Phase 1: Research and Assess Case Study

West Central Adult Learning Center (WC) is a community-based organization that serves several counties in the state. After leadership analyzed their enrollment data, they realized that enrollment numbers in Oakridge County were very low and that enrollment was continuing to drop. They compared the data with Hollyville County data because both counties primarily serve English language learners. Leadership noticed that Hollyville County enrollment numbers had increased after they began offering an information technology (IT) IET in conjunction with the local community college. WC thus decided to reach out to Oakridge Community College to see if they would be interested in a partnership to offer the same IT IET for students in Oakridge County. Oakridge Community College quickly agreed to the partnership, as the two entities had worked together on other initiatives and the community college was also experiencing declining enrollment numbers. However, this would be the first IET program and the first partnership with the IT department specifically.

WC leadership told Oakridge Community College in the initial meeting that they believed the center and the community college could easily replicate the Hollyville County program. Indeed, they suggested using the existing IT IET program plan as is, including the program goals and curriculum. Oakridge leadership agreed to this plan, and the conversation mostly stopped there.

The program is expected to launch in three months, but the IET coordinator at WC is now realizing that there may be some barriers. First, the coordinator is concerned that the IT IET might not be able to meet the students' needs. The coordinator has been fielding calls from students inquiring about the program, but when the coordinator explains that the program requires students to complete assignments at home, some interested students indicate they may not have consistent access to a device or reliable internet. Students also have questions about tuition, and the IET coordinator realizes that the center and community college still need to discuss funding to support students' access, including options for braiding funding. The coordinator has been collecting contact information from students who plan to attend the orientation, but not many students have signed up yet.

Second, although college leadership indicated that they wanted to bring more students into the college, they emailed WC explaining they are now worried about the English language learners not passing the college's language entry exam prior to participating in the IT IET. WC emailed the IT department back to explain that part of the IET program would include support for English language learners and

that WC has their own tests they use to level learners. The IT department is showing resistance to this as a solution, however, and is concerned about these students not meeting the same initial requirements.

Third, the program coordinator reviewed labor market information recently and saw that this particular IT pathway could lead to jobs in the state, but they haven't connected with any employers in the area yet. The Hollyville program has strong relationships with local employers in the surrounding counties, but WC hasn't considered job placement supports for the participants in Oakridge County. They also may not have the funding to hire an additional career navigator. The current career navigator serves all students in Oakridge County programs and might not be able to take on additional duties.

The program coordinator has begun to understand that there are some roadblocks to this new program and that more work is needed to assess its feasibility, desirability, and viability.

With your team, discuss the following:

- What is working that the team can build on?
- What are the challenges and problems in this scenario?
- In this phase of IET design, what actions or steps did the team miss?
- What can they do to address these issues?