

# ADULT EDUCATION AND IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Lessons Learned from

THE NETWORKS FOR INTEGRATING NEW AMERICANS INITIATIVE

By  
**World Education, Inc.**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

- Community Science
- IMPRINT
- National Partnership for New Americans
- Network Impact, Inc.
- Welcoming America, Inc.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The basic idea of welcoming immigrants to our shores is central to our way of life — it is in our DNA. We believe our diversity, our differences, when joined together by a common set of ideals, makes us stronger, makes us more creative, makes us different. From all these different strands, we make something new here in America.*

*~ President Barack Obama, July 4, 2014*

Adult English programs are among the first entities that welcome and orient immigrants to their new home community and its national language. They are a pathway to further education and training, and they typically maintain connections and referral agreements with a wide variety of social service agencies. Through their sustained contact with immigrants, they are also de facto facilitators of social inclusion in the local community for immigrants. Yet, these programs tend to operate outside or on the margins of existing immigrant service and advocacy coalitions. Their services are not well understood by those outside of the adult education system, and their potential as agents of immigrant integration is often underappreciated.

In the United States, 45.4 million working-age adults speak a language other than English at home of whom 19.2 million have limited English proficiency (Wilson, 2014). In contrast with earlier waves of immigrants, over one quarter of today's immigrants are college-educated in other countries though many are not English proficient (National Academy of Sciences, 2015). Immigrants are more likely to be poor than U.S. citizens though they have a high rate of labor force participation (ibid.). Over the next 20 years, immigrants and their children will account for 85 percent of the net growth in the U.S. labor force (Myers, Levy, & Pitkin, 2013).

Successful integration of immigrants is clearly important to the economic and social vitality of the United States. While the phenomenon of immigrant integration is not new in this country of immigrants, the notion that it should be intentionally advanced on multiple fronts by government, community agencies, and others is relatively new. The concept of full integration of immigrants is now viewed as multifaceted and includes linguistic, civic, and economic integration (Muñoz & Rodriguez, 2015). In addition to limited English proficiency, immigrants often face challenges that may hinder their participation in

education, community, and work, such as lack of access to job training and retraining, complicated recredentialing and licensing procedures, inaccessible pathways to citizenship, and anti-immigrant prejudice. At the same time, immigrants bring to the U.S. entrepreneurial spirit, skills, and credentials from their home countries, and optimism and willingness to work hard to make a new life in this country.

To respond to these needs and realities and to advance its understanding of effective approaches, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) funded a technical assistance contract to strengthen adult education programs' ability to 1) provide immigrants access to effective and innovative English language programs; 2) support immigrants on the path to citizenship and civic engagement; and 3) support immigrants' career development through training and education. This effort, Networks for Integrating New Americans, was a national initiative that worked to position adult education programs as key contributors to local, multi-sector networks of organizations formed to advance immigrants' linguistic, civic, and economic integration.

Through a network approach, this initiative sought to break down existing silos between organizations whose work serves the needs of immigrants and refugees. The central premise was that strong networks of organizations with complementary capacities are especially needed to effectively address immigrants' linguistic, civic, and economic integration. By coordinating services and strategies, networks of organizations can achieve more with the limited resources typically at their disposal than individual organizations alone.

Through its network approach, the initiative also sought to build inclusive, welcoming communities by fostering cooperation and mutual understanding among varied

newcomer groups and receiving communities. Welcoming communities recognize that immigrant and refugee integration is a dynamic, two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities.

Networks for Integrating New Americans provided coaching and technical assistance to help five local networks of organizations plan and implement activities that strategically coordinate across services and service providers to promote immigrants’ linguistic, civic, and economic integration. The initiative was led by World Education in collaboration with its partners: IMPRINT, National Partnership for New Americans, Welcoming America, Network Impact, and Community Science.

Five local networks of organizations were selected through a competitive process to participate in the initiative from April 2013 through February 2016:

Please refer to Appendix A for a description of the network selection process and profiles of the five networks. This report documents and discusses these networks’ experience and lessons learned so that other communities may learn from that experience. The individual network profiles complement the cross-network lessons learned.

The lessons learned are divided into two themes: Network Development and the Role of Adult Education in Immigrant Integration.

**LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT NETWORK DEVELOPMENT**

It is no small task when multiple organizations come together to make a difference about a complex issue such as immigrant integration. Rarely is there one right approach or solution. In this initiative, learning about network development was central to ensuring the success of the networks’ immigrant integration activities.

Upon joining Networks for Integrating New Americans, all five networks were primarily connecting networks whose members had been meeting to share information. They did not have common action plans, and their focus on immigrant integration was limited. As part of this initiative, they aligned their goals around immigrants’ linguistic, civic, or economic integration as they worked out a shared action plan with activities and benchmarks. Their implementation of these action plans, and attention to developing the network’s structure and processes, turned them into producing networks that coordinated existing services and created new projects and services to benefit immigrants and refugees.

**THE LOCAL NETWORKS**

NETWORK	LOCATION	LEAD CONVENER (BACKBONE ORGANIZATION)
Central Valley Network for Integrating New Americans	Central Valley, California	Fresno Adult School
Neighbors United	Boise, Idaho	Idaho Office for Refugees
White Center Promise	White Center, Washington	White Center Community Development Association
Lancaster County Refugee Coalition	Lancaster, Pennsylvania	Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon
We Rhode Island Network	Metropolitan Providence, RI	Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative at Providence Public Library

The lessons learned related to network development fall into two, broad categories: 1) Building Effective Networks: Evolving Goals, Roles, and Structure and 2) Reaping the Benefits: Expanded, Better Coordinated Services.

### **Building Effective Networks: Evolving Goals, Roles, and Structure**

1. *A network's action plan development and refinement is a dynamic process that is shaped by changing needs, opportunities, and membership, and an evolving identity.*

A common action plan with goals, activities, benchmarks, and timelines is key to network health and ability to achieve collective impact (Plastrik, Taylor, & Cleveland, 2014). The networks developed their action plans based on their local context and capacity, and the network members' willingness to actively work on them. At the same time, they stayed alert to changes in needs, opportunities, players, the political climate, economic conditions in the community, and global events related to migration. Not only did the networks' action plans evolve, their sense of identity shifted. The two networks that defined themselves as refugee coalitions began to expand their vision and mission to include all immigrants albeit not without some internal tensions. As part of their more expansive identity and message to the community, the Idaho Refugee Coalition renamed itself Neighbors United.

2. *Ongoing cultivation of internal relationships is key to building trust, buy-in, and shared sense of purpose.*

Networks move at the speed of trust. All five networks deepened their understanding and appreciation of the supreme importance of building strong connections among network members as the basis for the network's effectiveness in moving its immigrant integration agenda forward. The Coordinators of these networks had to ensure that the member organization representatives were well-informed and actively communicating the network's plans and work back to their organization toward the goal of each member incorporating the network's action plan into its own work plans. One significant lesson learned was that networks' effectiveness depends on buy-in from both executive directors and frontline staff. This requires ongoing communication and solicitation of their input and involvement at key points. When that was lacking, the networks experienced setbacks.

3. *Anchor projects help networks move from connecting to producing networks.*

All networks in this initiative were primarily information-sharing (connecting) networks and had much to do in terms of alignment, especially when it came to developing joint activities that involve adult English language programs. For each of the five networks, this process was greatly enhanced by what we call anchor projects. An anchor project was not part of the initial conceptual framework or selection criteria. The concurrent focus on network development (e.g. trust, internal communications, structure, decision-making) helped the networks coalesce around the anchor projects. In this initiative, anchor projects enabled the networks to make tangible progress while sorting out other aspects of their action plan. Tangible progress gave the networks momentum and validated the member organizations' investment of time and energy in the network. Please refer to the Featured Projects section (p. 20) for examples of anchor projects.

4. *Shared coordination and leadership builds shared ownership and help to distribute the work.*

Networks require a structure that offers multiple ways for people to participate, help shape strategies, and assume leadership. Shared coordination and leadership emerged as a key trait of network structure that helped networks move forward on multiple fronts at the same time and lightened the Coordinators' workloads.

5. *Intentional learning needs to be built into networks' operations.*

Learning from each other, experts, and experience sets the foundation for networks' growth and development. An ongoing technical assistance (TA) challenge was for the Coordinators to: 1) ascertain who the right people were from member organizations to participate in given TA; 2) ensure that these people were supported, able, and committed to participating in that TA; and 3) make sure there was follow-through in sharing, building on, and applying the TA. This challenge notwithstanding, the networks derived demonstrable benefit from the TA they received. The networks were emphatic in asserting that the coaching and TA helped them strengthen their networks and joint activities.

## Reaping the Benefits: Expanded, Better Coordinated Services

1. *Networks increase the efficiency and reduce redundancies in services among member organizations.*

Mapping their respective member organizations' strengths and services – however informally - helped the networks to better coordinate their services and thereby increase the efficiency of their services and activities. Two networks in particular merged and coordinated key education program functions across multiple programs in each network. Another network strengthened its citizenship services and civic engagement activities through expanded and close coordination with multiple partners.

2. *Effective networks attract resources to provide new or improved services to immigrants.*

Funders are increasingly realizing the benefits of coordinated networks, which gives such networks a competitive edge over single organizations. All five networks secured in-kind resources, and four competed successfully for grants and contracts. New and robust programs came into being in Lancaster (Community School for refugees and immigrants) and in Boise (Global Talent Idaho). English learners in metropolitan Providence gained access to a new college transition class, and immigrants in Fresno had more options to learn about and pursue citizenship. English language students and other residents of White Center in Washington benefited from multiple, creative ways of telling their stories and using their "civic voice."

3. *Multiple organizations with a common message are more far-reaching than single organizations.*

All five networks deployed some strategies to highlight immigrants' value and contributions to the community. Two networks realized that they needed to balance their direct service focus with community education to promote a more welcoming community partly in response to local hostility directed at refugees and immigrants.

## LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT THE ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The lessons learned related to the role of adult education programs in immigrant integration fall into three, broad categories: 1) A Central Role in the Network; 2) Increased Capacity to Address Immigrants' Work Readiness and

Employers' Readiness to Hire Them; and 3) Increased Capacity to Support Immigrants' Civic Participation and Leadership.

### A Central Role in the Network

1. *Adult education programs strengthen immigrant integration networks by building awareness of the educational strengths and needs of immigrants, and of the programs' own capacity to provide customized English instruction.*

While the network members appreciated the importance of English language development to all aspects of immigrant integration, adult educators bring knowledge about the time, supports, and variety of instructional strategies that are required to address the learning needs of a broad array of immigrants and refugees. Both inside and outside their networks, adult education providers raised awareness about the barriers that impede immigrants' access to services and hinder progress along pathways to much-needed credentials. They also offered educational services tailored to the goals, educational backgrounds, and local opportunities to embed instruction in authentic work and community activities.

2. *The immigrant integration framework encourages adult education programs to contextualize instruction in real-world activities and facilitates engagement with the receiving community.*

Contextualization is an approach that motivates and engages students by connecting learning to real-world applications and purposes. While many adult educators already contextualize their instruction at the classroom level, a new emphasis on integrated programming that situates learning in authentic settings emerged in each of the networks. Lowering the figurative wall between classroom and community, programs fostered positive interaction among language learners and local residents at workplaces, libraries, civic events, and celebrations.

3. *When given the support and opportunity, adult education programs can assume a central role in the network.*

The work of educating adults so that they can achieve their work and life goals has long brought adult education providers into partnership with other education and workforce training organizations. The Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative supported adult

education providers in bringing their capacity to a new set of partners focused on immigrant integration, where the essential role of language learning in immigrant integration brought the adult education programs into a central role.

### **Increased Capacity to Address Immigrants' Work Readiness and Employers' Readiness to Hire Them**

1. *Supporting the economic integration of immigrants and refugees requires multiple approaches that serve high and lower-skilled English learners.*

One of the factors that distinguishes groups of language learners, and around which English programs need to differentiate instruction, is level of formal education. Highly-educated language learners may seek a curriculum that prepares them with the academic or career-related language that readies them quickly for higher education and training, recertification, or jobs in their field. Learners with more limited schooling need a different set of supports that enables them to access credential-bearing job training – on-ramps that help them step onto a career pathway. Across the networks, promising strategies to support the economic integration of students from a wide range of backgrounds were implemented.

2. *Engaging employers is challenging and requires practical strategies that build long-term relationships as they address employers' immediate goals.*

The three networks that explicitly focused on economic integration all sought to increase the engagement of employers in order to strengthen career pathways and alert employers to the capacity of immigrant workers. They noted the challenge of maintaining a sustained collaboration and found that they needed to persistently implement a variety of strategies to keep employers engaged in timely, purposeful activities.

### **Increased Capacity to Support Immigrants' Civic Participation and Leadership**

1. *Naturalization and citizenship education can lead to broader civic engagement.*

Research shows that citizenship strengthens immigrants' sense of belonging and attachment to their new home community (OECD, 2015). Of the five networks, the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Network is the one

that focused on citizenship services as a civic integration strategy. This network built upon its growing program of citizenship preparation classes and legal assistance for naturalization, to provide opportunities for English learners to assist with voter education and citizenship eligibility screenings, to attend civic events and meet local officials, and to participate in dialogue and celebration with the local community.

2. *Engaging immigrant and refugee English learners in structured civic activities lays the groundwork for further civic engagement and leadership.*

Civically integrated newcomers are able to navigate their local institutions, participate in community activities, and contribute their experience and ideas to civic conversations and decisions (Nash, 2010). Many immigrants and refugees bring well-developed civic and leadership skills that they are unsure of how to apply in their new country. The networks worked to orient newcomers to their new civic environment by hosting visits to community institutions, organizing trips to the state house where civic engagement could be modeled, promoting peer leadership activities, and creating opportunities for immigrants and refugees to be “seen” in the broader community by telling or writing their stories. These activities opened up new avenues for English learners to become active community participants.

## **CONCLUSION**

The lessons learned from the 22 months of local implementation of Networks for Integrating New Americans have implications for other networks of organizations concerned with immigrant integration as well as for funders and policymakers. Whether funding or implementing such networks, the goal is effective, sustainable networks that result in tangible benefits for local immigrants and over time, measurable collective impact. The network approach becomes even more relevant than ever before as the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) moves into a full implementation phase with expectations for partnerships and close coordination across education and workforce development providers. WIOA's requirement for integrating education and training for English learners and transitioning them to employment or further education can support immigrants' economic integration.



# I. BACKGROUND

## CONTEXT

Adult English programs are among the first entities that welcome and orient immigrants to their new home community and its national language. They are a pathway to further education and training, and they typically maintain connections and referral agreements with a wide variety of social service agencies. Through their sustained contact with immigrants, they are also de facto facilitators of social inclusion in the local community for immigrants. Yet, these programs tend to operate outside or on the margins of existing immigrant service and advocacy coalitions. Their services are not well understood by those outside of the adult education system, be they workforce development entities, colleges, employers, or immigrant service and advocacy groups. And their potential as agents of immigrant integration is often underappreciated.

In the United States, 45.4 million working-age adults speak a language other than English at home of whom 19.2 million have limited English proficiency (Wilson, 2014). In contrast with earlier waves of immigrants, over one quarter of today's immigrants are college-educated in other countries though many are not English proficient (National Academy of Sciences, 2015). Immigrants are more likely to be poor than U.S. citizens though they have a high rate of labor force participation (*ibid.*). Over the next 20 years, immigrants and their children will account for 85 percent of the net growth in the U.S. labor force (Myers, Levy, & Pitkin, 2013).

Successful integration of immigrants is clearly important to the economic and social vitality of the United States. Citizenship is a strong indicator of integration, but in the U.S. only 50 percent of those eligible have applied for citizenship (National Academy of Sciences, 2015). While the phenomenon of immigrant integration is not new in this country of immigrants, the notion that it should be intentionally advanced on multiple fronts by government, community agencies, and others is relatively new. At the state level, Illinois was the first among five states that issued executive orders related to immigrant integration between 2005 and 2008 (Montalto, 2012).

The concept of full integration of immigrants is now viewed as multifaceted and includes linguistic, civic,

and economic integration (Muñoz & Rodriguez, 2015). In addition to limited English proficiency, immigrants often face challenges that may hinder their participation in education, community, and work, such as lack of access to job training and retraining, complicated recredentialing and licensing procedures, inaccessible pathways to citizenship, and anti-immigrant prejudice. At the same time, immigrants bring to the U.S. entrepreneurial spirit, skills, and credentials from their home countries, and optimism and willingness to work hard to make a new life in this country.

Federal funding is provided for adult education programs in every state, matched by state dollars. These programs serve adults with limited formal education, including immigrants with limited English proficiency. At the state and local levels, private and public funds expand the reach of adult education programs. For example, volunteer and workplace-based education programs also serve hundreds of immigrants. As well, a national network of refugee resettlement agencies provides short-term English, employment, and social services for refugees who make up 10-13 percent of immigrants admitted to the U.S. each year (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Nevertheless, the demand for English classes far exceeds the supply in most communities. This mirrors an overall dearth of resources allotted to meeting immigrants' needs in the United States.

## GOALS

To respond to the needs and realities described above, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) funded a technical assistance contract to strengthen adult education programs' ability to 1) provide immigrants access to effective and innovative English language programs; 2) support immigrants on the path to citizenship and civic engagement; and 3) support immigrants' career development through training and education. In so doing, OCTAE built on the New Americans Citizenship and Integration Initiative, a White House initiative that brought together a core group of Federal agencies to coordinate Federal immigrant integration efforts, including the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor. It has since

been renamed the White House Task Force on New Americans that in 2014 issued a Strengthening Communities by Welcoming All Residents: A Federal Strategic Action Plan and a progress report a year later.

OCTAE was looking to identify a “more holistic, integrated approach to meeting the linguistic, civic, and economic needs of immigrants” to “better understand how to replicate successful and innovative models” (OCTAE, 2013). The OCTAE expectation was that the initiative strengthen local immigrant integration efforts through technical assistance and document these efforts so that other communities may learn from the experience. In particular, OCTAE hoped the technical assistance would make possible better coordinated and more extensive services for immigrant English learners.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

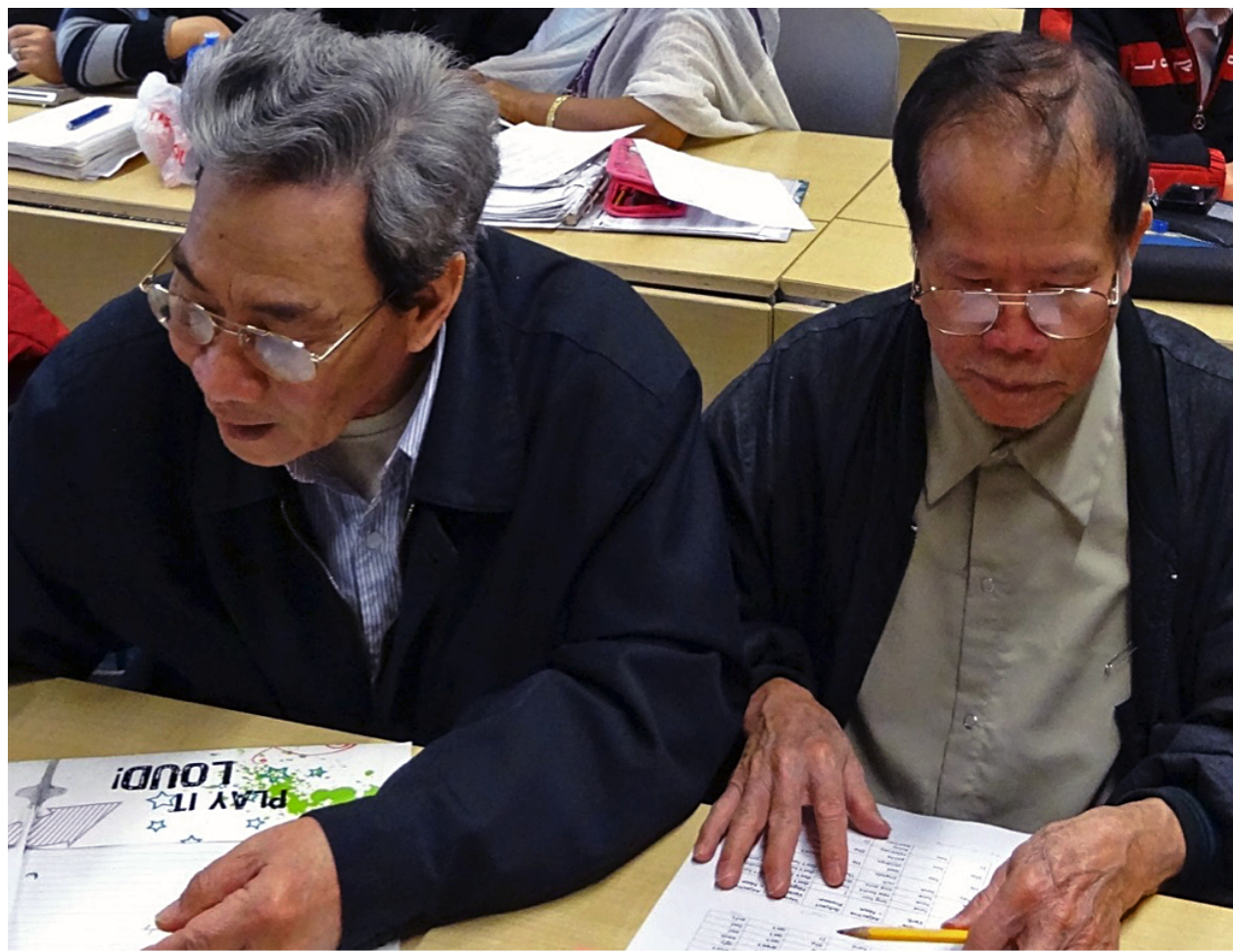
Networks for Integrating New Americans was formed to advance OCTAE’s goals with adult education programs in central roles in five local, multi-stakeholder networks. Through a network approach, it sought to break down existing silos between organizations whose work serves

the needs of immigrants and refugees. The central premise was that strong networks of organizations with complementary capacities are especially needed to effectively address immigrants’ linguistic, civic, and economic integration. By coordinating strategies and services, networks of organizations can achieve more with the limited resources typically at their disposal than individual organizations alone.

Through its network approach, the initiative also sought to build inclusive, welcoming communities by fostering cooperation and mutual understanding among varied newcomer groups and receiving communities. Welcoming communities recognize that immigrant and refugee integration is a dynamic, two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. Greater integration implies movement toward equity in critical life opportunities with U.S.-born people.

The initiative’s theory of change was that when organizations in the immigrant and receiving communities are collaborating and aligned, they are able to mobilize and leverage the assets of both communities to address the

*English learners at Highline College, WA.*





needs of immigrants and create a better life for them while at the same time improving conditions in the overall community. To achieve such alignment, the networks had to effectively convey this concept of mutual benefit to immigrants and receiving communities. Please refer to the Theoretical Framework for a full description of the theory of change and the logic model (World Education, 2013).

## THE NETWORKS

Effective networks are composed of organizations with complementary strengths. In this initiative, each of the five networks was composed of a different combination of the following types of organizations: adult ESL ESOL and workforce development programs operated by school districts, community colleges, or community-based organizations; refugee resettlement agencies; public libraries; social service providers; community development and public housing agencies; immigrant rights organizations; welcoming centers; employers; and more. Each network was required to have at least one adult education program that receives funding under the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The networks determined the rest of their organizational membership.

Each network was also required to have a “backbone organization” to serve as the lead convener for the network and to assign a Coordinator with at least some paid hours to facilitate and manage the network. In three out of five networks, an adult education provider served as the backbone organization per decision of the network. The networks participated in this initiative from April 2013 through February 2016. Please refer to Appendix A for a description of the network selection process and profiles of the selected networks. The individual network’s profiles complement the cross-network lessons learned discussed in this paper.

## LEAD PARTNERS

Launched in March 2013, the Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative was a partnership between World Education, Inc. and three leading, national immigrant integration consortia. World Education has decades of experience in building local organizations’ capacity for providing immigrant and refugee education, training, health, and safety. In the United States, it supports older youth and adult learners by strengthening the educators, organizations, and systems that serve them. World Education is a national leader in building the adult education system’s capacity to provide high-quality instruction and advising for adult learners. It works with state systems,

## LOCAL NETWORKS AND COACHES

NETWORK	LOCATION	BACKBONE ORGANIZATION	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/ COACH ORGANIZATION
Central Valley Network for Integrating New Americans	Central Valley, California	Fresno Adult School	World Education
Neighbors United	Boise, Idaho	Idaho Office for Refugees	IMPRINT
White Center Promise	White Center, Washington	White Center Community Development Association	Welcoming America
Lancaster County Refugee Coalition	Lancaster, Pennsylvania	Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon	World Education
We Rhode Island Network	Metropolitan Providence, RI	Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative at Providence Public Library	National Partnership for New Americans

colleges, programs, and teachers to help English language learners [welcomingamerica.org](http://welcomingamerica.org) and U.S.-born adults learn the skills and knowledge they need to reach their goals.

In this initiative, World Education worked closely with its esteemed partners:

- National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) encompasses the country's 37 largest regional immigrant rights organizations in 30 states.
- IMPRINT includes six partner organizations committed to helping internationally-trained immigrant professionals reclaim their careers in the United States.
- Welcoming America is a broad network of nonprofit organizations and local governments in more than 90 communities across the U.S. that supports them in developing plans, programs, and policies to transform their communities into vibrant places where everyone's talents are valued and cultivated.

The partnership also benefitted greatly from the expertise of:

- Community Science that served as the documentation expert; and
- Network Impact that served as the expert on network development.

These partners brought unique and complementary expertise and experience and an extensive network of providers and advocates. In addition, the initiative benefitted from the insights of 13 Subject Matter Experts from across the country whose expertise includes accelerated English language instruction and assessment; integrated career pathways; job readiness and workforce development for English learners; pathways to citizenship; immigration policy; public education about immigrants as assets; financial literacy; and support of immigrant entrepreneurs. Please refer to the Appendices for more information.

## II. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

A wide range of information about the five network's efforts was captured in order to tell the story of each network's development, obstacles overcome, successes, and lessons learned. The following data formed the building blocks for the final story of each network and the initiative as a whole:

- Each network completed three documents--a Network Development Self-Assessment, an Integration Activity Self-Assessment, and an Action Plan. Collectively, these three documents provided baseline data about each network's capacity and the types of integration activities being implemented before they were selected to be part of the initiative. This informed the baseline qualitative and quantitative data and the stories developed for each network.
- Notes from monthly technical assistance and coaching meetings, and bimonthly meetings of the network Coordinators with the coaches.
- Site visit notes from two-day visits to each network in the fall 2015.
- Documentation of customized and group (quarterly webinars and two institutes) technical assistance.

- Dialogue and analytics on a closed virtual Community of Practice on the Literacy Information and Communications System (LINCS) platform supported by OCTAE.
- Qualitative and quantitative progress and outcomes from network development and immigrant integration activities implemented by each network.

These multiple data sources and protocols allowed for ongoing triangulation of the data. The data were systematically coded by project staff and organized around the ten categories for network development and eight categories for immigrant integration activities for each network, aligned with the Theoretical Framework and logic model that were developed for the initiative in 2013. The coded data was analyzed in an iterative fashion to identify emerging themes and sub-themes for each network and the five networks as a group. As well, lead staff at the networks were consulted to fill in information gaps in the data. Through the iterative data coding process, patterns and themes emerged, which in turn informed the identification of lessons learned documented in this report

# III. LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, nonprofit organizations are building social impact networks to address complex issues that individual organizations cannot solve alone and, thereby collectively improve outcomes for the individuals they serve. Immigrant integration is one such complex issue around which social impact networks have formed. Immigrants' economic, civic, and linguistic integration requires a coordinated, multi-sector approach in which adult education needs to be a partner. No single strategy can help immigrants learn English, access further education, training, and better jobs, and achieve citizenship. And rarely can a single organization effectively address all these aspects of integration. While adult education can make important contributions to each aspect, adult education providers generally have neither the capacity nor the funding to do it well on their own. Thus, social impact networks hold great promise for organizations seeking to support immigrant integration.

Networks for Integrating New Americans tapped into a growing body of knowledge designed to help networks be more intentional and deliberate in their network building. Most nonprofit organizations have experience with partnerships or coalitions. What is new is that research and evaluation of social impact networks' design, management, and impact have led to a better understanding of how to build and implement networks most effectively (Plastrik, Taylor, & Cleveland, 2014; Collective Impact Forum, 2015).

An important characteristic of social impact networks is that they bring together individuals and/or organizations as equal partners to advance a common agenda through mutually reinforcing activities. Each member contributes its unique strengths and partners with others who bring complementary capacities. In the Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative, English language providers joined with libraries, refugee resettlement agencies, community agencies, colleges, workforce development entities, and other stakeholders to bring their collective knowledge and resources to the challenge of immigrant integration in their local communities.

In general, a key advantage of networks is that they can produce many types of value. Effective network organizing can: increase individual member capacity through peer learning and better coordination of services; build visibility through coordinated outreach; surface innovative solutions to a shared problem; spread new ideas and practices widely; and increase social impact by coordinating varied types of activity from service delivery to policy change (Plastrik, Taylor, & Cleveland, 2014).

Research on collective impact efforts indicates that, in their early years, networks' progress should be measured by how well they put in place elements that support their ability to achieve meaningful outcomes together: a common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication structures, and shared measurement systems (Preskill et al, 2014). The five diverse networks that were supported through the Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative realized some of these advantages in a systematic and deliberate way as will be discussed in the sections that follow.

## GENERAL NETWORK DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. Common Goals and Action Plan
2. Mutually Reinforcing Activities
3. Trust
4. Coordination and Support
5. Continuous Communication
6. Participation
7. Tangible Benefits to Members
8. Ongoing Learning and Adaptation

The following sections discuss lessons learned related to network development in the 22 months that local networks implemented the Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative. The lessons learned are divided into two themes: Network Development and the Role of Adult Education in Immigrant Integration.

The first section addresses network development under two, broad categories: 1) Building Effective Networks: Evolving Goals, Roles, and Structure and 2) Reaping the Benefits: Expanded, Better Coordinated Services.

## **BUILDING EFFECTIVE NETWORKS: EVOLVING GOALS, ROLES, AND STRUCTURE**

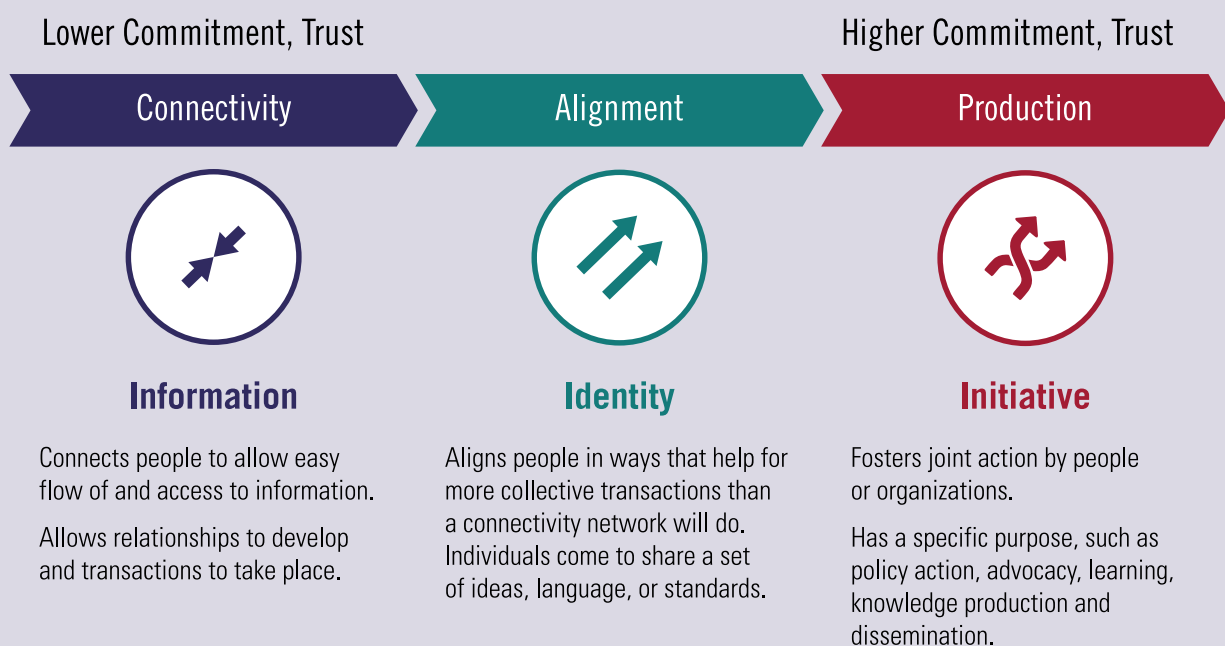
Research and practice from network science shows that networks need to intentionally develop their structures and ways of operating in order to achieve meaningful outcomes together, in this case, advancing immigrants' linguistic, economic, and civic integration. Effective networks nurture the network, build trust intentionally, share leadership, counter the pressures toward single organization-centric behavior, track their progress, engage in learning and self-reflection, and keep adapting to a changing environment (Crutchfield & McLeod-Grant, 2015). Learning to collaborate and function as a network is an ongoing process as internal and external realities and players change.

Network science identifies three overlapping network functions as described in the graphic below.

Networks are dynamic entities that are often in a state of flux. Connecting networks focus on information sharing and therefore require a much lower level of commitment than networks that also seek to align their values, standards, and services and implement joint services or activities. Aligning networks need to build a strong sense of group identity and purpose. Network alignment sets the stage for the network to become a producing network that plans and implements joint projects and programs and secures funding for them. All networks must attend to building connections among the members first and on an ongoing basis before they can effectively align their work, coordinate existing or new services, and become producing networks. Even for fully producing networks, the work of connecting and aligning is an on-going process. Networks may have subgroups where information-sharing (connecting) remains the central function. Networks' producing function may also fluctuate over time based on changes in funding, commitment, and goals.

Upon joining Networks for Integrating New Americans, all five networks were primarily connecting networks whose members had been meeting to share information. They did not have common action plans, and their focus

## **3 Basic Network Functions**



on immigrant integration was limited, for example to linguistic integration or refugee resettlement. As part of this initiative, they became aligned as they worked out common goals and action plans. The implementation of their common action plans and attention to developing the network's structure and processes turned them into producing networks that coordinated existing services and created new projects and services to benefit immigrants and refugees, and tracked their progress toward their common goals. One key way of assessing networks' progress and outcomes is their movement along this continuum toward collective impact.

“The White Center Promise network was a “connecting network” when we started last year. We shared fliers, made referrals, and used each other's space. Over the past 18 months we became an “aligning network” and are now a “producing” one. We now have a strong foundation for continued “production” in the future.

- Jo Anderson Cavinta, King County Public Library, White Center Promise network

It is no small task when multiple organizations come together to make a difference about a complex issue. Rarely is there one right approach or solution. Networks' movement from information-sharing and connecting to producing entities with common goals and action plans can be a bumpy road with dead-ends and disagreements about direction. All five networks experienced challenges that had to be addressed before they could move forward with a common action plan. The networks seeking to advance English learners' economic integration (Lancaster County Refugee Coalition, Neighbors United, We RI Network) struggled at times to engage employers to see immigrants' potential as viable job candidates, especially for more high-skilled jobs. Two networks (Lancaster and Neighbors United) stepped up their communications about immigrants and refugees as assets to the community in response to anti-immigrant/refugee incidents in their communities. Many of these challenges and how they were or are still being addressed are discussed in the lessons learned that follow.

### **1. A network's action plan development and refinement is a dynamic process that is shaped by changing needs, opportunities, and membership, and an evolving identity.**

A common action plan with goals, activities, benchmarks, and timelines is key to network health and ability to achieve collective impact (Plastrik, Taylor, & Cleveland, 2014). A common action plan with agreed-upon goals and benchmarks is a key tool for network members' accountability to each other. Without common goals and an action plan, a network is rudderless. Its development requires the network to not only assess needs, gaps, and assets, but also to build consensus and ownership over which needs it should address and how. In fact, in many cases, solutions or strategies are not known at the outset.

When it comes to immigrants' civic, economic, and linguistic integration, the range of needs in any one community is generally far greater than a single agency or even one local network can address. That was certainly true for the five networks in this initiative. A network must consider what goals and activities make sense to pursue given its local context and capacity, and the network members' willingness to actively work on them. And it must stay alert to changes in needs, opportunities, players, the political climate, and economic conditions in the community. Immigrant integration networks, in particular, are affected by global events that may lead to increased migration and local support or opposition to immigrants and refugees.

In order to help the networks identify and prioritize goals and activities, the technical assistance team developed a format for a strengths and needs assessment related to both network development and a wide range of possible integration activities. Each network traveled a different path to arrive at and continuously refine its action plan with goals and benchmarks, depending on the available information or capacities on which the network's effort could build. The Central Valley Immigrant Integration network identified a goal of building a more welcoming community, in part as a result of the needs assessment that was reinforced by research that rated this quality of Fresno County very low (Pastor et al., 2012). Over time, their membership grew, and new members brought new capacities and helped to strengthen existing activities. For example, when the Mi Familia Vota organization joined, voter education and registration became part of events organized by the Central Valley network.



The Neighbors United network knew when they joined the initiative that they wanted to help college-educated refugees in Boise reclaim their careers, and actively pursued funding opportunities to address this need. The We RI Network examined several possible strategies to advance immigrants' economic and linguistic integration including establishing a worker center and engaging employers. The Lancaster County Refugee Coalition stuck to its original economic integration strategy of mapping immigrant English learners' actual career pathways for two high-demand industries (health care and manufacturing), and they also added a major new goal to establish a multi-service Community School for refugees (See page 22 for a description.) This effort grew, in part, due to a change in a local funding condition: the Lancaster County United Way's new funding requirements preferred collective impact networks.

“While we have a shared vision for change, our network struggled with our focus. The group formed to address the needs of refugees; however, our work has evolved to include immigrants. With the opening of the Community School, our client base has become even broader. In that sense, working collaboratively is a challenge and requires continuous communication.

- Cheryl Hiester, Project Coordinator, Lancaster County Refugee Coalition and CEO, Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon

The White Center Promise network engaged in an in-depth assessment of community needs and assets over several months. While doing so, they responded to an opportunity to organize a community-wide Big Read Campaign led by the King County Library, a member of the network. (See page 23 for a description.)

These experiences demonstrate that networks need to strike a balance between setting a clear action plan and allowing it to evolve in response to changing community conditions, opportunities, and members, especially related to an issue as volatile as immigration. Experience gained from implementing integration activities, a growing awareness and better understanding of needs and

opportunities, and new and strengthened relationships led the networks to refine, revise, and expand their goals, related activities, and structure in an ongoing effort for form to follow function.

An increase in goals and activities caused some networks to revise their structure and establish sub-committees charged with moving specific goals forward. These sub-committees were accountable for their progress to a core group or steering committee. For example, nine months into implementing Global Talent Idaho that provides employment and education services for college-educated immigrants, the Neighbors United network added a new goal of making Boise a more welcoming community and promoting immigrants as assets. This effort is led by their Strategic Communications Committee and was and continues to be assisted by both Welcoming America and a pro bono marketing firm.

Not only did the networks' action plans evolve, their sense of identity evolved. Each network's unique identity shifted over time related to the target audience and/or how the network pursued its goals. The two networks that defined themselves as refugee coalitions (Lancaster and Neighbors United) began to expand their vision and mission to include all immigrants albeit not without some internal tensions. As part of the more expansive identity and message to the community, the Idaho Refugee Coalition renamed itself Neighbors United.

**2. Ongoing cultivation of internal relationships is key to building trust, buy-in, and shared sense of purpose.** According to Taylor, “Creating a core of connectivity is the first big step in a network's evolution” (Plastrik, Taylor, & Cleveland, 2014). Connectivity is not only about who the members are but also about how the connections among members are structured, and how information flows through those connections. Many networks have a core group or steering committee, members at large, and sub-committees. Some also have affiliate members. The members' sense of connection and commitment to the network and its work rely on continuous communication that keeps the many components of the network informed, a key network design principle. (See page 5 for the general network design principles.) Without efficient and ongoing communication, the network can easily fall off the members' radar. Meetings, e-newsletters, online groups and depositories for documents, and email help keep members informed and connected.

In order to develop connectivity and buy-in, network Coordinators especially need to invest time and energy on an ongoing basis in building and maintaining relationships and trust within the network and with other collaborators. They need to understand each member organization's evolving capacities, needs, and priorities in order to ensure the network's action plan is consistent with and addresses at least some of these priorities.

*Dr. Madeleine B. Taylor presents about network development.*



Any network's effectiveness rests on a shared sense of purpose, urgency, and collective value among the member organizations. As McLeod (2015) writes, "There is growing pressure in the social sector for nonprofits to measure and report on the results of their work. This reinforces organization-centric behavior, rather than collaboration." Network Coordinators have to build trust among member organizations that the collective network approach is worth pursuing and will yield benefits to them, and that no one organization will take credit even though they may certainly use their participation in the network to also advance their organizations. This is why network experts say that networks' work moves at the speed of trust (Plastrik, Taylor, & Cleveland, 2014; Collective Impact Forum, 2015).

All five network Coordinators deepened their understanding and appreciation of the supreme importance of building strong connections among network members as the basis for the network's effectiveness in moving its immigrant integration agenda forward. The Coordinators had to ensure that the member organization representatives were well-informed and actively communicating the network's plans and work back to their organization toward the goal of each member incorporating the network's action plan into its own work plans. At the adult education classroom level, the network's plans needed also to be reflected and reinforced in lesson plans in order to include English learners in the process inside and outside of the classroom. Please refer to Section V. Role of Adult Education Programs for more information about this topic.

While each member agency had one or two representatives on the network's core group, the Coordinators had to build relationships with key players in those organizations, not only the designated representative(s). Perhaps the most significant lesson learned in that regard was that networks' effectiveness depends on buy-in from both executive directors and frontline staff. This requires ongoing communication and solicitation of their input and involvement at key points. When that was lacking, several networks experienced setbacks, for example, when an executive director refused to sign off on a joint proposal a network wanted to submit, or when classroom teachers failed to see the purpose of aligning their lessons with the network's goals.

“There's another level of connectivity that's important - that is to the front line staff. I should have communicated earlier to teachers about the big picture of our network goals. Sometimes, I could feel my teachers' allegiance to our program getting in the way and causing friction. I think we have passed that point as we have more activities together as a network. We are clearer about why partnering is important, and the teachers are seeing the benefits and are onboard.

- Karisa Tashjian, Coordinator, We RIN  
and Director, RIFLI adult education program



Strategies used by the networks to build trust and a shared sense of purpose fall into two mutually reinforcing categories: relationships and structure.

#### Attending to Relationships:

- Understanding that networks operate at the speed of trust.
- Building in time and ways to get to know each other personally and organizationally including making it a regular part of the meeting agenda, and doing team-building activities to build trust, especially when any new members join or a conflict arises.
- Consistently sharing credit among member organizations.
- Rotating meetings among member organizations and including introductory tours.
- Showing up at each other's events.

#### Attending to Structure:

- Connecting members to their passions in leading or implementing different aspects of the network's action plan.
- Articulating clear roles and guidelines for decision-making.
- Sharing leadership.
- Designating two representatives to the core team.
- Establishing subcommittees for major goals with co-chairs and accountability to the large network.
- Requiring each member organization to designate two representatives to the network's core team.

The Operations Plan crafted by the Lancaster County Refugee Coalition with technical assistance from Network Impact is instructive. It spells out their values, mission, structure, decision-making process, the coordinator's and committee chairs' responsibilities, and guidelines for communications about the network (See Appendices). The development of this Operations Plan was a response to strife in the network, for example, many instances where the same decisions had to be made again, and the network structure kept fluctuating. The Operations Plan is now the network's touchstone. Core members credit it for the network's ability to move forward with big new proposals and projects, such as the Community School described on page 22.

**3. Anchor projects help networks move from connecting to producing networks.** As discussed on page 6, there are three network functions: connecting, aligning, and producing. A network cannot become a producing network without first attending to building connections among the members and also aligning themselves around common goals and values. Even for fully producing networks, the work of connecting and aligning is an on-going process.

All networks in this initiative were primarily information-sharing (connecting) networks and had much to do in terms of alignment, especially when it came to developing joint activities that involve adult English language programs. World Education and its partners coached the networks to articulate goals for both network development and immigrant integration activities to help them move along the continuum toward becoming fully producing. For each of the five networks, this process was greatly enhanced by what we call anchor projects. An anchor project was not part of the conceptual framework or network selection criteria. In this initiative, anchor projects enabled the networks to make tangible progress while sorting out other aspects of their action plan. Tangible progress gave the networks momentum and validated the member organizations' investment of time and energy in the network. The concurrent focus on network development (e.g., trust, internal communications, structure, decision-making) helped the networks coalesce around the anchor projects.

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“For our network, while sharing events and aligning services has always been critical, it really takes an anchor project for us to collectively galvanize around. This includes the Big Read project and our visual storytelling workshops as key examples.

- Tony Vo, Coordinator, White Center Promise network

Anchor projects may have been funded independent of the network, typically in the backbone agency, and they expanded and morphed to encompass the network. A good example of how an existing project both supported and benefited from the network is the Adult Lifelong Learning Access (ALL Access) project funded by the

Institute for Museum and Library Services at the Providence Public Library and its Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative adult education program. ALL Access became the touchstone for several integration activities of the We RI Network, such as the Jobs Club operated in the library by another network member agency, Rhode Island Institute for Labor Studies and Research. (See page 33 for a description.)

Across the country, the Central Valley network built on its citizenship services funded by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to strengthen pathways to citizenship and civic engagement. USCIS funded two organizations, San Joaquin College of Law and Fresno Adult School as the lead and fiscal agent that then formed an expanded network called the Citizenship Academy which includes the Fresno County Public Library, the Maddy Institute at California State University, Fresno, and other agencies. These organizations are core members of the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Network, along with other organizations that help to strengthen pathways to citizenship in Central Valley. For example, the DACA Collaborative organized informational sessions and citizenship eligibility screenings across the region on an ongoing basis, and Mi Familia Vota registered new citizens to vote.

“Our We RI Network has come to recognize that working on a common project is very useful for a network but it must be grounded in a common purpose and commitment to ongoing work. Our network was stumbling for a bit but was very much reinvigorated when we rallied around a common project, in our case, the ALL Access project, where we found multiple ways to work together to best support immigrants.

- Karisa Tashjian, Coordinator, We RIN and Director, RIFLI adult education program

In contrast, three other networks secured new funding for anchor projects with one agency serving as the fiscal conduit. Global Talent Idaho, an employment services initiative for college-educated refugees, funded by the Idaho Department of Labor, came to serve as an anchor

project of the Neighbors United network. (See page 24 for a description.) The Lancaster County Refugee Coalition raised \$1.4 million to establish the Community School for refugees operated by multiple agencies. (See page 22 for a description.) For the White Center Promise network, the anchor project emerged in the Big Read Campaign funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and others. (See page 23 for a description.)

**4. Shared coordination and leadership build shared ownership and help to distribute the work.** Networks aiming for collective impact need to coordinate the efforts of multiple organizations. Structure is as important as strategy, according to the founders of the Collective Impact Forum (Kania et al, 2014). Networks require a structure that offers multiple ways for people to participate, help shape strategies, and assume leadership.

Turnover in leadership slowed progress in four of the networks. Shared coordination and leadership emerged as a key trait of a network structure that helped the five networks move forward on multiple fronts at the same time and lightened the Coordinators' workloads. Shared coordination helped to distribute the work in Central Valley where both the Fresno County Public Library and the Maddy Institute came to co-lead key integration activities with Fresno Adult School. The Lancaster County Refugee Coalition adopted a structure with a single Coordinator who shares leadership functions with the Coalition Chair person, which is a rotating position. In addition, the Coalition's working groups often have co-chairs.

At Neighbors United, each of its seven subcommittees is co-chaired by two people representing two different member organizations.

At the same time, in each of the five networks, the Coordinators played a central role in coordinating action planning and managing communications among the various members and stakeholders. They juggled this considerable workload as part of their other jobs as executive directors, lead teachers, and project managers. Most of the five networks did not have the luxury of hiring an external, neutral facilitator that research suggests is ideal for collective impact networks (Preskill, Parkhurst, & Splansky Juster, 2014). The exception was Neighbors United that contracts with an Implementation Coordinator for its network of over 100 member organizations, businesses, and government agencies. Underwritten by the City of Boise and the Idaho Office for Refugees, the

part-time Implementation Coordinator facilitates this complex network with a Steering Committee, Planning Team, Implementation Team, and seven subcommittees.

**5. Intentional learning needs to be built into networks' operations.** Learning is a core feature of networks. Networks provide each other access to information and innovations, and opportunities for peer learning. Learning from each other, experts, and experience sets the foundation for networks' growth and development. However, without tools for assessing needs, capacities, and progress against goals; coaching; and technical assistance on promising practices, networks' effectiveness can be compromised by not knowing what they don't know.

Networks for Integrating New Americans was conceptualized by the funder (OCTAE) as a technical assistance contract on the assumption that nascent networks need guidance and support to address immigrants' linguistic, civic, and economic integration in a coordinated manner. In this initiative, learning about network development, including the role that learning should play in networks, was a central theme as a way to ensure the success of their joint immigrant integration activities. Technical assistance and coaching advanced the networks' learning. Learning was thus central to how the networks moved their common action plans forward by:

1. *Learning about the unique capacities and priorities of network members.*

Even though all five networks were established prior to joining this initiative, the Coordinators asserted that there was always more to learn about each member organization's work, connections, and capacities. Building this sharing of information into the network's operations strengthened networks' planning and performance. Each network discovered capacities within its members that could be marshaled for reaching the network's mutually agreed upon goals. Section IV. Featured Projects highlights many such capacities as do the network profiles in the Appendices.

2. *Learning together from technical assistance (TA) and thinking together about how it could inform their collective work, and the implications for the member organizations.*

“Upwardly Global's TA was invaluable in setting up the structure of Global Talent Idaho. We have built a close relationship with them and are adopting their data base and online training. They are helping us to be data-driven.

The Welcoming America TA has been incredibly useful also and resulted in a strategic communications plan.

- Tara Wolfson, Co-chair of Employment Committee, Neighbors United

Defining their TA needs was an ongoing process that evolved along with the network's goals. As they examined their progress, experienced challenges, or learned about new practices from their coaches, each other, or other experts, they identified new TA needs. For example, both White Center and Lancaster received TA from Dr. Kien Lee at Community Science on data collection using common indicators. They began to puzzle out what shared data collection means for the member organizations and how they can support one another in that endeavor.

Such collective problem-solving can both build and challenge relationships because it requires network members to 1) develop an understanding about outcome measurement; 2) identify existing measurement systems among themselves that they can build on and not duplicate; 3) negotiate data sharing agreements and practices; and 4) ensure that the confidentiality of the people in their data systems is protected. Developing a shared measurement and data system in particular is a complex process in that it requires buy-in from the member organizations' leadership, changes to their established data measurement and collection practices, and an infrastructure for transferring and sharing data and findings for mutual benefit.

As the networks gained a better understanding of how network science can help them, they sought TA to improve their operations. A good case in point is the Lancaster network that worked extensively with Network Impact's founder and principal, Dr. Madeleine Taylor, on network development issues. When the network was experiencing discord about goals and strategies, Dr. Taylor led them through a process of re-examining the eight network design principles (See page 5) that led to the

development of the Operations Plan for the network (See Appendices) and positioned the network to successfully move forward with its new flagship project, the founding of a Community School for refugees and immigrants.

An ongoing TA challenge was for the Coordinators to: 1) ascertain who were the right people from member organizations to participate in given TA; 2) ensure that these people were supported, able, and committed to participating in that TA; and 3) make sure there was follow-through in sharing, building on, and applying the TA. The network coaches and TA Coordinator worked with the Coordinators to overcome these challenges as much as possible. Even though the networks tapped into the available TA at different speeds and intensities, they derived demonstrable benefit from the TA they received. Please refer to the network profiles in the Appendices for more details about the TA each network received.

### 3. *Learning across networks about new possibilities and promising strategies.*

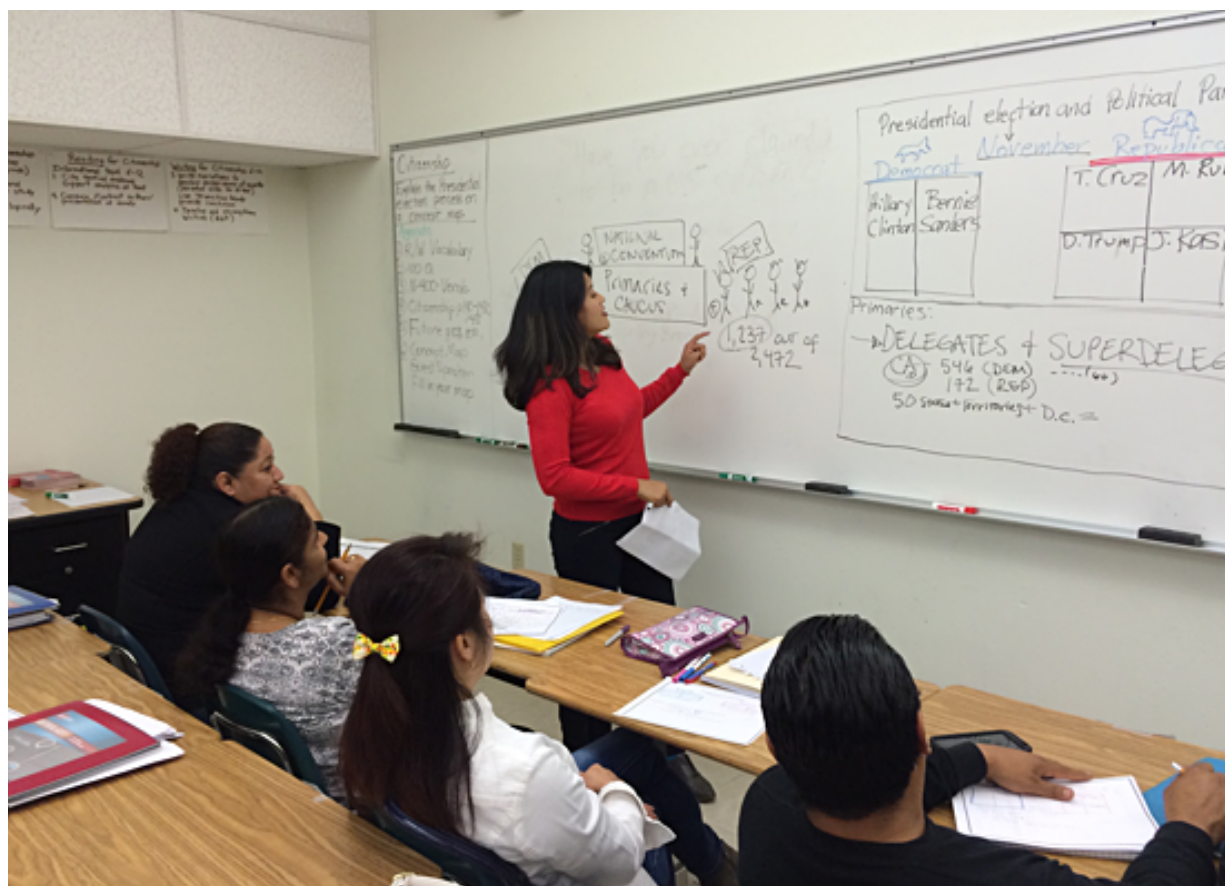
The networks learned from each other's practices, projects, and challenges through bimonthly meetings, two convenings, technical assistance webinars, discus-

sions about common readings, and an online community of practice. Nevertheless, it took time for the network Coordinators to grasp what each other was doing in their networks and how that work had evolved. Neighbors United network is now looking into replicating Lancaster's Community School concept while Lancaster is interested in their Global Talent Idaho program. The three networks that include local public libraries are talking to each other about replicating We RIN's ALL Access project and possibly also the Big Read Campaign.

“I really can't emphasize enough how much working with these other networks has informed our work – We RI is talking with IMPRINT about high-skilled immigrants; we are partnering on a Big Read grant with a school in Providence using White Center's lead, we're closely following Lancaster's growing relationship with their One Stop Career Center, and we're partnering on a grant to Institute for Museum and Library Services.

- Karisa Tashjian, Coordinator, We RIN and Director, RIFLI adult education program

Ana Jovel-Melendez presents a civics lesson at Fresno Adult School, CA.





## REAPING THE BENEFITS: EXPANDED, BETTER COORDINATED SERVICES

Networks are self-regulating systems: if the members do not find value in them they leave. This value may be characterized as collective impact when measurable short-term and long-term outcomes are documented. In addition to a shared action plan and data collection system, the collective impact approach calls for ongoing communication among network members, mutually reinforcing activities, and a backbone organization. Experience and research in collective impact networks affirms the experience of Networks for Integrating New Americans that networks' outcomes in their first 1-3 years are often formative (Preskill, Parkhurst, & Splansky Juster, 2014).

Considering that none of the five networks received funding from Networks for Integrating New Americans, the networks' progress is remarkable. All five networks leveraged existing resources in new ways in order to improve and increase services for immigrants and refugees. Each network secured new in-kind resources and/or grants building on existing capacities and needs. They also came to realize that an important – and often missing – part of improving services was generating positive visibility about immigrants and their contributions to the community toward the goal of an inclusive, welcoming community.

In order to track their progress, the networks collected qualitative and quantitative data to the extent feasible. Shared data collection was always more feasible and robust when it was a funded activity as part of a fully-funded, discreet project, such as Global Talent Idaho in Boise, the Community School in Lancaster, or citizenship services in Central Valley. Some network activities didn't lend themselves to extensive data collection and evaluation. For instance, the Central Valley Network had no funding for its welcoming week and determined it was not feasible to collect data beyond the number of participants in the various activities. As well, tracking changes in a community's disposition toward immigrants requires a multi-pronged, research approach that was beyond the scope of the network's program intervention. Operating a shared data collection system beyond a single funded project was challenging to a point where no network attempted it within the timeframe of this initiative.

**1. Networks increase the efficiency and reduce redundancies in services among member organizations.** A network draws its strength from its members' commitment, capacities, and connections. Taking stock of these capacities and connections is a central network function that is the basis for identifying gaps and synergies toward the goal of improved and better coordinated services.

Mapping their respective member organizations' strengths and services – however informally - helped the networks better coordinate services and thereby increase the efficiency of their services and activities. Central Valley network's Citizenship Academy expanded its citizenship classes to more locations after having identified Legal Permanent Resident populations that were not being reached by the network. They strengthened naturalization assistance services through partners, and brought in a new partner that offered non-partisan voter education and registration as part of citizenship education.

Two networks improved efficiencies in providing adult education services by merging and coordinating programmatic functions across multiple programs maintaining a common database. The Lancaster network's adult education programs have a long tradition of networking that has yielded coordinated student intake, wait lists, referrals, schedules, and levels and types of classes offered, and the maintenance of a common database. The We RI Network formalized previously informal coordination of these functions across multiple programs. The Lancaster network adult education providers also developed a joint student orientation and pooled their resources to provide joint training for staff and volunteers. On a broader scale, the Lancaster County Refugee Coalition strengthened the coordination of services among its six core agencies that also include a health center, school district, a college, and two refugee resettlement agencies. This coordination will be further strengthened by the development of a shared data collection system.

When the We RI Network moved the Jobs Club operated by the Institute for Labor Studies and Research (ILSR) to the Providence Public Library, the network's backbone organization, Jobs Club students were more easily able to access other services. These services included various technology-enabled adult learning programs. Thus, the adult learners and patrons of both organizations benefited from this synergy.

“What is most striking as a result of involvement with Networks for Integrating New Americans is our move from I to we in all that we do. At the ground level, this has meant using the same registration form, coordinating classes so that together two of the agencies serve the full continuum of ESL classes in both the morning and night, discussing shared students’ progress, holding joint registrations, sharing a wait list, and more. One agency has obtained grant funding to offer a class for another member’s students. We have realized that we each have our own extensive networks and we have tapped into those networks for the good of We RIN.

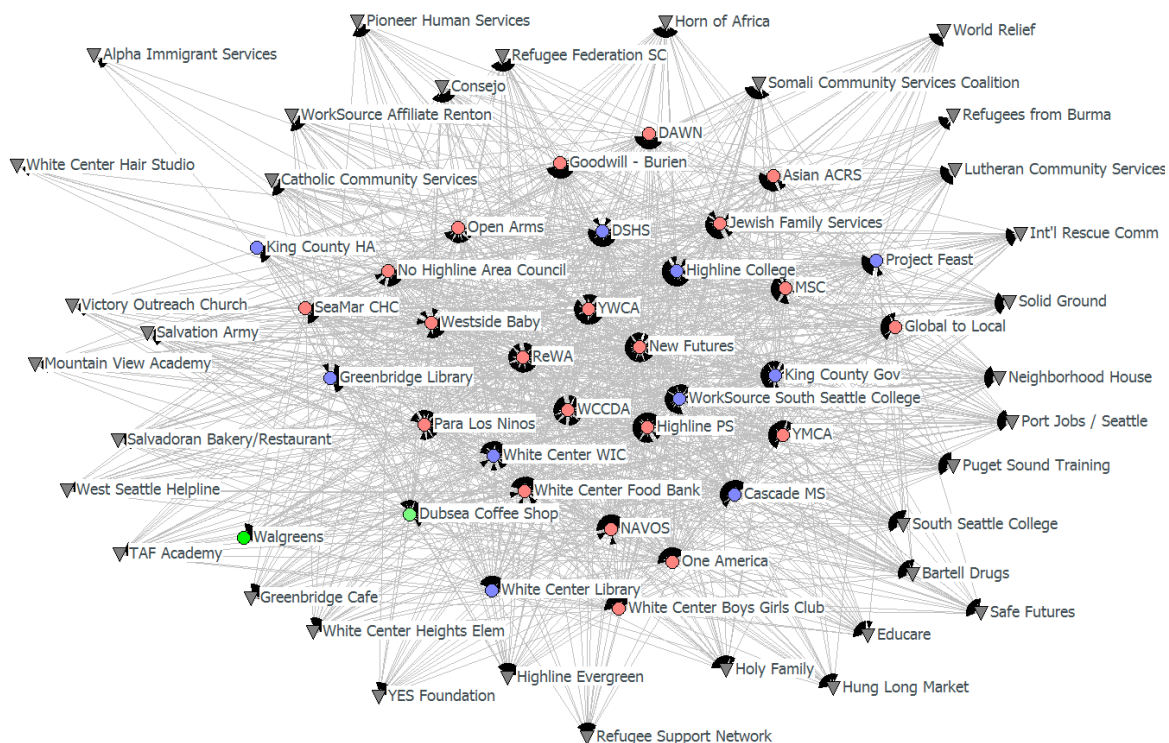
- Karisa Tashjian, Coordinator, We RIN and Director, RIFLI adult education program

The White Center Promise network engaged in a formal process of network mapping of the organizations in the community that serve immigrants and refugees and these organizations’ connection to the White Center Promise network. They reached out to 67 organizations

and received 33 responses about the demographics of the people served and the types of services provided. To assess the strength of the connection, they asked the respondents about the degree of their familiarity with each other and level of and types of interactions. Through that process, they assessed the purpose and strength of each connection/relationship between organizations, and they learned where there were gaps in capacity and connections as well as duplications in service.

The network maps also showed missed connections between members and revealed fewer network connections with ethnic and faith-based organizations. The map below portrays the strength of the connections: the organizations on the periphery had the least number of connections to the White Center Promise network. Several turned out to be immigrant-run ethnic organizations, such as the Somali Community Services Coalition. Securing their engagement in the network became a greater priority, and good progress was made, for example through the involvement of Trusted Advocates, a grassroots, immigrant-led organization. This and other visual documents produced as part of the network mapping process helped the network to trace the pathway of possible integration activities available to White Center residents.

White Center Promise network map of immigrant-serving organizations.





My name is Laura, I chose the adult school, because It's Free, it is closer to my house, and they have flexible schedule. It is important to have the adult school program. I have been attending to the U.S. Citizenship classes, and I also go to the ESL classes, adult school give good opportunities to many people and many communities. Thank you for adult education.

*Fresno Adult School, CA citizenship student, her family, and her writing.*

**2. Effective networks attract resources to provide new or improved services to immigrants.** Funders are increasingly realizing the benefits of coordinated networks, which gives such networks a competitive edge over single organizations. Nationally, several United Way affiliates, for example, now prioritize a collective impact approach, which, by definition, requires a multi-stakeholder network with complementary capacities (Preskill et al., 2014).

In the course of this initiative, all five networks secured in-kind resources, and four competed successfully for grants and contracts. To begin with, the backbone organizations of each network committed to a part-time Coordinator. This investment paid off in tangible and intangible ways, including new grants raised by four networks to benefit immigrants in Boise, Lancaster, Providence, and White Center.

Two networks built on existing grants, strengthening newly funded projects. We RI Network expanded the services of the ALL Access project funded by the Institute for

Museum and Library Services. (See page 20 for a description.) Central Valley built on its citizenship services grant funded by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. They secured in-kind resources from member organizations to support immigrants' pathway to citizenship. The Fresno County Library, for example, provided space for citizenship classes and opened a citizenship information corner at the main branch with plans to expand to several others. To strengthen immigrants' linguistic and economic integration, Fresno Adult School aligned English language classes with Fresno City College that now offers them free of charge at the adult school and has a representative on the network's core team. Each Central Valley member organization brought something to bear to advance the network's goals. For example, the Maddy Institute built a web page for the network, and Binacional made pro bono video recordings of immigrant stories.

Four networks raised new dollars to support services for immigrants and refugees and to build their network infrastructure. New and strengthened partnerships and a collective impact approach gave them a competitive



advantage. The Lancaster Refugee Coalition raised \$1.5 million for its Community School for refugees from a combination of sources with the lead funder being the local United Way. (See page 22 for a description.) White Center Promise received a three-year capacity-building grant of \$150,000 per year from the Seattle Community Foundation under its new Center for Community Partnerships program. White Center network member, King County Library, also secured funding from the National Endowment for the Arts for the Big Read Campaign supplemented by smaller grants for various community activities. We RI Network raised funds to enable one member (RIFLI) to provide college transition classes at another member's (English for Action) satellite site.

Neighbors United network's experience in partnering with the Idaho Department of Labor (IDOL) to secure a two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (US DOL) illustrates the power of multiple stakeholders acting in unison with goal-driven tenacity. A clause in the US DOL-funded Job-Driven National Emergency Grant program classified foreign-trained, dislocated workers (who had lost a job through no fault of their own) as an eligible population to receive training and employment services for jobs in high-demand industries. This clause enabled Neighbors United to make the case to the Idaho Department of Labor that they should be part of the IDOL proposal. The proposal was successful and resulted in a \$320,000 subgrant that enabled Neighbors United to launch Global Talent Idaho, a career services program for immigrants with college degrees that requires a high degree of employer engagement. (See page 24 for a description.) The US DOL grant and the commendable outcomes it has made possible have positioned Global Talent Idaho to compete successfully for more funding. Subsequent fundraising is targeting the Idaho Workforce Development Training Fund, US DOL American Apprenticeship grant program, health care career pathway funders, and others.

The program has also made a considerable impact at the state level where IDOL made refugees and immigrants eligible for its regular dislocated worker program and a priority group in another grant category.

### **3. Multiple organizations with a common message are more far-reaching than single organizations.**

When organizations team up and communicate agreed upon key messages in one voice they reach more audiences, and the message is more likely to have an impact. Research and practice in framing messages indicate that when we appeal to higher level, shared values in how we frame our messages, the target audience is more likely to be receptive to the message (FrameWorks Institute, 2002). This is an important consideration when networks (or single organizations) aim to promote immigrants and refugees or adult education as assets to the community and employers.

The goal of building inclusive, welcoming communities is a central concept in immigrant integration. The national efforts to build welcoming communities are spearheaded by Welcoming America in partnership with other national entities, such as the White House Task Force on New Americans and Partnership for a New American Economy that brings together more than 500 mayors and business leaders who support immigration reform as a way of boosting economic growth. As of January 2016, 115 cities and states have adopted resolutions and policies aimed at helping immigrants to integrate in their new home communities. (Welcoming America, 2016). Research has shown multiple benefits to communities that welcome

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“We have learned that...

- All members must be aligned with the common purpose.
- Networks need guidelines and a clear description of how new members will join, how the network will make decisions, and how the network will be structured.
- Clear and consistent communication is essential.

We have also learned that not one of our organizations could do this alone.

- Lancaster County Refugee Coalition report, July 2015

immigrants and refugees. For example, immigrants have helped to offset declining populations and an aging workforce in mid-western states (Paral, 2014) and revitalize neighborhoods (Borges-Mendez, R., Liu, M. & Watanabe, P. 2005).

With the exception of Neighbors United, developing a communications strategy with well-framed messages was not part of the action plan of the networks at the outset of this initiative. The focus was largely on coordinating, improving, and expanding services and creating civic engagement opportunities. However, as they began to build out their programming, the need to raise the awareness of other stakeholders about immigrants' needs, talents, and contributions became clear. All five networks deployed some strategies to highlight immigrants' value and contributions to the community. Remarkably, four networks secured technical assistance for their communications about immigrants and refugees from pro bono experts as well as Welcoming America.

The three networks focused on economic integration knew that engaging employers and other workforce development entities was crucial, but how to do so was less straight forward. They sought to communicate the value of adult education and immigrants who bring job skills and entrepreneurial spirit and revitalize neighborhoods. Neighbors United and Lancaster sought to convey the "brain waste" to the community when college-educated immigrants worked in menial jobs while striving to reclaim their careers, often in fields where there are shortages of skilled workers. They used myriad strategies to reach out to employers and other workforce development stakeholders. (See page 35 for details.) The We RI Network launched a series of workshops to rally adult education and workforce development providers around a common message on building the business case to employers about adult learners as an important asset to the Rhode Island workforce. Technical assistance helped these networks advance their communications efforts aimed at employers.

The networks advancing civic integration and community cohesion focused more on messaging about immigrants as neighbors and new citizens with talents and shared

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“About 250 Lancaster County men, women, and children turned out Saturday in support of refugees who have settled, and are expected to settle, here. They countered a rally of some 30 people—its organizers included people from Schuylkill and Berks counties—who insisted that bringing Syrian refugees into the United States poses a danger to Americans. The anti-refugee rally was held outside Church World Service’s refugee resettlement office in downtown Lancaster. The counter-rally formed in Musser Park.

This is the Lancaster County we know—a place of stalwart and generous people, many of them led by their faith to offer refuge to people fleeing from countries beset by war, poverty and terror.

- *Lancaster Online*, Jan 5, 2016

values and aspirations. Their messages honed in on commonly shared values of community, neighborliness, and hard work. Stories of immigrants working hard to provide for their families or gain U.S. citizenship found their way to mainstream media. The annual Welcoming Week activities and citizenship oath ceremony organized by the Central Valley network had an explicit welcoming theme and featured profiles of California immigrants written by adult learners. (See description on page 21.) The White Center Promise network’s community-wide Big Read Campaign entailed several community events, including book discussions facilitated by immigrant residents that drew both immigrant and U.S.-born residents. (See description on page 23.)

Two networks promoted the shared community value of neighborliness by reinventing a part of their own identity. White Center Promise changed its motto to “Neighbors Stronger Together” which was printed on bumper stickers and other media and widely distributed. The Idaho Refugee Coalition went as far as changing its name to Neighbors United and initiating a strategic communications campaign about refugees and immigrants as assets to the community.

Both Neighbors United and Lancaster County Refugee Coalition sought to balance their direct service focus with community education to promote a more welcoming community. Both networks felt called to respond to local hostility directed at refugees and immigrants.

In Lancaster, the wake-up call came when angry comments were made on a local news website, Lancaster Online, about immigrants and refugees. By January 2016, a group calling itself the Patriotic Liberty League called a rally to protest Syrian refugees being resettled in Lancaster. The rally was held outside the network member agency, Church World Service, that had helped three Syrian families begin new lives in Lancaster County. How-

ever, a counter-rally, organized by the Lancaster network, in support of refugees and immigrants outnumbered the Patriotic Liberty League's rally eight to one. Notably, the local online news outlet, Lancaster Online, picked up the message promoted by the Lancaster County Refugee Coalition that Lancaster County is "a place of stalwart and generous people" who welcome refugees.

All five networks are still learning about effective messaging. While the full impact of their communications efforts has yet to be realized, the networks' experiences to date have validated their efforts to rally multiple organizations around the same message.



*White Center Promise network bumper sticker.*

## IV. FEATURED PROJECTS

The following pages describe one key project from each of the five networks. As such, they served as anchor projects for the network, providing stability, focus, and an opportunity for the partners to deepen their collaborative relationships. Each project has a lead agency, but they were planned and implemented by the network and its multiple partner organizations. With the exception of the Adult Lifelong Learning Access project, these are new projects that were conceptualized by the network to respond to local needs and context. These projects illustrate the range of creative ways in which the five networks advanced immigrants' linguistic, civic, and economic integration.

### WE RI NETWORK: All Access

The We RI Network is a network of adult education providers that share a vision of responsive, learner-centered instruction and program collaboration. They have focused their efforts on addressing the economic integration needs of immigrant adults by innovatively using the public library system as a hub for services that build job readiness, digital literacy, and English language skills.

Supported by a grant from the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and led by the Providence Public Library and its adult education program, network members are each contributing to the Adult Lifelong Learning (ALL) Access Project. ALL Access consists of several connected programs, including:

- A drop-in "Learning Lounge," where adults can access peer and teacher support for the immediate, real-life tasks that require a range of language and computer skills, such as online job applications, resume preparation, citizenship or other test practice, and writing for college. In a comfortable environment, adults are able to network, get referrals to education and employment services, and develop skills while they may be waiting for an opening in an adult education class.
- An assistive technology exploration station that invites people to try out equipment and access online resources that provide access to people with disabilities. Community members can sign up for personalized support from a librarian.
- An Education and Career Center where adults can access state resources for employment and training.

To this mix of services, the network added "Jobs Club" classes for English language learners who were looking for work. In these classes, adults not only used the Learning Lounge, but also visited local employers for workplace tours, had the opportunity to ask questions of HR staff, and were referred to additional training as appropriate for their interest and experience. In the first round, 8 of the 16 participants attained employment by the end of the class. The network is seeking funding to support this successful component.

Both the Jobs Club and ALL Access are expanding to new sites, as they provide a valuable introduction to U.S. culture around the job application process and the workplace for foreign born adults. For many participants, this may be their first job in the U.S. or their first job search in the formal economy.

*Innovative programs for adults at the library.*



# CENTRAL VALLEY NETWORKS FOR INTEGRATING NEW AMERICANS: Welcoming Week

In 2012, The Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at the University of Southern California researched and ranked 10 California regions according to their levels of immigrant integration. Fresno County scored lowest overall, the lowest in the Civic Engagement category, and moderate in the Warmth of Welcome category.

Seeking a way to reverse this trend and address an underlying barrier to civic and economic integration, the Central Valley Networks for Integrating New Americans signed on to participate in the national Welcoming Week. This event, organized each September by Welcoming America and its partners, brings together immigrant and U.S.-born community members to appreciate their common and unique experiences, partner in service events, and make their communities more welcoming for all. While Fresno Adult School (FAS) led the planning of the Welcoming Week, all network partners contributed to its implementation.

In the first year, the adult school hosted a schoolwide event that engaged students in studying the immigrant experience. Adult basic education (ABE) and high school equivalency students researched and wrote profiles of prominent California immigrants, and discussed ways that immigrants are assets to their community. English learners and citizenship students wrote and designed personal narratives for display. At the end of the week, the network member organizations collaborated on a community resource fair and a celebration of Fresno's citizenship program with the immigrants' profiles prominently displayed. Network members capitalized on their connections to local media so that the event received prominent coverage that spread the message of welcome and unity throughout the community.



In year two, FAS used the Welcoming Week Toolkit developed by Welcoming America and World Education to facilitate written dialogue across classrooms and communities. Sixteen classes (ABE, English, Career and Technical Education, and citizenship) corresponded across cultures, literacy levels, and English abilities in order to communicate their thoughts on selected themes. The week culminated in a celebration at Fresno County Library where students played educational games, obtained library cards and voter registration forms, and recognized new citizens.

Ana Melendez, a network core member, noted that the network collaborations have "a multiplier effect" as each organization contributes to creating a sense of welcome and then builds upon the unity that results from the celebration. The Welcoming Week is a platform for celebrating along with other communities nationally, and the Central Valley Network plans to continue this annual event, drawing in new partners and adding new ways for community members to understand and appreciate one another.



# LANCASTER COUNTY REFUGEE COALITION:

## Community School

There are 23,302 people in Lancaster County, PA who are foreign born, and 82,088 who speak a language other than English. The Lancaster County Refugee Coalition (LCRC) resettles about 600 refugees annually. The LCRC network consists of two adult education providers, two refugee resettlement organizations, a health care provider, a liberal arts college, and a school district. Many of refugees they resettle are unable to move out of poverty due to limited English proficiency, and difficulty navigating school, health-care, and other systems.

In 2015, the LCRC took a bold step to respond to these needs with a collective impact approach by establishing a multi-service Community School. Over three years, its programs will provide:

- Adult ESL class for 430 new arrivals supplemented by bilingual cultural orientation, plus satellite classes at alternative locations, and citizenship classes.
- Academic skills and GED preparation for 50 refugees.
- Career awareness, mentoring, and job search services.
- Preparation for entry into job training and certificate programs for 30 refugees.
- Health services, including dental screenings, for 400 refugee children and adults with the goal to connect 100% of them to a medical home.
- Support to parents to prepare their children for kindergarten, to connect to their children's schools, and to become advocates for their children's education.
- Financial literacy workshops and free tax preparation.
- Backpacks of food for children to take home for the weekend.

In addition to professional staff, the Community School relies on volunteers and paid Community Navigators. The Navigators are more established refugees who are trained and placed at the school and the member agencies to help new arrivals navigate health care and other systems, and adjust to the U.S. workplace and cultural norms. Future plans include expanding the Community School's focus to immigrants and engaging them and refugees in the network leadership.

Consistent with a collective impact approach, the LCRC is putting in place a data collection and evaluation system with common measures to track outcomes for their shared services. A sustained focus on network development enabled the LCRC to put forth a competitive proposal with the two adult education programs in the lead. They were successful in securing a three-year grant of \$892,500 from the local United Way with an emphasis on collective impact. The local Rotary Club and foundations provided over \$500,000 in additional funding.

*IU13 adult education student, Lancaster, PA.*



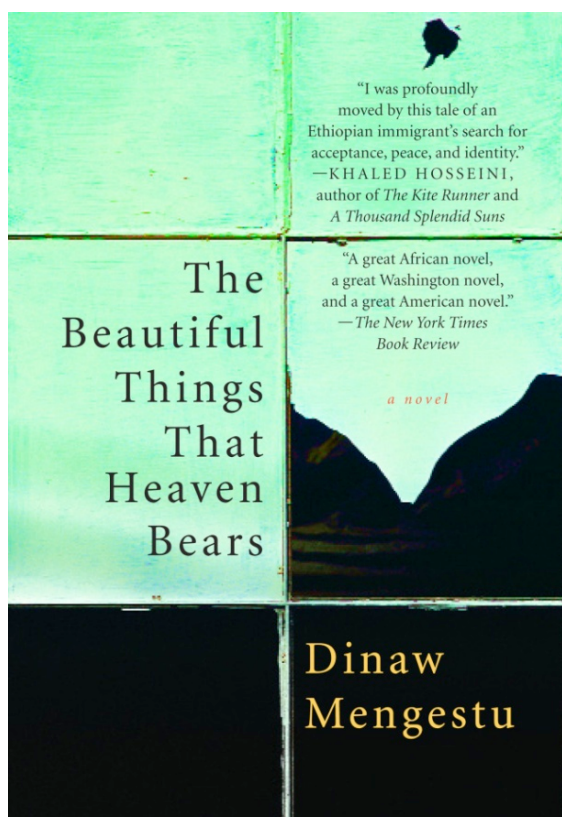
## WHITE CENTER PROMISE: Big Read Campaign

White Center is a community of 13,000 people near Seattle, WA where more than 30 percent of residents are foreign born, and 40 percent speak a language other than English at home.

The White Center Promise network strives to create opportunities for bringing residents together to share their experiences as a foundation to civic engagement. To that end, the network participated in a multi-faceted Big Read Campaign that provided creative ways for young and older community residents to read, discuss, and learn about immigrant experiences. A central feature of this campaign was a novel, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, about an Ethiopian immigrant shopkeeper and his friends who mourn and love their countries, as they make a new life in a quickly gentrifying neighborhood in Washington D.C. The novel's refugee protagonist wrestles with neighborhood gentrification, isolation, racial and cultural tension, and loss of identity—all experiences and issues faced by White Center residents.

Led by the King County Library System, the campaign used the book as a springboard for discussion of real-life community issues. In that process, the library looked to White Center Promise and other campaign partners to increase its cultural competency and understanding of the immigrant community's needs. 800 free copies of the book were distributed to community residents to support a range of activities hosted by various network members:

- Free tickets and transportation for groups to *Disguise: Masks and Global African Art*, an exhibit at the Seattle Art Museum that explored the role of disguise in the lives of those who come from Africa and/or are of African descent. White Center Promise also co-hosted the kick-off Night of Disguise with live performances, music, and art making.
- A keynote and a writing workshop for youth by the book's author, Dinaw Mengestu.
- English language lessons based on the book's themes taught by Highline College teachers who first read and discussed the book as a group.
- Book discussions facilitated by local immigrants at network's partner agencies, such as King County Housing Authority and Southwest Youth and Family Services. Training was provided for the discussion facilitators.
- Theatrical reading of the book and a discussion for 190 high school students.
- Visual storytelling workshops hosted by King County Housing Authority for immigrants and refugees — including 27 adults enrolled in Highline College's English language classes - providing guided expression through art to help participants voice their experiences, hopes, and needs. The storytelling aimed to make themes in the book more accessible to a wide range of young and older audiences.





# NEIGHBORS UNITED: Global Talent Idaho

Of the 1,030 refugees that Idaho resettled in 2015, 15% have some college education. Many are highly skilled degree holders who arrived with credentials and training but have no clear path to reclaim their careers. Among them are professors, doctors, engineers, educators, and IT specialists. Because the Idaho Office of Refugees already had well-established systems for placing refugees with limited formal education in entry-level jobs, Neighbors United decided to focus its attention on the growing percentage of educated refugees for whom placement was more difficult.

Global Talent Idaho (GTI) was launched to facilitate the economic integration of such high-skilled immigrants and refugees by getting them on paths related to their fields of expertise. GTI's services are modeled after Upwardly Global's two-pronged approach of preparing high-skilled job seekers and engaging employers. The project got a boost when it received \$320,000 over two years as part of a successful bid for a U.S. Department of Labor Job Driven National Emergency Grant (NEG) that names foreign-trained workers who are also dislocated as one of three priority job seeker groups. With this funding, GTI offers services that address job seekers' most pressing needs for English instruction, employment coaching, access to professional networks, and work experience through market-rate paid internships.

**English Instruction:** NEG funding enabled GTI participants to participate in intensive English classes as well as English for Professional Purposes that reinforces business English and cultural expectations for workplace performance. GTI is working with its network partners to expand these offerings to include English for healthcare professionals and business communication, and is piloting online English courses specific to job seekers' professions.

**Employment Readiness:** To help immigrants navigate the norms and protocols of a U.S. job search, new GTI job seekers are first required to complete five hours of online training that provides an overview of navigating a professional job search. At the conclusion of this training, job seekers are invited to participate in a one-day intensive career summit where lessons learned online are reviewed in the classroom and then practiced with local professionals through mock interviews and networking. Here job seekers practice how to describe their skills, experience, and ambitions in a way that is culturally appropriate and resonates with American employers.

All job seekers leave GTI with a world-class resume that they perfected with GTI staff, translating their past experience to compete in the U.S. professional job market. Job seekers receive intensive case management to help them understand the employment landscape for their field, explore ways to address any skills gaps, review cover letters and job applications, and practice for specific interviews. In addition, all interested job seekers are matched with a professional mentor who has local knowledge and experience. GTI also facilitates a peer support group, where job seekers compare experiences, exchange resources, and provide mutual encouragement.

**Internships:** NEG funding has also supported three months of full-time, on-the-job internships that provide work experience and potential job placement. As of January 2016, GTI had facilitated 19 internships, 11 of which resulted in permanent hires at the host company. For example, a pharmacist from Iraq with over a decade of experience received intensive English language training, assistance in obtaining her U.S. pharmacy technician certification, and U.S. work experience through an internship at a retail pharmacy. At the conclusion of the internship, this individual was hired full time by the pharmacy. She is not stopping there and is on track to pursue her pharmacist license in the U.S.

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“In our countries, we don't have behavioral questions during the interview, or have to make eye contact. And in our countries, a firm handshake makes you think, “Are you challenging me?”

- Abdullahi Mohamed, GTI Participant



*Boise skyline, home of Global Talent Idaho.*

Employer Engagement: GTI also began to engage employers by conducting outreach events that raised employer awareness of the high-skilled immigrant community and invited discussion of companies' hiring needs and opportunities. GTI made small but concrete "asks" of the employers, inviting them to speak to a class, attend a networking event, participate in mock interviews, mentor a jobseeker, or be part of a panel discussion about their profession. Through NEG, employers have access to skilled interns subsidized through the Idaho Department of Labor, as well as a growing candidate database. GTI now has engaged 41 employers and has over 100 local professionals who volunteer for activities and serve as mentors. This year alone GTI has facilitated 24 job placements that yield an average annual income gain of \$18,568, representing an increase of 304% from pre-placement earnings. The result of these positions alone is an estimated \$445,635 in economic impact to the families and tax base of Boise, Idaho.

## V. LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT THE ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### INTRODUCTION

The federally-funded adult education system is charged with serving the language, academic, and work readiness needs of the country's adult residents. Within this system, adult English programs provide service annually to about 840,000 (OCTAE, 2013) of the approximately 19.1 million working age adults (Wilson, 2014) who need English language support. Among these are immigrants and refugees who vary by level of formal education, age, learning goals, and length of time in the United States.

Adult education programs have traditionally placed language learners into levels by their English proficiency tested at entry, but are beginning to consider other factors, such as the level of formal education and learning goals, in determining how to cluster groups of learners for the most effective and efficient learning. Adult education programs provide immigrants with a foundation to function in the language of their new country, orientation to the mainstream culture and its many subcultures, information that enables immigrants to move forward toward their goals, and support in conveying their strengths and transferring their skills across cultures.

Adult education programs play a central role in immigrant integration networks because they are often a place of first welcome where newcomers can get their bearings as they adjust to a new set of expectations and opportunities. As a place where immigrants gather to learn over extended periods of time, adult education programs can provide other community agencies and organizations access to newcomers who have the ability to bridge communities, reach an extended network of friends and family, and become community leaders.

Over two years of Networks for Integrating New Americans activities, adult education providers grew into a role for which there was little precedent. Each provider shaped that role to fit its capacity and its relationships with network partners. Below, the development of the role of adult education is examined through three themes: the role adult education played in moving the network forward, and the centrality of adult education in supporting economic and civic integration, respectively.

Given the small number of networks in the initiative, and the uniqueness of each place-based effort, most of the lessons learned apply unevenly across networks. However, the networks themselves contend that many of their experiences are consistent and mutually affirming, and that learning from each other has better prepared them to sustain and grow their local collaborations.

### A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE NETWORK

The networks that were chosen for the Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative originally included adult education providers for their role in providing language instruction. However, through this work, their fellow network partners learned about the much fuller role adult education plays in immigrant integration, and the education providers, themselves, recognized their potential to play central roles in their networks. Across the board, adult education programs gained a deeper understanding of immigrant integration as a two-way process including both immigrant newcomers and the receiving community of local residents. The three pillars of linguistic, economic, and civic integration put forth by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) offered a common language and framework for education providers to plan services and activities focused on real-life purposes.

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“In our meeting with ValleyRide (bus company), we had to walk them through the various reasons why more written materials, maps, etc. would not always be effective with low/no literacy folks and that hands on learning, using landmarks instead of street names, etc. would be more helpful to prevent people getting lost or on the wrong bus. I can't count how many times I have had those kinds of conversations with volunteers and other community partners.

- Travis Thompson, VISTA Volunteer,  
Global Talent Idaho





*Refugee English learners in Lancaster, PA.*

The paradigm shift in thinking from language instruction to immigrant integration brings with it a host of opportunities to re-envision the work of adult education. Prior to the initiative, the participating adult education providers did not commonly describe their work as immigrant integration. As their network collaboration led them to a common agenda based on the immigrant integration pillars, they saw that language instruction sat very much at the hub of their immigrant integration goals. In addition, the more adult educators contextualized instruction, the more central it became to the efforts of the network partners as is described below.

**1. Adult education programs strengthen immigrant integration networks by building awareness of the educational strengths and needs of immigrants, and of the programs' own capacity to provide customized English instruction.** The diverse organizations that serve newcomer communities understand immigrant needs for English and the barrier that language can play in accessing services, conveying knowledge and skills, and building connections to neighbors and coworkers. In their networks, each organization has a unique understanding of how such barriers affect their efforts to provide health care, social services, employment, and civic inclusion. Adult education providers contribute their

expertise – meeting the learning needs of adult English learners who range from individuals not literate in their native languages to those who have advanced degrees. Adult educators are aware of the time, the supports, and the learning contexts that are required to address the learning needs of this array of subgroups. Many also bring experience in recognizing, assessing, and highlighting the many strengths that immigrants bring but that may be hidden behind the linguistic barrier.

One important contribution adult educators bring to immigrant integration networks is to ensure that community partners understand the role that education plays in advancing economic, civic, and social goals. As well, they raise their partners' awareness of the educational obstacles that can hinder and delay progress along pathways to much-needed credentials.

While most partners in this initiative's networks were aware of the language needs and strengths of immigrants, adult education providers did raise awareness and shape perceptions of immigrants and refugees both inside and outside their networks, most notably with Workforce Investment Boards, workforce training partners, and employers. These efforts often yielded important changes to policy and practice that removed obstacles to employment opportunities. For example, the

Lancaster network adult education providers educated a local job training program about the unnecessary barrier that its GED requirement created for those who are otherwise qualified and have a high school diploma from other countries. The resulting change in this training program's policy opened access to job training for many immigrants. The Lancaster adult education providers educated a container company about why immigrant jobseekers were failing the dexterity test the company uses for screening – test-takers were stumped by some of the vocabulary in the test instructions – when these were otherwise viable candidates. Although the test was not changed, the visit alerted education providers as to how to better prepare job candidates, and the employer was made aware of education services that could help employees advance in their jobs. The Lancaster network also raised awareness about the untapped skills of employees and the need for career pathways at a large hotel after the hotel read in the local newspaper that a refugee it had hired as a banquet server had a Master's degree in education. These exchanges impacted both perceptions and policies, and demonstrated that adult education providers had insights to offer that could help workforce developers and employers more effectively train, hire, and promote immigrant workers.

Within the networks, partners looked to adult education providers to help them meet the varied needs of English language learners. As libraries sought ways to serve immigrant patrons, educators helped them plan and promote accessible technology and citizenship resources; as the school district in Lancaster looked to open its new refugee-focused Community School, it turned to the adult educators for guidance on programming that would best serve the refugee parents; and as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) legal assistance providers in the Central Valley sought to build their outreach, the Fresno Adult School involved them in ongoing citizenship activities that enabled them to reach a new population of adults in the community. The education partners assisted many of their partners in making information accessible and in becoming aware of unintentional barriers that impeded access by English language learners to their services.

Network connections also brought new opportunities for adult educators to reach a broader audience. In Boise and Lancaster, they spoke at Workforce Investment

Board meetings and employer appreciation events about language acquisition, refugee resettlement, and building access to career pathways. And they explained how adult education can be an ongoing resource, partner, and source of job and training program candidates and referrals.

Surely, there was learning in many directions as network members worked together throughout the initiative. Adult education providers deepened their own understanding of refugee adjustment, DACA, library services, workforce development, communications, and many other areas of partner organizations' expertise. As a core factor in successful immigrant integration, however, their expertise in language acquisition and meeting the needs of English language learners prompted adult education providers to play a key role.

**2. The immigrant integration framework encourages adult education programs to contextualize instruction in real-world activities and facilitate engagement with the receiving community.** The immigrant integration framework reveals a connection between English language acquisition and two of the primary purposes (civic and economic) for which adults learn and use English. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 reinforces the economic purpose for learning and calls for a rethinking of service delivery to yield a better aligned, integrated, and contextualized system. This guidance is consistent with what the field of adult education knows about the effectiveness of contextualized instruction. Contextualization is an approach that motivates and engages students by connecting learning to real-world applications and purposes (Perin, 2011; EDC, 2012). Such lessons allow learners to integrate

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“ My focus as Coordinator has changed. I now think of our programs as having an audience outside of the school; what's happening in our ESOL programs that connects to the larger community and how can our programs and students provide a contribution, not just how the community can come in and contribute at our school.

- Lisa Agao, Coordinator, Central Valley Immigrant Integration Network and Teacher, Fresno Adult School





*English learners selecting topics of interest to study.*

new learning with their rich prior knowledge about the world, and are more easily absorbed by language learners who may have limited experience with formal schooling (Wrigley, 2007).

While many adult educators already contextualize their instruction at the classroom level, a new emphasis on integrated programming that situates learning in authentic work and civic situations emerged in each of the networks. Unlike general survival English, which contextualizes a broad set of life skills sufficient for initial entry to the U.S. but is inadequate for preparing for the more specific language demands of work and society (ibid.), the contextualized instruction implemented by the networks was carefully focused on high-value work and civic tasks tailored to the needs of various subgroups. For example, to enhance the digital literacy skills of adults with limited computer experience, the ALL Access project (of the We RI Network) coached students as they learned to do online job searches. Across the country, the Neighbors United network capitalized upon the strong digital literacy skills of their highly-educated job seekers group by having them access online training for professional job seekers.

This differentiation by educational background allowed educators to more effectively offer instruction calibrated to students' next steps.

Contextualized teaching and learning in authentic settings dovetailed with another aim of the networks - to cultivate the receiving community's receptiveness to immigrants. In too many circumstances, language and cultural barriers prevent longer-term members of receiving communities from understanding who their new neighbors are, their contributions, and why immigrants are worth investing in. Finding ways to bring together immigrants and receiving community members around shared interests has been shown to help build bridges between these different populations and create greater community cohesiveness (Downs-Karkos, 2011).

Within the networks, adult educators embraced the concept of building a welcoming community as an important component of immigrant integration and integrated new activities into their practice. For example, lessons designed to bring together native English speakers and English learners for authentic communication provide a rich language learning opportunity and also create a com-

comfortable, supported way to build relationships between immigrants and members of the receiving community. The Fresno Adult School built on this idea during the national Welcoming Week in 2015, when students in citizenship classes were paired with English-speaking pen pals from the school's Career and Technical Education classes to correspond about topics of interest. The school also brought students together for celebrations of citizenship, field trips, games at the library, and other activities that enabled immigrant and receiving community students to enjoy time together and build a sense of comradery and connection. (See description on page 21.)

The most noticeably consistent change across the five networks was the figurative lowering of the wall between classrooms and the community beyond. English learners were invited to events at the museum and library (White Center's Big Read activities and Central Valley's welcoming new citizens celebrations), to community activities (a march to celebrate Cesar Chavez Day), to City Hall, and to workplaces. In return, outside community members such as employers, state legislators, and community resource providers came into classrooms as guest speakers to share information and answer questions. In White Center, Highline College educators noted that being able to connect learning to community life is one of the advantages of being an off-campus site, and instructors capitalized on the community as a learning resource. In addition to this crossing of boundaries, the ALL Access project moved learning outside the classroom by creating comfortable "Learning Lounges" in the library, where English learners and other adults can drop-in for individualized language and technology support in navigating computer-based resources.

Another result of the network approach was the closer collaboration, and in some cases integration, of services across service providers. As network organizations learned more about each other's work, they discovered new opportunities to work together for mutual benefit. In the Lancaster County Refugee Coalition, the Literacy Council partnered with the refugee resettlement agencies to provide a new class that would respond to the needs of newly arriving refugees for open enrollment services. They created an English for New Arrivals class with content aligned to the cultural orientation course that every incoming refugee already participates in. The class was offered at three different time periods during the day so that participants could move among classes if they got

a job and needed a schedule change. This innovative joint programming yielded an English language class contextualized for the specific needs of these new arrivals. The course was quickly over-enrolled and had very high attendance rates, and prompted new planning for a similar class tailored to college-educated refugees.

Innovative and responsive educational programming, however, needs to be thoughtfully articulated with initiatives outside of the classroom to improve the quality of instruction (such as implementing standardized curriculum) and meet mandated performance outcomes. When the Fresno Adult School planned its Welcoming Week activities, for instance, instructors needed to demonstrate that the new lessons were aligned to the state standards and get clearance from the school administration.

Particularly if lessons are contextualized around non-work topics, teachers may not have time or the leeway to add activities or develop innovative collaborations that take time away from the mandated curriculum or test preparation. In developing programming that responds to targeted needs and populations, new thinking about how we determine student "level," and the timeline on which we expect learners to perform, is needed. As well, we learned that teachers need encouragement to reach outside their comfort zones and invest significant time and resources in developing new models that support coordination and deeper community engagement. Rather than relying solely on the internal motivations of teachers who may already be partial to such approaches, adult education programs would be well-served by considering accommodations and incentives for teachers that include modest amounts of funding, paid planning time, and broader recognition in support of these innovations.

**3. When given the support and opportunity, adult education programs can assume a central role in the network.** The work of educating adults so that they can achieve their work and life goals has long brought adult education providers into partnership and collaboration with other organizations. Many communities have educational coalitions that foster the coordination of comprehensive English language, adult basic education, adult secondary education, and college transition services and allow for smooth transitions across programs. Adult education providers also increasingly network with workforce development partners with the aim of improving work readiness and training opportunities for adult students.

The Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative, in providing technical assistance to local networks, prompted adult education providers to participate more fully and therefore enhance the educational aspect of each network's work. In three of the networks, the role of the adult education providers shifted over time, making their contributions and leadership more central to carrying out the networks' shared goals. In each case, the trajectory was different, but the end result was that these adult education providers led action plan development and coordinated its implementation.

In the Lancaster County Refugee Coalition (LCRC), the leadership role of the adult education providers expanded when the original lead agency for the newly-funded Community School had to withdraw and the IU13 adult education program stepped up to coordinate the effort and actualize a long-standing vision of the network for a refugee center. The success of this project, and the strong collaboration it demonstrated, attracted new resources for the Community School in which individual network partners each took responsibility for activities specific to their areas of expertise. While the Community School raised the visibility of all its partners, the adult education providers were invited into new conversations with funders and decision-makers about important economic integration issues, such as the need for STEM pathways for college-educated immigrants, and moved into a more central role in their network.

A significant grant for citizenship services from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services propelled the Fresno Adult School into a more central role as the coordinator of the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Network. This network brought together a civic integration coalition that was already implementing activities to educate legal permanent residents about citizenship and DACA-eligible residents about their rights, as well as the Fresno Public Library and Maddy Institute that were new to citizenship services. Serving as the backbone organization for the network brought the Fresno Adult School more squarely into a role of designing collaborative activities that engaged the network partners in new ways. (See the Central Valley network profile in the Appendices.)

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“We went from being on the periphery to having two AEFLA-funded programs become leading members of the coalition.

- Cheryl Hiester, Project Coordinator, Lancaster County Refugee Coalition and CEO, Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon

When the Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative began in 2013, the Neighbors United network's federally-funded adult education provider, the College of Western Idaho (CWI), was a young institution (just getting accredited) and unsure of how much it would be able to play a leadership role in the network. Yet, the enduring challenge of effectively addressing the language needs of college-educated refugees made it clear that the network needed CWI centrally positioned in network planning and development. As institutional constraints loosened, CWI's Adult Education Director became co-chair of the network's Adult Education Subcommittee and now participates in collaborative program development for college-educated refugees with Global Talent Idaho. At the time of this writing, they await word on funding for a proposed computer literacy course with embedded English language supports, and are in discussion about additional courses that integrate vocational content with English language instruction.

The requirement in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for strong partnerships between adult education and workforce development propels adult education providers in the direction of employment-focused collaborations. Without enabling resources, adult education providers may not be able to take central roles in emerging networks focused more broadly on immigrant integration. In particular, technical assistance around network development and professional development that supports instructors in contextualizing instruction for specific immigrant goals and purposes, are needed to position adult education programs for a central role in networks.





*College-educated refugee at work in Boise.*

## **INCREASED CAPACITY TO ADDRESS IMMIGRANTS' WORK READINESS AND EMPLOYERS' READINESS TO HIRE THEM**

In adult education, economic integration may take the form of college and career readiness activities, contextualized workplace-based English programs, employment services that help immigrants search and apply for jobs, or contextualized, work-based training. In this initiative, three out of five networks focused primarily on economic integration: Lancaster County Refugee Coalition, Neighbors United, and We RI. Each network developed its economic integration strategy and program based on its perception of the greatest needs and the member organizations' capacities, and in light of other available services. The three networks that focused on economic integration found themselves working in widely diverse contexts in terms of their English language learner populations, the economic conditions in their communities, and the resources at their disposal for developing collaborative efforts. The participating adult education providers worked with English language learners whose formal education backgrounds ranged from just a few years of schooling to advanced college degrees.

### **1. Supporting the economic integration of immigrants and refugees requires multiple approaches that serve high and lower-skilled English learners.**

The recent IMPRINT report, *Steps to Success* (Bergson-Shilcock & Witte, 2015) reinforces the growing evidence that English proficiency is a key factor in the economic integration of professionally-trained immigrants, correlating with increased earnings and a higher likelihood of obtaining work in one's profession. That report notes that, "For limited English proficient immigrant professionals, investing in English language training is likely the single most powerful step an individual can take towards his or her future employability" (ibid.).

English also expands lower-skilled immigrants' access to a broader range of jobs and to career and educational training. In adult education programs that serve both populations, educators are challenged by programming that often mixes together language learners with vastly divergent educational backgrounds.

While the participation of college-educated language learners was not new to English learning providers, what was new was the awareness that service models tailored specifically to this English learner sub-population need to be more readily available in the form of instruction focused on academic and sector-specific English

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“ We were tired of placing engineers in janitorial jobs and teachers on assembly lines. We knew we needed an innovation. . . We realized when immigrants are able to apply their educational and professional experience to Idaho’s job markets, their wages rise and many of their challenges dissipate.

*-Tara Wolfson, Co-chair of Employment Committee, Neighbors United*

offerings, accelerated learning options, and supports. English language learners with professional credentials especially benefit from English for professional purposes coupled with guided language practice for their profession, mentoring, and internships. Lower-skilled language learners need a variety of different supports that enable them to access credential-bearing job training – on-ramps that help them step onto a career pathway (Wrigley, et al, 2003). Variations on integrated instruction, which pairs technical training and supplemental language support, are being planned in all three of the networks focused on economic integration.

The Neighbors United network in Boise was the only network to explicitly focus on professionally-trained immigrants through a two-pronged approach: Employment services and English instruction for professional purposes. Its primary strategy was to build Global Talent Idaho (GTI, see description on page 24), which placed 24 job seekers into skilled positions and has many more placed in skilled internships. Its second strategy was to prepare adult education programs to better serve college-educated immigrants who need to learn career-specific English. Through targeted technical assistance, educators learned ways to consider these needs within their existing

general English language classes (using strategies such as self-paced supplemental activities to support independent learning) as well as through the creation of new classes tailored to the needs of professional subgroups. Neighbors United network also inspired the formation of GTI-Docs, a group of a dozen, foreign-trained physicians advocating for more accessible pathways to medical relicensing so that they can reclaim their careers and contribute to Idaho’s health care system. This advocacy effort interestingly brings together the civic and economic pillars of integration by employing civic engagement in service of career goals.

A somewhat different context prevailed in Rhode Island, where the We RI Network was working to advance the economic integration of their mostly lower-skilled student population. (See We RI network profile in the Appendices.) We RIN determined that building new career ladders and educating employers about immigrants’ skills and attributes as hard workers was of prime importance. As a network of education providers, their first steps were to develop educational supports for adult job seekers. This included the technology and job search support of the ALL Access project (see description on page 20), and a network-wide Jobs Club for adult language learners looking for work. Leveraging the resources and connections of the library and the Institute for Labor Studies and Research, the Jobs Club provided work readiness and job search support and also took students on worksite tours where they heard from Human Resource representatives and learned about the education and training requirements of various jobs. During its one funded year, eight of Jobs Club’s 16 participants found employment. In addition to the Jobs Club, the network partnered with a local workforce training provider, Building Futures, to develop an “ESL for the Construction Jobsite” class which will focus on language relevant for construction work and incorpo-

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## JOBS CLUB SESSION PLAN

**Part 1** Each session began with a 15 minute presentation of a newsworthy employment topic such as:

- Hottest Employment Trends for 2015
- Real Jobs RI
- Interviewing Techniques

**Part 2** was a discussion usually based on attendee responses to the presentation.

**Part 3** was open learning time where we worked individually with participants on whatever was needed, such as writing a resume, job search, or practice interviewing.



rate health and safety information for that context. Led by the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, several trade unions are actively recruiting students for this class.

The Lancaster network adult education providers began implementing a range of economic integration strategies independently and in concert with the local One Stop Career Center. They mapped the trajectories of immigrant students at many skill levels who were trying to find pathways to and through training in two high-demand sectors: advanced manufacturing and health care. From this data, they created a career pathways document that outlines an educational pathway, related jobs along that pathway, and special considerations for English language learners. They use this tool to assist adult students in drafting their own education and training plans, and to work with workforce development partners to address remaining gaps in the pathway. At the same time, they added a transitions counselor at the local One Stop Career Center to assist English language learners in applying and qualifying for training, and have a contracted exchange of services whereby the One Stop Career Center provides job readiness training and IU13 adult education provides math and reading classes. They are also planning a collaboration to develop integrated, short-term, certificate trainings for welding, tow-motor operation, warehouse work, and Certified Nursing Assistant.

This wide array of strategies illustrates that the networks' adult education and workforce development partners are still trying to figure out the combination of approaches that will a) serve immigrants with a variety of language levels, educational backgrounds, and career goals, b) address the skill needs of employers in targeted job sectors, and c) attend to labor market trends. It is a complicated puzzle that requires a commitment to creative partnerships, ongoing evaluation of what works, and continuous learning on the part of the network.

## **2. Engaging employers is challenging and requires practical strategies that build long-term relationships as they address employers' immediate goals.**

Key to designing effective economic integration strategies like those outlined above, is employer engagement. Building a connection between immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations and employers enables employers to better understand the capacity of the newcomer labor pool and to communicate the basic requirements of current and future jobs. A relationship between employers and the providers of English language and work-readiness skills, in particular, is important so that education programs can develop programming that most effectively prepares immigrant job seekers for real jobs. In addition, it is through personal interaction with immigrants and refugees that employers can learn about this population and assess for themselves their readiness to work.

*English class at Highline College, WA.*



All three networks that focused on economic integration sought to find ways to engage employers. Research (Enchautegui, 2015; Taylor, 2011) and experience indicate that employer engagement is essential to making sure that all stakeholders' needs are addressed in a comprehensive workforce development system. Employer engagement strategies employed by the networks are listed in the chart below.

The networks that focused on economic integration noted the challenge of moving beyond ad hoc discussions to more sustained collaboration and found that they needed to implement a range of strategies to keep employers engaged. Key among them was persistent outreach and many ways of relationship-building. The Neighbors United network organized individual meetings with employers as well as employer breakfasts where participants heard about the skills of local refugee jobseekers and about

Global Talent Idaho's (GTI) services to help employers find well-matched job candidates. (See description on page 24.) Through GTI's funding from the Idaho Department of Labor, the Neighbors United network was able to offer full-time, paid interns to employers for three months at no cost to the employer, which brought them into an ongoing, mutually-beneficial relationship. Employers were then more amenable to responding to GTI's smaller requests for support - such as mentoring, participating in mock interviews, or networking - activities that built employer awareness of the refugee population and introduced them to many qualified job candidates.

GTI's efforts have yielded considerable success. They have 41 engaged employers (as of January 2016) and an Employer Advisory Council of business leaders and employer-based organizations, such as the local Chamber of Commerce, who volunteer staff time, promote their

## EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES
Reach out to individual employers, Chambers of Commerce, business and trade associations, and Workforce Investment Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate what the adult education program does, what services are available</li> <li>• Discuss skills needed in their labor force for particular jobs</li> <li>• Communicate the strengths and capacities of immigrant workers</li> </ul>
Solicit employer input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite input on curriculum and work-related teaching materials</li> <li>• Invite input on program (or network) strategic plans</li> <li>• Organize an employer advisory council</li> </ul>
Introduce job seekers to the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worksite visits</li> <li>• Job shadowing</li> <li>• Internships</li> <li>• HR manager talks</li> </ul>
Recruit employers to volunteer for . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mock interviews</li> <li>• Professional mentoring</li> <li>• Mock networking</li> </ul>
Build collaborations with One Stop Career Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Stop and adult education staff co-train students</li> <li>• One Stop and adult education staff train each other</li> <li>• Co-locate classes and/or transition counselors at the One Stop</li> </ul>
Recognize employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation events and awards</li> <li>• Recognition in newsletters and other communications</li> </ul>

events, provide internships, and seek their counsel on refugee employment and workforce diversity. Notwithstanding these accomplishments, GTI is challenged to find new and meaningful ways to engage employers and recognizes that this challenge will only increase once funding for paid internships comes to an end.

The Lancaster County Refugee Coalition takes the long view in building a strong foundational relationship with the local One Stop Career Center (CareerLink), the Workforce Investment Board, and its employer members. The network invited the CareerLink administrator to its monthly network meetings to describe the CareerLink's resources and services and to hear about the challenges facing refugee clients. Relying on the maxim, "Make friends before you need them," IU13's Director of Adult Education invited input from CareerLink on his organization's strategic plan and collaborated to fund joint programming well before he sought (and received) their support for the network's Community School. The network is committed to fostering an ongoing dialogue aimed at building refugee access to vocational training through the CareerLink and collaborating to put the necessary supports in place.

Over the two years of this initiative's implementation, the networks focused on economic integration have had success with a wide range of strategies and continue to seek ways to build this work. Their efforts proceed at the pace of available resources and the speed at which they are able to build public and employer awareness of the rich pool of untapped talent and potential residing in the immigrant and refugee communities.

## **INCREASED CAPACITY TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS' CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP**

Civic integration can be advanced through citizenship education and naturalization, and through civic engagement. Gaining citizenship does not necessarily engender civic engagement, and civic engagement does not require citizenship. However, new citizens are often eager to participate more fully in their new home country. In this initiative, two out of five networks focused primarily on civic integration: Central Valley and White Center. In both cases, the notion of what it means to be civically engaged and integrated grew as the networks saw opportunities for immigrants to participate more fully.

**1. Naturalization and citizenship education can lead to broader civic engagement.** Naturalization has many benefits, among them the studied correlation of increased earnings, employment, and home ownership rates (Enchautegui & Giannarelli, 2015; Pastor & Scoggins, 2012). Citizenship is also widely recognized for strengthening immigrants' sense of belonging and attachment to their new home community, and nurturing community cohesion (White House Task Force on New Americans, 2015). According to the most recent estimates (Welcoming America, 2015), there are approximately 8.8 million Legal Permanent Residents (LPR) eligible to apply for United States citizenship.

About 111,000 LPRs (Office of Immigration Statistics of the Department of Homeland Security, 2012 estimates) live in Central Valley, California's four-county area and are eligible for naturalization. Of the five networks, the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Network stands out as the one that focused on citizenship services as a civic integration strategy. This network brought together multiple partners to support pathways to citizenship. They extended the reach and impact of citizenship preparation classes and naturalization legal assistance by building connections to voter registration activities, engaging the receiving community in naturalization activities, and providing services in new locations. In so doing, they tapped into the shared value of citizenship that resonates with many U.S.-born residents and could help the network build bridges across the immigrant and receiving communities. Using its network partnerships, the Fresno Adult School engaged its citizenship and other students in a wide array of civic activities that prepared them to apply the rights and responsibilities of citizenship that they were studying and contribute to community education and outreach efforts. Through their participation in these activities, students built their skills, knowledge, and confidence to take on more demanding roles, such as volunteering at outreach events and assisting with citizenship eligibility screening workshops.

The network Coordinator, who is also a lead teacher at Fresno Adult School, intentionally built a sense of belonging and inclusion for her students by inviting them to participate in the network's activities, such as the ribbon-cutting for the Fresno Library's Citizenship Corner, the citizenship oath ceremony, and the network-wide workshop on engaging public officials. The Central Valley Network is the only network among the five that included



an immigrant adult student leader on its network core team. FAS' activities allowed students to observe active citizens and extend their own civic participation. They also provided a space where students could practice using their "civic voices" by asking questions, sharing their experiences, or speaking at public events.

All of these activities supplemented the classroom-based citizenship education at Fresno Adult School that included visits by network partners as guest speakers and support in understanding and navigating basic civic institutions (e.g., the library) and practices such as voting.

## **2. Engaging immigrant and refugee English learners in structured civic activities lays the groundwork for further civic engagement and leadership.**

Civically integrated newcomers should be able to navigate their local institutions, participate in community activities, and contribute their experience and ideas to civic conversations and decisions (Nash, 2010). Although there are no formal civic pathways to follow, there are supports that networks can put in place to build the confidence and capacity of New Americans to participate in civic activities. Key among them is helping immigrants understand how systems work and then providing appropriate scaffolding

to support them as they develop the skills and knowledge to participate independently in those systems.

The networks used this "gradual release" approach to enable adult students to observe, then participate in the safety and support of a group, and finally contribute civically on their own. In collaboration with their network partners, adult education programs were able to introduce English language learners to a variety of real-life civic activities that provided a motivating context for language learning and exposure to role models from their own communities.

The starting point for the White Center Promise network was to focus its attention on developing civic indicators that could serve as benchmarks of network progress and help the network identify areas of need in the community. The indicators included items such as leadership of immigrants in civic organizations and an increased number of naturalized immigrants who vote in local, state, or national elections. Aligned to the indicators, the network's civic engagement committee created a civic participation survey which was translated into several languages and administered throughout the community by trained volunteers. The survey revealed data about

*Citizenship oath ceremony in Fresno, CA.*



“Immigrant integration became a major theme in our ESOL classes as a result of our participation in the Networks for Integrating New Americans. Students now feel very comfortable with the idea that their voices should be heard, and that in and of itself is an important part of civic integration.

- Linda Faaren, Highline College, Puget Sound  
Welcome Back Center and ESL Special Programs  
Director and Co-Coordinator, White Center  
Promise Network

where and how immigrants were accessing services and participating in the community. The network discovered that only 14% of respondents had attended a school or government meeting or communicated with an elected official, 23% had voted in an election, and many were unaware of available employment, English language, and citizenship services.

To begin to address the many civic needs that were identified, the White Center Promise network sought a unifying project that would enable it to build both immigrant civic engagement and the sense of community welcome that supports it. Through the Big Read Campaign (see description on page 23), the network created a wide variety of community-building activities that allowed newcomers to observe or participate with peers in structured ways (such as a guided visit to the Seattle Art Museum's Disguise exhibit, community book discussions, oral history events, and a citizenship ceremony) and thereby gain significant cultural knowledge about how to engage in such events. Immigrants and refugees also participated in a series of workshops to create visual stories of their personal histories. The positive response that they received from residents who saw their stories also contributed to the sense that their voices are welcomed in civic life.

Instructors at White Center's Highline College campus, for their part, prepared English language learners for this civic engagement by bringing the themes of the Big Read — separation, reconnection, and finding local support — into the classroom for language learning. They met monthly to share strategies for connecting the curriculum to the broader civic engagement work of the network and using the classroom to create a sense of community for adult learners who otherwise might feel a sense of isolation.

Most of the networks noted increased collaboration between adult educators and other network partners that facilitated not only a better flow of information about resources to immigrants, but opened up new avenues for English learners to become active community participants. Adult students in Lancaster, White Center, and Fresno participated in adult education advocacy days at their state capitols where they communicated with legislators. Adult education programs also invited elected officials to speak with students in their own classrooms. Through connections strengthened by the White Center network, the statewide immigrant rights group, OneAmerica, is now planning a workers' rights training for students at Highline College, contributing to their upcoming civic focus on speaking up and using one's political voice.

The opportunity to participate in varied, meaningful community events gives immigrants a chance to build their confidence and sense of belonging and tap their civic skills and interests so as to develop as local leaders. To benefit from a growing pool of such leaders, some networks are accelerating this process by offering explicit training. For instance, as part of the Community School, the Lancaster County Refugee Coalition (LCRC) created the position of Community Navigator, a role for refugees and immigrants to assist their peers in navigating systems such as health care, schools, and financial institutions. Each Community School partner organization hired and trained navigators in its own area of expertise (the adult education providers, for example, provide educational navigators). LCRC's United Way funding supported a 120-hour training for these navigators through Temple University. (See Appendices for the Community Navigator's job description.)

In Boise, the Neighbors United network organized a new refugee speakers' bureau that includes training for refugees on public speaking and telling their stories. Refugees spoke on public panels and presented at the 2016 Idaho Refugee Conference.

These are all important beginning steps that the five networks took, to date, to include immigrants in the civic fabric of the community and provide leadership opportunities. All five networks acknowledge that it is very important to have immigrants "at the table." They are committed to increasing the avenues through which immigrants can speak for themselves and impact their own integration.



## VI. CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages, we have traced the five networks' development toward becoming producing networks that contribute to immigrant integration in their communities in multiple ways. Having joined this initiative as primarily information-sharing (connecting) networks, the five networks made remarkable progress. They solidified their structures and operations, built their membership, and the underlying trust and solidarity among member organizations. They engaged adult English language programs and the immigrants they serve in new and creative ways that brought the community to the classroom and the classroom to the community.

Across networks, the adult education providers grew in their ability to contextualize English language programming that builds on immigrant strengths and addresses their work and civic goals. In demonstrating this capacity to respond to wide-ranging learning needs, adult education programs established a central role in their networks and supported partner organizations in understanding the unintended language barriers that hinder economic and civic integration. As they collaborate with a growing number of network partners, these education programs are becoming more nimble in addressing the needs and potential of an ever-changing array of newcomer communities.

While each network used different strategies to advance immigrant integration based on their local needs, context, and the network members' strengths, they all brought added value to their local immigrant and refugee com-

munities, and engaged those communities in new ways. They leveraged existing resources and secured new grants in order to improve and increase services for immigrants and refugees. These new projects and services will have a lasting impact in the five communities well beyond this initiative.

This impact will be amplified as the networks progress in their positive messaging about immigrants whose capacities need to be further developed, whose voices should be lifted, and leadership skills deployed. In these communities, we can expect to see more employers, workforce development and service providers, elected officials, libraries, and others come around to seeing immigrants and refugees as an important rather than marginal part of the community whose needs, contributions, and talents should be taken into consideration in policy and program development as well as when hiring and developing career pathways.

At the conclusion of this technical assistance contract, all five networks are implementing joint projects that draw on the member organizations' capacities and strengthen pathways to immigrant's economic and civic integration with a particular focus on English learners. While their 22 months of participation in the Networks for Integrating New Americans set the five networks on new paths to make a difference in their communities, their full potential has yet to be realized and the resulting impact measured. Meanwhile, we can learn from their experience.

*A rally in support of refugees and immigrants in Boise, Idaho.*



## VII. IMPLICATIONS

The lessons learned from the 22 months of local implementation of Networks for Integrating New Americans have implications for other networks of organizations concerned with immigrant integration as well as for funders and policymakers. Whether funding or implementing such networks, the goal is effective, sustainable networks that result in tangible benefits for local immigrants and over time, measurable collective impact.

The network approach becomes more relevant than before as the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) moves into a full implementation phase with its expectations for partnerships and close coordination across education and workforce development providers. WIOA's requirement for integrating education and training for English learners and transitioning them to employment or further education can support immigrants' economic integration.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

1. Network development takes time and needs to be intentional. When developing a network, plan for a multi-year timeframe with a dual focus on network development and integration activities that produce common value to the member organizations.
2. Network coordination requires dedicated time and leadership attributes, such as strong facilitation, interpersonal, organization development, and management skills. Identify or create a funded, at least part-time network coordinator position, and look for these skills in the person hired.
3. Networks require organization-wide commitment, engagement, and communication within member organizations about the network's work. Ensure top leadership and staff are informed, onboard, and supported to participate in the network's activities.
4. Funded anchor projects can be helpful because they provide a focal point for some joint integration activities while other aspects of the action plan are being worked out. They yield tangible progress which gives networks momentum and validates the member organizations' investment of time and energy in the

network. When developing a network, intentionally identify an anchor project to which multiple member organizations can contribute and from which they will benefit.

5. English language learners benefit from programming that is differentiated by their needs, goals, and levels of education. Create customized English language programming related to economic integration that engages workforce partners to address the needs of both high and lower-skilled immigrants.
6. English language learners need access to civic integration pathways that provide options for full civic engagement for citizens and non-citizens alike. Create customized English language programming related to civic integration that includes networking with partners focused on access to citizenship as well as partners that foster broad civic engagement.
7. The goal of building inclusive, welcoming communities is a central concept in immigrant integration. Create programming that brings communities together and is sensitive to the needs of English language learners.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR FUNDERS CONCERNED WITH IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

1. Fund a scale-up of specific promising practices by the networks adapted to new local contexts, e.g., adult education programs organizing a Welcoming Week with lessons implemented program-wide across adult basic education, secondary education, and ESL classes (Central Valley); Jobs Classes with technology integration (We RIN); outreach to local Workforce Investment Boards about local immigrants (Lancaster); a Big Read type campaign that engages English language programs and multiple community agencies, libraries and museums (White Center); employment services for college-educated immigrants (Global Talent Idaho).
2. Provide funding and technical assistance for network development and for the development and implementation of shared data collection systems.

3. Incentivize the inclusion of adult education programs in immigrant integration networks and welcoming communities initiatives, understanding that network development undergirds effective implementation of these activities. This could mean giving bonus points for proposals that include adult education programs or earmarking funds for engaging English learners through adult education programs in the network's activities.
4. Immigrant integration networks cross organizational and sector boundaries, and as such, don't often fit neatly into existing funding streams. Yet, such

networks are likely to achieve greater collective impact than individual organizations over time. Where possible, federal agencies whose funding affects immigrants, should consider where there are opportunities to support multi-year, network-oriented funding initiatives to advance immigrant integration across multiple sectors. Most notably, such agencies include the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

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# A. PROFILES OF THE NETWORKS

The network selection process looked for existing networks committed to immigrant integration that technical assistance could strengthen, and that we could document so others can learn from their experience. A call for preliminary applications was disseminated widely by World Education and partners, as well as OCTAE, in fall-winter 2013-14. The initiative generated a great deal of interest: An informational webinar for prospective applicants drew 250 people representing 210 organizations from 37 states who registered for it. The 35 applications that were received were reviewed through a competitive, multi-stage process that included preliminary and full applications. Ten finalists were narrowed down to five networks based on their combined scores that included a final phone interview. The application process screened applicants based on the following selection criteria. Successful applicants had to:

- Be an existing multi-stakeholder network / coalition interested in strengthening their current efforts;
- Commit to addressing immigrants’ linguistic, economic, and civic integration through a process that entailed a strengths and needs assessment, action plan development and implementation

- Share progress updates and information about their promising practices;
- Have at least one Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)-funded adult education program with a strong track record of serving English learner immigrants in a central role;
- Have the capacity to benefit from and commit to participating in coaching and technical assistance over two years;
- Have a well-established backbone organization with a designated Coordinator who had paid time to facilitate the network.

The following networks were selected based on their combined scores through the three-stage application process. They are diverse in terms of geography, size, the make-up of the member organizations, how long they’ve been in existence, who is the backbone agency, and how they chose pursue their integration goals.

## THE LOCAL NETWORKS

NETWORK	LOCATION	BACKBONE ORGANIZATION
Central Valley Network for Integrating New Americans	Central Valley, California	Fresno Adult School
Lancaster County Refugee Coalition	Lancaster, Pennsylvania	Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon
Neighbors United	Boise, Idaho	Idaho Office for Refugees
We Rhode Island	Metropolitan, Providence RI	Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative at Providence Public Library
White Center Promise	White Center, Washington	White Center Community Development Association

## CENTRAL VALLEY NETWORKS FOR INTEGRATING NEW AMERICANS, CALIFORNIA

### Context & History

Fresno County sits in the heart of California's Central Valley, and is the number-one agricultural producing county in the nation, and it has the highest poverty level in the state. Almost one quarter of its nearly one million residents is immigrants, many of whom work in agriculture. The proportion of immigrant-headed households in which no person over 13 speaks English only, or very well – is high (34%). The rates of naturalization among those who are eligible remain low, suggesting that the region needs to build a stronger infrastructure to facilitate immigrants' pathways to citizenship. The county received the lowest rating across 10 California regions for civic engagement and for immigrant integration, according to a study by University of Southern California Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration. The same study states that, "Fresno both accepts immigrants as necessary to its economic success and stops short of fully welcoming them to the region."

The Central Valley Immigrant Integration Networks including the DACA Collaborative and Citizenship Academy were established in 2013 to address these conditions in the community with the Fresno Adult School as its backbone agency. The DACA Collaborative has since evolved into the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative (CVIIC). There is overlapping of agencies between the two main networks.

### Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Network Development

#### Establish a shared data collection system.

This goal addresses the need for the network to document progress on its integration goals to ascertain whether its efforts result in increased services to more students / clients in the community. The quantitative data is tracked as part of a grant funded by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for citizenship classes and naturalization assistance by the lead partners, Fresno Adult School and the San Joaquin College of Law. The grant is also supported by other CVN member organizations (the Maddy Policy Institute, Fresno County Library, Mi Familia Vota, and the DACA / CVIIC Collabora-

### CORE NETWORK MEMBERS:

- Binacional
- DACA Collaborative
- Fresno Adult School (Backbone)
- Fresno County Public Library
- Fresno City College
- Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative
- The Maddy Institute at CA State University, Fresno
- Mi Familia Vota
- Proteus, Inc.
- San Joaquin College of Law
- Pasifika Immigration Law Group

tive). The network also documents recruitment activities for the citizenship services conducted by network member agencies.

### Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Integration Activities

#### Increase immigrant access to and participation in citizenship services.

This goal addresses the high number (60,000) of Legal Permanent Residents (LPR) in the region who are not pursuing citizenship. Research shows that citizenship attainment increases immigrants' economic, civic, and linguistic integration (Urban Institute, 2015).

The CV Networks has been addressing this issue by increasing its outreach to LPRs, including previously underserved populations, by expanding both the number of citizenship classes and locations, and by coordinating cross referrals across member organizations. To that end, the CV Networks has been organizing bimonthly citizenship outreach events under the leadership of Mi Familia Vota and the CVIC Collaborative. As many as 50 to 150 community members have



attended each event where eligible LPRs are able to start their application process and receive free services through network partners. Not only are immigrants participating in these services, but other immigrants are helping out as volunteers including volunteer attorneys many of whom themselves are immigrants. Fresno Adult School increased the number of citizenship classes and the variety of locations where they are offered. Classes have been offered at places of worship, the library, and the adult school. Proteus, Inc. also expanded its citizenship classes to the cities of Dinuba and Porterville, in addition to Visalia. The citizenship network partners exceeded their goals (stated in parentheses) for the number of newly enrolled citizenship students (280), the number of LPRs that received naturalization eligibility screenings (400), and the number of LPRs for whom they prepared Form N-400 that begins the formal naturalization process (280) as reported on quarters 1-4 in the USCIS 2014 grant.

In November 2015, the library opened Citizenship Corners at six branches where there is now dedicated space with information on U.S. citizenship, application forms for naturalization, citizenship test preparation information, California AB60 driver's license information and financial literacy for new Americans information.

### **Increase community receptiveness and support of immigrants.**

This goal aims to improve Fresno County's reputation as not being very welcoming to immigrants by highlighting immigrants' contributions to the community.

The CV Networks developed two main strategies for pursuing this goal: an annual Welcoming Week in September and turning a citizenship oath ceremony into a public celebration of the new citizens, both with outreach to local ethnic and mainstream media. For the 2014 Welcoming Week, immigrant students wrote their own profiles that were then displayed at Fresno Adult School. ABE and high school equivalency classes researched and wrote profiles of prominent immigrants in California, and discussed ways that immigrants are assets to the community. A culminating community event brought together adult students across programs, network members and other organizations in a resource fair and celebration of Fresno's immigrant community and new citizens.

### **AEFLA-FUNDED PROGRAMS:**

**Fresno Adult School** has provided adult education since 1910. It served almost 10,000 adults in 2014-15 about one third of them English learners. In addition to three levels of ESL, it offers citizenship, ABE, and high school equivalency classes as well as eight different job training programs. Student support services include academic and career counseling, tutoring, referrals to community agencies, and opportunities for student engagement in cultural celebrations, job fairs and community service.

Established in 1967, **Proteus, Inc.** provides education, job training, job placement, and other support services to farm working families and other program participants to improve their quality of life. Proteus offerings include ESL, citizenship and GED classes as well as certificate programs in Career and Technical Education programs at several sites in Central Valley.

Poster-sized info-graphs were displayed which provided data showing the contributions of immigrants. The event received media coverage by the Spanish language TV station, Univision and the local Fresno Bee newspaper.

The 2015 Welcoming Week focused on a writing project using the Welcoming Week Toolkit materials co-developed by World Education and Welcoming America. English language and job training students were designated as pen pals who wrote to each other about two common readings one of which had been written by a FAS student. A culminating community activity took place at the Fresno County Public Library where immigrant and US-born adult students and community members celebrated new citizens with games and refreshments. All participants also received library services and voter registration information.

In June 2015, the CV Networks hosted its first citizenship oath ceremony and celebration of the new citizens in collaboration with the regional office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Over 700 people attended the event and 200 new citizens were sworn in. The network

enlisted Congressman Costa and a local City Councilwoman to speak at this special occasion. The network deemed it a great success and plans to do it annually. In addition, the CV Networks, particularly the efforts of the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative, was part of a broader effort to convince the Fresno City Council to pass a resolution in support of immigrant integration. The resolution “affirms the city’s desire to actively promote the economic, social, linguistic, and civic integration of all immigrants residing in the City of Fresno” and “ supports active collaboration of the City of Fresno and non-profit immigration services providers and community-based organizations to emulate the efforts of other welcoming cities throughout the nation.”

### **Increase immigrant access to and participation in career training.**

This goal responds to the high unemployment rates in the Central San Joaquin Valley. Four years of drought have exacerbated economic challenges for low-skilled immigrants many of whom earn their livelihoods as farm workers.

Proteus and the DACA Collaborative secured funding for a new Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) program for DACA eligible residents. The curriculum covers general workplace skills and focus on health, education, construction, truck driving, and ‘green’ industries. The curriculum included lessons on Career Preparation and on Specialized Industry Clusters. The purpose of the Career Preparation session was to give students a general understanding of the overall process of getting a job including general expectations of an employee, the general process of career advancement, and how to address concerns with a supervisor. The second session covered the five different industry clusters, discussing terminology, the types of jobs available within that sector, safety, general job duties, working environment, laws and regulations. In addition students learned basic computer skills and did mock interviews.

Fresno Adult School (FAS) built on its existing services including career training options. In 2014 FAS strengthened its partnership with Fresno City College and began to offer two on-going college-level ESL classes at the adult school location as a pathway to postsecondary education. This is significant since transition to college is a primary focus for adult education programs and Common Core State Standards. Immigrants are more likely to make the transition to college classes when their first experience is at the same location as their adult school. The Fresno City College classes also include field trips to the campus of Fresno City College so that students are more comfortable with the next step, transition to Fresno City College campus. In addition, Fresno City College has a counselor with office hours at the adult school campus to monitor the progress of adult school students in the transition classes.

### **Challenges**

The two main challenges that surfaced both relate to constraints on the network’s capacity and staff time and availability. The goal of developing and documenting individual referrals from various agencies using a shared database was postponed indefinitely due to limited capacity and lack of funding for dedicated staff time to maintain such a database (even if one could be developed through technical assistance). With the exception of the USCIS grant which utilizes an Excel database to document referrals between Fresno Adult School and the San Joaquin College of Law, other referrals are not documented. Partners still make referrals, but there is no network-wide systematic record-keeping of these referrals.

The network coordinator is also a teacher. The time required for activities and planning is limited by the teacher’s schedule and school requirements. At the same time, the network activities directly benefit the students she is teaching. The coordinator’s schedule limitations mean that shared leadership is required. The two main networks have effective leaders in place and the adult school added to the leadership structure

Next steps

The CV Networks plans to continue to pursue its goal of building a more welcoming community in Fresno County by:

- Organizing annually a high visibility Welcoming Week with educational classroom and community activities and an oath ceremony with immigrants and community members.
- Developing a media / outreach strategy to better engage local political leaders and media to support the messaging of immigrants as assets.

- Supporting on-going efforts to reach out to immigrants and engage community members through resource fairs as well as naturalization workshops and deferred action for childhood arrival workshops.

The network is committed to continuing to connect the classroom to the community and community to the classroom.

Technical Assistance

The CV Networks requested and received the following types of technical assistance that supported the planning and implementation of the network’s goals.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER
Building welcoming communities that perceive immigrants as assets	Susan Downs-Karkos, Welcoming America Mahvash Hassan, Sarah Rubin, Institute for Local Government
Best practices for vocational ESOL curriculum	Heide Wrigley, LiteracyWorks

## LANCASTER COUNTY REFUGEE COALITION (LCRC), PENNSYLVANIA

### Context & History

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, is a county of more than half a million people, including approximately 23,000 foreign-born and 82,000 who speak a language other than English. The refugee population is over 4,500. Lancaster County is the second highest refugee resettlement community in PA, behind Philadelphia. Church World Service and Lutheran Refugee Services resettle more than 500 individuals a year. While the community provides adequate opportunities for entry-level and initial jobs for new arrivals, it has been difficult for highly-skilled immigrants and refugees to secure employment in line with their education level and previous professions. Immigrants with a background in health care face several obstacles beyond English language proficiency, including lack of knowledge about the American health care system, how to access retraining, and licensing requirements.

### AEFLA-FUNDED PROGRAMS:

**Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13** and the **Literacy Council of Lancaster- Lebanon** collaboratively offer a wide range of ESOL classes, from beginning literacy to advanced ESOL, serving approximately 1,500 immigrants and refugees each year. ESOL services are available mornings, afternoons, and evenings, as well as on weekends and include classroom, small group, and one-on-one instruction. Additional services include advising and support for transition to work, training, or postsecondary education, and a strong system of referrals to community social service agencies.

Lancaster County Refugee Coalition (LCRC) was established in March 2012 from a conference held jointly by Franklin and Marshall College and the local resettlement agencies to improve refugee integration in Lancaster County. Attendees included employers, adult education, social service agencies, volunteers and public officials. LCRC's goals are to ensure that refugees successfully integrate with dignity and respect, and to build career pathways for refugees and immigrants whether they

### CORE NETWORK MEMBERS:

- Church World Service
- Franklin and Marshall College
- Lancaster-Lebanon IU13
- Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon
- Lutheran Refugee Services
- Southeast Lancaster Health Services
- Lancaster General Hospital

have limited education or college degrees. In particular, the network wants to extend pathways in health care and manufacturing down to the lower levels and help people gain access to them.

The network encompasses more than 30 community service organizations that include adult education, refugee resettlement and health services agencies, a housing opportunity program, ethnic associations, and a program that supports small business development.

### Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Network Development

#### All members recommit to the vision and mission of the Network.

The LCRC was only months old when it was chosen to be part of the NINA initiative and soon after won its initial project support. The network experienced rapid transition during these months. New members, new opportunities and significant funding commitments challenged the coalition's assumptions about purpose, membership, and decision-making. Their first goal was to refocus and make sure that members were committed to a shared vision.

With technical assistance from Madeleine Taylor of Network Impact, the network revisited its purpose and created an Operations Plan (see attachment) that codified the network's agreed upon mission, membership rules, communication processes, and decision-making structure. They have clearly defined their leadership and working



group roles and have hired a paid coordinator to oversee the implementation of network activities. In addition, the network understands the importance of building trust and mutually-supportive relationships among members, and attends to that by providing opportunities for member organizations to learn together about refugee integration issues of common interest.

The network's efforts to effectively collaborate positioned them well for a Lancaster UnitedWay collective impact grant, which only considered collaborative projects with a minimum of three agencies. The LCRC won the highest level of awarded funding. The network has been intentional about seeking funding that supports its members organizations as well as the collaborative projects they come together to pursue. This United Way grant dispatched almost \$300,000/year to six network organizations, among them the IU13, the resettlement agencies, the health center, and the Literacy Council.

### **Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Integration Activities**

The LCRC focused on the economic pillar of integration by building relationships with local employers and by improving services that support the transition of English learners to postsecondary training and education, and to connect students with jobs in their area of interest. Students who are interested in careers in health or manufacturing need academic and career pathway support to make the transition to good jobs. It's also necessary for employers to understand the benefits of hiring immigrants. They broke this aim into several goals:

**Develop career pathways maps for two high growth industry sectors in Lancaster County (health care and manufacturing) so that immigrants and refugees are able to access family sustaining jobs. Develop individualized career maps with 20 students.**

The network embarked on its effort to improve career pathways by gathering information about what currently existed – where students were working, what pathways existed, what education and training students were accessing along career pathways, and where gaps existed.

- From the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the local WIB, the adult education providers obtained existing Career Pathway Maps in the areas of health care careers and manufacturing, and identified stackable credentials that immigrants and refugees can access.
- Through surveys of English language students who were interested in transitioning to postsecondary education or employment in the targeted industries, the network investigated where immigrants and refugees were working and mapped the education and training they were accessing. They used this data to draft a guide that describes the adult education pathway, the work and career opportunities that are available along that pathway, and the English language-specific considerations that need attention in order to access each step along the way.
- The adult education providers are planning to use this guiding document to help students develop their own career pathway plans and to collaborate with their network partners to address gaps in service.

### **Review class offerings in order to support career pathways.**

The first step in improving the education and training supports available to English language learners was to review the existing class offerings and curricula of the adult education providers. They identified the pathway supports that the network already provides, such as an English for Health Careers course that the IU 13 Adult Education Program offers, a vocational English class funded by Church World Service, and the many technical training courses that are available through local training providers or the Harrisburg Area Community College.

However, they also identified gaps, particularly in the area of academic English for language learners with post-secondary training. As a result of their review, the adult education providers added academic English classes to support highly-educated English learners prepare for the transition to jobs, job training and postsecondary education. With the implementation of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, they foresee that this

review of services will grow into a broader survey of the network's strategies for including employer and workforce development partners. Such a review could also support the adult education providers to expand their capacity to provide high quality case management and transitional counseling.

### **Build upon the immigrant-friendly employer base.**

LRS and CWS resettlement agencies have strong relationships with employers who hire newly resettled refugees. For the adult education providers and the resettlement agencies, themselves, expanding this number of employers is a primary goal. To move this goal forward, the adult education providers interviewed several large employers to learn what it takes for English learners to get hired, keep the job, and be promoted in the company. They learned about the entry tests that new hires must pass, skills required for internal company training, and daily language needed on the job. This information has informed the development of curriculum and target lessons.

The larger aim is to establish on-going connections with employers that leads to systems of mutual referral (companies sending job announcements or referring workers for English instruction, and the education providers referring job candidates to employers). The network has strengthened its connections with employers and workforce development partners by inviting the One Stop Site manager to attend LCRC meetings and by bringing the LCRC meeting to the One-Stop so that network members could listen to the needs of employers and learn about programs and services available for job-seekers. The refugee resettlement agencies hold annual employer appreciation events and the adult education providers are actively engaged with the local WIB.

### **The Community School**

In addition to the LCRC's original goals, the network pursued a long-standing goal of building a center that serves refugees. With initial funding from the Lancaster Rotary club and the Lancaster County Community Foundation, and under the guidance of the School District of

Lancaster, they opened a Community School that provides a safe space and services for refugee families moving into Lancaster. The Community School, which opened on January 1, 2015, has garnered funding of \$892,000 over three years from the Lancaster United Way and \$500,000 from the Rotary Club of Lancaster, other foundations, and state/federal grants.

The development of the Community School was the realization of a long-term vision that merited the network's time and attention. Every core network member has a key (funded role) in the Community School, and they carry out a high degree of coordination to integrate their pieces. IU 13 is the lead agency for the Community School at Reynolds. The Literacy Council is the lead agency for the UW-funded collective impact grant which supports the community school. The refugee resettlement organizations support cultural orientation and provide community navigators to support refugees. Franklin and Marshall College provides student interns. And South East Health Services provides the medical home at the Community School. The School District of Lancaster provides more than the physical space – it provides a critical link to a large network of people and organizations involved in the district.

Programs at the Community School include: adult cultural orientation, English language and basic skill instruction, financial literacy, home/landlord rights and responsibilities, civic engagement and citizenship classes, health and mental health education, and job training as an access site for the One Stop Career Center. For more about the Community School, see the feature on page 30.

### **Challenges**

The network has faced two primary challenges. The first has been to clarify a shared vision for the network. As new opportunities arise and new organizations engaged with its work, the network must regularly revisit its mission and joint goals. The second challenge has been the ongoing engagement of employers. Not unique to this network, LCRC continues to explore strategies that will engage employers in an on-going way.

Next steps

- Going forward, the network is focused on
- Expanding services at the Community School
  - Exploring the Gateways for Growth opportunity to fund steps toward become a Welcoming Community
  - Continuing to refine a shared data collection plan in order to better capture data related to collaborative efforts.

Technical Assistance

The LCRC requested and received the following types of technical assistance that supported the planning and implementation of the network’s goals.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER
Guidance on network structures, roles and responsibilities, and membership	Madeleine Taylor, Network Impact
Develop a coordinated system of community navigators	Sandy Goodman, World Education
Develop a plan for common data collection across the network.	Kien Lee, Community Science

## NEIGHBORS UNITED NETWORK, IDAHO

### Context & History

Boise, the capital city of Idaho is one of the top 20 fastest growing metro areas with 7.3% of its population identified as foreign born. The growth of the state's foreign-born population increased by 46.5% in recent years: according to analysis by the Pew Hispanic Center, from 2000 to 2013, well above the national average. In 2013, nearly 94,000 people in the state were foreignborn. Boise boasts over 90 different languages spoken in the Boise School District, over a dozen language courses available through local universities and community education programs, as well as high numbers of refugees with over 2,500 alone between the years 2009-2014, to a community population of just over 200,000.

With its thriving population of immigrants and refugees, Boise is undergoing a multicultural transformation. There is no doubt that immigrants are an important part of the overall fabric of Boise, they bring additional revenue, skills, experience and cultural diversity – although not without challenges. Even today as the economy is continuing to improve, the Idaho Office of Refugees (IOR) reported that in 2013 only 60% of the adult refugee population was able to secure full-time employment, and of that number the average starting hourly wage was \$8.21 – an amount below the state average.

To more fully address this and other immigrant integration issues, in 2009, the Mayor's office and the Idaho Office of Refugees joined forces to strengthen Boise's refugee resettlement. Since then, more than a hundred community leaders, policy makers, service agency representatives, refugees and other advocates have become engaged in the strategic process of maximizing resources across stakeholder groups. Officially established in 2009, Neighbors United, formerly referred to as Refugee Strategic Community Plan, is a collaborative initiative which helps refugees successfully integrate and thrive in Boise. It is made up of more than a hundred community leaders, policy makers, service agency representatives, resettled refugees, volunteers, and educators. The primary mission of the network is to identify and improve resources for refugee resettlement, and other immigrant group's civic, linguistic and economic integration.

### CORE NETWORK MEMBERS:

- Boise State University
- Boise Libraries
- Catholic Charities of Idaho
- St. Alphonsus Health System
- Economic Opportunity Program by Jannus
- Idaho Department of Labor
- Idaho Office of Refugees
- Global Talent Idaho
- College of Western Idaho
- Learning Lab
- Stepping Stones
- Mayor, City of Boise
- Agnew Beck

### Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Network Development

#### Develop an Employer Advisory Council.

A goal of Neighbors United Employment Committee was to establish a career center for highly skilled refugees that included an employer advisory council and opened professional career pathways for high-skill refugees and other immigrant groups. The development of an employer advisory council was initiated as a means of providing leadership & engagement opportunities for employers with the goal of opening career-path jobs & internships, recruiting professionals as volunteers, and hosting worksite visits & networking events. Through opening career-track jobs for high-skilled immigrants greater access to employment would inevitably trickle down, resulting in lower-skilled immigrants access to open entry-level positions - for which would ideally be better suited.

The network's employer advisory council began with approximately 12 employer members providing insights and guidance, actively engaged in creating jobs, par-

ticipating in professional job search training programs, and one-on-one mentoring – which has proven to be a successful model. The network now actively engages over 41 employers and over 100 professional volunteers - representing over 50 unique companies. As a result of the success of GTI's internship model, the network is continuing to maintain and build strong relationships with all of its internship sites.

### **Develop a strategic communications plan for Neighbors United.**

Operating amidst a climate of anti-immigrant and refugee sentiment, the network quickly realized it was at a critical time in its planning for the development of an overall strategic communications plan. This plan aims to combat the negative rhetoric from members of the community and create a more positive message around the real impact and benefit of integrating immigrants and refugees into Boise. Seeking to greatly shape the future of the network and community as a whole, the communications committee is currently working on implementing their plan which was developed in consultation with Welcoming America – the network's technical assistance provider through NINA. As a result of this plan, the Idaho Office for Refugees has contracted with a public relations firm, on behalf of Neighbors United, to help fine tune its message and create a short-term implementation plan which will further support the committee and future network development.

### **Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Integration Activities**

#### **Facilitate economic integration of high-skilled immigrants, who have language as one key barrier to career advancement, by building the foundation for Global Talent Idaho (GTI), a workplace development initiative.**

Many immigrant professionals arrive in Boise without a clear path to continue and/or reclaim their previous careers. The development of Global Talent Idaho has changed the reality for many by helping skilled immigrants transition to roles more closely related to their former professional careers, experience and education. Global Talent Idaho has created a set of professional services which help high-skilled immigrants transition into career-track jobs in Boise. Taking a holistic approach, GTI

### **AEFLA-FUNDED PROGRAM:**

**College of Western Idaho**, established in 2007, is a comprehensive community college providing higher education programs to residents of western Idaho. It served approximately 18,000 students in 2015 through a full range of academic and professional-technical courses. CWI also offers basic academic skills to help prepare for a GED, dual credit for high school students, six levels of English classes, and fast-track career training for working professionals.

provides clients with full job seeker training, coaching, placement and post-placement support.

Global Talent Idaho began in 8 months and during that time was able to scale up its services and programs to accommodate a total of 60 refugees and immigrants in varying capacities. It will continue to evaluate and improve its services to better accommodate the needs of its clients, and is continuing to work on the improvement of its job seeker "motivation" and program and placement retention rates. Proud of its achievement under the TA from NINA, GTI has placed 24 job seekers into skilled positions with an average annual income gain of \$18,568. The result of these positions alone is an estimated \$445,635 in economic impact to the families and tax base of Boise, Idaho.

#### **Establish a set of educational resources for high-skilled immigrants who have language as one key barrier to career advancement, including ESOL options and "ReBoot Academy," a bridge career class emphasizing workplace literacy.**

Skilled immigrants often need short-term U.S. training or education to step into career pathways. For many English is often a key barrier - even at an intermediate+ level, there are significant needs around workplace literacy to achieve career success. Replicating the success of other cohort models, in other cities, the network has successfully graduated 35-50 high-skilled immigrant jobseekers from its "GTI Academy" with enhanced workplace literacy and mentor connections, access to English language learning resources, and clearer pathways for U.S. career success.



After launching its first pilot class with 20 participants, GTI evaluated and refined its curriculum with the guidance and resources from TA provider Upwardly Global. Now working closely with the Idaho Department of Labor (IDOL), and using funds from the Jobs Driven National Emergency Grant (JNEG) to train and place skilled refugees and immigrants in internships in professional fields, GTI's first internship placement has resulted in on-the-job training (OJT). Since January 2015, 21 job seekers were placed in internships, 11 of whom were subsequently hired into a permanent role. GTI's relationship with IDOL has been critical to their success. Looking to build on that success, GTI will continue to refine its system of referrals in an effort to make sure that all job seekers are "Employment Ready" before referrals are made - so as to continue its impact in this area.

The network is continuing its outreach efforts to all local language programs and is simultaneously working with others in the field to learn more about gaps in services and resources which they may be able to assist in filling. GTI is also joining the adult education committee realizing the key role that adult education plays in the economic and linguistic integration of immigrants.

## Challenges

While Neighbors United has experienced some small setbacks and challenges during its involvement in this project, the network identified 3 main challenges it's actively working to address.

The first is time. While the network acknowledged that this is not exclusively unique to NINA, the network agreed that the ability to accomplish their stated goals were at times difficult given the nature of their work and the recognition that many clients served have newly arrived in the U.S., and thus require a more intensive level of service to achieve results. While being part of a network helps by being able to gain support from others, the work of integrating immigrants and refugees does still take time. It requires building relationships, understanding barriers (internally and externally) and still being able to produce results within a given timeframe – one that unfortunately is often times limited.

The second challenge identified by the network is the securement of sustainable and adaptable funding for the future. In the case of the College of Western Idaho (CWI)

and its Adult Education Program this challenge was most evident in its inability to incorporate additional curriculum such as skilled or higher level programming without the securement of preexisting funds. Whereas other colleges in Boise may be more nimble in providing a fee-for-service program model, the structure of funding within CWI made it difficult to quickly adapt to such a need and opportunity.

The last challenge identified by the network relates to its ability to work against a growing hostile climate of anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment. This resulted in the need to develop a more targeted strategic communication plan with a main focus of combating the negative environment through spreading a more positive message to the community around the benefits of integrating refugees and immigrants. With the support of Boise's Mayor, the TA provided from NINA and the support of volunteers from within the business and community sectors, the network is positioning itself to tackle this challenge head on in the coming year.

## Next steps

Neighbors United will continue the pursuit of its goals around the linguistic, economic, and social integration of immigrants and refugees following the conclusion of the NINA project. It will seek to accomplish this through the following activities:

- Implementing its newly created strategic communications plan
- Continuing its strategic development – specifically GTI's programming and outreach efforts to achieve maximum impact in integration of skilled immigrants and refugees
- Updating all Neighbors United Committee goals and outcomes in 2016 to reflect work accomplished and new work it is looking to achieve
- Gathering data to better measure success and communicate the networks story.

## Technical Assistance

Neighbors United requested and received the following types of technical assistance that supported the planning and implementation of the network's goals.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER
Strategic Communications	Susan Downs-Karkos, Welcoming America
Best practices for integrating high skilled immigrants and refugees into Adult Education programming	Heide Wrigley, LiteracyWorks
Program Development for high skilled immigrants	Anne Kirwan, Upwardly Global
Data Collection	Kien Lee, Community Science

## WE RHODE ISLAND NETWORK, RHODE ISLAND

### Context & History

The three principal partners of the We Rhode Island Network (WeRIN) came together in April 2012 propelled by a State-Imposed Performance-Based Funding formula which awards organizations by their abilities to achieve significant outcomes in comparison among all those funded by the State Office of Adult Education. They proposed coming together to discuss performance-based funding and ways in which they might share information and collaborate. From there, the group began to further define priorities. As medium-sized agencies with different origins but similar learner populations and philosophies of education and program advocacy, the network members strategize about ways to collaborate, sharing learners and resources and developing joint programs. The backbone organization, RIFLI, is based in the Providence Public Library; ILSR provides education and training programs in collaboration with several unions; and EFA, is a grassroots organization with a strong emphasis on learner empowerment and self-advocacy.

### CORE NETWORK MEMBERS:

- English For Action (EFA)
- Institute for Labor Studies and Research (ILSR)
- Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI)

The network's target population is immigrant and receiving communities in the greater Providence area of Rhode Island, including the cities of Providence, Pawtucket, East Providence, Central Falls and Cranston. The immigrant populations of these areas are primarily Latino, with sizable Cape Verdean, Portuguese, Haitian, West African, and Southeast Asian minorities, and significant numbers of other European and Asian immigrants as well. All network agencies serve English learners from low beginning/literacy through advanced proficiency levels, with a core strength at the low to intermediate levels.

## Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Network Development

Create the means to share information within the Network about economic integration services, identify gaps, facilitate effective referrals, and align programming.

WeRIN's network development goals have emphasized strengthening relationships and discovering opportunities available through collaborations among the existing WeRIN members. As a small network of adult education service providers--each with a distinct organizational mission and set of external partners--WeRIN's focus throughout most of the period of the NINA project has been less on new network members than better coordinating existing programs and activities, and finding ways to leverage each member's existing partners, strengths, and relationships in the interests of the network as a whole and the community of learners they represent.

At the same time, WeRIN members are linking to other networks to expand services to the community they serve. For example, they are making referrals to the Blackstone Valley Adult Education Network (BVAEN), of which ILSR and RIFLI are members, for students WeRIN member can't serve (and other BVAEN members can make referrals to WeRIN providers).

Another example is the RI Citizenship Consortium, of which RIFLI is a member. ILSR and EFA don't feel the need to offer citizenship services because the Consortium is doing the coordination and students can be connected to those services. A growing number of steps where WeRIN coordinates and collectively leverages each member's core services include:

- Creating joint schedule and sharing schedules of other adult education networks/agencies
- Creating one waitlist for students at the Pawtucket Library and conducting a joint registration
- Regular evaluation of service delivery across network members and improvement of service inventory and alignment
- One agency offering their niche services at another network member's location (for example, ILSR Jobs Club at RIFLI's All Access program)

- Mapping relationships with other direct service providers who provide complementary services that match learners' needs
- Identifying areas where learners' needs are unmet and research providers that can meet those needs
- Conducting outreach to service providers to partner with a particular focus on integrating with ALL Access program (through emails, Facebook postings, and field visits)
- Exploring opportunities for shared funding
- Providing conference presentations as a network.

### **Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Integration Activities**

#### **Ensure routine WeRIN member and student participation in ALL Access Programming.**

The main focus of network integration activities is Adult Lifelong Learning Access (ALL Access ([www.allaccessri.org](http://www.allaccessri.org))) whose goal is to improve the education, digital literacy and workforce skills of adults through the public libraries. Opportunities for the network members to engage and collaborate around this project include: having network members' students utilize ALL Access services such as One-on-One technology appointments, receiving academic and employment help in the ALL Access Learning Lounge including for the National External Diploma Program; and using the ALL Access Learning Lounge as the setting for ILSR "Job Club for ESL Learners"; ALL Access's focus on patron empowerment is particularly in sync with the goals of the WeRIN network and its members. WeRIN members have helped inform the development of ALL Access services. This project offers a flexible way for network members to maximize their agency goals while working together to support and expand the ALL Access project. As a result of RIFLI and ILSR collaboration at the Pawtucket Public Library, a new Learning Lounge was established at that location. The project can also serve as a hub for attracting new WeRIN members. This core project has enhanced WeRIN's ability to "think like a network" in every aspect, from programming to applying for funding to planning TA needs.

### **AEFLA-FUNDED PROGRAMS:**

#### **Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI)**

offers ESOL, citizenship computer literacy, and college transition classes in libraries, public housing, public schools and One Stops. The program uses a student-driven curriculum tailored to student goals and needs **English for Action (EFA)** provides ESL, pre-GED, parent literacy and native language literacy programs. Through participatory English language, childcare, and other educational programs, EFA links language learning, leadership development and community building. **Institute for Labor Studies and Research (ILSR)** offers workplace-based and community-based adult education programming, including ESL, ABE, and GED/HE classes, using a learner-centered, participatory focus.

#### **Scan Immigrant Community Barriers and Needs Regarding Library Use.**

The range of services available to immigrant communities through the public library system, including ALL Access, represents a rich and growing opportunity for linguistic, economic, and civic integration. But many barriers exist to the communities' awareness of and ability to access these services—as simple as library card fees—and for the library system to understand immigrant needs the system could better meet. An environmental scan of these barriers and needs (tapping into the WeRIN network members and other stakeholder groups and immigrant community members themselves) aims to better connect immigrants with library resources and help the library, ALL Access, and WeRIN partners, to develop new opportunities to respond to immigrant community needs and interests. The network has completed its goal of summarizing access barriers to library use and existent immigrant-related programming, based on interviews with regional adult education providers. WeRIN network leads are considered part of the ALL Access team.



## Challenges

The main challenges in both network development and advancing integration activities has to do with the small size of the network (one of the original partners, also an ESOL provider, dropped out in the first six month after losing staff), the exclusive focus of the partners on ESOL programming. In addition, an uncertain funding environment that made it difficult for WeRIN to collectively commit to expanding their network and their programming outside of ESOL and computer literacy services – and in turn agree on what areas of technical assistance would be most strategic in this respect.

Shifting the backbone agency mid-stream from ILSR to RIFLI and choosing a creative new “anchor” project focused on online literacy tools, group activities, and technology access, helped keep the network’s momentum going. This helped them think about new ways to share and jointly create ESOL and workforce development services, and explore new funding opportunities. It also allowed the network partners’ primary focus on ESOL programming to be a benefit more than a liability, as they position themselves as a regional brain trust of ESOL expertise in working with statewide adult education stakeholders and they are taking steps to position themselves as a resource for area employers in need of workplace-based language programs and to promote immigrants as valuable candidates for employment.

## Next steps

WeRIN will continue its efforts to improve network co-ordination, grow network partnerships, and enhance and expand services through the following activities:

- Offer more rounds Jobs Club for ESL Learners at the Providence Public Library and possibly the Pawtucket Public Library.
- Secure ongoing funding for RIFLI to continue to offer a Transitions to College and Careers class at EFA.
- Reach out to area employers and employer groups concerning workplace-based ESOL programs leveraging the resources, strategies, and partnerships developed during the technical assistance.
- Convene monthly working groups to advance partnerships with employers and employer groups.

## Technical Assistance

WeRIN requested and received the following types of technical assistance that supported the planning and implementation of the network’s goals.

WeRIN made available the technical assistance to all adult education organizations in Rhode Island as an opportunity to amplify the message about the value of adult education.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER
Develop resources and strategies for engaging employers to leverage WeRIN ESOL services for workplace-based programs and in the process connect with new potential partners for the WeRIN network.	Connie Nelson, Consultant
Develop employer outreach strategies including highlighting existing resources and plan for how the group of providers working together can form a coalition with minimal coordination capacity.	Claudia Green, English for New Bostonians
Create tools to communicate the value of adult education and its students to employers and employer organizations	Jo Androski, Design Agency

## WHITE CENTER PROMISE NETWORK, WASHINGTON

### Context & History

Situated on the outskirts of Seattle, White Center is a small community of about 13,000 residents, almost half of whom are immigrants, and 26% of the total population has limited English proficiency. The White Center community is changing. It is an unincorporated community in King County, and whether or not it should become part of Seattle remains a point of debate. Without a city government to support it, White Center has struggled with a lack of resources. Racial equity remains a very real concern in a community that is challenged socioeconomically. There is also a sense that gentrification is coming as young people looking for affordable housing move to White Center and see new opportunity.

The White Center Promise network was originally created as a collaborative effort to address poverty in the community, spurred by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Promise Neighborhoods grant opportunity. Despite being unable to secure a federal implementation grant, the White Center Promise network that had been established stayed intact with White Center Community Development Association (WCCDA) as its lead convener. Its mission to develop authentic resident leadership, leverage resources, and build economic and social equity to create a strong, connected, and vibrant community in alignment with the economic, linguistic and civic pillars of immigrant integration. The network's participation in Networks for Integrating New Americans provided them with a new opportunity to bring an immigrant integration lens to their work with greater focus on adults rather than primarily children.

### Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Network Development

#### Implement a shared data collection system

A shared data collection system was prioritized because it would help partners further align their efforts and make collective decisions on immigrant integration strategies based on accurate data. Being able to track the extent to which residents were accessing services from network

#### CORE NETWORK MEMBERS:

- Highline College
- Highline Public Schools
- King County Housing Authority
- King County Library System
- One America
- Port Jobs
- Southwest Youth and Family Services
- White Center Community Development Association
- YWCA of Seattle-King-Snohomish

#### AEFLA-FUNDED PROGRAM:

**Highline College** was established in 1961 and provides educational opportunities to approximately 17,000 students annually across King County. It offers a wide array of programming, including ESL, ABE/GED, vocational training, and supports for foreign trained professionals.

partners and assessing their longer-term outcomes was a priority for the network. WCCDA took the lead on this effort and worked with members to understand what data was already being collected. A data matrix was created that identified key indicators, how they could be measured, specific outputs that could be tracked, and longer-term impacts. The key indicators were across economic, linguistic, and civic integration. Please refer to the Appendices for a copy of the indicators.

In the process of working across different network member organizations, it became apparent that data was not being collected in a consistent way that was helpful to the network. For instance, some organizations don't track

whether or not a participant is an immigrant or refugee. Therefore, shared data collection forms were developed and disseminated to network members, with a special focus on civic engagement indicators. Civic indicators were prioritized because civic engagement was a key component of the network's action plan. Organizations would input their data into the shared database and a Promise Scorecard, or dashboard, would be available to help track progress in real-time. In the end, this data will help the network quantify its impact and use data as a tool for ongoing decision-making, especially as they continue working to align efforts, fill service gaps, and avoid duplication.

### **Align and integrate activities between organizations in the network.**

Network development was a priority for White Center from the beginning, as they sought to strengthen their collaboration to serve immigrants and refugees, and to improve access, availability, and accountability of services. Network members worked together to create a visual document to trace the pathway of possible integration activities available to White Center residents. Through this process, members learned of gaps and duplications in services and established plans to work together to resolve them. A network mapping process also showed missed connections between members, and a gap in membership among ethnic and faith-based organizations. Securing their engagement in the network became a greater priority, and good progress was made in particular through the involvement of Trusted Advocates, a grassroots, immigrant-led organization.

Cutting across both of these two network-focused strategy areas was the community survey, an effort to interview hundreds of White Center residents and learn more about their quality of life, progress, and ongoing needs. WCCDA led this effort and collected surveys from 300 residents. Findings were presented to the full network, and continue to help shape their efforts to measure progress across the key indicators in activity a) above as well as to help them think about what services are needed by the community and how to best deliver them.

## **Goals, Strategies, and Activities for Integration Activities**

### **Integrate civic engagement and leadership for refugees and immigrants into network members' activities to help create a welcoming community.**

Civic engagement work had two mutually reinforcing focus areas: the ESOL classroom and the broader community. Highline College's ESOL teachers began incorporating civic engagement activities into the classroom. While this was somewhat new to most of them, the teachers met monthly as a community of practice to share insights about their approaches and ways to incorporate civic engagement activities into the curriculum. Through this process, they began to broaden their approach toward student empowerment.

The second focus area was the broader community and considering ways in which network members could open up civic engagement opportunities to residents. This work was informed by a brief survey among ESOL students and other immigrants accessing services within the community, to learn more about their interests and current state of engagement. It soon became apparent that the community civic engagement work would benefit from having a unifying theme, as opposed to a handful of disparate activities. The Big Read Campaign provided that opportunity.

With encouragement from the network, the King County Library System secured funding from the National Endowment for the Arts to distribute a single book among the community - *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* – and help elevate the themes of immigrant contributions, belonging, and engagement through activities across the community that related to the book. Network members submitted their plans for hosting related activities through an online portal.

One noteworthy activity planned in conjunction with the Big Read was a citizenship ceremony, coordinated with the local office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, where 26 people took the oath and a diverse audience of 42 people celebrated with them. The ceremony included the announcement by King County government

that it was joining the Welcoming Cities and Counties Initiative, a priority for the network. Other activities included community conversations, facilitated by local immigrants who helped create comfortable, cross-cultural spaces for residents to share their own stories with each other. A partnership with the Seattle Art Museum gave residents the opportunity to view the commissioned exhibit *Disguise* and share their own experiences of wearing masks. A visual storytelling component included cohorts from the Somali, Vietnamese, Hispanic and other immigrant communities, who learned storytelling techniques and had an opportunity to document and showcase their experiences for the broader community. A speaking event and writing workshop with the author, repertory theatre re-enactment of the book, and many other community events gave residents the opportunity to engage around the book's themes and connect with each other in new and creative ways. Working through network partners, such as the King County Housing Authority and Highline School District, assured that those at the grassroots were truly involved in the civic engagement opportunities.

Finally, the ESOL teachers at Highline College also read the book, met for book discussions, and began applying some of the themes to their own classrooms. For instance, they explored how the classroom helps create a sense of community for adult learners who otherwise might feel a sense of alienation similar to the character in the book.

**Develop and integrate communications strategies that highlight that a primary asset of White Center is that it is a community made up largely of refugees and immigrants.**

The communications strategy, like the civic engagement strategy, needed a focus. The network concentrated its communications activities on the Big Read events and used those as opportunities not only for civic engagement among residents, but also to communicate a positive message of White Center's diverse community. While they had originally conceived of a stand-alone public communications campaign, the tie to the Big Read felt more strategic and brought with it a specific call to action (participate in Big Read activities) that a broader campaign needs.

The Network also developed a new tagline to help communicate the spirit behind their effort: *Neighbors Stronger Together*. This was used in a number of events related to the Big Read.

## Challenges

The network faced several challenges. The greatest challenge was the departure of its longtime coordinator, who had served in that capacity for a number of years. Two interim coordinators from WCDDA closely followed until a permanent position was offered near the end of the project. With this amount of staff turnover, some loss of momentum was inevitable. The original coordinator's strong relationships with network partners and clear grasp of the network's strategy, coupled with the ensuing loss of institutional memory and level of expertise, made this a difficult period. While having new staff brings the benefits of new ideas and energy, the network did experience a capacity challenge that resulted in a slowdown in its development. Nonetheless, the Big Read Campaign was highly successful during this time of staff transition and gave members a common area of focus, propelling their integration-focused work forward and giving them a sense of accomplishment together.

Funding and resources are also a challenge, as the network has limited funds to support its work and struggles to find funding to take on new, specific projects.

## Next steps

The network has reexamined their goals to guide their work together after the closure of the Networks for Integrating New Americans initiative. While these have not yet been formally adopted, they do reflect the direction the network is headed and are very much in alignment with their earlier work:

- Implementing a new leadership model and revised committee structure
- Increasing opportunities for immigrants and refugees to be engaged in the community and for the receiving community to also be involved
- Building the involvement of immigrants and refugees in the network



**Technical Assistance**

White Center Promise requested and received the following types of technical assistance in support of the planning and implementation of the network’s goals.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER
Network mapping	Madeleine Taylor, Network Impact
Indicators and measurement	Kien Lee, Network Science
Strategic communications	Susan Downs-Karkos, Welcoming America
Civic engagement in the ESOL classroom	Shash Woods, Consultant

# B. LANCASTER COUNTY REFUGEE COALITION OPERATIONS PLAN

## Our Mission

To optimize sustainable refugee integration in Lancaster County by empowering the community to incorporate refugees into social services and community systems

## Values and Beliefs

We emphasize the importance of resource sharing and collaboration, as we maintain a grassroots approach to honoring and supporting Lancaster’s long history of refugee integration. We believe that refugees enrich the diversity of the community and strengthen the economic base. We recognize that supporting each other in our diverse work, which goes beyond refugee-specific populations, has a direct and positive impact on refugees as they transition from new arrival to community member to citizen and beyond. Together we can create more opportunities for refugees, strengthen our services and transform our community.

## Our Members

The LCRC also works with over 20 network affiliate organizations as well as individuals and organizational members who are interested in supporting and empowering refugees on their journey to self sufficiency. Network affiliates include colleges and universities, local education agencies, school districts, refugee resettlement organizations, nonprofit organizations, faith communities and volunteers who come together to fulfill the mission of the LCRC and understand that as a network we are stronger together than we are apart. Membership will expand as needs arise.

## Our Work

The LCRC is a network that creates opportunities for improving services for refugees by connecting people and organizations, aligning our services, and producing new strategies and programs, so that we can improve overall service delivery, educate the B. Lancaster County Refugee Coalition Operations Plan community, and advocate for Lancaster’s refugees. Through our network, the LCRC responds to current refugee and provider needs. The

coalition leadership team provides support to strengthen the capacity of the broader LCRC network.

## Focus Areas of Our Coalition

All work of the LCRC considers the areas of focus within the coalition, as listed below. Each area of focus will develop broad goals and members of the coalition will be working towards these as stated.

Awareness and Education
Communication
Building and Fostering Relationships

## Our Structure

The Lancaster County Refugee Coalition is comprised of a core group of members who serve as the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team meets monthly and strives to ensure we are engaged in mutually reinforcing activities and continuous communication in order to achieve our common purpose.

## LCRC Leadership Team Members - Responsibilities

Leadership members will:

- Ensure that all LCRC affiliates are kept apprised of actions, projects and outreach efforts and that affiliates have meaningful opportunities for input, feedback and participation on major strategic decisions
- Facilitate in strategic planning and set goals for the LCRC
- Share major organizational decisions, such as changes in mission, advocacy and program priorities, with member organizations

- Make a program report to members at each quarterly meeting as necessary
- Attend monthly meetings and participate on working groups or actively contribute to organizational priorities; vote on major coalition decisions (if unable to attend meeting, can send proxy)
- Actively seek resources to fund the coordinator and projects
- Design program and coalition evaluations to ensure quality of services, finances, administration, internal & external communications, etc
- Engage with affiliate organizations and community partners to mobilize support and spread our mission
- Pay annual dues (see last page)
- Serve as coalition chair on a rotating basis
- Provide support and oversight to the LCRC Coordinator, including contributing to the LCRC website, quarterly meetings and Insight newsletter

The Leadership Team has the right to remove a member from the team in the event that the member fails to fulfill the LCRC responsibilities.

### **LCRC Coalition Chair - Responsibilities**

This is a rotating position designed to work closely with the LCRC Coordinator. The coalition will establish a rotation process that suits all members (with a 6 month chair rotation).

The Coalition Chair will:

- Collaborate with the Coordinator to set meeting agendas and respond to community inquiries about the LCRC
- Ensure the coalition is progressing towards goals and outcomes as defined in the strategic plan
- Represent the LCRC, along with Coordinator and relevant coalition members, when necessary

### **LCRC Coordinator - Responsibilities**

The LCRC Coordinator is tasked with mobilizing working groups and leadership committee members to set, meet and complete organizational targets, programs, etc.

The Coordinator will:

- Communicate regularly with working group leaders to ensure progress (through regular reporting mechanism); work with working group leaders to set targets, evaluate progress, create or retire groups
- Ensure regular communication with full network by convening quarterly meetings and sending a quarterly newsletter
- Manage interns and delegate organizational tasks to interns (including communication tools such as Facebook, newsletter, etc...)
- Serve as primary point-of-contact for information requests (including web requests); collaborate with LCRC Chair to represent the LCRC as necessary
- Collaborate with Chair to set meeting agendas and ensure coalition is progressing towards goals and outcomes as defined in the strategic plan

### **LCRC Network Affiliates**

The LCRC also works with over 20 network affiliate organizations and individuals who are interested in supporting and empowering refugees on their journey to self sufficiency.

Affiliates will:

- Be active members of the network – attend quarterly meetings, engage in LCRC activities and provide input on current refugee needs as seen from the community perspective and provide insight of possible solutions
- If a member volunteers on a working group and agrees to complete a task, to complete the task on time

- Respect the confidentiality of all LCRC discussions, member information and intellectual property
- Build the network and positively represent the LCRC and refugees in local, national & state discussions
- Uphold the mission and values of the LCRC and actively promote LCRC

### **Benefits of Membership**

- Networking with diverse members who share a common purpose.
- An opportunity to engage in advocacy about issues related to refugees.
- Listing on the LCRC website about programs and services for refugees.

The LCRC network affiliates and leadership team members meet quarterly. The LCRC network affiliates and leadership team members meet quarterly.

### **Working Groups**

Working Groups are formed around the needs of LCRC network members and priorities as outlined in the LCRC goal plan. Each working group selects a chair or co-chairs and works toward an action plan which defines their work, and is owned by the working group. The chairperson for each working group is responsible for the following:

- Convening working group meetings
- Maintaining up-to-date group membership lists
- Regularly reporting group updates to the Coalition Coordinator

### **Our Decision Making Guidelines**

The LCRC leadership team makes decisions about onboarding new members, funding opportunities, advocacy

issues, coalition goals and communication activities. Our goal is 100% agreement on issues at hand. Coalition leadership members will be provided ample notice of when decision making meetings are scheduled. When consensus is not possible, decisions will be made by vote. A quorum of 75% is required for a decision in order to take a vote, and a vote must pass with 75% in agreement. Each leadership team member will have one vote, with a maximum of two voting members from each organization. If members are not able to attend a meeting, they can send a proxy. The proxy will have the power to vote. Any decision made by the coalition leadership team will be fully supported by all leadership team members. If any groups directly connected to affected communities have strong concerns and/or objections, they have a right to stop the decision making process and address their concerns and/or objections.

The leadership team will also make decision about adding new members. A member of the leadership team must bring new potential member names to the leadership team. The coordinator will meet with the invitee to explain leadership team expectations, provide information on the coalition and answer questions. The invitee will attend a Coalition meeting. Following the meeting, the Leadership Team will vote on adding the new member to the team.

### **Communication on Behalf of the Coalition**

All coalition members and network affiliates who would like to communicate an issue publicly on behalf of LCRC must obtain approval from the leadership team prior to release.

### **Coalition Membership Guidelines**

Memberships Dues are due by July 1st each year.

If membership dues are a barrier to participation, please contact the coordinator to discuss alternatives



ANNUAL DUES	
<b>INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	\$25.00
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP BASED ON OPERATING BUDGET</b>	
Less than \$5,000	\$50.00
\$50,000 - \$150,000	\$100.00
\$151,000 - \$500,000	\$150.000
\$501,000 - \$1,000,000	\$200.00
More than \$1,000,000	\$300.00

## C. SERVICES TO SUPPORT REFUGEE INTEGRATION IN LANCASTER, PA

Through collaborative efforts, members of the Lancaster County Refugee Coalition (LCRC) provide continued services to refugees from date of arrival and beyond. All of the below agencies are part of the LCRC, whose mission is

to optimize sustainable refugee integration in Lancaster County by empowering the community to incorporate refugees into social services and community systems.



### CWS IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROGRAM

- Resettlement Case Management: 90-180 days from Date of Arrival
- Intensive Case Management: 90 days to 1 year or beyond as needed
- Employment: Assistance and placement for up to 5 years
- Immigration and Legal Services: Indefinite and as needed
- Advocacy and Additional Support Care: Indefinite and as needed, including connections with community Welcome Teams

### LUTHERAN CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICE (LUTHERAN REFUGEE SERVICES)

- Resettlement Case Management: 90-180 days from Date of Arrival
- Employment: Assistance and navigation for up to 5 years
- Mentoring Program: long-term employment mentorship to refugees who have been here between 1-5 years
- Immigration and legal services: indefinite and as needed



THE LITERACY COUNCIL OF LANCASTER-LEBANON	THE WARE INSTITUTE FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE	SOUTHEAST LANCASTER HEALTH SERVICES	LANCASTER-LEBANON IU13	SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LANCASTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead for the United Way Grant</li> <li>• English language instruction for refugees and immigrants in Lancaster County</li> <li>• Education case management and navigation services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student intern and volunteers to support numerous programs and integration services*</li> <li>• After school Refugee Girls Group to empower refugee girls*</li> <li>• AmeriCorps VISTA member to support the Refugee Center and Community School*</li> <li>• Coordination of donation to refugees including winter clothing, welcome kits, etc*</li> <li>• VITA Tax Preparation through United Way of Lancaster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-service health center at the Refugee Center and Community School at Reynolds*</li> <li>• Act as a primary point of contact for the refugee center and community school*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational workshops for refugees*</li> <li>• School support services for refugee children and parents*</li> <li>• Advocacy and connection services for refugees that have been in the U.S. for over 1 year*</li> <li>• ESL classes</li> <li>• Job placement services for refugees in the U.S. for over 5 years*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K-12 student and family support*</li> <li>• Physical space provided at Reynolds Middle School*</li> <li>• School support services for refugee children and parents*</li> </ul>

\*Provided on-site at the Refugee Center and Community School at Reynolds (RCCSR)

#### Our Local Funders:



## D. LANCASTER REFUGEE CENTER COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

**Position Title:** Refugee Center Navigator

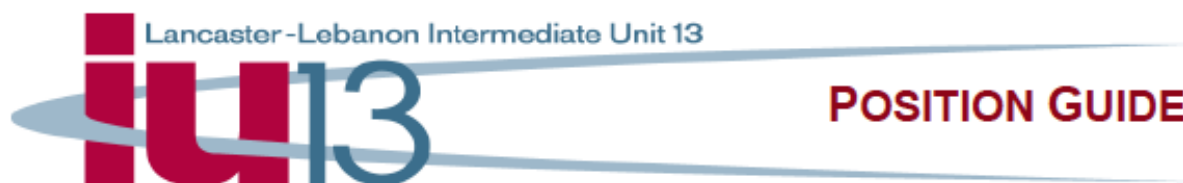
**Code:**

**Department:** Instructional Services

**Group:** Community Education

**Reports to:** Community Education Supervisor

**Date:** January 2016



### Purpose of Position:

The purpose of this position is to support refugees in becoming economically, culturally, and linguistically integrated in the Lancaster community by assessing their needs, making referrals, and helping them to navigate governmental and programmatic systems.

### Essential Functions:

All job functions are to be executed through the lens of high quality customer service. Customers are defined as both internal and external clients. Examples demonstrative of high quality service may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- prompt responsiveness to inquiries
  - professional and courteous verbal and nonverbal communication
  - proactive problem solving
1. Provide direct support to refugee students and families, both at the refugee center and in the community, in an effort to increase access to needed services, improve communication and school engagement, and remove potential barriers to educational success.
  2. Serve as an in-school resource for refugee students and their teachers.
  3. Build and maintain positive relationships with community agencies, social service organizations, and schools that serve refugees.
  4. Refer refugees to resettlement agencies and/or existing community resources, information, and social services based on immediate needs.
  5. Assist refugees with phone calls and accompany and drive clients to appointments to ensure accurate communication.
  6. Help refugees to read and understand documents such as letters, bills, or forms.



7. Advocate for equal access to services for refugees.
8. Engage in home and community visits, accompany refugees to support service meetings, and proactively facilitate other activities that bridge the home and school connection for refugee students and families.
9. Effectively work in tandem with the Community School Coordinator and Refugee Center Facilitator to evaluate progress towards goal completion.
10. Ensure accurate and complete documentation, paperwork, and data entry is maintained at all times.
11. Effectively use technology to maximize efficiency and quality of work during the planning, implementation, and completion of projects and tasks.
12. Contributes to the effective team management of all problems, issues, and, opportunities.
13. Perform other duties assigned by supervisor.
14. Adheres to the established work schedule through regular and consistent attendance.
15. Staff must observe all LLIU requirements governing FERPA, HIPAA, and any LLIU policies on FERPA and/or HIPAA's policies and notices of privacy practices.

### **Marginal Functions:**

A natural and dedicated helper with the ability to work independently, maintain client confidentiality, and work collaboratively with community partners. Above average decision and problem solving skills, high moral character, and impeccable judgment absolutely necessary.

### **Knowledge & Skill Requirements:**

At least two years of college education and proficiency in English required. Must have strong organizational, interpersonal, and problem solving skills. Bilingual skills in Swahili, French, Somali, Arabic, Burmese, Bhutanese, Nepali, Haitian Creole, Karen, or one of the other Lancaster-based refugee languages required.

### **Supervision of Personnel: N/A**

### **Physical/Mental/Environment:**

#### **Physical Demands:**

Activities:	Sit: 50%
	Walk/stand: 50%
	Driving to other locations: 0%
Lifting:	Up to 20 lbs. - Lifting of light boxes and office material (unless otherwise noted below)
Vision:	Close concentration
Mental Demands:	Interpret, analyze and problem solve
Environment:	Refugee Center and Community School at Reynolds Middle School. Valid PA driver's license required.

## E. WHITE CENTER PROMISE IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION DRAFT INDICATORS

### White Center Promise network

NETWORK GOAL	OUTPUT MEASURES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOME MEASURES	DATA SOURCES
<b>Increase level of civic participation among immigrants</b>	Increased opportunities for immigrant leadership (e.g., organizations target their advertisements, announcements, or invitations of leadership positions in committees, task forces, advocacy trainings, board of directors, PTAs to immigrants, etc. )	<p>Participation of immigrants in community leadership positions (e.g., task forces, committees, PTAs, boards, etc.)</p> <p># of immigrants who pursue citizenship (i.e., completed application)</p> <p># of naturalized immigrants who vote in local, state, or national elections</p> <p># of publications by immigrants, for example in school newsletters, White Center Herald, The International Examiner, The Asian Weekly, KCBS Immigrants set up their own blogs</p> <p># of participants in community forums and meaningful participation</p> <p># of people involved in public debates or awareness-raising campaigns and meaningful participation</p>	<p>Institutional Survey (New) (select a sample of organizations and administer a short survey that includes questions about what they do to create INTENTIONALLY opportunities for immigrant leadership)</p> <p>Community survey Q59m but don't quite line up with the response categories. Revise Q59 to get at these measures</p>

NETWORK GOAL	OUTPUT MEASURES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOME MEASURES	DATA SOURCES
<b>Improved job readiness for participating in the labor force among immigrants</b>  <b>Employment</b>	# enrolled in professional, technical, and educational classes offered by Highline Community College  # completing classes	#attaining credentials  # employed  # with livable wage job  # engaged in entrepreneurship efforts	Work with Highline College to collect data about enrollment, completion, and credentials attained (NOTE: have to have a sentence to explain why they are collecting information about whether or not the person is an immigrant because some people may get scared about why the college wants that information)  Community Survey Q46-56 asked questions about credentials, employment, livable wage job  Add self-employment as a response category for Q47 and 48
<b>Increased educational opportunities for immigrants</b>	Increased # of classes at Highline College that immigrants can enroll in  Increased # of instructional offerings for immigrant K-12 families by Network members first, followed by other community organizations  Implementation of strategies to re-engage immigrant youth by Network members first, followed by other community organizations		Work with Highline College to collect data about number and type of classes (baseline and over time)  Institutional Survey (or part of Network Survey) and create a list of the types of possible instructional offerings that respondents can just check off. Ask a question about what strategies they have to engage immigrant youth or “opportunity youth”

NETWORK GOAL	OUTPUT MEASURES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOME MEASURES	DATA SOURCES
<b>Increased connectedness between immigrants and receiving community members</b>	<p># of cultural and community celebrations</p> <p>attendance at these celebrations</p>	<p>Quality of contact and interactions in cultural and community celebrations</p> <p>Perceived effectiveness of these celebrations (select sample of celebrations)</p> <p>Sense of community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership (belonging, connectedness) in community</li> <li>• Influence on what happens in community</li> <li>• Fulfillment of needs by being part of community</li> <li>• Shared emotion connection with other community members</li> </ul>	<p>Community Survey Q16, 17, 18, 19</p> <p>Select a sample of celebrations that you know ahead of time and administer a survey there.</p> <p>Sense of Community Index (attached)</p>
<b>Increased connectedness between immigrant serving institutions</b>	<p>Increase in collective data sharing and analysis; increase in collective meetings and discussion regarding immigrant issues; increased collaboration between organizations; increase in collaborative events between orgs</p>		<p>Institution Survey (or Network Survey)</p>



NETWORK GOAL	OUTPUT MEASURES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOME MEASURES	DATA SOURCES
Increased cultural responsiveness within immigrant-serving institutions	<p># of presentations, workshops, and conferences on immigrant issues held and participated in by staff</p> <p>Use of professional translation and interpretation services</p>	<p>Institutions with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Policies, procedures, and practices that are responsive to working with immigrants</li> <li>2. Staff who have the skills and other competencies to work with immigrants</li> <li>3. Relationships with immigrant led organizations and immigrant leaders</li> </ol>	<p>Institution Survey</p> <p>JourneyStart Cross-Cultural Competency Survey (attached) when institutions are READY to do it</p>
Increased connectedness and support systems between immigrants and immigrant-serving institutions	Increased awareness and knowledge among immigrants of the institutions' services	<p>Increased sense of trust among immigrants of the institutions</p> <p>Perceptions of feeling safe and respected by institutions</p>	<p>Q26 (health insurance) Q37 (early childhood services) Q45 (education) Q 57h (law enforcement) Q71 and 72</p> <p>Revise the response categories for Question 72 to get at key institutions and the sense of trust, comfort, and safety with those institutions</p>

## F. TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

### TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (TWG) MEMBERS

- 1. Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, BS**  
Senior Policy Analyst, National Skills Coalition
- 2. Laura Burdick, MSW**  
Project Coordinator/Field Support Coordinator, Catholic Legal Immigration Network
- 3. Anna Crosslin, BA**  
President and CEO, International Institute of St. Louis
- 4. Marcia Drew Hohn, EdD**  
Director (retired), Public Education Institute, Immigrant Learning Center
- 5. Claudia Green, MCP**  
Executive Director, English for New Bostonians
- 6. Kimberly Johnson, EdD**  
Program Director of Faculty and Instructional Development, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
- 7. Jon Kerr, MA**  
State Director of Adult Education, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- 8. Margie McHugh, AB**  
Co-Director, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, Migration Policy Institute
- 9. Donna Moss, MEd**  
Arlington REEP Program, Retired
- 10. Maricel Santos, EdD**  
Associate Professor of English (TESOL), San Francisco State University  
Director, Immigrant Literacies Program
- 11. Teresita Wisell, MBA**  
Executive Director, Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education  
Associate Dean, The Gateway Center, Westchester Community College
- 12. Heide Wrigley, PhD**  
President and Senior Researcher, Literacywork International

# G. STRENGTHS AND NEEDS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

## FALL 2015 NEEDS AND STRENGTHS SELF-ASSESSMENT, PART I – NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

### Purpose

The needs and strengths self-assessment provides a continuum for each network to indicate its current activities and level of functioning as a network and to aid in thinking about next steps and goals. It complements the network's Action Plan and progress reports and has two parts:

Network Development and Integration Activities. The expectation is not that the network is engaging in all the activities or has all the characteristics. The Network Development Self-Assessment is comprised of six indicators and a list of characteristics associated with each indicator. The Integration Activities Self-Assessment is comprised of five indicators and their associated activities.

### Process for using the integration activities self-assessment

A. Before arriving at the October 29-30 Institute, Network members (core or more) review the self-assessments that were submitted by the Network in April 2014. Based on a discussion of these earlier self-assessments, they complete a new set together as a group. If that is not feasible, they do so individually, and the Network Coordinator aggregates the individual ratings by category using one point for each rating. Here are suggested discussion questions:

1. Where do we note the most change since our self-assessment in April 2014?
2. Which activities are we the most proud of and why?
3. What, if anything, do we need and want to improve the most?
4. For which items do we have the greatest range of opinions? What do we make of it?
5. Did the assessment bring up new activities that the network wants to explore?

B. At the Institute, Network members discuss their progress and lessons learned in cross-network groups:

1. What are the most important developments/changes you've seen in your network's activities over the past 1.5 years?
2. What new activities are emerging as priorities? Why is that?
3. Are there any common themes that you see in your experiences across networks?

# PART I – NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Date:

Name of the network:

Name and role of individual completing self-assessment:

Contact person’s name and email:

## INDICATOR 1: PURPOSE

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	COMMENTS
a. The network members share a common purpose or mission of immigrant integration, with a focus on civic, economic, and/or linguistic integration.					
b. Network members have jointly identified strategic goals and objectives for the network related to civic, economic, and/or linguistic integration.					
c. The network members explicitly incorporate the network’s goals into their organization’s work plans.					

INDICATOR 2: LEADERSHIP

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	COMMENTS
a. The network Coordinator and core network members are knowledgeable about the role of adult immigrant education in promoting and - supporting immigrant integration.					
b. The network Coordinator and core network members have connections to and are able to foster relationships with key partners to build and strengthen the network.					



INDICATOR 3: MEMBERSHIP

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	NOT A PRIORITY	COMMENTS
a. Community or technical college(s) and work-force development program(s)						
b. Immigrant advocacy and/or mutual assistance organizations						
c. State or local government agencies						
d. Social service or civic organizations						
e. Employers, unions, or career centers						
f. Organizations that work with high-skilled immigrants						
g. Immigrants from diverse backgrounds						
h. Receiving community members						

INDICATOR 4: STRUCTURE

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	COMMENTS
a. The network has a steering committee or core planning group that convenes with sufficient frequency to develop activities and agendas, and identifies resources to support the network and/or ABE activities.					
b. The network has clear expectations of its members (e.g., roles and responsibilities, frequency of meetings, subcommittees, time commitments).					
c. The network has a mechanism in place to promote accountability and mutual information sharing and coordination among members.					
d. The network partners commit resources (e.g., staff time, funding, in-kind services) in support of the network’s goals.					

## INDICATOR 5: OPERATIONS and PERFORMANCE

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	COMMENTS
a. The network has a method of communication, such as a listserv, social media, newsletter, online calendar, that keeps members regularly updated and informed of the network's activities (including meeting agendas and minutes).					
b. The network has a decision-making process that considers divergent perspectives and encourages all members to contribute and collaborate.					
c. The network has the human, financial and institutional resources to achieve its goals.					
d. The network has a system and/or process for assessing progress and outcomes, including collecting data to determine whether it is meeting its goals.					
e. The network has used a collaborative process for determining its technical assistance needs for this initiative.					
f. The network has an action plan with clear benchmarks of progress and measures of success that demonstrate goal achievement.					
g. The network has a process of keeping abreast of current information, data, and research, policies or practices relevant to its immigrant integration goals.					

1. Are network members achieving more together than individual members can achieve on their own?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Beginning to
- ☐ Not yet
- ☐ Don't know

Please elaborate on your answer above.

2. Does your network have or need other important characteristics or face critical challenges that were not covered in the above items? If yes, please describe what they are and why they are important?

3. Do you have other comments regarding your network's development?

Adapted with permission from Indicators of Effective Community Planning for Community Adult Learning Centers prepared by Patricia Pelletier for Adult and Community Learning Services, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013 and Network Health Score Card by Network Impact, Inc.

## FALL 2015 NETWORK NEEDS AND STRENGTHS SELF-ASSESSMENT: PART II – INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES

### Purpose

The needs and strengths self-assessment provides a continuum for each network to indicate its current activities and level of functioning as a network and to aid in thinking about next steps and goals. It complements the network's Action Plan and progress reports and has two parts: Network Development and Integration Activities. The expectation is not that the network is engaging in all the activities or has all the characteristics The Network Development Self-Assessment is comprised of six indicators and a list of characteristics associated with each indicator. The Integration Activities Self-Assessment is comprised of five indicators and their associated activities.

### Process for using the integration actives self-assessment

- A. Before arriving at the October 29-30 Institute, Network members (core or more) review the self-assessments that were submitted by the Network in April 2014. Based on a discussion of these earlier self-assessments, they complete a new set together as a group. If that is not feasible, they do so individually, and the Network Coordinator aggregates the individual ratings by category using one point for each rating. Here are suggested discussion questions:
  1. Where do we note the most change since our self-assessment in April 2014?
  2. Which activities are we the most proud of and why?
  3. What, if anything, do we need and want to improve the most?
  4. For which items do we have the greatest range of opinions? What do we make of it?
  5. Did the assessment bring up new activities that the network wants to explore?
- B. At the Institute, Network members discuss their progress and lessons learned in cross-network groups:
  1. What are the most important developments/changes you've seen in your network's activities over the past 1.5 years?
  2. What new activities are emerging as priorities? Why is that?
  3. Are there any common themes that you see in your experiences across networks?



# PART II – INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES

Date:

Name of the network: Coordinator’s name and email:

Name and role of individual completing self-assessment:

## INDICATOR 1: INTAKE AND ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	NOT A PRIORITY	COMMENTS
a. Identify adults’ goals, interests, and purposes for enrolling in ESOL program at different stages of their participation in the program?						
b. Thoroughly orient adults to program purposes and services?						
c. Identify, counsel, and provide cross-agency referrals for adults eligible for citizenship?						
d. Identify, counsel, and provide cross-agency referrals for immigrants with credentials from other countries?						
e. Identify, counsel, and provide cross-agency referrals for workforce training, higher education, and social services?						

INDICATOR 2: ESOL CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	NOT A PRIORITY	COMMENTS
a. Differentiate instruction and programming based on students' levels of education, native language and/or purposes for enrolling in classes?						
b. Promote and support learner persistence?						
c. Support accelerated ESOL instruction that draws on online and/or mobile learning, tutors, or intensified hours of in-class instruction?						
d. Integrate job readiness and career planning activities into instruction?						
e. Integrate civic participation activities and opportunities for civic engagement into instruction?						
f. Teach academic English and academic skills across the levels?						

**INDICATOR 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER PATHWAYS**

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	NOT A PRIORITY	COMMENTS
a. Provide job readiness and career advising for low-skills ELLs?						
b. Provide job readiness and career advising for immigrant ELLs with professional credentials?						
c. Contextualize instruction around career sectors?						
d. Secure internships and job placements with local employers?						
e. Build and strengthen relationships with organizations that are part of the workforce development pipeline (e.g., community colleges and other workforce development providers) in order to prepare and transition students to local postsecondary education and training programs?						
f. Provide lessons and workshops on workers’ rights and responsibilities?						
g. Provide training or services for immigrant small business owners on your own or in partnership with financial institutions and other organizations?						

INDICATOR 4: CITIZENSHIP, NATURALIZATION, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	NOT A PRIORITY	COMMENTS
a. Offer citizenship preparation classes and/or tutoring?						
b. Design and teach lessons on the economic and civic benefits of citizenship?						
c. Register citizens to vote and provide non-partisan voter education?						
d. Offer leadership development activities for immigrant ELLs?						
e. Provide or link immigrants to opportunities for civic engagement?						

INDICATOR 5: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	NOT A PRIORITY	COMMENTS
a. Integrate parent engagement in children’s education into adult ESOL instruction?						
b. Provide information and build skills in financial literacy and asset development?						
c. Teach health literacy and wellness or provide services to help immigrants navigate the health system (e.g., community health navigators; medical interpreters)?						
d. Provide information about community safety and laws?						
e. Provide information about housing and homeownership?						



INDICATOR 6: RECEIVING COMMUNITIES

DOES YOUR NETWORK HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?	YES	YES, BUT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NO, BUT IS IN DEVELOPMENT	NO CAPACITY TO ADDRESS	NOT A PRIORITY	COMMENTS
a. Engage receiving communities by providing volunteer opportunities in the ESOL program or other programs that support immigrants?						
b. Provide programming that builds dialogue between US born and immigrant students?						
c. Sponsor activities that bring community members and representatives of public and non-profit agencies into the program as guest speakers, partners in celebrations, etc.?						
d. Implement a communications strategy about immigrants as assets and contributors to the larger community?						
e. Provide opportunities for receiving community members and immigrants to work together on community improvement, cultural, advocacy, or other efforts?						

Does the network have other notable activities that were not covered in the above items?

Do you have other comments?



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