



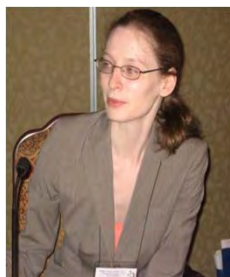
NATIONAL CENTER ON
IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICY

**LEP Workers & Access to Workforce Services:
Perspectives on Current Barriers to Access and
Prospects for Improvements Under WIA
Reauthorization**

Language Access Webinar
September 21, 2011



Speakers



Since 2006, **Amanda Bergson-Shilcock** has served as Director of Outreach and Program Evaluation for the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians. She coordinates data collection and analysis, enabling the Welcoming Center to use hard evidence to support its decision making. She also handles inquiries from members of the media, researchers, community partners, and others who need clear, factual information about immigration in the Philadelphia region.



Emma Oppenheim is Manager for Workforce Development Policy Initiatives at the National Council of La Raza, where she works to advocate for improvements to workforce development policy, build the capacity of community-based affiliates to monitor public workforce investments in Latino communities, and broaden NCLR's network of partners and allies in employment and workforce development. Her work focuses on documenting the impact of employment programs and policies on Latino communities and building the case for services targeting basic skill deficient and limited-English workers.



Dr. Gabriela D. Lemus was appointed Senior Advisor and Director of the Office of Public Engagement at the US Department of Labor in July 2009. Prior to her appointment, she was the first woman to hold the position of Executive Director at the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) from 2007-2009, as well as the first woman to chair the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLEA) from 2008-2009.

For more information on language access issues, visit: www.migrationpolicy.org/languageportal



The Issue in Context

- Prior MPI Workforce Investment Act (WIA) webinar on different states' approaches to serving LEP workers available at:
<http://migrationpolicy.podbean.com/category/language-access/>
- WIA is single-largest source of workforce services funds from federal government
- Growing knowledge that WIA does not serve all populations adequately, including LEP workers

Unique Barriers for LEP Workers

- Understanding the barriers
- State and local actors *do* have alternatives within current system
- Community-based organizations can add specialized expertise
- Nexus between immigrant services and workforce services is limited but not nonexistent
- Today's webinar: Use PA experience as lens

For more information, visit: www.welcomingcenter.org/

Immigrant and LEP Workers May Not Use Workforce Services

- Unaware of system
- Believe they are ineligible
- Fears about accessing services
- Attempt but are turned away

One-Stop Workers Have Limited Opportunity for Specialization

- Expected to serve many special populations
- Impossible to be fully versed in complex needs
- Examples:
 - Foreign credentials
 - Immigration documents
 - Rapid policy changes

What Can We Do Without Congress?

- Professional development training for one-stop workers
- Subcontract with community-based organization (CBO)
- Have staff from CBO co-located at one-stop

Professional Development for One-Stop Workers

- Big picture: Ensure knowledge of basic facts
- Provide reference materials for consultation
- Confirm a “go to” person to call

Another Solution: Subcontract with Specialized Organizations

- Since 2004, Welcoming Center has received state and local contracts to provide WIA-funded workforce services to immigrants
- Referrals through one-stops and word of mouth
- Direct job placement using high-engagement model

Welcoming Center's High-Engagement Model

- Comprehensive intake
- In-person advance visits to employers
- Individual jobseeker preparation and accompaniment
- Debrief with jobseeker and hiring manager separately

State and Local Agencies May Use a Combined Approach

- Some localities may not have a CBO ready to take on this role
- Fostering knowledge between practitioners can lead to positive outcomes for jobseekers
- An alternative model: CBO co-locates with one-stop

How did we get here?

- WIA passed in 1998 – economic boom, unemployment rate of 4.5%.
- Universal service model assumed rising investments in workforce development.
- Lack of political will to reauthorize and reform indicates disagreement over priorities under “dual customer” model.

NCLR's WIA Priorities

- Improve access for LEP and basic skills deficient individuals
- Improve access to training
- Improve integration of basic education and workforce development
- Invest in youth workforce development

Current State of Play

- More and more individuals using the system, further limited resources.
- Disincentives to serve LEPs because need longer-term and more intensive services.
- Progress in other arenas – ARRA, DOL guidance, state and local innovation.
- Senate draft of WIA reauthorization, jobs bill.

For more information on language access issues, visit:

http://www.nclr.org/index.php/issues_and_programs/economic_policy/wia/

Where do we go from here?

- WIA reauthorization uncertain
- Funding for system remains under severe threat
- Jobs bill important opportunity to inject needed resources, shift the debate
- State and local innovation more important than ever

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Q&A

*Reminder: Please type questions into chat box or press*1 to get in the queue to ask a question.*



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