

## A Few Resources Related to ESL and Work

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- Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center. (VALCR) <http://www.valrc.org/resources/buildingbasics/index.html>

## WORKING WITH SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

Skilled immigrants bring unique circumstances to the career planning context. These individuals have already completed postsecondary education or training in their countries of origin and have often worked for many years in their chosen professions. Most skilled immigrants have a strong desire to continue their professional careers in the United States; however, they often face obstacles in achieving this goal. A first step for many is learning the English language. It is common for highly trained individuals, including physicians and engineers, to work menial jobs as line workers in factories or as custodians as they study to improve their English. Once skilled immigrants have mastered basic survival skills in English, they still face many hurdles since they typically lack information about the steps necessary to obtain jobs in line with their prior training and experience.

When highly skilled immigrants are working in low wage jobs, this is clearly a serious waste of talent and human potential. Thankfully, in recent years, several organizations in the United States have been working on developing resources to improve services for skilled immigrants. There is now a growing number of tools and resources available to adult educators and the skilled immigrants they work with.

For example, the **Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians** has developed detailed career guides in four high growth careers: accountant, mechanical engineer, systems analyst, and teacher. There is also a general career guide, "How to Succeed in the Workplace: A Career Guide for the Immigrant Professional," which provides helpful tips for the professional job search. Other useful information includes guides for how to start a small business as well as a resource for supporting newcomers to the US to gain employment. These guides are available for free download <http://www.welcomingcenter.org/publications/publication-downloads>.

**IMPRINT (Immigrant Professional Integration)** conducts training and other resources for the field on ways to work more effectively with skilled immigrants. For example, the following free webinars are available: What Adult Educators Need to Know about Serving Skilled Immigrants, Who Are Skilled Immigrants in Your Community?, and Building Employer Partnerships to Foster Skilled Immigrant Success. You can access the training materials for these webinars and others at the IMPRINT website <http://www.imprintproject.org/>.

**Global Talent Bridge** <http://www.globaltalentbridge.org/> at World Education provides many valuable resources for skilled immigrants including information about credential evaluation, professional licensing, college admissions, financial aid and transfer credit. A resource recently available is designed for community colleges *Bridging the Gap for Foreign-Educated Immigrants: A Guide for Community Colleges is available here* <http://www.globaltalentbridge.org/ccguide/>

They have also developed a useful handbook for the adult ESL field, *Supporting Skilled Immigrants: A Tool Kit for Adult ESL Teachers* available for free download <http://www.globaltalentbridge.org/toolkit/>. This tool kit includes:

- Innovative classroom strategies and lesson plans
- Best practices and effective program models
- Essential information and case studies to guide adults toward success
- Comprehensive program and resources guide

The **Welcome Back** (<http://www.welcomebackinitiative.org/wb/>) initiative is currently operating in 10 locations across the US. Welcome Back's focus is on supporting internationally trained health care professionals to find their way back to careers in healthcare. Each center serves as a model for how to work successfully with this unique population to provide career planning support and guidance. The San Francisco site also includes access to a contextualized curriculum, "The English Health Train: English Language Skills for Health Professionals," <http://welcomebackinitiative.org/sf/links/> that can be used with higher level adult learners.

**Work Voices at KQED** is another useful resource for working with skilled immigrants <http://education.kqed.org/edspace/category/work-voices/>. This site features videos of English language learners discussing their career pathways. Teacher resources, including transcripts and translations of the videos, are also available.

One More Resource for Healthcare/Nursing

**Lonestar College: Prescription for ESL Student Success**  
<http://www.wappscfc.lonestar.edu/grants/esl/index.htm>