



---

## ELL Workforce Navigator Pilot Project Grantee Site Visit Summary

### Introduction

As part of the Technical Assistance ALLIES delivers to support grantee teams, ALLIES staff met with grantee teams on site to:

- Learn about their programs in greater depth;
- Identify promising practices;
- Drill deeper into program implementation questions and challenges;
- Identify and provide resources and support that can help accelerate their work; and,
- Lay a foundation for evaluation activities.

Visits were held as follows:

October 30, 2017	San Diego Team
October 31, 2017	Madera-Fresno Team
November 6, 2017	Orange and Pacific Gateway Teams
November 7, 2017	SETA Team

ALLIES worked with grantees to develop the agenda/activities for the visits and provided a discussion guide (Attachment A) to help focus discussions on key pilot project milestones, partnerships, navigators' work, and upcoming evaluation planning. All grantee team partners were invited to participate during the site visit, as appropriate.

This memo summarizes lessons ALLIES learned that apply to all grantee pilots, as well as those specific to individual sites. The discussion is organized by topics:

- How collaborative partnerships are being enhanced to deliver services and instruction
- Navigators' roles and responsibilities: How they engage with partners, customers, and program staff; support they receive and require to be effective
- Practices that affect change across systems

The memo concludes by highlighting areas/challenges for further action and shared learning.

### Context

Overall, pilots are being implemented in the context of existing processes and programs. When a challenge arises, it offers an opportunity to re-evaluate the practice, business process and policy that led to the challenge. This is complex work, and grantee strategies vary depending on existing infrastructure, partnerships and community resources, as well as the population(s) targeted for the pilot.

The following is a brief description of the lead grantees' organizational structure and populations each proposed to serve through the pilot.

- SETA is a city and county organization that provides administrative oversight and is responsible for workforce services and a host of other related services, including refugee resettlement grants available through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Target population is recently arrived refugees and Special Immigrant Visa holders (SIVs).
- Orange and San Diego are public agencies that are part of a local county structure, provide administrative oversight for workforce services, and contract with providers to run services. Both counties have diverse populations located in different parts of their respective counties.
  - San Diego target population is recently arrived refugees
  - Orange target population is a mix of refugees/immigrants, primarily speakers of Spanish and Asian languages
- Madera is a public benefit nonprofit responsible for administrative and fiscal oversight for county workforce funds and is the AJCC operator implementing services on behalf of the local WIB. Fresno is part of a county structure providing administrative and fiscal oversight for workforce services.
  - Madera target population is predominantly Latino, large population of agricultural workers.
  - Fresno's population is similar, though somewhat more diverse due to a recent influx of refugees.
- Pacific Gateway is a WDB that is the AJCC operator and runs programs and services in the city of Long Beach. Target populations are Latino and Cambodian communities, with a mix of longer-term and recent arrivals in both communities.

## Partnerships

Grants were awarded to workforce development boards with strong existing relationships with partners that include the workforce development board/agency, training providers, community-based organizations, adult schools and community colleges – but not necessarily between all primary partners on the grant team. The site visit explored how existing relationships and work processes are adapting and expanding to better serve English learners.

### *Collaboration between Grant Partners*

Overall, grantee teams are figuring out how to work together to implement the programs they designed and increase participation of English learner customers in Title I services.

Common practices being implemented by the lead grantee (WDB) include:

- Holds the vision for seamless access to services, from a customer-centered perspective
- Takes a proactive role as an intermediary to provide support that builds alignment:
  - Facilitates collaborative program planning with and across partners to:
    - help them learn about one another’s systems and services, and how to work together
    - adapt the project work plan and work flows, to ensure delivery strategies are user-focused and meet identified needs
  - Provides TA on policies, training, orientations, data management
  - Holds regular partner meetings

Grantee teams are working together to adapt service delivery processes within and across organizations:

- Share contacts and resources across their existing partnership networks
- Establish reciprocal referral processes, warm hand-offs
- Establish service flows that create seamless service contacts for participants (co-location, collaborative case management, warm hand-offs, active “hand-holding” and follow-up)
- Resolve questions and address barriers experienced by English learners with different levels of English language ability and varying support needs
- Adapt forms, data collection tools and processes to support customer service, information sharing, accurate reporting, and joint decision-making

### *Outreach to New Partners*

- Partners on grantee teams are establishing new and stronger relationships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and adult schools, to increase the availability of ESL courses and access to pilot project services in locations convenient to target populations, such as family resource centers and k-12 schools
- Madera, Fresno and Orange counties have made notable progress in conducting outreach to new partners, to increase awareness of services available to English language learners through the AJCC and help connect them to needed resources. Strategies include:
  - Participating in and promoting services at community events (e.g., Welcoming America week, local convenings)
  - Holding partner agency orientation events
  - Networking with existing partner contacts to promote services and ask for leads
  - Direct outreach by navigators
- Grantees are creating information tools (e.g.

#### **Practice Spotlight: Orange County Workforce Development Board**

Orange County Workforce Development Board’s community partner OCAPICA is collocated at the AJCC to deliver a seamless service experience for English learners. This grant is supporting new approaches to building partnerships and improving services. OCAPICA navigators are increasing the number of personal contacts with partners to follow up on referrals, researching whether marketing strategies are reaching targeted customers and actively building an expanded network of relationships with civic, cultural, religious, social and service organizations that serve new and existing customers.

spreadsheets listing partner organizations, etc.) with outreach and contact information to share across partners, to help streamline referral processes

## Navigators

The navigator role is staffed differently across the pilots. The staffing model across pilots is as follows:

### SETA:

- 4 navigators at co-located Job Center/Adult Education locations
- Co-location facilitates warm handoffs to ESL classes, close collaboration with transition specialists at adult schools, who often refer people to navigators
- Close collaboration with job developers for additional resources

### Orange County

- 3 navigators placed within AJCC, co-located with OCAPICA (CBO)
- Navigators collaborate with one another and adult school staff
- Focus: outreach, case management, referral to wraparound services

### San Diego

- 2 navigators: one at IRC, one at AJCC co-located with adult school, warm handoffs for clients between IRC navigator to AJCC navigator
- 2 navigators working with same clients is new model, with a warm-handoff over time, and with more intensive case management than other programs

### Madera/Fresno

- Madera: 1 navigator, located at AJCC
  - Navigator works closely with career specialist at AJCC
  - AJCC co-located with adult school
  - Close collaboration with adult school (AEBG) transition specialist
- Fresno: 1 navigator (interim), located at AJCC (FT navigator expected to be hired 1/18)
  - Navigator does mostly case management and referrals to wraparound services

#### **Practice Spotlight: Madera**

#### **Workforce Development Board**

Madera Workforce Development Board is taking advantage of its co-location with the adult school

- The AJCC Navigator works in close collaboration with the adult education transition specialist to identify and support participants in the ELL Navigator Pilot
- Co-location facilitates warm handoffs between AJCC and adult school
- A welcoming reception area provides information about both AJCC and adult education programs

### Pacific Gateway

- 1 Navigator located at United Cambodian Community (UCC): UCC staff member trained by Pacific Gateway Workforce Development Board in WIOA career development services, on site at AJCC 1 day a week, will also provide career workshops and readiness programs in their native language. 2 Navigators located at Centro CHA: Spanish-speaking, focus on Latino immigrant

population, including DACA eligible youth. Navigator is also responsible for immigration services in Centro CHA and lets customers know about all services they provide

- 1 navigator at AJCC (Pacific Gateway): will work with City’s Language Access Program to provide information and outreach in multiple languages, focused primarily on ELLs interested in accessing training opportunities
- Expect navigators to be fully operational Jan 2018

### *Engagement with Customers*

Almost all Navigators are members of the customer populations targeted in each pilot.

- Many have experiences like those of customers in targeted populations
  - Are immigrants
  - Are of the same cultural, racial, ethnic groups
  - Are multi-lingual
  - Have previously received services from one or more grant partners
  - Have intelligence about needs in the community generally, and with respect to certain individuals/families, specifically
- Navigators personalize services - prepare to work with customers by learning as much about them as possible from assessments and discussions with partners before each meeting, to effectively help them
  - develop an individualized plan and match them with available services
  - provide support and encouragement as they complete steps in their plan
  - help them resolve issues and challenges
- Navigators actively work to help set customers who may be hesitant to seek services at ease.
  - Customers feel understood and supported
    - Navigators reported that many customers, particularly recent immigrants, refugees and SIVs, find it extremely helpful to talk with someone who understands their circumstances, and share information about their lives beyond immediate support needs or career goals.
    - They build rapport with customers, which they hope they will share with families and friends to draw others to services
  - Customers feel more confident
    - Increased understanding of systems, programs, requirements helps them feel more prepared
    - Opportunities to practice English and support at every step from navigators and other staff help them change perceptions of their own ability

**Practice Spotlight: Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network**

The Pacific Gateway team is applying Human Centered Design principles to the ELL Navigator pilot to gain a deeper understanding of customer engagement

- PGWIN has developed a collection of ‘personas’: customer profiles that can inform program design tailored to certain types of customers
- The team is exploring how to promote self-agency of customers and build elements of self-direction into their program flow of services

Customers' motivation to participate varies depending on their unique circumstances. Pilots are finding ways to tailor services to individuals' goals and needs (see referrals, enrollment, assessment below).

Motivation includes:

- Immediate need for employment (particularly among refugees/SIVs)
- Desire to obtain better job, including earning credential required for career goal
- Improving ability to support children in school, at school site and financially
- Improving ability to manage demands of daily life, including access healthcare and navigate other responsibilities
- Increase comfort in participating in social and civic society
- Personal growth and development

Keys to customer success, which may or may not currently be influenced by the navigator role, include:

- Having a support system at home
- Feeling they are in a safe environment in which to access services
- Access to mandated partners and other key services (e.g., CalWORKs) either co-located at AJCC and/or coordinated by navigator

### *Engagement with Staff and Partners*

- Navigators work in teams with other staff
  - Work closely with staff peers (e.g., instructors, job developers, transition specialists).
  - Help facilitate proactive joint case management (through IRT and/or other methods)
  - Communicate regularly with partners to share information (outreach materials, verbal communications, detailed case notes)
- Navigators are active and visible in the community
  - Follow up with clients
  - Conduct ongoing client outreach presentations at partner sites/in partner services
  - Conduct ongoing partner outreach at partner and community events
  - Invite partners to training events related to serving ELLs
- In some cases, navigators have other job responsibilities.
  - Some navigators perform duties that create synergy with their role – i.e., job developers

#### **Practice Spotlight: San Diego Workforce Partnership**

San Diego is proactively planning to build infrastructure that will help scale successful pilot practices.

- SDWP is surveying all its staff and staff at partnering organizations to learn about their beliefs, knowledge and experience in serving English learners, and identify supports they may need to effectively serve this population.
- The team also envisions connecting an expanded database of partners to a new county-wide database that will offer capability for online referrals.

## *Supports Navigators Need*

Many navigators are new employees, whether located at/employed by a WDB, adult school or CBO

- As staff new to organizations they are employed by, navigators are still learning about the workforce system and partner systems, and could benefit from training on WIOA, both Title I and Title II.
- Many cited having trusting relationships with colleagues and supervisors is extremely helpful

## *Systems*

### *Referrals, Enrollment, Assessment*

All grant partners at all pilots conduct an initial intake screening of customers' needs and refer potentially eligible customers for further assessment to ELL Navigator Pilot staff.

- Navigators continue assessment process, which may include:
  - Discussions in which customers self-identify need
  - An informal assessment of spoken, written language. May include TABE
  - Adult schools administer CASAS
  - Other skills/needs tools
- Service array available at AJCC and grant partner organizations varies by pilot site.
- Pilots are establishing and conducting cross-referral processes, adapting forms, to streamline processes and eliminate duplicative assessments and requirements for customers to re-submit forms, etc.
- No pilot reported encountering mental health needs among those assessed, primarily because these concerns are addressed by other partners or through referrals to other services (e.g., immigration, domestic violence, etc.)

#### **Practice Spotlight: Sacramento Employment and Training Agency**

As part of this pilot, SETA set aside funding for degree translation services and transportation. Participants in the pilot can access funds for GED testing fees, for example. If a customer needs a large amount of support (e.g. transportation), the navigator will check for eligibility to co-enroll in other programs that can provide additional financial support.

Almost all grantees are optimizing services through checking eligibility for other funding, such as

- ORR
- CalWORKs
- Disability grants

## *Instruction*

All partners are trying to determine the mix of programs that will best meet the needs of target customers.

- Grantees are tailoring services to meet individual customers' needs

- Grantees are interested in strategies to work with ELLs that promote their agency and autonomy (empowerment and independence)
- CASAS and TABE scores used to differentiate readiness to participate in Title I services
  - Almost all pilots reported they learned they need to refer customers with higher levels of English language proficiency to the ELL Navigator pilot program – most who express interest aren’t ready (or able – from work authorization perspective) to participate in Title I
- CBO grant partners are now connecting more closely with adult education and some are offering ESL classes onsite
- Availability of ESL courses during times and at locations convenient to job-seekers is a challenge
- In some cases, VESL programming doesn’t match needs
- Some pilot sites offer advanced dual enrollment courses at adult schools, and help customers apply to college and for financial aid.

**Practice Spotlight: Fresno Workforce Development Board**

Fresno Workforce Connection offers contextualized integrated soft skills training for all customers – not specifically tailored to ELLs – that is offered by staff who can help explain in customers’ first language

### *Data*

All pilots are using a tool or tools outside of CalJOBS to track information about customers, particularly to capture information on those not eligible for Title I services and referred elsewhere.

### **Emerging Successful Practices**

- Navigators are conducting outreach using messages and strategies that demonstrate an understanding of and are tailored to potential customers’ motivation for accessing services
- Navigators and partners are implementing informal and formal screening processes/tools that help identify customers who may benefit from pilot services
- Navigators are connecting with organizations that serve targeted populations in their own communities and developing/translating materials to increase awareness of available services
- Navigators are engaging with customers and brokering connections across partnering systems through joint case management, classroom presentations, community presentations
- Some pilots are expanding the availability of ESL classes offered onsite at CBOs
- Some pilots are exploring business partnerships to collaborate to provide ESL classes

### **Areas for Further Development and Learning**

#### *Partnerships*



Grantees are at different phases of deepening and adapting existing partnerships and building new partnerships. All grantees can benefit from continuing to re-evaluate existing programs and ways of working together determine whether and how:

- Assessment processes can be refined to support differentiated referrals to services, and inform the development of “on ramps” to career pathways programming appropriate to meet the needs of English learners at different levels of ability and with varying interests
- Gaps in the array of available programs and services still exist such that customer needs are going unmet
- Opportunities exist to develop evidence-based programming, such as IET, digital literacy, through closer collaboration with existing and new partners

For some grantees, a commitment to collective work at the local level to break down silos should be strengthened. Others are well-positioned to expand strategies for collaborative work and accelerate progress toward alignment across systems at policy, administrative/programmatic and practice levels.

- Reflection on current strategies should include exploration of ways each partnering organization might change or adapt to increase alignment across all partners

Grantees can continue to establish partnerships with other public benefit programs to help leverage resources and expand the array of available services

- Examples of government funded programs include CalWorks, CalFresh E&T, DSS Immigration Services

### *Navigators and Other Program Staff*

Grantees can help supporting navigators across partner sites, and across pilot sites to connect with one another, to share practices, lessons.

- For pilots with navigators working at different sites and/or employed by different grant partners (including transition specialists), establish more regular opportunities for discussion and shared learning
- Do the same for navigators and transition specialists across pilot sites

Navigators could benefit from training on WIOA and Adult Ed systems

- General overview, in relation to navigator role
- Mandated partners and why AJCC, adult schools are structured as they are
- Details about program eligibility and assessments
- Details about instructional offerings aligned to participant’s language abilities, work history and career goals

Training on How to Work with ELLs

- Cultural competence across diverse populations
- How to conduct formal and informal assessment

- How to support customers' self-agency

### *Education and Training*

While relationships between partners are progressing through outreach and referrals, existing programs and services, particularly education and training, continue to operate in silos. Grantees can begin refining their focus on building on-ramps to instruction, training and services for English learners at different levels of need and ability, and links to career pathways instruction

- Grantees are tailoring services to meet individual customers' needs – in some cases, not clear how the service array is aligned with on-ramps to career pathways
  - Availability of ESL courses during times and at locations convenient to job-seekers is a challenge
  - Availability of Title I and II services to those who may be working and can only attend ESL classes at night is a challenge
  - In some cases, VESL programming doesn't match needs of customers with very low levels of education, skill in their native language.
  - It can be challenging finding instructors to meet growing demand for ESL classes
  - Curriculum development and approval timelines don't sync with workforce scheduling needs (rapid sessions, summer sessions)
- Consider developing, identifying, adapting, adopting digital literacy curricula
- Consider creating community-based experience opportunities, such as mentoring, volunteering programs that provide experience in building language and employability skills, social connections and networks, and build resume

### *Employer Engagement*

While grantees are focusing on placing most ELLs in entry-level jobs, particularly those that don't require high levels of English language proficiency, it would be helpful to learn how they are engaging employers (through sector strategies or other means) around the issue of employing English learners.

- Building systemic connections to employers so customers can become employed and continue developing skills

### *Data Development for Program Improvement*

- Grantees run administrative reports to manage the pilot. It would be helpful to learn more about processes that are in place or could be developed to help staff determine if services are effective and meeting customer needs, and signal how they can be improved
- Grantees are developing strategies to use CalJOBS and other methods to track referrals, particularly for customers Title I can't serve. Continuing to explore and standardize data collection and reporting across systems is a priority.

- Some grantees reported it would be helpful to learn more about others' experience regarding how to address challenges with customer follow-up, particularly 3-week follow up strategies

### *Policy*

- Grantees are continuing to experiment with questions around the timing of when customers can and should be enrolled in Title I, Title II and/or co-enrolled. The Draft Pathways to Services guidance will influence activity in this area. Ongoing support as the directive is released will be required.

### *Funding*

- Some grantees pointed to limited funding for ESL courses
- All are starting to consider how to make the pilot "business as usual" by training staff; scaling pilot practices is likely to require resources beyond the grant term
- All grantees are interested in developing strategies on how to leverage resources and locate new funding to support sustainability and scalability across the state

## Attachment A: Discussion Guide

---

### **English Language Learner Workforce Navigator Pilot Program Site Visit Discussion Guide**

#### **Questions for Navigators**

1. How do you engage with/support customers?
2. How do you assess customers?
3. How do you determine which programs or services to refer a customer to (both internally and externally)?
4. How do you connect customers with supportive wraparound services?
5. How do you connect customers with education and training programs?
6. How do you inform pilot and/or program staff about the pilot and pilot customers?
7. How are you supported in your role as navigator? What could help you more?

#### **Questions for Project Team**

1. Tell us about your program model (flow of services). Have you adjusted your initial plans?
2. Describe the process of engaging customers to enroll in the pilot.
3. How is collaboration between partners going? What works? What doesn't?
4. How is partner outreach and engagement progressing?
5. How are pilot activities becoming embedded in a local career pathways framework?
6. What changes need to happen in each delivery system and across the systems to make the pilot successful?
7. Where are opportunities to accelerate progress?
8. What learning or experience to date do you think would be important to share with others?
9. Do you have any questions for our state partners?

#### **Data, Reporting, and Evaluation**

1. How do you track customer flow through the pilot?
2. How do you monitor/ensure referral program quality?
3. How and with whom are you sharing and/or reporting data?
4. How are you using data to inform ongoing evaluation and program improvement?