



**MA Public Adult Education
Professional Development System**
A PUBLIC ADULT EDUCATION OF MA PROGRAM

Disability Inclusion Program Models: Hampden County Sheriff's Office

This feature is one in a series of four program features that showcase how adult education programs in MA have used program-based coaching and the [Basic Disability Screening for Adult Educators](#) to make their programs more disability inclusive. To read the additional features, visit the [Disability Inclusion: Four Program Profiles and BDSAE Resources resource page](#), and to learn more about SABES Program Support offerings related to ADA & Disability Inclusion, visit the [SABES ADA & Disability Inclusion website page](#).

About

The Support Services team at the Hampden County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) offers a full range of classes, including English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), High School Equivalency (HSE) test preparation, and computer skills, as well as advising for transitions to further education or career. Adult education services are available to about 305 students across many facilities, spanning both custodial and community settings.

Disability Inclusion Goal

HCSO sought to standardize baseline disability screening and accommodation identification processes across multiple facilities. The primary goal was to create a safe environment where learners could discuss teaching and learning accommodations, as well as identify supports for reintegrating into the community.

Summary of the Work

The coaching was carried out in three phases. First, the leadership team collaborated with a SABES coach to create a targeted action plan for delivering professional development across the program. Second, the coach delivered a day-long training on disability inclusion. Finally, leadership collected feedback and brainstormed ways to integrate and adapt tools from the BDSAE into intake and educational processes across facilities.

Lessons Learned

A few months after the training, the program identified two major takeaways:

- First, bringing in outside experts on disability inclusion proved effective for building staff buy-in and generating positive, productive discussions around inclusion and student learning needs.
- Second, navigating the institutional challenges of a corrections environment alone can be overwhelming. Bringing in external reinforcements and experts, and connecting with state and federal resources, is essential to building a collaborative support network.

Conclusion

HCSO worked with outside coaches to build a clear plan for finding and supporting students with disabilities across its facilities. The program learned that outside help makes staff more open to change, and that no program should try to handle these challenges alone.