Webinar: A Skills Strategy within CIR

July 29, 2013
Welcome

Rachel Unruh
Associate Director
National Skills Coalition,
Washington, DC
Our Vision

We seek an America that grows its economy by investing in its people, so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper.
Our Mission

• We **organize** broad-based coalitions seeking to raise the skills of America’s workers across a range of industries.

• We **advocate** for public policies that invest in what works, as informed by our members’ real-world expertise.

• And we **communicate** these goals to an American public seeking a vision for a strong U.S. economy that allows everyone to be part of its success.
Why CIR?

One of the most significant pieces of employment legislation in recent history

Current

- Family-based: 75%
- Employment-based: 25%

Senate Bill

- Family-based: 50%
- Employment-based: 50%

Basis for annual admission of Lawful Permanent Residents. Source: New York Times

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At the intersection of workforce development and immigration reform

Laine Romero-Alston
Program Officer, Next Generation Workforce Strategies
Ford Foundation, New York

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Immigrant integration within CIR

Margie McHugh
Co-Director, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy

Migration Policy Institute, Washington, DC
Integration Provisions in S.744

• Office of Citizenship and New Americans
• Accelerated pathway for DREAMers
• English provisions for RPIs
• Funding for legal services, integration initiatives & citizenship ceremonies
House Immigration Reform Efforts

- Piecemeal versus comprehensive
- Legalization versus “Special Path”
- Special focus on unauthorized youth
- Possible stand-alone bill on integration
- Possible English and education requirements
Scenarios and Populations of Interest from Ed and Skill Perspectives

• H+S: KIDS/DREAMers (MPI prior estimate 38% likely to succeed)
• S: RPI; H: non-DREAM, Ag (about 8 million)
• S: Backlog reduction (4 million)
• S: Future flow: low-skilled; family
• S+H: Agricultural workers
Human Capital Investment
Considerations

Given weak ABE, ESL, skills and PSE infrastructure:

• Likely focus on DREAMers; low-educated parents of young children
• Linguistic, economic & civic integration
• Desire to address needs of all non-citizens
• Desire for high leverage strategies
For More Information

Find data, reports and other analysis on language diversity and language access at

www.migrationpolicy.org/integration

Margie McHugh
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Adult education system: Capacity and requirements within CIR

Jeff Carter
Adult Education Policy Expert
Independent Consultant, Washington, DC

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NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION
Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.
Adult Literacy in the U.S.

- 30 million American adults (14%) have below basic literacy skills.
- 63 million adults have just a basic, bare-bones level of literacy proficiency.
Federal support for adult literacy and adult education

• The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), authorized by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
  
  o Provides block grants to states to fund local adult education / family literacy programs.
  o Administered by U.S. Department of Education (ED) through the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)
  o Since FY 2000, Congress has reserved a portion of state grant funding for integrated English language and civics education programs

• Not the only source of federal support (USCIS, CDBG, etc.)
Adult education programs

- Basic literacy
- Help adults of varying levels of literacy proficiency improve their basic academic skills (including math)
- Help non-native English speakers learn English
- Help those without a high school diploma obtain a high school level credential
- Provide adult education integrated with occupational skills training and career pathway programs (often leading to an industry recognized certificate)
- Civics education
- Family literacy
- Different modalities of instruction (classroom, one-on-one tutoring, computer-assisted, etc.)
Current investment serves a tiny fraction of the need.
Diversity of populations important in context of CIR

Those affected by CIR will include:

• Adults and youth/children
• Current citizens/legal residents
• People in the workforce and not in the workforce
• Low-skilled/low-wage workers and higher skilled workers
• People proficient in English and those not proficient
• People enrolled in WIA programs, and those who are not
• People primarily focused simply on obtaining citizenship

A skills strategy is focused on skills, but works best in the context of an integrated system that serves many different populations
Proposal for a skills strategy in CIR

Rachel Gragg
Federal Policy Director
National Skills Coalition,
Washington, DC
Immigration and the workforce

- Immigrants are critical to the future of the U.S. workforce
- Senate immigration bill shifts immigration policy from family-based to employment-based focus
Workforce requirements under CIR

• At six years:
  – Employed continuously (not more than 60 days unemployed); OR
  – Earnings at least at 100% of federal poverty line; OR
  – Enrolled in “full-time” education and training program.
Workforce requirements under CIR

• At ten years:
  – Employed continuously (not more than 60 days unemployed); OR
  – Earnings at least at 125% of federal poverty line; OR
  – Enrolled in “full-time” education and training program; AND
  – Meet English language and civic education requirements.
Principles for skills strategy in immigration reform

• Address the dual stakeholders involved in immigration policy: employers and workers.
• Support alignment, collaboration, and shared accountability in the provision of adult English language acquisition and basic skills instruction.
• Support the vital role of community based networks and service providers as a bridge into the public workforce system.
• Address the plurality of skill levels/employment goals of individuals impacted by changes to immigration policy.
NSC proposed investments in skills under immigration reform

$500 million for Career Pathways Employment Fund
• H-1B visa fees
• Integrated or contextualized ABE services
• Citizens and lawful permanent residents

$1 billion for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Grants
• Expansion of pilot program proposed in Senate bill
• Employment focused ABE/ESL
• Funded with a portion of Earnings Suspense File SSA

$50 million for an Employer Skills Investment Fund
• CIR Trust Fund’s optional, $50 million grant program for integration purposes
• Turn into mandatory grant program
• Incentivizes employer and/or philanthropic matches for workplace ESOL.
Ensure investments integrated with workforce development system

Use common performance measures consistent with workforce development programs.
• Should reflect both employment outcomes and basic skills gains/progress toward a degree or industry recognized credential.

Employ high quality providers within workforce development system.
• Prioritize states that have implemented standards of quality for adult-ed programs, and programs that can establish that they have met—or can meet—those standards.

Move the Office of Citizenship and New Americans (OCNA) to the White House.
• cross-agency cooperation both horizontally at the federal level and vertically with state and local systems
Employment focused ABE/ESL bridge programs

Dr. Ricardo Estrada
Vice President, Education and Programs
Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago
The role of worker centers in a skills strategy

Hilary Stern
Executive Director
Casa Latina, Seattle
Employer engagement in ABE/ESL

Jerry Rubin
President and CEO
Jewish Vocational Services, Boston
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