

“I am proud”


ABDEL SOW

AGE: 23

JOB STATUS: SERVICE TECHNICIAN, EQUITY RESIDENTIAL

Abdel Sow moved to the US from Ivory Coast in 2010. He struggled to maintain a well-paying job because he lacked critical job skills. He worked as a backroom associate at a national retailer and later took occasional construction jobs. But the construction company stopped calling; and Abdel needed to find a solution. After learning about the MI-BEST program, he enrolled in Montgomery College to become an apartment maintenance technician.

Today, Abdel earns \$17 an hour, plus benefits, as a Service Technician for Equity Residential.



“Every time I would go to a job interview, they said I needed more experience. I finished the [MI-BEST] program; now I have a good job ... And I am proud.”

Through its support for programs like MI-BEST, The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region’s **Greater Washington Workforce Development Collaborative** plays an instrumental, behind-the-scenes role in building a stronger workforce. We are deeply committed to helping low-income workers improve their marketable skills, secure higher paying jobs and achieve economic security for their families.

At The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, our investment in workforce development initiatives extends beyond providing critical financial support through grants. We bring together public and private partners, and offer capacity building resources and peer learning opportunities to foster effective, sustainable workforce programs. Together, we are building a stronger workforce.

“The Community Foundation really understands the trends and needs in the field and provides tremendous collaboration and support. I’ve never had a better learning network.”

KIMBERLY BROWN

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES SENIOR
PROGRAM MANAGER
ADULT ESOL & LITERACY PROGRAMS,
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Connecting Workers to Careers

Residential property management companies lack the qualified workers they need to support growth in a booming industry. The construction of new apartments continues in the DC area, creating jobs for talented workers to lease, manage, and maintain properties. Currently, the number of vacant jobs in the industry far outweighs the number of qualified candidates. Yet, despite these opportunities, thousands of low-skilled workers in our region struggle to earn enough money to support their families.

In order to help close the labor gap, the National Apartment Association Education Institute (NAAEI) partners with community colleges, such as Montgomery College, to respond to industry demand and cultivate a stronger workforce. As part of a progressive trend to enhance traditional technical training with literacy and basic skills training, Montgomery College utilizes the curriculum developed by NAAEI. The

Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) Apartment Maintenance Technician Program combines English language, adult basic education, and workplace skills instruction into the technical training program.

The Community Foundation's Workforce Development Collaborative invested in the MI-BEST program, allowing low-skilled workers to participate in a free, seven-week program that includes technical skills training such as HVAC, plumbing and electrical maintenance. Upon completion, program graduates earn an accredited Certificate for Apartment Maintenance Technicians (CAMT). Plus, NAAEI connects Montgomery College students to job fairs, and helps link the college with employers who conduct mock interviews and serve as mentors. MI-BEST program graduates receive sought-after, full-time jobs that pay good wages and benefits, and provide opportunities for financial stability and career advancement.



“The confidence level, drive and positive attitude, combined with technical skills, really set the MI-BEST program graduates apart.”

JAMIE PRESKI
RECRUITER, EQUITY RESIDENTIAL



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An initiative of The Community Foundation, the **Greater Washington Workforce Development Collaborative** is a coalition that helps low-income and unemployed workers increase their skills and credentials so they can achieve family economic security. Supporters include the Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Citi, The Consumer Health Foundation, the Eugene & Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, the Moriah Fund, Northern Virginia Health Foundation, Patricia Weiss Fagen, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, United Way of the National Capital Area, and the Washington Area Women's Foundation.

For additional information about the Community Foundation's workforce initiatives, please contact workforce@cfncr.org.