

## **San Diego Community College District, Continuing Education Division Immigrant Rights Program**



### **Project Purpose:**

San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) created the Immigrant Rights Program in order to implement EL Civic Objective #19: Immigrant Rights and Services. The desire to address this objective stemmed from a district-wide survey of over 1500 students, in which the need to inform students about their rights as immigrants was evident. From the beginning, the project was student-driven and curriculum was tailored to the expressed needs of the students enrolled in the Intermediate High ESL class. The specific needs addressed by the program include:

- Students' need for information about how to respond if stopped and questioned about their immigration status.
- Students' need for information about help available in situations involving domestic abuse

As the class progressed, students insisted that the information they were receiving needed to be shared with their families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and the outside community because it was, ..."so important to know their rights and responsibilities". Sharing of this information has taken the Immigrant Rights project to a whole new level, and has educated SDCCD's students as well as the community about very important issues.

**Summary Description of Project:**

The specific goal of the class was for students to share information they had learned about immigrant rights and services, to help people feel safer as they commuted to school and work, to be more aware of their rights, to know where to get help when needed, and to respond with confidence when facing challenging situations. A bonus for the students was the recognition that their rights were exactly the same as the rights of native-born and naturalized citizens of the United States.

With teacher help and support, students worked together in small groups to make posters presenting information about immigrants' rights, including common problems confronted by immigrants, laws that protect immigrants and agencies that offer social services. The posters were hung in the school corridors and were viewed by many other students. In addition to the posters, each student made a directory of immigration service providers. Many students photocopied these directories and presented them as gifts to family and friends.

**Evaluation Process and Results:**

This project was evaluated in a variety of ways

1. The success of the project became self-evident as teachers and administrators began to note students from all classes and levels gathered in the corridors to study the posters
2. Students filled out a questionnaire asking how the information learned in the class had helped them and if they had shared the information with others. Students responded that the information made them less fearful, more confident, and better able to respond to challenging situations. All students reported that they had shared the information with family members, fellow students, co-workers and friends.
3. Officials at the campus where the class was offered reported that the campus environment was less tense and that students were more relaxed as they arrived at school. This change in the school environment is attributed to the sense of confidence gained by students in knowing how to respond to challenging situations such as being stopped and questioned about their immigration status.
4. Students were tested using an agency-developed COAAP (Performance Based Assessment). The pass rate was 100%.
5. Student attendance records demonstrate increased attendance during the implementation of the project

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