**Part 2: Slide 1: Breaking Down Silos: Examples of Effective Partnerships Between ABE and Workforce Partners in Massachusetts**

Hello and welcome to Part 2 of the ACLS FY2016 community planning webinar on Resources and Strategies for Enhancing ABE and Workforce Partnerships. My name is Patricia Pelletier and I am the community planning consultant with the Adult and Community Learning Services, ACLS, of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. I am also the designer of the Indicators of Effective Community Planning for Adult Basic Education Coalitions in Massachusetts.

These pre-recorded webinars are intended for adult basic education programs and community planning partnerships to develop strategies and activities to enhance and strengthen ABE community planning, utilizing the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions published in 2013, as well as other research-based approaches to ABE community planning.

This three-part, pre-recorded webinar will focus on resources and strategies for enhancing ABE and workforce partnerships.

**Slide 2: Webinar Overview**

The webinar is divided into three separate but related pre-recorded parts that can be accessed during the specified period of time as communicated by ACLS.

Part 1 provides an overview of the Collective Impact Model developed by the Foundation Strategies Group, FSG, in Boston. The collective impact approach to social change is heavily embedded in a recent Call to Action in February 2015 by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, or OCTAE, entitled *Making Skills Everyone’s Business – A Call to Transform Adult Learning in the United States*. The collective impact approach of social change has been nationally acclaimed as an effective partnership strategy, and is referenced in the OCTAE report.

Part 2 provides first-hand information from ABE community planning partnerships and programs with their workforce partners that have a shared commitment to ABE. Their presentations will highlight the benefits and impact of these collaborations as they move toward WIOA implementation.

Part 3 provides some informative resources for integrating the concepts discussed in Parts 1 and 2, particularly how the collective impact approach can be integrated into ABE partnership building and some other resources on relationship and collaboration building.

So let’s begin Part 2 of this pre-recorded webinar.

**Slide 3: Relationship-Building**

Working together, whether within a program, or an organization, or across organizations or sectors, requires relationship building that takes time, social skill, and a good deal of patience. The Miriam-Webster dictionary describes “relationship” as: the way in which two or more people, groups, countries, etc., talk to, behave toward, and deal with each other,” and to ”build” is defined as “to increase the amount of (something).” So, relationship building could be defined as to increase the amount of ways in which we deal with each other in partnerships or collaborations.

Part 1 of this webinar series focused on the collective impact model as a framework for partnership and collaboration building, and how partnering is a key focus of WIOA. A common theme when talking with ABE directors and community planning coordinators is that relationship building is the most important thing you can do to start and maintain partnerships of any kind. Relationship building is the first step in developing collaborations that will enhance your community planning partnership and support ABE programs as you transition to WIOA.

There are a lot of resources available to learn about relationship building and partnership development. For example, in the book *Forming Alliances: Working Together to Achieve Mutual Goals*, Emil Angelica and Linda Hoskins describe the six components of an effective collaboration. These components are very similar to the elements of the collective impact model from Part 1 of this webinar and also intersect with some of the characteristics of the ACLS Indicators of Effective Community Planning Coalitions. In Part 3 of this webinar series, we’ll outline other resources for relationship and coalition building.

One ABE director I recently talked to didn’t realize how much relationship building she has done until I pointed out to her that when I first met her about eight years ago, their ABE program was very small, and their partnerships were limited. A strategic priority of this director was to get out into the community and develop relationships that would enhance their programming and service to adult learners. Today, their program consists of morning, afternoon, and evening classes, job training programs, career pathways, computer classes, and others. She attributes this growth to the new and expanded relationships they have built.

**Slide 4: The Intended and Unintended Benefits of Relationship Building**

The following presentations by ABE program directors and their workforce partners will describe how the relationships they have built through their ABE community planning partnerships and other collaborative initiatives have impacted their programs and learners, and, albeit unintentionally, have prepared them for the changes associated with WIOA implementation.

So let’s hear from Betty McKiernan, Director of the Lowell Adult Learning Center and Gail Brown, Director of the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board, about how they built their relationship and the impact of that relationship on the work they do in adult basic education.

**Slide 5: Lowell Adult Learning Center Partnerships**

Hello, my name is Betty McKiernan and I am the Director of the Lowell Adult Learning Center. I have been with the Lowell Adult Learning Center, now called the Fred Abisi Adult Learning Center after our former director, since 1986 when I was an instructor and grant facilitator. Before that, I was the Director of the Adult Learning Center and Links Program at Middlesex Community College in Bedford. And, before that, I taught in several private schools in Lowell.

I have with me today Gail Brown, Director of the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board, who will give you a little information about herself in just a few minutes. I’d like to first give you an overview of the ABE Community Planning Partnership in Lowell and how it has grown, changed and evolved as the needs of learners and the community have changed.

**Slide 6: History of ABE Community Planning in Lowell**

The Lowell ABE Community Planning Partnership has been in existence since 2000 when ACLS rolled out the community planning initiative. At the time, I worked part-time at Middlesex Community College’s ABE program in Bedford and part-time at the Lowell Adult Learning Center. The Bedford ABE program also developed an ABE community planning partnership that same year. Because we had students coming from Lowell to the Bedford ABE program, and vice-versa, I participated in both partnerships and quickly learned about the benefits of the partnerships, particularly with referrals of students between programs as slots became available, and, of course, based on the needs of the learners. The former Lowell ABE Director, Fred Abisi, was very dedicated to the community planning partnership, and I have worked hard to keep the partnership active since Fred’s retirement in 2012, when I became the director.

The Lowell ABE Community Planning Partnership is currently comprised of 40 members from various sectors including community colleges, libraries, health providers, schools, workforce partners, and others. At the recommendation of ACLS last year, the Chamber of Commerce was recruited to become a member of the partnership. The partnership conducts a large annual meeting, and during the year, work is done through small groups or with individuals based on the needs and current climate and environment.

Close and productive relationships have been built over the years with partners, such as the Lowell Community Health Center who visit the ABE program about once a month to provide health screenings, workshops, immunizations, and other health related services for adult learners. We can call on the partnership’s members for many things to support our program, such as contacting legislators to advocate for policies or funding, providing workshops or internships for students, and information about job openings.

**Slide 7: Workforce Partners**

The Lowell ABE Partnership has always focused on workforce development and has always had workforce partners as members. With our workforce partners we have participated in many joint activities over the years such as job and career fairs, tours of the Lowell One Stop Career Center, workshops, referrals to job training, and co-location of ABE staff at the career center.

The ABE Director in Lowell has a seat on the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board and, more recently, became a member of the Board’s WIOA Transition Team. The Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board is one of 16 Workforce Boards through Massachusetts and consists of private business representatives, educational leaders, community based organizations, local and state agencies, economic and other workforce development groups. The Workforce Board is charged with overseeing and implementing workforce development initiatives throughout the area.

I’m happy to be able to provide insight and perspective from adult basic education into the local workforce board’s planning and strategy for rolling out WIOA. Staff of the Lowell ABE program are also part of the regional Adult Career Pathways Work Group. Our focus here in Lowell is on Advanced Manufacturing, Green Jobs, and STEM occupations.

Participation on these important workforce development groups has greatly enhanced our relationship with our workforce partners and has created some positive impacts on our ABE program and learners.

**Slide 8: Cross-fertilization of Groups**

Sometimes it’s hard to connect the dots between community planning and partnerships and the impact on ABE programs and learners. Patricia talked about relationship building earlier, which is what I’ll talk a little about here. Relationship building, which is the first step in collaboration, often happens in other settings than the one in which the impact occurs.

In this diagram, you can see the overlap between the Lowell ABE Community Planning Partnership, where workforce partners are members, the WIB and the WIOA Transition Team, where the ABE Director participates, and the Regional Career Pathways Working Group where both WIB and ABE staff participate. Each group has different objectives and activities, but generally has the same goal of economic independence for lower-skilled populations. Participation in the groups by ABE program staff builds relationships that carry over to many different situations that ultimately benefit the “end users”, in our case, adult learners. Here’s an example.

**Slide 9: Impact of Partnerships**

As I mentioned earlier, I formerly worked at Middlesex Community College’s Adult Education Program. At that time, I participated on both the Lowell and MCC ABE Community Planning Partnership. Also as I mentioned earlier, the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce is a fairly new member of the Lowell ABE Community Planning Partnership. The Chamber of Commerce, the Lowell WIB, and Middlesex Community College are also part of a group called the Middlesex 3 Coalition, a regional partnership of nine Middlesex County Communities, with the support of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.

The coalition communities share a common goal of fostering economic development, job growth and retention, diversification of the tax base, and enhancement of quality of life. Because of the explosion in the restaurant business in the Burlington area, and not enough employees to fill the positions, the Middlesex 3 Coalition recently held a restaurant job fair and, because of the relationships built between the different partnerships described in the last slide, Lowell ABE students were invited to the job fair, and transportation was provided by Middlesex 3 to get students there. The Lowell Adult Learning Center sent a good number of students, who were prepared with a resume and job interview skills.

Had it not been for the relationship built initially through the Lowell ABE Community Planning Partnership, the Middlesex 3 Coalition may have never known about the Lowell ABE program and recruited students to attend the job fair. This is a direct and concrete example of the impact of partnerships on adult basic education.

I’d like to introduce Gail Brown, Director of the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board, who will give you her perspective about how ABE and the Greater Lowell Workforce Board work together.

Slide 10: ABE-WD Partnership in Lowell

Thank you, Betty. As Betty said, I’m the Director of the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board. I joined the Lowell workforce board eight years ago as senior program manager and moved into the role of director three years ago. Before that, my entire career was in the private sector in high tech industries as a business strategy manager.

I’m very happy to talk about the importance of our partnership with the Lowell Adult Learning Center and I’ll give you a few examples of how ABE and workforce development work together. As you know, with the implementation of WIOA, it is more important than ever for workforce boards and one-stop career centers to reach out to and work with ABE partners. We believe that a strong relationship between ABE and workforce partners in Lowell benefits all partners in a real way.

The first example I’ll share is the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium. The Consortium is led by four regional Workforce Boards and works collaboratively to bring employers, training vendors, institutions of education, workforce development agencies, and others together to coordinate and develop strategies and activities to strengthen the advanced manufacturing industry in Northeast Massachusetts. These strategies are designed to result in increased job retention, job creation, new business development, and economic growth.

In Lowell, we view ABE students, particularly students enrolled in the Adult Career Pathways program, as a pipeline into the advanced manufacturing pathway and plan to work with the Lowell Adult Learning Center, Middlesex Community College and the career center of Lowell to transition ABE students to the Advanced Manufacturing Training Program. The program has enrolled and graduated many students whose first language is not English, so it is a good fit for ABE learners.

Because advanced manufacturing is a high demand occupational area in Greater Lowell, we will work closely with the Lowell Adult Learning Center to ensure ABE students have an awareness and understanding of career pathways in this sector. We’ll do this in a variety of ways, including through a new “pipeline outreach” initiative, where we’ll provide information sessions, outreach events, and other activities with area schools, community colleges, and ABE programs to help identify programs for people interested in training in this sector. We’ve identified ABE as a key partner in this pipeline outreach program and we believe that exposure to this sector will create good opportunities for adult learners as they continue to improve their education and basic skills.

Another way we partner with ABE is through the Adult Career Pathways working group that the Lowell workforce board convenes with the Lowell Adult Learning Center, the One Stop Career Center and the Lowell City Manager’s office. One of the ways we can help ABE students in the career pathways program is to provide labor market information, not just from the data that we publish, but what that information means to ABE students, and their education. I am also committed to working closely with the Lowell Career Center to further expand services to the ABE population.

**Slide 11: Contact**

Thank you, Gail, for sharing some of the ways we are breaking down silos between ABE and workforce development here in Lowell. It’s been a pleasure to be able to share some of our experiences in Lowell with workforce partners and how those relationships impact our program and learners. Please feel free to contact me with questions at the number or email address in this slide.

Now, here is Sr. Eileen Burns from the Notre Dame Education Center in Lawrence who will talk about their workforce partnerships.

**Slide 12: Norte Dame Education Center-Lawrence**

Hello, my name is Sr. Eileen Burns and I am the Executive Director of the Notre Dame Education Center in Lawrence.

I have been with NDEC-Lawrence since 2008. Before coming to NDEC, I coordinated the ESOL program at St. Patrick Asian Center in Lynn, MA for 7 years. I have been a long time volunteer at Bread and Roses Soup Kitchen in Lawrence and was cofounder of Si, Se Puede in Lawrence in the 1980’s.

Let me start by giving you a brief background of the Lawrence ABE Community Planning Partnership because I think that is where the importance of partnering in ABE was highlighted, and it was the beginning of an interesting partnership journey.

**Slide 13: History of the Lawrence ABE Community Planning**

Here’s a little history of how ABE community planning started and has evolved in Lawrence, although a lot of it was before I started at NDEC.

Since 2003, Lawrence ABE Programs have been involved with community planning, beginning with Lawrence Literacy Works which was a city-wide initiative to strengthen the relationship between workforce development, economic development, and adult education. A core group of ABE staff focused on strategic planning, community assets, needs assessments, and overall ABE planning in our community. This core group is still active today and is comprised of the four ESE ABE Directors in Lawrence and their respective staff.

As the environment changed and more relationships were formed in Lawrence, the ABE Community Planning Partnership merged with the Lawrence Pathways to Family Success, now called Community Pathways-Lawrence.

ABE members and NDEC-Lawrence took on a leadership role of Community Pathways-Lawrence. We are a multi-focus community planning coalition. Members attended the ACLS community planning training, lead a group assessment on the indicators of effective community planning, helped the group prioritize goals, and established a mission statement. The group consists of ABE providers and Lawrence agencies, including ValleyWorks Career Center, and we work together to hold joint events, to communicate events and opportunities though our city-wide list-serve, and meet regularly to share information on resources and to do planning. NDEC administers the list-serve.

**Slide 14:Cross-fertilization of Groups**

Workforce development has always been a primary focus in Lawrence ABE programs since the beginning of ABE community planning. As Lawrence ABE community planning continued to evolve, NDEC-Lawrence assumed one of the leadership roles to ensure that adult basic education continued to be a priority discussion in different circles throughout the city. New partnerships have formed including the Lawrence ESOL Task Force, led by Mayor Dan Rivera, to help coordinate ESOL services. Also, the Merrimack Adult Career Pathways working group has been formed with ABE programs, the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board and Northern Essex Community College. These groups have distinct purposes, but also a lot of overlap, or synergy, as we like to call it.

This diagram illustrates how partnerships in Lawrence intersect. Often the same representatives serve on more than one group, which ensures communication and cross-fertilization between groups. ABE members of the larger, more generalized partnership, the Community Pathways-Lawrence group, led by local ESE-funded programs, are also members of the Lawrence Learns English Task Force and the Career Pathways Working Group. These intersecting groups have developed a continuum of services and next steps opportunities for adult learners.

So when we think about ABE community planning, it’s important to realize that in addition to coming together as an ABE-focused group, becoming actively involved with other groups maximizes the impact that partnerships have on ABE programs and learners.

**Slide 15: Joint Activities**

Many collaborative efforts have benefitted ABE programs and learners in Lawrence. In 2011, six programs pooled their time and resources to develop a community-wide ABE assets and needs assessment, and in doing so, developed a plan of services for adult learners in the city, across all programs. The Lawrence ABE Assets and Needs Profile, published in November of 2011, has been a valuable tool and resource for ABE programs in Lawrence. In fact, we jointly submitted the profile as part of the ESE five-year funding proposal.

The Lawrence Community Pathways partnership has hosted and coordinated the Annual Family Literacy Night for over 10 years. This event is attended by more than 500 parents and children and includes parent workshops, stories and activities for the children, resource tables, library tours, and the last two years included a story read by Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera.

Because of the relationships built between adult basic education and workforce partners in the last several years, two ABE representatives have been appointed to the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board. I am now a member of the WIB Board, as is another ABE representative from the Lawrence Adult Learning Center.

Relationship building activities starting with NDEC’s strategic planning process in 2011 have resulted in a joint project with the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce and the six ESE-funded ABE programs in the Merrimack Valley WIB region to conduct an employer survey. So, this one relationship, built in 2011, has paved the way for this collaborative project with the Chamber of Commerce that will greatly inform the work we do in ABE to transition to WIOA.

Some other collaborative efforts that will support WIOA transition in Lawrence include ongoing communications between Valley Works Career Center and the Lawrence Community Partnership to post hot jobs and job fairs to the city-wide list-serve and presentations by the career center staff about their services at a staff training day at Northern Essex Community College. Lisa Remington from ValleyWorks Career Center will talk more about that in a few minutes.

Relationship building has played a huge role in learning about funding opportunities at NDEC. For example, funding was received from the WIB in 2009 as part of the ARRA initiative for NDEC to implement KeyTrain into our Certified Nurse Assistant program, and over time we expanded it to ESOL and ABE learners. As you know, KeyTrain is now Career Ready 101 and NDEC has become a leader in using this tool for adult learners in various ways.

NDEC-Lawrence also is the recipient of an Adult Career Pathways project in collaboration with the WIB and the career center. Because of our focus on health care occupations and the strong relationships we have built with workforce partners, we are a subcontractor for the Merrimack Valley WIB’s CommCorp Health Care Transformation Grant that supports incumbent workers at two area health care employers, with basic education, vocabulary, workshops and Career Ready 101. While these workers aren’t ABE students in the traditional sense, the model we have developed to provide on-site education will greatly support the transition into WIOA.

**Slide 16: Impact**

I cannot speak enough about the importance of relationship building in the work we do in adult basic education. It takes time and dedication, but through relationship building and actively seeking and entering partnerships, NDEC-Lawrence has built a continuum of education and support services that have a direct impact on learners, the programs we provide, and the community. For example, relationships developed with the community college through the ABE community planning partnership ensures access to higher levels of ESOL for NDEC-Lawrence learners, as well as providing a bridge to college for them. Partnerships built with the Workforce Investment Board have resulted in support for occupational skills training and career pathways that adult learners can enter as they move through ESOL levels. Relationships built with the ValleyWorks Career Center have resulted in collaborative activities that directly impact learners, such as access to the one stop for jobs, training, and other job-related services for students.

Building relationships builds program capacity, and increased capacity allows us to offer comprehensive services to learners. Students gain valuable skills, get jobs, go on to community college, or to the bridge to community college program, and become productive members of the community. The community is impacted with a pipeline of skilled and competent workers and community members. I’d like to turn this over to Lisa Remington, Operations Manager at ValleyWorks Career Center who will talk a little more about the partnership between adult basic education and workforce development in the Merrimack Valley.

**Slide 17: ValleyWorks Career Center**

Hello. My name is Lisa Remington and I am the WIOA Operations Manager at the ValleyWorks Career Center, the one-stop career center that provides workforce development services throughout the Merrimack Valley. I have worked at ValleyWorks since 2002 and in workforce development for 18 years. My career path throughout workforce development has been varied, and comprehensive, including working directly at a training program, as a career counselor, and now, as a manager.

ValleyWorks is part of a national network of One-Stop Career Centers, now called American Job Centers under WIOA legislation, that form the foundation of the state's delivery system for employment and training services for job seekers, employers, and their workers. Massachusetts American Job Centers serve as a vital link, connecting workers and employers to bring about economic opportunity.

At ValleyWorks, we collaborate with a variety of partners, including workforce, education partners, and community resource agencies, to provide wrap-around supports with the goal of customers completing their education and training, and moving into employment.

As Operations Manager, I supervise the employment and training counselors who work with adults and youth. These staff assist customers to access education, training, and other services leading to career path employment. Working with our ABE partners is critical to develop a pipeline of workers in our region and to offer individualized services to meet customers’ needs.

**Slide 18: ABE-Valley-Works Joint Activities**

Our work with ABE partners is as unique as our customers. For example, in one program, a ValleyWorks Business Service Representative provides quarterly on-site labor market presentations, highlighting various industries, the job opportunities there, and the steps to get in the door.

In the Lawrence community there is a great demand for ESOL classes. ValleyWorks has an ongoing relationship with Notre Dame Education Center and other ABE partners to refer our job seekers to ESOL and ABE classes. There is an ABE representative onsite at ValleyWorks who meets with the job seekers referred by our staff if they lack high school equivalency credentialing or those who have limited English skills. The ABE representative assesses their abilities and then makes referrals to education partners. We also provide re-assessments for ABE learners at a later date if there is a possibility they have increased their levels and may be ready for the next step to training.

Another example of how ValleyWorks partners with ABE is that this year I had the opportunity to attend a professional development day for ABE staff. I was able to give an overview of all of our services, and then focus on the steps we use to move a customer through our system. This presentation included information on our assessment process, testing requirements, and on-line tools such as Job Quest and “My Next Move.” I also walked them through our website, with screen shots, so they could see the resources that they could access for their students, such as upcoming Job Fairs, recruitments, and available tools including a Resume Worksheet in both English and Spanish. This was helpful to the teachers and administrators in understanding some of our processes. I was able to meet the ABE staff and discuss their confusion or understanding of our system, so that in the future, if they have questions, there is a ValleyWorks contact for them to call. These are just a few examples of how we have recently worked with ABE partners in the Merrimack Valley.

ValleyWorks is committed to building even stronger relationships as we move forward to transitioning to WIOA. If you aren’t partnering with your local area career center, don’t hesitate to contact them to talk about ways you can work together to meet your common goals. The link at the bottom of this slide will lead you to the American Job Center near you.

**Slide 19: Contact**

Thank you, Lisa, for being such a good partner with us and for providing some examples of how ABE and workforce development work together in the Merrimack Valley. It’s been a pleasure sharing with my ABE colleagues some ways ABE and workforce partners work together in Lawrence and how our partnerships impact the work we do with adult learners, in our programs, and in the community.

Please feel free to contact me with questions at the phone number or email listed on this slide.

**Slide 20: Contact**

Thank you for participating in this webinar. For further information on ABE community planning, please contact Kathy Rodriguez at the email address above.

This concludes Part 2 of the three-part recorded webinar on Resources and Strategies for Enhancing ABE-Workforce Partnerships. Don’t miss Part 3 which will provide myriad resources that will support partnership development as you transition your ABE program to align with WIOA.

Thank you.

This concludes Part 2 of the three-part recorded webinar on Resources and Strategies for Enhancing ABE-Workforce Partnerships. Don’t miss Part 3 which will provide myriad resources that will support partnership development as you transition your ABE program to align with WIOA.

Thank you.