



Business Access Community Update

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Putting Lives Back Together

With the storm clouds still gathering, Derrick and his mother packed up the Honda Accord. On their way out of town, they stopped to pick up an aunt and a couple of other relatives. By the time they were done, there were six of them packed inside the vehicle, each with a small bag of belongings, some sandwiches, and some chips.

Katrina was coming.

Derrick and his mother were headed west. They were two of approximately 240,000 hurricane evacuees who eventually would end up in Texas, unsure of their futures.

Most assumed they'd be returning to their homes, their community, and their jobs. After they found food and shelter and got their bearings, the devastating reality began to sink in: Going home wasn't the best option.

One solution to the painful sense of loss was finding a job. As Derrick said, "Once I find a job, I'm going to feel better. I'll feel like I'm getting my life back together."

That has been the goal of the Business Access NEG program. For many, a computer and Internet access has been an invaluable part of the transition. "A computer is a necessity these days, as much as an automobile is," says Chandler, a Mississippi resident who along with his wife and two daughters found their way to Dallas. From using it to stay in touch with loved ones, create a resume, search for employment, check out local schools, monitor bank accounts, or get I-9 documents, the computer helped dislocated evacuees orient themselves to their new community.

As Chandler says, "We're doing job searching, and, we're actually running a cleaning business. We're trying to get some advertising on the Internet and get someone to develop and build a web site so we can look for contracts and bids."

Online access has even helped the family get around. "In Mississippi, you don't need Map Quest for anything," Chandler adds. "Here, you need it to get to the grocery store."

Evacuee Success

Eighty-one percent of the Katrina and Rita evacuees who entered the Business Access program reported being employed for over 60 days. [More](#) about the BA Hurricane Evacuee program.



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Creating Positive Online Study habits:

- Identify study sessions times.
- Create a weekly schedule.
- Inform family and friends of your commitment to study.
- Minimize distractions.
- Don't skip. Begin each study session.
- 15 minutes is better than zero minutes.
- Get back on track if diverted.
- Set a reasonable goal for each study session.
- Work on difficult courses/chapters first.
- Take course pre-assessment tests.
- Take chapter review tests.
- Don't allow questions or frustrations to linger.
- Speak up, call for support.
- Get problems resolved quickly.
- Check your progress.
- Celebrate your success.

In-Home Learning Benefits the Shy

Flexibility, reducing childcare and transportation costs aren't the only advantages of distance learning. There's a less obvious benefit for those adults for whom the traditional classroom is a setting fraught with potential embarrassment.

I'm referring to the large number of Americans (48%) who say they are shy. While shyness exists on a continuum. Shy people are more sensitive to rejection, believe that they will end up looking foolish in front of others, and grow anxious and try to avoid new social situations.

They're often the ones who sit in the back of the class trying not to be noticed, if they show up at all. [More](#) on shyness.

Erik, a Business Access client in El Paso, was one of those shy people who wanted to take advantage of the termination benefits available after having been let go from a manufacturing job that he'd had for ten years. He enrolled in a criminal justice program at the local college.

"You had to know how to use a computer and I knew very little," he said. He took a computer class but nearly dropped out.

"There were all these little kids there and they knew how to do everything. It was embarrassing." He didn't ask a lot of questions and ended up finishing the course with a "D."

A couple months later, in less threatening space, with the support of his computer literate wife, and the BA in-home learning program he was slowly able to master the basic computer skills he'd need to complete his college courses. When we last spoke Erik had just one semester left to complete his Associates degree.

For shy people like Erik, in-home learning can be a safety zone from which they gain the training and knowledge they may desire and need but hesitate to access in a traditional classroom setting.

Achiever says...

"I have just always enjoyed going to school and really loved the work-at-your-own-pace of this program. My favorite course was one that explained financial investments so clearly. Someday my goal is to get a ROTH IRA started!"

Lisa, Achiever Alumni
Northeast Texas

Did you know...

Over 77% of all jobs in the US will require some level of ability to use ICT (Information and Computer Technology) by 2010.

Norman C. Saunders
Monthly Labor Review Online
November 2005

Learn more about how the Business Access has helped Workforce:

[TANF Clients](#)

[WIA Adults](#)

[WIA Youth](#)

[Hurricane Evacuees](#)

[Incumbent Workers](#)

[FSE&T Clients](#)

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