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Adult Education and Immigrant Integration:

Networks for Integrating New Americans (NINA)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Community Science, Inc.

IMPRINT

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NETWORK IMPACT

WELCOMING AMERICA
Building a Nation of Neighbors

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Background

Immigration defines the past, present, and future of the United States. Immigrants' contributions to U.S. society and their integration underlie the nation's progress to date and its ability to thrive in the future.[1] Immigrants and their children will account for 85% of the net growth in the U.S. workforce over the next 20 years; by 2030, nearly one in five U.S. workers will be immigrants.[2,3] In light of an increasing demand for skilled workers, ensuring that immigrants can capitalize on their current education and experience while acquiring additional and necessary education and training is paramount to the nation's prosperity. Likewise, immigrants' civic integration strengthens the social and political fabric of communities.

Networks for Integrating New Americans (NINA) is an initiative that builds the capacity of local multi-stakeholder networks to support the civic, linguistic, and economic integration of immigrants and fosters cooperation and mutual understanding among varied newcomer groups and receiving communities. World Education, Inc., and its partners define immigrant integration as a dynamic, two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities.[4]

The NINA initiative is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) in order to strengthen adult education programs' ability to 1) improve immigrants' access to effective and innovative English language programs; 2) support immigrants on the path to citizenship; and 3) support immigrants' career development through training and education. OVAE builds on the *New Americans Citizenship and Integration Initiative,* a White House initiative that brought together a core group of Federal agencies to coordinate Federal immigrant integration efforts, including the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor.

This document is part of the overall strategy for designing and implementing the NINA initiative. Its purpose is to put forth an evidence-based theoretical framework that will guide the technical assistance for supporting immigrant integration networks in five communities. Existing immigrant integration efforts at the national, state, and local levels provide a strong foundation for strengthening and informing the NINA initiative. This initiative will add to that portfolio an innovative, place-based model designed for replication focused on education as the essential foundation for immigrant integration.

Theory of Change

The NINA theory of change is that when the organizations in the immigrant and receiving communities are collaborating and aligned, they are able to mobilize and leverage the assets of both communities to address the needs of immigrants to create a better life for themselves while at the same time improving the overall community conditions. Such organizations include community- and college-based adult ESOL and workforce development programs, public school systems, career centers, social service providers, refugee resettlement agencies, immigrant rights organizations, welcoming centers, employers, unions, government agencies, as well as the social support and mutual aid organizations of immigrants themselves. As they align their goals, core competencies, resources, strategies, and data collection

around a common immigrant integration agenda, they will achieve greater impact related to the three dimensions of integration: linguistic, economic, and civic.

Network Science and Collective Impact

To ensure that the local networks have optimal impact, the NINA initiative draws on network science and collective impact theory as its overarching framework. Network sciences articulates the following conditions for success of multi-sector coalitions: a) clear definition of the problem, a joint approach to solving it, and agreed upon actions; b) deliberate attention to communication and trust building; and c) members who bring complementary capacities and who engage in mutually reinforcing activities. In addition, collective impact research identifies two other conditions for collective success: shared measurement systems to ensure alignment and accountability, and a backbone support organization with the capacity to assemble and coordinate the specific elements necessary for successful collective action.[5]

Linguistic Integration

The ability to communicate in English is critical for immigrants to be able to attain better jobs, advance in their careers, participate more fully in civic life, and become more integral members of the larger community.[6-8] Linguistic integration occurs when non-English proficient individuals have acquired the necessary English language skills and related cultural knowledge to be able to meaningfully contribute to their community.

In 2011 there were an estimated 19.5 million Limited English Proficient adults ages 16-64 living in the U.S., an increase of 7.3 million from just five years earlier.[9, 10] These English learners need opportunities that enable them to learn as effectively and efficiently as possible. We posit that engaging instructional strategies that are appropriate for students' level of literacy and education, delivered at the highest possible intensity (hours available for structured learning in and outside of class), coupled with program-wide strategies to increase learner persistence, will accelerate English language learning.

This framework addresses evidence-based strategies and initiatives that address immigrants' linguistic integration in: ESOL literacy; Multi-level classes; Use of technology to accelerate learning; College and career readiness; Learner persistence; Parental engagement and family learning; and Engaging the receiving community.

Economic Integration

Finding a job that pays a living wage is the top priority for most working-age immigrants. Economic integration occurs when employers are able to attract and retain the best talent, when both employers and immigrant workers understand their rights, and the latter have the resources to excel and obtain economic and financial self-sufficiency. This vision of economic integration is not a reality for many immigrants given that immigrants are disproportionately concentrated in low-wage jobs that do not pay family-sustaining wages.

In the short-term, immigrants need job readiness skills and job placement assistance. [11] To move ahead beyond the first job they are able to land in the U.S., most immigrants need further education and training and an understanding about the local labor market and how to pursue the most viable career

pathway. Immigrant and non-immigrant adults with a postsecondary credential are more likely to succeed in the U.S. labor market than are those without one, be it a certificate or a degree.

This framework addresses evidence-based strategies and initiatives that local networks can pursue to facilitate immigrants' full economic integration related to Job readiness and career pathways; Financial literacy and asset building; Entrepreneurship; Unions; and Engaging the receiving community.

Civic Integration

Immigrants' civic engagement is critical to upholding the nation's values and democratic institutions. Civic integration occurs when all community members belong, are secure in their rights, exercise their liberties, and share ownership in the community and the nation's future.

Citizenship is a classic benchmark of integration in any society. In the U.S., with citizenship comes the right to vote and access to public benefits as well as the ability to sponsor family members for immigration. Even if they have not yet attained citizenship, immigrants should be encouraged to participate in civic life, such as volunteering in school activities, joining local task forces to address community issues, and organizing neighborhood activities. Such participation increases interactions with other immigrant and receiving community members and signals immigrants' commitment to their community and new country. It develops leadership skills and social and professional ties that can expand immigrants' access to resources and job opportunities.[12]

This paper addresses evidence-based strategies and initiatives that local networks can pursue to facilitate immigrants' civic integration related to both citizenship and civic participation.

NINA Partners

The NINA initiative is a partnership between World Education, Inc. and three leading, national immigrant integration consortia: the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), IMPRINT, and Welcoming America, Inc. (WA), with significant contributions by Network Impact, Inc., and Community Science, under the direction of OVAE. The partners bring unique and complementary expertise and experience and an expansive network of providers and advocates, including the 12 member immigrant coalitions of the NPNA, the five member organizations of IMPRINT, and the 22 affiliates of Welcoming America. In addition, the NINA initiative benefits from the insights of 13 Subject Matter Experts from across the country.

Conclusion
This Theoretical Framework sets the stage for the project to support local immigrant integration activities that are strategically prioritized to yield desired outputs and outcomes. As the nation discusses the integration of immigrants, we need to marshal all available community resources to effectively respond to the demand for ESOL and related social services.

1. **Introduction**

> *Nearly every American family has their own immigration story. Generations of immigrants braved hardship and great risk to reach our shores in search of a better life for themselves and their families. Their names and actions may not have made it into history books, but they were essential to building this country. Indeed, this constant flow of immigrants has helped make America what it is today. . . . The United States reaps numerous and significant economic rewards because we remain a magnet for the best, brightest, and most hardworking from across the globe. Many travel here in the hopes of being a part of an American culture of entrepreneurship and ingenuity, and by doing so strengthen and enrich that culture and in turn create jobs for American workers.*
> *~ Building a 21st Century Immigration System*, The White House, 2011[13]

Immigration defines the past, present, and future of the United States. Immigrants' contributions to U.S. society and their integration underlie the nation's progress to date and its ability to thrive in the future.[14] Immigrants and their children will account for 85% of the net growth in the U.S. workforce over the next 20 years; by 2030, nearly one in five U.S. workers will be immigrants.[15,16] In light of an increasing demand for skilled workers, ensuring that immigrants can capitalize on their current education and experience while acquiring additional and necessary education and training is paramount to the nation's prosperity. Likewise, immigrants' civic integration strengthens the social and political fabric in communities.

A national consensus is emerging that successful integration of immigrants is vital to the social and economic strength of the United States. World Education, Inc., and its partners define immigrant integration as a "dynamic, two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, integration engages and transforms all community members, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts."[17] This definition is also consistent with the Common framework for the integration of immigrants used by the European Union (EU), which emphasizes immigrants' access to opportunities, resources, and services; participation in the member countries' workforce; intercultural dialogue; education; language acquisition; and understanding of a host country's laws, norms, and traditions. EU member countries are encouraged to use diverse approaches, depending on the demographic attributes of the immigrants who resettle in the countries and on the countries' social, economic, and political context. Member countries are also encouraged to develop and implement policies that foster an environment for local actions that are conducive for immigrant integration.[18]

The U.S. also stands to learn from its neighbor to the north when it comes to immigrant integration. In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt a Multiculturalism Policy. This policy was encoded in legislation in 1988. Its purposes include to: recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future; promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation; and preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada.[19]

The Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) of the Government of Canada cites several cross-national studies that link the national and regional promotion of multiculturalism and growing evidence that

Canada outperforms other countries on a wide range of measures for immigrant and minority integration. For example, in terms of civic integration, "compared to every other Western democracy, immigrants in Canada are (much) more likely to become citizens."[20] They are also more likely to vote and run for political office than in any other country. In terms of academic achievement, "the children of immigrants have better educational outcomes in Canada than in any other Western democracy" even when one takes into account the skills, education and income of the parents. The CIC points to a 2006 OECD study that established that a crucial factor in this success was the presence of specific policies to address issues of cultural and linguistic diversity in the school population.[21]

The CIC partners with the <u>Metropolis Project</u>, an international network for comparative research and public policy development on migration, diversity, and immigrant integration in cities in Canada and around the world, to sponsor and undertake research. Currently, research is being planned or conducted in six priority areas:
- Citizenship & Social, Cultural & Civic Integration
- Economic and Labor Market Integration
- Family Children and Youth
- Housing & Neighborhoods
- Justice, Policing, & Security
- Welcoming Communities: The role of host communities in attracting, integrating, & retaining newcomers and minorities[22]

The experience and research from Europe and Canada indicate that the engagement of all stakeholders in the newcomer and receiving communities, and those who bridge the two, is critical to successful integration. The assets and resources immigrants possess, the actions they take, and the reception and supports they receive from the host community are key determinants of successful integration to overcome common challenges. Some of the challenges that hinder immigrants' full integration and participation in workplace, school, and community include limited English proficiency and access to technology; lack of access to job training, credentialing and licensing, and good jobs; limited understanding of the U.S. education, health, housing, and other systems; limited knowledge about the U.S. democratic processes; and receiving community members' prejudices about immigrants. Fragmented systems and services exacerbate these challenges that are best addressed through holistic, integrated strategies implemented by multi-sector networks and focused on building and strengthening entire communities.

Networks for Integrating New Americans (NINA) is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) to respond to these challenges, address known gaps in immigrant integration, and build a sustainable foundation for future efforts. OVAE builds on the *New Americans Citizenship and Integration Initiative,* a White House initiative that brought together a core group of Federal agencies to coordinate Federal immigrant integration efforts, including the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor. Launched in 2010, this interagency Initiative developed three pillars of integration as a guiding framework for government-wide efforts: linguistic, economic, and civic. In early 2011, the White House held a series of roundtables with stakeholders representing immigrant and refugee communities, businesses, state and local governments, and educators, as well as community leaders from diverse immigrant communities to discuss the most effective approaches to integrating immigrants. The federal government expects to release a document late in 2013 that will highlight the investments and initiatives across a number of agencies that work on issues pertaining to immigrant integration.

Consistent with the federal cross-agency initiative, the NINA initiative advances OVAE's goals to strengthen adult education programs' ability to: 1) improve immigrants' access to effective and innovative English language programs; 2) support immigrants on the path to citizenship; and 3) support immigrants' career development through training and education. This document is part of the overall strategy for designing and implementing the NINA initiative. Its purpose is to put forth an evidence-based theoretical framework that will guide the technical assistance for supporting immigrant integration networks in five communities. As an OVAE initiative, NINA seeks to leverage adult education programs as instrumental components of multi-sector immigrant integration initiatives. As such, it seeks to break down silos and address gaps in the current array of services for immigrants.

The NINA initiative is a partnership between World Education, Inc. and three leading, national immigrant integration consortia: the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), IMPRINT, and Welcoming America, Inc. (WA), with significant contributions by Network Impact, Inc. and Community Science, under the direction of OVAE. The partners bring unique and complementary expertise and experience and an expansive network of providers and advocates, including the 12-member immigrant coalitions of the NPNA, the five-member organizations of IMPRINT, and the 22 affiliates of Welcoming America. In addition, the NINA initiative benefits from the insights of 13 Subject Matter Experts from across the country whose expertise includes accelerated ESOL instruction and assessment; integrated career pathways; job readiness and workforce development for ELLs; pathways to citizenship; policy and public education about immigrants as assets; financial literacy and support of immigrant entrepreneurs; and innovative technology solutions.

2. Context for Immigrant Integration

Today, migration is a large-scale, global phenomenon, with growing numbers of people leaving their countries to seek safety, economic opportunity, or the chance to reunify with family elsewhere. In 1960, 77 million people were international migrants and by 2010 the figure had jumped to 214 million.[23] The U.S. continues to serve as a beacon of hope for people across the globe pursuing refuge and opportunity. Leveraging and integrating the newcomers' diverse cultural, linguistic, and other assets into local communities across the country to create vibrant communities and a globally competitive nation is a major imperative for the United States. The potential immigration reform will heighten the sense of urgency for cost-effective and innovative immigrant integration models that enable New Americans to acquire the English language skills they need to pursue citizenship and careers, and engage with schools to advance their children's education.

Despite the nation's long history of immigration, the arrival of immigrants today is marked by mixed emotions among many Americans. While some recognize the benefits of welcoming immigrants (e.g., to replace the aging workforce with a younger one), others are concerned that new languages and cultures threaten the core values of the American Creed.[24] Today's immigrants are more diverse than ever, for unlike their counterparts who came primarily from Europe at the turn of the 20th century, they arrive from a host of countries across Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Some of them have professional and middle-class backgrounds; others have limited or no formal education.[25, 26] The range of immigrants that come to the U.S. is so vast that immigrants today account at once for both the highest and the lowest rates of poverty, education, fertility, and welfare dependency.[27] Any immigrant integration efforts need to take this diversity into account in planning programs and services, and include immigrant leaders in the planning.

Due to the continuous resettlement of immigrants since the early 20th century, traditional gateway cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Chicago, Houston, and Miami have become accustomed to multi-lingual interactions, celebration of different holidays, emergence of ethnic enclaves, appearance of immigrant businesses, and development of nonprofits with strong racial and ethnic identities. While immigration is not new to the receiving communities in these cities, the language, cultural, and other apparent differences between them and newer waves of immigrants can still cause challenges in the day-to-day interactions, administration of programs and services, and engagement of long-term residents. As we entered the 21st century, we witnessed rapid demographic changes in new gateway cities and towns in states that have not experienced significant immigration in this century, such as Georgia, North Carolina, Nevada, Tennessee, Colorado, and Kansas.[28, 29] Another growing trend is the settlement of increasing numbers of immigrants in the suburbs.[30]

Clearly, one of the biggest challenges faced by both immigrants and receiving community members is the former's varying levels of proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English. The language barrier affects everything from daily interactions in the supermarket and workplace to the provision of health, social, legal, education, housing, and other services. The ability to communicate in English is critical for immigrants to be able to advocate for their families and communities, attain employment, advance in their careers, participate in civic life, and become integral members of the larger community.[31-33] Linguistic and cultural differences between immigrants and receiving community members can be further exacerbated by prejudice and racism.[34, 35] These differences make it difficult for immigrants not only to develop a sense of belonging to their new homeland, but to find employment even when they have the right qualifications.[36] Similarly, these barriers can be isolating for entrepreneurs who are operating small retail businesses, and can create friction with their customers.

In recent years, several communities across the country have worked to advance immigrant integration as the two-way process mentioned in the *Introduction* (e.g., cities such as Boston, Chicago, New York, and St. Louis, and counties such as Santa Clara County in California and Montgomery County in Maryland). While their work is not done, we can learn from their efforts. For example, political will of elected and government officials to support immigrant integration is one key ingredient. The next section introduces some exemplary national, state, and local efforts that promote and support immigrant integration.

3. Current Immigrant Integration Efforts

Efforts to integrate immigrants are not new: they range from settlement houses in the late 19th century designed to "Americanize" immigrants to mutual assistance associations intended to help newcomers understand and navigate the systems in their new country to the immigrant rights coalitions we see today. Previous efforts and contemporary immigrant integration initiatives differ in the following ways: how much they "pushed" immigrants to give up their cultural identity; how much attention they gave to economic mobility; the social, cultural, and political context in which they operate; and the degree to which the assets of immigrant communities are recognized and leveraged for community building efforts. They are similar, however, in their shared emphasis on English language acquisition, social cohesion with the receiving community, and participation in civic activities.[37] Contemporary factors such as ease of travel; international communications; transmission of remittances between the U.S. and immigrants' country of origin; allowance of dual citizenship; values about multiculturalism and pluralism; encouragement of migration to expand the workforce in the face of an aging population;

rising economic global competitiveness; and growing attention to immigrant rights affect immigrant integration efforts today.[38- 41]

The following sections highlight several contemporary immigrant integration efforts at the national, state, and local levels. Many of them have not been formally evaluated; some of them, however, have received awards and other forms of acknowledgment for their work. They provide a strong foundation for strengthening and informing the NINA initiative and other future immigrant integration efforts.

3.1 Current National Efforts

As discussed in the Introduction, several key federal agencies have mobilized themselves to address immigrant integration. The U.S. Department of Education, in particular, has identified 22 grant programs that it administers that benefit immigrants in some measure. The NINA initiative will add to that portfolio of support an innovative, place-based model designed for replication. In contrast to other national efforts, described below, its central focus is on education as the essential foundation for virtually all forms of immigrant integration.

There are upwards of 50 national organizations in the United States that advance immigrants' rights and related policies and services. Three prominent networks are entirely focused on immigrant integration: IMPRINT, the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), and Welcoming America (WA). They work towards integrating immigrants by: addressing workforce participation among both high- and low-skilled immigrants;[42] promoting citizenship and civic engagement; promoting the assets and resources of immigrant communities; and engaging receiving communities to create a welcoming environment for immigrants, respectively. They share the common strategy of using multi-sector and multi-level partnerships to mobilize resources and engage individuals in grassroots campaigns in order to promote immigrant integration. The NPNA, for instance, has brought together its 12 member coalitions across the country to pool their resources, collective reach, and experience to launch a one-stop, free online information resource about the naturalization process, Become a Citizen Now coupled with volunteer citizenship coaches. Welcoming America's first evaluation of its programming showed that two of its state affiliates have so far succeeded in creating more opportunities for positive exchanges between immigrants and receiving community members, as well as in changing certain practices.[43,44] As well, the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, a member of IMPRINT and an umbrella for 23 community colleges and other organizations, maintains a database of promising practices related to adult immigrant education practiced by its affiliates.

The NINA initiative also stands to learn from the experience of the leading refugee resettlement and immigrant service agencies in the U.S., including stand-alone operations like the International Institutes and those embedded in mainstream social service entities like Catholic Charities. The work of these community-based organizations relies heavily on public/private partnerships which leverage federal resettlement funding with sometimes significant local community support in the form of volunteer, in-kind, and cash donations.

Refugees are sponsored into the U.S. through the Department of State. Annually, it contracts with nine national refugee resettlement networks with over 350 affiliates as well as ethnic, community self-help groups. These agencies, for example, the International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and the International Institutes in various cities have decades of experience in

promoting immigrant integration, and have published useful curricula and other resources, some of which are referenced in the sections that follow.

Also at the national level, the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) of the Department of Health & Human Services serves a central funding role by disbursing formulaic refugee social service funding to the states. They also award direct contracts to service agencies for refugee-based services such as microenterprise development, technical assistance for capacity-building, and aid to victims of trafficking.

Other relevant national networks include:
- the National Council of La Raza, the largest civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States works to improve opportunities for Latinos through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations;
- The New Americans Citizenship Collaboration spearheaded by Carnegie Corporation brings together national and local funders and immigrant-serving nonprofits to increase efficient naturalization of Legal Permanent Residents;
- The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) and the NALEO Educational Fund facilitate the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service; and
- The National Immigration Law Center (NILC) engages in policy analysis, litigation, education, and advocacy on behalf of immigrants.

These national efforts are enhanced by the extensive research on policies and practices that support immigrant integration in the U.S. and worldwide by Migration Policy Institute (MPI). As well, the National Immigration Forum works to advance sound federal immigration solutions through its policy expertise, communications, and coalition building. Other national organizations that advance pro-immigrant policies include the Center for American Progress and the National Skills Coalition. Both have recently issued notable policy papers about the critical importance of supporting immigrants' full workforce participation and increasing related education and training opportunities.[45,46]

3.2 Current State Efforts

Many state-level immigrant integration efforts have emerged during the last few years, from state government-driven agendas to nonprofit-led statewide efforts. Five state governors issued executive orders between 2005 and 2008 to promote an immigrant integration agenda. These agendas, based on extensive research and consultation with community leaders, commonly emphasized the expansion of immigrant adult education and citizenship preparation efforts; establishment of welcoming centers; language assistance in order to facilitate access to public services; and creation of a state office to coordinate and manage immigrant integration efforts.[47]

At the same time, many statewide immigration coalitions – many of which are part of the NPNA – have emerged to promote and accelerate immigrant integration efforts. For example, the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), which led the effort to create a state-level immigrant integration policy agenda, built on that same agenda when it created the New Americans Integration Institute (NAII) in 2011. NAII combines policy-oriented research and on-the-ground integration projects to help newcomers take their place in the economic, social, and civic life of the state in areas ranging from citizenship to immigrant professionals' integration to building immigrant-receiving community alliances. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights' (ICIRR) Uniting America

program also works to build connections between immigrants and receiving community members. ICIRR has also launched its own Illinois Immigrant Integration Institute, on the model of NAII, and recently held its first annual Immigrant Integration Policy Symposium, drawing stakeholders from government, business, social services, philanthropy, labor, and the community. The New York Immigration Coalition is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for nearly 200 groups in New York State that works with immigrants and refugees. Such coalitions, many of which did not exist a decade ago, play a critical role in integrating immigrants by advocating for better policies and services, promoting citizenship, and assisting with the naturalization process.[48] For instance, the New York Immigration Coalition registered over 11,000 New Americans to vote during the 2012 election cycle.[49]

Immigrant integration initiatives are also sprouting in new immigrant gateway states. For example, North Carolina has a statewide Building Integrated Communities pilot project led by the Latino Migration Project based at the Institute for the Study of the Americas at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The intent of this project is to help North Carolina city governments successfully engage with immigrants and refugee populations in order to improve public safety, promote economic development, enhance communication, and improve relationships between immigrants and the receiving community. The Latino Migration Project has developed useful community planning tools for building integrated communities.[50]

3.3 Current Local Efforts

There are countless immigrant integration efforts at the local level in cities and counties across the country. A rich resource for these efforts is the E Pluribus Unum Award Program, a national program that awards exceptional immigrant integration initiatives managed by the Migration Policy Institute and supported by the J.M. Kaplan Fund. A scan of award recipients revealed a heavy emphasis on immigrants' economic integration, especially through programs that offer English classes and job training, as well as on civic integration through citizenship classes or assistance with the naturalization process.

For an increasing number of cities and states, the incentive for fostering immigrant integration is the promise of improving their economic health. Some cities, such as Dayton[51] and Detroit[52], are actively recruiting immigrants to make up for populations losses. The New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has created a set of open-source Blueprints for Immigrant Integration with strategies that local governments can implement to foster economic, civic, and cultural vibrancy through immigrant integration. The National League of Cities also conducted extensive research and visits to identify cities that have innovative immigrant integration practices. The result was a report on lessons learned about immigrant integration from 20 towns and cities.[53] Among the lessons learned are: the important role of local government in partnering with federal and state governments to support immigrant integration; the need to engage the receiving community and maximize the contributions of immigrants to the local economies; and the necessity of encouraging civic engagement and naturalization, and eliminating language barriers. These lessons support the NINA theoretical framework proposed in this paper.

St. Louis, Missouri, is an example of a city that has set a bold goal to be the fastest growing immigrant city in the nation by 2020.[54] After commissioning an economic impact study on the contributions of immigrants, the St. Louis County Economic Council realized that their economic growth was hindered by low numbers of immigrants in their community. With an aging population, community leaders recognized the opportunity that immigrants could bring for economic and social revitalization. The regional Immigration and Innovation Initiative was formed as a collaboration of the local economic

development organizations including the Chamber of Commerce. Another critical participant in this citywide effort is the St. Louis Public Schools, which established a newcomer center that has successfully engaged immigrant parents and communities as resources for immigrant integration.

In Santa Clara County, California, the Office of Human Relations established an immigrant integration program that, for example, offers a course on immigrant leadership skills in collaboration with San Jose City College. As well, they published *Immigrant Rights, Responsibilities, and Resources*, an online directory of curricula and resources encompassing over 20 topics. Santa Clara was recently found to be the highest performing region in California for immigrant integration in a study conducted by the University of Southern California.[55] Finally, the Silicon Valley ALLIES Innovation Initiative is a multi-stakeholder partnership focused on workforce development that provides immigrants with pathways to employment and career development through coordinated services such as ESOL classes, job skills training, job search, and placement. Local efforts also include employer- and union-sponsored ESOL classes and citizenship assistance that are highlighted in the sections that follow.

4. Theoretical Framework for Immigrant Integration

The national, state, and local efforts described in Section 3 demonstrate that the activities to support immigrant integration require collaboration among organizations – both in the immigrant and receiving communities – that have complementary functions, and together, wider reach. They also demonstrate the importance of the three dimensions of integration: linguistic, economic and civic. To ensure that local collaborations have optimal impact, the NINA initiative draws on network science and collective impact theory as its overarching framework to support the weaving of linguistic, economic, and civic integration strategies and activities. It seeks to break down silos and address gaps in existing services for immigrants while tapping into the potential of adult ESOL programs to be more active agents of immigrant integration and co-leaders of local networks.

The principles of network science theory are especially applicable to immigrant integration because no single organization in the receiving or immigrant community can effect such integration on its own given the complexity of the integration process. The theoretical framework for the NINA initiative asserts that a constellation of organizations must be deliberately bridged in a way that leverages their unique strengths in order to achieve immigrant integration along the three dimensions. Such organizations include community- and college-based adult ESOL and workforce development programs, public school systems, career centers, social service providers, refugee resettlement agencies, immigrant rights organizations, welcoming centers, employers, unions, government agencies, as well as the social support and mutual aid organizations of immigrants themselves. They must intentionally align their goals, core competencies, resources, strategies, and data collection around a common immigrant integration agenda to obtain collective impact in:

- Increasing economic mobility by making use of the skills that immigrants bring with them to the U.S. and at the same time, improving their access to and successful participation in education and training programs and social services;
- Increasing immigrants' ability to navigate U.S. norms and systems while preserving their identity and traditions;
- Increasing immigrants' rates of naturalization and participation in civic life;
- Improving relationships and trust between immigrants and receiving community members, as well as among immigrants from different countries and backgrounds; and

- Improving the capacity of receiving community organizations and institutions to value the assets and contributions of immigrants, act in good faith, and to welcome and support them.

The NINA theory of change is that when the organizations in the immigrant and receiving communities are collaborating and aligned, they are able to mobilize and leverage the assets of both communities to address the needs of immigrants to create a better life for themselves while at the same time improving the overall community conditions. In that process, access to high quality education for children and adults plays a central role.

The NINA Theoretical Framework is consistent with other immigrant integration frameworks, such as those articulated by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR)[56] and the European Union (EU).[57] The GCIR[58] framework, for example, lists six strategic pathways to integration: 1) communitywide planning; 2) language and education; 3) health, wellbeing, and economic mobility; 4) equal treatment and opportunity; 5) social and cultural interactions; and 6) citizenship and civic participation. The EU's framework for immigrant integration articulates ten principles that emphasize a range of values, such as the importance of employment; immigrants' equal access to goods and services; basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions; and the safeguarding of diverse cultures and religions.[59]

Research on community development also informs the NINA framework, especially where the community building is taking place in diverse contexts with two or more racial and ethnic groups. In such instances, special attention must be paid to the intergroup dynamics. The following elements are necessary in order for two or more racial and ethnic groups to be able to successfully collaborate to strengthen their services, impact, and the community:

- Identify a common vision and goals;[60]
- Ensure that majority and minority groups have equal status in their pursuit of common goals;[61,62]
- Develop community leadership skills critical for addressing complex, entrenched challenges;[63]
- Consider each other's differences as assets and use them as part of the relationship-building process;[64]
- Deal with conflict constructively;[65-67] and
- Encourage groups at all levels to focus on their interdependence and accountability to the larger group, paying attention to the attainment of the group's overall goals, and create a "culture of connection" that is "empathetic, reciprocal, and sustained over time."[68]

Exhibit 1

Principles of the NINA Initiative

Informed by frameworks such as those of GCIR, the EU, and the White House's New Americans Citizenship and Integration Initiative with its focus on linguistic, economic, and civic integration, the following principles will guide the NINA initiative:

1. Immigrant communities have assets that should be mobilized and cultivated as part of the integration process;
2. Diversity is healthy for communities and the nation, and receiving communities are stakeholders in immigrant integration;
3. The receiving community must be engaged through activities that provide opportunities for their members to have positive contact with immigrants and engage in joint projects of mutual interest, as well as activities that improve their organizations' capacity to provide cross-culturally competent services;
4. Immigrants' basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration;
5. The practice of diverse cultures, languages, and religions must be safeguarded;
6. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies supports their integration; and
7. The socio-political context and history of the immigrant group and the receiving community affects the integration process.

The next section discusses in more detail and with supporting evidence network science and collective impact theory, which inform the framework, as well as each of the three pillars of integration (linguistic, economic, and civic). Since the engagement of the receiving community is a vital, cross-cutting issue and part of the equation in the two-way integration process, we have embedded a discussion about receiving community involvement within each sub-section. Each section also references exemplary efforts that will inform the work of participating sites in the NINA initiative, and will be expanded upon in the Technical Assistance Plan, which will build on this Theoretical Framework paper.

4.1 Network Theory and Collective Impact

Networks in the non-profit sector take many different forms. They include peer learning networks, innovation networks, policy networks, and service delivery networks, in addition to a variety of coalitions and alliances that are organized to promote large-scale social change.   Grounded in the social and mathematical sciences, network theory incorporates higher-order insights that apply to *all* social sector networks (such as the relationship between network structure and network function), as well as elements that apply to specific types of networks (identification of conditions that promote effective peer exchange and the conditions necessary for large scale political mobilization, for example). Network theory also offers insight into network developmental trajectories that can be applied in efforts to catalyze, strengthen, and deploy social sector networks. This has resulted in specific network building approaches, methods, and tools suited to different types of networks at different stages of development. Network theory is thus more encompassing than collective impact theory. Building on the conditions required for collective impact (centralized infrastructure, dedicated staff, continuous communication, mutually reinforcing activities, and shared measurement systems), network theory also

provides insight into conditions for nurturing network relationships and for engaging network members in different types of network activities, from close collaboration and peer learning at core of the network to broader cross-sector collaboration among a wider range of stakeholders.

4.1.1. Overview. Partnerships and collaboration are required to successfully integrate immigrants because the process is complex and no single immigrant organization or receiving community institution can achieve integration alone. Partnerships, coalitions, and other forms of inter-organizational collaboration have long existed in the nonprofit sector. However, deliberate efforts to increase the effectiveness of multi-sector efforts, reduce duplication, and surface innovative solutions by spanning boundaries are relatively new.[69-72]

4.1.2. Relevance of Networks in Immigrant Integration Efforts. Contemporary network science encompasses insights from psychology, anthropology, and sociology as well as from mathematics and physics.[73-76] Research into the behavior of small, tightly-knit social groups – such as the ethnic enclaves established by immigrant groups – combined with studies that document the behavior of very large networks has shed light on optimal links and pathways within broad network environments.[77,78] This, in turn, has improved our understanding of the powerful advantage that networks offer: the ability to efficiently match assets with needs; coordinate resources and services; spread knowledge and skills; cultivate new ideas and values; and activate large numbers of people to act.[79-83]

4.1.3. Networks and Collective Impact. Recent research into conditions for collective impact makes the case for broad multi-sector collaboration as a means to achieve large-scale community and systems change.[84,85] Conditions for success of these broad multi-sector coalitions include: a) clear definition of the problem, a joint approach to solving it, and agreed-upon actions; b) deliberate attention to communication and trust building; and c) members who bring complementary capacities and who engage in mutually reinforcing activities. That is the goal of the NINA initiative. Collective impact research also identifies two other conditions for collective success: shared measurement systems to ensure alignment and accountability, and a backbone support organization with the capacity to assemble and coordinate the specific elements necessary for successful collective action.[86]

Network building on behalf of immigrant integration will certainly require dedicated resources for network coordination, especially at the core of any network comprised of newcomer-serving organizations that seek to link and integrate linguistic, economic, and civic integration services more fully. Evaluations of place-based multi-sector networks cite the coordinator role as key (e.g., Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness 2011; The Colorado Trust, 2011).[87,88]

4.1.4. Attributes of Effective Networks. Network building for social change is also a *practice* of applied knowledge and tested processes.[89-93] One key lesson is that, wherever possible, social change networks should build on existing connections between stakeholders to leverage the social capital already embodied in these relationships.[94-97] Efforts to document place-based network environments relevant to immigrant integration should include attention to pre-existing connections between stakeholders in newcomer and receiving communities, and those that bridge the two, as well as relevant entities that are not currently connected.

All social impact networks begin with a base of "connectivity" that serves as a platform for interactions on a continuum from simple information exchange to complex collaboration.[98] Identifying the network's desired position along this continuum can help network builders develop appropriate enabling infrastructure. For example:

- A network that is principally designed to open pathways so that useful information can be accessed more efficiently may be best served by a central organization or "hub" that aggregates and distributes information to network members.
- A network that is designed to promote alignment among members around a common set of values or standards will typically require facilitated communication between members to agree upon and monitor points of alignment.
- A network whose members act jointly on a sustained basis will require a high degree of purposeful planning and coordination in addition to effective information exchange and alignment.

Shared ownership and sense of purpose, buy-in, trust, complementary capacities, strong bonds, and bridges to those on the network "periphery" are conditions that need to be deliberately fostered in networks and that require time and effort to cultivate. The need for a backbone agency with a coordinator whose job it is to attend to fostering these conditions has been well-documented.[99] As indicated in Exhibit 2, movement along the continuum from connectivity to alignment and, ultimately, to joint action requires members to sacrifice some autonomy in service of the collective and therefore demands greater levels of trust.[100-103,104-106]

Exhibit 2: Network Connectivity, Alignment, and Production

CONNECTIVITY *Information*	ALIGNMENT *Identity*	PRODUCTION *Initiative*
Connects people to allow easy flow of and access to information	Aligns people around a common set of values, language or standards	Fosters joint action for specialized outcomes
Example: A place-based multi-stakeholder network that is organized to promote immigrant integration maintains a website and listserv with information about member services and activities.	*Example: A place-based immigrant integration network regularly convenes a broad range of stakeholders from immigrant and receiving communities to align efforts to effectively integrate immigrants.*	*Example: At the core of the place-based immigrant integration network is a council comprised of members who directly serve immigrants. Council members take a "no wrong door" approach to ensure that, no matter where they first enter the network, clients are served with the right resources at the right time.*

Level of Commitment, Trust, Engagement, Risk

4.1.5. Engaging the Receiving Community.   A comprehensive place-based strategy for immigrant integration that reflects insights from network theory should include networks of organizations in the receiving community and the immigrant community. Immigrant integration initiatives typically use community collaboratives to achieve their goals. Such collaboratives aid sustainability of the effort. For instance, <u>The Colorado Trust's Immigrant Integration Initiative</u>[107] established multi-sector coordinating councils in 19 communities to develop and implement integration plans. When funding from The Colorado Trust ended, the existence of these bodies helped ease the transition of the integration effort in some of these communities to a nonprofit organization, or the absorption of the effort into one of the council members' organizations.

Engaging members of receiving communities in network development is important to achieve immigrant integration. Research suggests that if not properly managed, immigration can have short-term negative impacts on community cohesion. Trust of others and cooperation, including those both within and outside of one's own demographic group, tends to decline with increased diversity. However, examples from the U.S. military, faith-based organizations, and history of immigration point to the fact that these short-term challenges can be overcome in the long-term by promoting a shared identity.[108,109] Contact theory research suggests that interpersonal contact reduces misperceptions by helping people understand and appreciate viewpoints different from their own.[110]

4.2 Pillars of Integration

Below we discuss the theoretical and empirical literature as well as promising practices related to each of the three pillars of integration: linguistic, economic, and civic. While they are presented in separate sections, the NINA initiative will explore their potential for greater synergy at the local level. This Theoretical Framework promotes an approach that weaves the three forms of integration such that language acquisition programs also build the capacity of English Language Learners (ELL) to participate in the U.S. workforce and civic institutions and to become leaders and advocates for their communities.

Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs can play a key role in advancing linguistic, economic, and civic integration of immigrants inside and outside of the classroom and as part of a local network that leverages technology and community resources. While they are important agents of immigrant integration in their own right, many adult ESOL programs have yet to capitalize on the resources and synergy of an organized network of providers, employers, K12 educators, and other stakeholders sharing the goal of immigrant integration. To do so implies altering existing practices, improving them based on research and professional wisdom, and expanding horizons toward a more holistic vision.

4.2.1. Linguistic Integration

4.2.1.a. Overview. Linguistic integration occurs when non-English proficient individuals have acquired the necessary English language skills and related cultural knowledge to be able to meaningfully contribute to their community as participants and leaders in community planning, organizing, and advocacy efforts. Language acquisition is a complex process that changes one's identity and sense of self-efficacy when it takes place in a new culture and country.[111] Immigrants' integration and

opportunities to succeed as workers, parents, and community members increase with their English fluency and the self-efficacy such fluency engenders.

Research has established that adult ELL levels of literacy and previous education affect their rate of English acquisition as do the intensity of instruction and corresponding learner persistence.[112] Using 2011 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey data, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimated that there were 19.5 million Limited English Proficient adults ages 16-64, an increase of 7.3 million from just five years earlier.[113, 114] A 2006 MPI report estimates that LEP immigrants require millions of hours of instruction "to bring their English skills to the level that would allow for their civic integration into the U.S. society."[115] In 2011-2012, ESOL programs funded under the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIA Title II) were able to serve 733,624 ESOL students.[116] The demand for ESOL services, however, still far exceeds the capacity of existing programs.[117] Even if an equal number of ELLs were enrolled in programs funded through other sources (there is no national database for adult ELL enrollments), that still leaves well over 10 million ELL adults without access to ESOL classroom instruction. If proposed legislation for immigration reform passes it would dramatically increase demand for ESOL classes as the 11 million immigrants become authorized to pursue a path to citizenship, which requires proof of some English proficiency.

Given the enormity of the need for English language instruction and the length of time it takes to learn English (average of 110 hours of instruction to rise one level of English depending on native language, age, and previous education),[118, 119] adult ESOL programs play a critical role in addressing the need to provide instruction and learning opportunities that enable ELLs to learn as efficiently as possible. Most ESOL providers must overcome several challenges to accelerate their students' learning and readiness for further education, training, and employment, and help their students:

- Learn English in spite of limited or no literacy in their native languages or English and in multi-level settings;
- Learn sufficient English to qualify for naturalization;
- Use technology to accelerate learning in class and on their own;
- Develop career awareness and plan for a changing job market with increasing skill requirements for good jobs;
- Prepare for postsecondary education and training;
- Persist in their studies in spite of barriers;
- Attend to their children's learning and navigate education and social service systems; and
- Build connections and a sense of belonging within their own community and with other immigrant and receiving communities.

This section addresses these challenges and points to the evidence base for selected strategies that local networks could pursue to facilitate immigrants' linguistic integration. We posit that engaging instructional strategies that are appropriate for students' level of literacy and education, delivered at the highest possible intensity (hours available for structured learning in and outside of class), coupled with program-wide strategies to increase learner persistence, will accelerate English language learning. In this section, we unpack these elements and discuss research that should inform initiatives that address immigrants' linguistic integration in:

- ESOL literacy;
- Multi-level classes;
- Use of technology to accelerate learning;

- College and career readiness;
- Learner persistence;
- Parental engagement and family learning; and
- Engaging the receiving community.

In all these areas there is a need for innovative strategies that make good use of best available technology solutions. We also posit that ESOL instruction can effectively advance civic and economic integration, as discussed in section 4.2.3. However, ESOL providers cannot do this alone; their impact can be magnified by collaborating with other organizations across multiple sectors.

4.2.1.b. ESOL Literacy. An estimated one fifth of the ELL population is determined to be at the beginning English literacy level.[120] Within this group, "there are vast differences between adults who have no print literacy and those who have even a small amount of literacy." [121] The non-print literates are arguably the hardest to serve, and available research suggests that they would benefit from separate classes from other beginning level ELLs. ESOL providers need to accurately assess them during intake and know how to implement distinct instructional strategies.[122]

For beginning level ELLs (not exclusively non-print literates), research points to some effective instructional strategies as key to successful English language acquisition. For example, the *What Works* study on ESOL literacy learners in 38 ESOL classes identified three effective instructional strategies that yielded measurable learning gains for adults with limited formal education: connecting teaching to students' everyday life; using students' native language for clarification in instruction; and using a variety of modalities and high levels of student interaction. [123] Consistent with the findings of the *What Works* study, another study also found that the use of authentic materials from adults' daily lives in literacy instruction increased the learners' use of literacy skills and knowledge in their lives outside of the classroom.[124] Therefore, a network of organizations that also touch the daily lives of immigrants needs to be mobilized to accelerate language acquisition using their content and context for language learning and practice (e.g., parent engagement, voting, workplace safety, community issues).

4.2.1.c. Multi-level Classes. The reality of virtually every ESOL class is that it is multi-level in terms of students' language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and native language proficiency. Additionally, students vary in their interests and goals.[125] Differentiated Instruction (DI) is an approach for mixed-ability teaching that is highly recommended for multi-level ESOL classes. There are three elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: content, process, and products.[126] The content should be aligned to learning objectives and student interests, and can be differentiated along a continuum from simple to complex. Process refers to flexible grouping of students that alternates whole class and small group instruction with students divided based on their skill level and/or interests. Process can be differentiated along a continuum from more teacher-directed to more self-directed. Products refer to student assignments and their assessment. Project-based learning complements DI teaching as it typically results in student-generated products. In order for ESOL teachers to differentiate instruction, however, they must assess and get to know their students.[127]

4.2.1.d. Use of Technology to Accelerate Learning. Existing and emerging technologies offer several ways for ELLs to develop their language skills inside and outside of the classroom. While research in this area is limited, especially with adult ELLs, consensus is emerging that these technologies offer valuable learning opportunities that engage learners, promote self-directedness, and extend instruction toward more authentic contexts while helping students gain valuable digital literacy skills.[128] Equally important, instruction needs to help adults gain the digital literacy skills they need in their everyday lives as

workers, consumers, and citizens. One useful resource for that is the curriculum developed by the Virginia-based REEP program that integrates content on job readiness with technology skills development. The entire curriculum with lesson plans is available free of charge online.

Some notable, free online resources for ESOL self-study include Livemocha, USA Learns, TV 411, ESL.pod, and the Learner Web. Blogs, wikis, and other free online writing tools promote writing fluency and help learners develop their identity as writers. Social network sites, such as Facebook pages set up expressly for the class, have been used by ESOL teachers to good effect for class assignments and to create a sense of community. Multiplayer online games are also emerging as a tool to engage students in practicing English communication. As well, mobile phones and tablets represent a new frontier for learning. Their portability and versatility increase time on task outside of the classroom by enabling busy adults to use spare moments of down time at home, at work, or on-the-go to study. World Education is currently field-testing two mobile apps for academic English and vocabulary for health careers in five adult education programs.

A useful list of key design elements that contribute to learners' engagement, persistence, and success in an online learning environment has been compiled.[129] Some of these strategies echo other research that places a high premium on authentic content and activities. Research on 51,089 adult ELLs enrolled in California ESOL programs found that blended learning opportunities obtained best persistence and learning outcomes.[130] One new blended program model is English Innovations of One America in Washington State that uses trained tutors from the community, is built to adapt to student needs, and engages community-based organizations, libraries, colleges, and businesses as sites for instruction. This program is designed for replication as it offers an interactive, online training of trainers. Also in Washington, the State's AEFLA and state-funded adult ESOL programs and their ELL students at levels 1-3 will soon benefit from a new program, Integrated Digital English Acceleration (I-DEA) that may also be adaptable for the NINA networks. I-DEA, currently under development, is designed to accelerate learning by combining highly contextualized, face-to-face and online instruction and practice. This approach will provide participants with 24/7 language instruction, practice, and online interactive communication opportunities and will facilitate the development of 21st century digital literacy skills.

4.2.1.e. College and Career Readiness. By 2020, 65 percent of jobs are projected to require some form of postsecondary education or training.[131, 132] College and career readiness is essential for immigrants and other adults to successfully access and succeed in postsecondary education or training that lead to in-demand jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. Workers with an associate's degree, for example, earn 20 percent more over their lifetime on the average than those with only a high school diploma and 40 percent more than high school dropouts.[133] Yet, approximately two-thirds of adults age 25 or older do not persist in postsecondary education long enough to earn a credential, and many others do not even enroll.[134] Over half of all immigrants age 25 and older have no college education.[135] At the high school level, research indicates those ELL students who enter the school system at the secondary level for the first time have low high school graduation rates; in Boston Public Schools, for example, the four-year graduation rate for these students is only 36 percent.[136] These students will likely eventually join the ranks of adults seeking ESOL classes.

For ELLs and other adults with low literacy and numeracy skills, the transition to and completion of postsecondary education and training is often challenging. They face a range of barriers, including a lack of academic preparation for college, and knowledge of and access to financial aid and other supports. A growing body of literature identifies the skills and knowledge English Language Learners need for college

and career readiness.[137-139] The National College Transition Network/World Education breaks these skills and knowledge into four overlapping categories of readiness:

1. *Academic Readiness* – college level reading, writing, and algebra, study skills, and other self-efficacy strategies;
2. *College Knowledge* – the ability to navigate college culture, admissions, and financial aid processes;
3. *Career Readiness* – the ability to articulate a realistic goal that is aligned with labor market data and to identify the steps along one's education and career pathway; and
4. *Personal Readiness* – the ability to anticipate challenges and secure supports proactively, and juggle multiple commitments while managing stress and time.

ESOL programs can accelerate ELLs' college readiness by developing these skills before learners reach advanced ESOL or college transition classes. Educators should employ the following strategies at lower ESOL levels: reading and listening; organizing information; taking notes; and thinking critically. As students progress toward more advanced levels of fluency, they benefit from opportunities to study with native English speakers to reduce their linguistic isolation.[140] Integrated and dual enrollment programs (discussed under economic integration section 4.2.2.) offer such opportunities.

 A growing number of community colleges are seeking to improve their services to immigrant students. The Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, another example of a multi-sector network and a member of IMPRINT, has documented numerous promising practices, ranging from ESOL and workforce training to citizenship from its 23 member organizations. One member college, Northern Virginia Community College is implementing an "American Dream Team ESL for Employment" initiative that works in partnership with faith-based and other non-profit organizations, employers, and One-Stop Career Centers to teach English and workplace cultural competencies to immigrants. The initiative also assists immigrants to find jobs and take next steps in their education and training.

4.2.1.f. Learner Persistence. Learning will be accelerated when the ELL student participates in instruction actively. Research on learner persistence points to the importance of building a sense of self-efficacy (beliefs about one's abilities in a specific area) as a strong predictor of persistence and learning outcomes.[141-144]

ESOL instructors and programs can support self-efficacy and learner persistence by:

1. *Helping learners set and monitor meaningful goals.* This includes assisting learners in breaking long-term goals down into short-term goals so they experience success, and providing learning tasks that are well-matched to students' skill level (challenging but not frustrating) so that they can see regular progress. As well, teachers should be explicit about how instruction addresses student goals.

2. *Addressing beliefs about intelligence and explanations for success and failure.* Students either believe that their intelligence is a fixed trait or that intelligence is something they can develop through effort and education (a "growth mindset").[145] Students with a growth mindset are more likely to seek opportunities to learn and to persist in the face of challenges. Educators can help students redirect their reasoning as to what accounts for and affects their performance toward things they can control, such as effort or strategy use, by teaching them that errors are a natural part of learning, and by focusing their attention on the process of learning (e.g., monitoring one's understanding).

3. *Providing choice and autonomy.* When learners believe that they have some control over their own learning, they are more likely to take on challenges and to persist with difficult tasks. Research has found that providing adults with choice about what activities to do and how to do them can increase intrinsic motivation and, indirectly, persistence.[96] The New England Learner Persistence study[146] found that adult students, given more clear information about the program and their learning options, made better-informed decisions that led to improved persistence. In addition, students invited to participate more in classroom decision-making had improved attendance and persistence, and demonstrated greater self-efficacy in directing their own learning.

4. *Building a sense of belonging and community in the classroom and program.* The New England Learner Persistence study[147] found that building a sense of community (e.g., through student recognition events, buddy support systems, cross-class workshops, and community-building activities during student orientation) supported persistence by creating a welcoming environment and inviting adults to participate as their full selves.

5. *Designing instruction with real-life applications.* Adults are more likely to stick with a learning experience that they deem relevant to their goals and the real world.

Some of these elements for successful learning can be reinforced by a support system of community leaders and organizations by, for example, acknowledging English language learners' efforts to learn English, supporting their aspirations, and helping ESOL programs bridge the classroom and community.

4.2.1.g. Parental Engagement and Family Learning. As a group, immigrant parents demonstrate lower levels of conventional engagement in their children's education.[148] Yet, immigrant children tend to outperform US-born children of the same racial, ethnic, or national background, though there are notable differences between different race and ethnic groups.[149] This is called by some the "immigrant paradox in education." However, no one argues that we should not aim to increase immigrant parent engagement in their children's education and lower the barriers to it. Such barriers include lower socioeconomic resources, which make families less likely to have reliable transportation or to have the types of flexible jobs that allow for engagement in the classroom; language barriers that make it less likely that parents understand how they can be involved and what the benefits are; and cultural differences on appropriate roles and boundaries between parents and teachers.[150]

Ensuring immigrant or any parents' engagement is particularly significant because research points to a strong connection between parental involvement and children's academic achievement. For example, a mother's education level is the strongest predictor of her children's future academic success, outweighing other factors, such as neighborhood and family income.[151] Participation in an Early Childhood Education program has also been shown to boost children's school readiness and ultimately, academic achievement.

There are multiple strategies schools and communities can adopt (and schools sometimes must adopt[152]) to engage immigrant parents in their children's learning and to help them overcome barriers in order to improve education and family outcomes. The Aspen Institute's national Ascend initiative outlines a comprehensive policy and practice framework for a two-generation approach to move parents, especially women, and their children from poverty to educational success and economic security.[153] With education at its core, the framework includes the necessary economic supports (such as housing, transportation, food assistance, and asset building) and social capital. Social capital refers to individuals and organizations that support families, help build their resiliency, and expand their social

networks. This framework may be a helpful, additional lens through which the NINA networks can examine the strategies they choose to pursue.

In the Ascend frame, K-12 schools are only one player, but certainly the most relevant one for parent engagement in their children's education. Many schools also provide parents and community members opportunities to be engaged in school activities as resource persons/organizers. Parent engagement strategies include: providing interpretation at parent meetings instead of relying on a bilingual child to interpret; translating documents into the languages that parents speak; connecting ELL parents with education opportunities; and developing opportunities for mentoring relationships between immigrant parents and teachers. Public schools have designated funds for these kinds of parent/ community education and engagement activities. For example, the School Districts of Philadelphia and Boston operate Parent University programs that offer workshops in multiple languages on topics such as financial literacy, and refer parents to ESOL and other education programs offered by partner agencies.

Parent involvement as advocates for their children in schools and other institutions that affect their children's wellbeing is also a form of civic participation practiced in the United States. One local example comes from the *Logan Square Neighborhood Association's Parent Mentoring Program* that has cultivated many immigrant parent leaders who have become advocates for their children's education.[154]

Adult ESOL programs can incorporate parent engagement vocabulary and activities into the curriculum. Lessons might include touring the school building; vocabulary related to educational concepts; visits from teachers and administrators; preparing participants for the parent-teacher conference; how to support learning at home; encouragement to sign up for parent committees; and coaching parents on how to address the school board about an issue of common concern. English for New Bostonians program has a free online curriculum on ESOL for Parents that is relevant and adaptable to locations outside of Boston. The New York Immigrant Coalition runs a Family Engagement and Leadership Initiative in partnership with the Family Resource Centers. We can leverage their insights and lessons to assist the participating NINA networks.

In addition, family literacy programs are an important way to encourage family learning and parent engagement. Family literacy engages parents and their children in the classroom, providing specific language instruction separately for adults and children, but also incorporating lessons on parent involvement and bringing parents and children together during the class time to learn side-by-side.[155] The National Center for Family Literacy works with ELL parents of elementary school children through its Toyota Family Literacy Program that is increasing English language and literacy skills for adults while also supporting parents' involvement in their children's education. The American Library Association promotes immigrant family literacy through libraries and has published an online toolkit for librarians, *The American Dream Starts @ Your Library*.

4.2.1.h. Engaging the Receiving Community. The ESOL classroom is often one of the first mainstream community settings with which immigrants come into contact. In many cases, the ESOL teacher develops a close relationship with students and may serve as an informal cultural coach or counselor, providing guidance on how to navigate community systems. One of the scenes in the documentary, *Welcome to Shelbyville*,[156] shows how the ESOL teacher encouraged Somali refugees to contact the local newspaper to discuss and correct the negative portrayal of their community – an initiation to civic engagement. In general, however, the ESOL classroom and educators are underutilized agents of immigrant integration.

Though many programs teach ESOL lessons about the U.S. culture, and some recruit and support volunteer tutors from the receiving community (some of whom are naturalized citizens themselves), they could more intentionally facilitate cross-cultural understanding between the immigrants and receiving community members, while also building job readiness and civic knowledge and skills. Many adult education programs that serve both immigrant and U.S.-born adults are a microcosm of the broader community and the lack of understanding that can exist between and among groups. They are well poised to implement activities that build cross-cultural understanding, promote the cultural and linguistic assets of immigrants, and foster acceptance, starting among their U.S.-born and immigrant adult learners and eventually paving the way to the newcomers' integration in their new home community.

The public school system is another community setting with which immigrants who have children come into contact. The school provides opportunities for facilitating cross-cultural dialogue between immigrant and receiving community parents, between immigrant parents and their children's teachers, and among immigrant parents. The school, in partnership with immigrant organizations and other nonprofits, can develop parent leadership programs that will not only improve parent engagement, but also immigrant community leadership, as demonstrated in the Logan Square Neighborhood Association's Parent Mentoring Program and other similar efforts. The school's facilities and resources also can be leveraged for ESOL and job training programs.

The Receiving Communities Toolkit by Welcoming America offers examples and many practical suggestions for how to bring the immigrant and receiving communities together in dialogue with one another or through joint projects that extend classroom learning to the community.[157] For ELL adults, however, engaging in dialogue and joint service activities in English is challenging and requires practice, preparation, and support. ESOL instruction can help overcome these barriers through skill-building lessons that enable students to tell their stories, articulate their experiences, express opinions, and communicate effectively with receiving community members.

Programs that reach out to and engage receiving community members in the classroom as assistants, coaches, mentors, and guest speakers not only help their students develop stronger English skills and greater community connections, but they also have an impact on the attitudes and behaviors of the receiving community members themselves. *Intercambio Uniting Communities* based in Boulder, Colorado is an ESOL provider that incorporates a significant focus on receiving communities through tutoring, mentoring, community events, and community engagement. Their program evaluations indicate that not only do ESOL participants achieve significant linguistic gains, but students are more likely to view the community as welcoming and feel more comfortable with other cultures. In addition, receiving community members who volunteer with Intercambio also report significant gains in learning more about other cultures and relating to immigrant experiences.[158]

4.2.2. Economic Integration

4.2.2.a. Overview. Finding a job that pays a living wage is the top priority for most working-age immigrants. Economic integration occurs when employers are able to attract and retain the best talent, when both employers and immigrant workers understand their rights, and the latter have the resources to excel and obtain economic and financial self-sufficiency. Obtaining financial self-sufficiency from one job, and not having to work two or more jobs to make ends meet, would enable immigrants to become more engaged in their community.

This vision of economic integration is not a reality for many immigrants given that immigrants are disproportionately concentrated in low-wage jobs that do not pay family-sustaining wages, despite some of the skills they possess. Over one half of the lower-skilled immigrant workforce works in healthcare, hospitality, construction, and manufacturing. Most of these sectors have been adversely affected by the economic recession, significantly impacting immigrants and U.S. born workers alike. Overall, the earnings of immigrants are roughly 20 percent lower than those of U.S.-born adults, and this disparity has grown in recent years. "Less educated immigrants' average wages are predicted to reach parity with those of natives only after generations."[159]

In the U.S., immigrants tend to be clustered at the two ends of the education and skill continuum: those with limited formal education and high-skilled professionals with credentials: 56 percent have a high school diploma or less whereas almost 30 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher.[160] "While immigrants account for about one-sixth of all workers, they make up two-fifths of workers who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent . . . three-quarters of those who have not completed high school report that they cannot speak English very well."[161] Their employment opportunities are, to a large extent, limited by their lack of English fluency, education, and training. The central challenge, then, is to reverse this trend and help immigrants improve their short- and long-term job prospects.

In the short-term, immigrants need job readiness skills and job placement assistance. They face formidable challenges entering the U.S. workplace: they must acquire both general workplace communication skills as well as job-specific vocabulary. They also need strategies for navigating the U.S. norms and regulations, and their specific workplace and its culture. To move ahead beyond the first job they are able to land in the U.S., most immigrants need further education and training and an understanding about the local labor market and how to pursue the most viable career pathway.

In the long-term, immigrant and non-immigrant adults with a postsecondary credential are more likely to succeed in the U.S. labor market than are those without one, be it a certificate or a degree. Their earnings are higher on the average and their rates of unemployment lower commensurate with years of formal education.[162] By 2018, two-thirds of jobs are projected to require postsecondary education.[163] The skills premium is particularly notable in such high-demand fields as health care where annual wages increase from the average of $20,560 for Home Health Aides to $64,690 for Registered Nurses.[164] Carnevale et al. make a compelling case for Career and Technical Education that prepares low-skilled workers for so-called middle-skill jobs that require some postsecondary education and training but not a bachelor's degree, and have earnings of $35,000 per year or more.[165] Research on Massachusetts immigrants has also quantified the economic importance of speaking English.[166] This study found that the ability to speak English strongly influenced immigrants' earnings.

Immigrants and their children will account for 85 percent of net workforce growth in the US over the next two decades.[167] Given that immigrants account for most of the growth in the U.S. labor force, their

ability to meet the skill demands of the available jobs affects the economic and overall vitality of entire communities and the nation. The successful economic integration of immigrants has a documented "ripple effect" across several desirable indicators. These include:

- Increased homeownership; [168]
- Better educational outcomes for dependents; [169]
- A larger tax base; [170]
- Higher citizenship rates; [171] and
- Establishment of immigrant-owned businesses that create jobs. [172]

This section focuses on challenges and related, evidence-based practices that local networks could pursue to facilitate immigrants' full economic integration related to:

- Job Readiness and Career Pathways;
- High-Skilled Immigrants;
- Financial Literacy and Asset Building
- Entrepreneurship;
- Unions; and
- Engaging the Receiving Community.

4.2.2.b. Job Readiness and Career Pathways. Research suggests that the most effective workforce development programs combine job search and readiness with education and training in an environment that simulates the target workplace as much as possible. [173, 174] The job search assistance should be informed by program staff's understanding of the local labor market, high-demand jobs, and the skills and pathways required to access those jobs. Research and empirical evidence suggest that approaches that combine language education with skills training appear to be the best bet for accelerating learning and readiness for jobs and training programs. [175] Programs with proven results need to be scaled up and broadly advertised so that immigrants know about them and seek them.

There are at least three ways to accelerate adults' progress to and through postsecondary education and training: 1) contextualizing ESOL instruction around broad career sector concepts at intermediate levels and around more specific concepts and vocabulary at more advanced levels; 2) fully integrating ESOL instruction with occupational instruction in the same class; and 3) dual enrollment programs where students attend ESOL classes concurrently with occupational classes. [176] These approaches, especially the second and third ones, require close alignment between ESOL and postsecondary instruction, which calls for collaboration among faculty and leadership of credit and non-credit departments, if both programs operate as part of a college, as well as with potential employers and job placement programs.

ESOL programs that are not part of postsecondary institutions must pursue partnerships with these institutions in order to ensure a smooth transition for their students. This is particularly true for the majority of states where AEFLA-funded adult education is delivered by school districts and/or community-based organizations. Instituto del Progreso Latino in Chicago is an often-cited example of a community-based ESOL and GED provider that has institutionalized career pathways for Latino students through close partnerships with a local college and social service providers. Their completion rates are impressive: a cumulative completion rate of 94 percent across all bridge programs, and a 95 percent licensing rate for their Licensed Practical Nursing and Certified Nursing Aide program graduates. Useful for other networks is the Instituto's manual that instructs other organizations how to replicate their program model. [177]

Another acclaimed program model with documented positive outcomes for ESOL (and ABE) learners is Washington State's I-BEST program that integrates basic skills education with college level technical courses leading to a college credential, typically an occupational certificate. The central strategy is team teaching wherein the adult education instructor and college faculty overlap 50 percent or more time in the classroom. A study showed that the 2006-07 cohort of I-BEST students, compared to their counterparts in similar college courses without the benefit of the integrated program model, were more likely to: continue into credit-bearing courses; earn credits that count toward a college credential; earn occupational certificates; and make learning gains on basic skills tests.[178] Several states have begun to replicate Washington's I-BEST program model, including Connecticut, Maryland, New York, and seven others that are part of a national Accelerating Opportunity initiative. An I-BEST program, Instituto, and four other workforce development programs with commendable outcomes were selected through a competitive process for the *Courses to Employment* demonstration project by the Aspen Institute.[179] Many of them serve large numbers of ELLs and lend themselves to replication.

While there is no database of vocational, college transition, and integrated programs that serve ELLs throughout the country, the *Adult Career Pathways* collection website[180] offers Open Education Resources on vocational ESOL curricula on food management, health care communication, landscaping, and more. A 2003 study identified promising ELL workforce development program models and practices.[181] As well, World Education's National College Transition Network has documented program models and promising practices on its website, and also works with many such programs from Texas to Maine.[182]

There are fewer proven models of job training and placement for beginning level ELLs. A 2003 *Language of Opportunity* report identifies some promising program models and practices from across the United States.[183] These practices include combining English instruction with job training; offering short-term job-training; providing bilingual job advising and placement, and training programs for jobs that don't require any or much English; and developing "ESL workplace certificates," which establish English language competencies needed in particular jobs. More research and documentation of best practices is needed in this area.[184]

4.2.2.c. High-Skilled Immigrants. The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates that there are more than 1.6 million college-educated immigrants in the U.S. today whose talents are substantially underutilized.[185] Their potential is lost through unemployment or underemployment in low-skilled and semi-skilled jobs, constituting an enormous knowledge waste both for the immigrants and the nation, especially given skills shortages in sectors such as health care, IT, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

Clearly, the proper recognition of immigrant skills and credentials is of vital importance to the U.S. economy. Yet, services to this population are few and far between and recognized barriers have complex solutions. Immigrant integration networks are an ideal vehicle for harnessing local resources to meet this challenge and help skilled immigrants contribute at their full potential, beginning with intake procedures that capture prior education and training and prompt appropriate staff referrals. Some key barriers and potential network responses specific to high-skilled immigrants include:

- *Advanced English proficiency for careers*. In the classroom, communication skills which stress the competencies skilled immigrants need to secure and thrive in professional jobs can be directly taught using a contextualized, communicative curriculum.[186] In some cases this may be further

contextualized to particular professional fields, such as the Welcome Back Initiative's *English Health Train* ESL curriculum for healthcare professionals.

- *Internships and mentors.* Expanding partnerships with employers to build the experience base for immigrants so that they can maximize their career potential is an important area for greater emphasis. Research in Canada on internships and mentorships for high-skilled immigrants found that among those who participated, about 80 percent found full-time employment in their chosen field. Networks are well-positioned to mobilize mentors or volunteers across agencies and sectors to help skilled immigrants navigate academic and professional pathways as they move beyond the ESOL classroom.

- *Credential recognition*. Career counselors and college advisors can be trained to help high-skilled immigrants to use their credentials as a stepping stone to advanced degrees rather than redundant studies in the U.S. Likewise, employers would benefit from learning which credential evaluators to trust when requiring proof of education from prospective employees.

- *Navigating licensing requirements in regulated professions*. Since licensing for such careers as K-12 teacher, physician, or engineer is regulated at the state level, local networks should educate licensing board members and engage the state to develop step-by-step licensing guides in in-demand fields.[187-189] This also connects to a need for advanced ESOL instruction as many professions require passage of English exams for licensure.

4.2.2.d. Financial Literacy and Asset Building. Immigrants have a lower likelihood of financial asset ownership compared to the native born in regards to savings and checking accounts, stocks, mutual funds, and individual retirement accounts. They are also less likely to have bank accounts. The "unbanked" are vulnerable to financial exploitation and have difficulty building assets as they most often carry out financial transactions at exploitative check-cashing or payday loan businesses. These were the findings of the California Latino Financial Access Survey.[190] The survey also found that the majority of the 1,000 survey participants were actively saving at least some money every month and wanted financial advice but were not able to access it. The reasons stated included cost of financial planning services, the language barrier, and poor customer service. Interestingly, the survey also found that naturalized Latinos had higher levels of financial engagement (e.g., having bank accounts and credit cards) than their non-citizen counterparts. California also is home to a unique financial services company, Progreso Financiero that offers unsecured credit to under-banked Latino families that lack credit histories, and traditional banking relationships.[191]

Networks that choose to focus on financial literacy and asset building must overcome some immigrants' resistance to participation in the formal banking system, including perceptions of financial institutions as unstable, unwelcoming, or labyrinthine. In doing so, they would do well to include both mainstream financial institutions and immigrant organizations that understand the struggles of immigrants and their lending traditions (e.g., according to Islamic law prohibitions against charging interest). There have been many instances of self-organized financial-related networks in immigrant communities that have served as bridges for the development of immigrants' financial wellbeing.[192-194] A few tested options include:

- *Financial literacy for ELLs* can demystify financial topics while building English fluency. The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service conducted a review of financial literacy needs and programs for newcomers and identified promising practices.[195] The Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED) offers a financial literacy curriculum, workbook, and training of

trainers for New Americans with limited English literacy.[196] C.E.O. Women's Educational Telenovela helps develop entrepreneurship skills for immigrant women through an 18-episode ESOL soap opera.[197]

- *Individual Development Accounts* (IDA) help low-income individuals save for asset-building investments such as college education, home ownership, and one's own business. Funds contributed by the immigrant are matched by public or private sector funds to encourage savings. The International Institute of St. Louis, for example, has operated an IDA program that has helped more than 600 immigrant families with matched savings totaling upwards of $1 million.[198] The U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement provides multi-year funding to 20-30 sites for micro-lending. Loans can range between $500 and $15,000 and are restricted to refugees who have resided in the U.S. for five years or less.

  In March 2013, the New York City Economic Development Corporation launched the LINK – Leveraging Innovations and our Neighborhoods in the Knowledge economy – Initiative, consisting of eight new programs designed to strengthen the skills and employability of New Yorkers with low incomes and to foster business activity that provides employment opportunities for those with less formal training. One of these programs is *Immigrant Bridge* that is designed to increase the earning potential of unemployed or underemployed, foreign-trained immigrants with advanced degrees and in-demand skills. Working through four nonprofit agencies, the program will help these individuals create individualized career plans, provide them with soft skills training, and assist with the job search process. Participants may apply for a microloan of $1,000 – $10,000 for educational and/or general personal expenses incurred while pursuing a higher-paid, technical job.

- *Immigrant-focused credit unions* such as the Latino Community Credit Union of North Carolina have a mission to promote fairness, affordability, and access for largely low-income and previously unbanked account holders.[199] They accept alternative credit history such as rent and utility payments, offer bilingual financial education, and allow low balances in accounts without significant penalties.

4.2.2.e. Entrepreneurship. Immigrants play an important role in fueling growth industries, advancing technology, and revitalizing neighborhoods. They create new wealth and jobs. A recent analysis by the National Venture Capital Association reveals a "striking propensity of immigrants to start and grow successful American companies."[200] They are 30 percent more likely to start a business than U.S. natives. Immigrants own a sizable share of businesses in the lowest and highest skills sectors and in a wide range of industries, most notably in construction, retail, science, technology, and entertainment. The total business income generated by immigrant business owners is $67 billion, representing 11.6 percent of all business income in the U.S.[201] The number of Asian-owned businesses alone increased 40.4 percent to 1.5 million between 2002 and 2007, employing 2.8 million people.[202]

With 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies founded by immigrants or their children, which combined employ over 10 million people worldwide, immigrants are increasingly receiving recognition for their contributions to the nation's economic vitality.[203] The U.S. Small Business Administration estimates that small businesses have generated 64 percent of new jobs over the past 15 years.[204] Small businesses—that is, firms with fewer than 100 people working for them where half or more of owners are immigrants — employed some 4.7 million people in 2007.[205] A study of immigrant entrepreneurs in

Boston neighborhoods showed that they are not only revitalizing these neighborhoods but also rapidly expanding beyond them.[206]

Yet, few of these immigrant entrepreneurs came to the U.S. ready to start a business, and they typically do not receive business management or financial assistance available to small businesses. They often have little or no credit history, and have limited understanding of business finance or culture in the U.S. Even where capital or technical assistance resources do exist (e.g., micro-lending programs targeting minority or ethnic businesses), many immigrant business owners do not access them. This dynamic is sometimes because the programs are limited in size or capacity for outreach and sometimes because of the very same linguistic and cultural barriers that hamper immigrant entrepreneurs in other respects.[207] Fortunately, many cities and some states are developing programs—often public/private/nonprofit partnerships—that help to address these barriers and allow foreign- and native-born entrepreneurs and their communities to tap into opportunities for new business and economic development. One program model for addressing this need is *The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians* that offers numerous practical tools to assist new and emerging immigrant small business owners in Philadelphia. They include *English for Entrepreneurs* classes, *How to Start a Business* guide, consultations, and monthly phone messages about upcoming opportunities for businesses in multiple languages.

In New York City, where 48 percent of small businesses are immigrant owned, the Mayor's office partners with financial firms, nonprofits, and community actors to address social and economic obstacles facing immigrant businesses, large and small. Multiple initiatives and public/private partnerships provide training and technical assistance, tax breaks, assistance building capital and market access—all integrated with neighborhood and sector-specific development plans.[208] In Washington State, a New Americans Policy Council within the executive branch promotes immigrant entrepreneurs as an untapped potential resource to drive economic development and neighborhood revitalization. Strategies being advanced include improved capital access, streamlined regulations, and investments in microcredit, business incubators, certification assistance, and small business mentoring.[209]

4.2.2.f. Unions. Unions are emerging as a notable and strategic partner for economic integration of immigrants locally and nationally. In 2009, two of the largest federations of unions in the United States, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO) and The Change to Win, joined forces to make a historic announcement in support of immigrant workers and issued a framework calling for immigration reform that "advocates for keeping families together, creating a road map to citizenship, and halting the race to the bottom in wages and worker standards by employers who are taking advantage of our failures in immigration policy."[210]

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions highlights several workforce partnerships in which unions play a crucial role.[211] For example, in the health care field, SEIU1199 assists its members, many of whom are immigrants, to advance in their careers by providing ESOL classes; no-cost or low-cost college classes and tuition reimbursement; paid time off to attend classes; and even help with purchasing books, uniforms, and other costs. UNITE HERE Local 26 offers free ESOL and skills training classes for its members in the hospitality industry.

Unions also play a role in cultivating new immigrant leaders by engaging them in organizing and advocacy activities and/or providing them formal training. Many universities and union organizations have education and training centers and programs for union members. For instance, the New York AFL/CIO/Cornell Union Leadership Institute offers union members courses in leadership and management skills to be able to address critical economic, political, and social questions. The courses

are taught by union and community leaders, and scholars from Cornell University. Students then demonstrate their learning by implementing projects under their instructors' supervision.

A number of worker-owned businesses focused on the service sector include large numbers of immigrants and are building the English and business management skills of their members while providing economic security. One example is the Cooperative Home Care Associates in New York City that employs 2,200 home care workers most of whom are immigrants.[212] Another example is the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United that works to improve the wages and working conditions for the nation's 10 million restaurant workers, and also runs and supports worker-owned restaurants.

4.2.2.g. Engaging the Receiving Community. As the preceding sections make clear, receiving communities play an instrumental role in advancing immigrant's economic integration, be they community colleges, other education providers, local governments, workforce development entities, employers, or unions. For example, local governments increasingly realize the economic benefits of welcoming immigrants and the important role newcomers can play in helping to improve the local economy and promote shared prosperity. These forward-thinking communities want to attract and retain a global workforce and maximize economic growth opportunities, positioning themselves as leaders for a 21st century global workforce. *Welcoming Cities, Framing the Conversation* provides the research base and examples from across the globe of how local governments are considering receiving communities' approaches to boost economic integration.[213] Not only does this framework increasingly resonate with local governments, but other receiving community institutions such as unions, Chambers of Commerce and employers, who need access to a diverse workforce, are also becoming supportive.

Some of the promising partnerships between employers and organized labor that hold potential for replication include Building Skills Partnership, which pairs managerial employees of Silicon Valley's corporations with ESOL students who serve on the maintenance staff for tutoring, mentoring, and career coaching.[214] *English Works* in Massachusetts is a collaboration between immigrant community leaders, labor unions, business and civic leaders, educators, and advocates to provide immigrants with a pathway to economic self-sufficiency and ensure a stable, skilled workforce. As well, corporations such as McDonald's and Marriott International have developed ESOL programs for their workers.[215] The Bethlehem Project[216] of the National Immigration Forum engages businesses in four cities to assist their eligible immigrant employees to apply for citizenship.

4.2.3. Civic Integration

4.2.3.a. Overview. Civic integration occurs "when all community members belong, are secure in their rights, exercise their liberties, and share ownership in the community and the nation's future," according to the White House *New Americans Citizenship and Integration Initiative.* Many immigrants come to the U.S. in pursuit of democratic freedoms, but they do not necessarily have a deep understanding of what democratic participation entails – much like some of their U.S. counterparts. Unfamiliarity with democratic participation, apprehensiveness about speaking out due to negative experiences in their home country, limited English proficiency, and a lack of strong ties to the larger receiving community are some factors that affect immigrants' participation, and that a multi-sector network can address inside and outside of ESOL classes. Immigrant adults have a lifetime of experience that they bring to their new environment. This lived experience is a starting place for effectively integrating language instruction with civic education and participation.

English language proficiency plays an essential role in immigrants' ability to be civically engaged because such language skills are required for comprehension of laws, involvement in civic affairs and social activities, and self-advocacy.[217] As well, civic ties have been shown to contribute to opportunities for economic mobility and as such, economic integration for immigrants.[218]

Research among immigrants suggests two types of capacities required for civic participation for immigrants and other community members:[219]

- Capacities at the individual level, including time, resources, education (including proficiency in the English language), and a psychological orientation toward participation; and
- Capacities at the community level, including a network of organizations, leaders, and community organizers.

Both levels of capacity are essential for full civic engagement. A network-based immigrant integration strategy will address these dual capacities by mobilizing and connecting a constellation of immigrant and receiving community members, leaders, and organizations. In so doing, the networks will create a "no wrong door" approach that allows immigrants to come into contact with receiving community members and immigrants from different countries, learn about traditional American civic values and institutions, and bridge their own civic practices with those of their new home country. The NINA networks will also enable immigrant and native-born participants to identify and pursue areas of shared interest.

This section divides the discussion about civic integration into two major types: citizenship education and naturalization, and civic participation. The critical role of the receiving community in aiding and facilitating the immigrant civic integration process is also discussed.

4.2.3.b. Citizenship Education and Naturalization. Citizenship is a classic benchmark of integration in any society. In the U.S., with citizenship comes the right to vote and access to public benefits as well as the ability to sponsor family members for immigration. A recent study showed that citizenship also has economic benefits for naturalized citizens, partly because it allows access to jobs that are otherwise not available.[220] In that sense, civic and economic integration are intertwined. Three key findings of this study included:

- Naturalized citizens have higher earnings, rates of employment, and more skilled jobs compared to their noncitizen counterparts;
- The presence of family members, friends, and colleagues who promote citizenship encourages immigrants to become naturalized; and
- Low English language proficiency, insufficient knowledge about the application process, and the cost of application serve as barriers for some of the eight million eligible permanent residents from applying to become citizens.

The White House Blueprint for Building a 21st Century Immigration System includes strategies to provide a path to citizenship through *a Citizenship Resource Center* maintained by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and funding for citizenship preparation and integration programs (in 2010, USCIS awarded close to $8 million for such efforts in 27 states).[221,222] The Center maintains a robust website that includes lessons individuals and citizenship programs can use to prepare for the citizenship exam. *EL-Civics Online* also offers classroom lessons and resources for citizenship education for ELLs.[223] Many immigrant coalitions and charitable organizations, such as CASA de Maryland,

Catholic Charities, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, and International Institutes offer naturalization assistance.

Citizenship does not end at naturalization. While citizenship education for naturalization helps immigrants learn rudimentary civic knowledge about U.S. history and government and their basic rights and responsibilities as citizens, naturalized citizens need to develop the confidence, sense of belonging, and know-how to exercise their rights and responsibilities. The right to vote is perhaps the most important benefit of naturalization, and the act of and voting is a significant signal of integration. While voter education is not part of traditional citizenship education, many citizenship initiatives conduct voter registration drives, but these efforts do not appear to include ESOL programs. A review of immigrant voter mobilizations efforts documented by the Carnegie Corporation did not identify any connections to ESOL programs.[224] Non-partisan voter education and registration should be a component of ESOL programming and any immigrant integration effort. An example is the non-partisan New England Voter Education, Registration and Action (VERA) campaign that mobilizes ESOL and Adult Basic Education students to register to vote and vote, and learn about topical, local, and national election issues.[225] ESOL students who are not citizens are encouraged to participate in discussions, mock elections, and other activities.

4.2.3.c. Civic Participation. Civic involvement of the people is a fundamental value in U.S. democracy. As such, immigrants' engagement in civic life is critical to upholding the country's values and democratic institutions. Civic participation need not be limited to naturalized citizens. Even if they have not yet attained citizenship, immigrants should be encouraged to participate in civic life, such as volunteering in school activities, joining local task forces to address community issues, and organizing neighborhood activities. Such participation increases interactions with other immigrant and receiving community members and signals immigrants' commitment to their community and new country. It develops leadership skills and social and professional ties that can expand immigrants' access to resources and opportunities, including career pathways.[226]

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) recommends four principles for engaging immigrants in civic life:[227]
1) Newcomers are encouraged to take responsibility and engage in all aspects of community problem-solving.
2) Programs start where the newcomers start, involving them with issues that affect their daily lives and leading them toward deeper analyses and more effective strategies to address these issues.
3) Newcomer learning and growth—learning by doing—is at the heart of all program design.
4) Building relationships with people from unlike backgrounds is an important goal.

The programs of *Tenants and Workers United* in Alexandria, Virginia, featured in the GCIR *Immigrant Integration Toolkit*, reflect the above four principles well. For example, when a group of immigrant women realized that there was no recreational space for their children in their working-class neighborhood, they mapped the number of parks in the neighborhood as well as in surrounding middle-class neighborhoods to demonstrate the disparity. Then, they researched the Parks and Recreation budget and uncovered unused funds that had been set aside for an unfulfilled purpose. The women's research, advocacy, and engagement with Parks and Recreation raised $100,000 to develop new recreational facilities.

The Virginia-based REEP program has developed and makes available online an *Advanced Culture, Civics, and English Studies* (ACCESS) Curriculum that was created for advanced level ELL students. With a focus

on U.S. culture, history, and current events, ACCESS is designed to help students develop the background knowledge necessary to transition to non-language focused activities. Special attention is paid to writing, reading, oral presentation, study strategies, and test taking skills.

The Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook published by World Education documents examples of civic activities by adult education classes that reflect these principles, and help move people from finding connections to community and issues to becoming active citizens.[228] Along a continuum toward active citizenship, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has developed a detailed leadership development training manual, *Inspiring Leadership in Immigrant Communities*[229] that is available free online. As well, the Center to Support Immigrant Organizing (CSIO) in Boston develops immigrants' capacity to organize around the issues that affect their lives and builds their leadership skills through leadership training institutes and other activities.

Many immigrants are, in fact, civically engaged, but often within their own ethnic groups, according to a study about the definition and practice of civic participation among immigrants in the Washington, DC metropolitan region.[230] This study found that:

1. The way immigrant communities are socially organized to support their members reflects the civic structures they have established and adapted in the U.S. to preserve their culture and at the same time, access the necessary resources and opportunities for upward mobility. Identifying, understanding, and acknowledging these structures are essential to civically engage immigrants because they are assets that serve as a starting point for further engagement and should be leveraged.
2. Organizations such as faith-based institutions, cultural organizations, mutual assistance associations, and rotating credit associations serve different functions in different immigrant communities and do not always serve the same civic purpose, and thus must be appropriately leveraged.
3. Civic leadership in immigrant communities is issue-based and situational. There are various levels and types of leadership, and each leader has a specific function in the social organization of his/her community.

The findings from this study assert the importance of involving an expansive network of immigrant-serving organizations to ensure multiple and diverse avenues for immigrants to get involved in civic life. The study also affirms the importance of bridging this network of organizations to civic and other organizations in the receiving community in order to encourage, support, and sustain immigrants' involvement in the U.S. democracy.

Another study asserts that there are three types of civic participation that complement each other and that can be cultivated in immigrants and naturalized citizens:[231]

1. A personally responsible citizen who understands and obeys the laws and assists other members of the community;
2. A participatory citizen who participates in the civic affairs and social life of his/her community; and
3. A justice-oriented citizen who assesses and addresses inequities and injustice.

Nash documents how adult ESOL programs can play a role in teaching all three aspects of civic engagement.[232] Immigrants' experiences, assumptions, and expectations should be explored in civic education as they figure out how to apply their skills to the new context. Based on past experience, what does it mean to be a citizen? To live in a democracy? What do they expect interactions with the

police, schools, government, etc. to be like? How did they participate in their communities before and how might they now? In valuing the prior knowledge and experience that adults possess, participants are encouraged to reflect on and compare diverse ideas and opinions and, by extension, to question single or simple explanations of the world. This stance of critical inquiry underlies the justice-oriented notion of citizenship.

4.2.3.d. Engaging the Receiving Community. Perhaps nothing convinces the receiving community (that can include previous cohorts of immigrants who have since become naturalized citizens) more that immigrants are dedicated to the nation than their interest in and effort to obtain citizenship. Pledging allegiance to the U.S., and assuming all of the rights and responsibilities that follow citizenship, is a critical step not only for immigrants to form a deeper connection, but also for receiving communities to promote cohesion and a greater sense of "we."

Receiving community leaders have an important role to play to encourage immigrants' civic engagement. Representatives from local government, business, faith, and other sectors may lecture at citizenship classes or speak at naturalization ceremonies, which are simple strategies for nurturing the support of local leaders. Not only will immigrants learn more about civic life and feel more welcome, but local leaders learn more about their newest community members and are more likely to champion integration efforts. Communicating back out into the broader community about the progress immigrants are making to be civically engaged and achieve citizenship leads to even greater support for newcomers by the receiving community.

The Receiving Communities Toolkit identifies a number of efforts that have successfully brought together immigrants preparing for citizenship with established receiving community members who play an important role in assisting them.[233] In Littleton, Colorado, a citizenship mentoring program pairs the two and has resulted in citizenship exam passing rates of nearly 100 percent. This multi-sector collaboration has involved the mayor's office, library, parks and recreation, employers, and immigrant organizations in a joint effort to promote citizenship across the city. The New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs' *Blueprint for Immigrant Civic Engagement* provides guidance to municipalities on ways to engage immigrants in civic life. For example, they sponsor, in collaborations with other agencies, "Know Your Rights and Responsibilities" forums aimed at immigrants. The Bethlehem Project[234] led by the National Immigration Forum is a unique initiative that engages businesses (in four cities to date) to assist their eligible immigrant employees apply for citizenship.

Finding ways for immigrants to work side-by-side with receiving community members for the common good, which might range from addressing challenges at the local school to caring for a community garden to participating in disaster preparedness, helps develop connections between diverse people and meet local needs. The possibilities for receiving community members and immigrants to work collaboratively for the better of the community are almost endless. However, many of these civic engagement or volunteer opportunities require some level of coordination and support. Volunteer coordinators play a critical role in bringing the two together and providing encouragement and ongoing guidance.

5. Logic Model for the NINA Initiative

The Theoretical Framework can be translated into a logic model with inputs, outputs, short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. The NINA logic model operationalizes the Theoretical Framework. This logic model, as shown in Exhibit 3, will guide the design and day-to-day implementation of the NINA Technical Assistance Implementation Plan. It is a work in progress.

The logic model demonstrates three major types of activities to support the selected networks: 1) Start-up activities to lay the foundation and prepare the core organizations in the selected networks for the technical assistance (e.g., assessment of capacities and needs, identification of desired outcomes); 2) Delivery of the technical assistance and other necessary supports; and 3) Monitoring and documentation of progress and outcomes. These activities will lead to short-term outcomes, such as an infrastructure at the national and local levels that can support network building across multiple sectors and enhanced services and programs for immigrants. At the local network level, this means operationalizing the tenets of collective impact: having common goals and action agenda; coordinated and mutually reinforcing services and activities, including an expanded system for intake, referrals, and services; and agreed-upon metrics and data collection methods for mutual accountability. For communications about immigrants as assets, we believe a realistic outcome is awareness of the importance of and resources for such communications efforts.
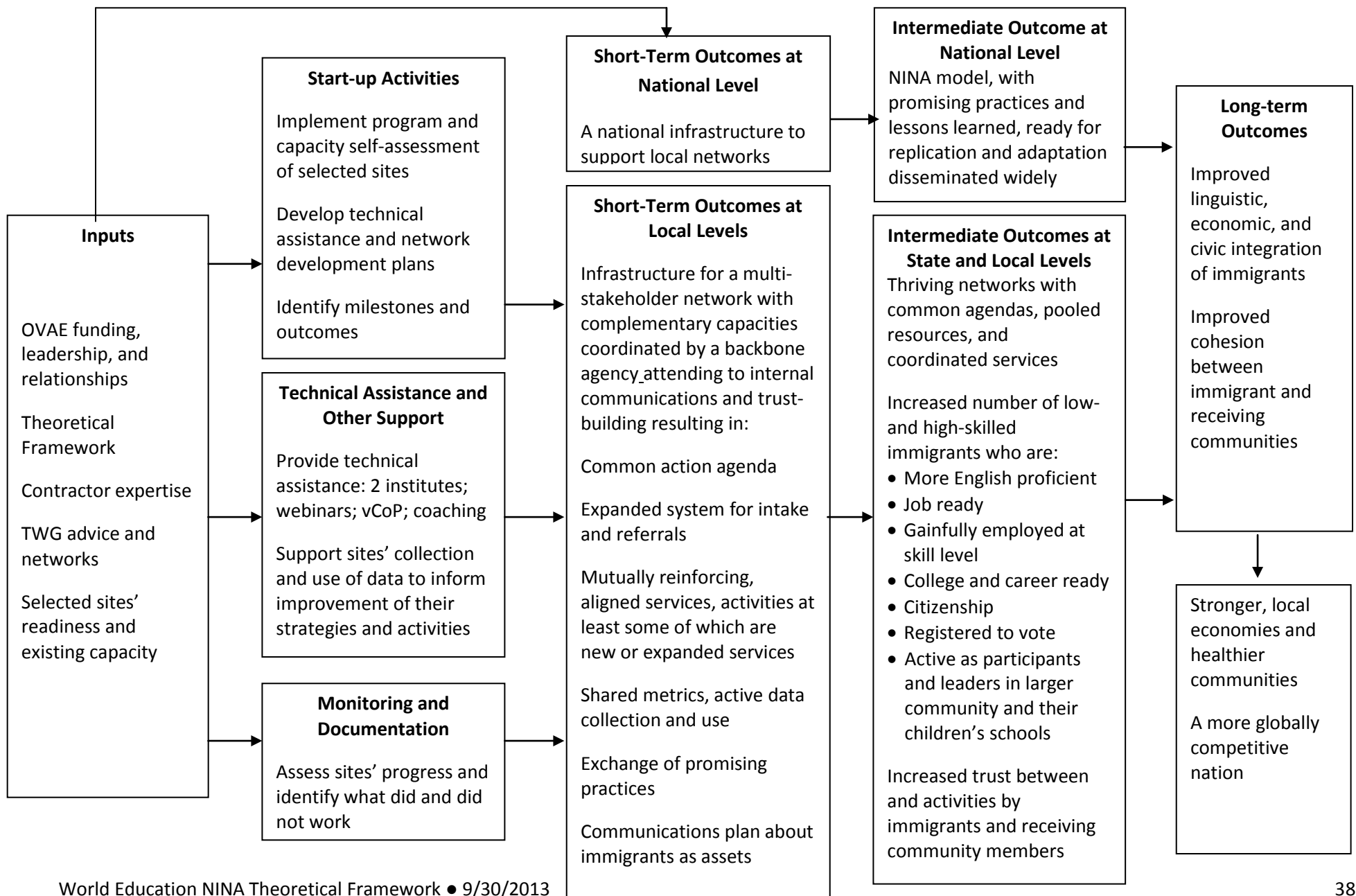
The networks established through this process will achieve intermediate outcomes for individual immigrants, their communities, and the field of adult education and immigrant integration. Immigrants will improve their capacity as workers, parents, and community members. They will increase their ability to pursue their goals and obtain gainful employment thanks to improved English and job skills, and college readiness. Their sense of belonging to the community will grow commensurate to the community's actions to welcome and value immigrants. With a sense of belonging comes proclivity to be an active community member who votes or is on a path to citizenship.

The primary intermediate outcome for the field of adult education and immigrant integration will be a model ready for adaptation and replication in other communities. The model will encompass promising practices and lessons learned and will be disseminated nationally. The intermediate outcomes will ultimately lead to the linguistic, civic, and economic integration of immigrants, and improved social cohesion between immigrants and receiving community members. Ultimately, this will result in stronger, local economies and healthier communities that underlie a more globally competitive nation.

All logic models entail assumptions about necessary conditions that need to exist in order for the inputs to yield the desired outputs and outcomes. The NINA initiative logic model assumes the following conditions:

- Adult ESOL programs – selected though an open, national application process – in at least five communities in the U.S. are able and willing to convene or co-convene and coordinate a multi-stakeholder network focused on the three pillars of immigrant integration;
- The NINA networks are willing to alter and adjust some of their procedures and practices as listed in the section that follows;
- The NINA networks are able and willing to adopt shared metrics and documentation for their agreed-upon, mutually reinforcing activities; and
- They are able and willing to plan, implement, and document their collective goals and activities without additional funding.

Exhibit 3: Networks for Integrating New Americans (NINA) Logic Model, August 2013

Inputs

OVAE funding, leadership, and relationships

Theoretical Framework

Contractor expertise

TWG advice and networks

Selected sites' readiness and existing capacity

Start-up Activities

Implement program and capacity self-assessment of selected sites

Develop technical assistance and network development plans

Identify milestones and outcomes

Technical Assistance and Other Support

Provide technical assistance: 2 institutes; webinars; vCoP; coaching

Support sites' collection and use of data to inform improvement of their strategies and activities

Monitoring and Documentation

Assess sites' progress and identify what did and did not work

Short-Term Outcomes at National Level

A national infrastructure to support local networks

Short-Term Outcomes at Local Levels

Infrastructure for a multi-stakeholder network with complementary capacities coordinated by a backbone agency attending to internal communications and trust-building resulting in:

Common action agenda

Expanded system for intake and referrals

Mutually reinforcing, aligned services, activities at least some of which are new or expanded services

Shared metrics, active data collection and use

Exchange of promising practices

Communications plan about immigrants as assets

Intermediate Outcome at National Level

NINA model, with promising practices and lessons learned, ready for replication and adaptation disseminated widely

Intermediate Outcomes at State and Local Levels

Thriving networks with common agendas, pooled resources, and coordinated services

Increased number of low- and high-skilled immigrants who are:
- More English proficient
- Job ready
- Gainfully employed at skill level
- College and career ready
- Citizenship
- Registered to vote
- Active as participants and leaders in larger community and their children's schools

Increased trust between and activities by immigrants and receiving community members

Long-term Outcomes

Improved linguistic, economic, and civic integration of immigrants

Improved cohesion between immigrant and receiving communities

Stronger, local economies and healthier communities

A more globally competitive nation

Examples of likely, necessary changes in the policies, procedures, and practices of ESOL programs include, but are not limited to:

1. Revising intake procedures to identify and respond to the needs of low- and high-skilled ELLs and to identify immigrants who are eligible for citizenship and counseling to assist such immigrants to pursue naturalization;

2. Implementing instructional strategies that accelerate learning in and outside of class and use emerging technology tools and mentors from the community;

3. Integrating college and career readiness content and skill development with ESOL instruction for low- and high-skilled ELLs;

4. Aligning highest levels of ESOL with postsecondary education and training, and/or integrating the two;

5. Providing experience in democratic practices and civic participation in and outside of class;

6. Capitalizing on resources in the community to extend instruction and services;

7. Securing internships, job shadowing opportunities with local employers, and mentors for students;

8. Building understanding among immigrant and U.S.-born adult students and community members in and outside of class; and

9. Participating in community activities.

These activities require strategic partnerships and deliberate networking between a core group of community- and college-based adult ESOL and workforce development programs, public school systems, career centers, social service providers, immigrant rights organizations, refugee resettlement agencies, welcoming centers, employers, unions, government agencies, as well as the social support and mutual aid organizations of immigrants themselves. Engaging certain stakeholders, such as employers, will likely take time and effort, and a compelling case for the return on their investment of time and other resources. In many cases, the network building also requires breaking down internal silos within larger organizations in order to align programs and create smoother pathways for students and clients. The coordination and alignment of these and other mutually reinforcing activities, and related data collection by the backbone organization for the network member organizations require leadership and staffing capacity. The integration activities also imply professional development needs, which will be addressed in the Technical Assistance Implementation Plan.

6. Conclusion

The NINA initiative is OVAE's forward-looking response to the national imperative to improve the nation's approach to immigration. Adult education programs, in particular, need to claim their place as instrumental to immigrant integration. As the prospect of national immigration reform becomes more real, they need to marshal all available community resources to effectively respond to the demand for ESOL and related social services. They are in a strong position to weave language instruction with economic and civic integration aims to address known gaps in services and magnify outcomes through a network-based collective impact approach.

The Theoretical Framework in this paper provides the grounding for the vision and immigrant integration agenda of the NINA initiative and the local networks to be established. It is based on theories

and research about immigrant integration and related promising practices for encouraging civic, linguistic, and economic integration. The lessons learned to date have taught us that integration has to be a holistic process that involves multiple sectors. The NINA initiative is innovative because it intentionally develops and uses coordinated networks with common agendas as the primary vehicle for promoting the three dimensions of integration.

While this Theoretical Framework addresses the most salient aspects of immigrant integration, there are emerging perspectives and issues that fall beyond its scope. These issues include immigrant youth, health literacy and disparities related to immigrants, and math instruction for ELLs as part of college and career readiness. Such topics may need to be explored in future frameworks. They point to trends and related needs in adult ESOL programming.

This Theoretical Framework sets the stage for the Technical Assistance Implementation Plan (TA Plan) to support local immigrant integration activities that are strategically prioritized to yield desired outputs and outcomes. The TA Plan complements this document.

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