

# **Expanding Local and State Investment in ESOL: How Adult Educators Can Nudge Policymakers to Action**

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# Today's agenda

- **What's an Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA)?**
- **Does my city have one?**
- **How are OIAs addressing demand for adult ESOL?**
- **What are the strategic pressure points and tools available?**
- **How do I plan my strategy?**



# What's a Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA)?

- Typically housed in Mayor's office
- State-level versions often known as Offices of New Americans
- Responsibilities may include:
  - Community outreach
  - Coordination of municipal services
  - Advising on policy
  - Oversight of funding (less common)



***Most have small budgets.***

# What's a welcoming initiative?

- **Effort to purposely welcome immigrant newcomers and assist in integration**
- **May or may not be a government initiative**
- **May or may not be formally affiliated with the nonprofit Welcoming America**



[www.welcomingamerica.org](http://www.welcomingamerica.org)



# Does my city have one?

- **Maybe!**
- **At least 28 offices of immigrant affairs; six state-level initiatives**
- **At least 92 welcoming initiatives**

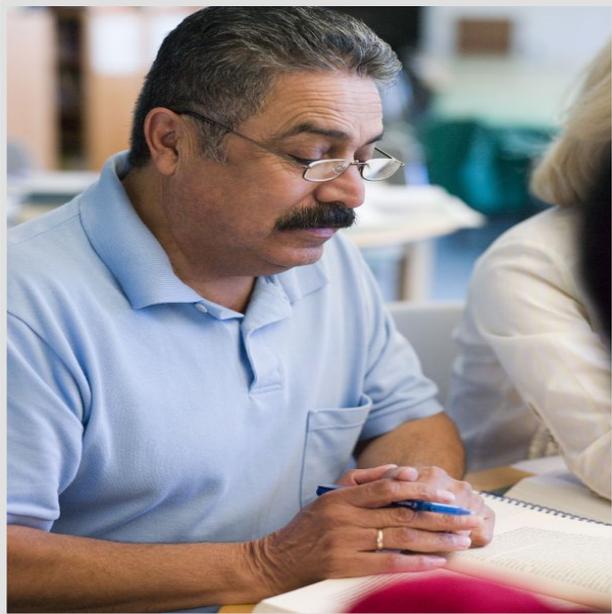


List of Welcoming America network communities: [www.welcomingamerica.org/programs/our-network](http://www.welcomingamerica.org/programs/our-network)

Academic article *Rolling Out the Welcome Mat: State and City Immigrant Affairs Offices in the US*: <http://journals.openedition.org/ideas/1293>



# How have OIAs and welcoming efforts supported adult ESOL?



- **New dedicated funding**
- **More creative use of existing funding**
- **Re-envisioning of ESOL as part of larger municipal strategy**



# Seattle: Filling a gap for entry-level English learners



**Seattle**  
Office of Immigrant  
and Refugee Affairs

- **Ready to Work** program serves low-level English learners
- **Capitalizes on nonprofit partnerships**
- **Funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and City Council funds**



# Michigan: Spurring innovation among ESL providers

- **Special RFP to signal focus on innovation**
- **Support from Governor's office**
- **Vocational ESL and English language prep classes for professional licensure exams**



# How have cities/states supported adult ESOL *outside* of an OIA?



- **Incorporating ESOL into broader community development goals**
- **Designing inclusive RFP for workforce funds**
- **Capitalizing on strong nonprofit partners**



# Philadelphia: Aligning ESL with other municipal investments

- **Commerce Department investment in commercial corridors**
- **Recognition of immigrant entrepreneurs' language needs**
- **Nonprofit partnership**



# Boston: Drawing on an experienced nonprofit partner

- **Boston Office of Workforce Development**
- **Revamp of CDBG priorities**
- **Funding to nonprofit partner for ESL classes + employment services**



**CITY of BOSTON**



# Maryland: Envisioning ESL as part of broader Career Pathways

- **State Department of Labor took the lead**
- **Creative use of WIOA Title I discretionary funds**
- **Fostering collaboration between adult education partners and local workforce boards**



# Or start small: improved navigation

- **California's Immigrant Guide**

<https://immigrantguide.ca.gov/en>

- **Philadelphia's ESL class map**

<https://tinyurl.com/ESLclassmap>



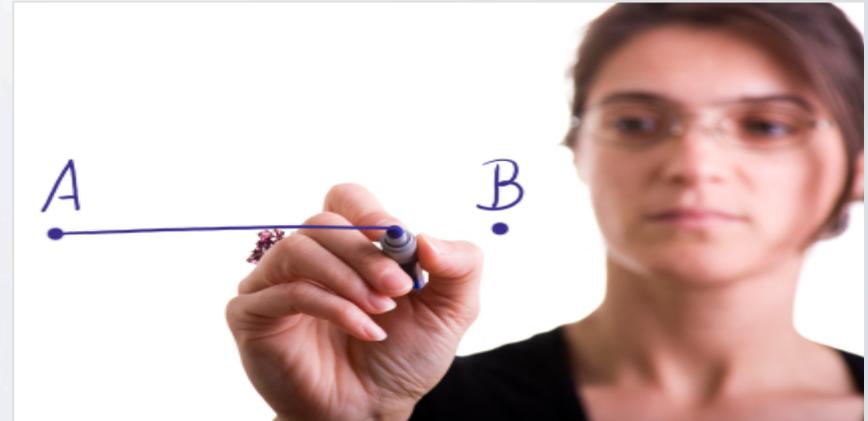
***Now that you've seen how other  
cities approach the issue...***



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# Let's talk strategy.

- **Identifying the right mechanism and those with the power to use it**
- **Coalition building with unlikely allies**
- **Developing policy (if necessary)**
- **Confirming key targets in policymaking roles**
- **Locating data to make the case**
- **Implementing strategic communications**
- **Mobilizing networks for advocacy**



# To find your best leverage, start:

1. With the **outcome** you want to achieve (e.g., increase access to high-level ESL)

*and/or*

2. With the **people** who are already your champions (help them figure out how to help you)



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# Consider unlikely allies.

- **State policymakers trying to reach postsecondary credential attainment goals**
- **Business leaders trying to meet safety standards or improve customer service**
- **Stakeholders responsible for Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning**



# Find common ground.

## Other populations that could benefit from investments in foundational skills:

- **People returning from incarceration**
- **People exiting public benefits**
- **Opportunity Youth**



# Do some coalition-building.

- **Ask: Where are there shared goals/interests?**
- **Identify a “pain point” for your prospective partner and come prepared with how a joint advocacy effort could solve it**
- **Use data to demonstrate similarities in barriers and opportunities faced by immigrant and US-born populations**



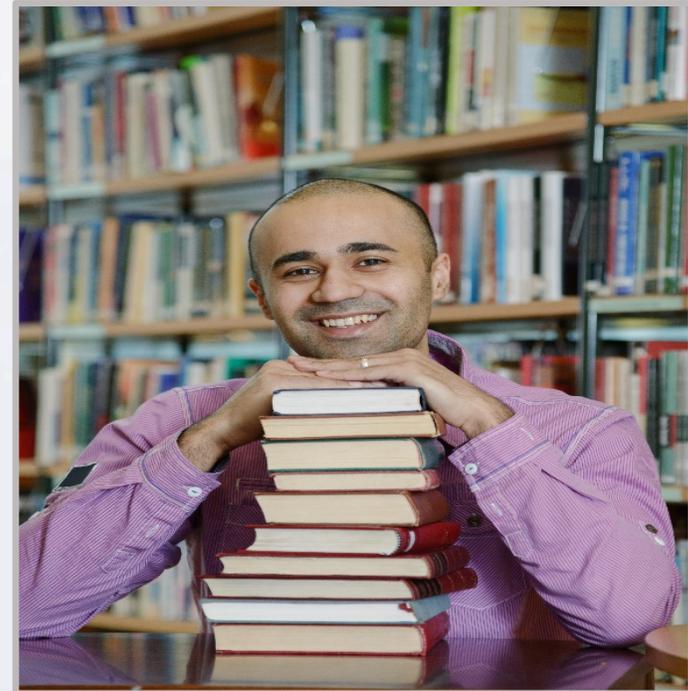
# Think like a policymaker.

- **What are they under pressure to accomplish?**
- **How does adult ESOL fit into that goal?**



# Locate data to make the case.

- **ESL provider waiting lists**
- **Employer surveys**
- **US Census Bureau American Community Survey data**
- **School district data on home languages of students**



# Develop your policy proposal.

- **NSC can help!**
- **Use our policy toolkits (online) or contact us for a technical assistance call**



# Think through your advocacy tools.

- **Op-eds in local papers**
- **Fact sheets or talking points for advocates**
- **Formal testimony; public comment at city council or other meetings**
- **Weighing in on how public money is spent (CDBG Consolidated Plans; WIOA plans)**



***Now it's your turn...***



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# Let's walk through the steps.



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# Time to share your thinking.



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# The bottom line: You have power.



- **As an advocate, *you have tools* to help immigrants build skills and earn family-sustaining wages**
- **NSC can help you identify, develop, draft, and advance policy in your locality**



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# Any final questions?

*What would you like to know?*



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