



Promising Practices in Immigrant Education– Submission Form

Name of Community College: Columbia Basin Program

Title of Program: Basic Industrial Maintenance

Type of Program: Workforce Training/Career Development, Community Outreach/Partnership

Primary Division(s) or Department(s) involved:

Key Partners: Opportunities Industrialization Center—OIC (Farmworker Jobs Program—funded by the Department of Labor. Columbia Basin College (CBC) WorkSource Columbia Basin—American Job Center TRIDEC—local economic development organization

1. Need for Program:

Individuals working in different aspects of seasonal farm work were consistently laid off for 3 to 6 months each year. The National Farmworker Jobs Program funded by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) by the Department of Labor was seeking to help individuals gain skills to obtain year round employment and keep them in the same industry.

Janese Thatcher, CBC Dean for Career and Technical Education programs convened a meeting of area employers to find out what kind of skills they were looking for and what kind of education their potential employees would need. She used this information to create a one quarter non-credit certificate program to address the need. The course originally included two classes that required pre-requisites that would have made it impossible for this cohort of students to participate. The classes were quickly modified to meet the employers most immediate skills needs. Michelle Mann, the CBC Director of Worker Retraining expanded the number of students for the cohort by connecting to WorkSource Columbia Basin and their WIOA funded contractor.

2. Brief Description of Program:

The purpose of the program was to provide workers with documentable skills for full time employment in family wage jobs that were not seasonal. There are a number of jobs in the region's food processing industry that provide year round employment. Since the students had already worked in farm jobs, this made a perfect transition for them out of their seasonal work cycle. Their training included industrial technology subjects: Basic electricity, blueprints and drawings, basic welding, and fundamentals of maintenance which included soldering, tools, hardware, and basic maintenance knowledge.

3. Specific Population Served:

Seventy-five percent of the students who enrolled initially in the class were immigrants. The students faced multiple barriers including homelessness, incarceration, lack of a high school diploma, and unemployment.

4. Goals and Objectives:

The Basic Industrial Maintenance program was identified as the best fit for the employers' needs but had to be updated to include the most relevant skills and offered as a certificate because the individuals identified would not be able to take the pre-requisites required for the current program. This would have required an extra quarter of training. A meeting with employers identified industry specific skills and gained their support for accepting a certificate as opposed to college credit.

Students were recruited via OIC and WorkSource Columbia Basin and took a CASAS assessment to evaluate their basic skills and ensure they could successfully complete the program. Students who scored too low were given further assistance by their WIOA funded contractor until they could meet the minimum requirements to attend the classes at a later time.

5. Outcomes:

The outcomes of the program were to provide documentable skills to students to meet the needs of the area employers.

Eleven of the fourteen participants who completed the course are employed. Their hourly wage ranges from \$10.50 to \$36.01 per hour with an average wage at placement of \$15.52. All of our students faced multiple barriers to employment. Many lacked a high school diploma, 6 had a criminal background, 1 was homeless, 3 had limited English proficiency and all had worked primarily seasonal agricultural jobs. Two of the students left the class before they finished because they found employment related to their training in this program and were hired because they were in the program.

6. Collaboration:

Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) National Farmworkers Jobs Program funded by the Dept. of Labor—WIOA made the initial request for the training program for their WIOA funded program participants.

Columbia Basin College Workforce Education Center took the initial request and contacted the Dean of Career and Technical Education. They also connected with WorkSource Columbia Basin to see if there were additional individuals that could be served so we could have a larger class size.

Columbia Basin College Career and Technical Education created the program that was delivered to the cohort of students.

WorkSource Columbia Basin, the local American Job Center, provided 3 additional students for the class that were funded by WIOA.

TRIDEC—local economic development organization—facilitated the meeting with area

employers to determine the industry specific skills needed for the students to complete the program.

7. Success Factors:

Partnership of organizations identifying a cohort of students in need and the ability to provide wrap around support services to ensure student success.

Employer input to define the industry specific skills needed. Industry involvement in this and other short-term certificate training was vital to getting workers on a career pathway that leads to long-term employment.

Instructors that were able to see beyond the barriers and recognize the capabilities of each student.

8. Challenges Faced and Overcome:

Once the program was ready, the biggest challenge was determining the best time available to hold the class based on instructor and classroom availability. That was overcome by offering the class late afternoon and evening 4 times a week for 11 weeks. Student challenges included their lack of basic tools to begin employment. That was overcome by purchasing a basic tool set and including it in the cost of their tuition.

9. Funding and Sustainability:

The program was funded by charging an equal cost for each student that was paid by the WIOA funded contractor.

The course is now offered for credit. The program is on the Eligible Training Provider List and can also be covered by other fund sources that offer tuition assistance—TANF, SNAP, Worker Retraining, WIOA, etc.

We have also connected to the Transitional Studies Department on campus. This department serves students completing their basic education skills. The goal of these English and math classes is to ensure a seamless transition from these courses into the CBC workforce programs. They want to make sure that the students are as successful as possible.

10. Contact Information

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