# The Transformation of Adult ESOL Learning

## A Practice and Policy Brief

**Authors:** Johan Uvin, Silja Kallenbach, Annalisa Crowe, Catalina González, Navjeet Singh, Jen Vanek, Alison Ascher Webber

EdTech CENTER @ WORLD EDUCATION

EdTech CENTER @ WORLD EDUCATION

## Table of Contents

## Executive Summary

**Project Background.** This Practice and Policy Brief is part of the Remote Adult ESOL[1] Project led by World Education, Inc. The goal of the work was to document and disseminate viable, remote models and practices for how adult ESOL instruction can be done at scale efficiently and effectively in varied settings. Its impetus was to uncover strategies for meeting the current unmet interest in and demand for ESOL instruction, as well as meeting potential demand prompted by English language requirements for U.S. citizenship under immigration reform. According to 2018 American Community Survey data, there are 11.4 million adults who speak English less than very well in the United States, and only a fraction of them are participating in ESOL classes.

The COVID-19 pandemic's effect on adult ESOL learning was disruptive, but it ultimately accelerated program innovation and transformation as providers stepped up to develop feasible education opportunities remotely. It created an opportunity to learn from these approaches toward the goal of improving and expanding them to meet growing demand. It also enabled us to reflect on what supports programs may still need to fully leverage the power of technology to increase the reach of those who can be trained and to accelerate learning through strategies such as personalization, differentiation, and embedding digital and other essential skills into ESOL instruction.

In response to our national call for participation in the Remote Adult ESOL Learning Project, we received 52 program nominations, reflecting different institutional settings, organizations, student populations, geographies, and approaches, with one program receiving two nominations. Of these, 35 programs were selected for interviews and an analytical review process. During the winter and spring of 2021, the project investigated selected ESOL programs' and learners' needs, experiences, and promising instructional and learner support practices that rely predominantly on technology-rich strategies and tools deployed remotely. These programs represent segments of the adult ESOL ecosystem both with and without WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Title II funding.

Each of the participant programs integrated some combination of key features identified as leading to ESOL learner success in a remote learning experience. These key features are:

- Student recruitment and onboarding
- Student access to digital skills, devices, Internet and data, and apps
- ESOL instructional approaches, curriculum and materials
- Student academic and persistence supports in remote learning
- Integrated remote support services to meet non-academic needs of students such as food, filing for unemployment or securing financial assistance, childcare
- Professional development and support for staff
- Tracking program performance and evidence of effectiveness; and
- Program leadership's support for the remote ESOL program design and implementation.

**High-Level Findings.** We learned that remote adult ESOL services solved to varying extents the design shortfalls and opportunity constraints of set schedules and in-person programming. Remote designs are conducive to more flexible, multi-faceted, and frequent learning opportunities. They can leverage technology for more differentiated/personalized instruction, facilitate higher levels of participation, promote persistence, increase intensity of instruction, and lead to achieving greater gains in shorter periods of time. Several programs showed it is possible to transition integrated support services to a remote environment by using various applications and strategies to communicate with students and refer them to services to help meet their non-academic needs.

All programs acknowledged and found ways to address the need to treat digital literacy not only as a key foundational skill to facilitate remote learning, but also to navigate daily life, support students' children's remote learning, and increase students' competitiveness in the labor market.

The transition to remote learning also prompted many programs to seek additional partnerships, resources, and revenue from both public and philanthropic sources, as well as their host institutions, to secure/supply devices and connectivity. Most programs were able to secure devices to loan out or give to support students' other technology needs. Some programs were successful at leveraging employer resources to support remote learning activities for incumbent workers.

Most programs provided teachers and staff with significant levels of professional development and other supports, such as additional paid time for professional development, curriculum development, materials development, and class prep. Some programs established new positions to support professional development and specific needs around digital inclusion and learning.

**Policy Implications and Recommendations.** The primary policy and funding implication of the Remote Adult ESOL Project findings is the need for policies and funding to facilitate the scaling up of innovative and effective practices illustrated in the case studies. It was clear from our research that the programs we interviewed that had leveraged broad-based collaboration and partnerships were better situated to scale and sustain the new technology-supported instruction and support service provision. We suggest that policies and funding should support the creation of a remote adult ESOL ecosystem (including ongoing capacity to study effective practices and associated outcomes, benefits, and costs) that would make it possible to leverage digital technologies to promote and provide equitable access to high-quality services at scale. In addition, policies and funding should create opportunities to experiment with and innovate purely asynchronous and remote models.

To build such an ecosystem, the involvement and collaboration of multiple constituents across various sectors and at different levels is needed to create a coherent, transparent, coordinated, efficient, and effective adult ESOL ecosystem. Providers from different contexts and settings need to be incentivized to come together and further build out existing services with remote learning complements. Adult learning providers, employers, labor unions, libraries, platform and application developers, public and private funders, and policy makers in the adult learning ecosystem all have a role to play in building a nationwide remote learning infrastructure.

We make policy recommendations to all these constituents. The following are our recommendations to the federal government, including the Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, and U.S. Citizenship Immigration Services:

- Ensure all remote learning expenditures are allowable uses of funds
- Modernize accountability expectations and revise reporting requirements to better facilitate remote learning arrangements and allow for useful national data on participation
- Invest in expansion of remote learning opportunities through community anchor organizations such as service providers, libraries, workplaces, unions, and other types of organizations and initiatives.
- Invest in publicly available information for prospective learners about where remote and in-person ESOL learning opportunities exist in their communities.
- Support leadership development and practitioner professional development to strengthen capacity of the field to deliver quality remote learning services.
- Require digital literacy as a new foundational skill to be offered through all programs and assessed as a measurable outcome, and reportable as a negotiated performance target.

- Invest in development of shared digital capability standards/competency statements at various levels that are viewed as relevant in ESOL programs nation-wide
- Fund the development of digital literacy and other content areas (e.g., citizenship, CCRS) OER and platforms to find, adapt, create, and curate reusable learning objects to facilitate personalized accelerated learning.
- Ensure that a portion of any authorized apprenticeship and work-based learning funds can be used to support remote ESOL and adult digital literacy skills development.
- Allow the use of federal student aid to support participation in tuition-based remote IET learning programs at the postsecondary level.
- Embed remote learning supports and provisions for immigrant and refugee foreign-trained professionals in the Professionals' Access to Health Workforce Integration Act or similar legislation.
- Ensure adult education is fully included and benefits from any federal Digital Equity Act type legislation.
- Fund research on comparative outcome studies of in-person and remote Adult ESOL learning opportunities using credible counterfactuals (IES).

This brief first sets the stage for understanding policy and practice recommendations by describing the context of adult ESOL delivery and providing a summary of the descriptive research project. The brief then highlights key findings and innovative practices and models, names and discusses facilitating conditions, identifies areas where more research is needed, and offers policy recommendations that can facilitate scaling up effective remote instructional models for English language learning. It is complemented by eight program profile case studies, as well as shorter profiles in the report *Creating Equitable Access to Remote Adult ESOL: Multiple Contexts, Distinct Populations, and Purposes*, and a *Promising ESOL Practices* document highlighting specific practices and innovations from the programs we interviewed.

# I. Introduction

This *Practice and Policy Brief* is part of the Remote Adult ESOL Project led by World Education, Inc. The goal of the work was to document and disseminate viable remote adult ESOL program models and practices for how ESOL instruction can be done at scale efficiently and effectively in varied settings. Its impetus was to uncover strategies for meeting the current unmet interest in and demand for ESOL instruction, as well as meet potential demand prompted by English language requirements for U.S. citizenship under immigration reform. During the winter and spring of 2021, the project investigated selected ESOL programs' and learners' needs, experiences, and promising instructional and learner support practices that rely predominantly on technology-rich strategies and tools deployed remotely.

This brief first sets the stage for understanding policy and practice recommendations by describing the context of adult ESOL delivery and providing a summary of the descriptive research project. The brief then highlights key findings and innovative practices and models, names and discusses facilitating conditions, identifies areas where more research is needed, and offers policy recommendations that can facilitate scaling up effective remote instructional models for English language learning. Finally, we offer funding estimates and identify the additional resources required to expand service capacity to meet unmet learner interest, need, and demand. These estimates will be useful to Congress and state lawmakers in the event of comprehensive immigration reform wherein a path to citizenship would include an English language requirement.

## Context – Adult ESOL Need, Demand, and Supply

According to 2018 American Community Survey data, there are 25.6 million children, youth, and adults who speak English less than very well in the United States.[2] Of those, 11.4 million are adults ages 18 and older. Data on the federally funded adult education system under the Workforce Innovation Act (WIOA) Title II show that programs have served fewer than one million of these adults in ESOL classes per year over the last 10 years.[3] Program capacity to maintain enrollment levels has declined, as WIOA funding increases have been minimal while the cost of doing business has increased, ultimately putting programs in a position to scale back capacity. Just over ten years ago, in the 2009–2010 academic year, adult ESOL enrollment in the publicly funded programs was 921,845 nationwide but, by 2019–2020, it was down to 568,738.

Federally, state-, and locally funded programs for adult learners supported with formula-based WIOA funding and state matching funds make up an important part of adult ESOL delivery, but there are many other parts to the adult ESOL ecosystem that do not receive such funding and are not subject to federal policies and regulations.[4] There are very few aggregate data across individual providers on adult ESOL service delivery outside of the WIOA system. The Remote Adult ESOL Project included programs from both the WIOA and non-WIOA segments of the system.

While participation in hybrid and blended learning in federally, state-, and locally funded programs has increased, the primary instructional approach has been in-person and classroom-based. In the 2009–2010 year, there were 24,017 ESOL participants in distance education.[5] Ten years later, this number had increased to 98,791, according to data from the National Reporting System.[6] But even with this increase, it is now widely accepted that the system has inadequate capacity to meet learner interest and demand, let alone the need for support services, or the capacity to employ technology in instruction in a way that adequately prepares learners to fully participate in technology-based or mediated schooling, work, and daily life.

Current demand for English learning opportunities for adults remains largely unmet. Many states across the country and numerous programs report long waiting lists, with wait times up to two years in some cities. In Massachusetts, for instance, there were 17,264 adults on waiting lists in April, 2021, the majority of them waiting for a slot in an ESOL program (rather than basic education for

native English speakers).[7] This figure exceeds the state's capacity to accommodate students at full enrollment by several thousand slots.

Demand for ESOL is likely to surge significantly as a result of any comprehensive immigration reform wherein a path to citizenship requires a level of English proficiency. For example, the New Deal for New Americans Act of 2020 (S-340), filed by Massachusetts Senator Edward Markey, calls for an "English as a Gateway to Integration Program for organizations that teach English or help individuals earn a GED [General Educational Development] or prepare for naturalization."[8] Demand for ESOL will also grow as a result of the four-fold increase in the ceiling for refugee admissions to the United States in 2021.

The current adult ESOL system of providers does not have anywhere near the capacity to meet such demand. Funded through federal, state, and philanthropic dollars, ESOL services are stretched to accommodate the currently enrolled adults. New models are needed. Digital ESOL platforms and tools can be leveraged to provide differentiated and personalized instruction and to reach more learners in rural, suburban, and urban communities, to contextualize more to their needs to learn English, and to allow for some instruction in the first language.

Although COVID-19 was an unpredictable shock to the economy and the way of life in the U.S. and globally, and its effect on adult ESOL learning was equally disruptive, it ultimately accelerated program innovation and transformation and possibly system-level recalibration. As providers stepped up to develop feasible ESOL education opportunities remotely,[9] it was a learning process for them and their students, one which they honed over time. Research initiatives by seven national and state-level adult education organizations captured the opportunities and challenges faced by the adult education field as programs shifted to remote instruction during the early months of the pandemic, but very little is known about what the effect of this shift to remote learning has been on participation/enrollment, attendance, completion, and achievement across programs.[10]

Our research in the winter and spring of 2021 focused on capturing current practice in remote adult ESOL learning. It revealed a great level of sophistication and array of tech tools and approaches being used by adult ESOL providers. The COVID-19 pandemic drove them to adopt technology-based approaches faster and at a larger scale than would have happened otherwise. It created an opportunity to learn from these approaches toward the goal of improving and expanding them to meet growing demand. It also enables us to reflect on what supports programs may still need to fully leverage the power of technology to increase the reach of those who can be trained and to accelerate learning through strategies such as personalization, differentiation, and embedding digital and other essential skills into ESOL instruction.[11]

## II. Project Description

The Remote Adult ESOL Project explored ESOL programs' and learners' needs, experiences, and promising instructional and learner support practices that rely predominantly on technology-rich strategies and tools deployed remotely. This in-depth analysis elucidated the potential of asynchronous and synchronous remote ESOL programming for adults and can be useful as Congress considers ways to fill the existing gap between demand and supply for ESOL services and to build the necessary capacity to satisfy any English language requirements that might be part of a major legalization effort and pathway to citizenship. The findings of the project are also helpful to philanthropy and state/local policymakers as they consider how to invest in ESOL education opportunities.

The primary outcome of the project was the documentation and dissemination of viable remote adult ESOL program models and practices for how ESOL instruction can be done at scale efficiently and effectively in varied settings to meet the unmet interest in and demand for ESOL and to meet potential English language requirements under immigration reform. Outputs of the project are all available on edtech.worlded.org and include:

- Eight case studies of programs from across the U.S. that showcase notable remote adult ESOL practices;
- *Creating Equitable Access to Remote Adult ESOL. Multiple, Contexts, Distinct Populations, and Purposes*, a cross-case analysis of remote adult ESOL delivery through the lens of the varied organizational settings in which they operate and the supports needed to engage distinct ESOL populations;
- This policy brief; and
- *Promising ESOL Practices*, a document that highlights specific practices and innovations of selected, nominated programs, from onboarding to instruction, digital skills development, and student and teacher supports.

In response to our national call for participation in the Remote Adult ESOL Learning Project, we received 52 program nominations, reflecting different institutional settings, organizations, student populations, geographies, and approaches, with one program receiving two nominations. Of these, 34 programs were selected for interviews and an analytical review process that informed the eight full program profile case studies as well as the shorter profiles in the report *Creating Equitable Access to Remote Adult ESOL and Supports in Multiple Contexts and for Distinct Populations and Purposes*. For a discussion of the key interview questions, the list of programs researched, and methodology, please refer to the Appendix.

## III. Summary of Findings

This section of the Practice and Policy Brief presents a high-level summary of findings across all programs first. It then presents the case studies that highlight innovative practices we found.

### Key Findings

Our research elucidated several high-level findings that describe innovative remote adult ESOL instruction in the participant programs. We found that all programs had moved ESOL instruction and support provision to a remote format, but that costs to make this shift varied greatly. In addition, we noted structural patterns, or models, in the way the instruction was delivered. Finally, though the impact of the shift played out differently in terms of enrollment, all programs boosted professional learning opportunities to help instructors better serve learners in new ways.

#### Transition to Remote Learning

All programs — to varying degrees — found a way to make remote adult ESOL services work for the existing demographics they serve. While a few programs offered remote or blended learning opportunities pre-pandemic, all programs in our project made a transition to fully remote services during the spring of 2020. Some programs intend to switch back to in-person delivery post-pandemic, but most of the programs interviewed are contemplating continuing service delivery remotely, either partially in blended format or fully. Notwithstanding the speed at which the transition was made, limited staff capacity or funding, or even limitations from funders, most programs were able to focus on both synchronous, virtual instruction and — to different extents — leveraged the power of technology to optimize reach (i.e., who can access training through asynchronous learning) and accelerate learning through flipped learning, differentiation, personalization, and more.

#### Remote Adult ESOL Program Designs

Remote adult ESOL services solved to varying extents the design shortfalls and opportunity constraints of set schedules of in-person programming. Remote designs are conducive to more flexible, multi-faceted, and frequent learning opportunities and to leveraging technology for more differentiated/personalized instruction. They can facilitate higher levels of participation, promote

persistence, increase intensity of instruction, and lead to achieving greater gains in shorter periods of time. Several programs showed it is possible to transition integrated support services to a remote environment and use various applications and strategies to communicate with and refer students to services to help them meet their non-academic needs.

All programs acknowledged and found ways to address the need to treat digital literacy not only as a key foundational skill to facilitate remote learning, but also to navigate daily life, support students' children's remote learning, and increase students' competitiveness in the labor market, as digital literacy skills are now expected of workers and in most spheres of life. Program approaches varied in how much they integrated digital skills instruction into ESOL instruction. Some simply provided distance learning supports to enable access to ESOL instruction but didn't necessarily continue to intentionally teach digital skills and resilience. Others did both.

**Emerging Remote Adult ESOL Instructional Models**

The programs we reviewed used one of three distinct remote instructional models. These models are:

1. **Hybrid learning model, including a live remote class component complemented with an independent learning component** for differentiation/personalized learning;[12]
2. **Full live remote instructional model using web-conferencing applications and tech tools**, often supported by additional tools and offered at specific times to expand access;[13] and
3. **Fully distant, coached, independent, asynchronous learning.**

Our team's knowledge of distance learning models examined in related projects also recognizes **that fully distant, independent, asynchronous learning models without coaching components exist**. This model was evident in a few of the programs interviewed for this project.

While some programs have leveraged independent learning time for differentiation/personalization, others have not. Consistent with findings on the important role of independent learning,[15] all programs should consider leveraging independent learning.

**Costs**

Costs vary greatly by instructional model and the scale of delivery. Depending on the model, costs may be the same as, less, or more than for in-person models. More comprehensive research is needed into costs by model and scale of delivery. Some programs learned that providing classroom-based and other services remotely is not necessarily cheaper than in-person delivery and that there may simply be shifts in the type of program expenditures needed to operate an effective, remote set of services, often requiring resources to support new functions. For instance:

- Devices, internet access, data plans, LMS solutions, and videoconferencing represent a significant additional cost and require resources for maintenance, beyond initial purchases or investments.
- Staffing resources beyond pre-pandemic capacity are needed to support onboarding and provide technical user support to learners and staff.
- Teachers need additional, paid time to develop remote lessons. This time will decrease as curriculum is created and teachers adjust to remote instruction. Some teachers' teaching schedules became more flexible, but cost implications of these changes were unclear.
- Volunteers or paid teacher aides are almost indispensable in fully remote classes, especially to facilitate multiple, concurrent breakout groups; almost all programs interviewed that use volunteers and paid aides said this need is significant in a remote learning program. However, there are alternative models that use tech support staff, persistence coaches, or dedicated case managers.
- Facility-related savings (e.g., security costs, facilities maintenance) can be redirected to temporarily and partially offset increased technology expenditures.

The transition to remote learning prompted many programs to seek additional partnerships, resources, and revenue from both public and philanthropic sources, as well as their host institutions, to secure/supply devices and connectivity. Most programs were able to secure devices to loan out or give to support students' other technology needs. Some programs were successful at leveraging employer resources to support remote learning activities for incumbent workers.

**Reach and Enrollment**

The majority of programs in this project prioritized serving the adult learner population that they were focused on pre-pandemic and switched to remote delivery as a means to ensure continuity of service to their communities. At least three of the remote adult ESOL programs reached and served learners from different geographies/communities (e.g., statewide now versus community-based pre-pandemic) because they removed barriers such as transportation, and most programs made their class schedules more flexible. While many programs experienced a drop in enrollment, particularly during the early months of the pandemic, a few increased their enrollment and several reported improved attendance and persistence.

**Professional Development and Staff Support**

Most programs provided teachers and staff with significant levels of professional development and other supports, such as additional, paid time for professional development, curriculum development, materials development, and class prep. Some of the programs established new positions to support professional development and specific needs around digital inclusion and digital learning. The resulting enhanced skills contributed greatly to successful transitions from in-person to remote learning environment. These supports were not exclusively focused on using specific technology tools but also on content and pedagogy/andragogy to ensure inclusive, supported, and meaningful ways of facilitating teaching and learning in a remote environment while helping students persist. More professional development focused on teaching ESOL online may be needed.

**Emergency Relief Funding for Basic Needs of Learners**

All programs increased to varying degrees their response to the different emergencies students and their families faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some were able to create emergency funds or tap into sources of funds to assist with non-academic needs, such as food, housing, and childcare, which some programs intend to institutionalize post-pandemic.

**Key Features of Remote ESOL Instruction**

Each of the participant programs integrated some combination of key features identified as leading to ESOL learner success in a remote learning experience. Those features are:

- Student recruitment and onboarding;
- Student access to digital skills, devices, Internet and data, and apps;
- ESOL instructional approaches, curriculum and materials;
- Student academic and persistence supports in remote learning;
- Integrated remote support services to meet students' non-academic needs, such as food, filing for unemployment insurance or securing financial assistance, and childcare;
- Professional development and support for staff;
- Tracking program performance and evidence of effectiveness; and
- Program leadership's support for the remote ESOL program design and implementation.

Programs in which most or all of these key features were particularly salient are presented in the section that follows.

## Highlights of Innovative Practices – Case Studies Overview

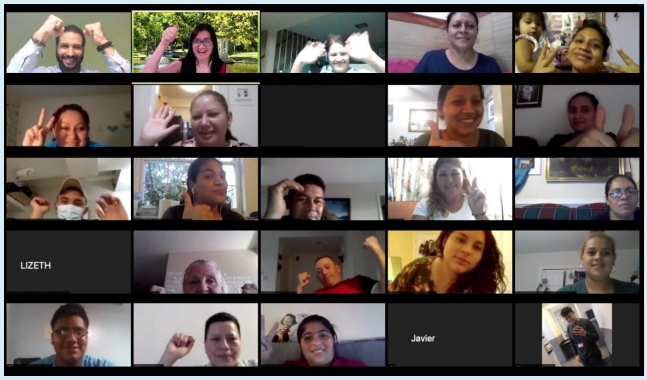
These high-level findings are woven throughout eight full program profiles, which offer contextualized illustrations of notable practices and highlight the key features of remote adult ESOL programming for the participant programs.

### Case Study

**Holistic Remote Instruction through Standardized Technologies and Integrated Support Services**

### Brief Program Description

The mission of the **Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School** is to deliver high-quality education (ESOL and GED Prep), career training and support services that enable adult immigrants to realize their dreams while strengthening the community and economy. The school is one of the adult public charter schools in Washington, D.C. and serves 2,500 learners per year, on average. Select services such as citizenship preparation classes are accessed by suburban communities surrounding D.C.. Carlos Rosario uses a three-pronged approach: foundational skills including ESOL, literacy, and high school diploma equivalency, computer literacy, and citizenship; career certification training in high-growth sectors; and comprehensive student supports to facilitate participation, all provided in ways that are linguistically and culturally appropriate.




### Remote Adult ESOL Program Design

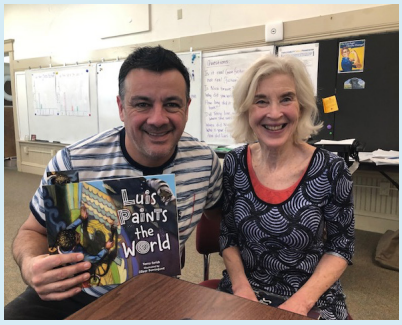
Carlos Rosario fully redesigned its previously in-person program and created a whole remote learning program, from onboarding to instruction and assessment, digital skills and devices, and student supports. Delivery switched from set three-hour classes in person to a combination of synchronous learning (90 minutes) and asynchronous learning resulting in 12+ hours/week of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning using differentiated tools.

### Notable/Innovative Practice(s)

- Comprehensive School Approach to Educational Equity During COVID
- Free laptops, Internet access, and data plans for all students
- Intensive virtual supportive services, including support for applying for employment; use of a virtual career coaching tool; and linkages to basic needs, including food assistance, transportation subsidies, and higher education scholarship applications.

## Case Study

**Thematic, No-to-High-Tech Remote ESOL Program**


### Brief Program Description

**Second Start** in Concord, New Hampshire, offers ESOL and adult basic skills classes, high school equivalency programs, and an alternative high school for students ages 14 to 20, all of which are supported by career navigators and advisors. The organization also runs a childcare center, a driving school for new Americans, and a volunteer tutor program.

Second Start did not operate remote programs prior to March, 2020, but did participate in the Adult Literacy XPRIZE Communities Competition in 2019, through which staff gained access to mobile learning apps and valuable experience in integrating them in instruction.

The program reports high student retention and engagement.

### Remote Adult ESOL Program Design

All students work through the same packet connected to the book they're reading, and those who can, attend class via Zoom, while those who are not able to attend synchronously, work independently with guidance and phone check-ins with the teacher. The homework packets create the bridge to the class. WhatsApp is used for group and one-on-one chats; the Quizlet app is used for learning vocabulary; Cell-Ed mobile learning app is available to students for supplementary learning.

Second Start loans out Chromebooks to students but internet access is an issue. Some students participated in remote classes by working on paper-based learning packets and the books that the advisor or the teachers delivered to them.

### Notable/Innovative Practice(s)

- Thematic, month-at-a-time curriculum, with accompanying book and homework packet used in and out of class;
- Supported and inspired by New Hampshire Humanities' *Connections* adult literacy and book discussion program in which participants receive and keep up to four books;
- Teachers develop a robust learning packet customized to the themes of the book, with links to videos to watch.

## Case Study

**Supporting Independent Learning from a Distance**

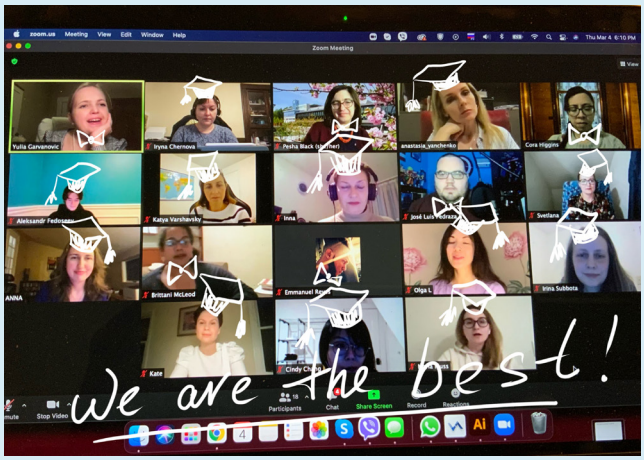
## Brief Program Description

**Holyoke Community College** operates core ESOL programs in Springfield and Ludlow in Western Massachusetts and these ESOL Workforce Development programs in Holyoke: Nurse Aide/Home Health Aide/ESOL, Culinary & Hospitality/ESOL, and Accelerated Career English.

## Remote Adult ESOL Program Design

All levels use a class website as the landing page from which students can go to Zoom for synchronous classes, Google Classroom for homework and independent learning, with links for office hours. In Google Classroom sessions, students are subdivided by device type (tablet/phone or computer/Chromebook) for tailored instruction.

Teachers meet by Zoom with the full class several times per week for synchronous classes.




Beginner/high-beginner levels have class websites, use Zoom or WhatsApp for synchronous work, and WhatsApp, Remind, or TalkingPoints, and email for communication and persistence support.

The college library lends out tablets and hotspots.

All levels are supported by two advisors who meet regularly one-on-one with students to provide resources to support persistence and guidance about career and education pathways, employment strategies, and job search.

Student attendance in synchronous classes by Zoom is consistently better than it was for in-person classes during the previous year and has been exceeding 80 percent.

## Notable/Innovative Practice(s)

- Personalized independent learning that involves metacognition, incorporates student choice, is goal-connected and requires demonstration of learning.
- At Level 2 students opt into month-long modules based on their goals and interests, such as U.S. citizenship, nurse aide exploration and prep, and career and education goals. Teachers support students through one-on-one meetings.
- Two dedicated technology coaches support students and teachers. They also run a remote basic computer class using NorthStar Digital Literacy curriculum via Zoom.

## Case Study

**Low- and High-Intensity Remote ESOL Options**


## Brief Program Description

**The School of Extended Learning of Santa Barbara City College (SBCC)** in California operates an ESOL Career Skills program, offering intensive, IET-style training in Personal Care Attendant, Green Gardener (landscaping), and Construction. In addition, SBCC offers parenting courses, adult secondary education, careers skills courses, courses for older adults, and learning circles.

## Remote Adult ESOL Program Design

IET courses: virtual, synchronous instruction, 30–32 hours per week in eight-week cycles, toward the goal of students being job-ready upon completion. Each IET program consists of three components: vocational skills, ESOL language support, and career exploration/job search skills. ESOL instructors are teamed up with vocational skills instructors for live, virtual classes on Zoom to support students' language learning. Every Friday students participate in a job search skills/workplace readiness small-group meeting via Zoom.

In contrast, open-enrollment, virtual, synchronous Learning Circles are offered once a week in 5–6-week sessions. The meetups consist of walk-throughs of BurlingtonEnglish lessons and watching and discussing different YouTube videos.

## Notable/Innovative Practice(s)

- Transformed hands-on learning program into an intensive eight-week, remote digital format for three career paths.
- Students receive $200/week to attend these IET courses.
- To balance this intensive offering, SBCC institutionalized open-entry, low-intensity, and less formal learning circles as part of the ESOL program.

## Case Study

**Rethinking the Work of ESOL instructors**

## Brief Program Description

**The Ronald M. Hubbs Center (Hubbs Center)** in Minnesota is the ABE program of the Saint Paul Public Schools' Community Education Department and operates as part of the Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium, a collaboration of agencies that provide literacy services to adults. Hubbs Center offers a full range of educational opportunities, from early English literacy to GED classes, postsecondary bridge programs, career navigation, distance education and digital literacy supports, and (usually) free childcare for students.

## Remote Adult ESOL Program Design

During the pandemic, every teacher offered hybrid instruction; every class met either four or six hours per week in remote live instruction and also integrated use of an online comprehensive distance learning curriculum. Success with this model has been supported by the Center's past focus on developing robust distance and blended learning opportunities.

## Notable/Innovative Practice(s)

- Instead of having teachers provide direct live instruction for 20 hours a week, class time was reduced by half and each class was matched with an online distance learning curriculum that best suited its learning needs.
- Teachers collaborated and experimented with new approaches and digital resources, finding new and creative ways to deliver mobile-friendly instruction.
- Teachers became more engaged with the orientation process and onboarding of students into online learning, creating opportunities for distributed support for learners because all teachers had the capacity to provide technical assistance on key technologies.
- Key staff were given time to exclusively focus on the digital learning needs of both staff and students, offering "push-in" digital literacy support.

## Case Study

**Independent and Peer Learning**

## Brief Program Description

**Literacy Pittsburgh** in Pennsylvania believes that "all people deserve the opportunity to learn in a place where their strengths are celebrated; and as a leader, they embrace the responsibility to innovate, model best practices, and grow." Established in 1982, Literacy Pittsburgh is the largest provider of adult basic education in Allegheny and Beaver Counties, serving nearly 5,000 adults annually in ESOL, GED, and basic education programs, with 50 staff and 500 volunteer tutors.

## Remote Adult ESOL Program Design

Literacy Pittsburgh uses and adapts various tech tools to support enrollment and orientation for learners with diverse devices and connectivity needs and accommodate multiple digital fluency levels.

Once learners have completed virtual onboarding, including an online orientation, they are placed in an English, citizenship, or college and career readiness class or with a one-on-one tutor. Students meet in live Zoom classes; before or after class, the instructor sends each student a link for a specific video to watch, which follows up on what was done in class. Within the video, students are asked to practice speaking, listening, reading or writing and then text or WhatsApp the instructors their recordings with answers, or images of written exercises and any questions they have. They also have an option of a peer-facilitated class.

## Notable/Innovative Practice(s)

- Created two YouTube channels with playlist by level: English class and Family Literacy Storytime. These instructional videos can be used as part of synchronous online, hybrid, or face-to-face class or independently.
- Optional "class with no teacher," where learners meet with peers to practice English and maintain community at a distance. This has been a popular offering.
- The Digital Literacy Fellow is a new staff position responsible for increasing technology use across the agency and making sure the organization and staff are up to date on the different resources available to support teaching and learning at a distance.

## Case Study

**Fully Remote Workplace ESOL**


## Brief Program Description

**The National Immigration Forum's English at Work** is a national initiative that offers industry-contextualized English language training that helps companies in urban, suburban, and rural communities build stronger career pathways for their employees. Seventy cohorts have participated in the program, made up of 1,500 employees. The program has multilingual staff to support its work. English at Work offered distance education/ blended learning well before March, 2020, launching in 2016. The program is free to students. Each site is funded partly through employer investment.

## Remote Adult ESOL Program Design

English at Work is designed for scaling. It offers industry-contextualized English language training. In this model, 40 percent instruction is live remote classroom instruction, where the instructor and students connect live once a week, and 60 percent of learning is anywhere, anytime, independent, online learning. Each site is partnered with a local community college or adult education program.

## Notable/Innovative Practice(s)

English at Work instructional model consists of 40 percent class group instruction — initially in-person but now also virtual/remote — and 60 percent self-paced online modules accessible on desktop and mobile devices. One notable practice is peer-to-peer student tech support — often in shared first languages — and collaborative problem-solving in technology-rich environments.

## Case Study

**Resilience, Health Literacy and English for Parents**

## Brief Program Description

**Literacy Partners** is a community-based organization in New York City whose mission is to strengthen families through a two-generation approach to education, with an emphasis on health literacy, access to healthcare and social services, early child development, and school readiness. The program draws on partnerships with healthcare providers and local universities.

Four times a year, all participating families receive a home library of children's books that are culturally representative and integrated into classroom instruction.

Literacy Partners did not operate a remote program prior to March, 2020.

## Remote Adult ESOL Program Design

The remote program design is driven by flexible learning options that leverage more than 100 volunteers who reinforce and supplement instruction by teachers. The primary components are:

- Teacher-facilitated live online classes on Zoom;
- Breakout room discussions facilitated by volunteers during the last 30 minutes of class;
- One-on-one volunteer speaking partners by phone or Zoom outside of class;
- Online vocabulary tools for students to work independently or in volunteer-facilitated small groups; and
- Weekly Power of Families seminars that bring together all classes to watch and discuss episodes of We Are New York videos and other media that cover parent-focused topics.

## Notable/Innovative Practice(s)

- Literacy Partners uses a trauma-informed approach that aims to foster resilience within a remote format: competence; confidence; community; contribution; and critical thinking. The organization has successfully kept and even deepened its approach and thematic focus in the remote model.
- The intake process asks questions related to social determinants of health, adapted to identify English learning needs.
- Online ESOL classes are supported by a network of student interns from local universities who act as health navigators, connecting students and their families to health and social services.

## IV. Facilitating Conditions and Resources

Program leaders identified leadership, prior experience with technology-facilitated remote learning, funding and other resources, and policy flexibility as conditions that facilitated implementation of effective remote adult ESOL learning opportunities.

**Leadership.** The presence of strong and committed leadership is a facilitating condition that affects the performance and effectiveness of remote adult ESOL programs. This leadership can come from various levels inside and outside the remote adult ESOL program itself or the organization in which it is embedded. Internal leadership can be provided by positional leaders, such as executives or senior managers, but also by teachers, counselors, case managers, staff, and adult learners themselves. However, the commitment and support of executive leadership, such as the leadership provided by chief executive, chief financial, and chief operating officers, college deans, executive directors, district leaders, school principals, and senior managers is essential. The vision, commitment, direction, and support of these leaders contributed to the successful creation of or transformation of in-person programs into remote learning programs.

Several of the leaders interviewed for the case studies shared the key decisions they needed to make and steps they took. One leader indicated it would have been helpful to know beforehand what the specific decisions and actions are that would lead to a successful remote learning program. Based on interviews with the leaders of selected programs, the project team distilled and inferred key decisions. These key decisions are listed below. Appendix B identifies associated action steps/tasks and related considerations for each of these key decisions.

- Create or transition to a remote adult ESOL program in the face of COVID-19 and/or for the long term;
- Determine whom to engage and how;
- Engage learners, instructors, and staff in planning and instruction;
- Determine the cost of a remote program and decide between different options. Consider whether there would be savings from some in-person activities that could be redirected to the remote program;
- Raise additional funds from existing or new sources or identify and leverage sources of funds to support learners/families;
- Assign/re-assign existing staff or hire or contract additional staff/teachers needed for the short or long term, as funding permits;
- Select and finance technology infrastructure and tools, including devices, software, and apps;
- Modify communication and collaboration processes, instruments, and structures to ensure remote learning is optimized;
- Review and select available curricula or design and develop curriculum and materials for remote learning;
- Modify data collection and assessment/testing policies and procedures to capture enrollment, attendance, persistence, learning gains, and other measurable outcomes;
- Create incentives for participation and attendance;
- Provide professional development for staff;
- Define necessary digital literacy content, offer instruction during onboarding, and embed into instruction;

- Finalize the remote program design;
- Support persistence and basic needs through remote academic and non-academic integrated support services including staff, volunteers, and classroom aides;
- Pilot remote learning options, materials, and support; and
- Iterate and continuously improve remote learning delivery.

**Resources.** None of the programs could have anticipated that the entire world was going to face a pandemic that would make it impossible to operate in-person programs during mandated shutdowns and lockdowns. None of the programs, therefore, had budgeted for or planned on investing in the creation of a fully operational remote learning program. While a few programs, or the organizations in which they are situated, had some modest reserves or discretionary resources, most programs in this project had to figure out how to make the transition work within their existing resources while simultaneously engaging in aggressive, short-term fundraising and grant writing for emergency funds and other pandemic resources offered by government or philanthropy. Many program leaders with host institutions, such as community colleges, engaged in aggressive advocacy to secure devices, more licenses for Zoom or another platform, online commercial learning solutions, etc. This allowed several programs featured in our case studies to allocate resources for technology and to distribute devices, set up lending libraries, offer Internet access, and assist with data plans.

Across the board, program leaders learned quickly that remote programs are not necessarily cheaper than in-person programs, but that the cost varies significantly by instructional model and the scale of implementation. While there may be some savings for select institutions — particularly associated with facility costs, such as security for stand-alone programs — that could be allocated to new remote learning-related expenditures, such as equipment, applications, and internet/data plan purchases and tech support, most programs which sought to replicate live classroom instruction in a remote environment did not see "training cost" savings. In fact, many of them needed additional resources to ensure equitable access and quality in distance learning experiences at scale. Some of these resources were significant, such as equipment purchases for lending libraries or for provision of devices to give to all students. In addition, models where learning is not organized by class but through a platform that engages learners with bilingual coaches or digital navigators by a large program or a region may require a very different budgeting and cost model. Others were ongoing costs associated with operating an effective remote learning program with tech support during and between classes. As of this moment, we do not have enough knowledge about whether the primary remote instructional models are cost-effective, or even fully understand what "cost-effective" means for this approach to adult ESOL instruction. We do not know how these models could become cost-effective through scale once they are past this start-up cost phase. More research is needed.

**Technology-Enabled Programming Experience.** Not all programs were new to technology-enabled service delivery. Whether the program had done any distance or blended education previously was a key facilitating condition to pivoting quickly to fully remote instruction. Some programs had been part of the national Adult Literacy XPRIZE Communities Competition that made available innovative mobile learning apps designed for ESOL and adult literacy learners. Through their participation, these programs learned how to onboard students to mobile learning apps and integrate them in instruction. Other programs are located in one of the 17 states that belong to the Innovating Distance Education in Adult Learning (IDEAL) Consortium led by World Education, which both provides professional learning and technical assistance to state leadership and facilitates learning among member states. A few other organizations had designed their program to be fully or largely remote pre-pandemic (e.g., National Immigration Forum's English at Work). Whatever the case, some prior intentional work supporting the development of distance education helped support the shift to completely remote instruction.

**Policy and Regulatory Flexibility.** Policy and regulatory flexibility was an important facilitating condition. Federal and state funders initially suspended pre- and post-assessment reporting requirements because not all test manufacturers had NRS (National Reporting System)-approved tests available to proctor virtually. This gave programs the opportunity to experiment with new program models. In addition, some states temporarily relaxed program enrollment goals and spurred innovation away from the old construct of students needing to be enrolled in one class. Some states where funding is closely tied to contact and proxy contact hours put this stipulation on hold and guaranteed sustained funding at FY2019 levels.

## V. Policy and Funding Implications and Recommendations to Scale Up Innovative Practices

One of the goals of the Remote Adult ESOL Project was to identify promising, notable practices and, specifically, to name practices that are scalable, with an eye toward significantly increasing access and availability of ESOL programming in future years. This section clarifies what scaling up means, identifies what is scalable, and puts forth policy and funding implications and recommendations to scale up innovative practices.

**Scalability.** There are many ways to think about scaling and there is no single scaling approach that is universally applicable or effective. The Remote Adult ESOL Project's focus on scaling has been on finding ways to give all adult ESOL learners access to services and provide them with an opportunity to develop digital skills that are necessary for remote ESOL and viewed increasingly as a new foundational skill required by employers, colleges, healthcare providers, K–12 schools, and more.

Considering scale as a goal for choosing programs and strategies to highlight is challenging, given the diversity of the constraints and affordances evident in adult ESOL programs across the country. With varying sources of funding and a range of different policies defining what programs can and cannot do, it's nearly impossible to say that what is scalable in one program is even possible in another. However, there do exist a handful of large-scale models that have proven popular and effective, and, therefore, hold the promise of further scale-up. These include:

a. Integrated Digital English Acceleration (I-DEA);
b. English Innovations;
c. The State of Pennsylvania's Distance Education Program; and
d. English at Work/National Immigration Forum.

**Different Ways to View Scaling.** When thinking about scaling, the notions of reach (or expanded reach), spread, and depth are helpful. Some of the programs featured in the case studies expanded their geographic reach from their local, community pre-pandemic reach through in-person service to statewide reach through remote learning. For example, transitioning to a remote model this last year has increased statewide student enrollment and broadened access for those living in rural, underserved communities. Another way to give all learners access is to "scale" ideas, practices, and other forms of expertise and wisdom gained by programs that have successfully implemented remote adult ESOL learning opportunities to other adult ESOL programs. This approach to scaling does not require much additional funding, as it largely reflects changing the way services are delivered or adding to services already in place. As many of the case studies have shown, for instance, the integration of foundational digital literacy skills in the ESOL curriculum reflects a practice that can be scaled with modest new federal or state funding.

Spread means offering services in multiple additional locations or through additional in-person or remote access points. Several of the national programs referenced in the case studies (e.g., English at Work, English Innovations, I-DEA) were designed for scale and are leveraging remote components

to continuously expand access. A more bounded but equally important extension of spread is found in the LCMC@Work program, which has the capacity to broadcast live remote instruction simultaneously to multiple workplace sites. These are clear illustrations of spread.

When looking at depth, programs or their services are not necessarily spread to more locations or access points, but scaling is done by adding capacity to go deeper in the community to reach and serve more adult learners, by adding more instructional time for existing learners or by accelerating learning through effective use of technology to personalize, differentiate, and extend learning. Flexible instructional models such as hybrid, blended, and hyflex models can increase depth. Depth can also be obtained by offering more and different types of learning options in the same location, such as adding remote citizenship preparation services or Integrated Education and Training programming.

When aiming to increase access at scale, it is important to adopt an ecosystem view that includes remote learning opportunities through both publicly and privately funded programs and through models that were designed for open access and maximum reach. USA Learns, for instance, reaches 2.5 million learners annually and has engaged more than 15 million learners since its creation in 2008. This is roughly five times the number of learners in WIOA Title II–funded programs. This ecosystem should also include an easy way for current and prospective learners to find out about remote learning opportunities and facilitate referrals and matchmaking between learners and programs. Such an ecosystem can also be strengthened through efforts such as CrowdED Learning, which allows practitioners — and eventually learners themselves — to find or create content, curate it, and make it available in various ways that support personalized and customized learning.

**Policy Implications and Recommendations.** The primary policy and funding implication of the Remote ESOL Project findings is the need for policies and funding to facilitate the scaling up of innovative and effective practices illustrated in the case studies. It was clear from our research that the programs we interviewed that had leveraged broad-based collaboration and partnerships were better situated to scale and sustain the new technology-supported instruction and support service provision. For example, the Hubbs Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, partnered with Ramsey County, the St. Paul Public School District, and private funders to boost device access for students. The partnership resulted in use of district-loaned iPads, refurbished laptops to be used as incentives for distance education engagement, and CARES Act–funded digital navigation services. Additionally, several programs leveraged partnerships with local service providers to bolster recruitment and support-service provision. We suggest that policies and funding should support the creation of a remote adult ESOL ecosystem (including ongoing capacity to study effective practices and associated outcomes, benefits, and costs) that would make it possible to leverage digital technologies to promote and provide equitable access to high-quality services at scale. In addition, policies and funding should create opportunities to experiment with and innovate purely asynchronous and remote models.[18]

**The Ecosystem Approach.** To build such an ecosystem, the involvement and collaboration of multiple constituents across various sectors and at different levels is needed to ensure a high likelihood of achieving policy goals. Below is a description of policy, investment, and other opportunities different constituents can advance, possible roles they can play, and actions they can pursue. Through a comprehensive, multi-constituent, and collaborative approach, as outlined below, the possibility of creating a coherent, transparent, coordinated, efficient, and effective adult ESOL ecosystem can be turned into a reality.

## Policy Opportunities for Various Constituents in the Remote Adult ESOL Ecosystem To Promote Equitable Access to High-Quality Services at Scale

| Constituents | Possible Roles and Actions |
|---|---|
| Adult ESOL learners | ▸ Participate in remote Adult ESOL, digital literacy, citizenship, and integrated support services; and<br>▸ Engage actively in program design and improvement discussions |
| Adult ESOL education and service providers and other organizations serving immigrants and refugees | ▸ Create conditions for effective remote learning;<br>▸ Hire multicultural/bi-cultural, multilingual/ bilingual staff;<br>▸ Expand access to digital skills development using new delivery models; and<br>▸ Leverage technology to improve service outcomes. |
| Employers | ▸ Create opportunities for employees and communities to build digital skills and help provide access to high-speed internet;<br>▸ Sponsor workplace ESOL programs; support employee participation in those programs through paid release time; and<br>▸ Develop partnerships and leverage technology to diversify and grow talent. |
| Labor unions and labor-management initiatives | ▸ Create opportunities for union members and communities to build digital skills and learn English; and<br>▸ Embed key vocabulary and language structures workers need to communicate about advocacy. |
| Industry and employer associations | ▸ Support the development of industry-specific contextualized remote learning opportunities for English learners; and<br>▸ Promote adoption of effective remote learning practices to member companies. |

| Constituents | Possible Roles and Actions |
|---|---|
| Tech developers | ▸ Partner to create products that meet the needs of all learners/workers, including English learners. |
| Test developers | ▸ Modernize assessments to be fully functional with remote learning services, and capturing a wider range of outcomes and learning gains consistent with multiple facts of immigrant integration; and<br>▸ Develop contextualized digital literacy assessments that require use of a combination of digital skills to accomplish tasks. |
| Federal government, including the Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, and U.S. Citizenship Immigration Services | ▸ Ensure all remote learning expenditures are allowable uses of funds;<br>▸ Modernize accountability expectations and revise reporting requirements to better facilitate remote learning arrangements and allow for useful national data on participation;<br>▸ Invest in expansion of remote learning opportunities through community anchor organizations, such as service providers, libraries, workplaces, unions, and other types of organizations and initiatives (e.g., expand efforts such as USA Learns or CrowdED Learning);<br>▸ Invest in publicly available information for prospective learners about where remote and in-person ESOL learning opportunities exist in their communities;<br>▸ Support leadership development and practitioner professional development to strengthen capacity of the field to deliver quality remote learning services;<br>▸ Require digital literacy as a new foundational skill to be offered through all programs, assessed as a measurable outcome, and reportable as a negotiated performance target;<br>▸ Invest in development of shared digital capability standards/competency statements at various levels that are viewed as relevant in ESOL programs nationwide; |

| Constituents | Possible Roles and Actions |
|---|---|
| Federal government including the Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, and U.S. Citizenship Immigration Services *(continued)* | ▸ Fund development of digital literacy and other content areas (e.g., citizenship, College and Career Readiness Standards), OER, and platforms to find, adapt, create, and curate reusable learning objects to facilitate personalized accelerated learning;<br>▸ Ensure that a portion of any authorized apprenticeship and work-based learning funds can be used to support remote ESOL and adult digital literacy skills development;<br>▸ Allow the use of federal student aid to support participation in tuition-based remote IET learning programs at the postsecondary level;<br>▸ Embed remote learning supports and provisions for immigrant and refugee foreign-trained professionals in the Professionals' Access to Health Workforce Integration Act or similar legislation;<br>▸ Ensure adult education is fully included and benefits from any federal Digital Equity Act–type legislation; and<br>▸ Fund research on comparative outcome studies of in-person and remote adult ESOL learning opportunities using credible counterfactuals.[19] |
| Federal lawmakers/Congress | ▸ Enact the Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act (S.745) or similar legislation to allow the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to administer grant programs to promote digital capability and equity;<br>▸ Enact the National Digital Inclusion Act (S.1167) to provide state grants for digital literacy and digital equity initiatives; and<br>▸ Ensure that any Dislocation Reskilling Accounts that may be authorized by Congress invest in remote ESOL learning in addition to investing in reskilling and apprenticeship opportunities available for all eligible immigrants. |

| Constituents | Possible Roles and Actions |
|---|---|
| State governments | ▸ Provide matching resources from state appropriations in support of national/federal policy objectives pertaining to remote learning;<br>▸ Invest in developing and disseminating information for prospective learners about where remote and in-person ESOL learning opportunities exist in their communities;<br>▸ Establish or leverage existing UI (Unemployment Insurance) employer assessments to create new or allocate existing job/workforce training funds for remote adult ESOL learning opportunities;<br>▸ Fund workplace education/worker training remote ESOL program models;<br>▸ Establish technology grant programs for ESOL providers;<br>▸ Establish emergency/relief gran t programs so programs can address students' basic needs; and<br>▸ Include adult education providers in the allocation of federal economic stimulus, emergency relief or other funding. |
| State workforce boards | ▸ Expect digital literacy as a new foundational skill to be offered through all programs and support its implementation. |
| County, tribal, and municipal governments | ▸ Ensure that adult education programs that operate as part of school districts and others are eligible to provide digital devices to their students, the same as K–12 students and any other entities; and<br>▸ Plan for broadband connectivity for all residents, including subsidized data plans. |
| Local workforce boards | ▸ Expect digital literacy as a new foundational skill to be offered through all programs. |

| Constituents | Possible Roles and Actions |
|---|---|
| National philanthropic organizations | ▸ Invest in research, innovation, and capacity building for digital inclusion and skills development;<br>▸ Invest in experimentation and innovation for remote learning models or for scaling up proven models; and<br>▸ Invest in developing and disseminating information for prospective learners about where remote and in-person ESOL learning opportunities exist in their communities. |
| Community foundations | ▸ Invest in community-based capacity building for expansion of remote learning opportunities. |
| Corporate social responsibility organizations | ▸ Invest in the development of remote learning products that meet the needs of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. |
| Research and evaluation organizations | ▸ Conduct more descriptive studies and new comparative outcome studies of in-person and remote adult ESOL learning programs using credible counterfactuals and help in developing cost models for scale. |
| Immigrant and refugee advocacy organizations | ▸ Advocate for resources to expand remote adult ESOL, digital literacy, citizenship, and integrated support services. |

To make this scaled-up ecosystem a reality, providers from different contexts and settings need to be incentivized to come together and further build out existing services with remote learning complements. Adult learning providers, employers, labor unions, libraries, platform and application developers, and others in the adult learning ecosystem all have a role to play. Incentives could include providing flexibility in terms of allowable activities and fund uses under existing funding streams, including, but not limited to, adult education funding, as well as providing resources to intentionally fund any of these entities to build remote learning facilitation capacity in order to create a nationwide remote learning infrastructure. Various funding streams from education and workforce development to library and technology funding could be pooled and employer incentives could be created to make investments in remote learning opportunities for employees.

**Recommended Process.** Below is a suggested process for participatory policymaking at the grassroots, community, municipal, or regional level. Adult ESOL providers would be incentivized and supported to convene, coordinate, and facilitate such an effort as backbone organizations to achieve collective impact. The process allows all those involved in the adult ESOL learning ecosystem to come together, share experiences, identify areas where policy improvements are needed, co-design those desirable improvements, test and iterate them, and pursue the implementation of policy changes needed. This participatory policymaking approach acknowledges that policymaking is not only about statutes, rules, regulations or other formal public policies at the local, county, tribal, state, or federal levels of government, but also about local program, institutional, and community policies and practices. For instance, local school districts can ensure that technology loan programs are equitable and apply to adult learners in addition to K–12 students. This is one illustration of policy change that is not in the public policy arena but can affect and expand equitable opportunities for access to high-quality remote learning. Below is a description of steps that local or regional communities can take or adapt to their context, as they come together to create policies or make policy changes that put in place favorable conditions for remote learning to be effective.

**Step 1.** Hold individual conversations with key constituents

- Adult ESOL learners — prior, current, and future;
- Adult ESOL education and service providers/organizations serving immigrants and refugees;
- Employers;
- Labor union/labor-management initiatives representatives;
- Tech and test developers;
- State government representatives;
- State broadband providers;
- Local workforce boards;
- Local WIOA Core Program representatives/WIOA Partner Program representatives;
- County, tribal, and municipal government representatives;
- Community foundations;
- Corporate social responsibility organizations;
- Immigrant and refugee advocacy organizations;
- Volunteer tutoring and service organizations; and
- Others.

**Step 2.** Convene the network, identify the network backbone organization, and provide financial support for this role.

**Step 3.** Manage a structured, collaborative process of articulating shared goals, structures, and processes for collaboration.

**Step 4.** Select an area or issue where policy change is needed to create more equitable access and improve the effectiveness of remote learning in the community.

**Step 5.** Get smart – collect and analyze the data and identify issues/disparities and their root causes.

**Step 6.** Identify priority issue(s) and test possible solutions.

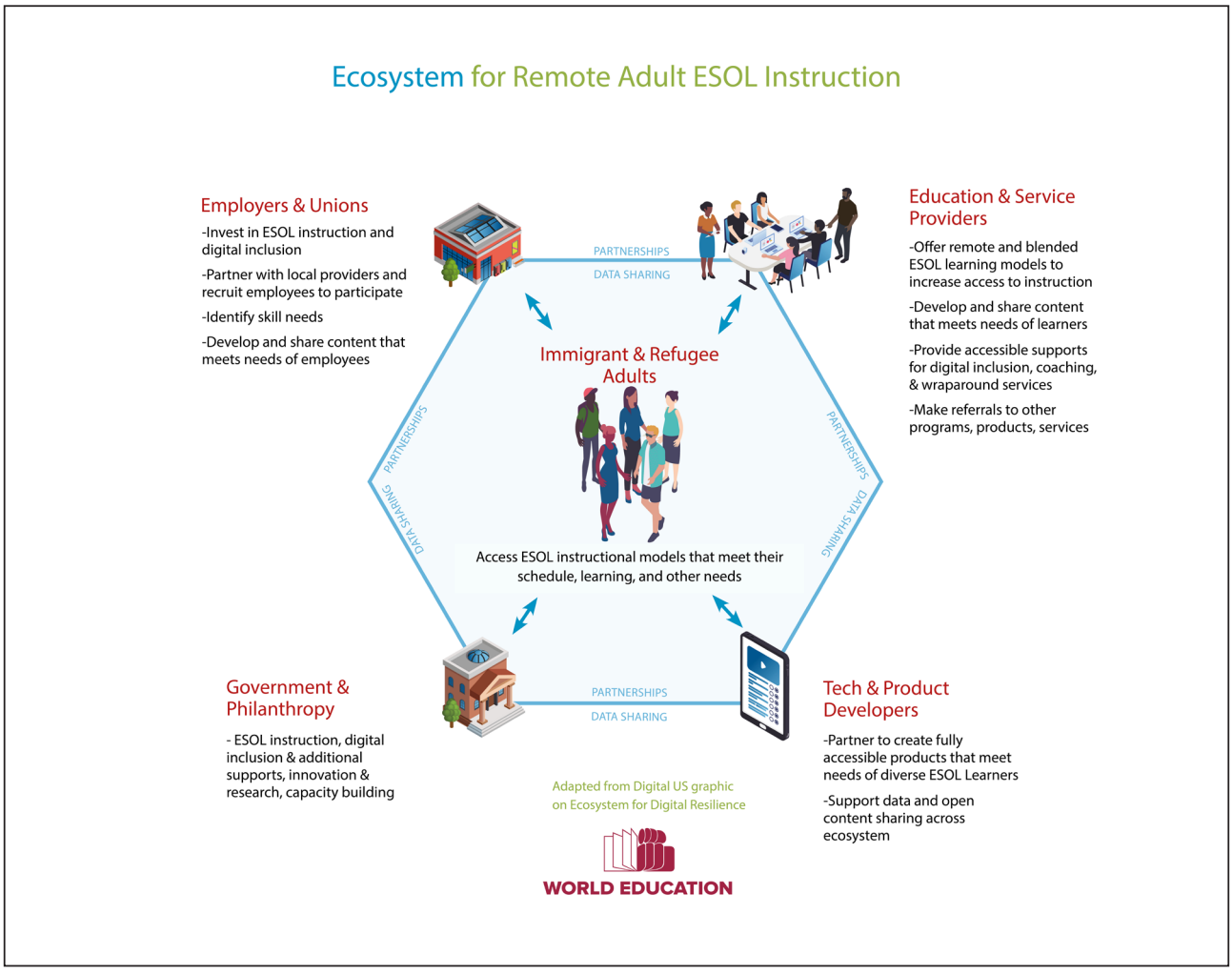
**Step 7.** Implement, iterate, and evaluate.

**Step 8.** Reflect, share and identify any further actions needed.

**Step 9.** Select the next area or issue.

**Step 10.** Repeat the process.

**Below is a stylized visual representation of what such an ecosystem could look like originally proposed by Digital US.**



**Additional Steps State Policymakers Can Take.** The National Skills Coalition and its network of state workforce and education policy advocates have laid out a set of 10 immediately actionable recommendations that can be implemented by state policymakers seeking to improve digital skills. These recommendations are not exclusively focused on digital skills for adult ESOL learners but do apply to them. That is why we have included them.

### Revenue-neutral Administrative Policy Recommendations

1. Issue guidance on how state agencies and local partners can support digital inclusion via existing federal programs.
2. Encourage the use of existing WIOA funds and state adult education funds for digital skill-building.
3. Capitalize on the availability of federal COVID-relief funds, such as the CARES Act.
4. Ensure that digital literacy skill-building is an explicitly permitted use of state Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funds.
5. Facilitate partnerships between education and workforce providers and the public library system to support digital skill-building.
6. Analyze existing datasets to understand whether existing digital learning methods produce equitable outcomes for learners.
7. Create or revise state strategic plans and initiatives to include digital literacy goals that align with governors' postsecondary credential attainment goals or other educational attainment strategies and metrics.

### Legislative Recommendations that Require Additional Investment

8. Introduce state-level Digital Equity Act or Digital Upskilling Grants legislation.
9. Research, develop, and invest in a scalable, low-cost digital assessment and aligned learning technologies.
10. Allocate state rapid-response funds to help disconnected workers build digital skills.

## Funding Implications and Recommendations

The participatory policy development process we proposed to create local or regional remote adult ESOL learning ecosystems is desirable, but only makes sense if sizable federal, state, or local appropriations are available to support existing and additional remote adult ESOL programs. These resources would enable states and local communities to sort out policies and to supplement their collaborative work with funding (e.g., employers in workplace settings). In other words, local communities cannot solve for meeting the massive need for remote adult ESOL that current demand and potentially immigration reform would create by themselves. Local coalitions can't fix this without additional funds. Therefore, we are offering five funding recommendations.

Recommendation 1. **Increase WIOA Title II appropriations to restore lost in-person capacity, expand capacity to support the three main remote ESOL instructional models, and support local providers in creating an ecosystem.** To restore capacity to the 2009–2010 level and serve 900,000 to 1,000,000 learners annually, we recommend increasing funding to support an additional 350,000 learners. At today's cost per participant, this would require adding $542 million to the state formula grants, with the federal share being $406.5 million. To support the expansion of remote ESOL instructional models, we recommend increasing capacity to serve 500,000 additional learners for 140 hours per year per learner at a total additional investment of $777 million, with the federal share being $583 million. To support 2,000–2,500 local providers in convening local partners to build an

ecosystem for remote adult ESOL learning, we recommend $10 million in additional funding for National Activities under WIOA Title II. We also recommend $150 million for a competitive grant program for local providers for this purpose and for an educators' professional development program on effective program models and practices for remote and blended learning models for ESOL.

Recommendation 2. **Create incentives for the core WIOA programs, WIOA partner programs, libraries, and social service agencies, such as community action agencies, to increase the number of ESOL learners served directly or through funded referrals.**[21] We recommend incentives for cross-title programming for adult ESOL learners and flexibility (e.g., waivers) to optimize braided funding or pool funding in exchange for better outcomes.

Recommendation 3. **Increase Institute of Education Sciences (IES) appropriations to conduct descriptive studies, comparative net-impact studies and benefit–cost analyses of traditional in-person and remote ESOL instructional models.** We recommend that IES establish an initiative to support a network of researchers, evaluators, and practitioners to carry out descriptive studies, comparative net-impact studies, and benefit–cost analyses of traditional in-person and remote ESOL instructional models. The recommended annual appropriation for this effort would be $15 million.

Recommendation 4. **Increase competitive grant funding for public–private partnerships and innovation grants.** We recommend $75 million annually to be awarded nationally by the U.S. Department of Education in conjunction with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to support innovation grants and public–private partnerships, including private–public benefit corporations, such as educational technology and test developers. The grants would support efforts to make information about ESOL learning opportunities widely and publicly available to current and prospective learners; to accelerate learning through evidence-based, effective use of new technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, virtual or augmented reality); to modernize assessments; and to create and implement integrated models of digital skills and ESOL instruction to meet the scale of need, as well as the specific needs of diverse populations.

Recommendation 5. **Further increase allocations to states in the event of any comprehensive immigration reform wherein a path to citizenship would come with an English language requirement.** *Appendix C* includes various policy options, policy considerations, and investment scenarios to meet any future additional demand tied to a potential English proficiency requirement. These estimates can be useful to Congress and state lawmakers.

## VI. Conclusion

COVID-19 accelerated the transition to remote adult ESOL learning and significantly altered at scale, if not permanently transformed, the delivery system. Based on our case studies, it appears that early indicators of remote ESOL learning are positive. Our research validates and supports the assumption that remote adult ESOL learning can be leveraged as a means to support more immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers in meeting community, workplace, and citizenship language requirements. The case studies illustrate how remote adult ESOL learning programs can provide access and extend reach, and may, under certain circumstances, produce similar, if not better, outcomes than in-person programs. The case studies have also shown that remote learning opportunities can be designed to expand and make more flexible and convenient when, how, and how many learners participate, as well as how intensively they engage.

Expanded reach, additional convenient options for learners to engage/participate, improved attendance, increased persistence because of program design flexibility, and possibly acceleration of proficiency gains are both encouraging and promising, but it is too soon to tell whether these improvements are robust, will be sustained, and will hold for all programs. Further study of the costs/savings associated with these perceived benefits would also be useful. For instance, if students

require less calendar time to achieve their goals, then the cost per student and outcome may decrease. Dedicated research is needed to determine how representative and widespread these outcomes are.

While remote adult ESOL services are likely not a substitute for in-person delivery for all learners (we heard from interviewees that there were learners who said they would return after classroom instruction resumed) or a panacea for current system capacity and performance shortfalls, they can be a great way to complement capacity of in-person programs and add new capacity to reach many of the millions of individuals interested in studying now who do not live near an ESOL program or have other barriers to attending in-person instruction, who may prefer remote learning, or the millions more who may be looking for ESOL classes soon as part of their pursuit of residency or citizenship under immigration reform. Policies and funding are needed to restore lost system capacity and to support research, remote learning expansion, and local remote adult ESOL learning ecosystem development.

## VII. References


Accenture (2020). Digitizing Learning-Based Programs: Best Practices for Nonprofit Organizations. New York, NY: Accenture.

Belzer, A., et al. (2017). Focusing or Narrowing: Trade-Offs in the Development of Adult Basic Education, 1991–2015. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 2017* (155), 11–18. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20236

California Department of Education (2004). The Relationship of Adult ESL *Reading Performance to Instructional Time*. Research Brief #2 — Learner Persistence and Achievement. Sacramento, CA: Department of Education — State of California.

Connecticut State Department of Education. (2009). *The relationship between Learning Gains and Attendance*. Retrieved April 23, 2021, from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/adult/accountability/esl learning gain final.pdf

Council of Europe (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment — Companion Volume*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg. Accessed on April 27, 2021, at: https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4[22]

Hahta, K., Butler, Y. G., and Witt, D. (2000). How Long Does It Take English Learners To Attain Proficiency? The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute Policy Report 2000-1. Stanford, CA: Stanford University. Accessed on April 2, 2021, at: https://web.stanford.edu/~hakuta/Publications/%282000%29%20-%20HOW%20LONG%20DOES%20IT%20TAKE%20ENGLISH%20LEARNERS%20TO%20ATTAIN%20PR.pdf

Johnson, M. and Bergson-Shilcock, A. (2020). *Digital Skills in Pandemic Times: How State Policymakers Can Help Workers and Businesses Adapt in a Changing Economy*. Washington, DC: National Skills Coalition. Accessed on April 19, 2021, at: https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/digital-skills-in-pandemic-times-how-state-policymakers-can-help-workers-and-businesses-adapt-in-a-changing-economy/

Kim, K., Collins, M., and McArthur, E. (1997). *Participation of Adults in English as a Second Language Classes: 1994–95*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Migration Policy Institute (2020). *Profile of the Unauthorized Population: United States*. Washington, DC Accessed on April 2, 2021, at: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/US[23]

National Partnership for New Americans (2015 and 2018). English as a Gateway. Chicago, IL: National Partnership for New Americans. Accessed on April 27, 2021, at http://partnershipfornewamericans.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/New-American-Dreams-Platform-English-as-a-Gateway.pdf

O'Donnell, K. (2006). *Adult Education Participation in 2004–05* (NCES 2006-077). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Reder, S. (2015). *Expanding Emergent Literacy Practices: Busy Intersections of Context and Practice in Low Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition*, Proceedings of the Ninth Symposium, Santos, M.G., and Whiteside, A., Editors.

Poulin, R. and Taylor Straut, T. (2017). *Distance Education Price and Cost Report, A Resource from WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies*. Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation.

Sum, A., Comings, J., Uvin, J., et al. (2000). *New Skills for a New Economy*. Boston, MA: MassINC.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, National Reporting System for Adult Education. *Table 4: Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level, Program Year 2009–2010*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Accessed on April 2–10, 2021, at https://nrs.ed.gov/index.php/rt/reports/aggregate/2009/all/table-4

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, National Reporting System for Adult Education. *Table 4: Measurable Skill Gains by Entry Level, Program Year 2019–2020*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Accessed on April 2–10, 2021, at https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/reports/aggregate/2019/all/table-4

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, National Reporting System for Adult Education. *Table 14: Local Grantees by Funding Source, Program Year 2009–2010*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Accessed on April 2–10, 2021, at https://nrs.ed.gov/index.php/rt/reports/aggregate/2009/all/table-14

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education,Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, National Reporting System for Adult Education. *Table 14: Local Grantees by Funding Source, Program Year 2019–2020*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Accessed on April 2–10, 2021, at https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/reports/aggregate/2019/all/table-14

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, *The Impact of ABS Program Participation on Long-Term Literacy Growth*, Washington, DC, 2014.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, *The Impact of ABS Program Participation on Long-Term Economic Outcomes*, Washington, DC, 2014.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, *The Impact of ABS Program Participation on Long-Term GED Attainment*, Washington, DC, 2014.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, *The Impact of ABS Program Participation on Long-Term Postsecondary Engagement*, Washington, DC, 2014.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, *The Long-Term Impact of ABS Program Participation on Voting*, Washington, DC, 2014.

Uvin, J. (2003). *Estimating the Effects of Job Loss and Training on the Earnings Trajectories of Limited English Proficient Workers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University [Doctoral Dissertation].

World Education, Inc. (2020, September). *What we learned: Adult education's response to emergency remote teaching and learning*. https://edtech.worlded.org/twg/

Yin, M., Condelli, L., Ogut, B., and Cronen, S. (2015). *The Importance of Teacher Background Qualifications for Student Learning*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

[1] We use the term English for Speakers of Other Languages, or ESOL, rather than English as a Second Language (ESL) out of recognition that many English learners already speak more than one language, just not English.

[2] https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Language%20Spoken%20at%20Home&t=Language%20Spoken%20at%20Home&tid=ACSST1Y2018.S1601&hidePreview=false

[3] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, National Reporting System for Adult Education. *Table 4: Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level, Program Year 2009–2010*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Accessed on April 2–10, 2021, at https://nrs.ed.gov/index.php/rt/reports/aggregate/2009/all/table-4
U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, National Reporting System for Adult Education. *Table 4: Measurable Skill Gains by Entry Level, Program Year 2019–2020*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Accessed on April 2–10, 2021, at https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/reports/aggregate/2019/all/table-4

[4] A table describing providers under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (i.e., Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) by type of organization is included in *Appendix D*.

[5] https://nrs.ed.gov

[6] Questions have been raised about whether National Reporting System data on distance learning accurately capture the extent to which adult learners avail themselves of distance learning opportunities.

[7] Email correspondence from MA State Director of Adult Education, 5/3/2021

[8] https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/One%20Pager%20New%20Deal%20for%20New%20Americans.pdf

[9] Belzer, A., Leon, Patterson, M., Rhodes, C., Salas-Isnardi, F., Vanek, J., Webb C., and B. Wilson-Toso. (2020). *Covid-19 Rapid Response Report from the Field*. ProLiteracy, Open Door Collective, and EdTech Center@World Education

[10] For more details, please refer to *What We Learned: Adult Education's Response to Emergency Remote Teaching* and Learning prepared by World Education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, based on the early stages of programs' conversion to remote formats. While the overall findings in the report are not specific to ESOL instruction, some of its findings are: for instance, that ESOL learners' persistence in online learning was aided by a learning community approach and that ESOL learner access to remote instruction was at times hampered by teachers' mindsets discounting the capacity of ESOL learners to succeed in distance education.

[11] Ascher-Webber, A., Rosin, M., and Vanek, J. (2018). How Technology Can Accelerate Collective Impact in Adult Learning. Boston, MA: World Education

[12] See, for example, profiles of Hubbs Center of the Saint Paul Public Schools and Holyoke Community College.

[13] See, for example, profile of English at Work of National Immigration Forum.

[14] http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/CFLRsrchBrief_Chllngng_Assmptns.pdf

[15] For resources on how to do this, see Section 3: Technology to Differentiate Learning: Ways to Customize Learning, at https://edtech.worlded.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Investment-in-Tech-Nov-30-FINAL.pdf.

[16] See the case study on Literacy Pittsburgh, for an example.

[17] For more information on these programs, refer to the *Creating Equitable Access to Remote Adult ESOL and Supports in Multiple Contexts and for Distinct Populations and Purposes* brief on this website. For more information on a range of mobile apps, software, and website/learning platforms providers offer, who they serve, and at what cost, refer to WorkforceEdtech.org, where several tech solutions have been reviewed.

[18] For more information, refer to Appendix C, Policy and Funding Options for Leveraging Remote Adult ESOL Learning as a Means to Support Immigrants in Meeting Future Citizenship Language Requirements.

[19] These outcomes studies should be longitudinal studies and not only include programs funded by WIOA Title II but also programs funded by other public and private resources. One example of a longitudinal study that examined the effect of participation is Yin, M., Condelli, L., Ogut, B., and Cronen, S. (2015). *The Importance of Teacher Background Qualifications for Student Learning*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. A second one is Uvin, J. (2003). *Estimating the Effects of Job Loss and Training on the Earnings Trajectories of Limited English Proficient Workers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University [Doctoral Dissertation]. The lessons learned from these projects regarding methodology and working with large public datasets should inform the design of future longitudinal net-impact studies.

[20] https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/digital-skills-in-pandemic-times-how-state-policymakers-can-help-workers-and-businesses-adapt-in-a-changing-economy

[21] WIOA–authorized core and partner programs: Department of Labor administers Title I (Adult, Dislocated and Youth services) and Title III (Wagner–Peyser Act). Department of Education administers both Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, which is covered by this page) and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation); Department of Health and Human Services–administered TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families); Community Services Block Grant; Department of Education–administered Career and Technical Education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006; U.S. Department of Agriculture–administered Employment and Training programs and Work programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Department of Labor–administered Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs; Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs; Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable federal law); Senior Community Service Employment program; and Reintegration of Ex-Offenders; Department of Housing and Urban Development–administered Employment and Training activities.

[22] 2020 Update of 2001 Framework.

[23] Source: These 2018 data result from Migration Policy Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the pooled 2014–2018 American Community Survey and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation, weighted to 2018 unauthorized immigrant population estimates provided by Jennifer Van Hook of Pennsylvania State University.

## VIII. Appendices

# APPENDIX A

## Remote Adult ESOL Project Research Design

### Key Questions and Methodology

The case study research used questions that were identified through pre-design key informant interviews with leaders, teachers, and learners in remote adult ESOL programs. To identify what information would be most useful to include and which related questions to ask, key informants spoke to these overarching questions and prompts:

1. For program staff — Based on your experience in remote ESOL instruction, what information has helped you plan and implement your instruction? What have you learned in hindsight?
2. For students — What has been helpful for you in learning English remotely through computer or phone?

Based on the input from key informants, case study research included interviews and document reviews focused on questions about the full program and questions about the details of specific notable, promising, or innovative practices.

Full program questions and prompts included:

1. Can you briefly introduce me to your program, its learners, and community?
2. Are there program *components or practices that you consider particularly effective and/or innovative* — which ones? Or is it the whole program from onboarding to instruction and assessment, digital skills and devices, and student supports?
    a. Tell me more about your student recruitment and onboarding process.
    b. Tell me more about the remote ESOL curriculum and what instructional materials and approaches you use. Do you use specific apps or software solutions, commercial or non-commercial products?
    c. Tell me more about how you support student persistence remotely (e.g., Remind).
    d. Tell me more about how you support student access to digital skills and devices.
    e. Tell me more about how you support other student needs remotely (food, unemployment insurance or financial assistance, childcare, etc.).
3. How about professional development for staff?
4. How has program leadership supported the remote ESOL program design and implementation? How did leadership create the necessary conditions for remote adult ESOL learning program implementation?
5. How would you characterize the remote ESOL program's effectiveness and on what basis (e.g., student persistence, feedback, learning gains, completions) to date?
6. Do you have any documents you can share with us that illustrate your programming (e.g., curriculum, student handbook)?
7. If you were starting your program from scratch, what might you do differently? And why?

Promising feature(s)/practices/components questions and prompts included:

8. You mentioned _____ in your application. Tell me more about how you implement it in practice.

9. Why did you decide to prioritize _____?

10. (If applicable to the program feature) Is it implemented with all ESOL students or only some? If the latter, for whom is this practice?

11. What challenges, if any, did you encounter in your implementation of this practice, and how did you address them?

12. How do you see this program feature contributing to your ESOL program's *effectiveness to date and after the pandemic*?

13. Do you have any documents you can share with us that relate to this program feature (e.g., curriculum, student handbook)?

To ensure the usefulness of the case studies, the project team co-designed and validated the approach with 16 key informants from 10 adult ESOL programs. These informants represented a range of adult ESOL stakeholders in the U.S. Drawing on convenience sampling, we reached into our practitioner network to identify program-level supervisors, instructors, learners, and others known to be providing or receiving remote instruction. Using the feedback provided in these early conversations, a nomination/application process and form were authored and implemented. Following the receipt of 53 nominations (52 unduplicated) or direct applications, the project team conducted an initial screening to determine which programs would be interviewed. Screening criteria factors involved service with a full range of ESOL levels, especially beginning levels, and evidence of an array of coherent technology-enabled practices, from onboarding to instruction to student supports. This resulted in interviews with leaders from 34 promising participant sites (see Appendix E). To inform case study development, the project team conducted interviews and reviews of website materials, as well as any reports or supporting documents. The team subsequently drafted case studies, identified cross-cutting themes, and determined which case studies would feature programs or models and which case studies would feature cross-program themes or issues. The programs that were interviewed and profiled reviewed, validated, and, where necessary, clarified or revised the case studies. The cross-program case study analysis informed the themes of this *Practice and Policy Brief*.

# APPENDIX B

## Key Decisions and Considerations for Remote ESOL Program Design and Implementation

| Key Decisions | Action Steps/Tasks | Related Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| Create or transition to a remote adult ESOL program in the face of COVID-19 and/or for the long term. | ▸ Consult/engage with board members, teachers, staff, and students.<br>▸ Assess the environment and feasibility of options.<br>▸ Assess staffing and other requirements and associated resources.<br>▸ Determine adequacy of available resources (notably, digital access for both teachers and learners) and identify sources of additional funds.<br>▸ Develop and implement a transition plan, with planning and implementation timelines. | ▸ Program goals and principles or values that should drive decisions based on factors such as continuity of service/participation, persistence, community-building, learner engagement, internet access, affordability of devices and data plans, accountability, staff and student ownership/ empowerment. |
| Determine who to engage and how.<br>Engage learners, instructors and staff in planning and instruction. | ▸ Expect, facilitate, and support cross-organizational collaboration of the academic, operational, and technology staff teams.<br>▸ Conduct focus groups or surveys of students and instructors to assess needs and assets. | ▸ Students' digital/ technology readiness (internet, data plans, etc.); and<br>▸ Teachers' digital readiness. |

| Key Decisions | Action Steps/Tasks | Related Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| Determine the cost of a remote program and decide between different options. Consider whether there would be savings from some in-person activities that could be redirected to the remote program.<br><br>Raise additional funds from existing or new sources or identify and leverage sources of funds to support learners/families. | ▸ Identify funding sources and deploy resources for curriculum development, LMS, devices, software, apps, tech-support, and case management.<br>▸ Identify funding sources and deploy resources for addressing students' non-academic needs, including food and childcare. | ▸ Availability of funds from current sources;<br>▸ Availability of in-kind resources through partnerships or from within the host institution; and<br>▸ Funder prospects specifically for remote/ distance learning. |
| Assign/re-assign existing staff or hire or contract additional staff/teachers needed for the short or long term, as funding permits. | ▸ Engage development/ fund-raising staff.<br>▸ Engage technology personnel.<br>▸ Engage case managers, advisors, career navigators, and other support staff.<br>▸ Engage instructional designers and teachers with the ability to leverage technology. | ▸ Rethink the role of instructor in the program; if staff have traditionally been divided as those who support distance and blended learning and those who do not, consider raising expectations for use of edtech and blended models to create more opportunities for personalization and flexibility for *all* learners. |
| Select and finance technology infrastructure and tools. | ▸ Purchase or secure devices, internet connectivity, data plans, and apps.<br>▸ Prepare for delivery of devices ready for immediate use.<br>▸ Develop a loan agreement protocol for device loan programs.<br>▸ Decide whether to have/ use an LMS or not.<br>▸ Purchase or secure web-conferencing technology/ applications and licenses. | ▸ Leverage devices students possess or supply all students with (ideally the same type of devices.<br>▸ Standardization of technology;<br>▸ Device Operating System capacity to facilitate desired delivery;<br>▸ Internet subscriptions and data plan requirements; and<br>▸ User-friendliness of existing institutional LMS solution and whether it needs to be modified for English learners. |

| Key Decisions | Action Steps/Tasks | Related Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| Modify communication and collaboration processes, tools, and structures to ensure remote learning is optimized. | ▸ Select and activate messaging/communication systems/apps to support student participation and persistence, and communication among instructors and staff. | ▸ Student familiarity with existing apps; and<br>▸ Cost. (For example, many programs opted to use the free version of Remind texting solution or the always-free WhatsApp.) |
| Review and select available curricula or design and develop curriculum and materials for remote learning. | ▸ Create instructor and staff teams to design, develop, and test the curriculum and materials.<br>▸ Identify, evaluate, organize, and sharelink relevant OERs in LMS or another platform.<br>▸ Assign staff to specifically support, educate, research, promote digital literacy and equity strategies. | ▸ Off-the-shelf curriculum or develop own or both; if the latter, consider how they can be best integrated; and<br>▸ Professional development on how to design "classes" and learning experiences for remote learning, build community, evaluate OER, and assess and engage students. |
| Modify data collection and assessment/testing policies and procedures to capture enrollment, attendance, persistence, learning gains, and other measurable outcomes. | ▸ Determine how attendance, completions, and support services will be tracked.<br>▸ Develop a work plan and schedule for virtual/ remote proctoring of tests and classroom-based assessments.<br>▸ Consider designing, developing or acquiring an online assessment model to assess learning gains for programs that are not WIOA–funded and don't have access to state-approved remote assessments. | ▸ LMS capacity to track attendance/engagement; and<br>▸ Capacity to manage and track support services. |

| Key Decisions | Action Steps/Tasks | Related Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| Create incentives for participation and attendance. | ▸ Offer flexibility to attend multiple classes/sessions at various times or for completing independent asynchronous distance learning activities. | ▸ Flexible scheduling to maximize participation and attendance;<br>▸ Consider feasibility of providing devices, internet access, and data plans free of charge for remote students; and<br>▸ Nudge engagement with independent asynchronous distance learning curricula. |
| Provide professional development for staff. | ▸ Identify instructional leaders for remote learning and engage them to create a structured, ongoing, and collaborative intensive professional development program for instructors and staff. | ▸ Consider both technology and methodology/ pedagogy/andragogy; and<br>▸ Create a community feel to and allow time for professional learning, where teachers are encouraged to collaborate, share ideas, and offer mutual support. |
| Define necessary digital literacy content, offer instruction during onboarding, and embed in instructional phases. | ▸ Document foundational digital literacy needs based on student input, existing digital skills frameworks and curricula, as well as remote program design.<br>▸ Determine how digital skills will be taught and assessed.<br>▸ Assess gains in students' digital skills. | ▸ Offer foundational digital literacy as part of onboarding or front-end bootcamp.<br>▸ Foster ongoing development of digital capabilities through curriculum integration or stand-alone complementary course.<br>▸ Create opportunities for learners to set their own digital literacy goals.<br>▸ Provide supports (to students and their instructors) to help learners reach those goals. |

| Key Decisions | Action Steps/Tasks | Related Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| Finalize remote program design. | ▸ Specify all components.<br>▸ Orient students, teachers, and staff. | ▸ Visual representations of components and processes; and<br>▸ Be open to revisions based on feedback from staff. |
| Support persistence and basic needs through remote academic and non-academic integrated support services. | ▸ Determine how technology and people will be used to support students.<br>▸ Revise Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and leverage apps to facilitate students' academic/ persistence supports and provide supports with basic non-academic needs. | ▸ Tracking of needs and services provided; and<br>▸ Apps based on behavioral economics. |
| Pilot remote learning options, materials, and support. | ▸ Facilitate a trial run where program is launched and tested for a specified period. | ▸ Decide whose feedback will be solicited, and when, how, and by whom. |
| Iterate and continuously improve remote learning delivery. | ▸ Schedule and hold frequent check-ins with students, instructors, and staff to review how program is functioning and identify needs for improvement.<br>▸ Conduct end-of-course evaluations and follow-up surveys. | ▸ Consider piloting components of the remote ESOL program incrementally, focusing on one element at a time; and<br>▸ Have an experimental mindset — be open to changes. |

# APPENDIX C

## Policy and Funding Options for Leveraging Remote Adult ESOL Learning as a Means To Support Immigrants in Meeting Future Citizenship Language Requirements

### Policy and Funding Drivers

Many policy and funding scenarios can be considered if the goal is to provide support to the millions of eligible adults in a future legalization program that would include an English language requirement as part of the pathway to citizenship. These scenarios will differ, depending on the policy choices made along with various cost assumptions. The key policy drivers that will define the nature and extent of support are:

a. **Size of the population** of eligible unauthorized immigrants and those who currently are authorized but not eligible for citizenship. Key decisions about inclusions and exemptions can be made based on age, time in the U.S., native language (i.e., English), criminal record adjustments, and other exclusions. Depending on how these decisions are made, the size of the population in need of services and support will vary.

b. **Values of policymakers.** The values or beliefs of key policymakers matter. One particular belief that can drive very different outcomes is whether policy makers view ESOL services as a public or private good and whether they view the provision of such services as an individual or government responsibility or a combination of both. The fact that immigrants have played an essential role in the net labor-force growth required by our economy supports the notion of ESOL as part of a citizenship pathway being a public good and responsibility. Policymakers who view ESOL as a public good are more likely to be supportive of allocating public funds to support it.

c. **Statutory purpose/policy intent regarding participant eligibility.** A key policy decision will be whether to support universal eligibility and access or conditional eligibility and access. These options will drive costs in very different ways. Universal eligibility and access mean that all eligible immigrants whose first language is not English would be able to avail themselves of either in-person or remote ESOL learning opportunities at no cost. Related decisions include whether proficiency would be assessed. Conditional eligibility would mean that there would be a proficiency standard associated with satisfying any English language requirement and that immigrants whose proficiency is below that threshold would be eligible for participation in free ESOL services (potentially subject to a cap). U.S. Census data for English ability — for instance, anyone who speaks English less than well or not at all — could also be a consideration. A related decision is how to best assess proficiency (e.g., through an interview) and who would be best positioned to do so (e.g., USCIS or ESOL providers). Other conditional access could be based on evidence-based time/dosage limits (e.g., up to 125 hours of instruction). For any of the scenarios, decisions will need to be made about authorization levels and the possible inclusion of recommended appropriation levels.

d. **Statutory purpose/policy intent regarding allowable services.** Key decisions are related to whether to support in-person only, blended, and remote learning options. The remote learning option will clearly allow additional eligible immigrants to benefit from instruction. Irrespective of how instruction is delivered, digital capability should be codified as a new foundational or basic skill, be made an expected activity and allowable use of funds, and should be incorporated into assessment expectations for both program improvement and accountability purposes.

e. **Cost basis.** There are many decisions to be made in arriving at a cost basis to determine the necessary levels of investment. Options include cost per instructional student hour, cost per participant (adjusted for persistence or not), or cost per outcome (e.g., measurable skill gains). Historical data on WIOA Title II performance and expenditures are available and can be used for this purpose.

- **Time.** There are at least three major decisions to be made that involve time and will drive costs in different ways. One is length of/time of residence in the United States. Depending on whether there is an eligibility threshold related to time in U.S./residence requirements or not, costs will vary. A second key factor will be the length of the pathway to citizenship in years (e.g., eight years). A third decision is how long participants can participate. Can they participate for only one year? Or for multiple years until they reach either a participation (e.g., 300 hours) or proficiency/achievement threshold (e.g., one or two levels of measurable gains or a set minimum proficiency standard or a set maximum cost threshold)?

- **Funding mechanisms and models.** Key decisions relate to whether new funding and/or increased appropriations are going to be pursued or whether existing funding will be repurposed. These are some of the options, all of which come with several policy choices:

### Market-based Models

- Public funding direct to consumer whereby each eligible individual would receive a payment to allow them to pay for classes;
- Impact Investing (e.g., Pay For Success and Tradable Income-Based Securities)[24];
- Fees charged to eligible immigrants (e.g., share of citizenship application fee — redirected to programming);
- Competitive funding for eligible communities.

### Public Sector-based Models

- Formula funding to states based on eligible population size:
- Within-state formula-based funding allocation to local communities/providers;
- Within-state competitive funding to eligible providers.
- Formula funding to municipalities based on eligible population size:
- Within-municipality formula-based funding allocation to local communities/providers;
- Within-municipality competitive funding for eligible providers.
- Competitive funding for private-sector platforms:
- Provide challenge grants to nonprofit, for-profit, and public benefit corporations providing remote ESOL learning services;
- Design challenge for open platform providing services at no cost to students.

### Repurposing Existing Funding

- Redirect H-1B fees;
- Repurpose “idle” collected taxes at the U.S. Treasury;
- Amend WIOA to require subset of existing resources to be used for this purpose (floor/set-aside).

### Leveraging Emergency Relief Funding

- Use federal CARES Act to support emergency grants for non-credit students who have experienced ongoing significant financial hardships as a result of COVID-19.

### Public–Private Sector Partnerships

- Provide funding to partnerships between state or local governments, national for-profits, and national non-profits to make products available at scale;
- Institute an employer matching requirement.

### Matching/Co-Investments

- Have/maintain state match requirements;
- Have/maintain Maintenance of Effort requirements for states.

## Policy Recommendations for Leveraging Remote Adult ESOL Learning as a Means to Support Immigrants in Meeting Future Citizenship Language Requirements

### Principles

In making decisions, we recommend that equity and inclusion would be the primary policy design and development principles. These principles would maximize inclusion of as many eligible adults as possible (with the exception of those whose first language is English and those who speak English well or very well already), and would ensure adequate and equitable access so adults can access ESOL services in their communities, their workplace or their homes via remote learning opportunities.

### Baseline Data

To ground our recommendation, the table below shares data on the size and proficiency of the unauthorized immigrant population, along with data on current system capacity, performance, and costs. System capacity, performance, and cost data are from the 2019–2020 year, which partially includes services affected by the pandemic.

| Unauthorized Immigrant Population | |
|---|---|
| Total (2018)* | 10,997,000 |
| Age 16+ | 10,378,000 |
| **English Proficiency** | |
| Speak English Only or Very Well | 3,848,950 |
| Speak English Well | 2,529,310 |
| Speak English Not Well or Not at All | 4,728,710 |

| Annual System Capacity | |
|---|---|
| All Services — Annual Enrollment — 2019–2020 | 1,100,210 |
| ESOL Services — Annual Enrollment — 2019–2020 | 568,738 |
| **Annual System Expenditures by Local Providers**** | |
| All Services | |
| Federal — WIOA Title II | $526,989,345 |
| States | $1,177,090,947 |
| Total | $1,704,080,292 |
| ESOL — Pro-Rated Based on Annual Enrollment | $880,900,207 |
| **Annual Systems Performance and Costs***** | |
| Total Participants — All Services — 2019–2020 | 1,100,210 |
| Total Participants — ESOL— 2019–2020 | 568,738 |
| Average Student Instructional Hours — All Services — 2019–2020 | 124.8 |
| Average Student Instructional Hours — ESOL — 2019–2020 | 139.9 |
| Measurable Skill Gains — All Services — 2019–2020 | 337,736 |
| Measurable Skill Gains — ESOL — 2019–2020 | 206,383 |
| Percentage of Learners Achieving Measurable Skill Gains — All Services | 36.4% |
| Percentage of Learners Achieving Measurable Skill Gains — ESOL | 36.6% |
| Cost per Participant Based on Local Grantee Expenditures | $1,548.90 |
| Cost per Participant Based on Local Grantee Expenditures — All Services — Federal Funding Share | $478.90 |
| Cost per Student Instructional Hour Local Grantee Expenditures — All Services | $12.40 |
| Cost per Student Instructional Hour Local Grantee Expenditures — ESOL | $11.10 |

**Notes:**

* Source: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-unauthorized-immigrants-stablenumbers-changingorigins_final.pdf

** Source: https://nrs.ed.gov/index.php/rt/reports/aggregate/2019/all/table-4

*** Source: https://nrs.ed.gov/index.php/rt/reports/aggregate/2019/all/table-14

## Scenarios

Thinking about scenarios that would optimize inclusion and maximize equity, below is a statement of the assumptions underlying our scenarios and recommendations:

- **Eight-year Pathway to Citizenship timeframe** — Annual investment estimates are based on one-eighth of the population and additional annual investments would be maintained for and evaluated after eight federal fiscal years.
- **No age exclusions** — Anyone who is an eligible adult from an age standpoint would be included.
- **Low-proficiency priority** — Only those who speak English less than well would be eligible for services.
- **Live classroom-based instruction** — The primary instructional approach would be group- or classroom-based instruction for the functional communication advantages in language learning including in-person or fully remote "live" classes and blended classes with supplementary independent study options.
- **Strengthen current system** — Add capacity to the current local providers in the WIOA Title II system and USCIS grant recipients. Do not create a new system but have the Department of Education manage the effort in conjunction with USCIS.
- **Hours adequate to reach intermediate proficiency** — 350 hours of access per learner, on average, should allow beginning learners to achieve proficiency gains/levels that would satisfy basic functional English language requirements (i.e., low-intermediate proficiency) for work, citizenship, and civic/community engagement.[26]

Based on these assumptions, we present six scenarios. The first scenario represented in the table below estimates the additional annual required resources to add system capacity/slots to support unauthorized immigrants in their journey to proficiency that would allow them to meet citizenship language requirements. It is based on actual per-participant expenditures by local providers of $1,548.90, on average. This annual system capacity expansion estimate is agnostic to issues of cross-year participation, variation in program intensity and duration, achievement rates, proficiency thresholds to be reached, and other considerations. This initial scenario can also be used to estimate how much doubling the capacity of the system would cost — in the absence of immigration reform — if the policy goal were to meet both the need and demand for services. The total additional resources are identified, as well as the federal and state shares under matching and maintenance of effort assumptions.[27]

| Assumption-Based Estimates of Annual Expanded Capacity Costs | | Scenarios (in U.S. dollars)<br>Scenario 1 — Based on Actual Per-Participant Expenditures by Local Providers of $1,548.90 |
|---|---|---|
| **Annualized Additional Required Resources** To Support Additional System Capacity Needed, Based on Annualized Target Population Estimates of 591,089 | | **$915,537,365** |
| Federal Share of Total New Required Resources | 75 percent | $686,653,024 |
| State and Local Share, Based on 25 Percent Matching Requirement | 25 percent | $171,663,256 |
| Federal Share, Based on Current Federal:State Match and MOE (Maintenance of Effort) Ratio | 31 percent | $283,131,281 |
| State and Local Share, Based on 25 Percent Matching Requirement and MOE, 2019–2020 | 69 percent | $632,406,083 |
| **Total Additional Required Resources for Eight Years To Serve All** | | **$7,324,298,919** |

The second set of scenarios below is based on hours of instruction and the associated cost per student instructional hour. These are not annual estimates but estimates of the total cost of serving all eligible adults at various levels of instruction. Based on recent data from the U.S. Department of Education, the average nationwide cost per student instructional hour for ESOL was an estimated $11.10. For various levels of hours of instruction, the total cost of serving the eligible population is presented. It is important to note that 125 hours is approximately the average number of hours of instruction Adult Education and Family Literacy Act participants receive annually. This fluctuates by type of service and level of instruction and ESOL is typically a bit higher (e.g., 140 in 2019–2020).

The 350-hour threshold reflects the minimum hours needed, on average, to achieve functional proficiency for those who start at the beginning level. That said, some individuals will require more time and others will require less, depending on their initial level of proficiency, education levels, age, and levels of literacy and familiarity with the Roman alphabet, and other factors known to affect language acquisition. Teacher and program characteristics will play a role as well. Age of both students and teachers are negatively associated with learning gains. Programs that provide support services to students tend to see higher gains.[28]

For these scenarios, it is important to point out that — in addition to the factors mentioned — program intensity and duration, and flexible class options will greatly impact how long it will

take individuals to complete. For instance, an intensive full-time program providing four hours of instruction five days per week in two 22-week cycles annually reflects 440 hours per cycle and 880 hours for two cycles (or within a given year). Based on the current average cost per student instructional hour, this program would cost $9,768 per student/slot annually. A low-intensity program meeting four hours per week (e.g., two two-hour classes per week) for two 22-week cycles, on the other hand, would not allow an individual to complete higher levels of instruction in a single year, as this program in total would only allow a person to receive 176 hours of instruction (i.e., 88 hours per cycle for two cycles), which would result in $1,954.

| **Total Eligible Population Who Do Not Speak English Well or At All** | | **4,728,710** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Average Cost per Student Instructional Hour** | | **$11.10** | |
| | **Total Additional Resources Required for Eight-Year Period** | **Annual Average of Additional Required Resources** | **Federal Share of Annual Additional Resources Required (75 percent of Total Cost)** |
| **Scenario 2** Every adult can participate for and is guaranteed 100 hours of instruction | $5,248,868,100 | $656,108,513 | $492,081,384 |
| **Scenario 3** Every adult can participate for and is guaranteed 125 hours | $6,561,085,125 | $820,135,641 | $615,101,730 |
| **Scenario 4** Every adult can participate for and is guaranteed 250 hours | $13,122,170,250 | $1,640,271,281 | $1,230,203,461 |
| **Scenario 5** Every adult can participate for and is guaranteed 300 hours | $15,746,604,300 | $1,968,325,538 | $1,476,244,153 |
| **Scenario 6** Every adult can participate for and is guaranteed 350 hours | $18,371,038,350 | $2,296,379,794 | $1,722,284,845 |

### Research Base for Recommended Scenarios

Scenarios 5 and 6 reflect our policy recommendations and, therefore, warrant further discussion. Scenario 5 reflects a recommendation by the policy advocacy community. Specifically, the National Partnership for New Americans has argued that it is essential to guarantee all New Americans 300 hours of ESOL instruction and for the federal government to invest in technologies and programs to innovate ESOL instruction.[29] Scenario 6 is an evidence-based scenario and speaks directly to two

questions that have dominated policy debates in English-speaking nations, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States: What is an adequate or minimum level of proficiency we want everyone to reach? How long does it take to reach that level, on average?

To answer this question and to support the estimate in Scenario 6, the evidence includes performance data on adult ESOL programs in the U.S., data from cross-sectional and longitudinal studies that have examined the impact of participation in adult education, including adult ESOL programs in the United States, and findings from the second-language acquisition research on time to proficiency.

Across nations, it seems that governments expect immigrants to reach a low-intermediate level of proficiency. This level is the equivalent to being able to hold a conversation confidently. In Europe, for instance, this reflects a B1 Level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). CEFR is an international standard for describing language ability. It uses a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. CEFR also names hours of instruction needed to go from one level to the next. To reach the B1 level, CEFR identifies 300 hours of instruction as a minimum, but, in practice, governments have learned that it might take 350–360 or more hours. Other nations use different names for this intermediate level of proficiency that adults must meet, such as "ESOL Entry 3" or "Intermediate 1" in Scotland, before they can be granted citizenship. In the United States, the reference framework includes educational functional/student performance levels, as articulated in the National Reporting System and in content standards documents. The corresponding level in the U.S. is Level 4: Low-Intermediate ESL (English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education Level 3).

This low-intermediate level of proficiency will not make an adult achieve nativelike proficiency, but it will allow adults to satisfy language requirements for various purposes, including most functional communication requirements at work and those associated with citizenship and civic engagement. To achieve full proficiency or approximate nativelike proficiency, many years may be needed. Second-language acquisition research has shown that it may take children and youth between three to five years to achieve functional oral proficiency, four to seven years for academic proficiency, and nativelike proficiency taking even longer.[30] The years required for adults to achieve these thresholds are likely to be higher, as there is a well-documented negative relationship between age and proficiency gains.

The scenarios above are all about creating access for all eligible adults whose proficiency is below low-intermediate and are based on actual average costs per student instructional hour or per participant, without consideration of adequacy of resources needed to provide a high-quality and effective learning experience, and without consideration of program effectiveness and cost-efficiency. The estimates reflect a floor or a planning starting point, in other words. In determining the ultimate level of resources to be allocated and how these resources will be allocated and administered, estimates may vary when these considerations are addressed:

- The average participant cost measures are national averages and mask the great variation in program intensity, average hours of instruction, and student achievement between and within states and between programs. For instance, estimates of cost per participant vary greatly. Adult public charter schools in the District of Columbia receive an allocation of $10,000 per student per year. The Literacy Assistance Center in New York City set the per-slot cost at $7,400 in its prototype budget. The Boston-based Jewish Vocational Services Pay for Success Project sets the per-participant cost at $5,007. Clearly, using these figures in scenarios that use cost per participant will result in much higher estimates of required resources.
- The access-based scenarios are silent on how program characteristics, socio-economic and socio-linguistic contexts, and individual differences will affect times to proficiency. National data suggest that consideration may need to be given to the impact on system capacity levels, as students may need to participate for more than one year and the system, therefore, should have the capacity to address that while maintaining capacity to onboard new learners annually.

- The access-based estimates do not speak explicitly to nor account for persistence and its implication for planning and budgeting resources for system capacity. Alternative estimates can be made that would consider that between 40 percent and 45 percent of all adult ESOL learners nationwide, separate from the program (or temporarily stop out and don't return within a given year) without achieving a skill gain. In the 2019–2020 year, to illustrate, 43.56 percent of ESOL students separated before achieving a positive outcome. The reasons for separation cover a broad range of issues. Learners may have gotten ill or passed away. They may face family circumstances that make them withdraw, such as the need to address unexpected family care needs. They may relocate for a new job or follow a partner in doing so. They may face shift changes at work, which makes participation difficult or temporarily impossible. They may need to take on an additional job. They may have lost access to support services, such as childcare. Or they may feel instruction is not meeting their needs, not challenging enough or too challenging, or the program may not be welcoming. In sum, providing access to all does not equal achievement by all.
- The access-based estimates do not speak explicitly to achievement. If robust longitudinal data on achievement were available that show, on average, how long it would take to achieve low-intermediate proficiency and over which period of time (e.g., months) from each of the three preceding levels and at what cost, then outcome-based scenarios could be developed.

It would be helpful for the field to collect cost data for both modes of delivery and conduct comparative analyses of the delivery functions and expenditures involved, as well as cost data on cost per learning gain.

---

[24] Pay For Success is a set of outcomes-based financing and funding tools that directly and measurably improve lives by driving resources toward agreed upon outcomes. Tradable Income-Based Securities is new type of public-private partnership to finance reskilling (and other services) at no cost to individuals or governments, and without relying on philanthropy by using future tax payments.

[25] 805,000 of these 10,378,000 adults were 55 and older.

[26] In 2019–2020, the average number of ESOL instruction hours overall was 140. By level, the average numbers were: Level 1, 101 hours; Level 2, 126 hours; Level 3, 149 hours; Level 4, 152 hours; Level 5, 151 hours; and Level 6, 143 hours. No data are available as to the average hours per student and per level across years.

[27] In Scenario 1, estimates are based on the average annual cost per participant, based on financial data on local provider expenditures and performance data for Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. These cost/expenditure data are for the current system's in-person and (modest) hybrid delivery.

[28] https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/2Adult-Learning-Importance-of-Teacher-Background-Qualifications-Sept-2015.pdf

[29] http://partnershipfornewamericans.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/New-American-Dreams-Platform-English-as-a-Gateway.pdf

[30] https://web.stanford.edu/~hakuta/Publications/%282000%29%20-%20HOW%20LONG%20DOES%20IT%20TAKE%20ENGLISH%20LEARNERS%20TO%20ATTAIN%20PR.pdf

[31] For state data on the relationship between hours and achievement, please refer to Sum, A., Comings, J., Uvin, J., et al. (2000). New Skills for a New Economy. Boston, MA: MassINC, California Department of Education (2004). *The Relationship of Adult ESL Reading Performance to Instructional Time.* Research Brief #2 — Learner Persistence and Achievement. Sacramento, CA: Department of Education — State of California, and Connecticut State Department of Education. (2009). The Relationship between Learning Gains and Attendance. Retrieved April 23, 2021, from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/adult/ accountability/esl learning gain final.pdf. For specific findings on the relationship between instructional time/attendance and achievement, attainment, civic, and economic outcomes, see the five 2014 research briefs under Steve Reder's project, Benefits of Adult Basic Skills Program Participation: Findings from the Portland State University Longitudinal Study of Adult Learners at http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/bulletins/facfae#link_1427386648547
For specific findings on the relationship between instructional time/attendance and achievement in adult ESOL learners with low formal education, see Reder, S. (2015). *Expanding Emergent Literacy Practices: Busy Intersections of Context and Practice in Low Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition*, Proceedings of the Ninth Symposium, Santos, M.G., and Whiteside, A., Editors.

# APPENDIX D

## 2019–2020 Local Grantees/Providers by Type of Organization for Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

| Provider Agency | Total Number of Providers | Total Number of IELCE* Providers | Total Number of Sub-Recipients |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Local Education Agencies** | 790 | 266 | 343 |
| **Public or Private Nonprofit Agency** | | | |
| Community-based Organizations | 269 | 96 | 108 |
| Faith-based Organizations | 34 | 13 | 10 |
| Libraries | 19 | 5 | 2 |
| **Institutions of Higher Education** | | | |
| Community Junior or Technical Colleges | 495 | 204 | 119 |
| Four-year Colleges or Universities | 42 | 8 | 2 |
| Other Institutions of Higher Education | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| **Other Agencies** | | | |
| Correctional Institutions | 43 | 0 | 21 |
| Other Institutions (non-correctional) | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| **Other** | 21 | 10 | 48 |
| **Total** | 1,719 | 602 | 653 |

* Integrated English literacy and civics education
Source: https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/reports/aggregate/2019/all/table-14

# APPENDIX E

## Remote ESOL Programs Interviewed for This Project

1. Building Skills Partnership, CA
2. Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School, Washington, DC Region
3. Central Wyoming College, College & Career Readiness, Riverton, WY
4. Chinatown Community Development Center, Women's ESL and Life Skills Program, San Francisco, CA
5. Chinese Community Center, Houston, TX
6. Clark College Transitional Studies, Vancouver, WA
7. Fox Valley Technical College, FVTC ELL, Appleton, WI
8. Holyoke Community College, Ludlow & Springfield Adult Learning Centers, Ludlow, Springfield, Holyoke, MA
9. Intercambio Uniting Communities, CC English, (National)
10. Lancaster-Lebanon IU13, IU13 Community Education, Lancaster and Lebanon Counties, PA
11. Literacy Council of Montgomery County (LCMC), LCMC @ WORK, Rockville, MD
12. Literacy Partners, English for Parents, New York City, NY
13. Literacy Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
14. Missoula County Public Schools' Adult Education, Academic Success Program, Missoula, MT
15. Mt. Diablo Adult Education, ESL Program, Concord, CA
16. National Immigration Forum, English at Work, (National)
17. National Partnership for New Americans, English as a Gateway - English Innovations, (National)
18. Neighborhood House - International Learning Program, Milwaukee, WI
19. New Haven Adult and Continuing Education Center Programs, New Haven, CT
20. New York State Office for New Americans Mobile ESOL for Immigrants and Refugees, statewide, NY
21. Northeast Wisconsin Technical College - ELL, Greenbay, WI
22. Orange County Library System, Learn English at OCLS, Orange County, FL
23. Ozark Literacy Council, Fayetteville, AR
24. Pima Community College Adult Basic Education for College and Career, Refugee Education Program, Tucson, AZ
25. Queens Public Library, Grand Family Fundamentals, Flushing Adult Learning Center, Flushing, NY
26. Riverside Language Program, Inc., New York City, NY
27. Sacramento County Office of Education, USA Learns, (National)
28. Santa Barbara City College, School of Extended Learning, Santa Barbara, CA
29. Second Start, Concord, NH
30. St. Paul Public Schools Adult Learning, Hubbs Center ABE, St. Paul, MN
31. Tamalpais Adult School, Home Care Aide - Online Course, Larkspur, CA
32. Technical College System of Georgia, Savannah Technical College, Savannah, GA
33. Technical College System of Georgia, Georgia Piedmont Technical College, Clarkston, GA
34. ThinkSelf Deaf Adult Education, St. Paul, MN
35. Tuscarora Intermediate Unit #11, PA Distance Learning Project, statewide, PA

WORLD EDUCATION

World Education, Inc.
44 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210, USA
Tel: 617.482.9485
literacy@worlded.org

EdTech CENTER@ WORLD EDUCATION