004.
- National research shows that individuals with a GED are more likely to participate in post-secondary education and vocational training than are other dropouts. In the 2004 program year 5,890 persons obtained their GED or high school credential in Minnesota.
- NCSALL reports that non-traditional students attending post-secondary institutions usually have their GED or Adult Diploma rather than a traditional high school diploma. Many of the students are financially independent, attend school part-time and work full-time. Many have dependents other than their spouses and many are single parents. They also tend to be the first in their families to attend college.
- According to *The Outcomes and Impacts of Adult Literacy Education in the United States*, "In general, adult literacy education has a positive influence on participants' continued education." Experiencing success, adults learn to feel comfortable in a school setting and these adults gain the confidence to seek higher levels of education.

In 2004—one out of every 11 diplomas awarded in Minnesota was a GED.



Partnerships Transition to Higher Education

The long-standing partnership between Anoka Technical College and Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE) program prepares community residents to pursue post-secondary education and training opportunities.

"It is common for an older adult to need a little brushing up on reading, writing, or arithmetic skills after years of non-academic instruction or influence. Metro North ABE staff know and understand the skills that are necessary to succeed at Anoka Technical College," said Tim Skaja, Director of Student Support Services at Anoka Technical College.

"A big part of Adult Basic Education is assisting the student to acclimate to our college," said Skaja, "With the Adult Basic Education classroom located on campus, the students utilizing the services become familiar and comfortable with the educational environment and are more apt to continue their education."



Impact

Children & Families

Reality

Parents' education level is directly correlated with their children's performance in school. *Reading Literacy in the United States: Findings from the IEA Reading Literacy Study (US Department of Education)* reported on the significant relationship between parent involvement and the reading comprehension levels of children.

Findings include:

- Where parental involvement is low, children scored an average of 46 points below the national average in reading.
- Where parental involvement is high, children scored 28 points above the national average.

This 74 point gap reveals the need for educated and more literate parents.

U.S. Adult Literacy Programs: Making a Difference reports that children of parents who have less than a high school education tend to do poorest on reading tests when compared to other children

whose parents are high school graduates. These differences in test scores have held constant since 1971 and the same differences show up in the scores of third, eighth and 11th graders.

The National Center for Family Literacy reported that children whose parents are involved in their school not only have better grades, but also fewer behavioral problems and are more sociable. Parental involvement at school is related to household income and parental level of education. The study showed that 38% of the parents with less than a high school education attended a school event as compared to 59% of the parents with a high school diploma or GED.

A
B
E

I
M
P
A
C
T

R
E
P
O
R
T

Partnerships

Children & Families



The goal is to learn English and prepare for the GED. The barriers include single parenting of three children, little past formal education, financial worries, and transportation. The solution? The Family Learning program at Adult Options In Education in St. Louis Park.

This partnership of more than 10 years between the Early Childhood Learning program in the St. Louis Park School District and Adult Options In Education is not only helping learners achieve their goals, but giving them important parenting and family skills. Four components make up the Family Learning Program: English learning or GED preparation time, a Parent Education class, an Early Childhood Education class for the children, and Parent/Child together time.

"The Family Learning program has been a boon to our district," said Mary O'Brien, Manager of Youth and Family Services for St. Louis Park Schools. "Children enter the system of learning much earlier, while the parents not only gain English skills or prepare for their GED, but learn to be better parents. Educating the adult and the child as a family strengthens what is needed for families to become strong, self sufficient members of our community."

Impact

Parents' Literacy Skills Impact Child's Success In School

As the child's first teachers, parents who build their literacy skills through ABE services positively impact the child's readiness and success in school.

ABE services, such as Family Literacy programs, offer parents an opportunity to increase their literacy skills. These adult educational services assist them in improving their children's achievement in school.

ABE programs understand that addressing the literacy needs of parents has a direct and positive impact on the academic achievement of their children. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Education, "The single most significant predictor of children's literacy is their mother's literacy level."

The National Center for Family Literacy stated that the education level of mothers affects pre-school and school-aged children alike.

- According to *America's Kindergartens*, a higher a mother's education level, the more she will tend to read to her children.
- Children whose mothers complete high school earn higher scores on national achievement tests and perform better in school than those whose mothers did not graduate from high school.
- Children's performance in reading, mathematics, and general knowledge increases with the level of their mother's education.
- During 2002-2003, of the parents participating in Minnesota ABE Family Literacy programs, 2,235 increased involvement in their children's literacy activities by reading to their children, visiting the library and purchasing books or magazines.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the more the parents read, the more their children read. The more children read each day, the higher are their scores on standardized reading tests and the greater their success in school.

Parents as Advocates

Increased earnings resulting from increased literacy directly affect a mother's participation in their children's education. Parents who become more literate also become more effective advocates for their children in their schools.

- During 2002-2003, of the parents participating in Minnesota ABE Family Literacy programs, 1,659 achieved their goal of increased involvement in their children's education by helping more frequently with children's school work, increasing contact with children's teachers and becoming more involved in children's school activities.
- The report *All About Families* states that as household income and educational attainment increase, the percentage of students whose parents reported participation with children's schools by attending a school event also increases. An NCSALL study linked increased parent literacy and parent participation, and discovered that increased parental literacy led to 79% increase in PTA involvement.



Impact Life

Children & Families

Michelle Rivera is enrolled in South Suburban Adult Basic Education's Family Learning class located at Family Connections, South St. Paul, MN. Michelle is originally from California and has had the goal of becoming a GED graduate for many years.

She and her family now live in Inver Grove Heights, MN. This fall, while pregnant with her second child, Michelle took the GED test and became a graduate just a month before the baby's arrival.

"I am a GED graduate! I did this for myself — and for my mother. Now that I have my GED, I will be looking for a job and would like to begin saving for a down-payment on our own home... I am thankful for the support of my family and for the direction from my teachers."



Impact New Americans

Reality

Minnesota has become one of the major immigration destinations for our country's newest Americans. Between 1990 and 2000, the foreign-population in Minnesota grew 130%. Of the total foreign born in Minnesota, 55% entered the United States between 1990 and 2000. In 2002, 13,522 immigrants came to Minnesota from 160 different countries representing every continent except Antarctica. This dramatic influx of immigrants has had far reaching effects on Minnesota with visible changes in almost every community across the state.

According to the State Demographer's Office, Minnesota will continue to be a prime destination for new immigrants.

The state's immigrant population continued to increase despite the economic slowdown. The Somali population increased 55% between 2000 and 2004. The Hmong population was up 24% to 60,000 and the Latino population was up 18% to 175,000. The Hmong population does not include the estimated 5,000 new Hmong refugees that will be settling in Minnesota during the summer of 2004.

Immigrant Group	2000 Census Population	Minnesota Population Estimate (2004)
Latinos	143,382	175,000
Hmong	45,443	60,000
Somalis	11,164	25,000
Vietnamese	20,570	25,000
Russians	35,513	12,500
Laotians	11,516	13,000
Cambodians	6,533	7,500
Ethiopians	5,413	7,500

Source: Estimates of Selected Immigrant Populations in Minnesota: 2004, Minnesota State Demographer, June 2004.

New immigrants are more likely to be unemployed and those who gain employment are more than likely to be earning less than their native counterparts.

- Immigrants make up one in nine U.S. residents, one in seven U.S. workers and one in five low-wage workers.
- Almost half (46%) of all foreign-born workers are "limited English proficient" (LEP) according to data from the 2000 Census. These foreign-born residents with poor English skills face high unemployment and limited economic opportunities.

New Americans Partnerships



As social service agencies serving individuals in the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood of Minneapolis, both the Riverside Plaza Tenants' Association Resident Resource Center and the Pillsbury United Communities Brian Coyle Center had been competitors in the funding arena. Five years ago, they, along with the Minneapolis Public Schools Adult Basic Education Program, established the Cedar Riverside Adult Education Program to jointly address the needs of the neighborhood. Aspects of program planning, staffing and budgeting are done as a team.

"Each of the organizations brings unique areas of expertise to meet the needs of our students," said Coyle Center director, Rhonda Eastlund.

"As a result of working together and pooling our resources, we have provided ELL classes for nearly 1,700 adult immigrants and refugees in the last four years," said the joint program's coordinator, Pearl Savage.

Impact

Earning Potential Increases

ABE services enable New Americans to increase their English proficiency, helping them to increase their earning potential in the state's economy. Participation in ABE services helps new immigrants improve their opportunities for gainful employment.

- According to a 1995 national survey, conducted by the National Clearinghouse for ESL, 35% of select adult ESL learners indicated that their employability increased because of their ESL training.

Economic Contributions

As new Americans become proficient in learning English and in preparing for citizenship, their employment opportunities and earnings increase. As a result, new Americans are able to own and rent properties, buy groceries, clothes, shoes, and other essentials. There are important indirect benefits of job creation from immigrant business and consumer demand.

- In 2002, Greater Twin Cities United Way estimated that the buying power of ethnic minority populations in Hennepin County alone was \$1.8 million. These dollars ripple through the economy, creating jobs and revenue for both government and business.

The United Way report also states that the incomes and tax contributions of immigrants increase the longer they are in the United States. As immigrants learn the language and obtain skills needed to enter the job market, they can contribute to the U.S. economy by revitalizing blighted and depressed areas. The Twin Cities metro area and areas throughout Minnesota are experiencing this revitalization. From the economic revitalization of St. Paul's University Avenue and Minneapolis' Lake Street, to the emergence of ethnic markets and community centers in small cities in Greater Minnesota like Worthington and Pelican Rapids, Minnesota's New Americans are dramatically changing the fabric of the state's communities and neighborhoods.

ABE services enable
New Americans to increase their
English proficiency, helping them to
increase their earning potential in the
Minnesota economy.



Impact Life A New American

Bounlong Ounchith originally from Laos, has been a student at the ESL site in Warroad for several years.

When her two eldest boys reached college age she knew she would have to find work to supplement the family income. Her husband works at the local window factory. Although there were positions open in the factory, she couldn't apply because of a back injury.

When an opening came up at the Warroad Schools for a translator she applied and was hired. She has been in this position for three years and still attends the ESL program part-time.

When asked about her secret to success, Bounlong said, "I thank my teachers for helping me get my citizenship, my driver's license, and for teaching me English so I can work at the school."



Impact

New Americans: Children

Reality

Children of immigrants are the fastest growing segment of the United States population under the age of 18.

The number of children in Minnesota schools who do not speak English at home has risen sharply in recent years. While school enrollments have declined slightly in Minnesota in recent years, the number of children speaking languages other than English has continued to grow. School-aged non-English speakers in Minnesota tripled in nine years from 21,277 in 1994 to 73,620 in 2003—an increase of 52,343 students. In Minnesota, more babies were born to foreign born mothers in 2000 than to their native counterparts.

Adult ESL learners have more than doubled since 1998, from 15,381 to 38,560 in 2004. This growth has coincided with a similar dramatic growth in Minnesota public school Limited English Proficient (LEP) learners, that has almost doubled from 26,936 learners in 1998 to 59,333 learners in 2004. Many adult learners enrolled in Minnesota ESL programs are parents of children enrolled in the Minnesota public school system.

Impact

Parental Involvement in Education

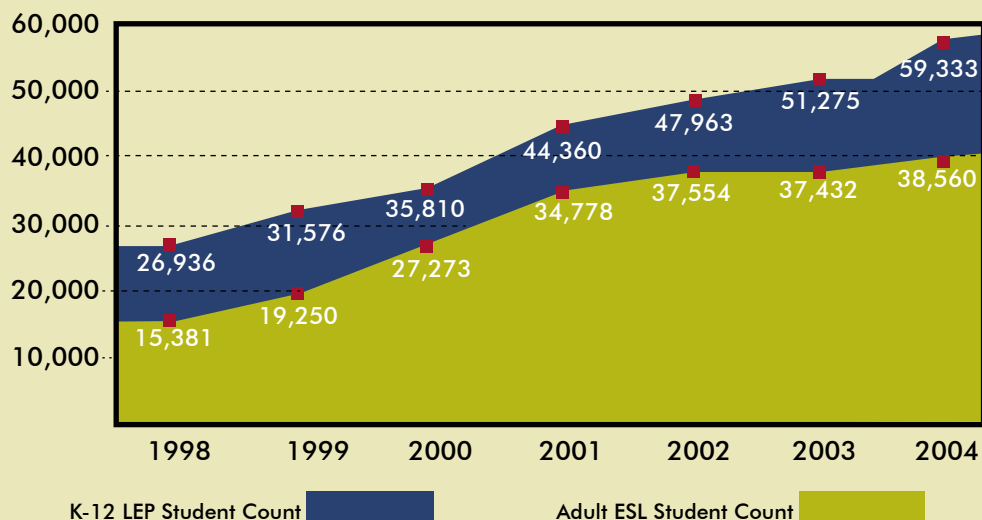
ABE services support a New American child's success in school. By enhancing their parent's English proficiency, ABE services help lay the foundation for parents to actively participate in their child's education, and support their academic achievement.

Academic Success for New American Children

When new American parents become more involved in their children's learning, and involved in the schools, their efforts result in improved school performance for their children.

- Researchers, Jordan, Snow and Porche cite three separate studies that back up their claim that “although excellent preschool and kindergarten classrooms can provide children with opportunities to learn and refine these skills [letter identification, phonological awareness, skills in understanding and producing extended discourse, etc.], it is widely acknowledged that linguistically rich home environments contribute more powerfully to the early development of these critical abilities.”

Minnesota Adult ESL and K-12 LEP Student Growth



ABE programs and family literacy programs help create such “linguistically rich home environments,” by improving learners’ language and literacy skills.



Impact

New Americans: Citizenship

Reality

Minnesota's growing immigrant and refugee population has resulted in increasing demands for citizenship preparation opportunities. Of the 260,463 foreign-born residents in Minnesota, 163,155 (63%) are not United States citizens.

There has been an increase of 100,880 non-United States citizens living in Minnesota since 1990.

Impact

ABE services prepare New Americans to become Citizens of the United States and participate more fully in Minnesota communities as voters, homeowners, and engaged citizens.

Adult Basic Education programs throughout Minnesota offer free classes and on-line instruction to help prepare learners to become United States citizens.

- In 2003, 660 students prepared for citizenship tests by learning the American system of government and basic U.S. history.
- Since 1990, 6,146 ABE students have participated in citizenship preparation classes, 60% of students have participated in these classes during the last five years.

New Americans Impact Life



Hashim is a refugee from Somalia. He came to the U.S. in 1996 with his mother and two siblings.

Despite having no schooling in his native country, Hashim has worked hard to become a success at his job and his classes. He has always worked: first at a factory doing assembly, and has driven a shuttle bus around the Twin Cities

for the last five years. He enjoys talking to his passengers and is in constant radio contact with his supervisor.

Mr. Mohamud will be sworn in as a naturalized citizen in March and awaits his wife and son to join him soon. "I want to continue school until I perfect English," he said. Hashim is a learner at the Ronald M. Hubbs Center for Life Long Learning in St. Paul.



Metta Wilson arrived in the United States in 1999, unfamiliar with the language, as well as with the American culture. As a native of Thailand, Metta spoke only Thai. She realized that she needed to work hard to become successful in her new environment.

She soon enrolled in English classes at the Adult Basic Education program at the

Rosemount, Apple Valley, Eagan School District 196. She had no transportation to school for day classes, so she attended in the evening. After two years of hard work she acquired enough English skills to enable her to obtain a Minnesota Driver's License.

Metta did not stop there. She drove herself to daytime classes which allowed her children to attend family school. Again, she studied hard, enrolling in an additional Saturday class. Three years later, she received her United States Citizenship. Metta states, "I learned a lot about American culture and proper English, which helped me to receive my citizenship."

Impact Corrections

Reality

Prisoners are disproportionately represented at the lowest literacy level, with average reading levels between 6th and 8th grade. Less than half have a high school or GED diploma.

- *Literacy Behind Prison Walls* reports that 70% of all prison inmates are “functionally illiterate” or read below the fourth-grade level.
- Nationwide, over two-thirds of all individuals entering state correctional facilities have not completed high school and one in seven have had no high school education at all.
- Although the average reading and math levels of an incarcerated adult are at or below the eighth-grade level, only 9% of all prisoners with low literacy skills receive literacy training while in prison.

“For me, the best part about the Prison trainings is that I know it is such a win-win situation for the tutors and students. The learners are obviously benefiting from improving their literacy skills, but the *tutors* are also developing some important skills. The men are also *really* motivated by the idea of helping their children.”

— Rob Podlasek, tutor trainer with the Minnesota Literacy Council, working in partnership with the Stillwater Prison to provide inmates training to help their fellow inmates work on literacy skills and preparation for the GED.

Impact Life Corrections

After earning his GED, Cary Kessel enrolled at the Cambridge Branch of the Anoka Ramsey Community College, but...getting to this point hasn't been easy. For the majority of his high school career, Cary was in juvenile detention centers throughout the state. During his incarceration at the Isanti County Law Enforcement Center, Cary began to get serious about his education and attended the ABE GED preparation classes offered weekly.

Upon his release, Cary continued his preparation for the GED Test at the Cambridge ABE class and within two months had successfully completed his GED. He has many dreams for his life and began to make those dreams come true by earning his GED. “My future is unknown, but I'm moving forward!”

Impact

Reduced Re-Incarceration & Crime Rates

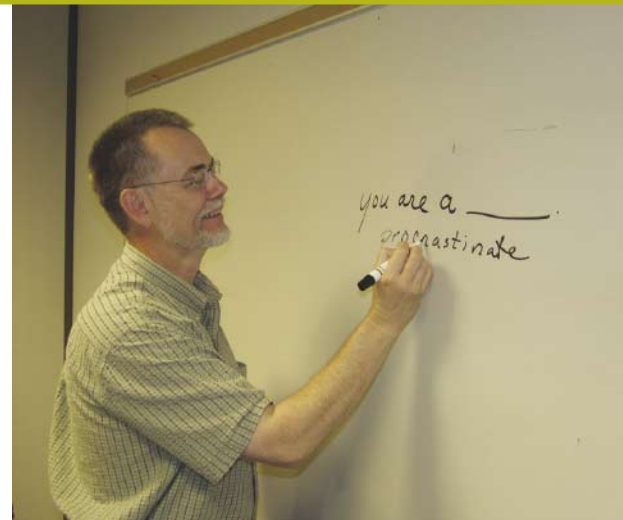
ABE services to inmates in correctional institutions result in reduced re-incarceration rates, lower crime rates in Minnesota communities and increased success for released individuals in finding gainful employment.

The need for ABE services in correctional institutions is significant. An inmate's chance to succeed in society when released is substantially enhanced if they can receive educational opportunities, such as high school, post-secondary, or vocational training while incarcerated. Statistics include:

- According to MDE, last year, 303 prison inmates earned a GED or high school diploma and 128 individuals entered post-secondary or vocational training.
- In *The Three State Recidivism Study*, researchers found that for released inmates in Minnesota, there was a 10% greater chance for the non-participants in ABE to be re-incarcerated than for those that participated in ABE.
- Another study in Virginia of 3,000 released inmates found only 20% who had completed basic skills programs were re-incarcerated, whereas 49% of those who had not participated in educational programs were re-incarcerated.
- For every released inmate who is successful in the prison's ABE program and does not recommit a crime, Minnesota taxpayers save \$28,000 which is the annual cost of re-incarceration. Since the average annual cost of ABE is approximately \$500 per individual, the cost-savings to the state is significant compared to the annual cost of incarceration.

ABE has been reported to be extremely cost-effective because inmates that participated in the program while in prison committed fewer crimes and were more likely to find work upon their release.

Additionally, ABE services also have a positive impact on the behavior of inmates while they are in prison. In one Maryland study, prisoners participating in ABE were less likely to be involved incidents in prison, thus reducing prison health care costs.



Partnerships Corrections

Amherst Wilder Foundation & Minnesota Department of Corrections

Since 1990, the Amherst Wilder Foundation in St. Paul has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) to deliver pre- and post-release services to offenders.

Wilder EXCEL program staff provide pre-release classroom instruction to offenders at several DOC correctional facilities, covering topics such as housing, employment, health, personal finance, transportation, personal ID acquisition, and family reunification. At their St. Paul office, they provide employment counseling services to released offenders.

"EXCEL instructors and community support staff have provided an invaluable service," states Tim Lanz, DOC Transition Program Director. "They provide the critical link between the offender and the community, offering each person the support and assistance they need to successfully reintegrate into an increasingly complicated world."



Impact Health Literacy

ABE IMPACT REPORT

Reality

Health literacy is the ability of an individual to access, understand, and use health-related information and services to make appropriate health decisions. According to a report issued by the Institutes of Medicine, the importance of health literacy is emerging as a top priority in helping to improve the quality and delivery of the nation's health care. The report cites that 46% of Americans struggle with understanding basic health care communications, physicians instructions, prescriptions, health care, and insurance forms. Those with low levels of health literacy face barriers in understanding the complexities of the health care system such as, tiered co-payment structure or rules about in-network and out-of-network providers. Additionally, 45% do not have anyone in their household who can read medical instructions to them.

Recent studies have shown that patients with low literacy skills use more health care resources and do not know how to access health care when appropriate. From treatment options to medications, when a patient is not literate enough to discuss key issues with their doctors, both patients and their providers suffer. Individuals with low health literacy:

- Are five times more likely to misinterpret their prescriptions than patients with adequate literacy skills.
- Average two more physician visits per year than their literate peers.

Impact

Minnesota ABE services help address health literacy issues of adult learners by:

- Increasing their ability to communicate effectively with the health care providers.
- Helping them understand communications from their health care provider.
- Helping adults and their families gain access to the health care system.
- Helping adults become healthier by understanding nutrition, prevention, and the proper use of medications.
- Reducing state and patient health care expenses.

Impact Life Health

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (120ml)	
Servings about 2.5	
Calories 90	
Fat Cal. 20	
Amount/serving	%DV
Total Fat 2g	3%
Sat. Fat 0.5g	3%
Polyunsat. Fat 0.5g	
Monounsat. Fat 0.5g	
Cholest. 10mg	3%
Sodium 830mg	35%
Total Carb. 17g	6%
Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 4g	
Vitamin A 20% • Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 3% • Iron 4%	
*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

Students at the English Learning Center (ELC), a CBO in Minneapolis, learn good health and nutritional habits through a partnerships with the Simply Good Eating Program of the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Hennepin County. Among other health literacy skills taught in the program, students learn to read nutritional labels and interpret recommended daily requirement (RDA) recommendations. Instructors from the Extension Service ask students to keep journals and then give students reports about the nutritional makeup (compared to the RDA) of the food they're eating, providing suggestions of ways to improve their diets, and their overall health. Students also learn proper food handling procedures and how to preserve kitchen cleanliness.

"Our adult students, who come from over 30 countries, need to learn how to manage their families' health and nutritional needs in a country where the food and resources available to them differ greatly from their home countries," said Nicole Pettitt, Director of Adult Programs at the ELC. "Our students graduate from the Simply Good Eating Program, reporting that they are making immediate healthful changes for themselves and their children."

Summary

The ABE system in Minnesota serves over 80,000 adults per year at over 500 sites statewide. The positive impact that our system has on the state's economy overall and on the individual lives of our learners is incredibly impressive. Every day I see the results of the great work that is being done by ABE teachers and volunteers who not only provide quality instruction but who take a genuine personal interest in the success of each of their students. It is indeed rewarding to be a part of a system of education that is focused on both individual accomplishment and community betterment.

–Dr. Barry Shaffer
State Director of Adult
Education
Minnesota Department of
Education

ABE: Worth the Investment

Adult Basic Education is worth the investment. Each year 80,000 Minnesota adults benefit from improving their literacy skills through Minnesota ABE services. Minnesota's investment in ABE programs positively:

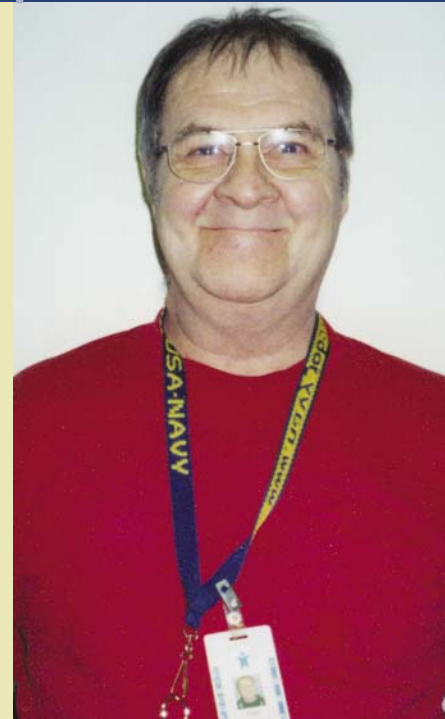
- Strengthens the economy through job attainment and job retention, higher earnings and economic self-sufficiency, and a more productive Minnesota workforce.
- Assists adults in poverty and on public assistance to exit the Minnesota public welfare rolls and become economically self-sufficient.
- Reduces the need for fee-based remedial classes at Minnesota colleges and universities
- Impacts parents' participation with the school and ability to support their child's readiness for school and academic achievement.
- Helps new Americans participate more fully in Minnesota communities as voters and civically-engaged United States citizens.
- Addresses health issues of adults by increasing communication with health care providers, facilitating access to services, improving health through education and reducing health care expenses.
- Assists in reducing Minnesota re-incarceration rates, and increases success for released individuals in finding gainful employment.

Minnesota ABE programs increase self-esteem, personal confidence and sense of personal and civic responsibility and serve as a stepping-stone to the next achievement for more than 80,000 adult learners every year.

One Story of Hundreds Impact Life

Thomas Heid, age sixty, from Mankato, felt he was ending his frustration with school when he dropped out at the age of eleven to enter the world of work. The passing of years didn't help the frustration go away and he decided it was time for a change when he found himself in yet another dead-end job.

Thomas entered the Mankato Adult Basic Education classroom as a low-level reader and seven months later is working on pre-GED materials. He credits his success to the Intensive Phonics program and a very patient teacher. He's excited to be reading the details about many things he only previously heard about. He reads newspapers and books on a daily basis using the dictionary and encyclopedias for further information and clarification. He goes to the library on Saturday mornings and is becoming more computer literate. He's gotten a better job, has looked into buying a home, feels much better about himself and his abilities, and feels hopeful for his future.



Resources

Providers & Acronyms

State Service Providers

The following Statewide Supplementary Service Providers support ABE programs throughout Minnesota.

Literacy Minnesota is a non-profit organization of professionals that serve adults with literacy needs through legislative advocacy, and statewide support and recognition of quality Adult Basic Education programs. (www.litminn.themlc.org)

The Literacy Training Network (LTN) provides professional development opportunities (statewide and regional) and resources to Minnesota's literacy practitioners. Using a nationally recognized model train-the-trainer program, LTN's goal is to improve the quality and appropriateness of learning opportunities offered to adults who participate in ABE programs. (www.ltn.themlc.org)

The Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC), a non-profit organization, provides a variety of services to the Adult Basic Education (ABE) community in Minnesota including: management and technical support services to more than 100 Minnesota programs, training and support for volunteer coordinators and tutors in literacy programs, citizenship resources, publications, statewide conferences and technology services. (www.themlc.org)

Learning Disabilities Association (LDA), a non-profit educational agency, provides ABE professionals with staff development and tutor training, assessment/diagnostic services, curriculum development, and Learning Disabilities technical assistance for adults with learning disabilities and related learning difficulties. (www.ldalearningcenter.com)

Communication Services for the Deaf of Minnesota (CSD), a non-profit organization dedicated to the provision of broad-based services, identifies and links agencies and ABE professionals, provides information on strategies for working with deaf and hard of hearing learners, and collaborates with ABE programs to provide classes for deaf adults. (www.c-s.d.org)

Physical Disabilities Project (P/NDS) assists ABE professionals with issues regarding physical and neurological disabilities of adult learners by providing local and regional trainings, consultation and a resource guide for ABE professionals.

Workforce Integration and Learning Mentor Academy (WILMA) provides workforce education training and consultative assistance to ABE professionals.

Acronyms

Common acronyms included in this report are defined below:

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ADP	Adult Diploma Program
AGA	Adult Graduation Aid
CBO	Community-Based Organization
ECFE	Early Childhood Family Education
ELL	English Language Learning
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Educational Development
LEP	Limited English Proficient
MDE	Minnesota Department of Education
MFIP	Minnesota Family Investment Program
MnSCU	Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
NALS	National Adult Literacy Survey
NCSALL	National Center for Study of Adult Learning and Literacy
NIFL	National Institute for Literacy
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Credits

Impact Report Credits

Date of Printing:

August 2004 Impact Report Credits

Development and Writing:

Anne Marie Leland—Minnesota Department of Education

Marianne Hummel—Metro North ABE

Jenny Schlukebier—Minnesota Literacy Council

Astrid Liden—Minnesota Literacy Council

Layout Production:

Kris Koshiol

Funding:

Literacy Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education Office

Acknowledgment

The development team acknowledges the input and feedback from many Minnesota ABE professionals who participated in this project.

* *Bibliography available upon request.*