



CASE STUDY:

# Bolster Apprenticeship Pipelines with English Upskilling



Apprenticeships connect workers with jobs in high-demand fields and boost employers' bottom lines. Yet across the country, English barriers keep adult English learners — a talent pool that now represents 1 in 10 working-age adults in the U.S. — from accessing these high-impact programs. An innovative pre-apprenticeship program with Maine-based Lewiston Adult Education is closing the gap.

Lewiston's program connects adult English learners — who represent 57 countries and speak 43 languages other than English — with a mix of career skills, English skills, digital literacy, and workforce readiness courses. Participants earn a series of industry-recognized health credentials, culminating in placement as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) apprentices with area hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Lewiston tapped EnGen to bolster participants' career-aligned English skills and digital skills. The program is now expanding to the education and finance sectors, connecting more adult English learners with career pathways in high-demand fields.

“We are thrilled that certified pre-apprenticeship programs, like the one at Lewiston Adult Education, are **opening doors for multilingual learners** and other under-represented populations to enter registered apprenticeship programs in Maine.”

- Joan Dolan

*Director of Apprenticeship at the Maine Department of Labor*



**90%** of EnGen learners improved their confidence in using English.



**85%** improved their job skills



**95%** improved their digital literacy



**84%** of pre-apprenticeship graduates found employment as CNAs

### EnGen learners enrolled in Lewiston's pre-apprenticeship program describe our real-world impact:

“I passed the **CNA English test.**”

“EnGen helps me with the PSS [Personal Support Specialist credential] training process. **I'm doing all these things without interpretation or translation.**”

“I am more **confident to talk with everybody** because I can understand and communicate very well.”

“EnGen helps me a lot with **vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and understanding.**”

# STEPS TO SUCCESS

Lewiston's pre-apprenticeship program is bolstering the local healthcare sector, placing more than 35 highly qualified candidates - all adult English learners - in roles with local health employers, with 28 more in the pipeline heading into the upcoming CNA class. Two years post-launch, all apprentices are thriving in their roles, a boon for a sector with exceptionally high turnover rates. The pre-apprenticeship program holds promise to scale to other communities. Here are three insights for other workforce leaders interested in replicating Lewiston's success.



**1. Build cross-sector support.** Lewiston's pre-apprenticeship pathway includes support from Lewiston Adult Education, the Maine Apprenticeship Program, and a network of six local healthcare employers that hire participants for one-year apprenticeships. Cross-sector partnerships between adult educators and employers are critical to ensure that apprenticeships are prepared for success in the workplace - and can access on-the-job training.



**2. Prioritize access and impact.** Lewiston's cohorts meet three days per week, giving participants time to work or tend to caregiving duties on off days. The pathway consists of three levels, each resulting in an industry-recognized credential. While a full 85% of learners complete the full CNA training, the program is designed to ensure that learners can get a full-time job after completing any of the three levels.



**3. Recognize English skills as workforce skills.** The pre-apprenticeship curriculum integrates career and technical training with other essential workforce skills, including English skills. Lewiston Adult Education has tapped EnGen to provide on-demand, career-aligned English upskilling to participants. With courses like "English for Certified Nursing Assistants," EnGen seamlessly complements Lewiston's existing curriculum and boosts instructors' capacity to offer personalized instruction to learners.

**“Having multilingual CNA apprentices trained through the Lewiston Adult Education program has been a **game-changer for our organization.** The digital curriculum not only equips them with essential healthcare language but also ensures they are workforce-ready from day one. **Their ability to communicate effectively and confidently in a clinical setting has enriched our patient care and strengthened our team dynamics.**”**

- Monique Roy

*Vice President-Learning, Culture and Workforce Development, Central Maine Healthcare*

## SCALING IMPACT

A Certified B Corporation, EnGen partners with employers, adult educators, workforce development organizations, and state governments to open pathways to careers and credentials in high-demand industries.



**LEARN HOW**  
ENGEN CAN WORK AT  
YOUR ORGANIZATION.