

Ability Building Center

Year-end Program Outcomes Report 2007



... ***The Mission of ABC*** is to improve the quality of life in Southern Minnesota by providing rehabilitation and employment services for persons with disabilities and other special needs.

ACRONYM KEY

AE	Ability Enterprises	CD	Chemical Dependant
AU	Abilities Unlimited	MR	Mental Retardation
CBE	Center Based Employment	MI	Mental Illness
CBScE	Community Based School Employment	OTW	Options To Work
DT&H	Day Training and Habilitation	SE	Supported Employment
ILS	Independent living skills	TTW	Ticket to Work
PACTT	People Achieving Change through Technology	VOC	Vocational Evaluation
LD	Learning Disability	VA	Veterans Administration
P/N	Physiological/Neurological	WAT	Work Adjustment Training
		WI	Woodland Industries



What Matters™. United Way of Olmsted County Partner Agency



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Accredited by the Commission on
Rehabilitation Facilities



Accreditation of

“I am deeply grateful to the many staff at ABC who took an interest in my vocational and personal future. When I started down this path, I felt hopeless and lost. But you cared enough to hold my hand and lead me where I wanted to go, even though I did not know where that was! THANK YOU!”

~An ABC “Graduate”

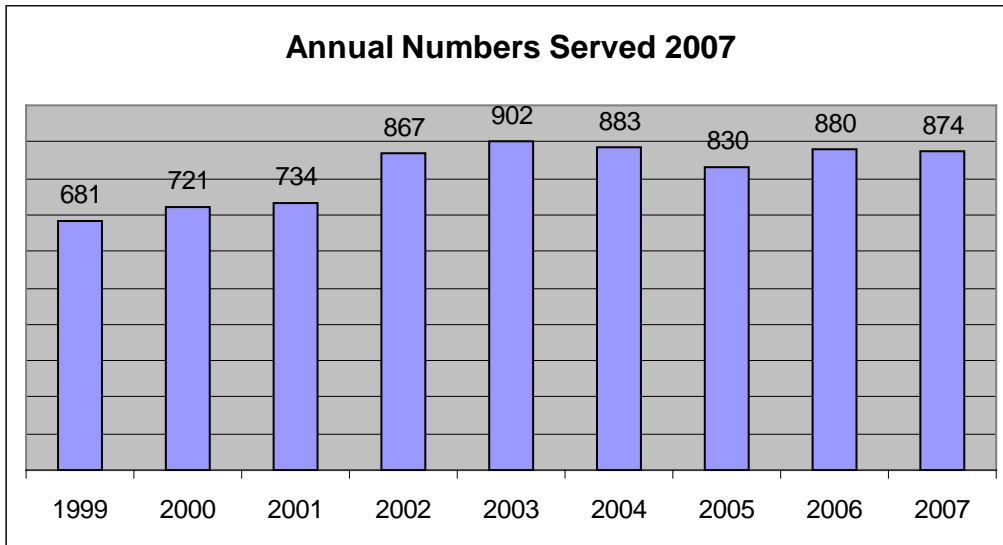
Foreword

As a non-profit organization, ABC is accountable to those participants it serves and to the community. The information presented in this report serves as a year-end accounting to the community on the impact of ABC's services to those it serves, its' funders, and to the communities in which it operates for the 2007 program year.

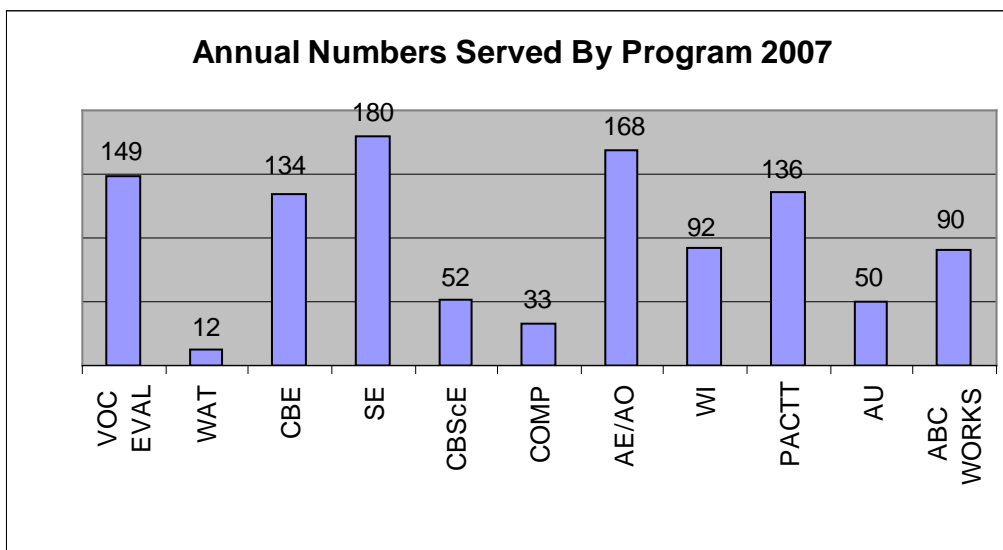
ABC is committed to providing the best possible services to those that utilize its programs. The information presented in this report is a reflection on the recent history from which ABC has incorporated new ideas, new approaches, and insight on best practices. ABC strives to incorporate new methodology in measuring growth and to collect regular feedback from its stakeholders.

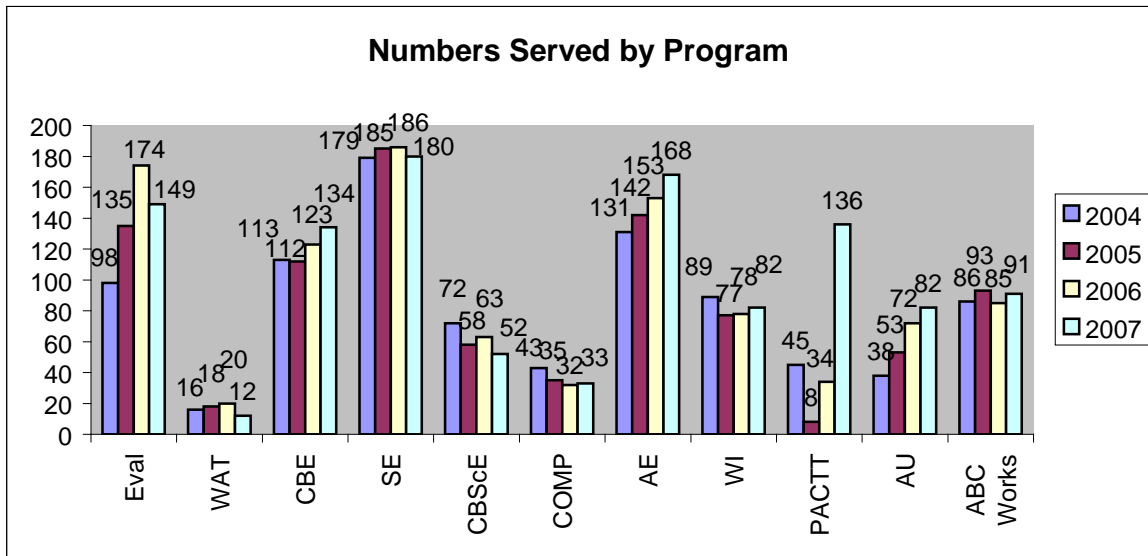
ABC trusts that by presenting this information it will invite discussion and participation from its stakeholders so that the agency may continue to improve its proficiencies and advance its services in the field of rehabilitation.

Program Demographics

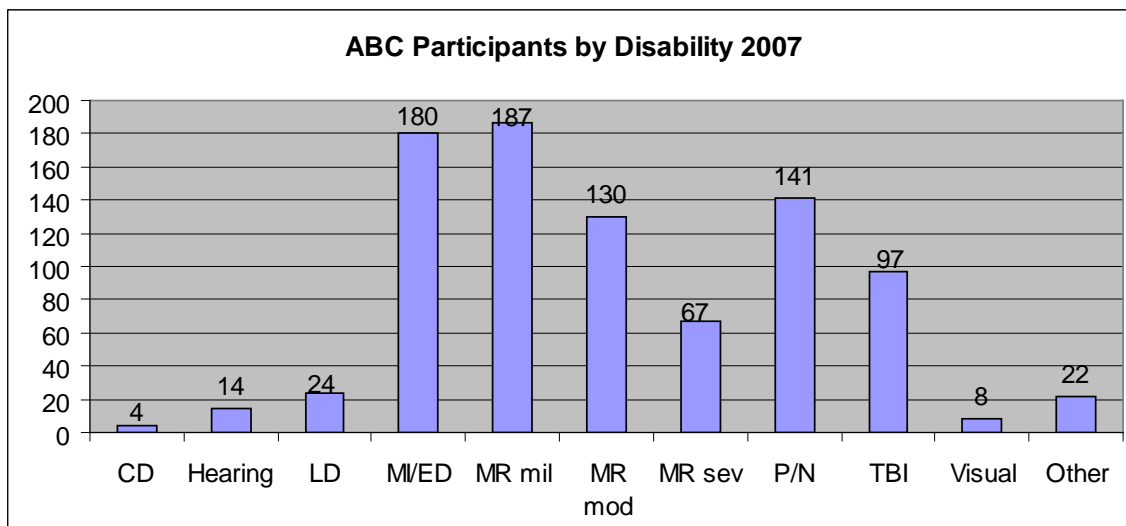


The chart below represents the distribution of participants served across program areas in 2007. The current numbers appear to indicate some stability of the number of people served, with no substantial change from 2006 to 2007. For 2007, Ability Building Center has served 874 unduplicated persons across all areas of programming.

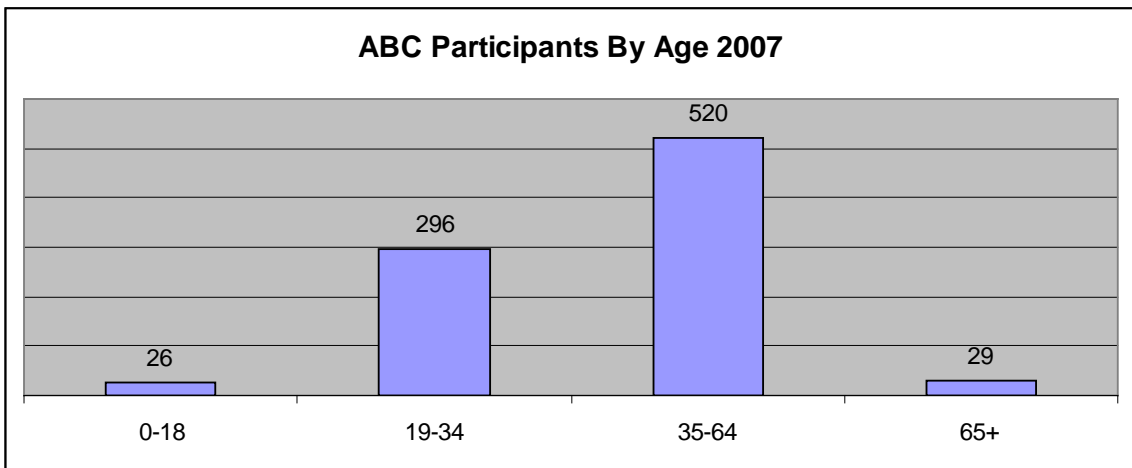
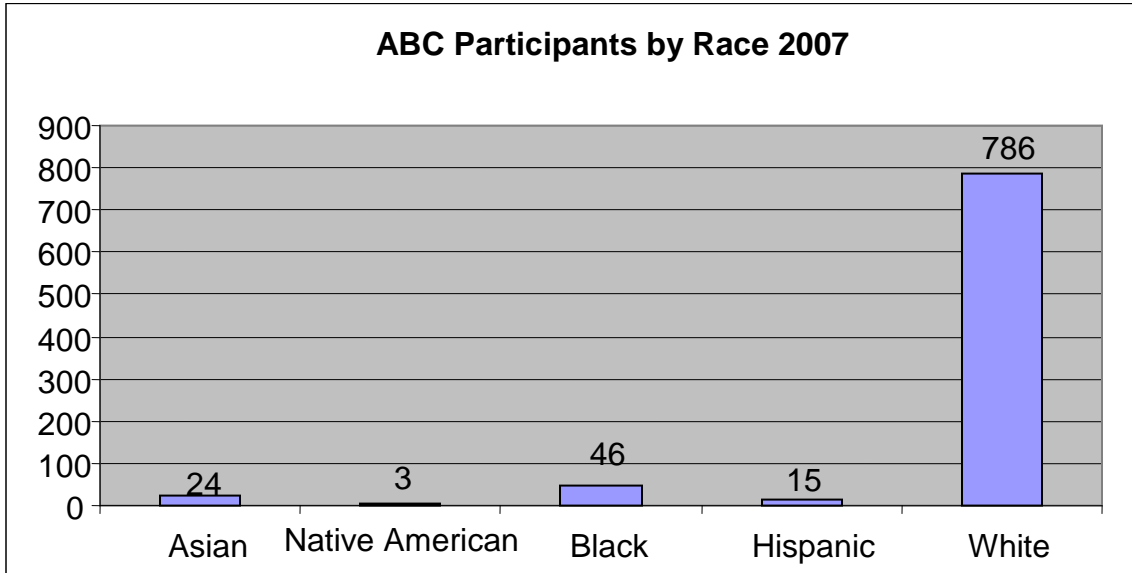




One of the most notable program demographics is the growth in the numbers served by Ability Enterprises and the PACTT program. Both programs experienced significant growth during 2007. Within the PACTT program, much of the increase in numbers served is the result of increased community outreach, marketing, and the offering of skills training programs for a variety of individuals related to technology. This past year PACTT received a large grant from the STAR Program (A System of Technology to Achieve Results) of funds and equipment, thus positioning the PACTT program as the regional assistive technology center in southern MN.



Service access is demonstrated by the broad cross-section of disabilities represented as having received services in 2007 through ABC. This demonstrates that the wide variety of programming choices made available to the community allows service access to a broad spectrum of needs. Most notably, the MR Mild and the MI/ED populations are the largest disability demographic served by ABC respectively. The breakdown of the demographics by disability thus far in 2007 reflects that of 2006.



Ability Enterprises - Data provided by Brett Graham, AE Program Manager

In 2007 we suffered the loss of some of our full-time job site contracts. These site losses led to a temporary displacement of participants. Because of the limited skills/special needs of many of the participants we serve, finding appropriate placement has been a challenge. Job development is one of AE's more difficult service areas, due to several ABC departments needing jobs simultaneously, the need for enclave-structured sites, the low number of jobs to be found in the community, and the loss of job sites that were not replaced. It appears that there are more opportunities for part-time job sites, based on the fact that 67% of AE's 27 job sites are part-time, and 33% are full-time. AE is making an effort to enhance our participants skills by developing a work training area in-center, which will simulate various jobs in the community. The idea is to challenge people to learn new job skills, and thus equip them with a variety of skills that would enable them to fill many job roles in the community.

The AE in-center program was coming close to capacity at year's end. This poses a threat when there are not enough community jobs for participants and no available space in-center. However, the in-center program has evolved to include regular community outings, volunteer work, and opportunities for part-time community work each week, which has enriched this program.

Transportation continues to be a challenge for AE. Utilization of vehicles is quite high, which limits flexibility in their availability. In addition, the need for more vehicles continues to be a challenge. As a result, AE must rely significantly on other more costly modes of transportation such as R&S and ZIPS to transport participants.

Staff turnover and retention has been a challenge as well. The overall length of service of job coaches was 8.64 months. In late 2007, a new mentoring program was implemented to better support new staff and to provide more focused training. In addition, there was restructuring within the department to create a lead staff position,

plus identifying one coordinator to supervise the majority of job coach positions, instead of staff supervision being spread out among seven coordinators. AE experienced a significant change when the Program Manager left in March, which left the program in transition until May. At that time the Program Manager of AU also took on management of AE and AO, which also added a lead coordinator position.

AE and AO continued to accept new clients in 2007, from the School to Work program, internal transitions, and outside referrals. Currently AE and AO serve a total of 156 participants; 141 in AE, 23 in AO, and 8 served in both programs.

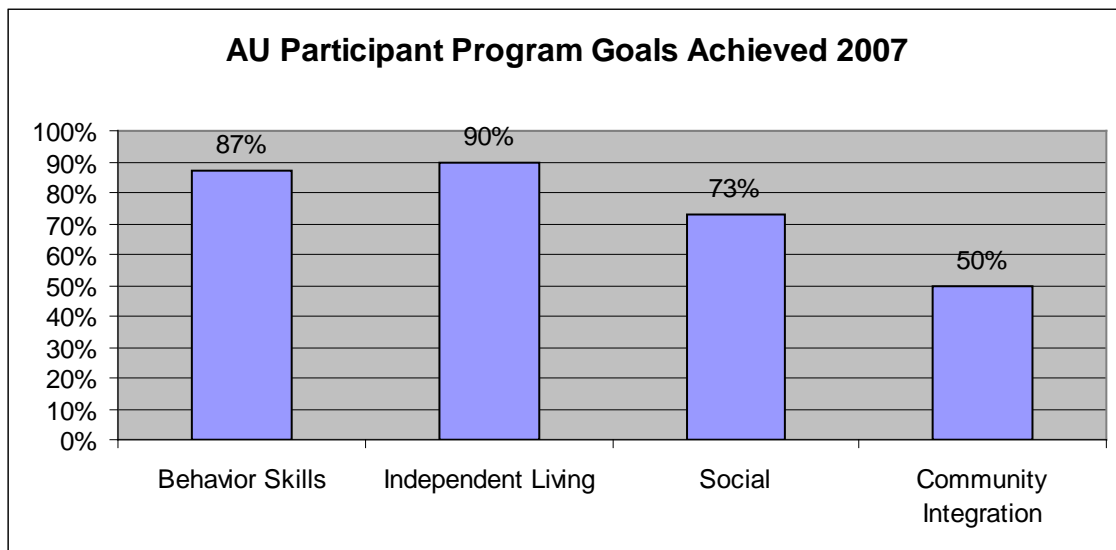
The average wage and hour compliance for AE was 86%. Incident reports total for 2007 was 125; down 45% from 276 the prior year. This is a significant improvement. There were 9 recordable injuries in AE in 2007; the same number as 2006.

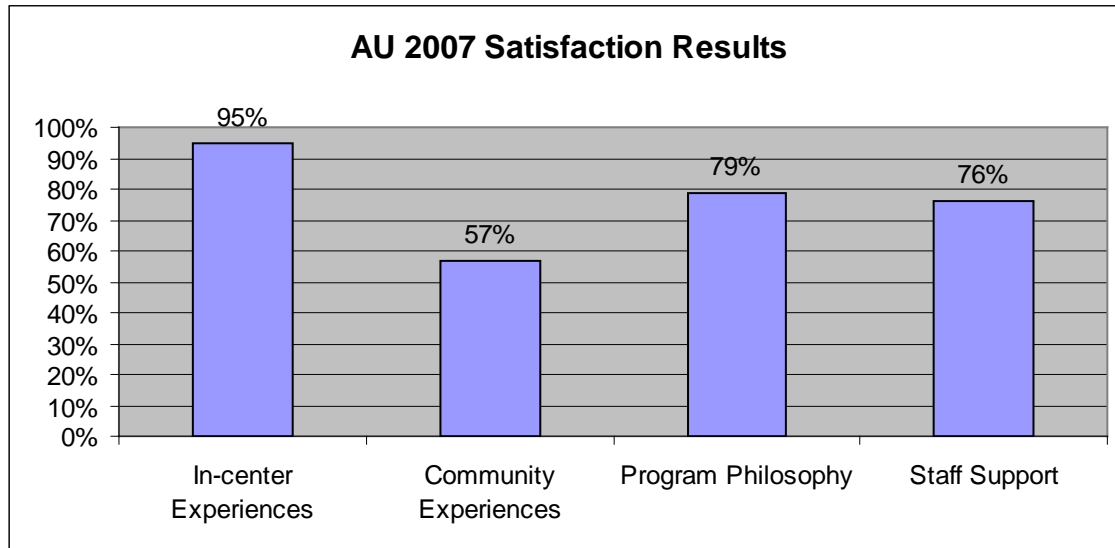
Ability Options experienced significant staff turnover in 2007, but ended the year with a completely new staff base, including a new Program Coordinator. Based on the available information, AO offered 2.3 community outings per week, with 16% participation. The state of changes in AO also may have impacted the program goals for the year.

Ability Enterprises' overall satisfaction rate from participant/guardians and case workers was 87%. AE's strengths are consistency for most of its participant base, participant longevity, positive exposure in the community, dedication of long-term job coaches and coordinators, and continuing to provide some kind of programming for displaced participants.

Transportation continues to be the second highest expenditure in the AE program budget, led only by staff wages and benefits. Contracted services accounted for much of AE's transportation budget and included monies paid to R&S, ZIPS, Rochester City Lines, and private contract. Ability Enterprises did experience a transportation per diem increase in October 2006. Our rate increased to \$9.19 up from \$8.99. Ability Options increased transportation per diem will also help the overall transportation budget. The average cost of the transporting a participant was approximately \$12.27.

Abilities Unlimited served 74 people in 2007, 50 in the day program and 32 in ILS with 8 duplicated. The mission of Abilities Unlimited is to provide a safe and supported environment for people with brain injuries to explore and identify strengths and abilities to enhance their quality of life, and this continues to drive the focus of all our programs in AU1, AU2, and ILS. The strengths of the program lie in the diverse amount of community outings and experiences we provided in the last year, our quality of services as indicated through our satisfaction surveys (shown in graph 2), and the strong commitment of staff to maintaining the quality of programming and delivering needed services to those in our program. Future opportunities for the program revolve mostly around the growth of the Independent Living Skills program, which has started to expand to provide services to individuals outside the Rochester area. Abilities Unlimited had a record year in 2007, but due to the very specific population we serve the program is vulnerable to changes in state and federal funding and the variable TBI population in a city the size of Rochester. The program goals that we measure reflect our commitment to expanding the abilities of participants in areas of independence, personal growth, and awareness of their community and the resources available to them. As the graph seen below shows, we accomplished these goals in 2007 for a large percentage of our participants.





ABC Works - Data provided by Judy Wandling, Program Manager

At the end of 2007, ABC Works has met 6 of their program measures in the areas of effectiveness and efficiency.

ABC Works served a total of 90 participants during the program year. There were seven new referrals who were admitted into the program throughout the year. Eighty-nine percent of all the participants served are employed at one or more community jobs during their program week. Seventeen percent of the participants working in the community are independent at their job site, receiving very minimal follow along support.

Wages paid to participants working in the community remain strong with the average wage being \$5.74 per hour. Seventeen participants are paid directly by their employer and have an average wage of \$6.99 per hour with the range being between \$6.15 and \$8.63. The average wage for participants working in the community that are paid through ABC (rather than directly from their employer) is \$4.50 per hour. Their wages range from .48 to \$6.15 according to their productivity level. The overall average wage for participants working in the community is 93% of minimum wage.

Of the participants served, 38% increased their productivity on general production jobs in-center. This percentage is based on jobs provided through the Blumenthal Lansing Button job, Bestway manufacturing, the Caledonia Argus and River Valley Sprouts.

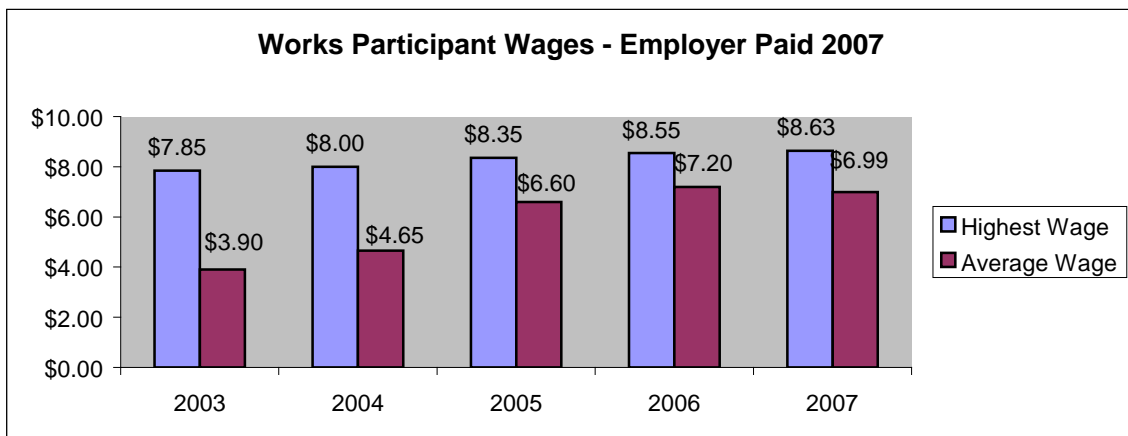
Fifty-four percent of participants met their formal program plan goals and ABC Works met all VOICE reviews conducted with ratings of reasonable or excellent.

The strengths of ABC Works continue to be their person-centered planning process and the variety of community job sites.

The one area that has not developed as expected is the license expansion to serve people in their residential program. At this time, Houston County can not identify any potential participants to be served under this license. However, there has been some interest by one participant's family for the services in 2008.

Transportation availability and cost continues to be the biggest barrier in providing services in Houston County.

It has been requested that ABC provide adult day care services to persons in Houston County and also serve individuals under the elderly waiver. This is currently being investigated as a potential program.



The Community Based School-to-Employment (CBScE) program served a total of 51 program participants in 2007. This particular measurement takes into account the program participants who were working exclusively in-center at ABC, those that were working on ABC enclaves, those participants that a at a community based employer paid job site. This measure also looks at participants who were transferred or discharged from the CBScE program in 2007.

The first outcome measure looked at the effectiveness of placing persons measured through the percentage of participants working in the community at an employer paid job or on an ABC enclave. This measurement excludes those participants who are working in-center or those who are in job development. There were a total of 29 or 57%, of the 51 participants served thus far in 2007, who were working in the community at an employer paid job or on an enclave. Of those 29 participants, 7 were at employer paid jobs, and 22 were working on an ABC enclave.

As a measure of the program efficiency the outcome measure looked at the number of participants throughout the evaluation year that had worked in a community based work experience for 3 months or more. This measurement included those participants working at a community based employer paid job site and those working on an ABC enclave. This measurement excludes those participants who were working in-center at ABC and those in job development. There were a total of 29 or 100% of participants that were employed in a community based employer paid job or enclave for 3 months or more. This area has improved because there have been more opportunities for CBScE participants though job development and more communication through the launch meetings.

A second efficiency measure looked at the average number in months it takes from when the participant and program staff began actively looking for employment to the time employer paid employment was obtained. This measurement excludes participants in programming who had already obtained an employer paid job prior to the 2007 program year. It was found that it took an average of 5 months to find

employer paid employment. There were a total of 2 individuals actively looking for employer paid employment who successfully obtained a job in 2007. A challenge that the CBScE program had faced with participants seeking employer paid employment is poor interviewing skills. However, ABC staff is currently working on providing a job seeking and interview skills training for participants that may benefit participants in the CBScE program.

Another measurement looks at the accessibility of programming to individuals through the number of referrals not accepted into programming during the program year. There were no referrals that were not accepted into programming in 2007.

Competitive Placement Services – Data provided by Courtney Andrist

The Competitive Placement Program served a total 33 consumers in 2007. Five participants achieved 90 days of competitive employment, and 100% of participants earn above the minimum wage. The average number of days from referral to job start per program participant is 90 days, while our program goal is 45 days or less.

As a measure of program accessibility, the number of referrals not accepted into programming during the program year was zero, with all referrals being accepted into programming.

Placement services has experienced significant staff turnover in the past 2 years. As a result, the stability of services has suffered some. This program relies heavily on the staff person's ability to connect with consumers and employers on a personal level. The number of referrals was also down in 2007 compared to 2008. The program is now being coordinated by a veteran job developer.

Stakeholder and participant satisfaction remain high with 3 persons reporting satisfaction at 100%. The number of responses to satisfaction surveys continues to be disappointing and other means to obtain greater participation may need to be explored.

PACTT served a total of 130 clients in the area of technology between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007. Of those served, 116 of the 130 were a duplicate in another program of Ability Building Center. A breakdown of all services performed between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007 is as follows:

- Technology assessments (38 performed, goal was 50)
- Technology training (63 clients referred for training)
- Use of technology in PACTT Lab (130 individuals)

PACTT continues to maintain and strengthen its relationship with other AT resources. During the year of 2007 PACTT received the following product donations:

- Key to Access (Region 10 Network) value: \$300.00
- Simon S.I.O. (Mayer Johnson) value: \$149.00
- VisionBoard 2 (Chester Creek) value: \$69.00
- KinderBoard (Chester Creek) value: \$69.00
- Variety of devices and support through STAR grant totaling more than \$70,000

Vendor and networking relationships enable PACTT to expand products offered on-site and for trial purposes. The contributions received through vendors are beneficial as they keep the items in the loan program up-to-date at little to no cost.

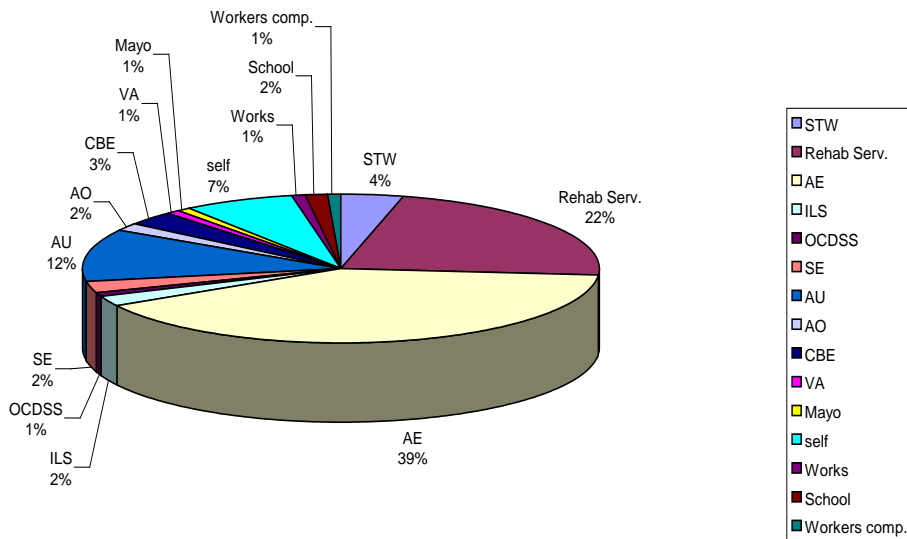
The average number of days from assessment of needs to report completion was 9 business days, which falls within PACTT's goal of 14 business days. PACTT continues to focus on increasing its direct client hours in the area of training and support.

The average billed income per month for PACTT services was \$1,406 per month. The month of March had the highest amount billed, \$2,153.30. PACTT did reach its monthly income goal of \$1,400. PACTT has seen an increase in referrals for computer training; however, the fees for this service are \$35 per hour for training while fees for an assessment are \$80 per hour.

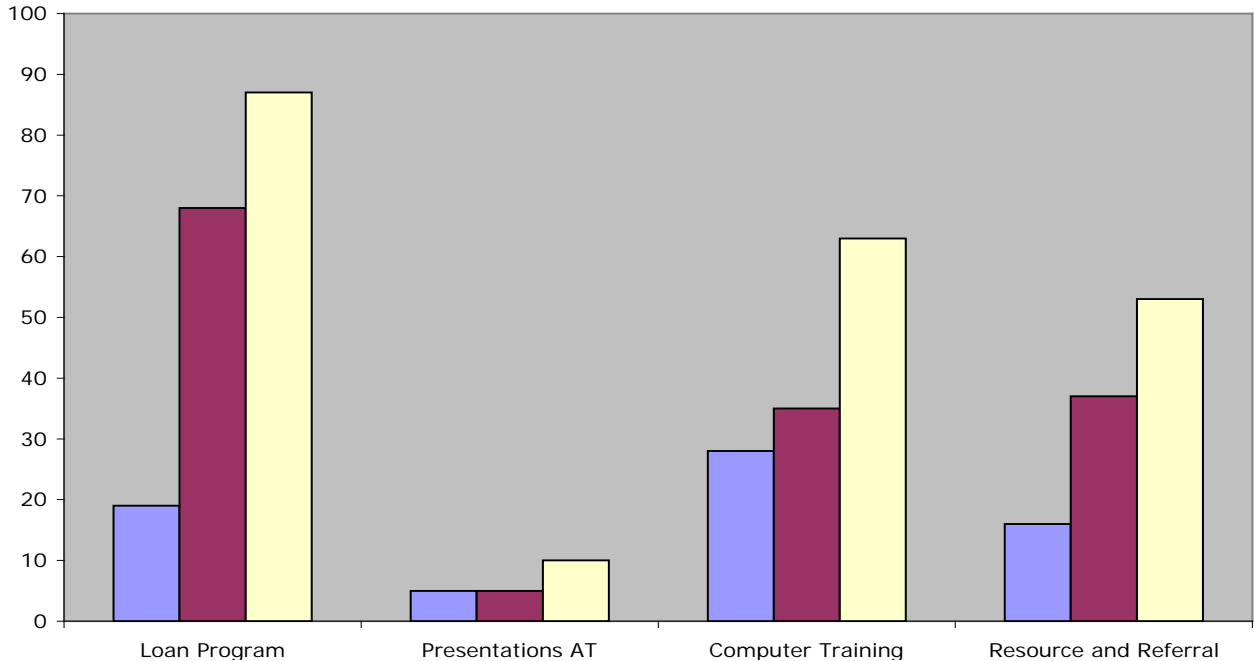
In an effort to continue to increase the use of technology by participants of Ability Building Center, PACTT has continued to increase its correspondence with Program Managers as well as Program Coordinators. It is a goal of PACTT to increase participant use and awareness of technology, as it is a growing need in the workforce.

PACTT will continue in its efforts to educate ABC staff regarding PACTT services and assist staff in recognizing participants that may benefit from PACTT services. In addition, PACTT has started offering training sessions to the staff of Ability Building Center to increase their skills with the use of Microsoft Suite Programs. Training on Microsoft Outlook has taken place with 8 staff in attendance. Future training sessions are being planned.

2007 Referral Sources



PACTT Services 2007
Blue=1/07-6/07
Pink= 7/07-12/07
Yellow=Full Year



ABC assistive technology program (PACTT) served approximately 130 individuals during the year of 2007. Currently PACTT keeps individuals informed of educational opportunities about Assistive technology on PACTT's web site (www.abc-pactt.org) in addition to emailing this information out on list servs, and through contacts.

This current location provides exposure for the program by having assistive technology displayed in the front window, as well as information on contacting PACTT. Individuals that access PACTT in this location oftentimes find the location easy to access and locate. The scope of the program continues to provide assessment, information, training, access and referral services on assistive technology to persons with disabilities in Southern Minnesota.

PACTT's community outreach efforts include workshops and presentations on assistive technology. The following events were held during 2007:

Date	Workshop	Attendance #
1/18/07	Assistive Technology: What is it?	13
2/1/07	Freedom Box	2
3/9/07	Autism and AT	13
4/18/07	Microsoft Outlook	8
4/23-4/24	Charting the C's	15+
7/26/07	Microsoft Word training staff	1
11/30/07	AT region 10 network	10
12/6/07	RCTC students AT presentation	8
12/13/07	Palm Pilot training	3
12/20/07	Palm Pilot Training	3
	TOTAL	79

PACTT continues to increase awareness of assistive technology within the community and surrounding communities through presentations, workshops, emails, phone calls, etc. In addition, PACTT also continues to increase individuals with disabilities use of technology such as increasing computer skills, typing abilities, data entry skills, etc. By providing additional support with these skills individuals with disabilities increase their chance of obtaining employment that utilizes a computer.

Among PACTT accomplishments for 2007, PACTT received a grant through the Minnesota STAR program totaling \$72,000 allowing PACTT to pay for administrative costs as well as purchase new equipment for the loan program.

Center Based Employment – Data provided by Sami Mohr, VS Program Manager

The Center Based Program served a total of 134 individuals in 2007. Approximately, 12 of those served in the program maintained 40 hours or more employment per week for the last six months. The goal was 15 persons for the year in 2007. Sixty percent of workers increased productivity and 86% accomplishing at least one work related goal. This measure continues to promote vocational growth and proactive development of participant work skills.

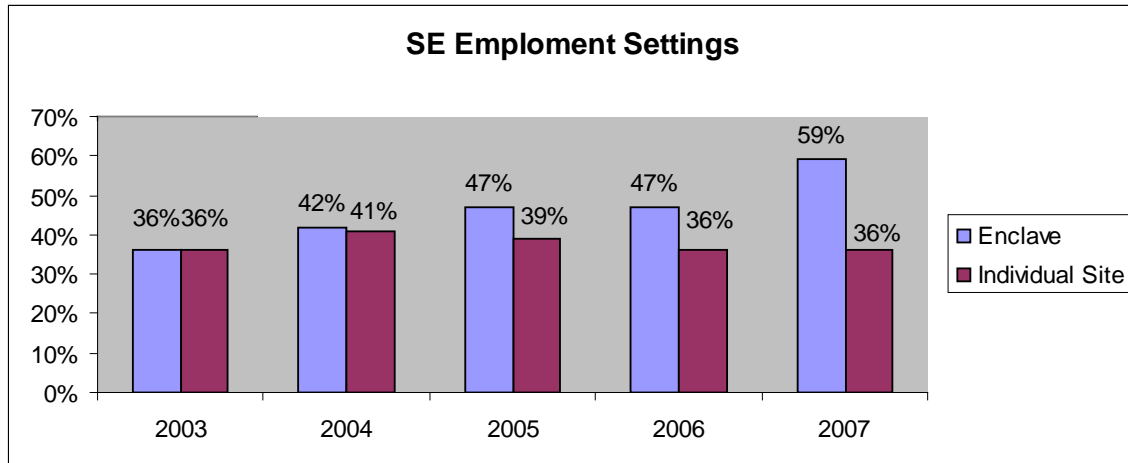
The Center-Based Program has remained stable in its participant base. Providing adequate work quantities for both participants in CBE program and those individuals displaced in the SE program continues to be a struggle. The skill level of the majority is not sufficient to support many types of work available. Also, a few individuals are not challenged by the work available to them as it is below their skill level. The immediate focus of the CBE department includes developing more work to support the various skill levels of individuals in programming such as the digital imaging and supporting individuals to be transitioned to community employment.

Participant satisfaction remains high at 92%, which exceeded our goal of 92%, while stakeholder satisfaction was at 89% which exceeded our goal of 85%.

As a measure of program accessibility, the number of referrals not accepted into programming during the program year was one, with one referral being accepted into programming due to a level of needs ABC was not equipped to manage in this program.

Supported Employment – Data provided by Sami Mohr, VS Program Manager

- The Supported Employment Program served a total of 180 participants in 2007.
- Fourteen individuals or 70% of workers placed in community jobs were able to maintain their jobs for 90 plus days. This indicates a good job match in regards to skills and interests.
- Fifty-nine percent of workers are in an enclave setting, 36% are at individual sites, and the remaining percentage are either inactive or in job development.



The participant base of the Supported Employment Program has remained stable. Business development efforts have resulted in placements and continued opportunities for enclave supports to individuals. Of note is the number of individuals that were able to be placed within 90 days of their referral for job development. Future economic projections in the community make the prospects somewhat challenging for 2008.

As a measure of program accessibility, the number of referrals not accepted into programming during the program year was zero, with all referrals being accepted into programming.

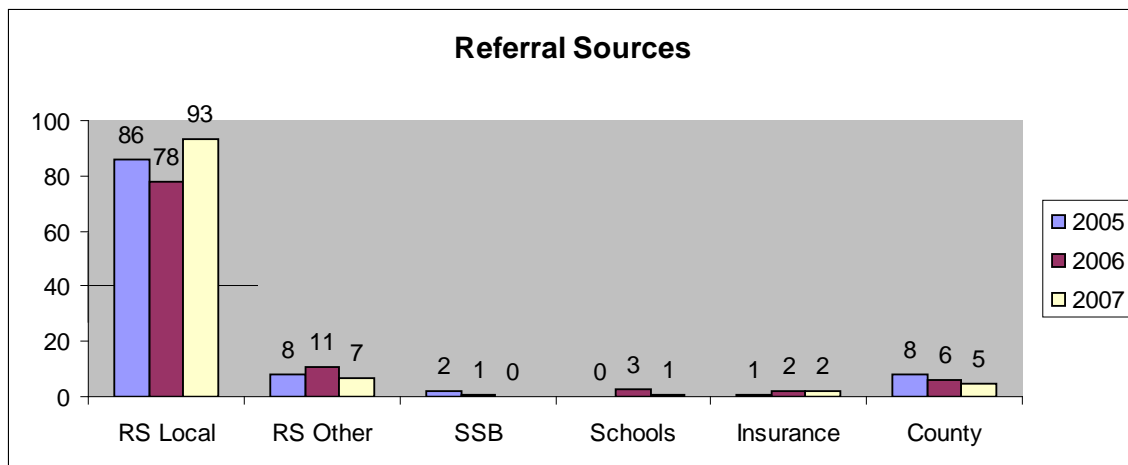
Vocational Evaluation Services – Data provided by Sarah Timmerman, VE Program Coordinator

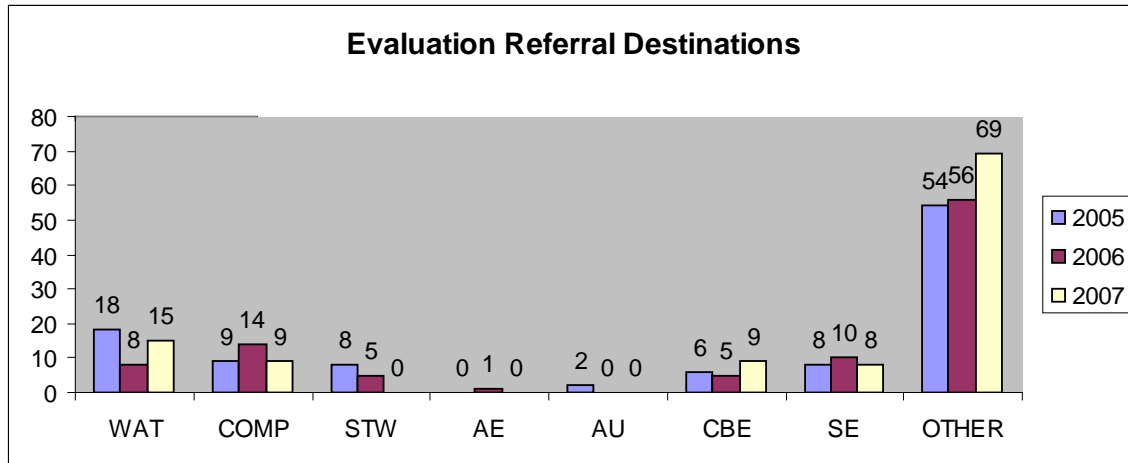
The Vocational Evaluation program served a total of 144 participants in 2007. This includes individuals discharged from ABC, individuals transferred to other ABC programs and those currently in programming.

An increase was seen throughout the year of individuals being referred who have significant physical limitations. This has limited individual vocational goals to sedentary positions that typically involve reception and computer work. However, these individuals are presenting with little to no computer abilities, resulting in a need for long-term training before they would be competitive in this specific area. The lack of sedentary positions available within the community has been very limiting to these individuals. Physical capabilities has played a larger role this year in individuals who do not complete program, as many individuals decided early on that either they are not able to work or choose not to work.

The number of satisfaction surveys being returned continues to be low and new plans are in place to help increase those numbers. Participants exiting the Evaluation program will be asked to complete the survey immediately after their final team meeting. This will eliminate surveys being sent out in the mail and not being returned. Referral sources will also be asked to complete surveys at the same time.

- The number of program participants and their team that implemented the vocational evaluation recommendations was 98%.
- The average length of time to complete a formal vocational evaluation report, including the number of days to complete proofreading and formatting was 21 days for the year.
- 66% of the participants reported “good” to “excellent” services in the areas of participant choice, job goal identification, recommendations, and clarity of vocational goals.
- 100% of the referral sources reported “good” to “excellent” services in the areas of participant choice, job goal identification, recommendations, and clarity of vocational goals.





Work Adjustment Training - Data provided by S. Timmerman, VE Program Coordinator

The Work Adjustment Training Program served a total of 12 program participants from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007. This includes individuals discharged from ABC services, referred to other programs within ABC and those currently in programming. Seven objectives were measured to assess service delivery and identify potential areas of improvement. Data collection included three effectiveness measures, two efficiency measures, and two satisfaction measures (representing program participant and stakeholder feedback in four sub areas of satisfaction).

The primary individuals served in 2007 in the Work Adjustment Training program were those who had already obtained independent community employment, but were either struggling with learning the job responsibilities or were on the verge of losing their employment. Intensive job coaching and case management supports were providing to ensure stabilization of employment. Other individuals being served are those individuals who struggle with workplace behaviors and have demonstrated poor attendance. These individuals were not considered ready for independent community employment at the time they were referred. Typically, work adjustment for those who do not have independent community employment is taking place within ABC such as in-house, reception or on an enclave because with those work areas, participants receive wages for the work completed. Due to the new state rule that went into effect in 2007, Rehabilitation Services can no longer pay wages for any of its consumers, this has resulted in more people being unwilling to participate in the WAT program and also limits

what jobsites we use for work adjustment purposes as people will not agree to participate if they do not receive wages.

There was only one client satisfaction survey completed in 2007 and none completed by referral sources. New steps will be taken to try and ensure surveys are filled out. This will include having individuals complete them at the final team meeting or placing follow-up calls to those individuals who received them in the mail. Attempts will be made to ensure referral sources are completing them as well.

Woodland Industries - Data provided by Helen Olson, WI Program Coordinator

- In 2007, 29% of CBE workers at Woodland Industries (WI) accomplished at least one or more work related goals in at least one job and 20 CBE workers accomplished one or more work related goals. Additionally, those served in the CBE program experienced an average of 19 hours a month in the community throughout the year.
- WI placed 100% of referred SE and 36% of Competitive participants in community jobs within 90 days of referral.
- A total of 75% (19 out of 15) of those served by the SE program at WI have held their community job for more than one year. 11 of those 19 have held their community position for five or more years.

Satisfaction surveys for 2007, with 40 persons responding, indicated the following:

- Their Job: **62%** "I like it a lot."
35% "It is ok."
2% "I don't like it."
- My Program Coordinator: **72%** "Is very helpful."
25% "Is ok."
2% "I would like a change."
- My Supervisor: **57%** "Is very helpful."
15% "Is ok."

- 5% "Is not helpful."
 - My Goals: 92% "Like my goals."
 - 0% "Don't like my goals."
 - 7% "Not sure."
- I Rate my WI satisfaction: 52% "Very satisfied."
 - 45% "Satisfied."
 - 2% "Not Satisfied."

ABC Year-end Summary

The 2007 program year has presented many challenges. Once again, funding continues to be a challenge in some areas, efforts at improving service quality, and staff turnover has required even greater collaboration within the agency and with outside entities. Program outcomes continue to appear to be met in most program areas with some new ones to be introduced in 2007, and further refinement of existing ones.

Ability Building Center was engaged in the process of seeking re-accreditation of its programs this year. In late spring ABC hosted an on-site survey team from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) who provided an impartial, external review of Ability Building Center's conformance to the accreditation standards. CARF is considered the preemptive international standard-setting and accrediting body in the United States for vocational rehabilitation programs. CARF-accredited service providers enjoy recognition among an international community of persons served, peer facilities, and programs for superior standards of care and excellence in outcomes.

Once again, Ability Building Center received a three year accreditation, the highest level of accreditation possible. This serves as an indication that ABC satisfies each of the CARF accreditation conditions and demonstrates substantial conformance to the standards, as well as a commitment to quality improvement and service to those who receive our services.

Community-based work activities continue to be the foundation for most of the programs at ABC. In the foreseeable future, independent living, prevocational and leisure programs appear to be growth areas and Ability Building Center must take steps to ensure is positioned service these emerging needs. In 2006 ABC opened Ability Options, which provide leisure skills programming for participants.

Areas of challenge include the continued need to control the rising costs of transportation, scheduling inefficiencies, staff recruitment/development, as well as job development. Steps have been taken to collaborate on transportation, and some cost reductions have come from ABC taking on routes previously assigned to outside vendors, while the implementation of a panel interview system to improve job retention in our job coach positions in late fall 2007 has yielded some impressive statistics in it's short implementation period.

ABC appears to maintain a good position in the community which could be considered a result of the quality programming and the talented staff we employ. In addition, ABC experiences much support from the community and stakeholders. Further, it could be considered a reflection of the fine direction and leadership the agency receives from its Board and Management.