

Program/Initiative Title: CareerONE Coleman Pilot Project
WDA Name: Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council

Overview describing the innovative practice

SBETC, District 742 Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Sauk Rapids manufacturing company Coleman forged a partnership in early July of 2017 to create a job training program called CareerONE Coleman. The program seeks to prepare individuals who face English language barriers and have “aged out” of high school and are unemployed, with the skills needed to fill open positions with employers. Fourteen students are currently enrolled in the joint training program and will have the option to interview for employment opportunities with Coleman upon completion of the program.

CareerONE Coleman is a five week program with 4 components including literacy/ adult diploma program, employability instruction, mentoring by a Somali elder, and on-the-job training. The classroom training consists of English, reading, writing, basic math, production safety, work related vocabulary as well as soft skills including organization, time management, responsibility, teamwork and leadership. SBETC has set up a mobile computer lab at Coleman in Sauk Rapids where the class is held, to assist with the classroom portion of the program. The on-the-job training facilitated by Coleman allows participants to learn a variety of manufacturing skills and duties on the production floor. A dedicated Somali elder is volunteering his time to mentor these youth which is an important piece as well. Participants are enrolled in the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) with SBETC.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

The main goals for these youth are to increase their literacy skills leading to a diploma, enhance their work readiness skills, obtain work experience, keep engaged in the community, obtain employment, and continue their education. The students earn a weekly stipend for their work and skill development. The students are working diligently and have come a long way in such a short amount of time. They are learning some important life and employment skills that will really help them move forward.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

CareerONE Coleman benefits the employer (Coleman):

- Increase an individual’s work skills through training and mentoring the workforce
- Seen as a community partner
- Opportunity to interview and hire the trained participants upon completion of the program
- Generate interest in the younger generation and recruit future employment candidates

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

District 742 Adult Basic Education (ABE), Sauk Rapids manufacturing company Coleman, and a Somali elder mentor. Our partners from District 742 and Coleman have been so willing and open to this new program and we are so glad to have our Somali mentor on board sharing his time to mentor these youth.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Program funding contributors include the Otto Bremer Foundation and the Initiative Foundation.

Ideas for replication/lessons learned

So far this pilot program is off to a great start. According to St. Cloud ABE, the number of students “aging out” will grow exponentially in the future. We are hoping to be able to continue this same model with other businesses who are interested in investing in the community.