

ABE/ESL Pathways to Employment and Postsecondary Education: Key Linkages and Strategies

Judith A. Alamprese
Abt Associates Inc., Bethesda, MD
judy_alamprese@abtassoc.com

Presentation at
34th Annual Conference of the National Council
for Workforce Education
October 18, 2009



Topics for Discussion

- **Overview of AECAP Project**

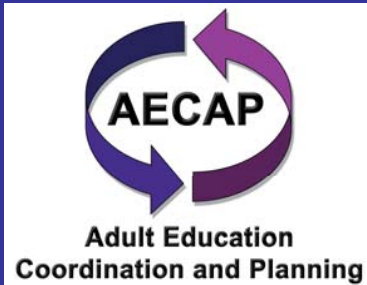
- **Two approaches to low-skilled adults' pathways to postsecondary training and employment**
 - ESOL Customer Service Training
 - CNA Pathway

- **Lessons**
 - Identifying Pathway & Target Population
 - Working with Partners
 - Developing Curriculum



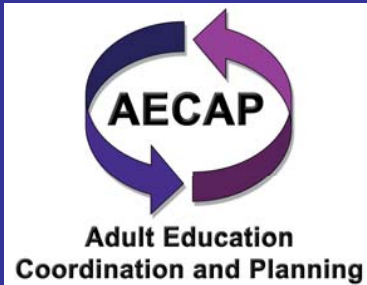
Overview of AECAP Project

- **Funder:** Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education
- **Conducted by:** Abt Associates Inc., Bethesda, MD
- **Timeline:** 2003-2008
- **Objectives:**
 - Develop & test models for state and local planning, leadership development, and coordination to expand adult education and workforce services
 - Identify factors underlying successful state and local strategic planning and interagency coordination



AECAP Project Design

- **Demonstration project with six states and two local pilot sites in each state**
 - State participants: adult education, labor, human services, K-12 education, juvenile justice
 - 4 pilot states: Adult Education and One-Stop coordination
 - 2 pilot states: Coordination in program improvement
 - Local pilot sites: local adult education programs, One-Stop Centers/workforce development organizations
- **Tested research-based models for coordination and program improvement through workshops and technical assistance**
- **Evaluation to test the project's model and to document outcomes from activities**



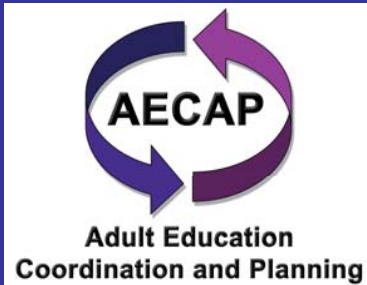
Pathways to Employment & Postsecondary Education/Training

Problem/Issue

- ABE clients need to further their education or training in order to qualify for desired employment
- Labor market changes and new skills are required

Data/Information to Examine

- ABE clients' employment goals
- Local labor market data
- Community colleges' training programs



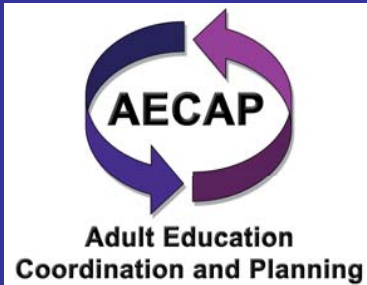
Montgomery College & Montgomery Works

AECAP Objective: Increase the number of ESOL clients referred from Montgomery College to Montgomery Works' Sales and Service Learning Center (SSLC)

AECAP Project:

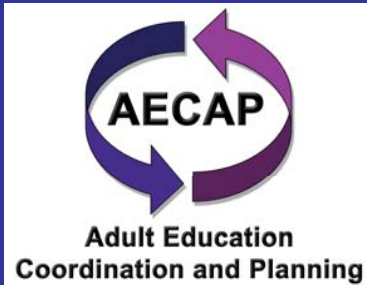
- Staff
 - Montgomery College ESOL instructors
 - Montgomery Works Sales and Service Center staff

- Phases of Activity
 - Piloted classes using ESL Customer Service Course developed by the National Retail Federation and EFF
 - Developed new recruitment strategies involving college



Montgomery College & Montgomery Works

- Phases of Activity
 - Set entrance scores for CASAS Reading and Listening (211-235) to target intermediate ESOL learners
 - Offered classes at SSLC –8 weeks, 100 hrs.
 - Developed new component “Support for Education and Employment”—facilitate use of One-Stop and job interviews
 - Participated in job fairs conducted by SSLC
 - Revised Sales and Service Course to increase ESOL content (MD ESOL standards) in context of sales and service applications; incorporated job readiness content; developed teacher’s guide



Montgomery College & Montgomery Works

- Key Lessons
 - Targeting Client Population: Identify skill levels of clients for whom service is thought to work well
 - Using Existing Products:
 - Pilot test without modification to determine if outcomes can be replicated
 - Note strengths and weaknesses during pilot test
 - Revise and test revisions
 - Assess whether product is sufficient to assist client in obtaining goals; develop additional products/processes if necessary

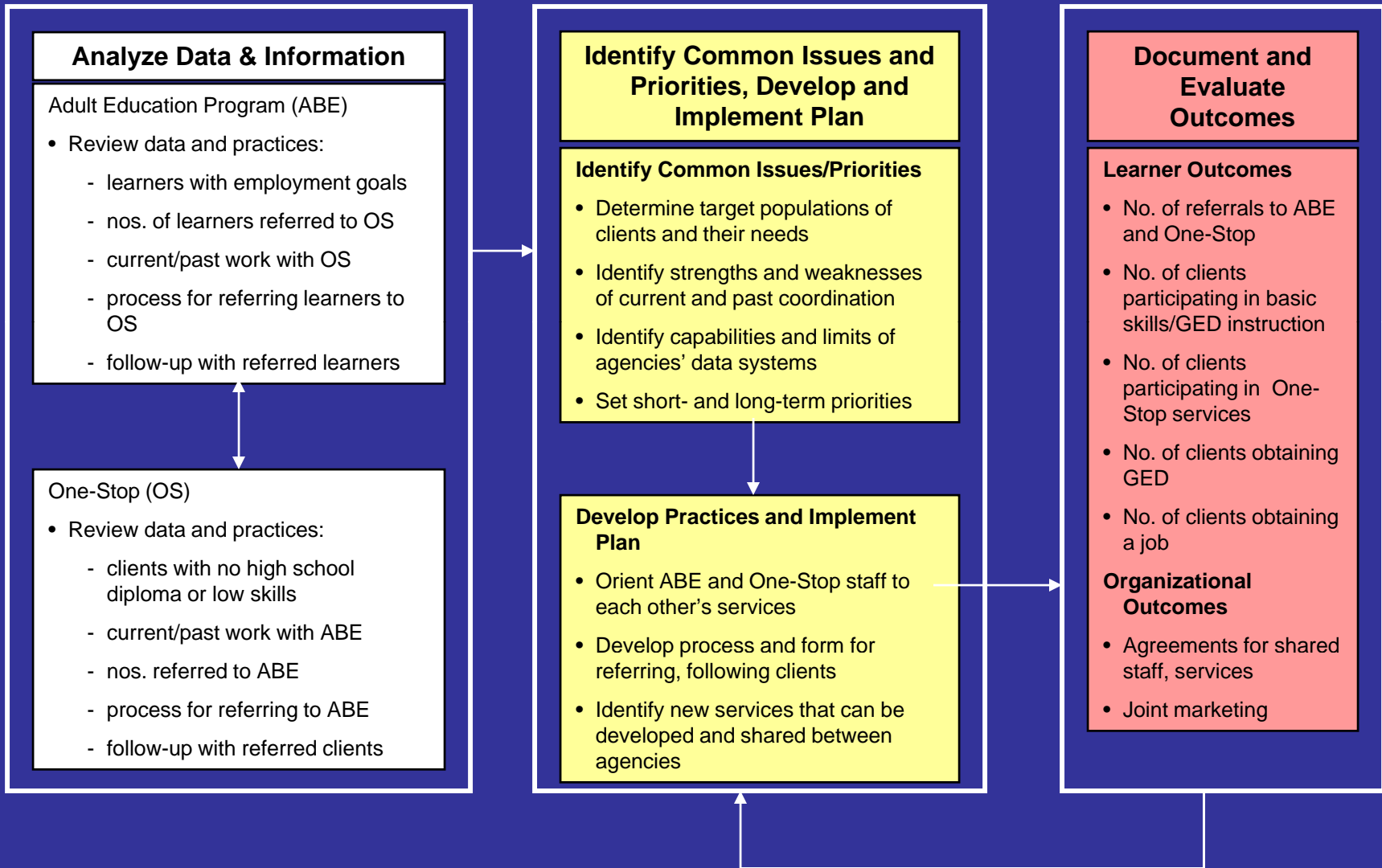


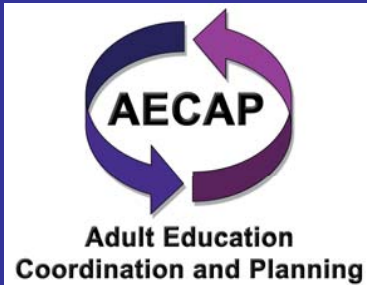
Adult Education
Coordination and Planning

Montgomery College & Montgomery Works

- Data from Project Period
 - CASAS Reading and Listening Tests: Pre-post gains after 100 hours of instruction were statistically significant
 - 43% of clients looking for work were hired or received a job offer

AIDDE Framework for Adult Education - One-Stop Coordination





Yakima Valley Community College, SCWC, Sunnyside CSO, ESD

Partners

- Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC)
- South Central Workforce Council (SCWC)
- Sunnyside Community Services Office (CSO)
- Sunnyside Employment Security Division (ESD)

AECAP Objectives

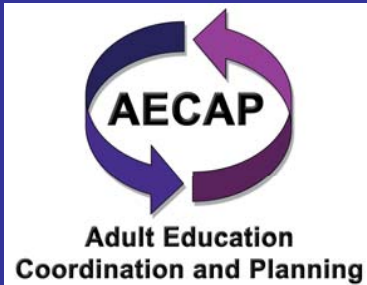
- Assess TANF clients under Comprehensive Evaluation (gubernatorial initiative)
- Develop employment pathways for clients through participation in education



Yakima Valley Community College, SCWC, Sunnyside CSO, ESD

Contextual Conditions

- Yakima Valley was a pilot test site for the governor's Comprehensive Evaluation
- AECAP partner organizations had a long history of working together on community activities
- YVCC's basic skills program had a leadership change in the early months of the AECAP project
- YVCC was developing an Allied Health Center of Excellence
- SCWC, as the local WIB, facilitated the work of four skills panels in high-demand industries



Yakima Valley Community College, SCWC, Sunnyside CSO, ESD

Activities

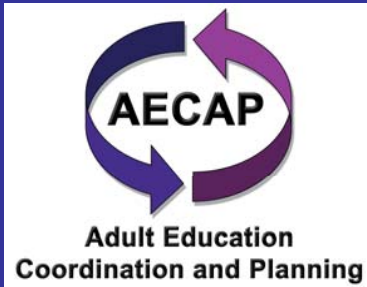
- Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC)
 - Assessed TANF clients using CASAS
 - Trained ESD staff to interpret CASAS results
 - Developed Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA) course at YVCC satellite campus close to Sunnyside CSO and ESD
 - Worked with CSO and ESD to place appropriate TANF clients in CNA course
 - Worked with local nursing home employers to obtain employment for clients who completed CNA program
 - Worked with SCWC in developing ESL construction course



Yakima Valley Community College, SCWC, Sunnyside CSO, ESD

Activities

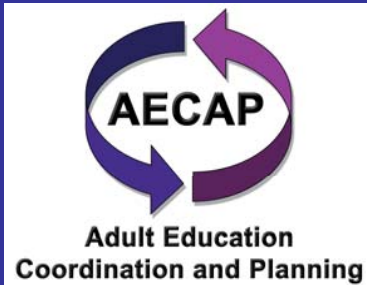
- South Central Workforce Council
 - Worked with YVCC in planning all phases of AECAP project
 - Worked with employers on Construction Skills' Panel to plan construction pathway for workers with limited English proficiency
 - Recruited workers for construction course
 - Worked with YVCC in developing course



Yakima Valley Community College, SCWC, Sunnyside CSO, ESD

Outcomes

- Comprehensive Evaluation successfully implemented in Sunnyside CSO/ESD and working relationship between YVCC and CSO/ESD strengthened
- 81% of clients who enrolled in CNA course completed course; 85% of those who completed course also completed clinical instruction and passed the CNA test; 73% of clients who completed all requirements obtained a job



Pathways to Employment & Postsecondary Education/Training

Lessons Learned

- Identifying Pathway & Target Population
 - Requires collection of varied data about clients, labor market, industry requirements, and credentials related to jobs
 - Initial pilot test may not work because characteristics used to select targeted clients were not accurate
- Working with Partners
 - Additional partners may need to be added as new issues are identified
 - Roles of partners can expand to address new issues



Pathways to Employment & Postsecondary Education/Training

Lessons Learned

- Developing Curriculum
 - Requires knowledgeable staff
 - Takes a number of iterations of development, testing, revision, and further testing
 - Needs to be matched to industry requirements while including basic skills