



Promising 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 Pima Community College, Adult Basic Education for College and Career Division

Title of Program Transition to Jobs

Type of Program ESL, workforce training/career development

Primary Division(s) or Department(s) involved: Adult Basic Education for College and Career Division, Volunteer Program

Key Partners

Pima College's ABE Division began teaching *Transition to Jobs* in July 2016 after the program was transitioned from JobPath, a non-profit workforce development organization. *Transition to Jobs* provides support for immigrant and refugee residents of Tucson and Pima County who need assistance transitioning to college-level education and job-training programs that lead to a living wage. *Transition to Jobs* helps adult students through job/career skills development and education.

JobPath had success with the program prior to 2016. Since transitioning to PCC, volunteer teachers have been attending professional development training, curriculum has been reworked, recruitment has expanded and the majority of students in the class have gotten jobs or entered training programs.

1. Need for Program

Pima County has a high immigrant population, many of whom come with education and/or credentials from their home countries. The program aims to help accelerate immigrant's abilities to get jobs, especially jobs in their fields, by assisting with navigations of the United States' systems and helping immigrants understand what is needed for their education and credentials to count in the U.S.

2. Brief Description of Program

Transition to Jobs is a class for highly skilled immigrants who are able to speak, read and write English at an intermediate level or higher, and have either some college, or career/professional background from their country of origin. The class focuses on introducing US job culture and practices for working in the US including: writing and practicing a job-related biography elevator speech, writing a cover letter and resume, interview practice, and learning about US laws as they apply to employees and employers.



The 2-hour class, held on Friday mornings, is taught by five trained volunteer teachers. Participants work with an Immigrant College and Career Navigator to design a personal plan to guide them more quickly towards career pathway jobs as well as advanced educational opportunities. The Immigrant College and Career Navigator and the Volunteer Coordinator provide support and guidance.

Transition to Jobs is a non-credit program and is free to students.

3. Specific Population Served

The class is for highly skilled immigrants who are able to speak, read and write English at an intermediate level or higher, and have either some college, or career/profession background from their country of origin.

4. Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives:

Systems navigation

- Introduce US job culture and practices to be prepared to work in the US
- Learn about US laws as they apply to employees and employers
- Learn about how the education system works
- Learn about and practice how people find jobs, including the concept and practice of networking
- Learn about and initiate translation of transcripts and/or credentialing

Career/Skill Development for entering employment and/or post-secondary

- Write and practice a job related biography elevator speech
- Write a cover letter and resume
- Practice Interview skills
- Practice advanced English language skills

US work experience through volunteering

- Learn ways to connect with your field
- Explore how to gain new US-based job experience
- Explore local community career options

Ultimately, the goal is for each student to transition from the program to post-secondary education or a job.

5. Outcomes

Students report that interviewing skills are the most difficult and helpful part of the curriculum. Practical and applicable awareness of the US hiring laws and practices help students reframe what to share during interviews and on resumes. Students appreciate group class time and in-depth one-on-one time with a volunteer teacher. One-on-one time might include resume and cover letter editing, interview practice, support with electronic job searching, growing awareness of professional associations and opportunities in the community (to grow awareness and ability of networking). Volunteer opportunities as a resume builder are also discussed.

In the future teachers will plan field trips to introduce students to professional organizations and to assist students in connecting with volunteer opportunities.



One challenge is continuing to stay knowledgeable and assist students in having transcripts translated and

credentials evaluated. Most students are not aware of the processes or costs, nor do they understand that their experience in their home countries is potentially valuable and important to obtaining a job within their field.

Teachers help calm frustrations and fears regarding time and costs for these processes. Managing expectations can be challenging.

Thus far, successes have included:

- Job acquisition in their students field
- Job acquisition not in the field, and continued work to find connections and a career pathway within the desired field
- Acceptance to post-secondary occupational programs, such as the Health Professions Opportunity Grant program at Pima College for a certificate
- Moving to TOEFL preparation class and applying to university
- Acceptance into AmeriCorps for a year of service in education/teaching field
- Moving to more advanced college transition classes and Adult Secondary Education in preparation for the high school equivalency exams
- Continuing in the class to build more skills

6. Collaboration

We plan to develop deeper relationships with community college career centers/advising, public libraries, as well as working with the Pima County OneStop Centers to assist with job search, career counseling and training as needed for student job-seekers. As students bring their experience and individual needs, volunteer teachers will continue to help them get connected to professional organizations and resources. For example, a student in the architecture field was supported by the teachers to connect with local architect professional organizations as well as individual architects through networking while awaiting his transcript evaluation.

7. Success Factors

Class location and schedule – The location chosen has a high number of immigrants in ESL classes, and is home to the Refugee Education Program. Class times were considered based on student focus group feedback and avoiding conflicts with ESL classes that the students may attend to improve their language skills. An evening class is being added because of the vibrant ESL population at night.

Volunteers and teamwork: Dedicated volunteers have been supporting students as teachers and as one-on-one career coaches. They wrote the curriculum, continually search for resources and job leads to share with students. The support of a team of dedicated people, volunteer teachers, an Immigrant College and Career Navigator and the Volunteer Coordinator provide wrap-around serves for students.

Student success and feedback: Students have said that the mock-interview practice is very helpful. They appreciate the time dedicated toward practicing and polishing interview skills. They also report appreciating the one-on-one time they received. And—many of them have gotten jobs.

8. Challenges Faced and Overcome

Recruitment and marketing: both informing the community about the class in order to bring in qualified students as well as finding the right number for student-to-volunteer ratios have been challenging and we continue to work toward balance. When JobPath provided the program, there was a full time designated coordinator to provide in depth case management.



It is a struggle to find a class schedule that works for students and does not interfere with other ESL classes that student may benefit from.

9. Funding and Sustainability

The program is funded using local dollars.

10. Contact Information

Name of person completing this form

Title: Vice President for Adult Basic Education, Regina Suitt

Organization: Pima Community College, Adult Basic Education for College and Career

Email address: rsuitt@pima.edu

Phone: 520-206-6500

If a reader wants to learn more about this program, please provide the contact information if different from above:

Name: Montserrat Caballero

Title: Volunteer Program Coordinator

Organization: Pima Community College

Email address: mcaballero1@pima.edu

Phone: 520-206-3737