

Morning Plenary: The Importance of Improving Access to Workforce Services for Immigrants and Refugees: Margie McHugh, Migration Policy Institute (National Center on Immigration Policy)

Jennifer Hernandez notes

- Goal of enrolling 500 people
- As of September 2018, 531 enrollments
 - 205 adult education enrollments
 - 547 basic career services
 - 335 supportive services
 - 283 individualized career services

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- In 2016, it felt like a large lift to understand new elements of WIOA
- Mission to connect between with refugees, immigrants, and all individuals who were basic skills deficient
- We were pushing things that were not allowed under WIA. Under WIA, people who were basic skills deficient were not intended to access workforce services
- It is great to see how California took on the challenge
- Integration and immigration are two parts of the same coin

Population and System Service Basics

- When workforce services look closely at population numbers, the opportunity populations become more apparent
- Importance of Immigrant Integration
 - Improves public health and safety
 - Strengths economics of families and communities
 - Expands civic engagement (and parent engagement), strengthens social cohesion
 - Counteracts risks to children's success
- CA's Immigrants and Refugees
 - The foreign born are
 - ½ of total population ages 16+ (10.1 million individuals)
 - More than 1/3 of California's workforce (6.6 million individuals)
 - 52% from Latin America; 37% from Asia; 7% from Europe
 - More than ¼ unauthorized (ages 16+)
 - Prioritization of service is mandatory under Title I WIOA (now includes individuals who are basic skills deficient – 2000% more than under WIA)
- Equity Gap: Small Numbers/Shares of "Priority" Clients Served

- 34% of CA foreign born (3.4 million) ages 19+ lack HSD or equivalent and are not enrolled in school; 8% native born (1.5 million)
 - 12.2% of exiters in Title I adult services lacked HSD or equivalent (3,541 individuals)
- 57% of CA foreign born ages 19+ are LEP (5.7 million); 2% of native born (471,000)
 - 3.4% of exiters in Title I adult intensive training services are LEP (908)
- Equity Gap: Even Smaller Numbers of “Hardest to Serve” Served
 - 3 million CA adults ages 19+ are LEP, lack a HSD or equivalent are not enrolled in school (62% of the state’s low-educated adults are also LEP)
 - Fewer than 500 exiters in Title I adult intensive and training services were both LEP and had no HSD or equivalent

Role of the ELL Navigator Project

- Learnings from ELL Navigator programs will be crucial to understanding and addressing
 - Practical barriers
 - Transit, childcare, etc.
 - Perceptions of potential immigrant customers
 - Systems knowledge
 - How to put this into performance measures and staffing models so they can grow
- Building program and system capacities to effectively serve immigrant (and all priority) customers
- (These are integration needs and policy concerns!) – the real bread and butter of how to weave together these disparate needs and perceptions with local populations
 - Elsewhere, no one is taking everything into account – versus taking stock of the social services system, K-12, early childcare... all the other ways you are trying to support the success of families

Structural Constraints will Need to be Addressed in Tandem

- Title I programs’ historic reliance on English and HSD or equivalent prerequisites
 - Everyone is up against a system that has been trying to do something else in many ways
 - This is a changed strategy
- Reliance on individual training accounts (ITAs)/community colleges and referrals from unemployment insurance (UI) and social services for program clients
 - Now, people are going out in the communities and finding people who are in need of these services. This is not the way that it worked in the past
 - Federal law does not anticipate RFP and other structures demand performance on a shorter timeline (e.g. one year)
 - Disjunctives between what the law envisions and what is practically possible
 - Also up against earning level performance metrics with people who are not English-language proficient

- Lack of realistic pricing structure and performance timelines for programs serving clients with multiple needs

Adult Education to the Rescue?

- WIOA Title I's automatic service priority for basic skills deficient individuals notwithstanding, adult education is the primary system relied upon to support immigrant integration
- System faces significant design weaknesses of its own when viewed through an integration lens, and new challenges under WIOA
 - Workforce performance measures applied on a mandatory basis to adult education programs
 - Those pursuing citizenship preparation, family literacy/parent engagement, or other non-employment goals have become extremely risky to serve
- If this is our major system for promoting immigrant integration, there is so much else that it needs to do. If a person needs 1000 hours to learn English, why is the system set up to only provide ~150 hours? A 5-10 year trajectory for immigrant integration and family success, need to think about what to do with that time

In Supporting Integration

- Civic, economic, and linguistic integration are vital for immigrants, but integration-focused topics are not a program focus or outcome
 - Digital literacy seem to be most missing from the value proposition in adult education when you are talking about integration
- Persistence through multi-year, multi-level ESOL and ABE class sequence is not possible for most

New Model Urgently Needed: English Public Integration (EPI)

- Challenge: Address integration needs and persistence barriers while overcoming WIOA's access and equity barriers
 - Huge challenge to connect families with young children to immigrant integration classes. People coming to classes and really doing well for one program period, but then it becomes too difficult to continue this class without the needed support, given their busy lives.
- EPI Solutions
 - Provide contextualized English acquisition support
 - Impart knowledge/skills on integration topics
 - Impart digital literacy and self-study skills
 - Support development of individual and family success plans

Expecting adult ed to completely do immigrant integration, but not validating them except for pre- and post- testing.

Implementation Opportunities

- Most immediate option in many states: reduce state overmatch in federal dollars to implement new model
- Public or private support for piloting at county or city levels
 - Good fit for “literacy zone,” Promise Neighborhood, or other collective impact models
 - Braid with large-scale citizenship promotion and/or immigration legal services initiatives
 - Use as a central element of equity-focused initiatives to provide on-ramps to career pathway models

Looking Ahead

- AB 2098: unique and important vehicle for placing integration topics and outcomes closer to the center of system designs (lever into the adult system to begin to say what outcomes should matter more broadly around integration)
- Conversations at DSS about refugee program, etc.
- Carry forward ELL Navigator Project Learnings
 - Thought leadership on system purpose, design and equity issues
 - Central relevant of navigator model for integration-focused efforts
 - Value “horizontal” challenges and learnings in particular

Questions and Answers

Neil Kelly: Regarding AB 2098 legislation on immigrant integration pathways, what are the priorities people should have when coming into this country for immigrant integration?

Margie: Topics include: how do local education systems work, housing, transportation, government, health care. All of this is becoming more complicated under the Trump Administration and some of the restrictions he is putting into effect. We do not give credit for when people think of the six performance measures that are now mandatory under Title II. About the navigator approach, how you think about these things in the context of your family is what matters. By the time someone comes to your system and is ready to commit and sign up for one of your programs, they’ve probably already thought about childcare and how that program will help get them where they need to go. The system is only serving 4% of need because it is not able to be at scale. However, if you could increase the offerings, who additionally would be able to come forward? What people often need is knowledge and navigation about how this fits in with their life and their career plans and how this fits in with their families and how to think about success for their teenagers or very young children. The navigator model is showing us that there are a lot of other things involved in terms of showing other people how the system can be useful for them. Also, the other piece is crossing over the digital divide and helping people make use of what is available online. WIOA says that people should be learning these digital skills, but there is no value (performance metrics) for teaching people these skills. Think about what this will do for families, the communities where they reside, and how this will help with Title I. Fresno was part of the Office of Career and Technical Development (?) saying adult ed is critical for immigrant integration but is can only be the

center of a broader network – e.g. social services, legal services, citizenship services, etc. It was an attempt to show adult ed plays a big role in supporting integration.

Kim Johnson: The other opportunity that comes in is that the CalWORKS program will be announced in January 2019. We are not evaluating the effect of home visits in outcomes – how visiting the CalWORKS homes that are exempt from Welfare-to-Work affects them. This program will be another opportunity to cross-over. (I couldn't hear well for this so missed some of the comment)