

ENGLISH AS A GATEWAY

Preliminary Policy and Program Field Analysis
January 2020



ABOUT ENGLISH AS A GATEWAY



The acquisition of English language skills is one of the most significant barriers preventing immigrants from integrating - civically, economically, and culturally - into U.S. society. According to a study by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the existing system through which English is taught reaches less than 4% of people who need it. In the event of immigration reform or other legalization, English language acquisition is almost certain to be a requirement for immigrants, and the current landscape is under-equipped to address this significant need.

The National Partnership for New Americans' (NPNA) "English as a Gateway Initiative" is a strategy to expand English language acquisition in the United States with NPNA members who are leading immigrant rights coalitions across the country. After a successful pilot of English Innovations in 2011-2013 lead by OneAmerica, this close partnership with NPNA has allowed for the expansion of the English language acquisition program to 11 states nationwide. The English as a Gateway Initiative aims to build English infrastructure through policy and resource development; a tested and scalable English language instruction component – "English Innovations"; and, creative integration of digital and technology-based learning through Community Navigators.

The purpose of this English as a Gateway Report is to serve as a "live document" to get a deeper understanding of what the foundation for English language access policies and programs are at the federal level, with examples grounded in the work being done at a state level. By having a birds eye view of English language access, translation services, and citizenship policies and programs, we are able to see what our capacity for English learning is across the United States, therein building, redefining, and actively changing what is possible in the realm of English language policies and programs.

We believe that English acquisition is the gateway for New Americans' full participation in our democracy, our economy, and our communities. Language barriers keep millions of immigrants from achieving their full potential. The U.S. should promote the acquisition of English skills by providing New Americans with access to 300 hours of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at no cost, within a year of arrival. Governments at the federal, state, and local level should significantly increase funding for ESOL program that use flexible and innovative models and clarify that other workforce-related funding streams can be used flexibly to support ESOL programs.

Special thanks to our NPNA members, **Florida Immigrant Coalition** (Florida), **Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center** (Maine), **Michigan United** (Michigan), **OneAmerica** (Washington), **Promise Arizona** (Arizona), **Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition** (Tennessee), who bring their expertise and practice to building out a successful English as a Gateway Initiative. This is a preliminary policy and program field analysis with the goal of continuing to build this out in 2020 together with our NPNA members and allies.



ENGLISH INNOVATIONS® TRANSFORMS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR IMMIGRANTS NATIONWIDE

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT **BARRIER** FACING MILLIONS OF IMMIGRANTS **IS LIMITED ENGLISH**



- GETTING A GOOD JOB
- HAVING EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS
- GREATER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OPENS THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES.



ALONGSIDE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, DIGITAL LITERACY IS ALSO BECOMING INCREASINGLY NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS.

ENGLISH INNOVATIONS IS A SPRINGBOARD ON THE PATH TO INTEGRATION

IT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE FORMAL ESL SYSTEM FOR A WIDE RANGE OF GROUPS.



PARENTS OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN WHO NEED INCREASED CONFIDENCE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR CHILD'S TEACHERS



MIGRANT & LOW WAGE WORKERS WHO NEED A FLEXIBLE CLASS SCHEDULE



ADULTS WHO DID NOT COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY



PERMANENT RESIDENTS WHO LACK THE ENGLISH SKILLS TO PASS THE CITIZENSHIP TEST

AN INTEGRATED MODEL MEANS INCLUSIVE, SOCIAL LEARNING FOR ADULTS

ENGLISH INNOVATIONS PROVIDES A CURRICULUM ADAPTABLE TO A BROAD RANGE OF CONTEXTS AND INTEGRATES DIGITAL LEARNING TO ADDRESS THE REAL LIFE NEEDS AND GOALS OF LOW-INCOME, LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT ADULTS, INCLUDING:



- EMPLOYMENT
- FAMILY LITERACY
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
- SPRINGBOARD TO FURTHER EDUCATION
- CITIZENSHIP

VOLUNTEER TUTORS SUPPORT LEARNERS WITH A 5:1 STUDENT- VOLUNTEER RATIO.



ENGLISH INNOVATIONS EMPHASIZES PEER-TO-PEER & PROJECT-BASED LEARNING.



BLENDED INSTRUCTION MEANS MORE FLEXIBLE LEARNING.

100 HOURS NEEDED TO GAIN ONE LANGUAGE LEARNING LEVEL

74 HOURS FACE-TO-FACE IN CLASS

26 HOURS ARE INDEPENDENT LEARNING OUTSIDE OF CLASS

12 WEEKS FOR STUDENTS TO COMPLETE 100 HOURS

EACH STUDENT IS LOANED A TABLET FOR THE DURATION OF THE COURSE

ONEAMERICA BRINGS ENGLISH INNOVATIONS TO PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE U.S.

With the National Partnership for New Americans, OneAmerica offers English Innovations as an education model for community-centered, host organizations nationwide. Host organizations with deep relationships in immigrant communities implement the model. OneAmerica works with host sites to train volunteers, technology coaches and program staff in the English Innovations methodology.



THE GOAL

TO STRENGTHEN LANGUAGE AND DIGITAL SKILLS WHILE BUILDING COMMUNITY FOR ADULT LEARNERS WHO FACE BARRIERS IN THE FORMAL ESL SYSTEM

PROVEN SUCCESS

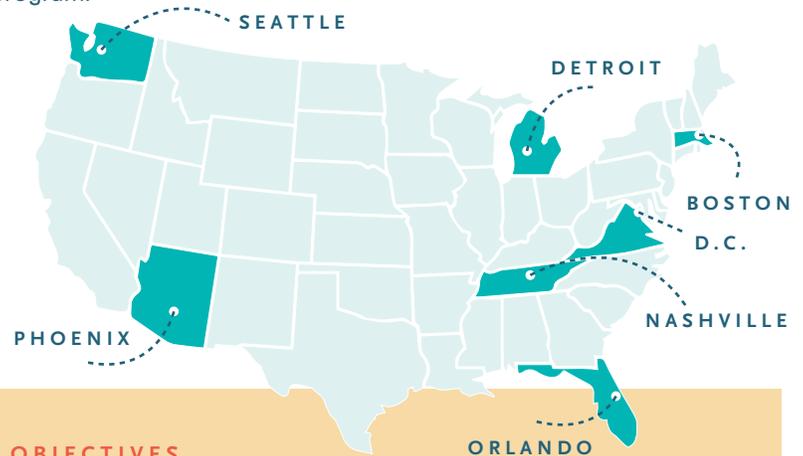
English Innovations was successfully piloted in the Seattle area from 2011-13, and at six sites nationwide in 2015-16, serving over 1,000 individuals to date. We have seen the model work to reduce barriers and connect immigrants to the larger community as they build confidence and competence in English and digital skills. Pilot results showed significant increases in community participation, English proficiency and confidence in the use of digital skills. In the national pilot, three out of six sites' performance was comparable to that of federally funded programs. 97% of participants reported that upon completing the course they were more comfortable using English, 96% were more comfortable using a computer, and 96% of students recommend the program.

ENGLISH INNOVATIONS HAS PROVEN TO BE A SUCCESSFUL MODEL INTEGRATING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH DIGITAL LITERACY.

RESULTS OF THE 2 YEAR PILOT SHOWED SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SKILLS

A SURVEY OF OVER 500 STUDENTS SHOWED SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN DIGITAL LITERACY

As measured by a national evaluation of the 2 year program



ENGLISH INNOVATIONS LEARNING OBJECTIVES

HIGH-BEGINNING TO LOW-INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO:

- ✓ GAIN DIGITAL SKILLS FOR LIFE AND WORK
- ✓ LEARN COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR REAL-LIFE SETTINGS
- ✓ USE DIGITAL TOOLS AND MULTIMEDIA APPLICATIONS TO ADVANCE TOWARD PERSONAL GOALS
- ✓ EXPRESS THEIR IDEAS IN ENGLISH
- ✓ TELL THEIR OWN STORY AND PUBLISH IT ONLINE
- ✓ WORK IN TEAMS TO RESEARCH THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH ONLINE TOOLS AND PROJECT-BASED LEARNING



OneAmerica advances the fundamental principles of democracy and justice at the local, state and national

levels by building power within immigrant communities in collaboration with key allies. WEAREONEAMERICA.ORG



NPNA works with new Americans as powerful participants and leaders in creating a more

vibrant, just, and welcoming democracy for all. PARTNERSHIPFORNEWAMERICANS.ORG

FOUNDATIONAL FEDERAL ENGLISH POLICY

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

WIOA is a federal law that assists job seekers in accessing employment, education, training, and support services needed to meet employers' requirements and succeed in the labor market. It requires each state to develop a plan covering its four titles:

- 1) **Title I** Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs administered by the Department of Labor (DOL)
- 2) **Title II** Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program administered by the Education Department (ED)
- 3) **Title III** Employment Service Program under the Wagner-Peyser Act administered by DOL; and
- 4) **Title IV** Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 administered by the ED.

The primary focus of WIOA with regards to English language access is WIOA Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy, which provides foundational skills and English literacy to 1.8 million individuals each year. Below are **WIOA reforms** for Adult Education under current legislation:

- Increases the coordination of core programs through submissions of a Unified State Plan or Combined State Plan
- Establish common performance measures across Core Programs
- Strengthens alignment between adult education, postsecondary education, and employers
- Supports educational and career advancement for incarcerated individuals
- Encourages establishment of high-quality local adult education delivery system
- Supports professional development opportunities and innovative models to enhance adult education programs
- Promotes activities to improve the quality of adult education programs
- Codifies the integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

EXISTING FOUNDATIONAL FEDERAL ENGLISH POLICY

WIOA TITLE II: Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)

Under WIOA Title II exists the **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)** programs. These programs seek to serve English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries that enable such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services include:

- Instruction in literacy and English language acquisition
- Instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation
- Workforce training

The majority of the programs mentioned fall under these categories of programs, which are more all-encompassing to students seeking a more community-based experience.

FEDERAL ENGLISH POLICY ANALYSIS

- The current adult basic education system offers minimal support for marginalized learners, including individuals with low levels of education and limited English. Under WIOA, there is little follow-up and evaluation that happens, which allows for learners to slip through the cracks.
- Independently, states may establish supplementary programs, funding, and support for this vulnerable population of adults with limited English, however, most are incentivized to do so with people who have higher levels of English.
- In order to remedy this gap, local programs tend to follow a patchwork approach when obtaining funding, since collaborative efforts between programs, cities, and states have proven most successful in providing English programming.

NATIONAL POLICY SURVEY OVERVIEW

NEW DEAL FOR NEW AMERICANS ACT (H.R. 4928):

The New Deal for New Americans Act is a legislative proposal based on the “New American Dreams” policy priorities of the membership of the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) and its allies. The bill is sponsored by U.S. Representatives Grace Meng (D-NY), Jesús “Chuy” Garcia (D-IL), and Pramila Jayapal (D-WA). It reflects a proactive, affirmative vision of a nation where the federal government commits significant resources to support state and local governments’ and communities’ efforts to ensure that immigrants and refugees (1) have a fair opportunity to defend their right to remain in the U.S. with the necessary legal support; (2) are received in welcoming and inclusive cities and neighborhoods; (3) have equitable access to U.S. citizenship and (4) can pursue English language learning and workforce development programs that support their full social, economic, and civic participation in the United States.

NEW AMERICAN DREAMS PLATFORM

English As a Gateway is one of eight policy planks of the “New American Dreams Policy Platform”, a comprehensive vision of immigrant integration policy at the local, state and federal level developed by NPNA with support of allies and member organizations. The New American Dream Platform serves as a policy guide for NPNA members when developing state and local campaigns to advance and expand immigrant and refugee integration and inclusion policies.

The New American Dreams Platform promotes Access to Workforce Development and English Language Programs by:

- Making training and workforce development programs available on an equitable basis to immigrants and refugees
- Committing sufficient federal funds to upscale and sustain long term investment in basic education and workforce training for immigrants and refugees, tailored to available jobs in their communities
- Significantly expanding access to contextualized English language learning programs that are delivered to meet the unique needs of immigrant and refugee communities and support their social, economic, and civic integration

NPNA MEMBERS' ENGLISH POLICY & PROGRAM ANALYSIS

ARKANSAS UNITED

Arkansas United currently offers two English acquisition programs. The GED en Español program and the English Acquisition through the Arts programs. They are partnering with University of Arkansas professors to increase English acquisition opportunities and early education initiatives for immigrant families.

CASA (MARYLAND)

CASA Maryland's English classes utilize a combination of communicative task-based learning and popular education techniques. Lessons are focused upon concrete and practical everyday experiences. Students, as adults, come to class with experiences they are encouraged to share and peer teach while performing tasks. Class materials are geared towards student's life experiences and promote both civic engagement and community empowerment.

FLORIDA IMMIGRANT COALITION (FLIC)

FLIC is part of the NPNA English as a Gateway program and offers free 12-week English Innovations classes in Central and North Florida (Orlando and Jacksonville), where students can learn new conversational and technological phrases, meet new people, and gain confidence in their written and spoken English in a warm and welcoming space.

MICHIGAN UNITED

Michigan United is part of the NPNA English as a Gateway pilot program by enrolling Community Navigators in the Voxy digital platform to improve their English skills while participating in the Community Navigator cohort that focuses on leadership development, workforce development and capacity building tied to Michigan United's immigration legal service work.

MASSACHUSETTS IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

From 2015 to 2016, MIRA was a pilot site for NPNA and OneAmerica's English Innovations program. Since then, the New American Integration Program (an AmeriCorps program of MIRA and ENB) places service members at immigrant-serving organizations around Massachusetts to expand the organization's ESOL-teaching capacity. Currently, NAIP is MIRA's sole program dedicated to expanding English language instruction. MIRA was also successful in petitioning the state to allocate over \$41 million for Adult Basic Education/English Classes.

NPNA MEMBERS' ENGLISH POLICY & PROGRAM ANALYSIS

MAKE THE ROAD – NEW YORK

One-third of adult New Yorkers lack either English proficiency or a high school diploma, but inadequate funding means that just 3% of New Yorkers have access to critical classes. Make the Road New York helps meet this need by providing English, computer, citizenship preparation, and Bridge to Health Careers classes to over **1,300 adults annually** and by working in coalition with other providers across the city and state to push for better funding for adult education classes for all New Yorkers.

NEW YORK IMMIGRANT COALITION (NYIC)

The NYIC education program is a pioneering initiative with a track record of major wins. These successes range from an increased funding weight for English Language Learners in the state's key school funding formula and \$13 million of funding for English Language Learners in New York City schools, to sweeping improvements to language access for immigrant parents.

ONEAMERICA - WASHINGTON

The English Innovations program was successfully piloted by OneAmerica with a President's Grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, serving over 1,000 individuals to date. The program offers free English classes centered around a model where students gain digital literacy, improve English language acquisition, and practice power building through the Community Navigator curriculum integrated through digital platforms across the country. OneAmerica also supported the establishment of the Seal of Biliteracy which recognizes public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more world languages in addition to English.

PROMISE ARIZONA (PAZ)

Promise Arizona is part of the NPNA English as a Gateway pilot program and offers free English classes centered where students gain digital literacy, improve English language acquisition, and practice power building. In Fall of 2019, PAZ held their graduation ceremony with 43 students completing the English Innovations program.

PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE OF NEVADA

In Nevada, PLAN worked to pass legislation AB 219 (Kevin's Bill) that requires schools to serve English Language Learner (ELL) students, provide assessments in students' native language, and help recruit more teachers with the skills to serve ELL students.

NPNA MEMBERS' ENGLISH POLICY & PROGRAM ANALYSIS

TENNESSEE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS COALITION (TIRRC)

TIRRC is part of the NPNA English as a Gateway pilot program and offers free 12-week English Innovations classes where students can learn new conversational and technological phrases, meet new people, and gain confidence in their written and spoken English in a warm and welcoming space.

GREATER PORTLAND IMMIGRANT WELCOME CENTER - MAINE

GPIWC hosts the iEnglish Project, which provides regional business leaders with the opportunity to enhance the human capital and economic mobility of their current and future workforce by investing in adult English instruction. GPIWC is also part of the NPNA English as a Gateway pilot program enrolling Community Navigators in the Voxy digital platform to improve their English skills while participating in a Community Navigator cohort that focuses on leadership development, workforce development and civic engagement.



Pictured Above: Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center iEnglish Project English Class

CONCLUSION

The current adult basic education system in place meets only a small portion of the need for services each year. In 2016, adult education programs served fewer than 1.5 million individuals, including 601,000 individuals in English Language Acquisition programs and 117,000 in Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs. This is in comparison to 43.7 million adults living in the United States who lack a high school diploma and/or have limited English proficiency, which indicates that the system currently meets only **3.4% of the total need**.

Under current English access policies at the federal level, all states are required to comply with WIOA. However, because of oversight with assessment and follow-up on a federal level, many cities, counties, and states find themselves with a lack of capacity to follow through with all WIOA requirements. As a result, the most vulnerable populations with little to no access to English acquisition fall through the cracks.

We believe that English acquisition is the gateway for New Americans' full participation in our democracy, our economy, and our communities. Language barriers keep millions of immigrants from achieving their full potential. NPNA advocates for a national standard and promoting English skills by providing New Americans with access to 300 hours of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at no cost, within a year of arrival. Governments at the federal, state, and local level should significantly increase funding for ESOL programs that use flexible and innovative models and clarify that other workforce-related funding streams can be used flexibly to support ESOL programs.

Through the New Deal for New Americans Act, we believe that promoting Access to Workforce Development and English Language Programs can be accomplished by:

- Making training and workforce development programs available on an equitable basis to immigrants and refugees
- Committing sufficient funds to upscale and sustain long term investment in basic education and workforce training for immigrants and refugees, tailored to available jobs in their communities
- Significantly expanding access to contextualized English language learning programs that are delivered to meet the unique needs of immigrant and refugee communities and support their social, economic, and civic integration.

Through the English as a Gateway initiative, NPNA will work together with its members to build English infrastructure through policy development, expand the English Innovations program model, and integrate digital and technology-based learning platforms.