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ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS STORY

Wendkouni "Eric" Zongo | Washington

Adult education dramatically increased Wendkouni's earning potential in a matter of years. Wendkouni, or Eric as he is known to most, started off as an Uber driver making \$12 per hour. He had come here from the country of Burkina Faso and was ready to look for any opportunity he could to support himself and his family.

After some time, Eric knew he needed to make more per hour to support his family's basic necessities. At 41 years old, he was ready to make more of himself. When a friend told him about a local technical program for adult education, Eric was ready to know more.

Eric went to Shoreline Community College to learn more about their I-BEST Manufacturing Program. He was excited to find out that his tuition would be covered by an Opportunity Grant, and he states that it just "took all of the stress away." During the program, he was able to get a job that paid \$14 per hour at an assembly line job at Genie Industries in Redmond. Here he was able to steadily earn raises while he completed his Certificate of Proficiency and Manufacturing degree.

Today, Eric has completed his manufacturing certificate and has landed a job this past March of 2022 at Boeing as a tool maker. His current rate of pay is \$24.75 per hour. His hard work has helped him connect with a job that uses his capabilities and pays him a family sustaining wage. At Boeing he hopes to develop deeper expertise that will qualify him for future career paths. He states, "The I-BEST Manufacturing program and the Opportunity Grant opened up a huge door in front of me. It shifted my entire vision. I just have to put in energy and run!" ■