



The Faribault WorkForce Center is home to a small but mighty group of workforce professionals who have made a conscious decision to design flexible programming to meet the needs of the uniquely diverse population we serve. Faribault is home to a growing number of Somali residents. Our Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and Diversionary Work Program (DWP) Career Planners work with an Interpreter, Faysel Ali, for our English as a Second Language (ESL) Somali participants who need translation assistance during their scheduled appointments. In our Resource Area, we have a Career Tree that has pictures and names of our staff so that participants who have difficulty speaking English can point to their Career Planner on the wall when showing up for appointments, submitting their job logs, or documents.

We have established a new partnership with Somali Community Resettlement (SCR)

Our organizations work together in the best interest of Rice County Somali Immigrant Refugee Program participants. Faysel Ali is our Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI) liaison, working closely with SCR. We have weekly meetings to go over scheduling for appointments that will require a Somali Interpreter. Together, we developed a class for Immigrant Refugees who are newcomers. The class, "Life in America," addresses employer expectations, job search activities, etc. There will also be a concentrated effort to establish career pathways and relationship building with local employers for our entry level ESL job seekers. In addition, there has been a need for assistance with immigration concerns. Senator Tina Smith's staff has plans to help answer immigration questions at the Faribault WorkForce Center in the coming months.

Faribault WorkForce Center Classes

- Our Driving Made Easy Class will return this summer as a tutorial for the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) manual, which has been an issue for our ESL participants. Many individuals are using permits because they cannot pass the exam to get their driver's license. We are looking for a way to assist in funding, through the Faribault Public Schools, for the Behind the Wheel training. This may be through a grant opportunity.
- The Northstar Digital Literacy Basic Computer Class began in April 2018 at the Faribault Diversity Coalition. The class is taught by Rebecca Zoubek, WDI Career Planner, and Faysel Ali. This 45-minute class, taking place on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12:00pm, is a hit. There are seven laptop computers and every laptop is in use.
- We offer both Job Club and Creative Writing classes with Kenneth Johnson, the new Workforce Development Representative with Job Service. Kenneth comes to us from Riverland College and his background in education has been a gift to this office. He has also agreed to help with establishing a class on entrepreneurship.

The Faribault WorkForce Center is a welcoming environment. There is a selection of coffee or tea and a place to rest while waiting. The staff will greet you and ask if you need assistance when you enter the Resource Area. What's most evident is that it's consistently open to growth and change.

*Sonji Davis, Rice County Area Manager
Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI)*