



Best Practices in Immigrant Education– Submission Form

CCCIE keeps a repository of community college best practices in immigrant education. It is our hope to provide meaningful information to community colleges across the country serving the needs of immigrant populations. As a first step toward developing a brief narrative describing your program, please respond to the questions below:

Name of Community College Columbus State Community College

Title of Program Language Institute

Type of Program (i.e. ESL, workforce training/career development, community outreach/partnership, providing access/support to undocumented students, citizenship/civics preparation, etc)

Non-credit ESL and community outreach/partnership

Primary Division(s) or Department(s) involved: Transitional Workforce Department

Key Partners:

Various community organizations (different for each specific project/initiative)

1. Need for Program (Briefly outline the significant need or problem that the initiative addresses and how long the program has been in place.)

The Language Institute began in January of 2000 to respond to the non-credit language needs of the central Ohio area. Currently 10.4% of Franklin County speaks a language other than English at home. In particular, Columbus is home to the second-largest Somali population in the U.S. (approx. 45,000) and a growing number of refugees and immigrants from all over the world.

2. Brief Description of Program (Briefly explain the purpose of your program, including whether it is an academic program [credit or non-credit] or student service.)

The Basic English program within the Language Institute provides non-credit Basic ESL (BESL) to anyone wishing to improve his or her English skills. About 24% of our students move on to credit coursework. Others are seeking English for work purposes or to begin work toward a GED.

3. Specific Population Served

All those with English as a second language--The largest population is the Somali refugees, but we also have students from many other parts of Africa, the Spanish-speaking world, Asia and Europe.



Spanish, Somali, Arabic, French, and Portuguese are among the top five languages spoken. About one-half of the students report that their highest level of education is high school, and the majority say they earned their high school diploma outside of the U.S. Approximately 40% indicate they have attended some college or earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

4. Goals and Objectives (Describe the broad program goals, and then identify major objectives that define how these goals will be accomplished.)

GOALS

1. Provide high-quality BESL classes in a leveled series from beginning literacy through intermediate level. At the end of the series, students should be able to pass the admissions test to the College and/or move on to GED coursework, as desired.
2. Reach out to the community with specifically funded projects for language, literacy and acculturation.

OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure program is fiscally sound to ensure stability.
2. Review curriculum frequently to ensure it meets student needs.
3. Make changes as needed to curriculum and structure to improve program quality.
4. Seek grant and contract funding for program growth and additional program areas.
5. Keep fees low so classes will be affordable for as many students as possible. Seek supportive funding for those unable to pay.

5. Outcomes (What has the program improved / corrected / increased / decreased by addressing this need, e.g. retention, student performance, student services, work force training, language acquisition etc? Please include any data regarding outcomes e.g. completion rates, employment, economic impact)

Over the past 13 years, we have served over 16,000 students from 125 countries. The program has provided a path for many students to improve their language skills in order to pursue a college certificate or degree. At this time, 24% of our students go on to credit coursework.

6. Collaboration (If applicable, please note other agencies or organizations involved in the program)

Internally, we have strong partnerships with other parts of our Division (Community Education & Workforce Development), as well as Admissions and Modern Languages (which houses the credit ESL program).

In the community, we have had strong partnerships with a number of organizations (generally on a per-contract/grant basis), including Somali Community Association of Ohio, SomaliCAN, HAND (Helping Africans in New Directions) and Centro Esperanza Latina (Center of Latin Hope).

7. Success Factors (What factors have been most critical to the success of your program?)

Talented and dedicated instructors have been a key factor to our success. There is a level of caring that goes beyond just knowledge of methodology, as well as a passion for teaching and sharing knowledge. These are qualities that are hard to list on a resume, but they are what separates the great teachers from the merely good ones. I've had some teachers with plenty of degrees and certifications who couldn't connect with the class at all. Those don't last, because the more basic levels of ESL can require a lot of energy to answer questions, anticipate problems, work with multiple cultures and various literacy and language skill levels at the same time, and still bring a coherent lesson together. We have been fortunate to find instructors who are energized by just these challenges and have a love for what they also learn from their students.

Another key factor is the degree of collaboration that exists on campus and the commitment at all levels to serving the immigrant population, from the President's office to the faculty and the staff. Representatives from the International Students Office, ESL, Student Life, Admissions, Testing, and Counseling and Advising meet regularly to discuss issues as they evolve. As a result, we've developed a great system of referrals, so college staff and faculty can effectively direct students to the right departments depending on their individual needs. So, for example, if a student is interested in qualifying for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, faculty and staff know there is a person in Admissions who is the DACA expert.

8. Challenges Faced and Overcome (Were there factors that created challenges? If so, how did you work to overcome those? Please note any current challenges as well.)

Funding is a continuing challenge. In this economy, it is hard for those of Limited English Proficiency to afford classes. This quarter, for example, 55% of our students are unemployed. Although our fees are kept low (\$165 per 10-week term), it can still present a challenge for students.

Programs funded through TANF or Refugee Resettlement dollars are increasingly competitive and sometimes carry unrealistic expectations on the part of the funder, making it impossible for us to make a proposal that we know will be fiscally sound.

Our Grants Office and Development Foundation are constantly seeking funding from government agencies, small and large foundations, corporate gifts or ESL research projects. There has been quite a bit of funding success over the years, but as the program grows, so does the need for more funding to help it be sustained and further its growth. It's a never-ending process.

Another big challenge is addressing the needs of undocumented students. We believe that the out-of-state tuition in Ohio presents a major barrier for many of these students. We're developing a survey to get a better understanding of the challenges faced by asking students about their goals, whether they have residency and/or financial aid eligibility, and if out-of-state tuition will prevent them from enrolling in college or continue to be enrolled. Once we have a final report, we'll present this to the college senior administration.



We've also created a cross-campus team to work with undocumented teams. This process is driven by our Student Life Division and includes representatives from all the key departments, including ESL (noncredit and credit), Admissions, Counseling and Advising, and Diversity. We're also working extensively in the community, with the Ohio Hispanic Coalition, Community Relations Commission, lawyers, and other immigrant advocacy groups.

9. Funding and Sustainability (How was the program funded? If the program was funded through a grant, how will the program be sustained?)

See #8. The program is currently funded through the class fees paid by students.

10. Contact Information:

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