

Filling an Unmet Need:

Career Pathways Program for Immigrant Professionals



Note: This publication summarizes content from a 60-minute webinar. To hear the recording and see slides associated with this summary, visit www.imprintproject.org.

The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians (WCNP) is tapping into foreign born professionals for high-priority occupations in the field of healthcare, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through its Immigrant Professional Career Pathways Program.

The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians (WCNP)

Founded in 2003, the WCNP focuses on connecting newly arrived individuals from around the world with economic opportunities. Since its inception it has served over 13,000 people from over 140 countries. Its core programming includes:

- Employment Services
- Education and Training
- Small Business Services
- Research and Policy



*Connecting immigrants, employers,
and communities*

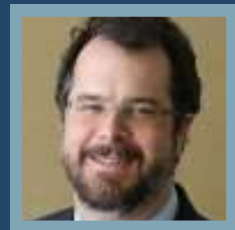
Setting the Scene: Aging Workforce, Growing Health Sector, Filling High-Priority Occupations

Philadelphia, identified as a 're-emerging gateway' for immigrants, has more than 500,000 immigrants residing in the region, and 175,000 in the city alone. With more than 38% identified as college educated, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates that approximately 32,000 are unemployed or underemployed.¹

The identification of low earnings (and in many cases no earnings) led to the discussion around the need to devise of program model that would sustainably uplift immigrant professionals residing in the region. As a result, the Immigrant Professionals Career Pathways Program was created.

With a mission focused on helping eligible immigrants obtain professional-level employment in Philadelphia, the program offers services to clients who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Minimum of a foreign bachelor's degree in Health / Healthcare or STEM
- Residence in the greater Philadelphia area
- Full work authorization
- Ability to communicate in English
- Commitment to pursue professional employment



PETER GONZALES
PRESIDENT & CEO (WCNP)

An immigration attorney by training, Peter Gonzales has a distinguished record of civic and business leadership and advocacy, and a longtime interest in and commitment to community economic development.



MANUEL PORTILLO
DIRECTOR, IMMIGRANT
PROFESSIONALS CAREER
PATHWAYS PROGRAM (WCNP)

Manuel Portillo is a seasoned nonprofit leader who comes to the Welcoming Center after a substantive career in nonprofit program development and community organizing.

1. McHugh, M., & Batalova, J., & Morawski M., Brain Waste in the Workforce: Select U.S. and State Characteristics of College-Educated Native-Born and Immigrant Adults. *Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved May 2014, from www.migrationpolicy.org/research/brain-waste-US-state-workforce-characteristics-college-educated-immigrants

Immigrant Professionals Program: Creating Professional Employment Outcomes

Since its inception earlier this year, the program has screened over 100 candidates into two active cohorts, and placed 10 clients into gateway jobs. While still in its initial stage of development, focuses is centered around the following key areas:



- Individualized 1-1 career advise-ment
- Professional peer mentorship

Job readiness training focused on 5 core areas

- Career pathways,
- Acculturation,
- Professional Development,
- Skills Building,
- Internal Processing

Of critical importance to the overall success of the program is a shared agreement and commitment – signed by all program participants and WCNP advisors.

Sector Specific Training: Directed Programming for Internationally Trained Healthcare Professionals

Philadelphia has the nation's 6th oldest population, with 1-5 (n.20%) working in the healthcare sector. With a growing demand for filling high priority occupations, immigrant professionals with a STEM background are increasingly seen as an excellent match.

Building localized knowledge and understanding of the healthcare sector means developing and delivering customizing training programs. The WCNP addresses this through sample topics which include:



- Patient Centered Care
- Patient and Family
- Caring for Kids
- End of Life Issues
- Communication
- Health Care Team
- Healthcare Delivery Venue
- Customs and Norms
- Professionalism, Conflict of Interest
- Confidentiality and Informed Consent
- Medical Insurance
- Medical Documentation
- Medications, Equipment and Supplies
- Safety, Errors and Lawsuits

To date, the benefits cited for program participants include:

- Improved comfort and confidence in dealing with patients and peers
- Better understanding of expectations
- Familiarity with terminology, policies, procedures
- Fewer embarrassing moments
- Increased acceptance by colleagues
- Getting "up to speed" faster
- Faster career advancement

Economic and Social Impact Created through Integrating Immigrant Professionals

In 2013, Upwardly Global conducted a study of skilled immigrant workers, *A Look at Skilled Immigrant Workers in the U.S.*, about the economic benefits of employing foreign-educated immigrants into positions more commensurate with their experience. Visit www.upwardlyglobal.org to learn more.



Using standard economic assumptions, the study analyzed a cohort of 561 immigrant jobseekers during a 2-year period and found that:

- Employment rose from 20% to 85%
- Aggregate salary increased from \$1.98 million to \$19.8 million

In addition to direct impact, the indirect impact generated includes:

- \$1.8 million in annual federal income taxes
- \$16.2 million in annual consumer spending
- 368 newly created indirect jobs
- 311 newly created induced jobs