

Trainer Profile Nazneen Rahman

BBRI Digital Literacy Program Benefits New Arrivals to U.S.



The International Institute is a great community partner.

As education and training director for the International Institute Rhode Island, Nazneen Rahman constantly searches for teaching techniques that will assist in moving Rhode Island's immigrant and refugee populations to self-sufficiency. When her boss forwarded to her information about Broadband RI's initiatives, Rahman quickly realized that BBRI's digital literacy curriculum offered a

perfect match for International Institute education classes that serve about 800 individuals each year.

"Our students don't know how to search for information, and how to communicate online," says Rahman, whose multi-service agency works with around 6,000 individuals on an annual basis in various capacities. "They have to be able to search for jobs, for schools, for health information, or just to look up addresses because they need to get somewhere."

Computer training serves as an important component of the International Institute's education classes for new arrivals to the country, and the institute has now adopted BBRI's digital literacy curriculum to cover the Internet portion of the computer training (computer classes at the institute are available in both English and Spanish). Students have access to a 47-terminal computer lab at the institute's headquarters in Providence while they are in the education program.

Because computer lab requirements exist for every subject taught to students in the International Institute's education program, it was important for the institute's instructors to receive sound training in how to implement the BBRI curriculum for the population they serve. Rahman says the full-day training from BBRI in which her instructors participated was clear, sequential and well-paced. These training sessions are designed to assist nonprofit organizations

(Nazneen Rahman profile continued)

and others that work with the public in improving the effectiveness of Internet training for their target groups.

“The training included some role-play exercises to demonstrate what the instructors had learned,” Rahman says of the instruction that International Institute staff received from BBRI. “The instructors were able to be creative with the knowledge they had gained.”

The International Institute is continuing to send instructors to the BBRI training workshops; a day long training session accommodating up to 10 instructors was scheduled for late August.

The International Institute has served Rhode Island’s immigrant and refugee communities for 91 years, often serving as new arrivals’ first stop for assistance with education skills, legal issues around resettlement, and identification of housing and medical service options. In today’s digital world, familiarity with resources that are available online constitutes an important part of these individuals’ efforts to become self-sufficient.

“Some individuals will tell us, ‘I need these skills in my job,’ as they may have to place orders through the computer,” Rahman says. “For others, they will say, ‘My children know how to do it, but I don’t want to have to depend on them.’”

Rahman is so pleased with her organization’s work with BBRI that she is contacting state education officials to encourage adoption of the BBRI digital literacy curriculum by other organizations that offer adult education classes across the state. “This is a great tool for the community,” she says.

For more information contact the digital literacy program:
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