

***Improving Access to WIOA
Title I Services for California's
Immigrants and Refugees***

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Roadmap

- Population and system service basics
- Select challenges, opportunities under WIOA
- Community and system constraints
- Key equity and access strategies



Importance of Immigrant Integration

Civic, economic, and linguistic integration:

- Improves public health and safety
- Strengthens economics of families and communities
- Expands civic engagement, strengthens social cohesion
- Counteracts risks to children's success



California's Immigrants and Refugees

The foreign-born are:

- 1/3 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 1/4 unauthorized (ages 16+)



Equity Gap: Small Numbers/Shares of “Priority” Clients Served

- 34% of CA foreign born (3.4 million) ages 19+ lack HSD/E and are not enrolled in school; 8% of native born (1.5 million)
 - 12.2% of exiters in T1 adult services lacked HSD/E (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 T1 adult intensive and training services are LEP (908 individuals)

Sources: MPI analysis of pooled 2012-16 ACS data; Social Policy Research Associates, *PY 2015 WIASRD Data Book: California* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2017), https://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/WIASRD/PY2015/PY%202015%20WIASRD%20STATE%20Data%20Book_CA.pdf.



Equity Gap: Even Smaller Numbers of “Hardest to Serve” Served

- 3 million CA adults ages 19+ are LEP, lack a HSD/E, and are not enrolled in school (62% of the state’s low-educated adults are also LEP)
 - Fewer than 500 exiters in T1 adult intensive and training services were both LEP and had no HSD/E

Sources: MPI analysis of pooled 2012-16 ACS data; Social Policy Research Associates, *PY 2015 WIASRD Data Book: California* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2017), https://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/WIASRD/PY2015/PY%202015%20WIASRD%20STATE%20Data%20Book_CA.pdf.



Role of the ELL Navigator Project

- Learnings from ELL Navigator programs will be crucial to understanding and addressing:
 - Practical barriers
 - Perceptions of potential immigrant customers
 - Systems knowledge
- Building program and system capacities to effectively serve immigrant (and all priority) customers
- (These are integration needs and policy concerns!)



Structural Constraints will Need to be Addressed in Tandem

- T1 programs' historic reliance on English and HSD/E pre-requisites
- Reliance on ITAs/community colleges and referrals from UI and social services for program clients
- Lack of realistic pricing structure and performance timelines for programs serving clients with multiple needs
- Federal/state expectations re: earning levels



Adult Education to the Rescue?

- WIOA T1'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



Rethinking Adult Education's Role In Supporting Integration

- Civic, economic, and linguistic integration are vital for immigrants, but integration-focused topics are not a program focus or outcome
- Persistence through multi-year, multi-level ESOL and ABE class sequence is not possible for most
- Digital literacy and other self-study skills are assigned no value, yet they are essential to support integration trajectories
- Limited system capacity overall



New Model Urgently Needed: English Plus Integration (EPI)

- Challenge: Address integration needs and persistence barriers while overcoming WIOA's access and equity barriers

- 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



Implementation Opportunities

- Most immediate option in many states: reduce state overmatch of federal funds and repurpose 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
- Carry forward ELL Nav Project Learnings
 - Thought leadership on system purpose, design and equity issues
 - Central relevance of navigator model for integration-focused efforts
 - Value “horizontal” challenges and learnings in particular



Thank you—let's stay in touch!

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