

MassSTEP

SKILLS · TRAINING · EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Newsletter

ADULT & COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICES

75 PLEASANT STREET | MALDEN, MA 02148 | [HTTPS://WWW.DOE.MASS.EDU/ACLS/](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/)

MassSTEP PROGRAMS

If you are interested in learning more about MassSTEP services please visit the FY22 MassSTEP Program Directory posted on our [MassSTEP webpage](#).

All MassSTEP programs are listed by region and you can get detailed information about each program by clicking on its profile. Each profile provides a program description, schedule, contact information, and other information about the service offering.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Cheryll Herrera of the Abisi Adult Education Center (Lowell Public Schools) MassSTEP Program

By Adriana Giraldo, Student Services Coordinator and Elizabeth McKiernan, Program Director

Cheryll Herrera immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic in 2014. In March of 2016, she enrolled at the Abisi Adult Education Center/Lowell Public Schools. She was placed in a High Beginner/Low Intermediate class upon enrollment. Cheryll had good attendance and persevered through several levels to the High Intermediate class over 5 years. In the spring of 2021, Cheryll learned about our MassSTEP program and wanted to train to become a Certified Nurse Assistant. Like so many other ESOL students across Massachusetts, Cheryll wanted a career that would begin with a strong training program in which she could continue to work on her English skills while preparing to work in a healthcare setting.



Cheryll Herrera during the internship

Cheryll's story is similar to many others, but what is unique about Cheryll is that she is visually impaired. She started to lose her eyesight at the age of nine, and it worsened through her teenage years. Cheryll graduated from high school and decided to move to the

United States. Cheryll eventually connected with the MA Commission for the Blind. She began to work with Priscilla Ngome, an MCB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, who happened to be one of our program's WIOA partners.

As Adriana Giraldo, Abisi's Student Services Coordinator, began recruitment for the upcoming cohort, Cheryll expressed a keen interest. Abisi's partners in the MassSTEP program, International Institute of New England-Lowell and Middlesex Community College, conducted interviews. As you might expect, there were some concerns among all of us about Cheryll's inclusion in the program. Would she be able to complete the coursework? Would she be able to manage the practicum? And the big question...could Cheryll take and pass

the Red Cross exam to earn her certification?

The answer to all three questions is a resounding YES! Cheryll's MCB counselor, Priscilla, remarked that 'she had never seen Cheryll so motivated and happy about doing something'. Priscilla assisted by providing an adaptive computer that enabled Cheryll to be better able to complete her coursework. Sherry Spaulding, IINE-Lowell instructor, prepared PDFs of all her coursework so Cheryll could enlarge the readings as needed. Debra Shaw, the MCC nursing instructor, shared that 'Cheryll provided safe and compassionate care to residents in a long term care facility and had a good work ethic in the classroom as well as the clinical area'. Her journey has involved a combination of efforts, but mostly Cheryll's work ethic and enthusiasm have enabled her to successfully complete the program.

Cheryll went to the Dominican Republic to spend some time with her family, but she is back in Lowell and is now preparing to enter the workforce. IINE-Lowell and MCB will help with job placement. MA Rehab is ready to assist as well. Cheryll has also expressed interest in continuing her training in Medical Assisting.

As we celebrate Cheryll's success, we also need to take note of the collaboration of the WIOA partners and others who have contributed to her success. Because of Cheryll's efforts and the willingness of the WIOA partners, we can all celebrate a successful story.



Cheryll Herrera at the CNA graduation ceremony



MassSTEP CNA PROGRAM AT THE WORCESTER ADULT LEARNING CENTER

By Kristin Bafaro, Career Navigator



Five happy CNA graduates from the MassSTEP CNA program at Worcester Adult Learning Center

The Worcester Adult Learning Center (WALC) congratulates and celebrates recent graduates of the Fall 2021 cohort of their Certified Nurse Aide training program. Students completed a 5-week CNA course in partnership with Fieldstone School that provides classroom and clinical hands-on practice to work toward a state recognized certification, all while receiving ESOL and study support throughout the program. Jennifer Brunelle, WALC Director, said, "This was a great group, and we're so proud of them and what they accomplished. We can't wait to see what they do next!"

In addition to providing academic support, WALC also works with graduates on resumes and job search, connecting them with opportunities through employer partners which include Oriol Health Care, Notre Dame Health Care, Reliant Medical Group, and UMass Memorial Health Care. Additionally, many CNA graduates continue their education in the healthcare field with additional training through the Worcester Jobs Fund or QCC and/or pursue a degree through the QCC Future Focus program. Kristin Bafaro, WALC Career Navigator, shared, "We are so grateful for our partnerships and opportunities for students, and we hope to continue to strengthen these pathways."

In a combined effort of instructors, advisors, and employers, and in the most recent cohort there were 8 students in all who were trained with many being hired by collaborating employer partners such as; UMass Memorial Health Care, Oriol Health Care, Notre Dame and several others. Two other students are finalizing their plans and next steps. This school year, 10 CNA graduates from past cohorts were admitted to Quinsigamond Community College through their Future Focus Program to continue their education in the healthcare field. Congratulations to all.

The Worcester Adult Learning Center serves over 300 students each year through ESOL and ABE classes, in addition to this CNA program offered twice each school year. More information about this program can be found on [WALC's MassSTEP CNA program webpage](#).



Mount Wachusett
Community College

BHCC & LARE INSTITUTE COLLABORATE FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE CERTIFICATION & MICROSOFT OFFICE 365

By Jemal Haynes, Site Coordinator/Vocational Counselor

MassSTEP/IET has devised a program through DESE (Dept of Education and Secondary Education), and the partnership between Bunker Hill Community College and LARE Institute. The program is designed to enroll 15 participants in the residential areas of Chelsea, East Boston, Everett, Malden, MA et al. into an education and training program. The individuals in need of a high school equivalency (HiSET), workforce development training (Customer Service certification and Microsoft Office 365) and employment placement services can qualify for the program. MassSTEP will accept participants shy of receiving their high school diploma placed at the 11th/12th grade level equivalency at assessment testing. Participants are required to take a pre and post MAPT (Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Tests) for program learner gains. The program is fully funded by DESE, students have free access to all materials, resources and educational tools.

The program runs four days a week: Monday through Thursday between the hours of: 9AM to 12PM, entailing twelve hours of class instruction per week total. At LARE, the program is run through the fiscal year, which participants are scheduled to partake in Microsoft Office/Customer Service classes on Monday and Tuesdays; and participate in HiSET class on Wednesday and Thursdays of each week. Upon completion of the participant's programming, HiSET recipients can move onto furthering their education in pursuit of a secondary education or training program. Individuals who receive their Customer Service and/or Microsoft Office 365 certification(s), have the opportunity to work in the customer service sector within the workforce. Companies that are looking for such recipients range from: Homewood Suites (hotel industry), Encore Casino in Boston, and Logan Airport, et al, as participants utilize their data entry, software knowledge from Microsoft Office 365, and custom service fundamentals acquired within LARE Institute's Customer Service and Sales Rep certification from NRF (National Retail Federation).

Currently, LARE has only one recipient thus far receive their HSE (HiSET) with customer service certification within FY'22, (several others have received their Customer Service certification), which has taken place at the beginning of the month of February 2022. The program has an

BHCC & LARE INSTITUTE COLLABORATE for CUSTOMER SERVICE CERTIFICATION & MICROSOFT OFFICE 365, continued

expectation assuming each participant will be enrolled and complete the entirety of the programming by the end of June 2022. The aforementioned recipient will begin working on her MOS 365 certification within the week, completing the program's educational and training design. Within previous cohorts in IET/MassSTEP, we have had participants who have received their customer service certification and now are employed at Encore Boston (Hostess/Greeter), State Garden Incorporated (Customer Service Rep), Boston Logan Airport (Ticket Agent) and sales representatives at Sprint/T-Mobile, etc.

The final component is enlisting with our job placement specialist, who we have onsite working with each participant throughout the year. The purpose is for job readiness and becoming gainfully

employed at the close of their educational attainment. Each participant is equipped with updating their resume, mock interviews, job- readiness workshops, provided with local job fair announcements and are assessed for their student's strengths/weaknesses in preparation upon entry into the workforce. Most importantly, participants have access to the connections and resources for employment opportunities presented to them through the placement specialist at LARE Institute.



THE IELCE PROGRAM: UNDERSTANDING ITS DESIGN AND CHALLENGES IN MEETING IMMIGRANT LEARNER NEEDS FROM THE MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE

By Michelle Perry, ACLS

In the February 2022 article, *The IELCE Program: Understanding Its Design and Challenges in Meeting Immigrant Learner's Needs* in the **Migration Policy Institute** newsletter, new research examines the effectiveness and the load that can be placed on the adult education providers who participate in these programs. The article discusses the changes to the WIOA policies since 2014 which, "brought notable changes to adult education systems." The report speaks to one of the first public studies of the IELCE programs and, "examines the program's design and the challenges it has faced, including those related to accessibility, practicality, and demand."

One of the key findings in the article is, "Many adult education providers have found it challenging to build and maintain IELCE-IET programs due to low enrollment, the resource-intensive nature of IET activities, geographic limitations and difficulties forming partnerships with workforce training institutions." Although the report does substantially support this view, it also offers examples of, innovative practices used by some programs. The report suggests:

- **"Developing bridge programming.** ...Providers can also use bridge programs to create pathways and opportunities for participants to earn credentials and qualifications along the way (stackable credentials)."
- **"Offering individualized instruction for IET.** ...This approach can also empower participants to enroll in training they feel is most relevant to their situation and goals..."

The report continues to support these goals above with a strong suggestion of reexamining some of the WIOA 243 requirements and creating more flexibility in the IELCE funding requirements. In its final note to readers the report highlights, "Attempts to address economic, civic, and linguistic integration of immigrants via WIOA Title II funds must recognize that the integration needs of the United States 'immigrants are as diverse as the immigrant population itself.'"

To read the full report: *The IELCE Program: Understanding Its Design and Challenges in Meeting Immigrant Learner's Needs*



Web | <https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/MassSTEP/default.html>

Email | derek.kalchbrenner@mass.gov

Phone | 781-338-3812

Address | 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148

