



Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board

HCWDB Meeting September 2026 – Success Story Hired; WIOA Adult Program

I met with a husband and wife who recently relocated to Minnesota through a refugee resettlement program after conditions in Ukraine became increasingly unsafe for them and their young daughter. Having spent their entire lives there, they made the difficult decision to leave behind their home, careers, extended family, and community in search of safety and stability.

Prior to their relocation, the husband, Oscar, was an established hairstylist who owned and operated his own salon for over a decade. He shared with me numerous awards and recognitions he had earned, reflecting both his talent and dedication to his profession. The family had been living comfortably, and their transition to Minnesota required them to start over in a completely new environment.

When we first met, both individuals were beginning English learners. With patience, persistence, and the assistance of a translation application, we were able to communicate effectively and begin building rapport. Oscar expressed a strong desire to continue his career as a hairstylist and pursue licensure in Minnesota.

Through research, we determined that he could not directly sit for the cosmetology exam without first having his international credentials evaluated. Fortunately, Oscar had brought his professional documents with him. The process involved translating his degree and credentials into English, followed by a formal evaluation to determine their equivalency to U.S. training standards. I assisted in completing the necessary applications, gathering documentation, and securing funding through Hired to cover associated fees. This process took several months.

During this time, Oscar actively participated in ESL coursework to improve his English proficiency. He also secured part-time employment at a local salon, where he contributed by washing hair, maintaining the workspace, and supporting other stylists. Although he was unable to cut hair without a Minnesota license, he remained motivated and used the opportunity to familiarize himself with workplace norms in the United States. He often reflected on his previous experience as a salon owner in Ukraine and his desire to return to that level of professional practice.

After an extended delay and multiple follow-ups, we discovered issues with the initial credential evaluation agency. We subsequently transitioned to a different provider, obtained additional funding approval, and resubmitted all documentation. This time, the process moved forward successfully. Once the evaluation was completed, Oscar met with a cosmetology school and was informed that he was eligible to take the licensing exam without additional training—an excellent outcome.

I then assisted with submitting the required paperwork and funding requests for the exam and licensure. With the support of an interpreter, Oscar completed and passed the exams. Within a few weeks, he received his Minnesota cosmetology license and was cleared to begin working professionally.

Throughout this period, Hired also provided supportive services, including rental assistance on multiple occasions, to help stabilize the family during the transition. Unfortunately, there were changes in federal policy that impacted temporary protections for individuals from Ukraine. While Oscar successfully obtained updated work authorization, his wife did not receive hers despite applying at the same time. As a result, I was required to close her case due to her lack of employment eligibility.

Oscar has since secured full-time employment as a hairstylist and is actively building his clientele. He also maintains a strong online presence, sharing videos that showcase his techniques and expertise. Looking ahead, he aspires to open his own salon in Minnesota and reestablish the level of professional success he once achieved.