



IET for English Learners Desk Aid 1: Research and Assess

The IET for English Learners Desk Aids support programs as they design and implement Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that serve immigrants, refugees, and other English learners (ELs). These IET programs may be connected to Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) activities and may leverage Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 243 funds. The Desk Aids are designed to complement and supplement the [IET Design Toolkit](#) approach and process. For more information on the background and structure of the IET for English Learners Desk Aids, please refer to the [QuickStart Guide to Using the IET for English Learners Desk Aids](#). Note: In the IET for English Learners Desk Aids, the term “IELCE IET program” is used to identify an IET program that is funded—at least in part—by WIOA Section 243 funds.

The *IET Design Toolkit* includes three steps for researching and assessing IET programs:

- 1.1 Conduct a Needs Assessment
- 1.2 Identify Key Insights from Your Assessment
- 1.3 Brainstorm and Select IET Program Opportunities

Following the structure set forth in the Research and Assess section of the *IET Design Toolkit*, IET for English Learners Desk Aid 1 walks through additional decision and design points under steps 1.1 and 1.2 for IET programs serving ELs, including IET programs that may be connected to IELCE activities or leverage IELCE funding.

1.1 Conduct a Needs Assessment

As you conduct a needs assessment, the following additional considerations for serving ELs can help to align your IET program with your IELCE goals and ensure that it is relevant for ELs and is designed to support student success.

Start with a *How Might We* Question

As you think through your How Might We question, use this time to consider the skills and credentials that students enrolled in IELCE activities bring to the IET program and the economic and civic needs of the community that ELs might address. Think about immigrant organizations within your community, the services that they might provide, and the potential learners they work with who might be eligible for your programming.

For example, ask yourself:

- How might we leverage the credentials, skills, and work experience of skilled immigrants to meet the employment needs in our community?
- How might we help beginning-level ELs access appropriate IET programming?
- How might the IET program support immigrant integration into the local community?

Identify Stakeholders

Broaden your list of stakeholders to include those who are focused on serving immigrants and refugees. This list might include:

- City offices designed to address immigrant and refugee needs and integration, such as Seattle's [Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs](#), the Baltimore [Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs](#), and Houston's [Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities](#)
- Industry boards that can help navigate credential requirements or evaluations
- Organizations focused on serving refugees, such as local [grantees](#) funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, such as Minneapolis' [African Immigrant Community Services](#) and Boise's [Agency for New Americans](#)
- Local Workforce Development Boards to learn about and inform local plans and activities geared toward non-native English speakers. Local boards can be identified through the Workforce Development Board Finder on [CareerOneStop](#)

What is Immigrant Integration?

Immigrant integration in the context of IET can include activities that promote the civic, linguistic, and economic integration of immigrants into their new communities. Immigrant integration activities can include English language instruction, civic readiness, citizenship preparation, workforce training, and digital literacy, as well as activities that help immigrants navigate U.S. systems and access services and resources.

Watch this short [video](#) to learn more about immigrant integration and explore the [IELCE Immigrant Integration Framework](#).

Plan and Conduct Your Needs Assessment

Each of the five key areas of the needs assessment offer opportunities for exploring and documenting the needs of ELs.

Key Area #1: State and Local IET Policy and Career Pathways Options

Requirements for IET, the connection (if any) between IET and IELCE, and the use of Section 243 funds and accompanying activities vary by state. Review your state guidance or check with your state’s adult education leadership to better understand IELCE programming requirements and where there might be flexibility in delivering an IELCE IET program. Some states also provide discrete funding opportunities that could possibly support aspects of IELCE IET program design for learners.

State and Local IET Program Policy

Additional Key Questions to Answer:

- Are the state policies different for IELCE IET programs (IET programs that are connected to an IELCE program or funded—at least in part—by Section 243 funds) than for other IET programs?
- Is civics integrated into the IET program? If so, how is it integrated? Does your state or organization require civics content to be integrated into an IET program? Does your state have civic standards to incorporate into the learning objectives?
- How does an IELCE IET program differ in its requirements and expectations from an IET program? Note: An IET program that serves immigrants or ELs may or may not be connected to IELCE activities or leverage IELCE funding. Identify the funding stream used to support the IET, as this may affect your decisions and considerations.
- Is your state using additional or different standards to guide English language instruction, such as English Language Proficiency Standards?
- Does the WIOA Local Plan prioritize individuals who are non-native English speakers? If so, how can that be leveraged for your program?

State and Regional Career Pathways Options

Explore and learn about the career pathway for the occupations you choose for your IET program. This includes understanding the language skills that individuals will need to be successful, any required credentials and background, considerations for internationally trained professionals (ITPs), other work requirements that relate to the immigrant and refugee population, and cultural norms that may stand in contrast to U.S. cultural expectations and norms.

Additional Key Questions to Answer:

- Does your pathway leverage and build on the skills that your learners bring to the program?
- How can bilingual language skills serve as an asset on a career pathway or in particular occupations?
- What credentials and experience do ELs already have that inform possible career pathways?

Who Are Internationally Trained Professionals?

WIOA defines IELCE as “education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States.”¹

Adult education programs often provide English language acquisition services to professionals with degrees and credentials from a foreign country, also known as internationally trained professionals (ITPs). Programs can leverage IELCE/IET activities to serve ITPs in a more customized and strategic manner. To learn more about serving ITPs, review the [Serving Internationally Trained Professionals in IELCE Activities spotlight](#).

¹ WIOA. Section 203(12). <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>.

Key Area #2: Regional Workforce Development Needs

Work with your workforce partners to identify an appropriate, in-demand occupation that ELs can prepare for through an IET program. Explore options with a cultural and linguistic lens to identify opportunities that align the local workforce needs with the EL population you plan to serve. This may help you evaluate and prepare for opportunities as you approach the local community and think about learner needs and potential.

Additional Key Questions to Answer:

- Are there parts of the WIOA Local Plan that specifically address non-native English speakers? Are there WIOA Title I or other programs that specifically target non-native English speakers? Does the workforce development system have demographic information regarding immigrants and their levels of education and credentials? Is the information available by zip code?
- Community colleges may meet with learners who do not yet have the language skills to fully participate in their workforce training programs. Are there postsecondary providers that could be potential partners?
- Are there specific employers that might employ non-native English speakers who could benefit from an IET program?
- What skills might ELs already possess? How do those skills align with in-demand jobs in the region? Can they be leveraged for success in the IET program?

Key Area #3: Community Resources to Support Your Program

Identify additional resources that can support your IET program, such as those focused on immigrant integration, first language support, and other activities. Community resources and funds could possibly be used more flexibly than federal or state funds.

Additional Key Questions to Answer:

- Are there organizations that can contribute to the civics component of your IELCE IET program? If so, which?
- Are there organizations that can support the immigrant integration needs of your ELs, including first language services or systems navigation? If so, which?

Funding

Research community programs that provide services to immigrants, refugees, and other individuals who may benefit from your IET program.

Additional Key Question to Answer:

- What can immigrant-serving organizations contribute (e.g., funding, services), and how will those organizations mutually benefit from supporting the IET program?

Training Providers

Explore training partners that have experience working with, or have expressed a willingness to work with, individuals who may need additional support as they negotiate learning workforce content along with the cultural norms of the U.S. workplace and the English language.

Additional Key Questions to Answer:

- What experience do potential training partners have in working with ELs?
- What support do they need to effectively serve ELs (e.g., professional learning opportunities)?

Key Area #4: Emerging and Promising IET Program Practices

Programs have begun to document and create innovative programming that meets the needs of ELs. Learn from others by interviewing your colleagues in different regions or states. Explore the activities and resources on the Enhancing Access for Refugees and New Americans (EARN) [webpage](#) on LINCS, which features IELCE initiatives, information, and practices. Become part of networks, such as the [LINCS English Language Acquisition](#) community of practice, that are actively sharing ideas and designing IELCE programming, including IET programs for ELs.

Learner Needs

Additional Key Questions to Answer:

- Do your ELs have specific academic or language needs?
- Are there any career or educational experiences that the ELs would like to leverage?
- Are there roadblocks to having the educational or work experience of immigrants and refugees recognized in the United States?
- Are there cultural constraints for immigrants and refugees with particular career pathways or jobs?
- Are there time constraints to attaining a job?

Business Needs

Additional Key Questions to Answer:

- Are local employers accustomed to hiring non-native English speakers? If not, what information do they need to know about the benefits of hiring immigrant and refugee adult learners?
- Will local employers recognize international credentials? If not, what can you do as part of the IELCE IET program to facilitate recognition of international credentials or fast-track learners into an associated industry or job?
- Could employers benefit from knowing more about potential employees' culture and language to help ensure an effective working environment and communication process?

Supporting Learners with International High School Credentials

Some ELs with international high school credentials are encouraged to pursue a U.S.-based high school credential or diploma, which may or may not be necessary for their education and employment goals. This can significantly add time to a learner's educational trajectory and postpone their access to postsecondary education or workforce programs.

Adult Education programs can support ELs with international high school credits by:

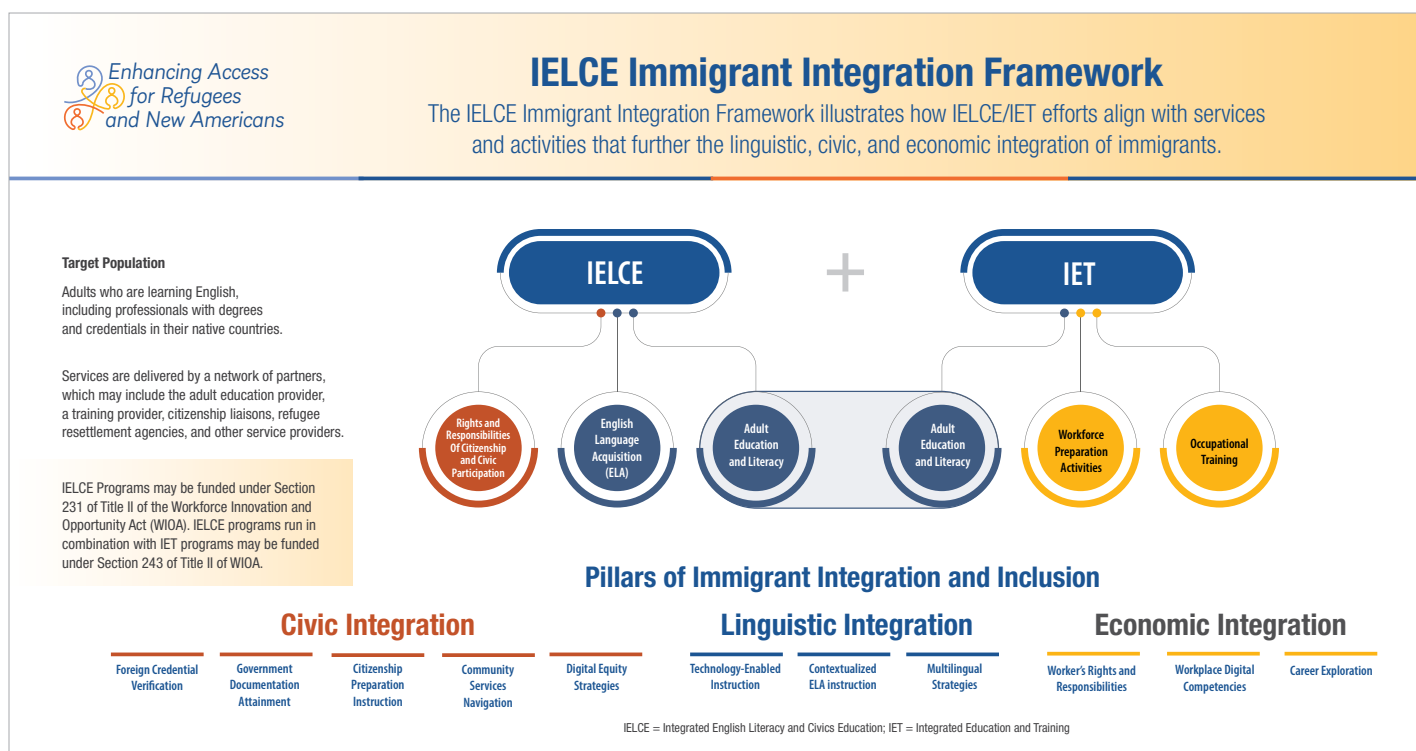
- Working with local employers
- Working with American Jobs Centers, workforce boards and partners, and local postsecondary institutions, such as community colleges, to recognize international credentials.
- Using Section 243 funds to support credential evaluation, provided the credential is relevant to the IET program. For guidance, see [Program Memo 19-2](#).

1.2 Identify Key Insights from your Assessment

As you synthesize your findings, focus your discussions on designing an IELCE IET program that:

- Goes beyond identifying language development to consider the full needs of ELs.
- Addresses immigrants' complex needs in navigating a career pathway.

The [IELCE Immigrant Integration Framework](#) identifies three pillars of immigrant integration and inclusion and shows their alignment to IELCE and IET program design (see Figure 1). For more detailed information and resources, explore the [framework](#) on the [EARN webpage](#).



1.3 Brainstorm and Select an IET Program Opportunity

As you select an IET program opportunity, consider including the EL's perspective to align the program to their needs and interests.