



The IMPRINT Coalition's Recommendations to the White House Task Force on New Americans

On behalf of the IMPRINT Coalition, a national coalition working to advance public policies and promising models that support the economic inclusion of internationally trained immigrants and refugees, we submit these recommendations based on our collective expertise in policy, education, and direct service provision to immigrants, refugees, and displaced people in the United States who hold credentials earned abroad.

Immigrants and refugees are critical to the U.S. workforce, making up **one in six workers**. The COVID-19 pandemic put a spotlight on the role of immigrant frontline workers who fill openings in essential sectors—such as medical and health care, telecommunications, information technology systems, defense, food and agriculture, and transportation and logistics—and are vital to the health of U.S. communities. In February 2023, the American Immigration Council released research highlighting **the key role immigrants play in 13 states' health care workforces**.

Yet the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates that two million immigrants and refugees who hold bachelor's degrees or higher are either unemployed or underemployed in the U.S.; of these, at least 60 percent hold credentials earned in another country. Systemic barriers—including restrictive licensing laws, lack of recognition of credentials earned abroad, limited community navigator programs, and inadequate workforce training and contextualized English language programs—impede the economic mobility of internationally trained immigrants and refugees. This results in approximately **\$39.4 billion in forgone earnings and more than \$10 billion in unrealized federal, state, and local taxes annually**.

In December 2022, the U.S. Census Bureau reported **the largest single-year increase in net international migration to the U.S. since 2010**. This increase represents a critical opportunity for the U.S. workforce development system to enhance its support services to immigrants and refugees.

Systemic Barriers to Economic Inclusion

Recognition of Credentials Earned in Another Country

The lack of recognition of credentials earned abroad is a significant barrier facing immigrants and refugees trained in regulated occupations. The National Conference of State Legislatures reported in 2020 that occupational licensing affected 25 percent of the U.S. workforce, an **increase of 400 percent** from 60 years prior.

In response, a growing number of states have enacted, or are considering, occupational licensing reforms to ensure that credentials earned abroad are recognized. The **IMPRINT Policy Tracker** monitors many of these efforts.

Although states have jurisdiction over licensing regulation, the federal government can incentivize states to reform occupational licensing laws and provide more equitable pathways to licensure for internationally trained immigrants and refugees.

Access to Workforce Training and Development

The current workforce development system prioritizes job placement over skill matching. A **recent report** published by the Project on Workforce surveyed 131 organizations that offered workforce development programs to immigrants and refugees; only 5 percent of the organizations surveyed focused on helping immigrants translate their credentials and experience from other countries. Internationally trained immigrants are often wrongly tracked into lower-level community college programs, non-credit coursework, or even high school equivalency programs. As a result, many immigrants and refugees work in occupations that are not commensurate with their education and experience.

English Language Learning

English language proficiency is another barrier many immigrants and refugees face as they seek to enter the U.S. workforce. Despite the importance of English language proficiency, federally supported programs currently meet the needs of just **4 percent** of adult English language learners. Moreover, in the case of internationally trained and educated immigrants and refugees, many English language programs do not offer the opportunity to participants to acquire and practice the contextualized English language skills necessary for them to rejoin their occupations.

Recommendations: Workforce Training and Development

- Workforce development agencies need more federal support to address the unique challenges facing internationally trained and educated immigrant and refugee job seekers, including credential recognition, development of soft skills, and access to specialized technical training. The Department of Labor (DOL), the Department of Education (DOE), and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) should coordinate their efforts more closely to strengthen and expand adult education and workforce development programs and ensure that they are equipped to serve immigrant and refugee internationally trained and educated workers. Additionally, DOL and DOE should revise current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance measures and incentivize workforce agencies and job centers to match internationally educated immigrants and refugees with jobs that are commensurate with their experience rather than focusing on rapid-attachment strategies.
- The U.S. federal government should increase its investment in workforce development and adult education programs designed to meet the needs of internationally trained and educated immigrant and refugee workers. Programs should build on existing effective models that promote career pathways that draw on the qualifications and experience of immigrants and refugees. Moreover, the federal government should provide information to immigrant service providers regarding how to apply for WIOA and other relevant federal funding.
- The U.S. government should ensure equitable access to federally funded apprenticeship programs by including contextualized English language learning opportunities.

- The DOE and DOL should expand technical assistance and resources to local workforce agencies to adequately serve internationally trained and educated immigrants and refugees. Greater investments should also be made in pre-apprenticeship programs and work-based learning models that are tailored to immigrants and refugees who are English language learners.
- The U.S. government should launch a national initiative to improve career pathways for immigrants and refugees who hold international credentials in health-related fields. Relevant federal agencies, including HHS, DOL, and DOE, should promote access to health care career counseling and training opportunities to support the reentry of internationally trained health workers into the health workforce, including through Health Profession Opportunity Grants.
- In 2021, the Biden administration published **Executive Order 14035** on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce. The order defines inclusion as “the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds.” In accordance with this order, the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of the Treasury (USDT) and DOL must ensure that the federal investments in workforce development in the CHIPS and Science Act, the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act intentionally include eligible immigrant and refugee communities.
- In 2022, Congress introduced the **Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act of 2022**, the **International Medical Graduates Assistance Act of 2022**, and the **Professional’s Access to Health (PATH) Workforce Integration Act of 2022**. These bills aimed to address health care workforce shortages across the U.S. and reduce employment barriers faced by immigrant and refugee health workers. The IMPRINT Coalition urges the Biden administration to support the reintroduction of these bills.
- In program year 2020, the **Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program** authorized under WIOA Title II and the **Employment Service program** authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act served less than 1 million English language learners. Yet the U.S. Census estimates that there are **nearly 26 million individuals with limited English proficiency in the U.S.** DOE and DOL should include targeted outreach strategies to facilitate the enrollment of immigrants and refugees in adult education and workforce development programs.

Recommendations: Language Learning and Access

- Congress should invest in strengthening English language learner programs to better serve immigrants and refugees, specifically through contextualized English language programs.
- Congress should invest in English language instruction for students at varying education levels, including those who have met NRS level 6 competency but need additional support to enter the workforce. The lack of English language programs beyond NRS level 6 is a significant barrier for

internationally trained and educated immigrants and refugees who seek to resume their careers in specialized fields and need training in sector-specific vocabulary.

- Congress should increase investment in data collection for local governments and community-based organizations to increase language access. Using localized data on a municipal level will improve language access and English language learning programs.
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Recommendations: Research and Data

- DOE should analyze existing National Reporting System (NRS) WIOA Title II (AEFLA) data on individuals who have credentials from another country. Cross-tabulating this data with other demographic factors and program outcomes already being collected by DOE could clarify the factors correlated with learner success.
- DOE should collect data on the licensure and employment outcomes of immigrants and refugees. In the context of broader efforts to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce, federal agencies should work with state licensing agencies to collect and distribute existing data on the licensure, employment, and retention of immigrants and refugees with international degrees and credentials; and work with state agencies to coordinate strategies for tracking the career pathways of internationally trained immigrants and refugees.
- To fully represent the diversity of experiences and backgrounds across immigrant and refugee communities, and to identify the barriers faced by different groups within these communities, the White House Task Force on New Americans should identify existing indicators of immigrant inclusion—such as employment data and income data—by race, gender, ethnicity, and place of education, as relevant.

Recommendation: Establishing a Federal Office of New Americans

- To ensure the continued inclusion of immigrants and refugees in federal workforce policies, programming, and funding, and to facilitate the continued coordination of stakeholder engagement with immigrant and refugee communities, the White House Task Force on New Americans should encourage the establishment of a federal Office of New Americans (ONA). The ONA could bolster support for immigrant communities, immigrant-serving organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. A federal ONA would be well positioned to support state ONAs by centralizing resources, investing in local immigrant community navigator programs, and ensuring that information about eligibility requirements for services is easily accessible to immigrants and refugees across the U.S.

Model Programs

World Education Services (WES) has compiled a database of nearly 150 programs and services that foster the economic and professional advancement of internationally trained immigrants and refugees in the U.S. Model programs and services in the database include:

Training and Career Support Programs

- **African Bridge Network (ABN)**
Based in Massachusetts, ABN supports the workforce inclusion of internationally educated and trained immigrants and refugees in the Commonwealth through mentorship programs, career guidance, and professional networking.
- **Emily Griffith Technical College CAREERS Program**
The CAREERS Program at Emily Griffith Technical College in Colorado supports internationally trained immigrants and refugees through career coaching and job search assistance, engagement and networking, and scholarships to cover expenses related to the job search, such as education and training tuition and supplies, exam and licensing fees, evaluation and translation of foreign degrees, and tools for school or work.
- **The Foreign-Trained Professionals Program at Miami Dade College**
The Foreign-Trained Professionals Program offers tailored services to internationally trained and educated immigrants and refugees seeking to rejoin their fields in the U.S. The program offers immigrants and refugees the possibility of quickly resuming their careers by offering support with credential evaluation, awarding credits for work experience earned in another country, and awarding Miami Dade College certificates or degrees.
- **Synergy Texas**
Synergy Texas was launched in 2021 as a partnership between Austin Community College, ESC 5, Restore Education, San Jacinto College, Ysleta ISD. The initiative aims to provide immigrant-serving organizations in Texas with the data, research, resources, guides, tool kits, and other essential information necessary to adequately serve internationally trained and educated immigrants and refugees enrolled in adult education and literacy programs in the state.
- **Upwardly Global**
Upwardly Global is a national organization that helps immigrant and refugee workers find commensurate employment in high demand industries including health care, tech, finance, engineering, and business operations.
- **Washington Academy for International Medical Graduates (WAIMG)**
WAIMG supports the inclusion of international medical graduates (IMGs) in the health care system of the state of Washington through academic coaching, career counseling, and by facilitating opportunities for clinical experience. Most of the IMGs served by the organization are immigrant or refugee physicians who obtained their medical degree outside the U.S.
- **The Welcome Back Initiative**
The Welcome Back Initiative is a national network of service centers that helps internationally trained health workers already living in the U.S. rejoin their professions by preparing them for recertification through educational interventions and employment counseling.

- **The Welcoming Center**

The Welcoming Center’s International Professionals Program is an intensive training program designed to help internationally trained immigrants in Pennsylvania prepare to apply to and interview for jobs. Some of the subjects covered in the training include résumé writing, researching employers and applying for jobs, interviewing skills, and building a professional network.

Model Funding Mechanisms

- **The International Medical Graduate (IMG) Program in Minnesota**

The Minnesota legislature established the IMG Program and its funding mechanism in 2015 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 71, Article 8, Section 17 to address barriers to practice and facilitate pathways to assist IMG integration into the Minnesota health care delivery system. Administered by the Minnesota Department of Health, the program aims to increase access to primary care in rural and underserved areas of the state.

- **New York Professional Pathways Program**

The New York Department of State ONA launched the Professional Pathways Program in 2021. The program aims to support internationally trained and educated immigrants through customized job coaching and career training resources. The program provides internationally trained and educated immigrants and refugees trainings and courses relevant to their professional path, job interview preparation, and support with re-credentialing. The program ultimately aims to place participants in jobs commensurate with their education and experience.

- **Refugee Career Pathways (RCP) Program**

The RCP program was established by the Office of Refugee Resettlement in 2018 to support refugees beginning professional careers in the U.S. Unlike other existing job training programs for refugees, RCP grantees assist refugee participants by working with them to develop career pathways and personalized long-term career development plans for career entry and advancement. RCP grantees provide an array of services, including re-credentialing and credential recognition, vocational English language training, and career coaching and mentoring.



About the IMPRINT Coalition

The IMPRINT Coalition is made up of service providers, advocates, and educational institutions committed to removing barriers to economic mobility for immigrants and refugees. Learn more about IMPRINT members:

- **American Immigration Council**
The American Immigration Council works to strengthen America by shaping how America thinks about and acts towards immigrants and immigration and by working toward a more fair and just immigration system that opens its doors to those in need of protection and unleashes the energy and skills that immigrants bring.
- **Church World Service**
Since 1946, Church World Service has supported refugees, immigrants, and other displaced individuals, in addition to providing sustainable relief and development solutions to communities that wrestle with hunger and poverty.
- **Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education**
CCCIE builds the capacity of community colleges to accelerate immigrant and refugee success and raises awareness of the essential role these colleges play in advancing immigrant integration in our communities.
- **Emily Griffith Technical College**
Emily Griffith Technical College is a nationally accredited public college where students can propel their lives forward and up. Students can prepare for the GED, improve English skills, or choose one of the college's dynamic career preparation programs that blend workplace learning and classroom training.
- **Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services**
ETSS is a community-based 501(c)(3) organization that helps new arrivals from over 50 countries establish roots and gain self-sufficiency in Central Ohio through programs and services that encourage community integration, sustained employment, education, health, and strong families. Staff members speak over 30 languages to provide individuals and families the services they need.
- **George Mason University, Institute for Immigration Research**
The Institute for Immigration Research (IIR) is a multidisciplinary research institute at George Mason University. The IIR's mission is to produce valid, reliable, and objective multidisciplinary research on immigrants and immigration to the U.S. and to disseminate this information through peer-reviewed academic journals, as well as in print and digital formats that make this research easily accessible to policymakers, the media, the business community, and the general public.
- **Global Cleveland**
Global Cleveland is a non-profit organization dedicated to growing Northeast Ohio's economy by welcoming and connecting international people to opportunities and fostering a more inviting community for those seeking a place to call home.

- **Global Detroit**

Global Detroit is a national leader in advocating for and executing strategies to drive equitable local, regional, and statewide economic growth through immigrant inclusion. Global Detroit continues to develop and lead programs centered on global talent, entrepreneurship, and neighborhoods with the aim of demonstrating the programs' potential for large-scale impact.
- **Global Talent**

Global Talent helps college-educated immigrants and refugees start or reclaim their professional careers in the U.S. Its mission is to provide career coaching and resources for college-educated refugees and immigrants, so they can effectively compete for high-quality professional positions, and employers can reap the benefits of their diverse expertise.
- **Immigrant Learning Center**

ILC of Malden, Massachusetts, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways: The English Language Program provides free, year-round English classes to immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston to help them become successful workers, parents and community members; the Public Education Institute informs Americans about the economic and social contributions of immigrants to our society; and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.
- **International Institute of Buffalo**

The mission of the International Institute of Buffalo is to make Western New York a better place for, and because of, immigrants and refugees. The Institute offers refugee resettlement and employment programs; provides services to survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking; offers translation and interpretation services to break down barriers; presents global education programs for students, adults, and businesses; and hosts international visitors.
- **International Refugee Assistance Project**

IRAP organizes law students and lawyers to develop and enforce a set of legal and human rights for refugees and other displaced persons. Mobilizing direct legal aid, litigation, and systemic advocacy, IRAP serves the world's most persecuted individuals and empowers the next generation of human rights leaders.
- **Jewish Family and Career Services**

Jewish Family and Career Services in Louisville, Kentucky, works to expand possibilities for each person and every family to meet life's challenges with confidence.
- **Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition**

MIRC's mission is to improve the legal, social, and economic conditions experienced by Maine's immigrants—enhancing their lives while strengthening Maine—through advocacy, information sharing, and collaboration both through and among its state network of 85 member organizations.
- **Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition**

MIRA's vision is a Commonwealth—and a nation—where all can thrive, no matter where they came from or how they got here, and all can fully participate in their communities' social, economic, and civic life.

- **New Mainers Resource Center, Portland Adult Education**
NMRC's mission is to support Maine's economic development by meeting employers' demands for a skilled and culturally diverse workforce, to grow Maine's economy by fully utilizing the skills of professionals trained abroad, to help employers hire and retain qualified workers for a skilled and diverse workforce, and to help Maine's immigrants and refugees overcome barriers and re-enter their professions.
- **OneAmerica**
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.
- **One Refugee**
One Refugee was created to assist highly motivated individuals from a refugee background who are attending college for the first time. Since 2014, One Refugee has provided one-on-one mentoring and support to over 600 college students from a refugee background.
- **The Puget Sound Welcome Back Center at Highline College**
The Puget Sound Welcome Back Center builds bridges between the pool of internationally trained professionals living in Washington and the need for linguistically and culturally competent professional services. Its goal is to assist these professionals to make the best use of their professional skills through respectful, innovative, and individualized career counseling and educational services.
- **Refugee Advocacy Lab**
Refugee Advocacy Lab's mission is to grow the diverse constituency for U.S. leadership on refugee protection. The organization accomplishes its mission by building partnerships, supporting inclusive policies, and developing communications products for the common good.
- **Refugee Congress**
Refugee Congress is a national nonpartisan organization built and led by former refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable migrants to promote the well-being and dignity of all vulnerable migrants. With members in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, Refugee Congress uses its members' voices and experiences to inform and influence decision-makers on critical issues that affect our communities.
- **Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA)**
ReWA is a non-profit, multi-ethnic organization that promotes inclusion, independence, personal leadership, and strong communities by providing refugee and immigrant women and their families with culturally and linguistically appropriate services. ReWA advocates for social justice, public policy changes, and equal access to services while respecting cultural values and the right to self-determination.
- **Restore Education**
Restore Education is a local 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to transforming the lives of individuals, their families, and our community through education. Restore Education offers a continuum of services from basic literacy and English language learning to high school equivalency, career training, and college support. The organization's mission is to restore

individuals' potential for success on their path to college and career through the transformative power of education.

- **Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning**

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning's mission is to empower people and organizations to succeed across languages and cultures.

- **Upwardly Global**

Upwardly Global's mission is to eliminate employment barriers for immigrant and refugee professionals and advance the inclusion of their skills into the U.S. economy.

- **Washington Academy for International Medical Graduates**

WAIMG is both addressing and breaking down barriers that prevent Washington international medical graduates from accomplishing their professional and medical career goals.

- **Welcome Back Initiative**

A Welcome Back Center is an international health care worker's assistance center. It serves as an information and resource center for people who received their formal education and training outside of the U.S., who live in the center's respective state or area, and who would like to enter the health care sector in the U.S. Its mission is to build a bridge between the pool of internationally trained health workers living in the U.S. and the need for linguistically and culturally competent health services in underserved communities.

- **The Welcoming Center**

The Welcoming Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Philadelphia that promotes inclusive economic growth through immigrant integration. Founded in 2003, TWC works to open doors of economic opportunity for immigrants of all education and skill levels and build immigrants' individual and collective agency to address barriers to integration and well-being. TWC collaborates with its participants, a broad spectrum of organizations, and public and private sector institutions to advance learning, shape policy, and grow the economy.

- **World Education Services Global Talent Bridge**

WES Global Talent Bridge is dedicated to helping internationally trained immigrants and refugees fully utilize their talents and education in Canada and the United States. We join with institutional partners, community-based organizations, and policymakers to help immigrants and refugees use their skills, leverage their training, and achieve their academic and professional goals.

