

ABE Impact Report

Current Year Statistics

Minnesota

Participation & Client Characteristics

ABE Student Eligibility: Must be 16 and over, not enrolled in secondary school, and functioning below the 12th grade level in any of the basic academic areas including reading, math, writing and speaking English.

Potential Participants

According to 2009 American Community Survey data, 518,000 Minnesotans over 16 lack a high school diploma or its equivalent, and are not in school – at least 174,000 are working age (under 65).

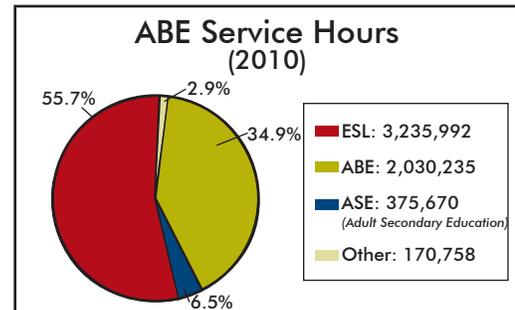
Additionally, nearly 7% of Minnesotans are foreign born. A significant number of ABE participants have learning disabilities. Many adult refugees and immigrants in need of ESL services have special learning needs due to a lack of special education services in their native countries.

ABE Enrollment for 2010

ABE Adult Enrollment for 2010: 76,504

- Basic Academic Skills 28,188 (36.8%)
- ESL 31,823 (41.6%)
- GED/Diploma 11,682 (15.3%)
- Workforce Prep. 4,811 (6.3%)

NOTE: In a given year, ABE programs serve approximately 12% of the eligible ABE target population.



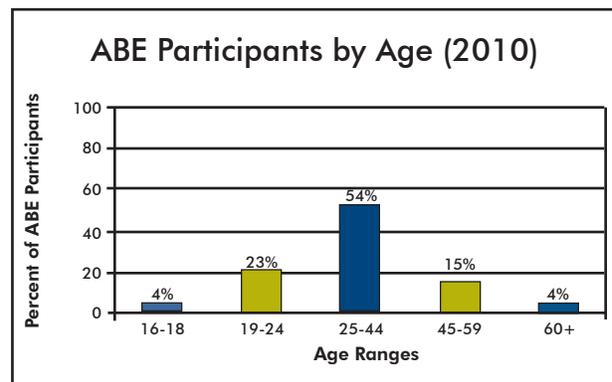
Outcome Results for ABE Participants in 2010

- ABE enrollment increased by 73% since 1995 (45,322 to 78,480 participants).
- One out of every ten diplomas issued in Minnesota was a GED or Adult High School Diploma.
 - GEDs earned: 5,951
 - High school diplomas: 987
- Gained or bettered employment: 12,678

The chart, *ABE Participants by Age (2010)*, illustrates that 97.1% (ages 16-59) are of working age.

ABE addresses a variety of other student goals corresponding to labor market needs and community priorities, including:

- Exiting the public welfare system and becoming self-sufficient.
- Learning to speak and write the English language.
- Helping their children succeed in school.
- Becoming US citizens and participating in a democratic society.



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ABE Programming & Partnerships in 2010

ABE Partnerships & Collaborations

ABE prides itself on supporting its collaborative efforts with Workforce Centers, school districts, community and technical colleges, welfare providers, correctional institutions, libraries, employers, community- and faith-based organizations, and the judicial system.

Partnerships are developed to share resources and to refer clients. Such partnerships strengthen services and enhance the students' ABE academic experience. Through partnerships, ABE programs can offer services such as transportation and child care in order to reduce the barriers for adults to attend ABE classes. These partnerships make the most of limited ABE resources and increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of existing ABE consortia.

Transition to Employment and Workforce Education

Pre-employment programs to provide basic skills necessary for work are provided at the local ABE site or MN WorkForce Centers. Also, ABE services may be provided at local employment sites and are designed to improve the basic skills (in the context of work) of the worker. *(This initiative is in collaboration with the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development.)*

Transition to Post-Secondary Education and Training

Career pathway programming (e.g.- Minnesota FastTRAC initiative), basic skills instruction, counseling, and college prep skills to better prepare students for post-secondary success in credit bearing or credentialed programs and occupational programs at post-secondary institutions are provided. *(Strong collaboration with MnSCU, DEED, nonprofit training providers.)*

Distance Learning

Minnesotans statewide can now access free GED preparation classes online through the GED-I program. Other online basic skill learning opportunities are offered by many local ABE programs. Expanding and enhancing distance learning statewide is a current ABE priority.

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Challenge for the Future

Investing in a skilled workforce to power the Minnesota Economy

The 2011 Governor's Workforce Development Council 2011 Policy Advisory¹ presents the challenge in stark terms:

Minnesota faces a growing skills gap.

Just seven years from now, seventy percent of Minnesota jobs will require education beyond high school. Our growing need for a highly skilled workforce, which is among the greatest in the country, has been brought on by an increasingly competitive global economy and rapidly evolving technologies. Yet today, only 40 percent of working-age adults in Minnesota have the needed education.

Studies show that educational advances account for 10% to 25% of economic growth, and regions with higher levels of education have higher incomes and more productivity growth. Individuals with an associate's degree earn 29% more than those with only a high school degree, and those with a bachelor's degree earn 62% more.

Because one third of the state's 2035 labor force is already of working age, it is impossible to reach our demand for skills by focusing only on new entrants to the workforce.

Minnesota is home to 1.2 million potential working learners – individuals that lack post-high school credentials who are wage-earners for themselves or their family – which comprises 60 percent Minnesota adults 18 to 64 years old. Serving this population will require rethinking the way Minnesota delivers education and training programs.

FastTRAC

FastTRAC, a comprehensive statewide partnership involving ABE, MNSCU, DEED, and community-based organizations, is addressing this skills gap through focused, collaborative efforts to develop and implement career pathways to train low-skilled, low-wage adults for jobs paying a living wage. Career pathways meet the needs of working learners, helping them attain credentials that lead to well-paying jobs in high-demand fields.

A career pathway includes connected educational and training programs to help students advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in a given sector. Each step is designed to prepare the student for the next level of education and employment. Through collaboration with employers and workforce development professionals, these pathways allow low-skilled adults to progress from basic ABE instruction through pre-college preparation and completion of one-year college credentials that lead to significant earnings advantages – while also meeting business needs for skilled workers. Career pathways target jobs in industries that are important to local and regional economies, ensuring the student good job prospects and serving as an effective supply chain for employers seeking skilled labor.

Development and maintenance of these pathways requires intensive collaboration between ABE, MNSCU, and DEED. ABE is proactively engaged in these FastTRAC efforts statewide.



¹Strengthening the Skills of Our Current Workforce: Recommendations for Increasing Credential Attainment Among Adults in Minnesota, September 2010

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Challenge for the Future

ABE assists individuals in improving their basic skills in order to become employed and self-sufficient.

ABE plays a key role in addressing the following:

- **Employer Needs:**

In order to be competitive in today's global marketplace, Minnesota employers demand that their workers have basic reading, writing, speaking, and math skills, some understanding of computers, relational skills, and behaviors (soft skills) that are appropriate for the workplace.

- **Economic Climate Shifts:**

The economic downturn of the past several years has led to far more out-of-work adults seeking educational opportunities at ABE sites statewide, as they seek to upgrade their skills.

- **New Americans (ESL growth):**

According to *Immigration in Minnesota: Discovering Common Ground*, a report by the Minneapolis Foundation, "Immigrants contribute to the economy in multiple ways: by paying taxes, filling job vacancies, engaging in entrepreneurial activities and neighborhood revitalization, and also through the consumption of goods and services. Some industries, such as food processing and meat packing, are almost entirely dependent on immigrant labor."

- **Welfare Issues:**

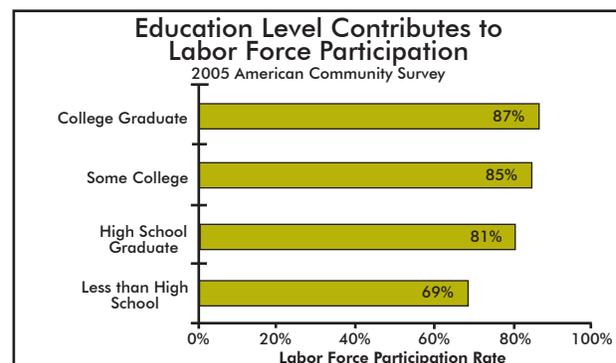
Department of Human Resources (DHS) reported that 42% of MFIP clients lack a high school diploma or equivalency.

- **Workplace Literacy Needs:**

On-site workplace literacy programs have great benefit to both the employee and the employer. Studies have indicated that on-site literacy instruction, such as English as a Second Language, has helped employees overcome communication barriers with their employers and seek promotions. Employers benefit from an educated workforce resulting in fewer errors on the job, increased safety, lower turnover, and higher productivity.

ABE Assists Adults in MN to Find Jobs:

The chart, *Education Level Contributes to Labor Force Participation*, indicates that more educated people usually find jobs more easily and generate higher incomes (*MN State Demographic Center*). ABE students develop the core literacy skills necessary to attain stable employment, as well as to become better parents, communicate with their children's teachers, and access further education and training.



Minnesota ABE System Recognized

In 2006, the MN ABE system was recognized for excellence in a federal review visit by the US Department of Education – Office of Adult and Vocational Education. The MN ABE system was commended for its quality. Minnesota ABE consistently exceeds its federally-negotiated Workforce Investment Act (WIA) core performance measures each year. (Core performance measures include: standardized level completion based on federally-approved adult assessments, entering employment, retaining employment, obtaining a GED or high school diploma, or entering a post-secondary educational institution or training program.)