



English Works Campaign Policy Agenda

Massachusetts' economic vitality is increasingly dependent on immigrants. Limited English speakers comprise over half the foreign born population and roughly 9% of the Commonwealth's working population, equivalent to over a half million residents. This, coupled with a favorable economic climate, is prompting companies to seek training opportunities for their limited English proficient (LEP) employees. In light of these factors and based on a recent survey of 91 public and private sector respondents, the English Works Campaign calls upon our elected and appointed officials to take bold steps to fully integrate limited English speakers into the Massachusetts economy:

- 1. Significantly increase business participation in providing and supporting English classes for their workforce.**
 - Raise statewide awareness, specifically among business decision-makers, highlighting evidence of investment returns associated with workplace ESOL.
 - Collaborate with unions and business groups across sectors to publicize existing public funding for workplace ESOL.
- 2. Develop, elevate, and disseminate sector-specific ESOL curriculum and models** that will allow limited English speakers to upskill for high-demand occupations.
- 3. Increase the visibility, impact and availability of funding for workplace ESOL.**
 - Lower the employer match required for Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP) funding.
 - Allow companies to share resources with other companies in their geographic area. For example, a company with a WTFP grant could offer extra seats in their ESOL training to employees at other businesses, and/or to community members.
- 4. Improve outreach to immigrant small business owners** to make them aware of public funding to develop on-site workplace ESOL for employees; and of customized, English for Immigrant Entrepreneurs courses for themselves.
- 5. Increase State budget line item for Adult Basic Education/ESOL.** Ensure that funding is used to offer more geographic and scheduling options, and more workplace opportunities for residents who need ESOL classes, and with a focus on lowest levels.
- 6. Create a cross-sector taskforce to identify, evaluate and disseminate technology-based solutions** to facilitate acquisition of English and digital literacy skills in- and outside the classroom. Establish a system that allows for continuous improvement as technology changes.

The English Works Campaign is committed to working closely with advocates on childcare, transportation, healthcare and legal services in order to extend English language learning opportunities for LEP residents as widely as possible.