



Skilled Immigrant Integration Program (SIIP) Request for Proposals

World Education Services (WES) Global Talent Bridge's Skilled Immigrant Integration Program (SIIP) offers communities an opportunity to leverage support from WES and its national partners and to join a network of communities working to promote the economic mobility of internationally trained immigrants and refugees. SIIP communities comprise local, regional, or state alliances between public and private organizations, including employers, who have joined together to serve internationally trained immigrants and refugees.

Program Overview

WES Global Talent Bridge seeks communities committed to accelerating the creation and expansion of tested and promising approaches that promote the inclusion of internationally trained immigrants and refugees. Communities in the 2022–2023 program will have the opportunity to join a focused cohort with customized training, coaching, and technical assistance (TA) to advance their state and local efforts. SIIP communities are included in a larger community of practice comprised of the various communities participating that year. The 2022-2023 cohort will also participate in WES's active alumni network of past SIIP communities that share their continued progress, resources, and peer-networking expertise.

Communities are invited to apply for participation in one focused cohort. Each cohort, comprising three to four communities, will develop shared outcomes that align across all the communities participating in the 12-month program.

WES invites communities to apply for one of the following focus areas which will be led by a TA provider who will guide the cohort and support the community in networking within **the larger WES alumni network**.

The focus areas are as follows:

- Creating Career Navigation Tools and Resources
- Advancing and Retaining Internationally Skilled Employees (A-RISE)
- Building Workforce Board Partnerships
- Developing Contextualized Digital Skills Opportunities

For more information, see the Thematic Cohort Overview section of this document.



Through this opportunity, WES expects selected communities to convene an engaged state or local network focused on achieving well-defined one-year outcomes with the support of TA providers. WES Global Talent Bridge will commit staff time and expertise to coordinate the program, provide training and support, and connect new and previous SIIP cohorts for peer learning and collaboration.

Selected communities will receive:

- Monthly group coaching sessions facilitated by national subject matter experts
- One-on-one coaching provided by WES Global Talent Bridge staff, TA providers, and SIIP alumni organizations, throughout the program period
- Consultation with WES Global Talent Bridge staff to identify measurable and achievable outcomes that can be supported by SIIP TA providers
- Access to participation in a two-day SIIP national convening to connect with the SIIP network, engage TA partners, and clarify SIIP cohort goals and outcomes (location TBD).
- Four interactive virtual training sessions with WES Global Talent Bridge and other national partners on topics related to internationally trained immigrant and refugee inclusion
- Quarterly cross-cohort calls with WES Global Talent Bridge and participating communities to share ideas and provide updates on the progress of local efforts
- A virtual platform to collaborate with SIIP's alumni network of 32 state and local communities

Program Criteria and Commitment

Communities must commit to engaging fully in the training and technical assistance provisions outlined above. Communities will be expected to actively exchange ideas, share best practices, and engage with TA providers and other communities participating in the program.

SIIP seeks to include communities that represent a range of geographic and demographic characteristics and areas of focus. Communities will be chosen based on criteria including:

- Evidence of strong leadership and commitment to innovative initiatives
- A robust network of multi-sector stakeholders that is inclusive of immigrant and refugee led organizations and impacted communities, leaders, and networks
- Commitment to supporting a rigorous program evaluation process
- Strategic alignment with **WES Global Talent Bridge's mission and goals**



Past cohorts include stakeholders from:

- State and local government
- Chambers of commerce and employers
- Workforce development entities and workforce boards
- Adult educators and ESOL providers
- Higher education institutions
- Refugee resettlement agencies

The program requires a lead organization that will act as the primary point of contact for WES and will coalesce, convene, and support the network, and to engage with WES Global Talent Bridge and TA providers.

Applications with a lead agency anchored in state or local government will receive preference.

Participating communities commit to the following:

- Each community will commit to achieving the shared outcomes developed in partnership with their cohort over the course of the program period
- Communities are required to participate in all program activities including monthly calls, quarterly trainings, and the SIIP convening
- Communities agree to participate in a rigorous program evaluation process over the course of the program

Members of each cohort are expected to participate fully in all program activities and commit to making progress toward the cohort's shared goals.



Program Timeline and Support

WES Global Talent Bridge will select a limited number of communities for this program. The provision of training and TA will begin in August 2021 and end in July 2022. Customized TA from WES Global Talent Bridge and subject matter experts will be provided through monthly calls and regular check-ins with WES Global Talent Bridge staff and national experts.

The program application timeline is as follows:

Key Milestone	Anticipated Timing
RFP Release Date: Application Period Begins	June 13, 2022
SIIP Call for Information	June 30, 2022, 3:00 p.m. EDT
Q & A Document Distributed to Applicants	TBD (following SIIP Call for Information)
Application Deadline	July 15, 2022
Communities Selected	August 1, 2022

WES Global Talent Bridge will communicate any changes to this timeline via email.

Inquiries and Updates

To apply for SIIP, **complete this application** by July 15, 2022.

Communities may be asked to participate in a brief screening call as part of the selection process. WES Global Talent Bridge will host a Call for Information on June 30, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. EDT. Interested communities are encouraged to join the call. **Register for the information session here.**

Thematic Cohort Overview

Thematic cohorts are each led by TA providers ([see About Us section for more information](#)) and focus on the following areas:

- **Creating Career Navigation Tools and Resources:** Building comprehensive resources that support the career advancement of internationally trained immigrants and refugees
 - Focus areas: Existing tools that provide guidance on credentialing, labor market demand, educational options, and alternative career pathways; the creation of stronger networks through the development of pathways tools
 - Led by TA provider Hillary Gardner, project consultant for WES Global Talent Bridge, and supported by WES Global Talent Bridge staff
- **Advancing and Retaining Internationally Skilled Employees (A-RISE):** Identifying opportunities to partner with local employers to promote upskilling initiatives for internationally trained incumbent workers who are underemployed
 - Focus areas:
 - Identifying local employers and promising employer sectors
 - Best practices in employer engagement
 - Supporting employers in developing a strategic upskill model for internationally trained professionals
 - Collaborating with adult education and community college partners to support the model
 - Led by TA provider Anson Green, senior manager for economic opportunity at Tyson Foods, and supported by WES Global Talent Bridge staff
- **Building Workforce Board Partnerships:** Partnering with local workforce boards to raise awareness of the specific needs of internationally trained jobseekers and identify opportunities for collaboration
 - Focus areas: Funding options, collaboration opportunities, and current priorities in workforce development to improve the infrastructure that supports internationally educated immigrants and refugees; Sector- specific strategies and how they inform training and high road partnerships; Recent strategic investments through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) that are intended to create good jobs in communities across the U.S.
 - Led by TA provider Brooke Valle, senior consultant for WES Global Talent Bridge, and supported by WES Global Talent Bridge staff
- **Developing Contextualized Digital Skills Opportunities:** Identifying opportunities to serve internationally trained workers through the Digital Equity Act and build customized programs that meet the professional needs of immigrants and refugees

- Focus areas: Engaging with the state Digital Equity Planning process to ensure that the interests of internationally educated immigrants and refugees are reflected in the plan and its associated grants; Opportunities to expand local digital skills programs to serve the professional and educational needs of internationally educated immigrants and refugees
- Led by TA provider Amanda Bergson-Shilcock of National Skills Coalition and supported by WES Global Talent Bridge staff

Thematic Cohort Activities

Thematic cohorts will participate in monthly meetings, as well as quarterly cross-cohort meetings, quarterly trainings, and the annual SIIP convening.

Monthly meetings will provide an opportunity for communities in each thematic cohort to build relationships, engage with subject matter experts, and identify strategies to achieve their goals. In these virtual meetings, thematic cohorts will discuss issues and opportunities relevant to their areas of focus, including:

- Creating Career Navigation Tools and Resources Cohort
 - Evaluating current local- and national-level pathways tools
 - Researching content areas for the development of a pathways tool in in-demand fields
 - Participating in data-driven discussions to identify community needs and skills gaps
 - Collaborating with SIIP alumni communities on best practices for the dissemination of pathways tools or the establishment of new resources
 - Incorporating resources for internationally trained immigrants and refugees in program development and classroom instruction
- Advancing and Retaining Internationally Skilled Employees (A-RISE) Cohort
 - Using local job market information to identify “best bet” sectors for immigrant and refugee workers, such as those that employ a higher share of immigrant and refugee workers, have identifiable pathways for career advancement for immigrant and refugee employees, or prioritize multilingual assets as added value
 - Promoting employer partnerships focused on supporting the advancement of internationally trained incumbent workers within the workforce
 - Creating an engagement toolkit to support SIIP providers in outreach to employers
 - Developing tools for employers to support internationally trained workers (e.g., skills assessment surveys, community resources, ELL programming)
 - Understanding and evaluating international credentials
- Building Workforce Board Partnerships Cohort

- Understanding the local workforce development landscape, including agency structures, interagency collaborations, governance, funding and compliance requirements, and common success metrics
- Amplifying awareness of the specific workforce needs and barriers faced by internationally trained immigrants and refugees and identifying opportunities to address them through partnerships
- Highlighting promising practices in customized workforce programming for internationally trained immigrants and refugees
- Exploring options to take advantage of equity and job quality initiatives, sector strategies, and opportunities created by ARPA and IJA investments to better serve the immigrant community
- Developing Contextualized Digital Skills Opportunities Cohort
 - Developing partnerships that are aligned with increasing digital skills in immigrant and refugee communities
 - Identifying in-demand digital skills in local job markets
 - Establishing model programs and promising practices for advancing contextualized digital skills
 - Promoting opportunities for digital skills programs to close racial equity gaps and ensure that immigrant and refugee expertise is fully recognized
 - Securing funding sources to support contextualized digital skills programming

Quarterly cross-cohort meetings will include members of all thematic cohorts and will focus on capacity-building for all SIIP projects

Quarterly training sessions are led by national experts on key issues for internationally trained immigrants and refugees.

Past topics have included: Innovative Funding Strategies to Build Programming for Internationally Trained Immigrants and Refugees; Engaging Immigrant and Refugee Networks; and English Language Upskilling for Internationally Trained and Educated Immigrants and Refugees.

The Annual SIIP Convening will take place on October 24–25, 2022, in Washington, DC.

WES will sponsor at least one participant from each community to travel to the Annual SIIP Convening.



About Us

WES Global Talent Bridge

World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit social enterprise dedicated to helping international students, immigrants, and refugees achieve their educational and career goals in the United States and Canada. For more than 45 years, WES has set the standard of excellence in the field of international academic credential evaluation. Through WES Global Talent Bridge, the organization joins with institutional partners, community-based organizations, and policymakers to help immigrants and refugees who hold international credentials fully utilize their talents and education to achieve their academic and professional goals.

SIIP Technical Assistance Providers

Hillary Gardner is a project consultant for WES Global Talent Bridge. She assists with special projects related to SIIP and Career Pathways e-guides. Hillary is a former director of the Center for Immigrant Education and Training at LaGuardia Community College, where she led the New York City Welcome Back Center for internationally trained health care professionals. For many years, she taught ESOL at The City University of New York, and authored numerous curricula and articles on contextualized learning for adult English language learners with a focus on innovative civics, writing, and health literacy instruction.

Anson Green is a workforce development trailblazer leading economic opportunity efforts at Tyson Foods and developing pathways for Tyson's 121,000 front-line team members. Prior to Tyson, as Texas Adult Education State Director, Anson led the transformation of the over \$80M Texas federal Adult Education program at the Texas Workforce Commission into a solution for Texans seeking responsive education and training services to meet their college and career aspirations. In 2020 Anson was the Coalition on Adult Basic Education Outstanding Administrator of the Year. While at the Alamo Colleges District, Anson directed a specialized training center in San Antonio's historic Westside delivering bilingual and integrated education and training solutions. Anson sits on numerous national workgroups and advisory committees and loves charting new ventures to build employer innovations around workforce training, digital literacy, adult education, and services to immigrants and refugees.

Amanda Bergson-Shilcock is a Senior Fellow at National Skills Coalition where she leads the organization's work on adult education and workforce policies to expand opportunities for US-born and immigrant adults. Throughout her career, Amanda has worked with state and federal policymakers and skills advocates to develop policy solutions that address the challenges facing adult learners and jobseekers, including immigrant workers. As a workforce development expert for more than a decade, Amanda has authored numerous publications and policy recommendations—on



immigrant integration, workforce development, and adult education—which have helped educate policymakers, journalists, and the public, and inform public policy at the state and federal levels. Her policy expertise, insights, and commentary have been cited and published in local and national media outlets, including TIME, Fortune, BBC News, Inside Higher Ed, POLITICO, Business Insider, The Wall Street Journal, and HR Dive.

Brooke Valle is a seasoned non-profit executive, workforce development leader and strategy consultant known in the field for her contributions around job quality, equity, and systems change. She is currently an independent consultant but most recently served as the Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer for the San Diego Workforce Partnership, the workforce board for San Diego County where she led the organization’s strategic planning, business process transformation, and policy advocacy efforts. She also oversaw a variety of special projects from Income Sharing Agreement work to WIOA Pay for Performance and immigrant and refugee welcoming which leverage research, evaluation, and technology to drive outcome-focused approaches for equity and income mobility.

Prior to her time at the Workforce Partnership, Brooke served as a Deloitte strategy and operations consulting leader to the federal government where she helped agencies implement innovative approaches to solving some of the toughest challenges in areas such as consular affairs, international law enforcement, narcotics, and the intelligence community. Brooke also served as the Associate Director for Deloitte’s Latin American operations where she led strategic initiatives including business process re-engineering, new market entry, and acquisitions across 15 countries.