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Study Identifies Essential Steps for Skilled Immigrants' Success

First-of-its-kind study documents multiple factors that correlate with the successful integration of immigrant professionals into U.S. workforce and communities.

NEW YORK, NY September 21, 2015—Today World Education Services (WES) and IMPRINT, a national coalition of non-profit organizations active in the field of immigrant professional integration, released *Steps to Success: Integrating Immigrant Professionals in the United States*, a new report detailing the experiences of college-educated immigrants in six U.S. cities; Boston, Detroit, Miami, Philadelphia, San Jose and Seattle.

The study, drawn from the responses of more than 4,000 college-educated immigrants living in the United States, identifies factors that correlate with their successful integration into American life and offers recommendations for communities to better integrate these skilled workers, and take advantage of their many talents.

The U.S. is home to approximately 3.7 million immigrants who received their college degrees abroad. However, 26 percent of these skilled workers are unemployed or working in low-wage jobs. “When an engineer is working as a janitor, or a nurse is employed as a cashier, their limited income reduces their ability to provide for their families,” said Paul Feltman, director of the Global Talent Bridge initiative at World Education Services. “This “brain waste” also has negative consequences for businesses looking for highly-skilled workers, and for cities seeking to boost their economies and grow their tax base.”

Key findings in the report show that:

- **Social capital is powerful:** The survey showed that there is a remarkably strong correlation between the size of an immigrant’s social network and his or her likelihood of success.

- **English really matters:** Across the board, stronger English language skills were correlated with virtually every possible measure of immigrant success.
- **Immigrants take enterprising approaches:** Numerous self-improvement strategies were reported, including academic credential evaluation, English language classes, and additional education in the United States.

“The large pool of college-educated immigrants in these cities includes untapped talent that can contribute to city success,” said Carol Coletta, vice president of community and national initiatives at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which provided funding for the study. “This new data, can help the six cities craft a plan for action, and expand opportunities for all.”

James Witte, director of the Institute for Immigration Research at George Mason University, which served as the lead research unit for the study, echoed this sentiment; “Recognizing the valuable education and experiences of immigrant professionals is critical for the U.S. economy in a time of demographic and economic transition. Our study shows that success for immigrants includes formal credentials, but also the language skills, social networks and employment-seeking strategies necessary to serve their own ends and to maximize their contributions to their local communities and the U.S. economy.”

Download the full report at imprintproject.org/stepstosuccess

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About the Partners

World Education Services (WES.org) led the project through its Global Talent Bridge program. For more than 40 years, WES has helped highly-skilled immigrants in the U.S. and Canada achieve their academic and professional goals by leveraging and utilizing their education and training earned abroad. Through its **Global Talent Bridge program** (globaltalentbridge.org), WES conducts outreach and provides training, tools and resources designed to ensure the successful integration of immigrant professionals, and serves as host of the IMPRINT coalition.

IMPRINT (imprintproject.org), based at WES, is a national coalition of nonprofit organizations active in the emerging field of immigrant professional integration. Working closely with partners in government, community agencies, higher education, business and other sectors, IMPRINT raises awareness of the talents and contributions of foreign-educated immigrants and refugees. The coalition works to identify and promote best practices and advocates for federal, state and local policies that facilitate the integration of immigrant professionals into the U.S. economy.

Institute for Immigration Research (iir.gmu.edu), the lead research partner on the project, is a joint venture between George Mason University and the Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Massachusetts. Its mission is to refocus the immigration conversation among academics, policy-makers and the public, including the business community and media, by producing and disseminating unbiased and objective, interdisciplinary academic research related to immigrants and immigration to the United States.

AudioNow (audionow.com) is the leading call-to-listen platform and provider of interactive mobile applications for broadcasters. Based in Washington D.C., AudioNow connects in-language broadcasters with hard-to-reach diaspora communities worldwide. It hosts broadcasts from more than 2,600 different radio stations in 94 languages, from the U.S., Central America, South Asia, the Philippines, Africa and the Middle East. In 2014, it broadcasted more than 2.5 billion listening minutes.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (KnightFoundation.org) supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.

To schedule an interview with the report's authors contact Marilyn Piels at 212-219-7985.