



EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education (CCCIE) launched a nationwide survey in March 2015 to collect input from community college faculty, leadership and administrators on the opportunities and challenges they face in serving immigrant students. Through this survey CCCIE sought input from community college leaders to identify steps to help community colleges around the country improve immigrant student success, college completion rates, and career readiness.

Immigrants and their children are expected to account for almost all of the nation's future labor force growth. By 2030, nearly 1 out of 5 workers will be an immigrant. Adapting college education and job training programs so that they are effective for this fast-growing immigrant population is likely to reduce the national skills gap as well as have a significant positive impact on overall student outcomes. Community colleges are ideally positioned to offer programs that accelerate immigrant student success but they face formidable challenges in addressing the unique needs of a diverse immigrant population.

Below are the key findings from CCCIE's review of input from 160 community college respondents in 33 states that, taken together, account for well over 80% of the nation's foreign-born residents:

Key Findings

Intentionality at a Strategic Level

More than one-third of respondents' colleges support immigrants in their strategic or high-level plans.

Growth in Immigrant Student Enrollment

A majority of colleges (over 60%) anticipate growth in immigrant student enrollment over the next 3 to 5 years; about 25% of colleges expect growth of 10% or more.

Two Most Important Services Based on Resources Allocated: Information Helpful to Immigrants and Support to Utilize Academic Resources

- Nearly half (46%) of the respondents indicate that providing helpful and accurate information regarding admissions, eligibility for in-state tuition and financial aid is a very important priority based on resources allocated.
- About 40% say providing immigrant students with support needed to utilize academic resources (e.g. tutoring, study skills, writing centers, etc.) is also very important based on resources invested.

Top 5 Areas of Investment: ESL, Developmental Courses, Academic Support Services, Academic and Career Advising, ABE/ESL Transitions

When asked to describe their college's status with regard to services to support immigrant students, a majority of respondents indicate they are "currently meeting needs" or "fully investing to enhance services" in the following areas:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) Instruction
- Pre-college developmental courses
- Academic support services (e.g. tutoring, study skills, writing centers, etc.)
- Academic and career advising
- Strengthening transition of Adult Basic Education/ESL students to college programs

Job-Related Training & Support for Immigrant Students Needs Further Strengthening

While many community colleges are investing resources to strengthen ESL and other academic services, respondents report less success in their college's capacity to prepare immigrant students to meet workforce requirements in the following areas:

- Expertise in identifying career pathways for immigrant students
- Ongoing tracking of workforce requirements of employers that hire immigrant workers
- Relationships with businesses and workforce agencies to help immigrant students obtain employment
- Assessing educational and professional experiences of students in ESL or other non-credit adult education as the basis for tailoring credit programs to meet their needs

Training/Advisory Services to Support Re-Credentialing and Career Re-Entry for Foreign-Trained Professionals: Lack of Programming/Urgent Need to Enhance

- More than half of the respondents (65%) say their colleges have "no programming" (51%) or an "urgent need to enhance but lack funding" (14%) for training programs to support re-credentialing of professionals trained in other countries.
- Almost 70% report that their colleges have "no programming" (46%) or an "urgent need to enhance but lack funding" (23%) for advisory and other support for foreign-trained professionals for career re-entry.

Less than Half of College Respondents Are At Expert Level or Have Adequate Capacity to Support DACA/DAPA Eligible Students

- Only 38% of respondents rate their colleges at "expert level" (16%) or say their colleges' have "adequate capacity" (22%) to provide educational access and support for students eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) or recent Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) and extended DACA.
- Moreover, over two-thirds (67%) of respondents say their colleges have borderline to no capacity when it comes to advocating on behalf of immigrant students to government institutions.

Limited Capacity to Track Immigrant Student Success

Community colleges are under increasing pressures to meet performance-based outcomes for all their students, yet the overwhelming majority (73%) of respondents say their college has borderline to no capacity in tracking success of immigrant.

Community College Recommendations for Action

- Articulate explicit, measurable goals to serve immigrant students and incorporate these as part of the college's overall strategic plan.
- Support strategies with actions on the ground and build cross-campus, cross-functional alliances to develop intentionally focused ESL student academic and support plans around completion and career preparation.
- Collaborate with community organizations to provide holistic support of immigrant students, build training and employment pipelines to fulfill labor force needs, and jointly apply for new sources of funding to address service gaps.
- Invest in the professional development of front-line staff and college faculty, including ESL adjunct faculty.
- Engage with employers to better understand local workforce requirements and ensure training programs align with occupations in demand and provide immigrant students with access to career building jobs.
- Encourage collaboration among noncredit ESL and credit academic departments to track the progression of immigrant students between the two sides and identify critical points for targeted interventions. Enlist Institutional Research departments as partners in this effort.

The wide range of capabilities across community colleges presents unique opportunities for sharing of experiences and practices across colleges to advance the college completion agenda. While a growing number of community colleges have developed innovative approaches to serving immigrant students, attempts to scale and replicate are still elusive. We hope the survey results will help community colleges and their partners, policymakers, and funders better understand the capacity needs of community colleges in providing immigrant students with the support they need to be successful in the classroom and in their careers.



2015 BLUE RIBBON PANEL MEMBERS

American Association of Community Colleges, D.C
Alamo Community College District, TX
ALLIES (Alliance for Language Learners' Integration, Education and Success), CA
Bluegrass Community and Technical College, KY
Bunker Hill Community College, MA
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Literacywork International, NM
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Pima Community College, AZ
Rio Hondo College, CA
South Texas College, TX
Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, WA
Westchester Community College, NY
World Education Services, NY

The Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education is a national network of community colleges and other organizations committed to supporting immigrant education through colleges' innovative programs and services. CCCIE's mission is to accelerate immigrant student integration by working with community colleges and their partners to help improve college/credential completion and build career pathways for new Americans. We believe that ensuring educational access and success for immigrants and children of immigrants is critical to increasing U.S. college completion and career readiness. National in scope, CCCIE receives financial support from the J.M. Kaplan Fund and is hosted and led by Westchester Community College in Valhalla, New York. CCCIE's work is guided by a Blue Ribbon Panel of community college leaders and experts in the field of immigrant education. Our key initiatives include:

- ❖ **Action-based research** and exchange of promising practices
- ❖ **Thought leadership** through conference planning and presentations
- ❖ **Technical assistance** to community colleges and other stakeholders
- ❖ **Strategic partnerships** to expand policy reach and influence the field

Please explore our website at www.cccie.org to receive a copy of the full Survey Brief and to subscribe to our mailing list.

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