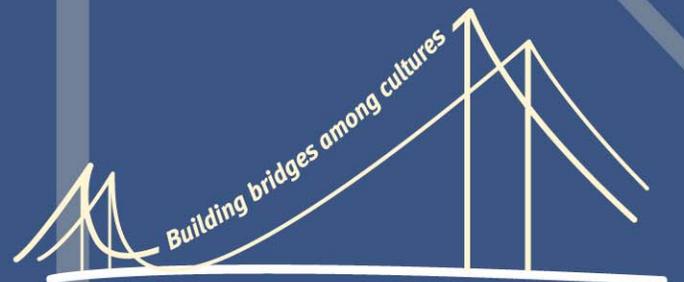


United Way of Salt Lake
serving Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele Counties
creating hope since 1904



Building on Common Ground:

A Framework for Immigrant Integration



English Learning Opportunities
a United Way of Salt Lake initiative

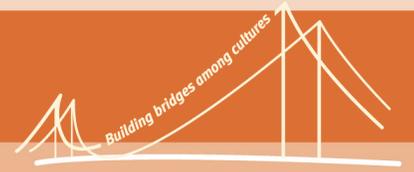
Building on Common Ground: A Framework for Immigrant Integration



Acknowledgements:

United Way of Salt Lake would like to express sincere appreciation to each member of the United Way of Salt Lake *Women's Philanthropic Network* for her leadership and visionary insight in tackling this difficult, complex, yet imperatively important issue in our community. In addition, we are deeply grateful to the members of the English Learning Opportunities (ELO) Change Council for their countless volunteer hours working with us to open the dialogue and develop the framework for this report. Special thanks to Rebecca Chavez-Houck of Centro de la Familia and Greg Summerhays of Workers Compensation Fund, co-chairs of the ELO Change Council, and Pam Perlich of the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Utah for their instrumental assistance or their own research utilized in the creation of this report.

Table of Contents



English Learning Opportunities
a United Way of Salt Lake initiative

Executive Summary	1
Introduction.....	6
Utah’s Changing Demographics & the Role of Immigrants and Refugees in Utah.....	8
United Way of Salt Lake’s English Learning Opportunities Initiative.....	16
English Language Survey	18
Collective Research and Survey Results.....	26
Conclusions.....	32
Recommendations	34

Executive Summary



Utah is at a crossroads. A low unemployment rate and high economic growth has led Utah into a new era. Along with the economic boom there has been a rapid influx of immigrants and refugees, leading to a growth of diversity in Utah. Traditionally, Utah has been a warm welcoming center to hundreds of refugees who seek safety and security from war-torn countries. However, over the past 10 years, Utah has also become home to a growing number of other immigrants. Immigrants and refugees have become and will continue to be integral to the economic, cultural, and social fabric of our community. At the same time, the rapid growth in diversity has its challenges. The information presented in this report provides some important insights and information into the situation of the immigrants and refugees in our communities.

While United Way of Salt Lake researched the issue of language acquisition and the barriers to language learning, a diverse group of stakeholders, called the English Learning Opportunities (ELO) Change Council, was created to help guide us and lend their expertise regarding this complex issue. The ELO Change Council encouraged United Way of Salt Lake to: 1) conduct a survey in its service area – Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele counties, and 2) complete extensive secondary research that would provide a depth of information to the realities that immigrants and refugees face daily. Our survey and research uncovered the need to approach the issue of English language acquisition in a comprehensive manner that addresses the needs of immigrants and refugees as a whole, as well as consider the needs of our economy and community.

Survey Findings:

The overarching conclusion of the survey is that barriers to English language acquisition are closely tied to the need to address larger immigrant integration issues. This is evident because the major barriers that were listed by limited-English-proficient survey participants were not solely language focused. Rather, barriers to English language acquisition were closely tied to other needs that would improve their lives. *Immigrants and refugees do not see English language acquisition as a single issue of need, but, rather, as an integral part of their overall effort to be self-sufficient and support their families.*

Also, as a result of the survey, it became apparent that workplace English as a Second Language (ESL) programs on a large scale are not the most effective mechanism to meet English language needs. *Although some employers are successfully running worksite ESL programs, there is a significant disconnect between employers and employees around major goals and resource needs related to learning English that makes workplace ESL programs difficult to administer and successfully take to scale.*

Collective Research and Survey Results:

Overall, United Way of Salt Lake’s survey and our secondary research underscored the need to address English language acquisition as the foundation of, or the beginning of, the “immigrant integration” process. For the purpose of this report, United Way of Salt Lake adopts the following definition for immigrant integration: “immigrant integration is a dynamic two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, immigrant integration engages and transforms all community stakeholders, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.”¹ United Way of Salt Lake uses the term “integration” rather than “assimilation” to emphasize respect for and incorporation of differences, the importance of mutual adaptation, and an appreciation of diversity.

Specifically, United Way of Salt Lake’s research draws two overarching conclusions:

1) Language is One Component of Immigrant Integration

Although language learning is usually the critical first step to immigrant integration, English language alone is not enough for families to be self-sufficient. Immigrant and refugee families have the desire to learn English and are trying hard to accomplish this goal. However, research shows that immigrants and refugees face multiple barriers when trying to learn English. Language acquisition is a complicated process that can be dependent on various factors, such as age, education level, amount of time in the country, and other issues. These challenges greatly inhibit successful language learning. Therefore, English language acquisition must be sculpted and considered within the larger framework of immigrant integration.

2) Immigrants and Refugees Face Multiple Barriers to Integration and Financial Stability

United Way of Salt Lake’s research found that the following five challenges are in the forefront of concerns and barriers of immigrants and refugees who participated in our survey. In addition, extensive secondary research concerning immigrant integration can generally be summarized under the following five challenges:

- a. Language
- b. Earning Potential and Financial Stability
- c. Naturalization for Eligible Residents
- d. Opportunities for Children
- e. Access to Resources

Summary of Recommendations:

Through this research, United Way of Salt Lake hopes to build on and bring insight to the successful and innovative work of public and community-based organizations that individually work on immigrant integration. Many organizations and efforts, including the Refugee Working Group chartered by Governor Huntsman and Salt Lake County Mayor Corroon, have undertaken

successful efforts to advance immigrant and refugee integration. However, Utah needs a comprehensive and strategic state policy spearheaded by a council made up of a diverse stakeholder group working to strengthen families and our economy through successful immigrant integration. Utah's rapidly changing demographics, the fast-paced changes of the global and local economy, and the growing demand for both high-skilled and low-skilled workers makes immigrant integration one of the most imperative economic and social issues in our community. A strategic approach must be developed that will allow immigrants and refugees to participate to the fullest extent possible in Utah's economic and civic life—strengthening families and communities, and fostering social cohesion for the benefit of all Utahns. Therefore, United Way of Salt Lake recommends the following:

Comprehensive Framework of Solutions:

To assist immigrant and refugee families in becoming self-sufficient, financially stable, and economically mobile in a comprehensive and sustainable way, we must develop pathways for immigrant integration. Specifically, these pathways should be focused on the following five challenges:

- 1) Language
- 2) Earning Potential and Financial Stability
- 3) Naturalization for Eligible Residents
- 4) Opportunities for Children
- 5) Access to Resources

To facilitate the ongoing process of developing high-impact strategies in each of these areas, we urge the creation of a council comprised of public, private, and other partners to develop a comprehensive strategic framework for the integration of immigrants and refugees in Utah. This council would require high-level leadership at the state level and a commitment from public sector agencies, nonprofit community organizations, and private sector employers.

Promising English Language Program Practices:

The wealth of knowledge and successful practices from local direct service providers are too large to encompass in this report. As a result, we have selected a few promising practices from local programs that we found were supported through our survey findings and secondary research. The following recommendations, when implemented, enhance successful English language acquisition:

1. English language acquisition strategies should account for the top barriers to English learning identified through our survey: a lack of time, the difficulty of learning a new language, and a lack of childcare.
2. For low-skilled workers, English language acquisition should be tied to other basic math, literacy and specific workplace skills to increase opportunities for job advancement and higher wage earnings. Specifically, for low-education level workers, ESL programs should focus on increasing basic literacy and education skills in native languages, while increasing English acquisition.

3. For high-skilled workers, skill and certification transfer policies should be created in conjunction with ESL programs tailored to specific workplace tasks.
4. Schools should offer dual immersion and English language acquisition programs.

Specific Action Steps:

United Way of Salt Lake recommends these specific action steps for the following groups:

Employers

1. Educate and build awareness among business leaders, co-workers, and colleagues about the positive and potential contributions of immigrants and refugees in Utah.
2. Access information about ESL services that are available by contacting 211 and the Utah Department of Workforce Services.
3. Partner with and support school-based ESL programs.
4. Develop vocational/technical/safety training programs in native languages.
5. If workplace ESL programs are developed, ensure a successful program by:
 - a. Holding classes at the worksite during paid hours
 - b. Utilizing curriculum that is tied to specific workplace tasks and skills, along with basic math and literacy
 - c. Integrating participation in workplace ESL programs with job advancement and promotion opportunities
6. Begin dialogues with business colleagues about local best practices. Start a network and form partnerships for sharing.
7. Engage local policymakers in a discussion about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

Service Delivery Agencies – Both Public and Community-based

1. Educate and build awareness among service providers, co-workers, and colleagues about the positive and potential contributions of immigrants and refugees in Utah.
2. Pro-actively develop specific outreach and service delivery programs that are linguistically and culturally appropriate, ensuring access to your agency's services by immigrants and refugees.

3. Partner with employers interested in helping immigrants and refugees succeed in their workplace.
4. Begin dialogues with other service providers about local best practices for outreach and linguistically and culturally appropriate service delivery. Start a network and form partnerships for sharing.
5. Engage local policymakers in a discussion about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

English Proficient Residents

1. Learn a second language.
2. Educate yourself and build awareness among family members, friends, and neighbors about the positive and potential contributions of immigrants and refugees in Utah.
3. Talk to local schools about dual-immersion programs and vocational/technical training programs provided in native languages.
4. Engage in a discussion with your local policymakers about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

English Language Learners

1. Call 211 to find out about and enroll in available English language programs. Investigate and find the program that best meets your needs.
2. Educate yourself and build awareness among family members, friends, and neighbors about the positive and potential outcomes of integration and participation in your communities.
3. Talk to local schools about dual-immersion programs and vocational/technical training programs provided in native languages.
4. Engage local policymakers in a discussion about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

Policymakers

1. Educate yourself and build awareness among colleagues about the positive and potential contributions of immigrants and refugees in Utah.
2. Engage in a discussion with your colleagues and the Governor about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

Introduction



United Way of Salt Lake works to develop and implement long-term solutions to our communities' most serious social problems. In addition to providing critical resources for 163 programs delivered by more than 60 community partners, we strive to change the community-level conditions that allow problems to happen in the first place. This focus on overarching change requires a deep understanding of the problems in our communities. Our *2007 Community Assessment* research identifies and describes the challenges faced by individuals and families, as well as the core issues that cause most of the problems. This report delves deeper into one specific problem—language and cultural barriers. The findings of this report will provide direction for future community efforts to truly address the problem and create lasting change.

Community Priorities

United Way of Salt Lake's *2004 Community Assessment* research identified 17 priority problems that impact the quality of life in our communities. These problems encompass a wide spectrum of challenges, from lack of affordable health care and housing to substance abuse, breakdown of the family, and crime. None of these problems has improved over the past three years. Alarming, our latest research, the *2007 Community Assessment*, found that 13 of the 17 problems are actually worse than three years ago and are affecting greater numbers of people.

Our latest research reconfirmed that four core issues underlie and significantly contribute to the 17 priority problems:

1. Insufficient income
2. People lacking life skills
3. Barriers to education
4. Inadequate opportunities for child and youth development

Working together, we can help improve the lives of individuals and families. We can also work to stimulate change in economic, social, and community conditions through education, collaboration, and systemic policy work. In order to create lasting change for our families and our communities, United Way of Salt Lake focuses its efforts on four Community Priorities:

1. Improving financial stability
2. Opening doors to education
3. Strengthening children and families
4. Protecting and meeting basic needs

Language and Cultural Barriers

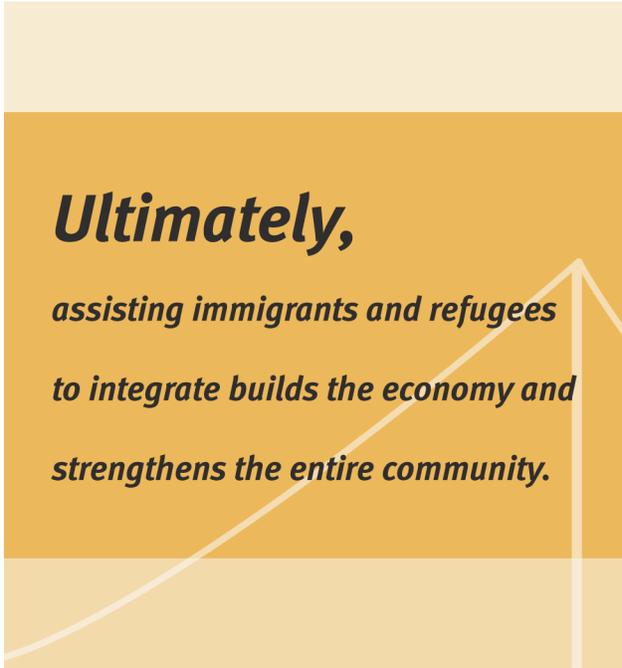
“Language and Cultural Barriers” is one of the 17 priority problems identified in our *Community Assessment* research. It is a problem that is worsening significantly. Our *2007 Community Assessment* found that this problem affects between 97,000 and 265,000 people in Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele counties. In these four counties—the service area of United Way of Salt Lake—the proportion of the population that is not proficient in English is steadily increasing. And the challenges and barriers this population faces are becoming significantly worse.

In 2006, United Way of Salt Lake convened an English Learning Opportunities (ELO) Change Council to address language and cultural barriers for English learners. Through discussion with the ELO Change Council, it became immediately apparent that the right resources and supports can help immigrants learn English, succeed on the job, attain educational goals, gain access to financial tools, and improve their overall quality of life. Ultimately, assisting immigrants and refugees to integrate builds the economy and strengthens the entire community.

United Way of Salt Lake acknowledges that working on issues regarding language, culture, immigrants, and refugees is difficult, complex, and often divisive. Discussions around immigrants and refugees are “hot button” topics that bring up controversial issues such as immigration reform. The purpose of this research is not to weigh in on the specific issues related to immigration reform. Rather, United Way of Salt Lake recognizes that the demographics of Utah are changing rapidly. The positive and negative impacts of immigrants and refugees, both legal and illegal, are undeniable. Regardless, immigrants and refugees are an integral and permanent part of the fabric of Utah.

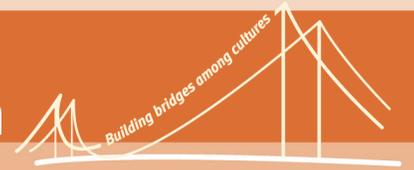
It is United Way of Salt Lake’s mission to improve lives by solving our community’s most serious problems. The purpose of this research is to find solutions to help the growing number of immigrants and refugees overcome obstacles to reaching financial stability and self-reliance, and to create stronger families and communities by finding solutions to one of our community’s most critical problems. In all, strengthening immigrant families by ensuring they have the tools, skills, and access to resources, such as English language skills, necessary to be self-sufficient, is critical for the common good and long-term prosperity of our entire community.

Building from the common ground of our desire to have a strong, cohesive community, it is essential to create a framework for welcoming immigrants and refugees and enabling them to succeed and contribute to our community.



Ultimately,
assisting immigrants and refugees
to integrate builds the economy and
strengthens the entire community.

Utah's Changing Demographics & the Role of Immigrants and Refugees in Utah



English Learning Opportunities
a United Way of Salt Lake initiative

Beginning in the 1990s, Utah experienced a rapid change in population demographics. The percentage of ethnic minority residents has grown steadily, as has the percentage of foreign-born residents. Utah's changing demographics have significant implications for the entire community. A new population of multi-lingual individuals offers tremendous benefits to local employers and the economy. This great opportunity can be maximized by helping immigrants succeed on the job, in school, and in the wider community.

In 2005, Utah's population hit an all-time high of 2.5 million people. The state reached another milestone that year—more of the growth was due to in-migration than to net natural increase (births minus deaths) in the state.² Immigration is clearly fueling a large portion of Utah's population boom. And for Utah, a large portion of that immigration is international, rather than from other areas of the United States. *According to the Bureau of the Census, Utah would have had a net out-migration from the state each year from 1997 to 2004 were it not for international immigration.*³

The flow of international immigrants into the state will not slow in the foreseeable future. The growth in Utah's foreign-born population is actually accelerating. Foreign-born people contributed 20 percent of the state's population growth in the 1990s, but that percentage increased to about 40 percent in the period between 2000 and 2004.⁴

According to the 2000 Census, Utah experienced a 171 percent increase in the foreign-born population from 1990 to 2000. Among states, Utah has the fifth-largest immigrant growth rate, and it is well above the national growth rate of 57.4 percent.

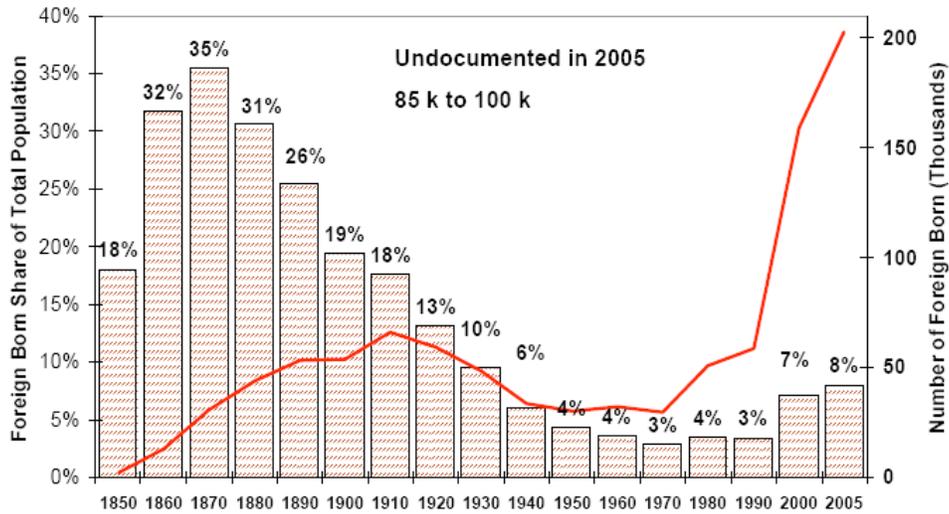
Immigration is also fueling population growth nationwide. Over the past 40 years, the foreign-born population tripled to 37 million people, representing nearly 12 percent of the population. This number is expected to grow to 43 million by 2010.⁵

Although Utah's population is growing, the state is not growing as fast as the neighboring states of Arizona and Nevada. Utah's share of the Mountain states population has declined from 16.5 percent in 1990 to 12.3 percent in 2000. This downward trend is projected to continue.⁶

Utah has long been a state of international immigrants. From 1850 to 1930, the foreign-born percentage of Utah's population was in the double digits. At its peak in the 1870s, immigrants made up 35 percent of the state's residents. As the chart below demonstrates, while the number of foreign-born people in Utah is reaching new highs (at more than 200,000), they represent a low 8 percent of the population.⁷

Figure 1

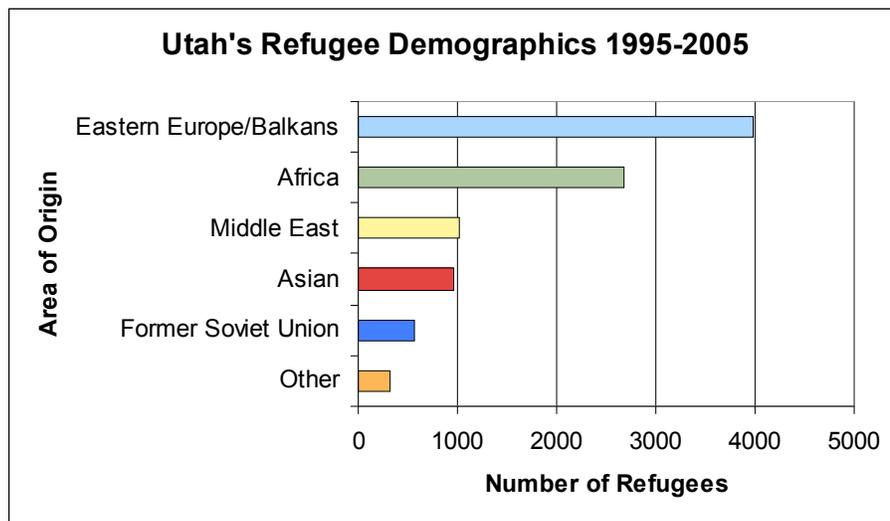
Utah Foreign Born Population: 1850 – 2005



Sources: Pam Perlich, University of Utah Bureau of Economic and Business; Research Bureau of the Census; Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Another contributor to the expansion of the foreign-born population in Utah is an influx of refugees. The nation is in the midst of a third great wave of refugee resettlement due to civil conflicts around the world. According to the Utah Department of Workforce Services, Utah received more than 15,000 refugees between 1983 and 2005. Many of these refugees (4,248) arrived very recently—from 2000 to 2005. In total, refugees make up nearly 11 percent of the foreign-born people who arrived in Utah during the 1990s. Utah has received refugees of 59 different ethnicities and nationalities, representing 53 different languages.

Figure 2



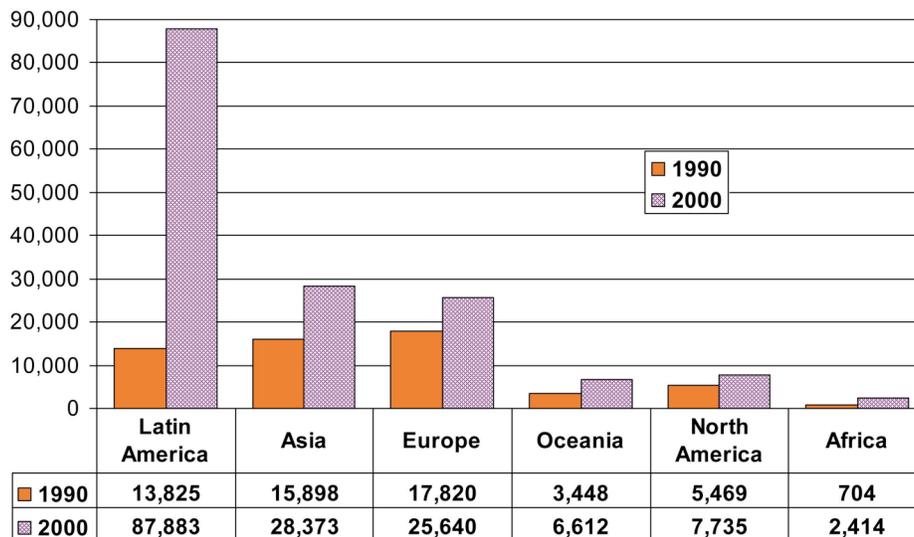
Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services

A New Utah

While Utah has long been a state of immigrants, the immigration boom of the last 15 years has created a new era of ethnic and racial diversity in the state. The vast majority of recent immigrants have arrived from Latin America while the contributions from Europe and Canada have remained fairly steady.⁸ In addition to immigrants from Latin America, Utah is also receiving new residents from Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union.

Figure 3

Utah's Foreign Born Population: 1990 & 2000



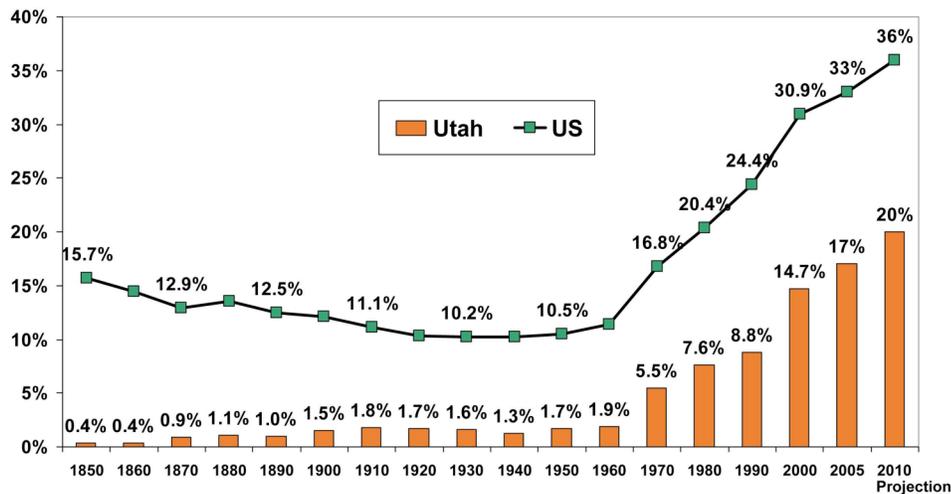
Source: Pam Perlich, University of Utah Bureau of Economic and Business Research; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 3; 1990 Census, STF3.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 55.4 percent of foreign-born Utahns are from Latin America. Asia is the second-largest contributor of immigrants, at 17.9 percent. Europe comes in third at 16.2 percent.

This growth in Utah's foreign-born population—and in the diversity of the foreign-born population—is contributing to a change in the makeup of Utah's population overall. As late as 1960, minorities represented less than 2 percent of Utah's residents. By 1990, the percentage had grown to nearly 9 percent, and by 2005 the figure had risen to 17 percent. Minorities are projected to represent 20 percent of Utah's population by 2010.⁹ See Figure 4 on the next page.

Figure 4

Minority Share of the Population: Utah & US



Source: Pam Perlich, University of Utah Bureau of Economic and Business Research.

Hispanics make up the majority of Utah’s new international immigrants. Utah’s biggest source of domestic immigration is California—and many of these immigrants are also Hispanic.¹⁰ Hispanics represented 23 percent of the state’s population growth through the 1990s.¹¹ In 2000, an estimated 42 percent of the state’s Hispanic residents were foreign born. For the state’s Mexican population, about 46 percent were foreign born.¹² Nationally, 31 percent of legal immigrants are from Mexico and another 23 percent are from other Latin American countries.¹³

About 30 percent of the foreign-born population is undocumented in the United States. However, it is estimated that 75 percent of the children in immigrant families are citizens.¹⁴ These “mixed-status” families face unique challenges and require unique supports and resources.

New Language Barriers

The recent immigration wave is creating a large community of people who do not speak English as a first language. In Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele counties, 177,000 residents speak a language other than English, and nearly 40 percent of employers have employees for whom English is not the primary language.¹⁵

In 2000, 81.9 percent of the foreign-born people 5 years of age and older in Utah spoke a language other than English at home. This includes 50.7 percent who spoke Spanish, 14 percent who spoke other Indo-European languages, 15.2 percent who spoke Asian and Pacific Island languages, and 2 percent who spoke other languages.¹⁶

Between 2000 and 2005, the size of the foreign-born population who were limited English proficient grew by 29 percent in Utah. In 2000, foreign-born Utahns 5 years of age and older who spoke a language other than English at home, 38.1 percent reported speaking English “very well,” 26.7 percent “well,” 23.6 percent “not well,” and 11.7 percent “not at all.”¹⁷

In this same age group, nearly 70 percent of native Spanish speakers spoke English with limited proficiency, while 28.5 percent of people who spoke Indo-European languages as a primary language reported limited English proficiency. For Asian or Pacific Islander people, the figure is 55.9 percent.¹⁸

Language barriers become particularly pronounced for families that do not have any adult English speakers. In Utah, 3.4 percent of all families are “linguistically isolated”—no adults or teenagers over the age of 14 in the family speak English well.¹⁹ Children face significant language barriers as well. More than 15,000 children between the ages of 5 and 17 spoke English with limited proficiency in 2005.²⁰ In the Salt Lake City School District, about 40 percent of students did not speak English as a first language in 2005.²¹

Although there are many language barriers for new immigrants and refugees, multi-lingual individuals—those who are fluent in both their native language and English—are valuable assets to our community as the economy becomes more global. The more that individuals from all cultures have the knowledge and skills to function in a global community, the stronger our community, economy, and workforce will be.

Economic Impacts

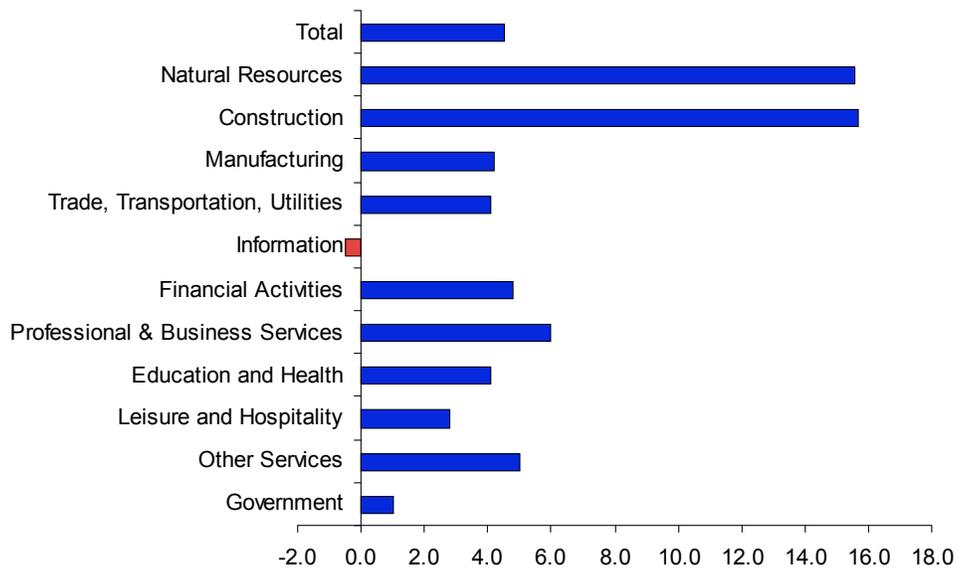
Over the past 15 years, Utah’s economy has benefited significantly from an influx of international immigrants. Without the foreign-born immigrants to the state in just the past five years, Utah would have experienced labor shortages, higher costs, and, ultimately, a reduction in economic activity.

Utah’s economy has flourished during the past year with strong job growth and expanding industries. As late as 2003, the state recorded zero job growth. Since that time, the economy has improved and, in 2006, saw an overall job-growth rate of 5.2 percent—the highest rate since the mid 1990s. The state’s unemployment rate has dropped to never-before seen lows. For 2006, the unemployment rate was 3.3 percent overall, and it dropped as low as 2.5 percent during the year. A 4 percent unemployment rate is generally considered “full employment” for a community.²²

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, by 2010 there will be a labor shortage of up to 10 million workers. In Utah, the effects of a labor shortage are already visible. Mark Knold, chief economist for the Utah Department of Workforce Services, commented, “Even though the economy probably doesn’t feel any different to the average worker or business, the numbers are showing that the luster is fading somewhat on the Utah economic expansion. The employment growth rate is slowing. Fortunately, it is not slowing because of any negativity coming from the marketplace in terms of less demand for goods and services. Instead, it is an expanding economy that is finding the pool of available new workers growing smaller and smaller. This fully-employed labor force is reflected in the state’s recent historically-low unemployment rates in the mid 2 percent range. That represents an extremely restricted pool of available labor. It is at the point where Utah’s labor needs are becoming more and more dependent upon the influx of new workers from outside the state, whether coming from other parts of the United States, or other countries.”²³

With a high number of new jobs being created and few workers to fill those jobs, immigration has allowed Utah’s economy to continue expanding. Employment in the construction industry, for example, grew 18 percent from 2005 to 2006. Foreign-born workers have fueled this expansion within the construction industry. As illustrated by the two following graphs, Utah’s top job growth occurs in the same industries²⁴ that have the highest number of foreign-born workers. Immigrants and refugees supply labor to the most dynamic and rapidly growing and changing industries, such as construction, manufacturing, and hospitality.

Figure 5 Utah Nonfarm Job Growth (Percent Change) April 2006 - 2007



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services

Figure 6

Top Occupations of Utah’s Foreign Born Population

Assemblers & Fabricators	Laborers / Material Movers
Cooks	Retail Salespersons
Maids, Housekeepers	Customer Service Representatives
Construction Laborers	Waiters and Waitresses
Janitors	Truck Drivers
Production Workers	Carpenters
Cashiers	Postsecondary Teachers
Grounds Maintenance Workers	Misc. Agricultural Workers

Sources: Pam Perlich, University of Utah Bureau of Economic and Business Research; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, 5% PUMS

Immigrants and refugees are critical to sustained economic growth, filling vacant positions that would otherwise not be filled. In fact, through our survey, local employers commented that if it weren't for immigrants and refugees filling the labor shortage, their companies would need to decrease production levels and turn down jobs (see complete information regarding the survey performed by de la Cruz and Associates in the English Language Survey section of this publication).

In addition, a recent study by the Pew Hispanic Center has shown that in the state of Utah, there is a positive relationship between the increase of the immigrant and refugee population and all measures of labor force performance, such as the employment rate overall.²⁵

Another sign of the positive impact Utah's immigrant families have on the economy is the growing financial clout of Hispanics in the state. Hispanics are spending money—more than \$3.8 billion each year—on goods and services in Utah. By 2009, that number is projected to be nearly \$6 billion.²⁶ And immigrants are not only consumers—they are opening businesses and contributing to the vibrant economic growth in the state. According to the 2002 Economic Census, there were 5,177 Hispanic-owned businesses in Utah with combined annual sales of \$555 million.²⁷

Social Impacts

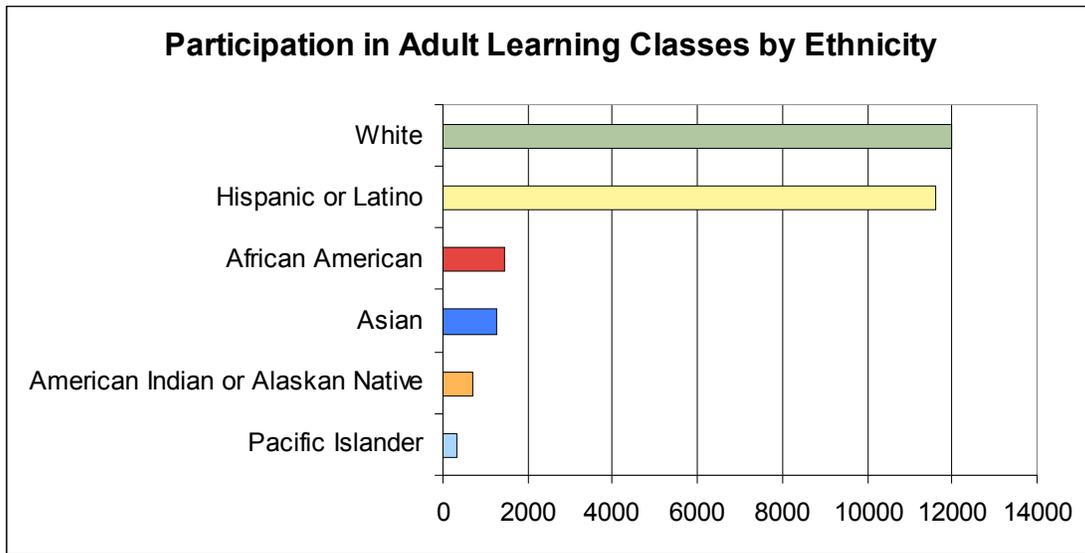
It is clear that immigrants are vital to the economic success of our community. However, more progress needs to be made to ensure immigrants are successful *within* our communities—that they are offered the same opportunities for a good quality of life as native-born residents. According to the 2000 Census, 19 percent of Utah's foreign born live in poverty, compared with about 10 percent for the population overall.

Language barriers compound the difficulties faced by immigrant families. Research conducted in New York City and Los Angeles finds that limited-English proficient immigrant families are more likely to be poor and experience hardships, such as food insecurity and hunger, than English-proficient immigrant families.²⁸

These difficulties are highlighted by the educational achievement gap that exists for Utah's Hispanic schoolchildren. In 2005, Utah Hispanics scored nearly three grade levels below whites in fourth-grade reading, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Further, U.S. Census data shows that only 62 percent of Utah foreign-born males over the age of 25 had a high school diploma in 2000.

Utah's immigrants certainly face many barriers as they make new lives in our communities. But these individuals and families are also making real efforts to succeed. According to the Utah State Office of Education, Hispanics make up 70 percent of students enrolled in English as a second language (ESL) classes for adults.²⁹ The following chart displays the rates of enrollment in adult education classes for Utah's ethnic populations. More than half of these students are minorities.

Figure 7



Source: Utah State Office of Education

In addition to taking part in educational opportunities, new immigrants make an effort to become self-sufficient. Nationally, the unemployment rate for foreign-born people declined significantly between 1996 and 2005, indicating that immigrants are being absorbed into the nation's economy. According to Department of Labor statistics, the unemployment rate for foreign-born people was 7.5 percent in 1996 and it declined to 5.2 percent in 2005.

Education in general and language acquisition in particular provides a valuable means for helping foreign-born residents achieve and maintain a good quality of life. But foreign-born residents need an opportunity to succeed while retaining their own cultural identity. Ensuring immigrants and refugees maintain their native language and culture, while learning English, is the cornerstone for building a Utah that will be ready for the global workforce and economy.

Local employers

commented that if it weren't for immigrants and refugees filling the labor shortage, their companies would need to decrease production levels and turn down jobs

United Way of Salt Lake English Learning Opportunities



English Learning Opportunities
a United Way of Salt Lake initiative

In 2006, United Way of Salt Lake convened the English Learning Opportunities (ELO) Change Council to address language and cultural barriers for English learners. The ELO Change Council is made up of a diverse stakeholder group consisting of businesses, faith-based organizations, English language service providers, government agencies, and other community groups (see a list of Change Council members at the end of this report).

When United Way of Salt Lake first began examining the problem of English language barriers, one possible solution to the problem was to increase English learning workplace opportunities. However, after researching workplace ESL programs, United Way of Salt Lake quickly discovered that an extensive workplace model developed by the Cultural Integration Advisory Council (CIAC), a group of private and public individuals working to find solutions to problems associated with diversity in the workplace, had been implemented with varying degrees of success.

Workplace ESL Program Developed by CIAC

In 2002, the Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) partnered with CIAC. After producing a state-wide survey of over 153 randomly selected Utah employers, communication was the number one barrier expressed by employers with a diverse workforce.³⁰ As a result, DWS granted \$250,000 to Granite Peaks Adult and Community Education to provide English language classes at the workplaces of 10 employers. The program had varied success and CIAC is no longer functioning. Many of the employers that participated in the program did not continue to provide ESL services. This could have been the result of funding no longer being available, or perhaps a lack of support among employers due to the same barriers we have identified in our own research.

ESL Programs in the Community

Currently, there are numerous local programs and initiatives that are successfully providing English language programs in Utah. ESL program educators have amassed a wealth of knowledge about English language training. Programs are available through schools, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, private companies, and the workplace. Many of these programs have long waiting lists, while others struggle to recruit students.

Nationally, most English language programs have long waiting lists. A recent study of 184 providers from various states indicated that 57 percent of these providers reported a waitlist. Waiting list time ranged from a few weeks to more than three years.³¹ As illustrated in the section of this report entitled “Utah’s Changing Demographics & Role

of Immigrants and Refugees in Utah,” the majority of students who utilize Adult Education services provided by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) are ethnic minorities. According to the USOE, 38 percent of students enrolled in adult education services are enrolled in ESL programs.

After in-depth dialogue about workplace ESL research and language barriers, the ELO Change Council recognized that language acquisition is one element of a much larger challenge. The ELO Change Council felt the underlying problem did not lie in a simple English language acquisition solution. Rather, meeting the holistic needs of immigrants and refugees would make a larger impact on our community and would result in community-level change. Preliminary research illustrated that the most successful English language programs occur within a framework and philosophy of meeting the comprehensive needs of immigrant and refugee families. As a result, the ELO Change Council decided to actively research other promising practices and models around the nation that approach English language acquisition as an additional skill within a larger framework that helps immigrants and refugees succeed, rather than as the ultimate solution. It became apparent that the ELO Change Council saw English language acquisition as the foundation for immigrants and refugees to become self-sufficient. However, learning English was just the beginning of the process of “immigrant integration.”

In researching the concept of “immigrant integration,” our literature review identified a national organization, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) as a definitive source for information around immigrant and refugee issues. A national network of more than 80 grant-making foundations, GCIR provides funders programs, publications, and networking opportunities to improve the lives of immigrants and strengthen communities. GCIR defines “immigrant integration” as “a dynamic two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, immigrant integration engages and transforms all community stakeholders, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.”³² For the purpose of this report, United Way of Salt Lake has adopted this definition of immigrant integration and uses the term “integration” rather than “assimilation” to emphasize respect for and incorporation of differences, the importance of mutual adaptation, and an appreciation of diversity.

In order to find solutions that would address the larger issues surrounding immigrant integration, our ELO Change Council recommended United Way of Salt Lake conduct an in-depth literature review, gather secondary data, and commission a study around the issue of English learning.

English Language Survey



Comprehensive research and analysis enable us to target our efforts and suggest lasting solutions. To that end, this report synthesizes literature and secondary data to begin exploring answers to the challenges of English learning for immigrants and refugees of Utah. In addition, United Way of Salt Lake commissioned de la Cruz and Associates to conduct in-depth surveys with English learners and employers with a large number of workers who do not speak English as a first language. This study highlights the perceptions, barriers, and motivators surrounding English language learning as the foundational component of immigrant integration.

Survey Methodology:

The purpose of the survey was to determine challenges, barriers, motivators, and perceptions of immigrants and refugees, as well as employers, regarding the issue of English language acquisition. The survey was implemented in United Way of Salt Lake's service area—Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele counties—and was conducted in three languages: Spanish, Russian, and Arabic. These three languages were selected because they represent the largest immigrant and refugee groups in Salt Lake County. The three survey instruments that were utilized across the four counties and three languages were:

1. In-person individual interviews with speakers of other languages: 229 participants, who self-reported as mostly employed in the construction, food service/restaurant, and housekeeping industries
2. Focus groups with speakers of other languages: 82 participants
3. Phone interviews with employers that employ a high number of speakers of other languages: 38 participants

The survey design was unique because it utilized representatives from trained and trusted community agencies to administer surveys to this population in native languages. This population is difficult to survey because of language and translation complexities, fear and mistrust of non-familiar agencies, work schedules, and cultural differences. By utilizing agencies with built-in translators and pre-established relationships with the population, many of these barriers were eliminated, resulting in more detailed and honest survey results.

Overarching Survey Findings:

The overarching conclusion of the survey is that barriers to English language acquisition are closely tied to the need to address larger immigrant integration issues. This is evident because the major barriers that were listed by limited-English-proficient survey participants were not solely language focused. Rather, barriers to English language acquisition were closely tied to other needs that would improve their lives. *Immigrants and refugees do not see English language*

acquisition as a single issue of need, but rather an integral part of their overall effort to be self-sufficient and support their families.

The survey also concluded that both employers and employed English learners desire a similar outcome: to have and be an English proficient and skilled workforce with the opportunity to be successful and self-sufficient. Another similarity between English language learners and employers is the shared misperception about the quantity of time required to learn English. The majority of both limited-English-proficient individuals and employers indicated that it takes only six months to a year to become proficient in English, when in fact, research shows that on average it takes at least five to seven years to become proficient in a second language, depending on factors such as education level, age, level of literacy in the primary language, and opportunities to interact with native English speakers.³³

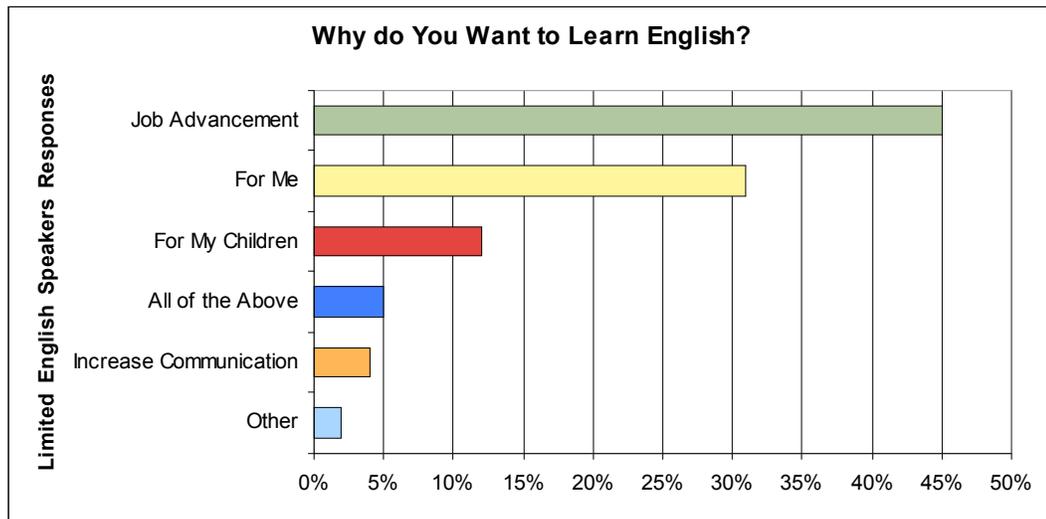
While similarities and congruencies were found between these two groups, the survey also found various disconnects and inconsistent perceptions between English language learners and employers. One such difference can be found around access and attempts to learn English in the past.

Specific survey results for both limited-English-proficient individuals and employers are reported in further detail below.

Limited English Proficient Individuals:

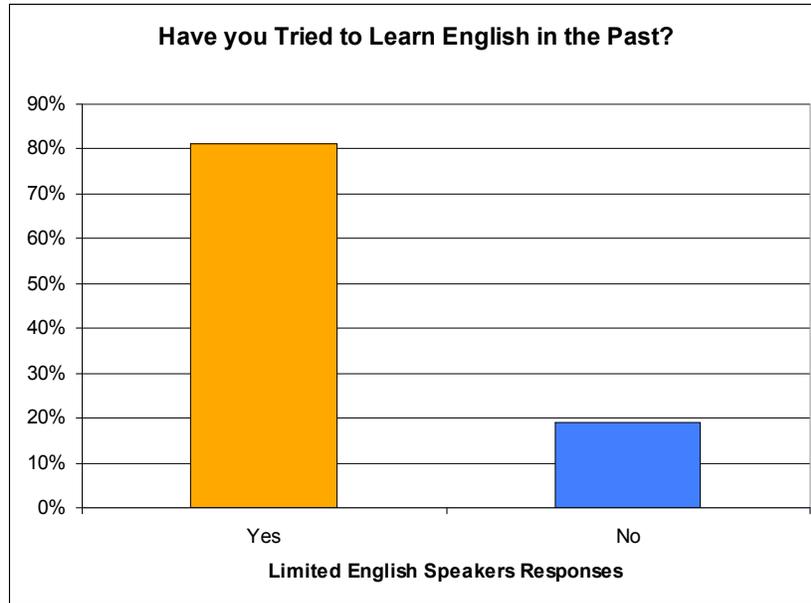
The survey conducted by de la Cruz and Associates produced the following results for limited-English-proficient immigrants and refugees in United Way of Salt Lake’s service area:

Figure 8



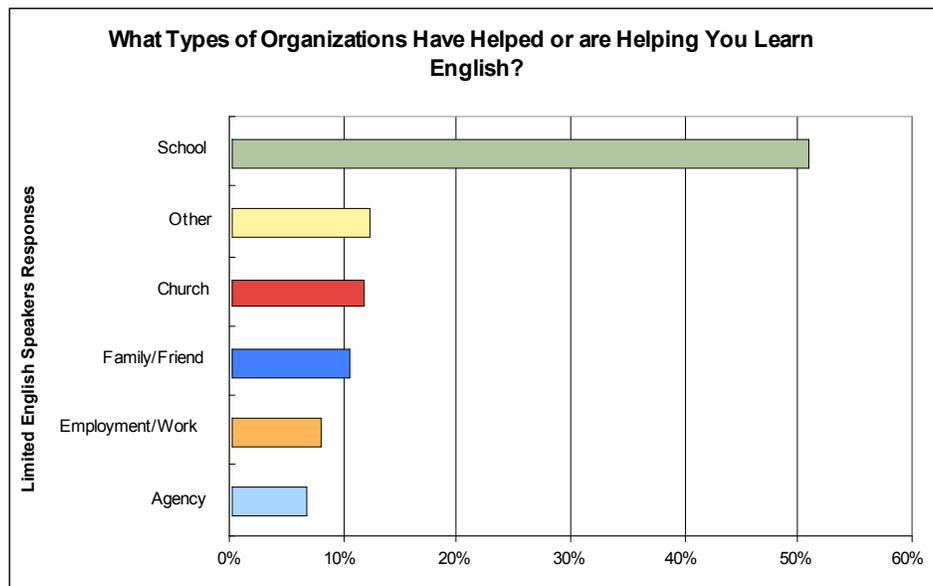
While many English language learners noted the need to effectively communicate with co-workers, employers, friends, and other social networks, the majority of immigrants and refugees want to learn English in order to reach higher wage earning potential and opportunities for job advancement.

Figure 9



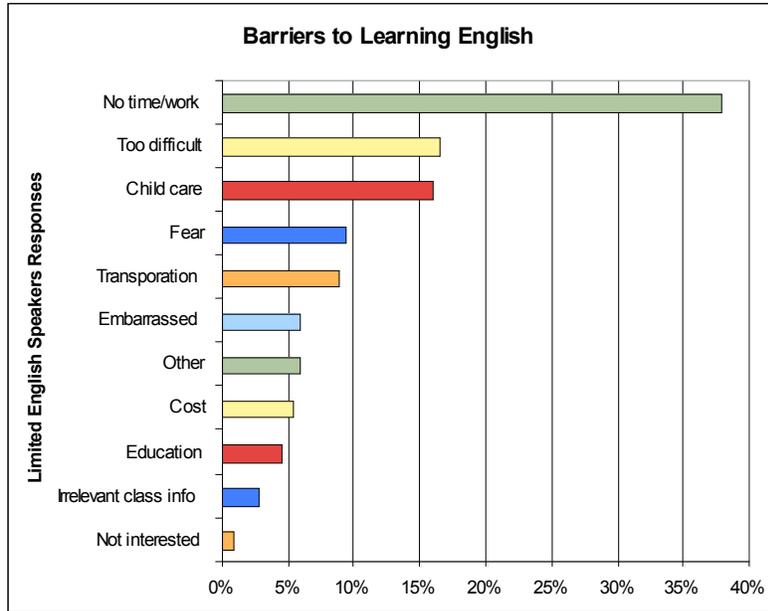
The majority of immigrants and refugees surveyed have attempted to learn English before. A large percentage has even tried to learn English at least once or twice before, some as many as four times.

Figure 10



Survey respondents noted that they mostly learn English through school-based programs. However, a large number also mentioned that they were trying to learn English through informal, non-organized mechanisms that allowed them to pick up language skills according to their time availability. Television, communication with co-workers, and informal communication with other social networks were specific informal mechanisms that were identified by survey respondents in the “Other” category.

Figure 11



* Graph footnote: Percentages do not add up to 100% because some survey participants selected multiple barriers.

The top three barriers to successful English language acquisition are:

1. Lack of time
2. Too difficult
3. Lack of childcare

The fact that a large number of survey participants had tried to learn English in the past coupled with the very small percentage who reported that they were not interested in learning English indicates that survey respondents have a high desire to learn English.

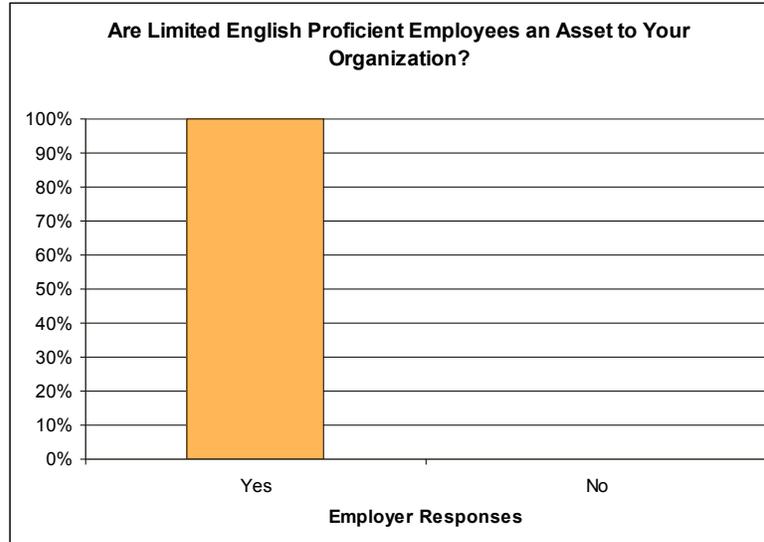
Overall, the survey indicates that immigrants and refugees have a strong desire to learn English, specifically English skills that will increase their wage earning potential and allow for job advancement. However, limited-English-proficient individuals face many barriers to acquiring English as a second language. Although many survey participants noted that they had tried to learn English at least one or more times, only a small percentage indicated that they are currently enrolled in an English class. As the survey results indicate, this could be because they currently don't have the time to learn and/or have given up trying to learn due to impediments to a positive learning experience such as large class sizes, irrelevant class curriculum, and others.

More than 60 percent of survey respondents noted that they are employed. In addition, many limited-English-proficient survey respondents indicated that they could understand English at work. Perhaps many English language learners find that basic survival English does not assist their families in integrating, advance their job skills, or allow them to become self-sufficient. The strong desire for immigrants and refugees to learn English for job advancement perhaps indicates that they hope to successfully integrate and be self-sufficient while contributing positively to Utah's economy and communities.

Employers of Limited English Proficient Workers:

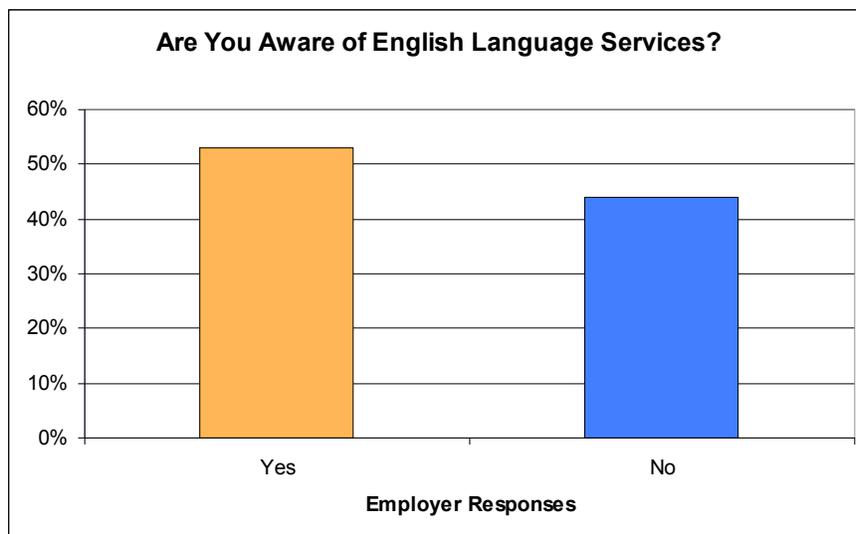
The survey produced the following results for employers of high numbers of limited-English-proficient immigrants and refugees in United Way of Salt Lake’s service area.

Figure 12



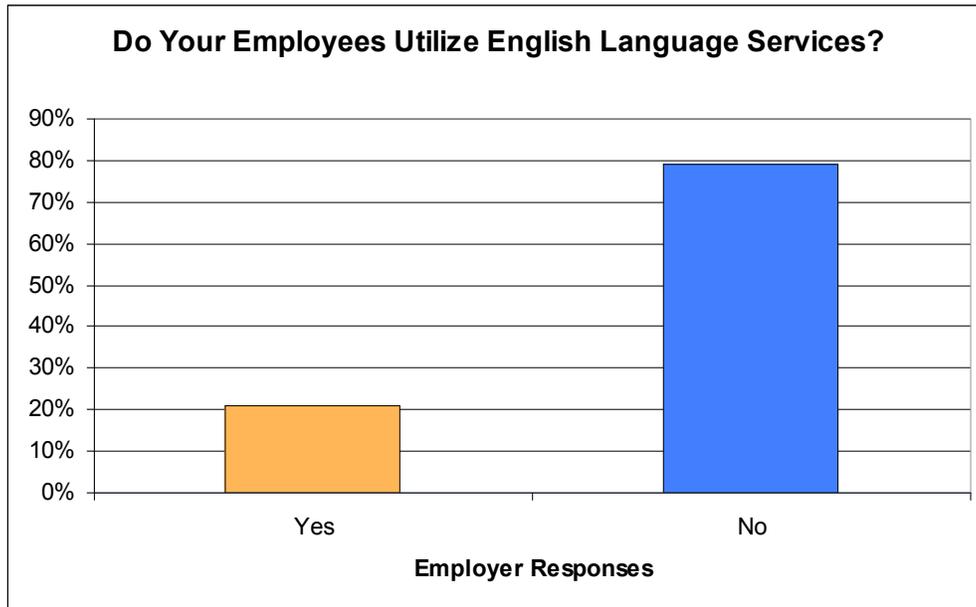
All employers noted that although there are challenges to working with limited-English-proficient employees, these employees are a huge asset to their organization. Employers noted that they are hard working, skilled, and essential contributors. Some even noted that they would not be able to maintain growth in their business if it were not for their limited-English-proficient workers due to the low unemployment rate and current labor shortage.

Figure 13



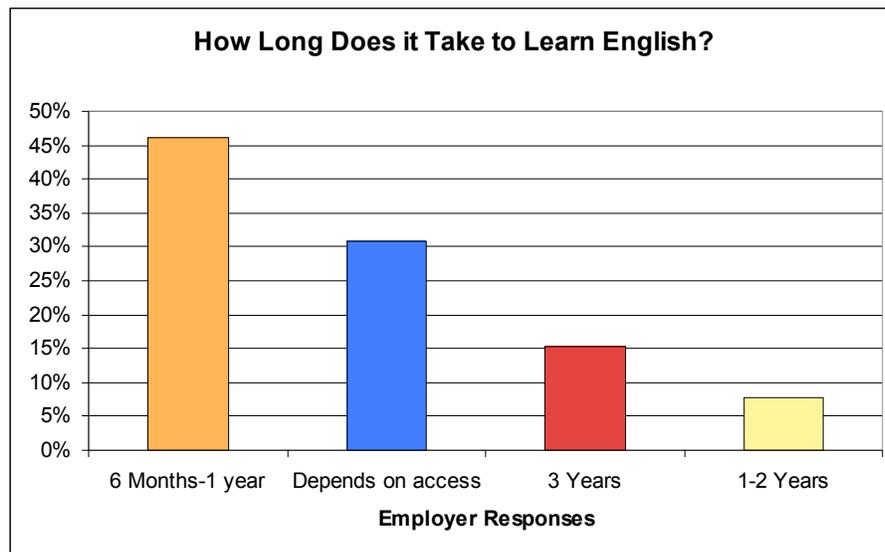
A slight majority of employers are aware of English language services available in the community. However, our survey data also shows that a high number of employers are unaware of the various ESL services that are available.

Figure 14



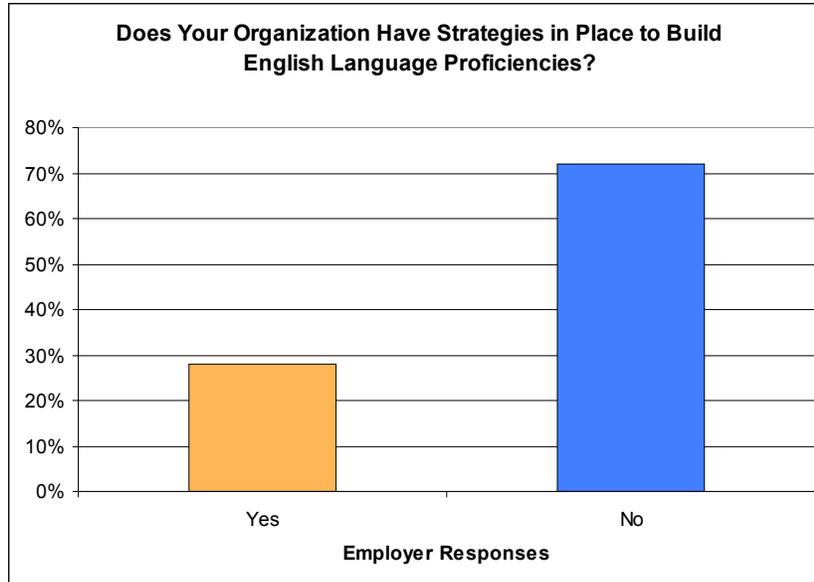
Interestingly, employers do not think their immigrant and refugee employees utilize English language services, when in fact, many limited-English-proficient employees indicated in this survey that they have tried at least one or more times to learn English.

Figure 15



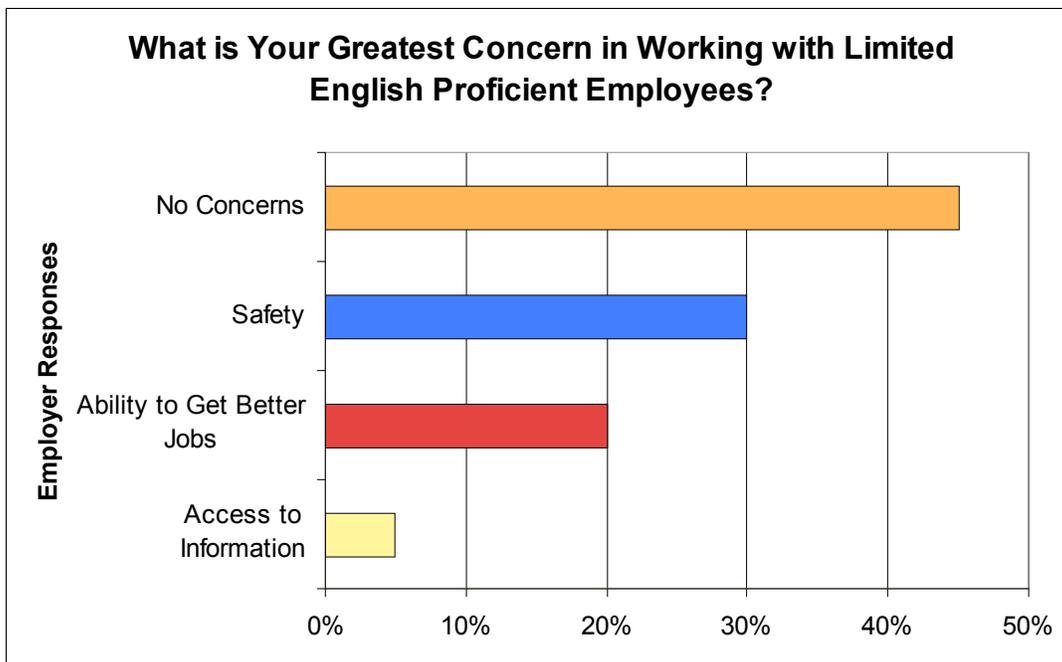
Almost half of employers believe that it should take only six months to one year to learn English. A very small percentage believes that it takes more than one year to learn English. Many noted that they believed it would take only six months to one year to learn job-specific English language skills.

Figure 16



The overwhelming majority of organizations and businesses with high numbers of limited-English-proficient employees that participated in the study indicated that they do not have any strategies in place to build the English language proficiencies of their employees.

Figure 17



The largest number of employer respondents indicated that they did not have any concerns regarding their limited-English-proficient employees. Safety was the highest response of reported concerns.

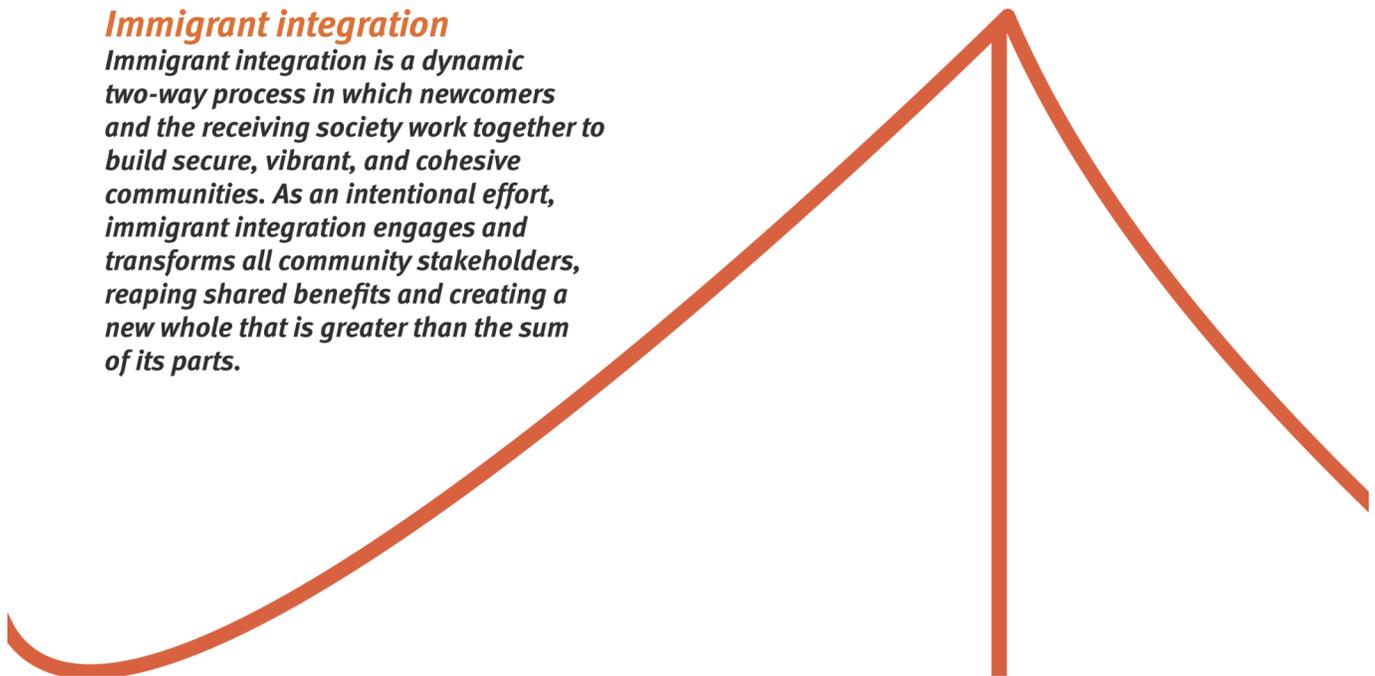
Overall, employers indicated that they need workers with both English proficiency and job-specific skills to succeed. The survey found that the majority of employers did not know of the various ESL services that are currently available. Also, employers did not think employed immigrants and refugees utilize English language services in the community. When asked what their top concern was for their limited-English-proficient employees, the largest portion of employers indicated that they did not have any concerns. This lack of concern may explain, at least in part, why worksite-based English language courses have not shown a great deal of success, or taken hold in ways expected in the past.

Although there are a number of successful workplace ESL programs, these programs are the exception and not the rule. The challenges to creating successful workplace ESL programs are significant considering employers are not inherently prepared to take on this challenge. Therefore, the extent to which a workplace ESL program is successful must take into account that it is not the goal or concern of most businesses to teach English. It is our conclusion that workplace ESL programs and strategies aimed to increase and enhance worker skills must be specific about and take into account the employer's goals, top concerns, and perspectives.

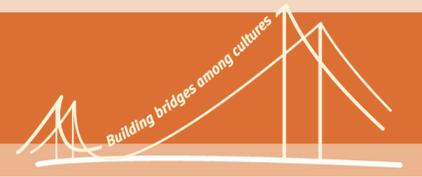
Utah's rapidly changing demographics, the fast-paced changes of the global and local economy, and the growing demand for both high-skilled and low-skilled workers makes immigrant integration one of the most imperative economic and social issues in our community.

Immigrant integration

Immigrant integration is a dynamic two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, immigrant integration engages and transforms all community stakeholders, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.



Collective Research and Survey Results



English Learning Opportunities
a United Way of Salt Lake initiative

Language is One Component of Immigrant Integration

Through secondary research, United Way of Salt Lake's survey findings, and continued discussions with the ELO Change Council, it is evident that language is only one of many necessary components to successfully support and integrate immigrants and refugees. English language acquisition is the foundation and gateway to begin the process of integration. To reap the full benefits of integration, Utah must invest in building a framework to welcome immigrants, support their integration into the social and economic fabric, and value their cultural and linguistic diversity.

Immigrants and Refugees Face Multiple Barriers to Integration and Financial Stability

The list of contributions of immigrants and refugees to our community and economy is extensive. However, immigrant integration does not come without its challenges. The challenges to integrate immigrants and refugees are numerous and complex. As the demographics of our population continue to change, integrating newcomers becomes more imperative and complicated. Hardworking immigrant families face multiple barriers that inhibit the creation of a foundation for achieving financial stability and upward mobility.

Research shows that immigrants and refugees in our community do not have access to tools, skills, and services to gain financial stability and upward mobility. For example, The Urban Institute has found that low-income, Spanish-speaking Latinos are much less likely to know about the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a proven tool to increase financial stability and self-sufficiency, than other low-income people, including English-speaking Latinos. Seventy-two percent of low-income parents interviewed in English had heard about the EITC, compared to 15.4 percent of parents interviewed in Spanish.³⁴ Also, immigrants' hourly wages are lower on average than those for natives, and nearly half earn less than 200 percent of the minimum wage (\$10.30 per hour)—versus one-third of native workers.³⁵

Multiple-barriers inhibit this population from higher earning potential, successful educational achievement, affordable and comprehensive health care, successful English language acquisition, civic engagement, and access to resources and programs that strengthen families and increase their ability to be self-reliant.

United Way of Salt Lake utilized primary research, guidance from the ELO Change Council, and research of promising practices, specifically “For the Benefit of All,”³⁶ a statewide, comprehensive immigrant-integration strategy spearheaded by the Governor in Illinois, to develop and identify the following five challenges that immigrants and refugees face in Utah:

- 1) Language
- 2) Earning Potential and Financial Stability
- 3) Naturalization for Eligible Residents
- 4) Opportunities for Children
- 5) Access to Resources

It is difficult to classify and examine these challenges individually, as many of them are linked and intertwined, such as the tie between English language skills and wages. However, by looking at each of these five challenges individually, we have a more comprehensive picture of the nuances and complexities of each challenge.

1. Language

Immigrants and refugees recognize the need and have the desire to learn English. A recent survey by Public Agenda concluded that immigrants believe learning English is very important.³⁷ Nearly 9 in 10 respondents said it's hard to get a good job or do well in the United States without learning English. Another research study developed by the Department of Education found that participants in adult ESL classes generally demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for learning English and stay in programs longer than do learners in other adult basic education classes. The Department of Education also reported that ESL is the fastest growing area of adult education.³⁸ Lastly, our survey confirms prior research that demonstrates the majority of immigrants and refugees have tried to learn English at least one or more times and do not see English acquisition as having a negative impact on their own culture.³⁹

However, research also shows that dual-immersion language and bi-literacy programs are positive and effective ways to increase English language acquisition, especially for populations with lower education levels.⁴⁰ Increasing literacy in one’s primary language speeds the learning process for a second language. In addition, looking at English language acquisition within the framework of immigrant integration, it is apparent that it is a two-way process, rather than one culture or language that takes the place of the other.

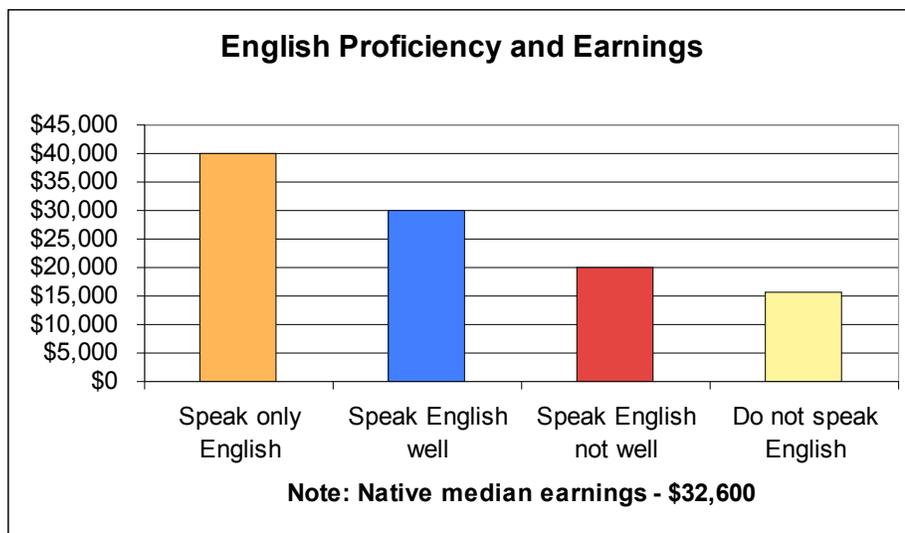
Successful English language acquisition is the cornerstone of immigrant integration. Specifically, national data illustrates that after adjusting for other socioeconomic factors including education and work experience, English-speaking immigrants earned 17 percent more than non-English speaking immigrants.⁴¹

However, literature discussing promising practices suggests that basic English language skills alone are not enough to increase wages. For immigrants with greater than 12 years of education, English fluency is associated with an astounding 76 percent jump in earnings compared with a modest 4 percent increase for workers with less than eight years of education.⁴² This research,

coupled with findings from the survey indicates that in order to assist immigrants and refugees in meeting their goals and desires to work and succeed, English language programs need to incorporate a focus on basic math, literacy, and workplace skills in conjunction with English skills in order to increase earnings.

Therefore, not only is an increase in English language proficiency directly tied to higher wages and earning potential, but English language proficiency also enables families to successfully access services, participate in their children’s education, and participate in civic activities. Having appropriate language skills is the foundation to be able to communicate and thus succeed at work and in life. English language acquisition is the foundation for immigrant and refugee integration and is the main challenge and barrier to self-sufficiency for immigrants and refugees.

Figure 18



Source: Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Rob Paral and Associates

2. Earning Potential and Financial Stability

Immigrants and refugees bring many assets and contributions to the workforce. As discussed before (see Figures 5 & 6), immigrants and refugees fuel Utah’s economic prosperity by supplying much needed labor and bolstering growth in many specific markets.

Historically, immigrants have entered the workforce in low-skilled positions. However, as generations of immigrants successfully integrate with American society, economic and social mobility raise immigrant families from low-skilled jobs to higher-wage earning positions. Immigrants and refugees are gainfully employed and are working hard to increase their earning potential. While low-skill jobs are good entry-level opportunities and are a key starting point for many immigrants and refugees, job training and skills advancement is critical to create economic mobility. We know that successful acquisition of English as a second language directly impacts a worker’s ability to earn higher wages. However, job advancement and living wages are also critical to build financial stability. Career path programs, where immigrants and refugees can

both become proficient in English while learning skills and trades in their native language, give immigrants and refugees the opportunity to advance.

At the same time, 42 percent of immigrants now enter the United States with both financial capital and 12 or more years of formal education.⁴³ High-skilled immigrants and refugees also face many challenges regarding earning potential. Many immigrants and refugees come to Utah with a specific skill set and credentials from another country. However, there is a lack of policies and programs that allow the transfer of credentials of immigrants and refugees, making it very difficult to find employment in previous occupations. Immigrants and refugees with high skills and credentials are an untapped resource that could help alleviate issues around Utah's labor shortage. Credential transfer also allows high-skilled immigrants and refugees in low-wage jobs to increase their earning potential. Without this opportunity, immigrants and refugees experience occupational downgrading with employment doors only open to low-skill jobs. Therefore, skill re-credentialing programs and transfer policies coupled with English language skills will open doors to labor pools for Utah and career and earnings pathways for immigrants and refugees.

3. Naturalization for Eligible Residents

U.S. citizenship is an essential step for immigrants to successfully integrate into the political, economic, and social fabric of Utah. Through various activities gained through citizenship such as the ability to serve on juries, hold public office, and vote, immigrants and refugees will have a sense of permanence and invest in their families and communities. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the number of naturalized citizens rose for the first time in decades, from 6.5 to 11 million citizens by 2002. The share of legal immigrants who had naturalized rose to 49 percent in 2002 after a steep downward trend—from 64 percent in 1970 to 39 percent in 1996. The increase in the number of naturalized citizens is a positive trend. However, despite this increase and the clear benefits to citizenship, large numbers of eligible immigrants have not yet become citizens. An estimated 9.4 million legal immigrants throughout the United States are currently eligible to naturalize.⁴⁴ According to The Urban Institute, 39,000 people in Utah are eligible to be naturalized and 40,000 have already been naturalized.⁴⁵

Many immigrant families that are eligible for naturalization do not apply. Surveys done in other parts of the nation conclude that immigrants perceive the citizenship process as difficult. They also found that legal immigrants eligible for citizenship lack reliable sources of information regarding citizenship, often depending solely on word of mouth.⁴⁶ In addition to these barriers, the federal government has imposed several measures, such as an increase in cost, difficulty, and length, that make citizenship more difficult to obtain, especially for qualified immigrants with lower income and education levels.

The challenge of obtaining citizenship also extends to immigrants who are here illegally. The nation and Utah's economy rely heavily on the economic contributions of these immigrants.

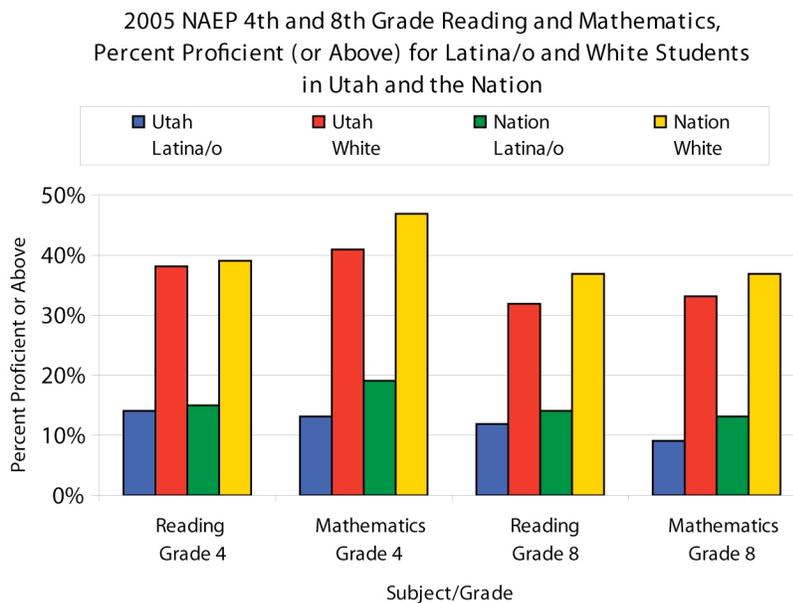
4. Opportunities for Children

While much of United Way of Salt Lake's research has been focused on adult immigrants and refugees, according to our survey, childcare is the number three barrier for many immigrant and

refugee families to successfully learn English (see Figure 11). Providing childcare in conjunction with English language programs is not enough. In fact, our survey also illustrated that the third most popular reason for immigrants to learn or enhance English language skills was also to help their children. This highlights the interconnectedness between all of these issues and the need for a comprehensive and holistic strategy to immigrant integration that looks at the picture of the whole family—the success of the adults and the success of their children.

Many immigrant and refugee families come to Utah with limited formal education and don't have access to information about how to navigate the Utah school system to support their children's educational needs. According to the Utah State Office of Education, children who grow up in households where a language other than English is primarily spoken and are limited English proficient (LEP) show wide gaps in school achievement compared to other youth. This is confirmed by a recent University of Utah report.⁴⁷

Figure 19



Source: University of Utah Education Policy Center

Often there is a misperception that immigrant and refugee families do not value educational opportunities for their children due to of a lack of parental involvement. However, a lack of participation by immigrant parents in their children's education should not be interpreted as lack of interest, according to a Brown study.⁴⁸ This study of parental involvement found that immigrant parents who participated in the study have high aspirations for their children's futures and recognized the importance of education. Often a source of frustration for school officials, low parental involvement is more specific to parents' discomfort with the English language, lack of familiarity with the educational system, and cultural conceptions of the role of teachers and parents than it is to the value placed on education. In order to support educational opportunities for their children, immigrant and refugee parents need the right tools, information, and education about Utah schools. School communities need to incorporate best practices and strategies that provide successful bridges between schools and immigrant parents.

In addition to supporting immigrant and refugee children with school opportunities, services for every stage of a child’s life must be evaluated. Effective early childhood programs that engage students and their parents have proven to have highly positive impacts for both children and adults.⁴⁹

For children to succeed, it is important to bridge the disconnect between immigrant families and systems, such as schools, and ensure that immigrant and refugee parents have access to educational resources for their children.

5. Access to Resources

While immigrants and refugees tackle the lengthy process of learning English as a second language, the number of limited-English-proficient residents continues to grow. Nationally, about 4.4 million households encompassing 11.9 million people are “linguistically isolated” (no adults or teenagers over the age of 14 speak English) from the rest of the population.⁵⁰ Here in Utah, 3.4 percent of all families are “linguistically isolated.”⁵¹

The effects of being linguistically isolated are especially apparent through health indicators. For example, minority and Hispanic/Latino families have the lowest rate of health insurance coverage and a lower percentage of mothers receiving prenatal care than the state average, according to the Utah State Department of Health. A recent study illustrated that among the 414 patients who saw a physician at least once, Latinos with fair and poor English proficiency reported approximately 22 percent fewer physician visits than non-Latinos whose native language was English, even after adjusting for other determinants of physician visits. The magnitude of the association between limited English proficiency and number of physician visits was similar to that for having poor health, no health insurance, or no regular source of care.⁵² Health disparities among the limited-English-proficient population are a growing concern in our state, and access to linguistically and culturally appropriate services is a critical piece to addressing health care and coverage gaps.

However, beyond health indicators, immigrants and refugees also have lower utilization rates of resources such as banks and traditional financial services. As important as it is to learn English, immigrants and refugees must also have access to linguistically appropriate resources and services in order to be self-reliant.

Figure 20

Asset-Building: Banking and Housing

The Unbanked:	
US families	9.1%
Whites, non-Hispanic	5.1%
Non-white or Hispanic	21.8%
Unbanked Households - US Born:	
Black	46%
Hispanic	34%
Other Race	34%
White	14%

Unbanked Households - Immigrant Groups:	
Mexican	53%
Latin American	37%
Asian	20%
European	17%

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

Conclusions



The history of immigrants in our nation is closely tied to our economic progress and national growth. Utah's economic growth is driving labor demands up, and as a result our state's demographics are quickly changing. Immigrants and refugees are coming to our state to help meet Utah's labor needs and are large contributors to economic growth. As a result, immigrants and refugees are an integral part of our economic, cultural, and social fabric.

As immigrants and refugees join Utah's workforce in pursuit of self-reliance, freedom, and democracy, businesses, religious institutions, non-profits, and local and state government leaders are actively looking for solutions to the barriers for a rapidly diversifying community and workforce. Barriers such as language inhibit immigrants and refugees from fully integrating with Utah society. As mentioned in the introduction, for the purposes of this report, United Way of Salt Lake has adopted the following definition of immigrant integration: immigrant integration is a dynamic two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. It is important to note that in a democratic society, we must respect the autonomy of each individual to integrate—if they choose to do so—as well as the pace and process for integration that works best for them.

United Way of Salt Lake recognizes the hardworking public and community-based organizations that work daily on the specific needs of immigrants and refugees. In more ways than one, these organizations are the unsung providers that are finding daily solutions to these complex issues. While many organizations have individually undertaken several successful efforts to advance immigrant integration, there has not been a single cohesive effort to address this issue with multiple stakeholders in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. This is all too evident in the fact that Utah does not have a comprehensive and strategic state policy to advance the broad issues of immigrant integration.

It should be noted, however, that Governor Huntsman and other state leaders have taken the important step of beginning to address related issues with a focus on the subpopulation of refugees. Refugee Working Group chartered by Governor Huntsman and Salt Lake County Mayor Corroon is a broad-based effort to identify needs and make recommendations for improving the conditions of refugees. Given the rapidly changing demographics of our state, the fast paced changes of the global economy, and the growing demand for both high-skilled and low-skilled workers, building on the work of the Refugee Working Group to focus on the larger issue of immigrant integration is one of the most imperative economic and social issues facing the public and private sectors.

It is our hope that this research provides some important insights into English language acquisition and the need for a comprehensive immigrant integration framework for our state. In short, United Way of Salt Lake's research into English language acquisition found that English

language acquisition alone does not strengthen immigrant and refugee families. Rather, English language development is the foundation by which immigrant and refugee families begin to integrate and create a stronger and more cohesive—yet diverse—community.

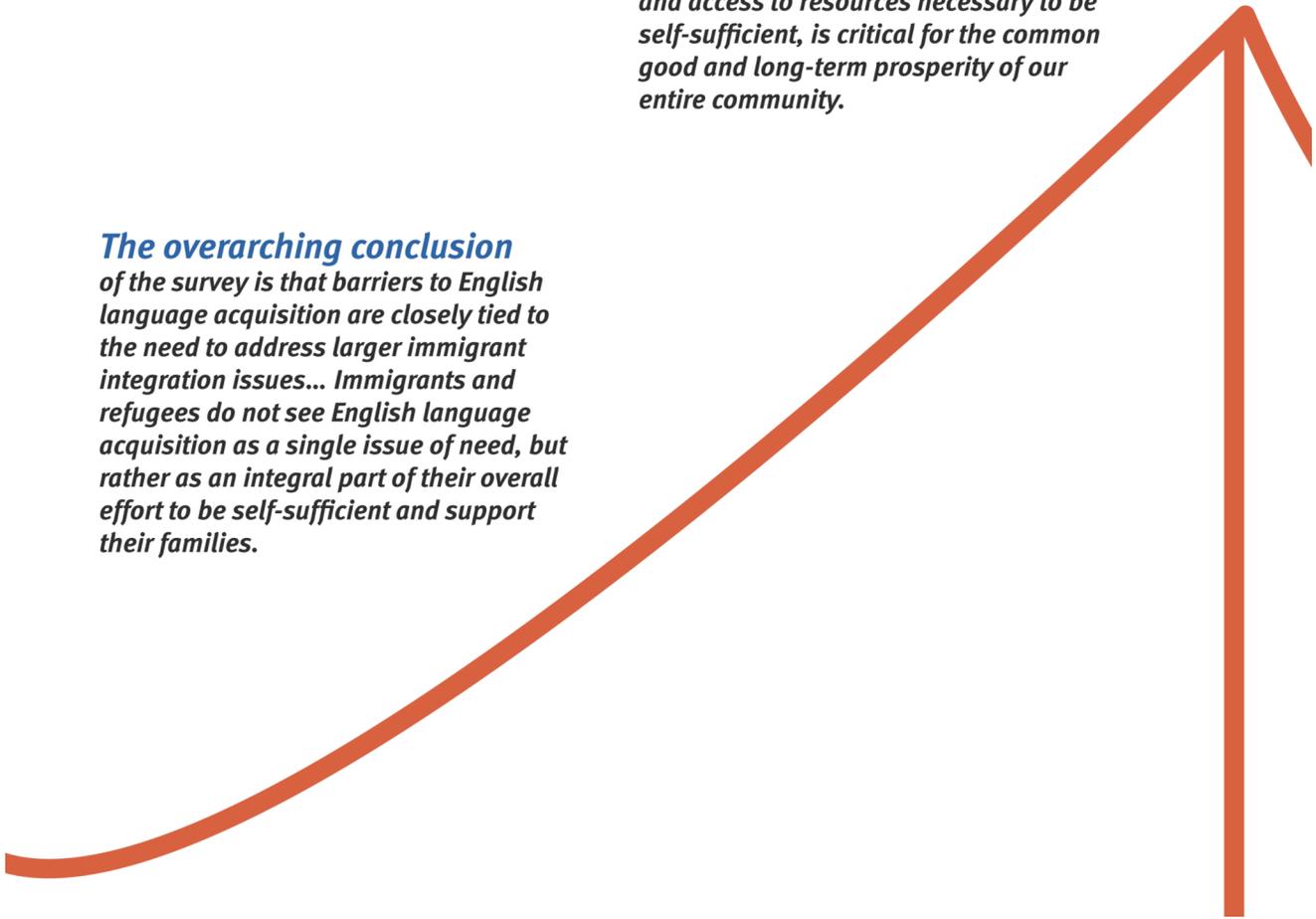
Building from the common ground of our desire to have a strong, cohesive community, it is essential to create a framework for welcoming immigrants and refugees and enabling them to succeed and contribute to our community. Immigrant integration is a critical step toward supporting work and building on goals and desires of individuals and families to be self-sufficient. By creating pathways and building bridges to integration, we can work together to build prosperous, cohesive communities and economies for the common good and benefit of all.

The purpose of this research

is to find solutions to help the growing number of immigrants and refugees overcome obstacles to reaching financial stability and self-reliance, and to create stronger families and communities by finding solutions to one of our community's most critical problems. In all, strengthening immigrant families by ensuring they have the tools, skills, and access to resources necessary to be self-sufficient, is critical for the common good and long-term prosperity of our entire community.

The overarching conclusion

of the survey is that barriers to English language acquisition are closely tied to the need to address larger immigrant integration issues... Immigrants and refugees do not see English language acquisition as a single issue of need, but rather as an integral part of their overall effort to be self-sufficient and support their families.



Recommendations



The following three recommendations are organized into three broad categories. Our first is the foundation and framework for Utah to find and build common ground on this important issue. The second outlines promising practices related to English language acquisition, and the last is a list of immediate action steps that various groups can individually take to further the work of immigrant integration.

Comprehensive Framework of Solutions – A State-level Public/Private Partnership:

Because English language acquisition alone is not enough to strengthen immigrant and refugee families, our efforts must focus on a multi-faceted approach that will:

- increase English language acquisition
- increase earning potential and financial stability
- provide opportunities for children of immigrants and refugees
- increase naturalization and citizenship of eligible residents
- increase access to resources and basic needs

To facilitate the ongoing process of developing high-impact strategies in each of these areas, we urge the creation of a council comprised of public, private, and other partners to develop a comprehensive strategic framework for the integration of immigrants and refugees in Utah. This council would require high-level leadership at the state level and a commitment from public sector agencies, nonprofit community organizations, and private sector employers.

Promising English Language Program Practices:

The wealth of knowledge and successful practices from local direct service providers are too large to encompass in this report. As a result, we have selected a few promising practices from local programs that we found were supported through our survey findings, secondary research, and literature review. Specifically, we relied on the findings of the Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, The Annie E. Casey Foundation,⁵³ and the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.⁵⁴ The following recommendations, when implemented, enhance successful English language acquisition:

1. English language acquisition strategies should account for the top barriers to English learning identified through our survey: a lack of time, the difficulty of learning a new language, and a lack of childcare.
2. For low-skilled workers, English language acquisition should be tied to other basic math, literacy and specific workplace skills to increase opportunities for job advancement and higher wage earnings. Specifically, for low-education level workers, ESL programs

should focus on increasing basic literacy and education skills in native languages, while increasing English acquisition.

3. For high-skilled workers, skill and certification transfer policies should be created in conjunction with ESL programs tailored to specific workplace tasks.
4. Schools should offer dual immersion and English language acquisition programs.

Immediate Action Steps for English Proficient Residents, English Language Learners, Businesses, Service Delivery Agencies, and Policymakers:

In addition to the broader recommendations described above, United Way of Salt Lake recognizes that individual actions can also have a significant impact. The following specific actions steps are intended as a way for various stakeholders to think about how they can individually support immigrant integration. Many are already doing the numerous steps outlined below, and in fact, their creative out-of-the-box solutions led us to incorporate and highlight many of their promising practices below.

Employers

1. Educate and build awareness among business leaders, co-workers, and colleagues about the positive and potential contributions of immigrants and refugees in Utah.
2. Access information about ESL services that are available by contacting 211 and the Utah Department of Workforce Services.
3. Partner with and support school-based ESL programs.
4. Develop vocational/technical/safety training programs in native languages.
5. If workplace ESL programs are developed, ensure a successful program by:
 - a. Holding classes at the worksite during paid hours
 - b. Utilizing curriculum that is tied to specific workplace tasks and skills, along with basic math and literacy
 - c. Integrating participation in workplace ESL programs with job advancement and promotion opportunities
6. Begin dialogues with business colleagues about local best practices. Start a network and form partnerships for sharing.
7. Engage local policymakers in a discussion about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

Service Delivery Agencies – Both Public and Community-based

1. Educate and build awareness among service providers, co-workers, and colleagues about the positive and potential contributions of immigrants and refugees in Utah.
2. Pro-actively develop specific outreach and service delivery programs that are linguistically and culturally appropriate, ensuring access to your agency's services by immigrants and refugees.
3. Partner with employers interested in helping immigrants and refugees succeed in their workplace.
4. Begin dialogues with other service providers about local best practices for outreach and linguistically and culturally appropriate service delivery. Start a network and form partnerships for sharing.
5. Engage local policymakers in a discussion about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

English Proficient Residents

1. Learn a second language.
2. Educate yourself and build awareness among family members, friends, and neighbors about the positive and potential contributions of immigrants and refugees in Utah.
3. Talk to local schools about dual-immersion programs and vocational/technical training programs provided in native languages.
4. Engage in a discussion with your local policymakers about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

English Language Learners

1. Access information about available English language programs by contacting 211. Investigate and find the program that best meets your needs.
2. Educate yourself and build awareness among family members, friends, and neighbors about the positive and potential outcomes of integration and participation in your communities.
3. Talk to local schools about dual-immersion programs and vocational/technical training programs provided in native languages.

4. Engage local policymakers in a discussion about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

Policymakers

State legislators and policymakers have recognized the economic and social assets that immigrants and refugees bring to the state of Utah by protecting access to resources that enable all families to be self-sufficient and that promote a vital and productive community and economy. Businesses, nonprofit organizations, religious institutions, and public agencies can build on that foundation by adopting this vision of integrating immigrants and refugees for the benefit of all.

1. Educate yourself and build awareness among colleagues about the positive and potential contributions of immigrants and refugees in Utah.
2. Engage in a discussion with your colleagues and the Governor about the need to create a comprehensive immigrant and refugee integration strategy for Utah.

English Learning Opportunities Change Council

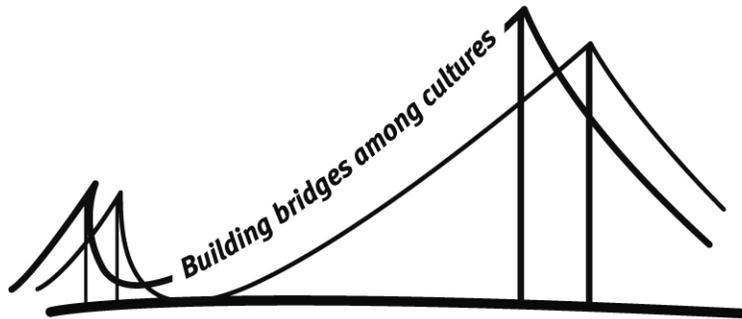
Catherine Barnhart, English Skills Learning Center
Elena Bensor, Utah Labor Commission
David R. Chavez, Horizonte Instruction Center
Rebecca Chavez-Houck, Centro de la Familia de Utah
Agnes Chiao, United Way of Salt Lake
Rob Clark, American ESL Academy
Bill Crim, United Way of Salt Lake
Daniel R. de Almeida, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Kate Diggins, Guadalupe Schools
Adrienne Escalante, Daily Dose Learning Systems
Gladys Gonzalez, Hispanic Marketing and Consulting
Sandra Grant, Utah State Office of Education
Patsy Halladay, AAA Fair Credit Foundation
Jennifer Hatch, United Way of Salt Lake
Lindsay Jorgensen, Intermountain Healthcare
Eva Kendrick, Granite School District
Peggy Larsen, Workers Compensation Fund
Theresa Martinez, University of Utah
Trenton Maw, Northern Utah Academy of Spanish
Hector Mendiola, Utah State University Extension
Anne Milne, Utah Legal Services
Nicole Miranda, University of Utah
Sabrina Morales, Comunidades Unidas
Norman N. Nakamura, Department of Workforce Services
Marilyn Maxine Nunez, Asian Association of Utah
Melanie Osterud, Utah Food Bank Services
Dorothy Owen, Salt Lake County Government
Kristine Pepin, United Way of Salt Lake
Ryan Prows, Ivory Homes
Barbara Jean Ray, Vantage Point Advisors
Luz Robles, Utah State Office of Ethnic Affairs
Susan L. Smith, Manpower Employment Services
Jesse Soriano, Utah State Office of Ethnic Affairs
Nate Southerland, Utah Education Network
Greg Summerhays, Workers Compensation Fund
Sabina Zunguze, Beautiful Options USA LLC

Endnotes

- ¹ Daranee Petsod, Ted Wang, and Craig McGarvey C. 2006. *Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration*. ed. Daranee Petsod. Sebastopol: Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees.
- ² Utah Population Estimates Committee
- ³ Pamela S. Perlich. Bureau of Economic and Business Research. *Utah Economic and Business Review*. University of Utah. March/April 2006. Vol. 66 Nos. 3 & 4
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵ Capps, Randy, Michael Fix, Julie Murray, Jason Ost, Jeffrey S. Passel, and Shinta Herwantoro. 2005. *The New Demography of America's Schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.
- ⁶ Bureau of Economic and Business Research, March/April 2006.
- ⁷ Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Utah
- ⁸ Pamela S. Perlich. 2002. *Utah Minorities: The Story Told by 150 Years of Census Data*. University of Utah, Bureau of Economic and Business Research.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ Bureau of Economic and Business Research, March/April 2006.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Jeffrey S. Passel and Roberto Suro. 2005. *Rise, Peak, and Decline: Trends in U.S. Immigration 1992-2004*. Washington D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center.
- ¹³ Capps, Randy, and Jeffrey Passel. 2004. *Describing Immigrant Communities*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute
- ¹⁴ Capps, Randy, Michael Fix, Julie Murray, Jason Ost, Jeffrey S. Passel, 2005.
- ¹⁵ Migration Policy Institute. Fact sheet on the foreign born.
<<http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/state2.cfm?ID=UT>> (28 February 2007).
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ Salt Lake City School District, 2004-2005 Annual Report.
- ²² Utah Department of Workforce Services <www.jobs.utah.gov>
- ²³ Utah Department of Workforce Services, News Release, Feb. 13, 2007
- ²⁴ Utah Department of Workforce Services, News Release, May 15, 2007
- ²⁵ "Growth in the Foreign-born Workforce and Employment of the Native Born." (Report, Pew Hispanic Center, 2006).
- ²⁶ "The Economic Impact of the Mexico-Utah Relationship." (Report, Institute of Public and International Affairs, University of Utah, 2005).
- ²⁷ 2002 Economic Census. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/meta/long_SBO415202.htm>. U.S. Census Bureau. (25 May 2007).
- ²⁸ Randy Capps, Leighton Ku, Michael Fix, et al. *How are Immigrants Faring After Welfare Reform?* Preliminary Evidence from Los Angeles and New York City, Urban Institute, 2002.
- ²⁹ Utah State Office of Education. <<http://www.schools.utah.gov/adulted/>>. (25 May 2007).
- ³⁰ "Cultural Integration and English Proficiency in the Workplace: A Model for Successful Workplace Education Programs." (Granite Peaks Adult and Community Education, 2004).
- ³¹ James Thomas Tucker. 2006. *Waiting Times for Adult ESL Classes and the Impact on English Learners*. Los Angeles: NALEO Educational Fund.
- ³² Daranee Petsod, Ted Wang, and Craig McGarvey C. 2006. *Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration*. ed. Daranee Petsod. Sebastopol: Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees.
- ³³ Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. <http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/faqs.html#Eleven>. (25 May 2007).
- ³⁴ Katherin Ross Phillips. 2001. *Who Knows about the Earned Income Tax Credit?* Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

-
- ³⁵ National Conference of State Legislatures. "A Quick Look at U.S. Immigrants: Demographics, Workforce, and Asset Building" in *The Immigrant Policy Project*. <<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/immig/immigstatistics0604.htm>>. (25 May 2007).
- ³⁶ "For the Benefit of All: Strategic Recommendations to Enhance the State's Role in the Integration of Immigrants in Illinois." (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, 2006).
- ³⁷ Steve Farkas, Ann Duffett and Jean Johnson with Leslie Moye and Jackie Vine. (2003). *Now That I'm Here: What America's Immigrants Have to Say About Life in the U.S. Today*. New York: Public Agenda.
- ³⁸ Tucker, 2006.
- ³⁹ "Attitudes to Learning English." (Fact Sheet, Pew Hispanic Center, 2006).
- ⁴⁰ Tia Elena Martinez with Ted Wang. 2006. *Supporting English Language Acquisition: Opportunities for Foundations to Strengthen the Social and Economic Well-being of Immigrant Families*. eds. Daranee Petsod and Ted Wang. Sebastopol: Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees.
- ⁴¹ Barry R. Chiswick and Paul W. Miller. 1992. "Language in the Immigrant Labor Market" in *Immigration, Language and Ethnicity*. ed. Barry R. Chiswick. Canada and the United States.
- ⁴² Martinez and Wang, 2006.
- ⁴³ Ivan Light. 2001. "Immigrant Neighborhoods as Centers of Commerce." Chicago: Roosevelt University Institute for Metropolitan Affairs.
- ⁴⁴ "Today we march, tomorrow we vote': fearful US Latinos flex political muscle," *Agence FrancePresse*, 28 March, 2006.
- ⁴⁵ Michael Fix, Jeffrey S. Passel, and Kenneth Sucher. 2003. *Immigrant Families and Workers*. Brief No. 3. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- ⁴⁶ "Preliminary Research Briefing: New Americans Survey." (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, June 13, 2005)
- ⁴⁷ "Closing the Educational Achievement Gap for Latina/o Students in Utah." (Report, University of Utah, Education Policy Center, 2006).
- ⁴⁸ George Street Journal. <http://www.brown.edu/Administration/George_Street_Journal/vol25/25GSJ26e.html>. Brown University. (25 May 2007).
- ⁴⁹ W. Stephen Barnett. 1995. "Long-Term Effects of Early Childhood Programs on Cognitive and School Outcomes." *The Future of Children*, Vol.5, No.3. Washington, DC & Princeton: Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and Brookings Institution.
- William Gormley and Deborah Phillips. 2003. *The Effects of Universal Pre-K in Oklahoma: Research Highlights and Policy Implications*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Public Policy Institute.
- ⁵⁰ Tucker, 2006.
- ⁵¹ Migration Policy Institute, 2007.
- ⁵² Kathryn Pitkin Derose and David W. Baker. 2000. "Limited English Proficiency and Latinos' Use of Physician Services" in *Medical Care Research and Review*. Vol. 57, No. 1.
- ⁵³ Martinez with Wang, 2006.
- ⁵⁴ Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, 2006.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are the sole responsibility of United Way of Salt Lake.



English Learning Opportunities
a United Way of Salt Lake initiative



United Way of Salt Lake



United Way of Salt Lake

*serving Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele Counties
creating hope since 1904*

www.uw.org