

Revised Vocational Technical Education Frameworks Coming Soon!

By Derek Kalchbrenner, ACLS

The DESE Office for College, Career, and Technical Education will release revised Vocational Technical Education Frameworks this winter. The revised frameworks include Dental Assisting, Health Assisting, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, Information Support Services & Networking, and Programming & Web Development, among other occupations. The draft frameworks now include skill levels: basic, essential, advanced, and advanced plus. In addition, equipment lists, and hours of instruction and industry-recognized credentials charts are included. All industry-recognized credentials have been categorized as either "Essential" or "Optional." Subject Matter Experts have provided expertise for the revised Strand 2 Technical Knowledge and Skills standards and objectives.

Many MassSTEP programs involve collaborations with the state's vocational technical education schools. Please see the statewide directory to find comprehensive and vocational technical education schools in your local workforce area.

Please watch the Vocational Technical Education Frameworks page for the final versions of the frameworks.

FY2023 & FY2024: MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL Planning and Implementation Requests for Proposals

By Jolanta Conway, ACLS

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Adult and Community Learning Services unit, released the FY2024-FY2028 Open and Competitive MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL Requests for Proposals (RFPs). This grant offers applicants the opportunity to apply for both optional planning grants and implementation grants. Planning proposals were due on February 17, 2023 and the implementation proposals are due at the Department by 3:00 PM Eastern on Friday, May 12, 2023.

All currently funded MassSTEP ESOL and ABE programs must apply for the new funding cycle as all current grants end in 2023. Programs may submit multiple planning and implementation proposals. For example, an applicant could submit a proposal for a MassSTEP ESOL advanced manufacturing and another for a MassSTEP ABE welding.

Approximately \$100,000 is available for planning grants and applicants may request up to \$10,000 for a planning grant to determine the readiness of the partnership to support a multi-year instructional program. Approximately \$2,500,000 is available for implementation grants and applicants may request up to \$50,000 per cohort of students for up to three cohorts or \$150,000 total for implementation grants to deliver MassSTEP ABE or MassSTEP ESOL services. If the costs per cohort are above \$50,000 applicants must provide a rationale.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Training Programs Lead Towards a New and Better Life

By Tirsit Gedamu, Student, Cambridge Community Learning Center



I am Tirsit Gedamu and I graduated from the **Just A Start/Community Learning Center (CLC) Adult Careers Information Technology program** in September of 2022. I heard about the program from the Cambridge Community Learning Center where I was taking English classes to improve my language skills.

I am originally from Ethiopia where I earned a Bachelor's degree of Accounting and worked as a Purchaser in a Secondary School. When I emigrated to the U.S., I was able to find a position as a Server at a hotel while learning English. I enrolled in the Just A Start Adult Careers/CLC Information Technology program in January of 2022 and gained hands on technical skills, teamwork, and communication skills.

In my new contract role as a *Technology Associate with Cambridge Savings Bank*, I am able to use the hands on technical skills, teamwork, and communication skills I learned from the Just A Start/CLC program. The technical skills help me to do my job confidently. The communication skills help me to communicate with other employees during meetings and through email. Engaging with different coworkers working in different IT roles has helped me learn new things every day. These experiences have helped me grow in the IT profession.

After I gain some experience at this level and continue my education, I would like to work as a Network Administrator in the future. **The Just A Start/CLC IT training program has given me the opportunity to be in the IT field.**

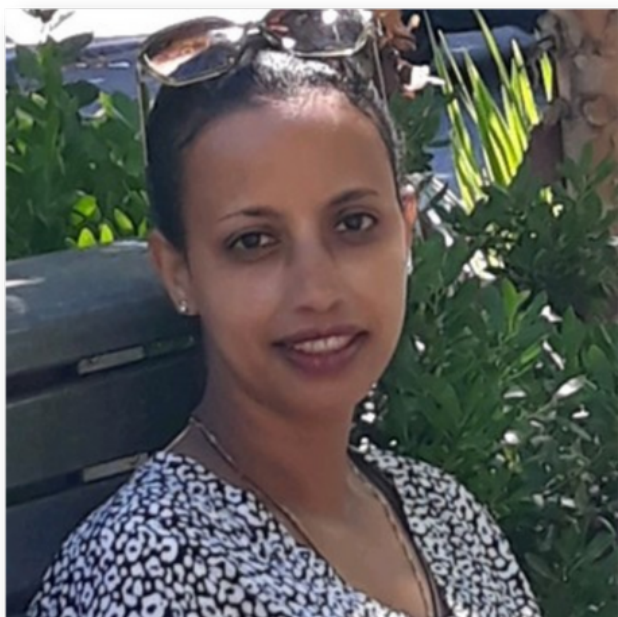


Photo: Tirsit Gedamu, Student, Cambridge Learning Center



Transforming Lives Through Adult Education

NEW PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: North Adams Public Schools and McCann Technical High School Partner for First Berkshire County MassSTEP Program



By Annie Pecor, Director of Northern Berkshire Adult Education and Workforce Development

The Northern Berkshire Adult Education Program, part of North Adams Public Schools, is excited to launch the first MassSTEP program in Berkshire County. The **North Adams Public Schools is honored to partner with McCann Technical High School for a 16 week Culinary Arts Program** located at McCann. This partnership is the beginning of bringing these life changing MassSTEP programs to Berkshire County residents to pave the way for more opportunities in the workforce.

With the Berkshires being a hub for Hospitality and Tourism, **earning the OSHA-10 credential, earning the food handler ServSafe certification** and engaging in all aspects of kitchen life, will prepare students for the reality of the workforce. Students will also craft a cover letter and a resume and receive interview practice with feedback. Building connections with industry partners such as Williams College and Mezza will also serve to support employment at the program's completion. The program will end in May, as the busy season begins in the Berkshires with locals and tourists alike taking advantage of Tanglewood, MassMoCA and Mount Greylock to name a few local attractions in our small corner of Massachusetts.

Northern Berkshire Adult Education Director Annie Pecor commented, "The high quality of the McCann Culinary Arts Program, coupled with the knowledge and compassion of our adult education teacher and advising staff, provide our students with a top notch education in and out of the kitchen." Currently, seven students are enrolled in the program, where they receive instruction and practice on everything from comprehensive breakfast delicacies to customer service to poultry preparation. A highlight in March will be the McCann Tea Room experience. The McCann Tea Room is open to the public for lunch where McCann high school students prepare and serve delicious meals. Our MassSTEP students will invite one or two people for dinner, and they



Photo: Culinary Arts teacher Patrick Cariddi instructs Julianna Thrasher during a lesson on cooking Hot Sandwiches.

will be in charge of preparing and serving a meal to their loved ones.

Staff and students are also looking forward to Berkshire County business owners and managers visiting the program to talk about the hiring process, the skills they look for during interviews and to provide an opportunity for students to ask questions about the industry. North Adams Public Schools, Northern Berkshire Adult Education and McCann Technical each have connections to the workforce in Berkshire County, which makes collaboration with a diverse set of businesses easy.

Northern Berkshire Adult Education serves both Adult Education students and English Speakers of Other Language students and is continuing to grow and evolve to offer services to the community.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: My Journey

By Alexia McFarlin, Student, MassSTEP Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable at Quinsigamond Community College, Adult Learning Community Learning Center



My name is Alexia McFarlin, I was attending an online school due to health issues. I was at the point where I was so far behind in school, I decided the best thing for me to do was drop out and pursue getting my GED. The school administrator told me about the program offered at Quinsigamond Adult Community Learning Center. It was a free course to prepare me for passing my GED exams.

I was so far from any normal schedule or routine, so I enjoyed my classes every morning. The kindness that came from the teachers and administrators was what I needed in my life. **They got me wanting to wake up in the morning and to learn how to better myself.** They pushed me to take my tests early because I didn't see what I was capable of, and I passed all my tests with flying colors. I even passed all my tests within just a few months of starting the program.

My administrator introduced me to the Accounts Payable Accounts Receivable program at the main campus. The program requires a lot of hard work, but I really enjoy it. The group we are in couldn't be any better. Everyone is close and we all support each other, which has made a significant impact on my college experience.

Being in a small group makes learning so much easier for me, so things really worked out. I am going to use my knowledge from this program, so I have an understanding of how to keep track of finances and take care of a business. Quinsigamond is even going to help me find a job when the course is over. Eventually after some time, I would like to get my cosmetology license and become a hairdresser and have my own salon.

"The programs at Quinsigamond Community College changed my life for the better and are playing a huge role in laying out the foundation of my life."

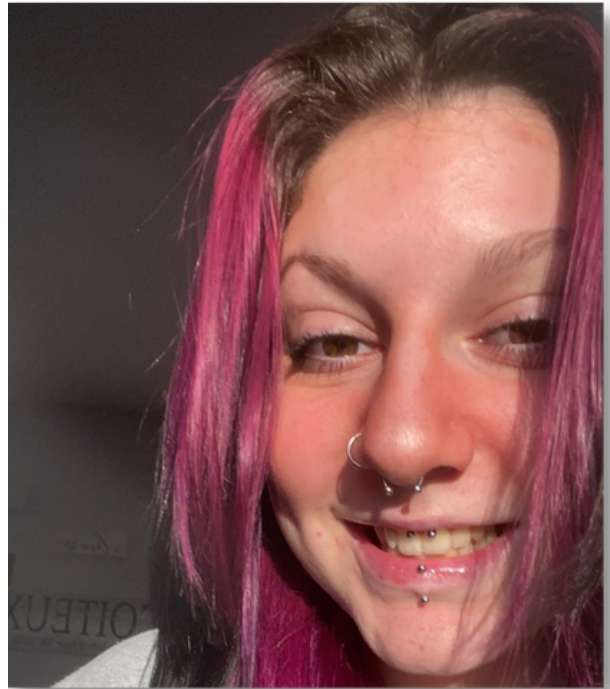


Photo: Alexia McFarlin, Student/MassSTEP Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable at Quinsigamond Community College



COLLABORATION SPOTLIGHT: Creating a Culture of Innovation



By Dr. Nadeem Sikandar, Director of Cont. Education and Career Readiness, Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.

Valley Opportunity Council (VOC) will enroll 24 students this year into our innovative ESOL/CDL program. We thank MassSTEP and our **long time partner vendor United Tractor Trailer School (UTTS)**. This program is one-of-a-kind focused on commercial driving licenses (CDL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes that prepare students for rewarding careers, such as driving school buses, trailers, trucks, and other large commercial vehicles. Students attend CDL classes at UTTS and contextualized ESOL classes at the VOC. VOC staff ESOL Instructor Jennifer Malanowski and Advisor Emma Almanzar are dedicated to each student's success. They will provide substantial language support to students as they learn new skills in the ESOL/CDL program and will prepare them for a meaningful, life-changing career.

UTTS has seen the need for language support for students at UTTS and is excited to collaborate with VOC on this program. Jose at UTTS is eager to support his students as he witnessed firsthand the CDL driver shortage and believes this partnership with VOC is a great way to give ESOL students a chance to learn how to drive a commercial vehicle and address the need for more drivers in the industry. **Students will be prepared to enter the workforce as highly trained professionals after completing the program.** One of the vital features of this program is its lucrative job market in Massachusetts, providing those who obtain their CDL anywhere from \$30.12 to \$49.00 hourly starting salary and the opportunity to further grow, and even to start their own business in the in demand field.

The end goal of the VOC MassSTEP ESOL/CDL Program is the success of our students, passing their CDL and obtaining meaningful careers that mitigate the Cliff Effect. **The partnership between UTTS and VOC extends beyond classroom instruction to include career placement services for students in the program.** Students will not only have access to UTTS' career services, which are dedicated to assisting students in finding a job that is the right fit, but will also work one-on-one with their VOC Advisor to work on their resume-building skills and practice soft skills. At UTTS, students can network with many trucking companies that UTTS works closely with. The proud graduates of UTTS love to help people find jobs. One excited student, a single mother, has joined the program to provide a better life for her daughter, while another student wants to earn his CDL to get a better job to support his family. All of our students are motivated by the opportunity! **The MassSTEP partnership between VOC and UTTS is an opportunity to provide life-changing results for our students.**



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