

ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNER WORKFORCE  
NAVIGATOR PILOT  
GRANTEE  
SELF-EVALUATION  
SUMMARY REPORT

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# Contents

- Introduction ..... 2
- Section 1: Self-Evaluation Findings ..... 3
  - Project Management ..... 3
    - Successes..... 3
    - Benefits to Customers..... 4
    - Barriers and Challenges ..... 4
    - Future Plans ..... 5
  - Customers ..... 5
    - Accomplishments..... 6
    - Benefits to Customers..... 6
    - Barriers and Challenges ..... 7
    - Future Plans ..... 7
  - Program Design..... 8
    - Accomplishments..... 8
    - Benefits to Customers..... 9
    - Barriers and Challenges ..... 9
    - Future Plans ..... 10
  - Performance Accountability ..... 10
    - Accomplishments..... 11
    - Benefits to Customers..... 11
    - Barriers and Challenges ..... 11
    - Future Plans ..... 12
  - Systems Change ..... 12
    - Accomplishments..... 12
    - Benefits to Customers..... 12
    - Barriers and Challenges ..... 13
- Analysis and Recommendations ..... 13
  - Recommendations ..... 15

## Introduction

In May 2017, five ELL Workforce Navigator Pilot Projects<sup>1</sup> were funded to implement projects that increase access, create/enhance program structure and availability, and provide supportive services within the workforce system for English language learner populations. Over the 18-month grant term, lead grantee county workforce agencies are required to collaborate with community-based organizations and other workforce partners, including adult education entities (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II and Adult Education Program<sup>2</sup> (AEP) providers), as key grant partners. Grant funds are supporting pilot sites to build workforce capacity in the following areas:

- Enhancing or establishing collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs) and other partners that can help provide supportive wrap around services for targeted English learner populations, specifically those who are among the hardest to serve.
- Creating a stronger collaboration and infrastructure to support dual enrollment or co-enrollment in WIOA Title I and Title II programs.
- Initiating systems change that begins to adapt the workforce system and make it more accessible, with no wrong door to access services for ELL individuals.
- Implementing a navigator model that can help recruit, enroll, and effectively support participants through program completion, serving as a liaison in referring and connecting participants to support services.

Pilots engaged in a Self-Evaluation Assessment process between May and June 2018. The self-evaluation assessment was intended to help teams of lead grantees and named grant partners to: 1) reflect on work plan implementation and progress toward pilot goals; 2) identify next steps and resource requirements; and 3) develop an action plan to refine current practices and sustain pilot activities beyond the grant term. The tool led grantees through a gap analysis approach to assessing five key domains of project activity to help them compare actual to target performance, analyze organizational processes based on strategic goals, assess service quality, and refine implementation strategies, as needed. A copy of the tool is attached as Appendix A.

This report summarizes responses submitted by four of the five the pilot sites.<sup>3</sup> It is organized into two main sections. Section 1 reports findings from grantees' self-evaluation reports on key EL Workforce Navigator program elements and activities: project management, customers, program design, data, and systems change. A subsection on key program element reports accomplishments and practices that have a positive impact on outcomes for English learners, common challenges, and plans for the future. The second section offers an analysis of grantees responses and recommendations policy makers can take to support and extend replication of the workforce navigator model and long-term system change.

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<sup>1</sup> Sites and lead grantees: Sacramento County, Sacramento Employment and Training Agency; Madera and Fresno Counties, Madera County Workforce Investment Corporation; Orange County, Orange County Workforce Investment Board; Long Beach, Pacific Gateway; and San Diego, San Diego Workforce Partnership.

<sup>2</sup> Formerly Adult Education Block Grant

<sup>3</sup> The Pacific Gateway team did not fully complete the self-evaluation tool. Their submission included meeting notes rather than responses to questions, no action plans, and completed rating tables showing that, of 26 possible indicators, the following three (3) had been fully implemented: a regular partner meeting schedule, knowledge of the target population, development of a desired "user-experience" for customers). Due to delays in making progress and insufficient information, this report does not include data from the Pacific Gateway pilot site.

## Section 1: Self-Evaluation Findings

This section reports grantees' responses to the Self-Evaluation Tool in Appendix A.

### Project Management

Grantee teams<sup>4</sup> reported that all key project management activities are in place, including collaborating with key pilot partners (workforce, education, community organizations) to establish a vision and goals for the pilot, conducting partner meetings on a regular schedule, and maintaining active and positive communications according to agreed-upon protocols and processes. They reported partners are clear about their roles and responsibilities and collaborating in executing them according to a jointly developed work plan.

### Successes

Pilots reported that implementing the navigator model helped to deepen existing partnerships. For example, because WIOA Title II adult education partners were closely involved in program development and participated in regular partner meetings, grantees reported they learned how to work more collaboratively and include one another in work processes and communications to ensure the success of the pilot.

Grantees developed new collaborative relationships with partners that have not previously or traditionally been engaged in providing workforce services. New partnerships included relationships with immigration service agencies funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), family resource agencies, and organizations on the California Employment Development Department (EDD) Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The benefits of these partnerships included building capacity to provide new practices and services, both onsite at AJCCs and in coordination with partner agencies, including:

- Citizenship and immigration focused resources;
- ESL courses at AJCCs, including open entry/open exit and summer sessions, and at other locations, such as family resource centers and CBOs;
- In-depth needs assessments that explore a broad range of life domains and possible needs that may present barriers to participation in workforce services; and,
- Additional case management support.

Grantees also reported that stronger partnerships helped them build capacity to streamline and coordinate services. Several reported that convening Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) helped to create, and benefitted from, strong networks of partners. In each pilot, navigators assemble a multi-disciplinary team around each customer, pulling resources into the AJCC and facilitating collaboration among WIOA mandated and other external partners to help customers identify and overcome hurdles that can prevent them from reaching their goals.

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<sup>4</sup> Hereafter, grantees.

## Benefits to Customers

Pilots reported these practices are creating a “no wrong door” pathway to services for EL Navigator customers, including individuals who may lack work authorization. Building capacity for staff to make referrals to valuable, trustworthy community resources and follow up to ensure that those referred received the intended services and resources is helping to foster a welcoming organizational culture within the AJCCs that is respectful and inclusive of immigrant and refugee English learners. Offering ESL courses at AJCCs and in other locations convenient to customers (e.g., CBOs, Family Resource Centers) has directly improved access to WIOA services for English learners and has also connected them to resources at the AJCC.

Grantees also reported the additional support EL Navigator customers receive has helped them understand and fulfill all service/program requirements and learn how to navigate through the workforce system to locate education, employment and career opportunities that can help them to become self-sufficient. A multi-partner, multi-agency approach streamlines and clarifies this process, helps customers address barriers, and provides a clearer path for clients to be successful.

## Barriers and Challenges

All grantees described challenges related to learning how WIOA Title I and WIOA Title II partners might work together and coordinate services around customer needs, goals and outcomes. They noted challenges in making sure every partner understands their role *as well as the roles of other partners* in serving English learners and maintaining open communication about customers’ services, progress and needs. This challenge affects all project staff working in different roles across partnering organizations. For example, because workforce development boards, adult schools and CBOs have different administrative, service and performance responsibilities, as do the staff within each organization, communicating and clarifying expectations at direct service, management, and executive levels is critical to planning, implementing and maintaining strategies to recruit partners and customers, determine eligibility across multiple programs, and provide services that are individualized yet well-coordinated at a program level and likely to meet project performance metrics.

*The challenge is making sure every partner is at an understanding of their role in serving the ELL population and maintaining open communication about the customers’ services/needs.*  
San Diego

Some pilots discussed challenges related to a lack of clarity about the status of state policy guidance regarding enrolling, serving and referring individuals who may not have authorization to work. This lack of clarity is experienced by some pilot partners as conflicting messages regarding whether, when and how a person without a social security number or authorization to work can be served under WIOA Title I. Pilots also cited federal policies affecting the status of immigrants in the U.S. as contributing to challenges to collaboration with partners and attainment of project goals like building referral networks to connect prospective and existing customers to wraparound services.

Further, grantees serving communities with (potentially) large numbers of undocumented immigrants noted the availability and capacity of community-based immigrant-serving organizations is limited; that is, there are relatively few CBOs providing immigration and other services that might help

provide wraparound supports to meet the needs of customers eligible or potentially eligible to receive services under WIOA.

Grantees reported these additional challenges related to resources:

- Demand is greater than pilot capacity: the need for services and the level [intensity/frequency] of services needed exceed funded service levels.
- Limits on access to adult education programs: Insufficient funding and other resources to support year-round ESL and HiSET instruction.
- Insufficient time: Although staff is better equipped to serve immigrant English learners, 18 months [the grant term] is not sufficient time to show results and the effectiveness of the pilot project.

## Future Plans

Pilots are planning to continue to build stronger partnerships and programmatic connections between workforce, education and community-based organizations to increase enrollments and co-enrollments in Title I and Title II programs for English learners. They also plan to increase and or enhance partnerships and collaborations with partner organizations that have not traditionally been connected to WIOA systems, particularly with immigration services organizations, to braid services. Additional specific programmatic strategies include supporting year-round ESL and HiSET classes, establishing and improving lines of communication, and co-locating staff.

Some pilots plan to pursue AEP funds to support dedicated staff who can serve as a liaison between the AJCC, adult education providers, regional partners and community-based organizations. They plan to use AEP and other funding to hire marketing and outreach specialists to develop and implement a regional targeted outreach strategy for English learners to encourage them enroll in WIOA-funded ESL class at AJCCs. They plan to pursue these and other strategies through Adult Education Program and WIOA regional planning processes.

Some workforce boards, as lead grantees, plan to provide technical assistance, support, and formal training to partner organizations, and peer mentoring by the ELL Navigators to support practical application of knowledge in how to serve immigrant and refugee English learners. Pilots are also planning to scale and replicate this program, pending availability of funds, as well as use it as a model for building co-enrollments between the youth and adult WIOA programs.

## Customers

Pilots reported having a clear understanding of targeted/potentially eligible English learner customers, common barriers that hinder their completion of workforce programs, and the most frequently needed support services. Grantees employed human-centered design principles to design a desired 'user experience' for customers receiving navigator services, and integrated elements of that user experience in their program design. Despite some challenges, customer outreach strategies are working well, and grantees have implemented strategies to deliver culturally competent, strengths-based, and English learner-friendly customer service.

## Accomplishments

Grantees reported this pilot project helped create or enhance a focus on serving English learners within the workforce development system. They cite building on existing partnerships with community-based organizations as key to locating English learners; learning about the cultures in which English learners live and the challenges they face in integrating into US society; leveraging available resources; and to applying best practices to improve engagement and services for adult English learners. Grantees implemented targeted outreach at locations where English learners shop, socialize, and receive other services; for example, at swap meets, health care centers, migrant Head Start centers, family resource centers, convenience and grocery stores, laundromats, churches, and other neighborhood locations.

*In essence, staff understands characteristics and key attributes of the target populations, which has multiplied the trust between staff and participants, and staff and the community.*  
Madera

Pilots reported that conducting culturally competent outreach helped to develop staff self-awareness and a better understanding of English learners' unique needs and barriers. Navigators, many of whom are immigrants and/or refugees and/or English learners, also use their social networks to identify opportunities to connect with potentially eligible customers in their home communities to promote pilot project services. Grantees report that all pilot staff, particularly English learner and bilingual/bi-cultural staff, understand, communicate and interact with people

across cultures in a thoughtful and effective manner.

Other practices pilots cite as having increased the cultural competence of staff include:

- Co-locating EL Navigators employed by WIOA and/or adult school providers on-site at AJCCs.
- In pilots where navigators are placed in more than one partner agency (i.e., adult schools and CBOs, adult schools and AJCCs, CBOs and AJCCs), both navigators assist customers at the intake/enrollment stage to conduct a thorough assessment for both organizations. This allows them to identify stages within the program where the participant may need more supportive services.
- Integrating welfare-to-work services at AJCCs, as many people participating in CalWORKS programs are English learners.
- Connecting EL Navigator customers with Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs.
- Offering digital literacy resources in the AJCC resource room, particularly for those who are not eligible for WIOA Title I services.
- Regularly updating and translating into multiple languages all print materials, including advertisements, brochures from organizations serving English learners and immigration services agencies, and displaying these in lobbies, classrooms and AJCC resource rooms.

## Benefits to Customers

Pilots reported their efforts to tailor outreach and services to targeted communities of English learners is creating a welcoming environment [at AJCCs] in which people across cultures feel valued and included. A community-based approach that connects staff with participants in a location they already

frequent and dedicated navigator staff help to ensure high-quality services in the AJCC, and helps English learners become less reluctant to participate in and/or inquire about WIOA services. Further, leveraging existing and new partnerships allows grantees to provide integrated, easily accessible, and holistic supportive services that are delivered in culturally and linguistically accessible formats. Grant resources also support pilots in offering seamless access to a broader variety of short-term vocational training, contextualized remedial skill development, and career pathway bridge programs than are traditionally accessed through the AJCC system.

## Barriers and Challenges

Several pilots are facing challenges as they develop strategies to connect with and serve undocumented individuals to bring them into the AJCC system. They report a need for extensive community-level outreach and education to help English learners develop a basic awareness of what a career center is, the services available to them, how the services can be helpful, and how to access services. They note most people referred by partner organizations are not eligible for WIOA Title I services and lingering misinformation/misunderstanding among staff in both WIOA Title I and WIOA Title II programs regarding how to best provide workforce development services to individuals without social security numbers. Despite targeted outreach efforts, they also report low levels of commitment and referrals from community organizations serving English learners. Working with undocumented individuals who cannot enroll in WIOA Title I while still meeting performance outcomes presents a significant challenge, particularly within the term of the EL Navigator Pilot Project grant.

Additional challenges include:

- A lack of resources available to serve this population, such as immigration services, Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs in a variety of fields and locations, funding for year-round ESL and HiSET classes, as well as ongoing navigator operations.
- Difficulty sustaining customer commitment and follow-through, as most work – often in in physically demanding (e.g. agricultural) jobs - to support their families.
- Identifying and implementing best practices to serve English learners with professional/advanced degrees from their home countries.
- In some pilots, despite a high volume of referrals, low eligibility levels resulted in under-enrollment in ESL classes, which is not sustainable.
- A need for collaboration and peer mentorship between ELL Navigators and adult education providers to learn more about programs in place and to explore new opportunities.

## Future Plans

Grantees plan to focus on strengthening buy-in and partnerships with CBOs to develop effective outreach materials and strategies; expand language translation options within AJCCs; increase referrals; improve coordination of services; and expand education, training, and employment opportunities for individuals who face substantial cultural and language barriers to employment. They are enhancing training for AJCC staff in ways to better to identify and meet English learners' needs; some plan to collaborate with WIOA Title II partners to plan and conduct cross-training for AJCC staff.

Some pilots reported they plan to co-locate navigators on adult school campuses and focus on ways to make better use of resources available through adult education partners. For example, WIOA Title II offers state-approved curricula focused on work readiness for English learners. These Civic Objectives and Additional Assessment Plans (COAAPs) classes could be offered in addition to ESL classes at the AJCCs. While the COAAPs curricula need to be updated, ESL instructors at WIOA Title II providers are already conducting workshops that can be further developed and offered at AJCCs. Offering work readiness classes designed for English learners will increase their work readiness skills and confidence to access services from the AJCC. Finally, in Sacramento, EL Navigators are now expanding their efforts to place customers in IET, to fast track progress and success towards each customer’s employment goals.

## Program Design

The pilots have operationalized and fully implemented almost every key component of a workforce navigator model. Fully operational elements include outreach and engagement; needs/eligibility assessment; referrals and follow up (warm hand off); co-enrollment; shared case management systems; and tools and protocols to support service delivery and program management. Pilots have implemented the following elements with work still in progress: scaffolded and integrated instruction, employer engagement strategies, and aligning the program design to a career pathways framework.

## Accomplishments

Pilots reported making significant progress implementing key elements of the navigator program model, attributing their success to forging deeper collaboration between WIOA Title I and Title II services and with CBOs. This collaboration enables partners to provide continuity in case management as English learner customers advance through education and transition into job search and employment activities. Navigators provide case management support to customers enrolled in Adult Basic Education, beginning ESL, and high school completion and equivalency classes, continue to work with them as they transition into vocational training, job readiness, job search, and coach and mentor them as they ultimately progress to placement and retention in employment. This continuity of service and support is crucial to assisting customers in seamlessly navigating complex education and workforce systems.

*The addition of ELL Navigators expanded the network of service providers in the county that are able to serve the Refugee/SIV/Asylee population, and expanded services available in the job centers for all immigrants and refugees. Sacramento*

Pilots are working with existing partners to identify areas where alignment across programs and services organically exists, such as client eligibility and intake processes and administering assessments, and then working with those same partners on areas where alignment doesn’t currently exist but appears feasible. Some grantees reported they are much more confident in developing career pathway opportunities through connecting employers and vocational training providers they partner with in CalWORKs programs. Deepening these partnerships to create customized education and employment opportunities for English learners is a shift in their approach to partnership development and collaboration is benefitting their program. In addition to co-enrolling clients in WIOA Title I and II and partnering with CalWORKs providers, pilots are also leveraging opportunities to co-enroll customers in other federal, state, and local funded programs to maximize service dollars and program reach, such as Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) programs.

Other strategies pilots are pursuing to build out their program design include:

- Identifying Integrated Education and Training (IET) opportunities offered by WIOA Title II and Adult Education Block Grant (AEP) providers that integrate and embed ABE and ASE with vocational skills training to accelerate participant success.
- Funding translation and evaluation of foreign degrees and credentials to mitigate the burden of out-of-pocket expense and delay in repayment that typically accompanies a supportive service. Participants aren't forced to make a choice between purchasing groceries, rent, utilities, etc., or paying the cost of the translation and evaluation of their degree/credential.
- Offering bridge programming in which English learners begin by enrolling into a WIOA II Integrated English Learner Civics program where they are concurrently enrolled in occupational skills training with real-time weekly contextualized support. This design allows clients to ease into occupational skills training by learning the prerequisite foundational and training skills that will enable them to be successful. In addition, the ELL Navigator team provides holistic support which includes financial coaching, supportive services, mental and behavioral health, job training, and immigration services.

### Benefits to Customers

*We were able to establish a setting in a vocational training institution that included access to instructors who spoke the languages of our participants. This was huge for us, as the medical field can often deter English Language Learners because of the medical terminology. We were able to strengthen our partnership with the provider and, as a result, we were able to provide a better opportunity for our participants.*  
Orange

The multi-layered elements of the workforce navigator program design improve coordination, delivery and quality of services, and helps to connect customers to valuable and trustworthy resources, including citizenship/DACA workshops, job/health/resource fairs, and a complete range of services across WIOA Title I and Title II programs. Customers also benefit from pilots' efforts to address existing and potential barriers prior to seeking AJCC services. As most barriers are related to language ability, providing support from CBOs and adult education through in-language services (e.g., VESL) while simultaneously searching for training programs in the AJCC helps to retain customers and accelerate their progress through services. Offering ways to accelerate successful attainment of customer goals is extremely important because time is money for adult learners.

### Barriers and Challenges

Pilots cited a lack of employer engagement, buy-in and willingness to hire English learners and those who are in programs to build basic skills as a major challenge. Another challenge is developing strategies to achieve service coordination and streamline access to comprehensive services among a variety of partners. Every employer, every partner, every WIOA Title I and Title II provider are unique. With so many different players in a single service delivery model, it can be difficult to coordinate services and create career pathway opportunities. One pilot described a need to develop a single AJCC provider model for English learner programs across an entire region.

Some pilots suggested that focusing on a relatively narrow segment of the potentially eligible English learner population contributed to challenges, such as under-enrolled ESL classes. The ability for pilots to access and leverage training dollars at the AJCC for special populations is limited and performance goals had been set against a baseline of adults that already speak English prior to the grant awards. This presented constraints on creativity with respect to program design supporting the “hardest to serve” and those who have the lowest levels of English proficiency.

Other challenges pilots reported include the absence of or limitations on mechanisms to share data and track co-enrollments between WIOA Title I and WIOA Title II, lack of access to CalJOBS by WIOA Title II staff to enter data on registered students, and different eligibility requirements across agencies.

## Future Plans

Grantees are planning to continue outreach and engagement, referral, and co-case management services, as well as to increase and expand career and employment opportunities for English learners. They report continued outreach and engagement is a key step in gathering and sharing information with communities to build awareness among target populations, strengthen partnerships and help shape service strategies. They would like to create new and additional career pathway opportunities through strengthened relationships with employers and WIOA Title II providers in their regions. Some plan to launch sector-based meetings or roundtable discussions with employers, WIOA Title II providers, and vocational training providers, to increase understanding of skills employers are seeking and the talents English learners offer. These important discussions can help partners to create a cohesive plan to ensure the services available to English learners will result in successful outcomes.

Some described a need to conduct an extensive needs assessment and resource mapping process focused on English learners that includes information on the educational levels of English learners, career pathways of interest, and whether/from where English learners are accessing workforce and/or supportive services. A crosswalk of services could then be created to identify overlaps and gaps in services between WIOA Title I, WIOA Title II, contracted providers, regional partners and other CBOs that serve English learners. Some noted a need for an ad-hoc committee to carry this type of work forward into the upcoming regional WIOA and AEP planning processes.

Other plans in development include:

- Providing access and training on CalJOBS to key WIOA Title II and/or AEP consortia staff to better track co-enrollments, facilitate data sharing, and inform strategies to achieve shared WIOA performance indicators.
- Build community sustainability and referral networks with the regional AJCC.
- Build capacity to resolve confusion/silos related to differences in performance standards/measures, assessments and ways to determine English proficiency across systems.

## Performance Accountability

All pilot staff responsible for data entry and reporting are trained in their respective systems and on data requirements for the EL Navigator Pilot. Data are being captured and reported by all key grant

partners, and data on individual customers is shared by all key pilot partners at service and management levels. Grantees reported partners are using data on pilot participants for quality improvement/program design and to inform discussions on sustainability and scaling.

### Accomplishments

Generally, data entry practices are a strong point for all grant partners. Grantees reported they are more effectively capturing co-enrollment in WIOA Title II programs, such as ESL, Adult Basic Education, and high school completion or equivalency, in CalJOBS. Most grantees created additional tools, some quite extensive, to track client progress, and capture data on individual service offerings and demographic information that is currently not possible to capture in CalJOBS. Some pilots are investigating third-party data solutions that combine datasets from different partners in a single platform. Currently, Madera and Fresno staff are receiving training in CommunityPro and CalJOBS. This will help staff to capture and share valuable data, including specific referral service codes and incoming/outgoing referrals.

### Benefits to Customers

Capturing data on key co-enrollment service milestones helps partners to deliver coordinated, cost-effective and seamless services, and is very important to ensuring that customers are connected to and participating in all the resources they need to succeed. In addition, staff familiar with data entry requirements and systems can focus more on direct services to participants rather than focusing on administrative duties. Capturing data and tracking customers' progress through an education program, such as ESL, and other individual service segments in tools outside of CalJOBS positions partners to make adjustments to customer service plans, better align services and resources that may be needed, and make educated decisions and recommendations to improve service delivery and program effectiveness.

### Barriers and Challenges

Grantees reported that limitations and ongoing changes in the functionality of the CalJOBS and TE data systems, as well as partners' lack of knowledge regarding data captured in these two systems complicates data sharing and data use. In addition to providing training and support in these systems to newly hired pilot staff, they identified a need to provide cross-training to all partner staff. Measures of success, accountability, and funding models are different for WIOA Title II and WIOA Title I, and key project staff would benefit from such training to better align systems and achieve shared performance indicators.

Other challenges cited by grantees include:

- Lack of interoperability across state data systems.
- Co-enrollments were not supported by the CalJOBS system and performance.
- Securing partner buy-in to use CalJOBS for participant tracking.
- A need to make progress on sharing information with partners.
- The grant term is too short to effectively capture data on all WIOA performance metrics, specifically on exits and placement into employment which may occur after the grant ends.

## Future Plans

Grantees plan to focus on ensuring data quality (accuracy and completeness) through ongoing training and support. Some grantees reported they plan to develop a strategy to issue a CalJOBS pseudo-SSN to adult education students who don't have a SSN to improve referral, co-enrollment and tracking processes across data systems, and to determine how WIOA Title II students without a SSN can be issued an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). They also plan to pursue funding to implement long-term programs with a navigator program design to continue to gather data that can demonstrate the effectiveness of this program model.

## Systems Change

Grantees reported partners have a clear vision for change at the systems level needed to reach pilot goals, including “no wrong door” access to services; co-enrollment/dual enrollment in Title I and II; and increased access to supportive services. They are planning and seeking opportunities to institutionalize the navigator model. They have developed structures (partnerships, resources, staff) and capacity (e.g., training, supervision, tools) to support systemic change.

## Accomplishments

Grantees referred to many of the achievements discussed in previous sections of this report when describing their success in expanding and enhancing services for English learners and building capacity for lasting systemic change. These include:

- Closer and deeper collaborative partnerships across WIOA programs and CBOs.
- Co-located navigator staff.
- More thorough/comprehensive assessment practices.
- Increased capacity to identify major language and cultural challenges presenting barriers to employment and education.
- Collaborative case planning processes, such as IRTs.
- Collaborative referral processes.
- Improved customer access to supportive services.
- Personalized customer assistance and case management to support enrollment, retention and completion.
- Co-enrollment in any combination of services available under partner programs that will help customers reach their goals.

Lead grantees (workforce development agencies) also reported providing ongoing training and support to pilot staff, expanding training to other case managers to increase their capacity to serve the ELL population, and cross training AJCC and adult education staff to provide services similar to those offered through the pilot project.

## Benefits to Customers

Grantees report their pilots are improving services and the customer experience for English learners, especially for those co-enrolled in WIOA Title I and WIOA Title II programs, by creating

universal access to workforce system services and resources in a coordinated way. Systemic change is being achieved through facilitating communication across multiple partners and sectors, and ensuring customers receive personalized and ongoing case management across WIOA programs and referrals to support services not previously connected to the workforce development system.

## Barriers and Challenges

Some grantees report that while targeted outreach efforts were implemented to connect with regional nonprofit, private and government agencies, the volume of pilot project referrals from these contacts remains low. The majority of referrals come from within the grantee partner agencies. They noted a lack of support and buy-in from nonprofit, private and government agencies and that individuals and organizations continue to work in silos.

Some grantees describe the nature of the gap as a function of WIOA Title I and Title II providers having different programmatic areas of focus and separate mandates and outcomes. While workforce organizations and adult education providers partner with one another, collaboration does not always involve coordinated case management and services. Workforce areas and adult education providers do not share tracking methods and it is rare, outside of this pilot, for a client's progress to be tracked through the course of both programs in a holistic way.

Additional challenges grantees reported include: the lack of funding outside of the pilot project to support the additional staff needed to execute key elements of the navigator model and to develop/support plans for long-term sustainability.

## *Future Plans*

Grantees reported they will continue to work toward increasing collaboration and aligning work processes and resources to coordinate services and case management support for English learners. Grantees plan to increase dual enrollments/co-enrollments and referrals to community-based organizations to achieve WIOA outcomes across both Title II and Title I. They also plan to continue targeted outreach efforts and seek buy-in and commitments from CBOs and other partner agencies that can help provide supportive services. Specific strategies include holding regular meetings with potential partners, employers and other stakeholders; sharing data on outcomes and skills gains achieved through the program and developing additional marketing materials and media promotions.

Grantees also plan to pursue strategies to co-locate WIOA Title I and Title II staff at both AJCCs and adult education campuses. They plan to work with project partners to identify funding that might be available for continued service delivery and re-evaluate current contract performance metrics to include services to immigrants/refugees and/or English learners. They are working to develop policy and procedures to sustain the program and replicate it in other service areas within their regions.

## Analysis and Recommendations

WIOA mandates important changes that affect all organizations and stakeholders with a role in providing education and training services in the workforce development system. It requires partnerships across WIOA Titles and with public and private agencies supported by other funding to improve service

quality and outcomes, and a priority for service for groups in society that have historically experienced challenges to accessing and/or succeeding in services. The English Language Learner Pilot Project charged grantees to implement a navigation model to engage and serve a large and growing segment of California's workforce that has historically been under-represented in workforce development services provided under WIOA Title I yet has been a core customer base of education and training provided under WIOA Title II.

While grantees' individual program designs varied, they each implemented a navigator model to recruit, enroll, and support participants and initiated shifts in practice to change the workforce development system. Key findings from grantees' self-assessments show that deepening existing partnerships and forming referral and service relationships with organizations that have not traditionally been linked to the workforce development system helps to promote alignment and co-enrollment across services offered under WIOA, and between WIOA services and those provided by other public agencies and community-based organizations. Findings also demonstrate that navigation is a multi-layered, multi-dimensional activity that must be supported within and across systems.

Specifically, individuals that serve as navigators successfully engage English learners because they possess language ability, cultural knowledge and a deep understanding of the communities from which customers are recruited. Navigators' ability to engage English learners in community settings to help them understand the types of support available through the workforce development system factored heavily in successful outreach strategies. Navigators also successfully engage their peers in WIOA Title I and II services and across other service systems to provide information about services available to English learners, co-enroll customers in services, develop individualized plans to help customers achieve clearly defined goals, and provide collaborative, ongoing, individualized case management so that customers can be successful in every segment of their service plans. Further, grantees developed capacity within their organizations to support navigators, creating and leveraging institutional relationships, program, training, financial and other resources to facilitate navigators' success and ensure their experiences are translated in to lessons that can be spread and scaled.

Yet achieving alignment across systems and supporting co-enrollment through deeper and more extensive networks of partnerships and navigation support is challenging for several reasons. Learning about resources available through other service systems as well as specific eligibility criteria, practice strategies and outcome requirements takes time, as does building trust and confidence that shared customer needs will be met in a coordinated manner and will result in positive outcomes. Some grantees reported challenges such as lingering confusion regarding services available to English learners across WIOA Titles and gaining commitments and support from partners to serve English learners. These challenges are related to policy constraints on providing job training and employment services to individuals who are not U.S citizens and lack authorization to work in America, as well as funding constraints that limit the scope and depth of services available within the term of the pilot, gaps in services in WIOA and in partners' systems, and significant demand for services by individuals with substantial language and cultural barriers that hinder their ability to effectively participate in services and obtain employment.

Grantees' experience informed state action to clarify policy and procedures regarding verifying authorization to work and making services accessible to all populations. The draft policy guidance titled *Pathways to Services, Enrollment and Referral*, though not final as of this writing, aims to offer greater

clarity and flexibility to local areas in how and when documentation of authorization to work is required to receive services under WIOA Title I. While the policy guidance, when approved, may help clarify services that can be made available to all populations, findings from grantees' reports show that resources to serve English learners in seamless transitions between Title I and Title II services are still under development and limited in scope, and that ongoing training and technical support will be needed to address confusion, concerns and misinformation creating barriers to productive partnerships.

Additional state-level and local challenges that must be addressed to support co-enrollment and service alignment to meet the needs of immigrant English learners include developing the capacity to track customers across separate data systems - for example, through assigning individual customer identifiers to ensure seamless reporting across funding streams and service systems - and increasing clarity around performance reporting across Title II and Title I programs. As current performance targets drive funding allocations and are based on historical data that doesn't include hard-to-serve populations like English learners, this will affect funding allocation well into the future. To interrupt a cycle of services driven by performance targets based on historically inequitable resource allocations, the state must invest additional resources, like the English Language Learner Pilot project, to help local boards test new practice models and pave the way for sustainable, systemic change.

Finally, there is tremendous need for state level investments in professional learning and cross-training for staff in WIOA Title I and II – from executive to direct service staff – as well as for partners in public and community agencies on services for immigrant English learners available through all WIOA titles and mandated/community partner organizations. Collaboration between the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, California Workforce Development Board, California Department of Education, California Community College Chancellors Office and California Department of Social Services in the form of targeted funding, training, and implementation support is critical to continuing to build on and spread lessons from this pilot.

## Recommendations

The following specific suggestions are actions policy makers might take to support long-term implementation of navigator models for English learners across the state.

### **Technical Assistance and Support:**

- Develop a “Start-up Guide” or a “Fact Sheet” on how to create and sustain this type of program. Such a resource could include suggested key partners, best practices, timelines to guide phases of program development and implementation, and other helpful information and important steps to follow.
- Support an initiative to help local areas engage employers, to create more career pathways opportunities for English learners.
- Develop resources that support collaboration and peer mentorship between navigators, workforce development and adult education providers, with a focus on increasing access to IETs for English learners.
- Explore ways to leverage COAAPS to accelerate learning and to increase job readiness support provide to English learners funded by Title II resources in the adult education system.

**Policy Guidance:**

- Clarify state policy on Pathways to Services, referrals, and co-enrollment, and provide examples of best practices that tailor services to English learners with different barriers and varying levels of need.
- Many English learners are reluctant to seek services at an AJCC because they are undocumented. Have WIOA Title II ESL classes approved by welfare-to-work and social services programs so that more of their existing clients may be referred to WIOA Title II – and, possibly, Title I services.
- Adults (special populations) should be able to exit the program prior to being employed; employment could happen in the follow up period (as for youth).

**Funding:**

- Although staff is better equipped to serve the ELL population, the 18-month grant term is not sufficient time to demonstrate results working with this “hard to serve” population and the potential effectiveness of the pilot project. Extending the term of the pilot project grant would be beneficial for workforce, partner agencies and customers. Additional funding to support this work.
- Allocate more funding to local areas to implement long-term programs with this program design.

**Data and Evaluation:**

- Improve functionality of state data systems.
- Continue to assess the growth, development, successes, and challenges of implementing the ELL Navigator Pilot Project.

## APPENDIX A

### EL Navigator Self-Evaluation Tool

1. Project Management			
Elements	Status		
	In Place	Progress	Not Yet
Key pilot partners (workforce, education, community organizations) are clear on vision/goals for pilot			
Partners meet together on a regular schedule to discuss pilot			
Communication flows and protocols work well			
Partners are clear about their roles and responsibilities			
Partners collaborate in executing roles and responsibilities			
Partners have developed a joint detailed work plan through the end of the grant term			

1. **What is the status?**
  - a. How has your practice changed since you launched the pilot? What do you do differently now?
  - b. How does this/these change/s improve access and outcomes for English learners?
  
2. **What is the goal, capacity, or target you'd like to reach in this area?**
  
3. **What is the gap?**
  - a. How would you define the nature of the challenge (the "symptom" or "issue") and the cause?
  - b. What does the challenge look like from the perspective of each grant partner?
  
4. **What are possible solutions?**
  - a. What concrete steps will help close the gap?
  - b. Why is this step important and how quickly should it be implemented?
  - c. Who will lead/own the work?
  - d. What resources are needed to implement the action step? Are resources currently available?

Action	Owner	Priority H M L	Resources Y N


<b>2. Customers</b>			
<b>Elements</b>	<b>Status</b>		
	<b>In Place</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>
Have clear understanding of targeted/potentially eligible EL customers interested in/in need of EL Navigator services			
Outreach strategies are working well			
Implemented strategies for culturally competent, strengths-based, and ELL friendly customer service			
Identified common barriers to completion of workforce training programs experienced by ELL customers (most frequently needed support services)			
Described desired 'user experience' of customers			
Integrated elements of user experience in program design			

5. **What is the status?**
  - a. **How has your practice changed since you launched the pilot? What do you differently now?**
  - b. **How does this/these change/s improve access and outcomes for English learners?**
  
6. **What is the goal, capacity, or target you'd like to reach in this area?**
  
7. **What is the gap?**
  - a. **How would you define the nature of the gap (the "symptom" or "issue") and the cause?**
  - b. **What does the gap look like from the perspective of each grant partner?**
  
8. **What are possible solutions?**
  - a. **What concrete steps will help close the gap?**
  - b. **Why is this step important and how quickly should it be implemented?**
  - c. **Who will lead/own the work?**
  - d. **What resources are needed to implement the action step? Are resources currently available?**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Priority H M L</b>	<b>Resources Y N</b>
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<b>3. Program Design</b>			
<b>Elements</b>	<b>Status</b>		
	<b>In Place</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>
Navigators are hired, in place, and trained			
Navigators’ job descriptions, functions, and support needs are assessed periodically to determine need for refinement			
Articulated and implemented program design in a career pathways framework 1) Sector focus 2) Pathway (connected educational components) 3) Partners 4) Instructional strategies (i.e., contextualized instruction, dual enrollment, competency-based education, work-based learning, integrated education and training) 5) Support service strategies 6) Ongoing assessment and data collection			
Operationalized/Implemented key elements of ELL Navigator program design: 1) Outreach and engagement 2) Needs/Eligibility Assessment 3) Referrals and follow up (warm hand off) 4) Co-enrollment 5) Shared case management system 6) Scaffolded and integrated instructional strategies 7) Employer engagement			
Developed tools and protocols to support practice and full implementation for all program design elements			

**9. What is the status?**

- a. How has your practice changed since you launched the pilot? What do you differently now?
- b. How does this/these change/s improve access and outcomes for English learners?

**10. What is the goal, capacity, or target you’d like to reach in this area?**

**11. What is the gap?**

- a. How would you define the nature of the gap (the “symptom” or “issue”) and the cause?
- b. What does the gap look like from the perspective of each grant partner?

**12. What are possible solutions?**

- a. What concrete steps will help close the gap?
- b. Why is this step important and how quickly should it be implemented?
- c. Who will lead/own the work?
- d. What resources are needed to implement the action step? Are resources currently available?

Action	Owner	Priority	Resources
		H M L	Y N

**4. Performance Accountability and Quality Improvement**

Elements	Status		
	In Place	Progress	Not Yet
All staff responsible for data entry and reporting (navigators, case managers, intake, TE, CalJOBS, etc.) are in place			
All staff responsible for data entry and reporting are trained in their respective systems and on data requirements for the EL Navigator Pilot			
Data on pilot participants are being captured and reported by all key grant partners			
Data on pilot participants are shared by all key grant partners at service and management levels			
Data on pilot participants is used by all key grant partners for quality improvement/program design			
Data on pilot participants is used to inform discussions on sustainability and scaling			

**13. What is the status?**

- a. How has your practice changed since you launched the pilot? What do you do differently now?
- b. How does this/these change/s improve access and outcomes for English learners?

**14. What is the goal, capacity, or target you’d like to reach in this area?**

**15. What is the gap?**

- a. How would you define the nature of the gap (the “symptom” or “issue”) and the cause?
- b. What does the gap look like from the perspective of each grant partner?

**16. What are possible solutions?**

- a. What concrete steps will help close the gap?
- b. Why is this step important and how quickly should it be implemented?
- c. Who will lead/own the work?
- d. What resources are needed to implement the action step? Are resources currently available?

Action	Owner	Priority	Resources
		H M L	Y N

5. Systems Change			
Elements	Status		
	In Place	Progress	Not Yet
Grant partners have a clear vision for change at the systems level needed to reach pilot goals			
The change process is well-defined at the systems level in terms of strategy/processes to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) No wrong door access to services</li> <li>2) Co-enrollment/dual enrollment in Title I and II</li> <li>3) Increased access to supportive services</li> <li>4) Institutionalizing a navigator model to help recruit, enroll, and effectively support participants through program completion</li> </ul>			
Structures are in place to support systemic change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Partnerships</li> <li>2) Resources (in-kind, leveraged, new)</li> <li>3) Staffing</li> </ul>			
Staff have capacity to support and implement systemic change (e.g., training, supervision, tools)			

**17. What is the status?**

- a. How has your practice changed since you launched the pilot? What do you do differently now?
- b. How does this/these change/s improve access and outcomes for English learners?

**18. What is the goal, capacity, or target you'd like to reach in this area?**

**19. What is the gap?**

- a. How would you define the nature of the gap (the "symptom" or "issue") and the cause?
- b. What does the gap look like from the perspective of each grant partner?

**20. What are possible solutions?**

- a. What concrete steps will help close the gap?
- b. Why is this step important and how quickly should it be implemented?
- c. Who will lead/own the work?
- d. What resources are needed to implement the action step? Are resources currently available?

Action	Owner	Priority H M L	Resources Y N