

# Adult Education and Immigrant Integration: Networks for Integrating New Americans

# **Call for Applications to Receive Technical Assistance**

## I. Introduction & Purpose of the Initiative

Networks for Integrating New Americans is an innovative, national initiative that seeks to position adult education programs as key contributors to local networks (coalitions/ initiatives) that advance immigrant integration. The initiative will identify, strengthen, and document place-based models of immigrant integration that other communities can replicate and adapt.

Immigrant integration is a dynamic, two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. The initiative uses organizational networks as the primary vehicle for promoting immigrant integration because when organizations in the immigrant and receiving communities are collaborating and aligned, they are able to mobilize both communities to address common needs, and draw on their unique strengths.

THE INITIATIVE is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and led by World Education and its partners: <a href="National Partnership for New Americans">National Partnership for New Americans</a> (NPNA), <a href="IMPRINT">IMPRINT</a>, and <a href="Welcoming America">Welcoming America</a>. The project advances OVAE's goals to strengthen adult education programs' ability to: <a href="1">1</a>) improve immigrants' access to effective and innovative English language programs; <a href="2">2</a>) support immigrants on the path to citizenship; and <a href="3">3</a>) support immigrants' career development through training and education. These goals represent the three pillars of immigrant integration — linguistic, economic, and civic.

THE INITIATIVE offers an unprecedented opportunity for existing networks to receive sustained technical assistance (TA) from nationally recognized experts that will help the selected networks to:

- Improve the functioning, impact, and sustainability of their collective work;
- Make better use of adult education program services to carry out their immigrant integration agenda; and
- Improve services in order to accelerate progress on immigrants' linguistic, civic, and economic goals.

Five networks of organizations will be selected by February 28, 2014 through a national, open, and competitive application process. They will receive technical assistance over two years, March 2014 – February 2015.

To read the <u>Theoretical Framework</u>, see http://lincs.ed.gov/professional-development/resource-collections/profile-717.

## II. Description of the Opportunity and Benefits

Each participating network (coalition/ initiative) will receive **up to 100 hours of federally funded technical assistance** (TA) over two years. The TA includes two institutes, webinars, an online community of practice, coaching, and TA customized to specific network needs. It will be provided by recognized immigrant integration experts in the areas of English language instruction, workforce development, communications about immigrants, civic education, naturalization, and network-building. Participation in the initiative will provide opportunities to:

- 1. Strengthen local efforts that enable immigrants to effectively integrate linguistically, economically, and civically. Such services have historically been compartmentalized by service type, populations served, or program goals. As organizations work together to assess the strengths and gaps in their services and develop shared goals, however, they are able to build more fluid connections among those services (such as increased referrals, joint projects, etc.), address gaps, and create new collaborative efforts. With such coordination, the networks can have a greater collective impact than any of their member organizations do separately.
- 2. Build the capacity of ESOL programs to carry out collaborative efforts that enhance the learning and life outcomes of their adult students. Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs have an important role to play in advancing integration of immigrants inside and outside of the classroom. As one of the first places newcomers turn to for support in navigating their new environments, ESOL programs are uniquely positioned to facilitate activities that can help immigrants build the skills that will enable them to function effectively in the economic and civic life of their communities.
- 3. Participate in a national immigrant integration learning community. The technical assistance includes opportunities for the selected networks to meet face-to-face and virtually in an online discussion space, to receive joint technical assistance, and to share their own expertise via webinars and other professional learning activities. The initiative will enable them to participate in a professional learning community focused on their needs, priorities, and interest in sharing questions, practices, and expertise.
- 4. Gain national visibility for local efforts. Many existing efforts are already paving the way for communities that are ready and looking for models of immigrant integration. The initiative is an avenue for bringing attention to innovative work underway in many corners of the country, enriching this work with in-depth technical assistance, documenting the models and their outcomes, and disseminating promising practices nationally.
- 5. **Contribute to the knowledge base of other communities.** Changes in patterns of settlement are bringing immigrants and refugees to an ever-widening range of communities across the nation. These newer immigrant destinations can benefit from the models of network-building and service provision that are developed and documented by the initiative.

# **III. Eligibility Requirements**

The initiative is designed for *existing* multi-stakeholder networks (coalitions / initiatives) that are interested in strengthening their efforts to address the three pillars of integration (linguistic, economic, and civic) and in building their networks; and that have the capacity to benefit from the technical assistance. Such networks may already be strong in addressing one or more of the three pillars of integration and may wish to focus on strengthening a pillar that is less developed. All selected networks need to address all three pillars to some extent and focus on finding synergies among the related services and efforts. Networks may wish to expand their membership to include additional organizations in the receiving or immigrant communities and/or strengthening the involvement of existing but peripheral member organizations or collaborators.

The four basic eligibility criteria for participation are:

- 1. Alignment with initiative's goals. The local network member organizations must commit to developing and supporting a common immigrant integration agenda that aims to yield greater collective impact in:
  - Increasing immigrants' economic mobility by making use of the skills that immigrants bring
    with them to the U.S. and improving their access to and successful participation in
    education and training programs and social services;
  - Increasing immigrants' ability to navigate U.S. norms and systems while preserving their identity and traditions;
  - Increasing immigrants' rates of naturalization and participation in civic life; and
  - Improving relationships and trust between immigrants and receiving community members, as well as among immigrants from different countries and backgrounds.
- **2.** An *existing* network with at least one AEFLA-funded<sup>1</sup> ESOL program in a central role. Such networks may also include some of the following types of organizations concerned with immigrants and refugees in their core membership:
  - Community or technical college
  - Public school district
  - Employer
  - Government agency
  - Refugee resettlement agency
  - Immigrant/refugee mutual aid organization
  - Immigrant advocacy organization
  - Welcome Back Center or another entity that works with high-skilled immigrants
  - Other adult education (ABE, ASE, ESOL) provider
  - One Stop Career Center/American Job Center
  - Social service provider

<sup>1</sup> Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II) of the federal Workforce Investment Act provides funds for ABE and ESOL services to state-level administrative agencies that allocate those funds to programs.

- Economic development agency
- Civic organization
- Faith-based organization
- Labor union
- Workforce development program
- Legal services agency
- Philanthropic foundation
- Library
- Media/ communications provider
- **3.** A backbone organization with the capacity to coordinate the network's participation. Networks must have a backbone organization that has the capacity to facilitate the work of the network under this initiative (needs assessment, goal setting, action planning, strategy development, shared data collection, and resource development). This includes a staff person's paid time to carry out essential responsibilities such as:
  - Recruiting and orienting new member organizations to the network;
  - Guiding the implementation of a needs and strengths assessment, the subsequent goalsetting, and action planning;
  - Coordinating the implementation of agreedupon activities;
  - Convening, facilitating, and documenting regular network meetings, and following up on decisions and tasks;
  - Attending to the implementation and submission of agreed-upon data collection;
  - Keeping network members informed by providing regular updates; and ensuring that the activities of the network are promoted by the members; and
  - Participating in the technical assistance, as described below.

# **4. Commitment to participate in technical assistance.** The technical assistance consists of cross-network support (institutes, discussions on a virtual Community of Practice, webinars) for all five sites, and individual, network-specific support (coaching, customized TA). The selected networks are expected to participate in the core technical assistance activities (two institutes, monthly coaching, and the virtual CoP) and are encouraged to take advantage of additional offerings. Networks will receive support in prioritizing their TA needs and applying what they learn to their local context.

# Example 1

Network A's direct services have been focused on naturalization assistance and public awareness about immigrants as assets. They want to use the TA opportunity to more systematically connect their citizenship clients to ESOL and workforce development programs. They will identify and invite the local ESOL program(s) and community college to work together on a plan that may result in agreements for cross-referrals and co-sponsored workshops at the ESOL program about the naturalization process and the economic benefits of citizenship. Network A may also invite the ESOL programs to co-plan and participate in the Immigrants Day they organize every year in the community, perhaps also join their steering committee. They seek technical assistance for developing the cross-referral agreements and ways to build closer working relationship and for developing a workshop on economic benefits of citizenship as an ESOL lesson.

#### Example 2

Network B has been focused on building positive relationships between immigrants and receiving communities through communications, community events, and advocacy. Its board has representatives from the public and private sectors, including media, but ESOL programs have hardly figured in this work. This network wants to use the TA opportunity to forge more intentional and substantive connections between its work and local ESOL programs. Such connections could take the form of engaging receiving community members to help secure job placements and internships for ESOL learners, and as volunteer tutors and professional mentors. It could involve ESOL students helping to plan and implement community events and community improvement projects. In addition to developing an internship, mentoring or tutoring program, Network B seeks technical assistance for developing ESOL lessons that prepare immigrant adults to participate in and advocate for community improvement projects, as well as practical ways to track the network's impact.

#### Example 3

Network C is primarily a network of ESOL providers, some of whom also provide citizenship classes and naturalization assistance. Its board has representatives from local government, employers, college, health care provider, and labor union. To date, they have not collaborated with the local school district or focused on parent engagement. They want to use the TA opportunity to develop a parent engagement initiative that might entail offering a series of lessons for ELL parents to encourage and guide them how to navigate the local school system, advocate for their children, and boost their children's vocabulary development and reading skills. They will engage the district's Parent Resource Center in planning the initiative with interested member programs and their ESOL students. In addition to broadening their network, they seek technical assistance for identifying and adapting existing parent education materials for ELL parents into interactive self-contained lessons, as well as practical ways to track its impact.

Go to
http://tinyurl.com/k566q4y
for a one-page description to
share with partners

#### Example 4

Network D's membership is largely composed of labor union-sponsored ESOL programs and immigrant advocacy organizations. This network wants to use the TA opportunity to broaden its focus to include postsecondary education and training opportunities. They plan to align their classes with a local AEFLAfunded program that offers college transition classes. As well, they want to broaden their programmatic offering to include citizenship and civic participation within the ESOL classes and network-sponsored activities. They are interested in using technology to accelerate students' learning.

#### IV. Technical Assistance Activities

Five networks of organizations will be selected by February 28, 2014 through a national, open, and competitive application process. They will receive technical assistance over two years from leading immigrant integration and ESOL experts (World Education, its partners, and other experts) to strengthen local networks' operations and ability to better facilitate immigrants' linguistic, economic, and civic integration. The types of TA were described on page 4.

The selected networks are required to send the Coordinator and three representatives to a two-day kickoff institute to be held in Washington DC in March 2014, and a second institute in late fall 2015. Expenses for their travel, lodging, and per diems will be covered by World Education.

## V. Application Process & Timeline

The application process has three stages: 1) A preliminary application that screens for eligibility; 2) A full application; and 3) Interviews with the finalists. The preliminary application is designed to screen applicants' eligibility and interest through a streamlined process. Eligible applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. All submissions will be electronic.

# **Instructions to Submit the Preliminary Application**

The preliminary application available at <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NINA2013">https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NINA2013</a> asks the applicants to:

- State the network's mission, history, and goals;
- Describe the network's targeted immigrant and receiving communities and what is known about their demographic profiles;
- List their network's member organizations, including the participating AEFLA program;
- Describe the lead AEFLA-funded program's ESOL services by level and class hours per week as well as the support services it offers to students;
- Describe the mission and core strengths and services of the backbone organization;
- State the name and paid hours of the network Coordinator or point of contact; and
- Indicate the network Coordinator's commitment to participate, over two years, in the technical assistance.

Informational Webinar	Tuesday, December 3, 2:30-4:00 PM ET
All applicants are encouraged to attend.	Register at http://ninacallwebinar.eventbrite.com
Preliminary applications due	Friday, December 20, 2013
Preliminary applicants notified	Friday January 10, 2014
Full applications due	Friday January 31, 2014
Interviews with finalists	February 12-14, 2014
Applicants notified	February 28, 2014
Kick-off institute	April, 2014

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