

Maryland Workforce System Survey:

*Serving Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
Individuals and Skilled Immigrants*



Skilled Immigrant
Task Force

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Introduction

Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) prohibits discrimination against individuals relating to the delivery of services. The regulations released by the United States Department of Labor require the formulation of a plan to ensure non-discrimination in the services provided by Maryland's workforce system. A major component of this plan focuses on services provided to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Individuals and skilled immigrants.

Over the past year, Maryland's Skilled Immigrant Task Force has been meeting to address the needs of Maryland's skilled immigrant population. This survey was created as a part of the Task Force's on-going work.

Purpose

The purpose of this Workforce System Survey is to assess how Maryland's WIOA network serves skilled immigrants and LEP individuals. Responses will drive the creation of future technical assistance and cross training opportunities. Therefore, we are conducting a Workforce System Survey of the partners who make up Maryland's Workforce System. This survey is being sent to staff from the State's American Job Centers, Local Departments of Social Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Title II adult education service providers.

Notice for Survey Participants

The survey is anonymous to protect your rights as a participant. It is completely confidential and should only take a few minutes of your time. Again, the information will only be used to better inform how Maryland's workforce system can provide services to LEP Individuals and skilled immigrants. Thank you for your participation.

Definitions

For the purpose of the activity, the following terms are defined as follows:

Skilled Immigrant

A work-authorized foreign-born and foreign-trained worker with at least two (2) years of formal or informal education, training, or on the job experience that has led to special skills, training, knowledge, and/or abilities for certain types of work

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient. LEP individuals may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing).

Section I: Professional Demographics

1. Where do you work?

(Select one)

- American Job Center (DLLR or Title I local workforce area)
- Local Department of Social Services (LDSS)
- Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)
- WIOA Title II adult education provider

2. In which Local Workforce Development Area do you work?

(Select one)

- Anne Arundel County
- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Frederick County
- Lower Shore
 - Somerset County
 - Wicomico County
 - Worcester County
- Mid-Maryland
 - Carroll County
 - Howard County
- Montgomery County
- Prince George's County
- Southern Maryland
 - Calvert County
 - Charles County
 - St. Mary's County
- Susquehanna
 - Cecil County
 - Harford County
- Upper Shore
 - Caroline County
 - Dorchester County
 - Kent County
 - Queen Anne's County
 - Talbot County
- Western Maryland
 - Allegany County
 - Garrett County
 - Washington County

3. Which of the following best describes your job function?

(Select one)

- Management or senior staff
- Staff who directly interact with customers/students
- Administrative staff who do not directly interact with customers/students
- None of the above

Section II: Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Definition:

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient. LEP individuals may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing).

4. How does your agency identify LEP individuals?

(Select all that apply)

- Assume limited English proficiency if communication seems impaired
- Formal assessment (TABE CLAS-E, TABE, CASAS, BEST Plus 2.0, BEST Literacy, etc.)
- Respond to individual requests for language assistance services
- Self-identification by the non-English speaker or LEP individual during intake
- Ask open-ended questions to determine language proficiency on the telephone or in person
- Use of “I Speak” language identification cards or posters
- Based on written material submitted to the agency (e.g. complaints)
- We have not identified non-English speakers or LEP individuals
- Other (Please specify): _____

5. How do LEP individuals report hearing about your organization and services?

(Select all that apply)

- Heard about services from immigrant-serving organizations and community groups
- Heard about services from friends or family (word of mouth)
- Saw flyers/informational material in public locations
- Saw online posting of available services/programs (websites, Maryland Workforce Exchange)
- Saw Social Media pages/posts
- Heard about services from media specifically targeting LEP or foreign language-speaking populations, such as newspapers or radio programs
- Received notices about programs and/or activities from a school, college, or community service group
- Received an email about available services
- I don't know
- My organization has not served LEP individuals
- Other (Please specify): _____

6. If you collect and record primary language data from individuals, where is the information stored?

(Select all that apply)

- Intake information/form
- Program application or database system
- Maryland Workforce Exchange
- This data is not collected

7. Identify non-English languages encountered at your organization or site:

(Select all that apply)

- Amharic (Ethiopia)
- Arabic (Middle East and North Africa)
- Bengali (Bangladesh and India)
- Burmese (Myanmar, formerly Burma)
- Chinese
- Dari (Afghanistan)
- Farsi (Iran)
- French
- German
- Haitian Creole
- Hindi (India)
- Italian
- Kinyarwanda (Rwanda)
- Korean
- Japanese
- Nepali
- Oromo (Ethiopia)
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Swahili (Eastern and Southeastern Africa)
- Tagalog (Philippines)
- Tigrinya (Eritrea, Ethiopia)
- Thai
- Urdu (Pakistan)
- Pashto (Afghanistan and Pakistan)
- Vietnamese
- Yiddish
- Other (Please specify): _____

8. What type of language assistance services have you utilized to serve customers?

(Select all that apply)

- LanguageLine/telephone interpretation
- Bilingual staff for interpretation (oral)
- Bilingual staff for translation (documents)
- Contracted interpreters (oral)
- Contracted translators (documents)
- Volunteer interpreters (provided by customer)
- Volunteer translators (provided by customer)
- Other (Please specify): _____

9. When is language assistance training available for staff at your organization?

(Select all that apply)

- Training was provided at the time of hire
- Training is provided periodically
- Training has not been provided
- Other (Please specify): _____

10. What outreach does your organization currently conduct to engage LEP individuals and immigrant communities in services?

(Select all that apply)

- Create relationships with immigrant community leaders
- Create relationships with immigrant-serving organizations for the purpose of customer referral
- Post flyers/informational material in public locations
- Post flyers/informational material in public locations in languages other than English
- Online posting of available services/programs (websites, Maryland Workforce Exchange)
- Publish information on media specifically targeting LEP or foreign language populations, such as newspapers or radio programs
- Send notices about programs and/or activities to schools, colleges, or community service groups
- Send emails about available services
- Social media pages/posts
- I don't know
- My organization does not conduct outreach to LEP individuals
- Other (Please specify): _____

11. What resources have you used to serve LEP individuals?

(Select all that apply)

- Onsite or referral to English as a Second Language/Adult Basic Education classes
- Referral to childcare services
- Referral to transportation services
- Provision of or referral to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, energy assistance, Temporary Cash Assistance/Refugee Cash Assistance, medical, or SSI services
- Maryland Workforce Exchange
- Referral to American Job Center workshops
- Having staff with immigrant-service expertise

- Having multilingual staff to assist customers
- Assistance with the professional licensing process
- Business services and/or employer connections
- Referral to relevant training programs
- Scholarships and/or financial assistance for training programs
- I have not utilized any resources to serve LEP individuals
- Other (Please specify): _____

12. Do you feel equipped with the skills and tools necessary to guide an LEP individual through the process of finding a job? Please explain.

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable to my job function
- Comment box: _____

13. In what ways do you think your organization could enhance services for LEP individuals?

(Select top five)

- Staff training on how to work with immigrants
- Staff training on how to work with LEP individuals
- Staff training on how to market immigrants to employers
- Increased outreach to immigrant communities
- Institute a Language Access Plan
- Staff training on the licensing process and credential evaluation
- Partner with immigrant serving non-profit organizations
- Hire culturally diverse staff
- Staff training on how to use interpretation and translation services
- Increase individualized services
- Develop strategies to reduce barriers (childcare, transportation, etc.)
- Hire staff to specifically work with immigrants
- Additional funding for services/programs
- I do not think services could be enhanced
- Other (Please specify): _____

14. What training or technical assistance do you require in order to improve service to LEP individual Maryland's workforce system?

Comment box: _____

Section III: Skilled Immigrants

Skilled Immigrant Definition:

A work-authorized foreign-born and foreign-trained worker with at least two (2) years of formal or informal education, training, or on the job experience that has led to special skills, training, knowledge, and/or abilities for certain types of work

15. Have you noticed skilled immigrants facing barriers to obtaining jobs in their field of study and/or sector of past experience?

- Yes
- No

(If “no,” skip to question 17).

16. What barriers have you noticed preventing skilled immigrants from obtaining jobs in their field of study and/or sector of past experience?

(Select the top 3 barriers)

- English language barrier
- Cultural barriers
- Difficulty with the licensing process
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Lack of work experience in the U.S.
- Lack of social and professional networks
- Lack of understanding of the U.S. job system
- Lack of U.S. education credential
- Immigrant difficulty promoting their own skills and experience
- Insufficient funds for licensing, training or higher education
- Poor interview skills
- Poorly crafted resumes
- Employer/workforce system difficulty in assessing foreign education and/or training
- Other (Please specify): _____

17. How does your organization engage with businesses on behalf of skilled immigrants?

(Select all that apply)

- Work with businesses to fill job vacancies with skilled immigrant labor
- Ask businesses to sit on workgroups or taskforces
- Facilitate visits to jobsites
- Encourage use of Maryland Workforce Exchange
- My organization does not engage with businesses on behalf of skilled immigrants
- My organization does not engage with businesses
- Other (Please specify) _____

18. Do you think skilled immigrants bring assets to the Maryland workforce?

- Yes
- No

(If “no,” skip to question 20).

19. What unique assets do you think skilled immigrants bring to the Maryland workforce?

(Select all that apply)

- Work experience
- Ability to speak other languages
- Creation of a labor pipeline
- Previous education
- Small Business/Entrepreneurship expertise
- Ability to diversify the workplace
- Motivation and work ethic
- Other (Please specify): _____

20. What resources have you used to serve skilled immigrants?

(Select all that apply)

- Onsite or referral to English as a Second Language/Adult Basic Education classes
- Referral to childcare services
- Referral to transportation services
- Provision of or referral to SNAP, energy assistance, TANF/RCA, medical, or SSI services
- Maryland Workforce Exchange
- Referral to American Job Center workshops
- Having staff with immigrant-service expertise
- Having multilingual staff to assist customers
- Referral to academic credential evaluation organizations
- Assistance with the professional licensing process
- Business services and/or employer connections
- Referral to relevant training programs
- Scholarships and/or financial assistance for training programs
- I have not utilized any resources to serve skilled immigrants
- Other (Please specify): _____

21. How could skilled immigrants be better connected to WIOA services?

(Select all that apply)

- Creation of a centralized online service hub
- Increased outreach to immigrant communities
- Partnerships with immigrant-serving organizations
- Incorporate education and training opportunity information into the intake process at AJC and LDSS locations
- Incorporation of Immigrant Navigators or staff specifically assigned to work with skilled immigrants
- Distribute English as a Second Language/training program lists to customers
- Translate vital documents into major, non-English languages
- Assistance with existing tools such as Maryland Workforce Exchange
- I do not think adjustments to the system are needed to better connect skilled immigrants to WIOA services
- Other (Please specify): _____

22. What types of collaboration would better assist you in serving skilled immigrants?

(Select two)

- Regular meetings between my organization's staff and those who serve skilled immigrants at other WIOA partner agencies
- Training from immigrant-serving organization's staff
- Training from State/local WIOA partner's staff
- Regular meetings with the leaders of immigrant communities
- Forum to share best practices
- Joint Professional Development trainings with WIOA partners and immigrant-serving organizations
- None of the above
- Other (Please specify): _____

23. How does your organization prepare skilled immigrants to engage with businesses?

(Select all that apply)

- Use of Maryland Workforce Exchange
- Mock interviews with potential employers
- Guest speaker appearances
- Specific workshops on the licensing process with industry professionals
- Job or Career Fairs
- My organization does not facilitate business engagement for skilled immigrants
- Other (Please specify): _____

24. Do you feel equipped with the skills and tools necessary to guide a skilled immigrant through the process of finding a job in their field of study and/or sector of previous work? Please explain.

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable to my job function
- Comment box: _____

25. In what ways do you think your organization could enhance services for skilled immigrants?

(Select top five)

- Staff training on how to work with immigrants
- Staff training on how to work with skilled immigrants
- Staff training on how to market immigrants to employers
- Increased outreach to immigrant communities
- Institute a Language Access Plan
- Staff training on recertification and credential evaluation
- Partner with immigrant serving non-profit organizations
- Hire culturally diverse staff
- Staff training on how to use interpretation and translation services
- Increase individualized services
- Develop strategies to reduce barriers (childcare, transportation, etc.)
- Hire staff to specifically work with immigrants
- Additional funding for services/programs
- I do not think services could be enhanced
- Other: _____

26. What training or technical assistance do you require in order to improve service to skilled immigrants in Maryland's workforce system?

Comment box: _____