



Promising Practices in Immigrant Education– Submission Form

Name of Community College: Pima Community College

Title of Program: Refugee Education

Type of Program: ESL program

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

Pima Community College Adult Basic Education for College and Career

1. Need for Program

The Refugee Education Program (REP) was created in 1978 to focus on the acquisition of English language skills necessary for obtaining and retaining employment. REP methods and standards that are consistent with Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) and informed by Low Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition (LESLLA) research.

REP is located in Tucson, Pima County, Arizona. Pima County receives over 1000 refugees each year. Newly arrived refugees have English skills from early-emergent literacy through advanced. The primary goal of the federal refugee resettlement program is employment as soon as possible. Improvement of English language and literacy skills allows refugees to obtain and retain employment to support themselves and their families.

In the last year, REP served nearly 700 refugee students.

2. Brief Description of Program

REP provides English Language Training (ELT) to adult students who hold refugee status as defined by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). REP offers English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA) classes at three (3) levels: Literacy, Beginning, and Intermediate.

The classes are held Monday through Thursday. Each class is two (2) hours long. REP also provides a 6 week intensive Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) in collaboration with refugee resettlement agencies.

REP is a non-credit program.

3. Specific Population Served

Eligible refugees



4. Goals and Objectives

The goal of REP is to provide balanced reading, writing, listening, and speaking English Language instruction to refugees with an emphasis on workplace language and culture in the US in order to help students obtain and retain employment. The program assesses and places students in early literacy to intermediate classes with a pathway to higher English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA) and High School Equivalency (HSE) classes. REP meets with employers to maintain a current employment focused curriculum. Instructors participate in a professional learning community. Students have access to college and career navigators.

5. Outcomes

REP helps students improve their language skills and understand workplace culture. They learn to communicate both orally and in writing to be able to function on the job, fill out various employment forms, and navigate workplace and college systems.

6. Collaboration

REP closely collaborates with all refugee resettlement agencies in Tucson. These are the International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Social Ministries (Refugee Focus), and Catholic Community Services. REP is a program within Pima Community College Adult Education for College and Career and receives in-kind services from Pima Community College such as building space, facilities maintenance, use of IT and classroom equipment, IT services, books and materials that are used in other programs as well.

7. Success Factors

Close cooperation with refugee resettlement agencies has been critical to the success of the program. REP and resettlement agencies keep track of students' attendance, thereby helping to increase attendance and retention. Job development services at resettlement agencies help REP instructors select materials necessary for students to get into the job market faster and more successfully. Navigators increase students' access to academic and community resources.

8. Challenges Faced and Overcome

The main challenge REP is facing is an increasing number of refugees arriving in Tucson. Funding has not kept up with this increase. To support the increase, low-enrollment classes have been eliminated and high enrollment classes have been expanded.

9. Funding and Sustainability

The program is funded by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program. We also are looking for other grants, community partners, and funding sources to support the Refugee Education Program financially and/or in-kind.



For more information, contact:

Lissa Fogel

Advanced Program Coordinator

Pima Community College Adult Education

For College and Career

Refugee Education Program

mnash@pima.edu

520-206-3554