

# **Building Pathways to Economic Stability in Seattle's Immigrant and Refugee Communities**

- ***What Did We Learn from Our Research?***
- ***What is the Ready to Work Program?***
- ***What are the Implications for Policy & Practice?***

**English Language Learning Convening, July 21, 2016**

**Glenn Scott Davis, Program and Policy Specialist City of Seattle, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs**

**glenn.davis@seattle.gov**

# Why Seattle Created the Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs

- Identify and Overcome Barriers to Civic Engagement and Voting
- Increase Participation in Citizenship Campaigns and Programs
- Build Equitable Pathways to Careers and Economic Stability
- Improve and Expand Education, Training & ELA Programs (Pre-K to Adult)
- Increase Access to & Participation in Community Based Social Services
- Support Interpretation and Translation Networks and Services
- Strengthen and Support Ethnic Media Organizations
- Provide Technical Assistance through Organic Community Relationships
- Communication Between the City & Immigrant Communities

# Research Findings

## Harsh Labor Market Reality for Immigrants & Refugees

- Immigrant and refugees and people of color must compete with more “advantaged” populations for the available “good” jobs even in low wage jobs.....**as a result....**
- Significant numbers of immigrants and refugees educated in their home countries are **directed to & trapped in less desirable low wage occupations** creating disproportionate levels of underemployment compared with the native born and .....
- Immigrants & refugees with low levels of English proficiency are thus consigned to the **poorest quality, most unstable and lowest wage jobs**

# Research Findings: Rising Low-Wage Work & Income Inequality Impacts Immigrants and Naive-Born Alike

## *In Seattle and King County*

- **40% of Jobs are now in Low-Skill – Low Wage Occupations**
- **35% of Jobs are now in High-Skill – High Wage Jobs**
- **Only 22% of Jobs are now in Middle Skill-Middle Wage Jobs**
- Income disparities widen with the growth of low-wage jobs as rates of underemployment increase and housing costs soar
- Economic & labor market forces continue to reproduce income inequality, the exodus of low-income families from Seattle & the resulting “suburbanization” of poverty throughout King County

# Research Findings: English Language Learners in Seattle

- Widespread racial inequities and bias persist in workforce and college systems and in hiring practices
- Conventional ELA programs poorly designed for transition to work & college
- Weak ELA instructional models and ineffective assessment uniformed by best practices in the field of adult education and development
- Low rates of language gains, completion, & persistence for ELLS in programs
- Lack of occupational training programs for those not bound for college
- Dearth of services for immigrants and refugees educated in home countries
- Traditional funding streams reinforce silos and prevent the integrated provision of ELA, Career, Social & Job Placement Services
- Research showed only 10% of college ESL students transitioned to workforce training within 3 years of enrollment and only 2% earned a certificate or degree within 5 years

# RTW: From Research to Program Development

- The City of Seattle & stakeholders developing a policy framework to guide the program design, goals, funding, and partnership model for better serving those with low levels of English proficiency in need of stable employment
- Long-term goal not to compete with existing programs but to demonstrate an effective model that could later be scaled and institutionalized while “moving the needle” on performance, outcomes and impact

## Primary WA State Funders: Immigrant & Refugee Employment, Adult Education & Training

- State Board Community/Technical Colleges (ABE/ESL/Occupational Training)
- Workforce Development Councils (Workforce Training and Employment)
- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance “ORIA”)\*

*\* WA State ORIA receives TANF and general state funds (GF-S) and partners with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to combine multiple funding sources and a mix of state/federal dollars to provide LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET employment services to eligible clients. Designated by the Governor’s Office to administer \$25 million in federal and state dollars to more than 60 providers, serving more than refugee and immigrant clients in Washington state annually. ORIA services include refugee cash/medical assistance (RCA/RMA), comprehensive case management, self-sufficiency education, immigration assistance, refugee medical screening and mental health services, employment assistance, English as a second language (ESL) services, unaccompanied refugee minor foster care, youth educational activities, elderly services and naturalization services*

## Key Design Elements of Ready to Work Program

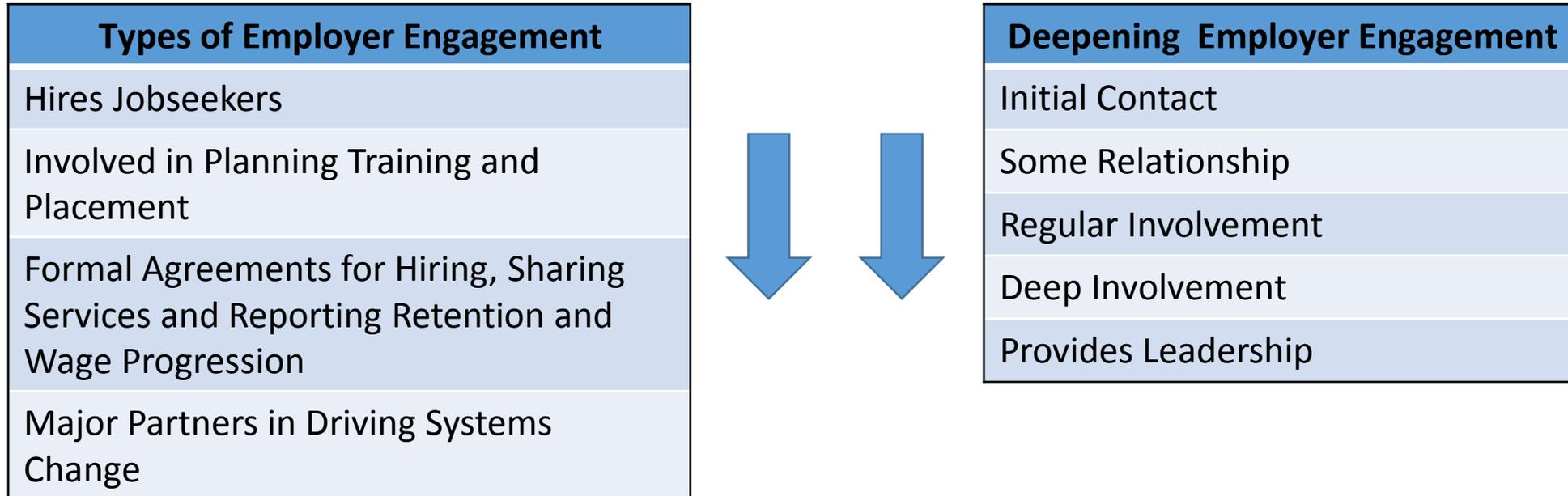
- Leverage and City of Seattle, CDBG, Adult Education and Workforce Funding
- Learner/Worker Centered Instructional Design focused on Deep Learning
- Community and Neighborhood Based Program Housed in CBO
- Intensive Case Management & Navigation including ongoing support/tracking
- Two Classes Meet 4 Days X 3 Hours per Day = 12 Hours per Week
- Pro-Active Career & Job Development with Individualized Plans
- Workshops and Field Trips to Supplement/Complement Classes
- Ongoing Curriculum Development, Personalized Instruction & Digital Literacy
- Focused Employer Engagement: Quality Jobs Strategy

# RTW: Key Outcome Goals & Performance Measures

- ❑ High Completion, Retention and ongoing Participation Rates
- ❑ Continued Formal Level Gains & Progression in English Skills
- ❑ Completion of Ready to Work Classes
- ❑ Become Job Ready and obtain a quality job
- ❑ Advancement to next step community or campus based ESL programs
- ❑ Advancement into next step , short term industry based training
- ❑ Advancement to next step college, I Best or occupational skills training
- ❑ Ongoing services through integrated service model by tethering participants
- ❑ Progress toward economic stability

<b>READY TO WORK PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD (July 2015 to June 2016)</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Continuing Participants from Previous Quarter Enrolled in Class</b>	<b>23</b>
<b><u>Newly Enrolled Participants (Distinct Individuals)</u></b>	<b><u>76</u></b>
<b>Total Enrolled in Classes</b>	<b>99</b>
<b><u>Withdrew from Classes</u></b>	<b><u>15</u></b>
<b>Enrolled Who Completed a Quarter Class</b>	<b>84</b>
<b># of Participants Advanced to Next Quarter RTW Class</b>	<b>23</b>
<b># of Participants Advanced to Next Quarter Higher Level Class or Occupational Training</b>	<b>11</b>
<b># of Job Placements</b>	<b>20</b>
<b># of Participants Exited Program (Without a positive outcome)</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Completion Rate in Quarter Classes</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Attendance Rate in Quarter Classes</b>	<b>75%</b>

# Ready to Work Framework for Expanding the Type and Depth of Employer Engagement in Tight Labor Market



# Acknowledging Ready to Work Partners

Original Partners		Emerging Partners	
Seattle Housing Authority	<i>Cross Recruitment &amp; Referral</i>	U. of Washington	<i>Employment</i>
Goodwill	<i>Cross Recruitment &amp; Referral</i>	PCC Natural Markets	<i>Employment</i>
Neighborhood House	<i>Cross Recruitment &amp; Referral</i>	Nordstrom	<i>Employment</i>
One America	<i>Recruitment Support &amp; Policy</i>	Port Jobs	<i>Employment</i>
State ORIA	<i>Recruitment Support</i>	Filson	<i>Employment</i>
City of Seattle OED	<i>Planning &amp; Workforce Strategy</i>	Seattle Center	<i>Employment</i>
Workforce Development Council	<i>Funding, Employer Research/Job Leads</i>	City of Seattle Labor Equity Team	<i>Pre-Apprenticeship Pathways</i>
Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI)	<i>Recruitment Support and Potential Career Pathways</i>	Child Care Resources (CCR)	<i>Training Bridge to Employment &amp; Certification</i>
SBCTC	<i>Planning and Policy</i>	Muses Fashion Conscious Studio	<i>Training Bridge to Employment</i>
City of Seattle IT Department	<i>Funding Support Student Computers</i>	Seattle New Citizen Program	<i>Cross Recruitment &amp; Referral</i>
City of Seattle	<i>Core Funding (CDBG)</i>	Seattle Adult Literacy Coalition	<i>Recruitment Support</i>
Ethiopian Community	<i>Recruitment Support</i>	Seattle Public Library	<i>Recruitment Support</i>
Islamic Center	<i>Recruitment Support</i>	Health Care Employer-SEIU Labor Management Training Funds	<i>Employment and Potential Incumbent Worker Training</i>
Horn of Africa	<i>Recruitment Support</i>	Early Learning/Day Care Employers and SEIU	<i>Employment and Potential Incumbent Worker Training</i>
El Centro	<i>Recruitment Support</i>		

## Policy Implications: Immigrant & Refugee Pathways to Economic Stability

- ***Fund integrated community based models*** of adult education-ELA and employment programs as “on-ramps” to further training and jobs....
- ***Fund Short-term sector-focused training*** with robust ELA components as “on-ramps” to targeted working class jobs.....
- ***Fund dedicated services for those educated in home countries*** as paths to professional jobs in high wage sectors ...

## Policy Implications: Immigrant & Refugee Pathways to Economic Stability

- ***Go Granular: Develop comprehensive data & information on immigrant workforce*** and the range and scope of ELL and workforce development needs across sectors to guide program designs, funding allocations, and accountability measures.....
- ***Design programs for immigrants & refugees supported by merged funding streams*** to broaden outcomes and goals and strengthen program models.....
- ***Expand existing success measures beyond educational attainment, job placement and income mobility*** to include attainment of economic stability & equity goals.....
- ***Create blended funding arrangements to support consortiums*** between workforce, education, housing, social and community service agencies, employer and unions for scaling best practices, busting silos, collective impact, and economies of scale...

## Policy Implications: Immigrant & Refugee Pathways to Economic Stability

- **Identify the return on investment** in immigrant and refugee communities and demonstrate how they support larger economic dev. community, and equity goals...
- **Establish economic stability** as the core goal of workforce and adult education investments
- **Re-envision outmoded concepts of mobility** and “success” in light of labor market reality and underemployment...
- Implement workforce initiatives to **improve job quality and training in targeted low wage working class sectors** to guide employer engagement & job placement efforts for those not bound for college...
- Support laws incentivizing employers to **meet equity goals** such as priority hiring in publically funded services and protect labor standards (minimum wage, paid sick leave, workers rights)...