

INNOVATIVE BRIGHT PRACTICES

1/14/20

Wabash Area Development, Inc. Head Start had a challenging issue related to mandatory supervisory training for center directors. DCFS requires center directors to have a Preschool Administration class. Gateways will not accept the class as a credential unless it has a grade, not a pass/fail. We enter all of our staff into Gateways and we needed the credential to earn the Director Credential. This credential will assist in maintaining or receiving the highest circle of quality from INCCRRA. The only way we could get a grade was through college credit.

Paula Maloney, CLASS Coach / Education Coordinator brought this issue to my attention and asked if she could contact Wabash Valley College to brainstorm some ideas. Unless the class was online, it would be impossible for all three center supervisor to be in one class together because our agency is very rural; each supervisor lives an hour to two hours away from each other.

Paula has a Master's Degree. The college liaison and Paula created a request to the college Dean and then to the college President to approve Paula to teach the class to WADI center supervisors on work time for college credit. (They also asked for the class to be at no charge because our organization is non-profit.) The Dean and President approved with the following conditions:

*A syllabus would need to be submitted for approval by Paula. The syllabus would need to follow the college guidelines.

*The class required 45 hours of face to face contact for class time, 90 hours of homework assignments, required participation, and a graded final exam, not a pass/fail.

*A Wabash Valley College staff member would need to be present for the classes to assure all is followed. (The liaison agreed to do this.)

The college approved for the class to be taught by our WADI Coordinator for college credit!

The Education Coordinator was able to conduct the classes at our Central Office. She trained 6 staff members and all 6 received college credit, making our program compliance with DCFS standards and credentialing through Gateways. We were able to train and obtain college credit for 3 center supervisors and 3 center teachers who cover as center directors.

The program benefited from tailoring the training to fit our program. All college classes teach with broad goals and objectives in mind to prepare the student for more job opportunities than just Head Start. We were able to tailor this college approved course to our agency and our own Head Start program. The class was designed for Head Start supervisors, using our own policies and procedures along with Head Start, DCFS, and State Early Learning standards.

What was to cost? Free! The college gave our program In-Kind for the cost of college tuition for each participant. **We didn't even have to pay tuition!** Additionally, we received In-Kind for the liaison that took time to come to every class to observe.

This was a win/win for our agency! Staff received program specific quality training, the program saved money, the program gained In-Kind, the program also created a strong community partner through the process. Additionally, the college liaison learned about our program and gained knowledge to better understand our services. She told us that she learned so much and was glad to attend our class. She was always an advocate for Head Start, but now; her belief in our program is even stronger after attending the class.