THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

BUILDING AND UNLOCKING IMMIGRANT SKILLS

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PROCEEDINGS

MS. LIU: Good morning. I think as all of you can tell I am not Bruce Katz. He unfortunately could not join us today. But my name is Amy Liu and I am the co-director of the Metropolitan Policy Program here at Brookings, and I want to welcome all of you to the Brookings Institution and to today's forum on aligning immigrant skills to jobs in our metro areas. I do want to thank Suzette Brooks Masters and the J.M. Kaplan fund for their support of this work and the forum. And Suzette is just a passionate, committed leader in the integration of immigrants in America. And you will see her more later when she moderates our panel this morning.

I want to start by telling you why today's subject matter is so important. First is the fact that we must embrace the demographic revolution underway if we are to stay globally competitive. 16 percent of today's workforce is foreign born. That share climbs to 25 percent if you add in their children who are first and second generation Americans. And that share will continue to grow because virtually all of the growth in the U.S. labor force over the next 40 years is predicted to come from immigrants and their children. Yet immigrants face unique challenges in finding jobs that match their skill levels or in receiving skills training. So we must learn how to adapt to their reality if we want our economy to grow and to raise incomes along the way.

Second, to embrace immigrant skills and strategies we must not assume that all immigrants are low skilled. In fact only 30 percent of today's foreign-born do not have a high school diploma. 70 percent instead are immigrants who are considered mid or high skilled. So Audrey

I jury and today's panelists are going to talk about how we as a nation must leverage those good based skills so that immigrants can be important contributors of our economic and social progress.

And lastly, any innovative economic workforce strategies aimed at immigrant integration will take place in cities in metropolitan areas. This is not just because labor markets are regional and industry concentrations are regional, which they are. But this is because in the face of federal inaction on broader immigration policy and deep uncertainty on the fiscal health of our national government cities and metro areas must go it alone to solve the biggest challenges facing our country. And luckily cities in metro areas are blessed with a rich array of institutions and organizations and can-do leaders who set aside partisan bickering for problem solving.

So we're going to hear today from a panel of experts and practitioners who will tell us about the innovative programs they have put in place in communities across the country to help the immigrants who are here integrate and succeed in the American economy. These are the kind of innovations that make the U.S. unique and make our future so bright. So without further ado I would like to introduce Audrey Singer who is the author of the report we are releasing today. Audrey is going to summarize the key findings from her paper. Audrey is the senior fellow at the Brookings Metropolitan policy program and a ten-year friend and colleague of the institution.

Audrey.

[Applause]

MS. SINGER: Good morning everybody. It's so nice to see old and new friends and colleagues here this morning. Happy to have this opportunity to share most recent work and to have this discussion today with our esteemed colleagues on the panel.

As the sluggish recovery of the U.S. economy continues, many cities and regions are looking for strategies to grow jobs and improve overall standards of living over the long term. Increasingly human capital of workers through education and skills training is one critical pathway. In order to maintain globally competitive the U.S. workforce will need to make continued gains in education and skills. Forecast show shrinking opportunities for lower skilled workers over the next several years. Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce projects that by 2018, which is not that far away, nearly two-thirds of all job openings will require a post secondary education. What's more, much of this increase in the demand for high skilled workers comes from up skilling in jobs that previously did not require these credentials. So the demand for more educated workers seems to be rising fairly quickly. And as the baby boomers begin to retire over the next two decades, these shortages will persist. The graying of the U.S. population combined with low birth rates means that immigrants and their children will become the primary source of labor over the next several decades.

Now I have to have a little bit of demography in every talk that I do. So here I'm going to show you the age structure of both the native and the foreign-born population, what it looks like today. The immigrant population is heavily concentrated in prime working ages. And you can see, well slightly more than half of the U.S. population is 20 to 64 years of age. 79 percent of the immigrants are in that age group. The real difference between the two is in the child population. 30 percent of the native born population versus only nine percent of the foreign born population are 19 and under. This is primarily due to the fact that most children of immigrants are born in the United States. Thus immigrants and their children will constitute the majority of the supply of workers going forward. Already we've seen the immigrant share of the labor force rise from about 5 percent in 1970 to more than 16 percent in 2010. And if we add the children of immigrants, those born in the United States to foreign born parents, one in four workers is currently first or second generation American. The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that virtually all of the growth in the labor force over the next 40 years will come from immigrants and their children. If this is the case, ensuring that this population is prepared for a competitive U.S. market is essential for the strength, growth, and health of the U.S. economy.

Getting ahead of myself here with the slides, so I'm going to go back. Forgive me.

The paper I wrote today and today's discussion focuses on immigrants who are already living in the United States and who with some additional training and guidance could move into jobs in high demand sectors to the benefit of local economies. And as Amy pointed out, metropolitan areas, cities, and regions are that context for immigrants to integrate into labor markets. And we are focused on regional initiatives that unlock the skills of professional immigrants with foreign credentials or build the skills of immigrants who are primed to advance in jobs through targeted training programs.

I focus on two groups of workers in the paper. The first are foreign trained professionals who face a number of obstacles to working in the United States in the occupations for which they were trained. It's not uncommon, especially in some metropolitan areas to hear about the nurse who works as a nanny or the engineer driving a cab. Many immigrants in a similar situation across the country of unemployment; doctors, scientists, information technology specialists, and others in highly specialized professional fields who have already invested in their training elsewhere.

The other group, the workers are immigrants who with some training and improvement of basic skills including English language preparation could be ready to move up the career ladder. But they are in need of support to get there. These are workers who are in low wage jobs that could become healthcare administrators or auto service technicians if they had training and support and a clear career pathway.

Both groups encounter barriers common to newcomers to this country such as not knowing how to navigate the U.S. job market and absence of networks that could help locate suitable jobs and sometimes low English proficiency. But often the barriers, especially for those trained in professions outside of the United States are more formal. Their credentials are not recognized by U.S. employers, or they haven't figured out the complex licensing and certification requirements that come with certain regulated jobs, say in healthcare or engineering. These immigrants essentially have skills, usually in industries in high demand, but they are barred in the ways that I've just mentioned.

Okay. Now we're ready for this graph.

Before I go any further I want to talk about a few issues related to the profiles of these immigrant workers, specifically their educational attainment. About a year ago I put out a paper with my colleague Matt Hall from Cornell University on the geography of immigrant skills. And in that study we found that immigrants were much less likely to have a high school diploma than natives, but they're on par with the native born when it came to having a bachelor's degree or more.

So here I'm showing data that come from the Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey. On the educational attainment of the native born population, the immigrant population, and in the last column immigrants who arrived within the last ten years. And here you can see that, yes, immigrants hold bachelor's degrees at more or a rate similar to natives, but they're much more likely to lack a high school diploma. You can see only nine percent of the native born population does not have a high school diploma compared with 30 percent of the foreign born over all in the same 30 percent for those who recently arrived. So it’s interesting to note that among the cohort of more recent immigrants there are slightly more likely to be high skilled than the total. So we're bringing in people now that are tilting more towards high skilled or those with a college education or more. But the middle skilled are still the largest group for both the native born and for the foreign-born.

The ability to communicate proficiently in the English language is a fundamental skill for the U.S. labor market. So let's look at immigrants and their English language ability. This is measured by respondents who report that they speak English either very well or less than very well. So everybody who -– very well is the top category. So in the red you've got very well and in the yellow less than very well.

Of note here are the differences by skill level. The majority of low skilled immigrants lack proficiency, 84 percent. While still half of the middle skilled are not proficient. Even among the high skilled one quarter are 26 percent, do not consider themselves to have an excellent command of the English language. And these rates are even higher when we look at the newcomers, the newest immigrants that have just arrived in the last ten years. One-third for high skilled, two-thirds for the middle skilled and 90 percent among the low skilled.

Given this single indicator it’s not surprising that high skilled immigrant workers are more likely to be unemployed than their native born counterparts. And here I've estimated that nearly half of all immigrants with at least a bachelor’s degree were overqualified for the jobs they held as compared to one-third of native workers. And among new arrivals the rate is higher, 53 percent. And this is actually about one half. This means that new arrivals are about one half more likely to be working in jobs that they are overqualified for than their native born counterparts in similar jobs.

This is a measure that compares each worker’s level of education to a national occupation specific average, again using American community survey data. And if their educational attainment is one or more standard deviations from the mean education in that occupation, they’re considered overqualified for their job.

So the question that this paper asks in our discussion today is how do forward looking regions make the most of immigrants living in their areas. Foremost they view these immigrants as assets and assets to their labor markets and their communities. They help move these immigrants into jobs they were trained for or put them on career tracks to accelerate job mobility, to increase earnings, and to augment local revenue. They assist in getting immigrant workers through obstacles that prevent them from working in fields that they are trained in.

The approaches that are discussed in the paper and that our panel will be discussing share the characteristic that they are intentionally aimed at the resident immigrant population workforce specifically. So let me make it clear that these are programs designed to work with people already living in U.S. communities. It's not a suggestion to bring in additional immigrants to the United States, change the status of those living here say from temporary to permanent or for one region to poach them another region.

Our panel of practitioners and leaders in the field have a lot of first-hand knowledge about these kinds of programs, so I'm not going to spend much time discussing them in detail. However, some of the best programs and best initiatives include partnerships between nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and employer to build skills of immigrants for jobs that have been identified as having a short supply of workers. And this usually happens through a regional assessment of employer needs and a lot of discussions that happen and projections that are made in industry specific ways.

I highlight programs from Washington State, Miami, Portland, San Antonio, and suburban Washington, DC in the paper. These include programs that largely integrate skills in English language training or adult basic education to train workers for jobs such as certified nursing assistants, health care administrators, pharmacy technicians, dye setters, assembly workers, and automobile service technicians. The best ones such as the Training Futures Program which is a partnership here in suburban Washington, DC, offer clear career pathways and sufficient support to ensure workers finished their degrees or certificates and make connections to employers.

Other programs aimed at immigrant professionals trained abroad help unlock their skills to move these workers into jobs commensurate with their skills and experiences. Initiatives in Chicago, San Francisco, New York, Boston, Denver help immigrants understand, and clear licensing requirements navigate the U.S. job search process at the level that they want to reenter, acquire U.S. specific professional language in their field, and work directly with employers to market this cohort of immigrants. The Welcome Back Initiative for example is operating in ten locations across the country, and it works exclusively with healthcare professionals to retrain and get credentials needed to practice in the United States.

So in summary metropolitan areas have a tremendous opportunity to build the capacity of their workforce from within by investing in immigrant residents, especially by targeting sectors with shortages of trained workers and also by unlocking the potential of highly skilled immigrant professionals. Many of the programs highlighted in this paper are run by nonprofits or partnerships between nonprofits and educational institutions. Community colleges play a very prominent role, and they should. They are affordable access points for training, and many have proactive active agendas to provide education for immigrants and their children. But many of the programs that help workers build skills and that create career pathways are reaching both native and immigrant workers, expanding the supply of regional skilled labor.

Regional economies matter. But state and local governments, educational institutions, nonprofits, civic and community leaders all play a role, a very important role in how immigrants integrate into regional labor markets. Investing in human capital through education, skills training, language training will drive economic prosperity over the long run making sure immigrants are part of this process, even those that need extra help, has to be part of regional growth strategies.

Before we have the panel come up I want to introduce Suzette Brooks Masters. She directs the migration portfolio at the J.M. Kaplan Fund. It's a family foundation in New York City. She's a leader among her peers and has been at the forefront of thinking about immigrant integration issues and in shaping our knowledge on a number of subjects including immigrant educational access, high skilled professional workforce integration, and receiving community engagement. Prior to joining the Fund she consulted with nonprofit organizations working on behalf of immigrants and refugees including the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, the Migration Policy Institute, the American Immigration Law Foundation, and the National Immigration forum. She's also published extensively on immigration policy subjects. And she served on a number of nonprofit boards, including the lower east side tenement Museum. Wouldn't we all want to do that? The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the National Immigration Forum Lawyers

Alliance for New York, and New York Cares, an organization that she helped found.

I’ve known Suzette and admired her work for almost ten years, and I'm absolutely delighted that she's here to join us and to moderate the panel that we are about to have. So welcome to Suzette and welcome panelists.

[Applause]

MS. MASTERS: Just checking that the microphone is working. Can everybody hear me? Okay. So while everyone gets miked I guess I'll get us started.

I want to thank Amy and Audrey for those wonderful remarks that I think really bring into focus how important today's panel is. And I’m really glad to be moderating the discussion. I also want to commend Audrey on the excellent paper which I hope you’ll all read. Has really, really good examples of fantastic practice that hopefully at the end of today many of you will fill motivated to emulate in your communities. What we’re really trying to do today is really talk about the importance of specific places and different tools and interventions that can be useful to unlock the skills of people that are already here. We’re not getting into congressional politics, immigration policy reform, any of the things that are so unpredictable and difficult. This is stuff that in my opinion is a slam dunk. It's doable. It's smart. It's common sense, and we only need good will and collaboration to get things done. So I'm really hoping that's what people are going to take away from today's conversation.

So it’s really my pleasure to be seated up here with these really esteemed colleagues. You have representatives from different sectors as Audrey mentioned someone from the community college sector, two nonprofit representatives but focusing on different types of professional immigrants. And then of course we have Audrey Singer herself who's going to participate in the panel.

So you have bios, printed bios, so I'm not going to go into great detail. But I'm just going to give you some little highlights about the different people that you have here. And then I'm going to be directing the questions for about 45 minutes. And then at the end we'll take some questions. So right to my left is Jose Ramon Hernandez-Pena from the Welcome Back Initiative. He wears multiple hats, today as do many of the people on the panel which is why they're such good panelists. He is a doctor trained in Mexico. He's a professor. He's worked at hospitals. He's worked in university settings. And he's also a visionary. He started the Welcome Back Initiative, which he's going to talk to you about today, and he runs their San Francisco program and the national effort overall.

Then we have Kevin Kelly who's also here wearing multiple hats. He's on the national board of Upwardly Global, which is another one of the programs that Audrey highlights in her paper. He also works for the Bloomberg administration on the operation side of things. He has mentored some of Upwardly Global's clients. He's hired immigrants like them. And he's going to have lots of different perspectives to share on why Upwardly Global's work is so relevant.

And then we have Bob Templin who many of you may know. He is the president of Northern Virginia Community College, the largest higher Ed institution in Virginia, also one of the biggest community colleges in the country with about 80,000 students. And Northern Virginia Community College has been extremely innovative in partnering with regional planning and industry to really find employees for real jobs. And so we're really looking forward to hearing how Bob has done that and share his lessons.

And then we have Audrey at the end.

So I'm going to kick things off by asking pointed questions of each panelist, and then we are going to have a conversation.

So, José Ramon.

MR. RAMON: Yes.

MS. LIU: What I wanted to ask you as the founder of the Welcome Back Initiative is why you started it, what need you saw, and how you developed a response to the problems that you had identified.

MR. RAMON: Why it was founded is perhaps the easiest question to answer. As an immigrant health professional myself I had the experience of getting here and then trying to figure out how I would get back into what I was doing in my previous life. Back in the eighties before the age of internets and things it was not as easy to find information and 1-800 numbers were not part of my way of thinking.

So the idea of creating a place where people like me would go and get all the information they needed was very appealing since my very early days in the states in New York City. I worked with many foreign trained doctors at Bellevue Hospital, and we would talk about what do you know? How do you do it? How do you get from A to B? Have you read something? Do you know someone? Even working at an academic institution, it was not clear for us what the process was to get from where we were to where we could be. And even finding what options would be available, would be manageable, what could we think of in terms of alternatives to our lives when it became obvious that we had been away from practice for too many years. And we're not going to go back into practicing medicine, then what do you do? What do you do with those ten, eight, whatever many years of your education in your life.

Then fast forward when I worked in San Francisco at community based clinic what we saw all the time was that we had programs serving primarily Latino population, and we didn't have the workforce that could communicate with the patients. So this lack of cultural and linguistic diversity in the health workforce was really contributing to a series of health disparities. That was further documented by Institute of Medicine and another number of reports that talked about this matter.

So at the same time we had people come into the clinic and asking if they could apply for the job that we had open for six months for a nutritionist that spoke Spanish. So they would come. They were there. But when we asked them, sure. Where is your license? What do mean my license? Do you have a U.S.? I don't have a U.S. license. What are you talking about? So then there were a bunch of assets in the community. There was a need in the community, and there was no way of bridging those two components. So we went on to create a program with the idea that people would come in. We would first figure out what the pathways were like, what the options were like. How much time. How much cost. How much effort would you need to put into your life right now to get from where you are to where you could be?

We are the ones that tell our participants that, no; you may not be able to get back to your original profession. But here are 20 options that you may have not considered. And this is how you get to them. And this is so we can help you get from A to B. So this is what we've done.

MS. LIU: So explain how you've grown the program, who you tend to partner with, and what kind of outcomes or successes can you claim for your program.

MR. RAMON: from the very beginning we partnered with community colleges and state universities. In San Francisco we started in partnership between the two institutions, City College and San Francisco State. And the initial phase of dissemination was exclusively using community colleges as they are; somebody put it a minute ago. Community colleges may I quote you, the Ellis Island of the 21st century. They saw the institutions. I love that line by the way. This is where immigrants find themselves because they're trying to learn English. Because they're trying to figure out how to get the skills that will get them to work. Because let's remember their goal is to get back to work.

So economic institutions, employers certainly to understand what are their needs, what are they willing to work with? What do they need? An example here in the Montgomery County Welcome Back Center, how they are working with Adventist Health and other employers to train nurses that they will need. How much money are they willing to put on the table? How much time and effort and faculty are they willing to put on the table to get what they actually need? We partner very closely with Upwardly Global, another agency that is for us like the finishing school. Upwardly Global is where they go to learn how to interview, how to polish up their resume, how to build up their social and professional networks.

We partner with the licensing boards. It's imperative that we know what are the licensing requirements for any and all professions so we are able to guide our participants through every single step as required. We’re not looking for shortcuts. We’re looking for accuracy and what the information we give. We partner with funders, Kaplan Fund being one because without that kind of funding it’s not possible to do this kind of work. We partner with politicians. We partner with legislators, regulators, in order to push forth an agenda that removes artificial barriers for every license short of professionals. Understanding always that especially in this context with the affordable care act there are way more vacancies in the health sector than we have people able to fill them.

By 2014 there will be tens of thousands in primary care profession vacancies. From primary care doctors to nurse midwives to physician assistants, pharmacists, lab people, pharmacy people, the United States cannot produce the workforce they will need in just two years. So not making use of the talent that is already here is really not a very good idea.

MS. LIU: So tell us very quickly, and then we'll move on, about some of your outcomes.

MR. RAMON: We have seen over 12,000 people from 157 countries. We have over 2000 that have gotten into a first job in health in the United States or have moved up their career ladders. 108 physicians have entered their residency training programs. That represents a savings of $27 million that we did not need to spend in sending these people to medical school. Make a note of that. And the average income of our participants increases by about 260 percent in the average 18 months they spend with us.

MS. LUI: All right. That's a great way to and this first line of questioning. Thank you, Jose Ramon.

Now Kevin, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about your relationship with upwardly global, how you became involved, and now why you're a champion.

MR. KELLY: Sure. For me I think working in economic development in the Peace Corps after college in Central America really showed me that catalytic programs that leverage forces that are already in place and components that are already there can have tremendous returns on investment and they tend to perpetuate and spin off more value as they go forward into the future as opposed to constructive or reconstructive programs which tend to have ongoing costs associated with them. And when I came back to America after living in Central America and South America and Europe for a while, I started working with foreign born students at Columbia where I'm an adjunct and with a couple of other organizations, more sort of social in nature, working with foreign born folks.

And I was always the person who focused on job search and interviewing and resume writing because it’s what I knew and what I saw that folks could really sort of take in, make theirs, and then move forward with their strategy and their job search. And in 2006 Upwardly Global was opening up their New York office, and I got wind of it by virtue of the other associations that I mentioned. I heard about it from someone that there was this new organization that was going to focus exclusively on college educated professional foreign born job seekers. And I thought, well, I want to know about this organization. They went through their training to become a mentor and worked directly with job seekers.

And I did that for about three years. Because I'm sort of general white-collar, manager, supervisory, and background. I’m not a licensed professional. I was working mainly with job seekers that were looking for some other types of work in information technology or supervisory work or analytics or financial analysis as opposed to pharmacist or doctor or lawyers. And so there's a whole programmatic track associated with them re-credentialing that I didn't have to contend with my job seekers. But what I found was that these were folks who their transactions, their sort of supply and demand of labor transactions should have been clearing at a much higher level. These are people who had really great backgrounds, excellent credentials, really well educated. And it was a matter of explaining and guiding how to navigate the job market here, how to turn a CV into a resume. And that you don't even call it CV. No one knows what that means. You don't put your picture on a resume. You don't put your age, and you don't put your marital status and you don’t put your gender. And that you have to write a resume starting with action verbs.

It's going to sound boastful to people from some cultures because they're not used to talking about their achievements and in a certain way. But if you tell them about judging what you found to be effective prior to being here, I'm just telling you that if you want to be effective and if you want to get what you purport to want, I'm going to show you the quickest, fastest, most effective way to be able to get into those circles, to create professional networks, to interact with people in such a way that they come in contact with the opportunities, make the impression that they would have made anyway.

They don't need me to be professional. They don't need me to be skilled. They don't need me to be qualified for these positions. They just needed to figure out with someone helping them so it could save them time and grief frankly when you're talking about being in a survival job that doesn't match your profession in your country of origin. A lot of familial and individual grief and get them to a point where, again, harnessing those forces that are within those folks, having a transformative intervention so to speak, and getting them to a point where they get a job that matches what it was that they did, what it was that they want to, get a major bump in income and forge a pathway that then has them with sort of U.S. job market credibility and professional and other networks that then they can leverage as they move forward into a lateral or promotion or to another organization.

MS. LIU: So I'm going to stop you right there. That was really interesting and very granular. I want to ask you about two other things that Upwardly Global does. I know that what's unusual about them is that they're almost like an intermediary. They work on the supply side. But they also work on the demand side. They build the demand among employers to be more receptive to hiring these people. So can you talk a little bit about that process and then also talk about the very major results. You alluded to it. But I think if you could give some dollar amounts, they are so impressive.

MR. RAMON: Sure. So Upwardly Global does work and partner with employers. Part of it is designing programs around specific industries, technology, or engineering with companies that have ongoing and sort of volume substantive hiring requirements. Part of it is just general awareness in a city like New York working with financial institutions like Standard & Poor's, or JPMorgan Chase, or other champions of diversity in the workforce. Employers that realize that robust decision making and higher order, cognizant ability on the part of their staff includes diversity of language and thought and perspectives to be able to come up with good, robust solutions to problems and to drive their organizations forward.

So there are a number of large employers and small employers in New York who partner with upwardly global on the employer front. I work for the city. The city of New York has policy and also operational objectives that tie to language skills and cultural perspectives. We're a very diverse city. People speak a lot of languages. It's expensive to always rely on translation and interpretive services.

As an operations professional I'm always thinking about the lowest ongoing cost of operations. The way to get that in service delivery is to incorporate people with the perspectives and the language skills that you need for serving people on the front line or for designing programs associated with the very populations that you're interested in reaching and delivering services to. So it's one of the reasons why for me

Upwardly Global job seekers are such great candidates, provided all the technical skills or there that I need in terms of analysis, speaking Arabic or speaking French or speaking Russian or speaking Korean in New York is a very great thing two fold together with the technical skills when it comes to a candidate.

So I've hired them in the agencies that I worked for, referred them to other ones around the city and to friends who work at other nonprofits that are also interested in serving diverse populations. So the labor focus for sure is there. It’s a very innovative, high touch program when it comes to job seekers. But there's also substantive employer engagement to identify demand both industries and geographies and job types because that then informs intake and outreach because the organization is interested in serving as many job seekers, but moving them through a process where ultimately you’re talking about clearing transactions when it comes to people looking for work and employers that are looking to hire people to fill positions that they have.

The outcomes. About 79 percent of the job seekers that we serve are unemployed when Upwardly Global first starts working with them. The others have an average income of a little bit less than 20,000 per year. And post Up Globe and post placement average salaries with benefits and whatnot north of 41,000. So it's a big bump. The retention on the part of employers is also north of 80 percent, 80 to 90. In some industries and in some situations 93, 94 percent. And I mean speaking anecdotally all the job seekers that I’ve worked with that I've mentored, introduced to my networks hired into positions that I was the hiring manager for or referred to other organizations to hire are still there. Some of them have moved laterally.

Some of them moved laterally and then were promoted because these folks who have been in survival jobs or outside of a job market that really could use them and they were on outside looking in, once they're in they're not in a real hurry to enter into that situation again and so they tend to invest in the organizations that gave them the opportunity to do the work that they're qualified and skilled in doing. And so it represents a really great value proposition for employers. The retention and the sort of the stickiness associated with the placement.

MS. LIU: Fantastic. I hope you're all sold.

Okay, third. Bob, so you can talk about the role the community colleges play in educating immigrants but also the important role community colleges play locally working with industry, government, to make sure that there is a vital economy going forward.

MR. TEMPLIN: Sure.

So if we want to think about how massive this challenge is that we face, it's important that solutions be done at scale. Where not talking about a hundred at a time. We're talking of tens of millions of people. And that's why I refer to community colleges as being the 21st century Ellis Island. In previous immigration waves coming with a strong work ethic and a strong back was all you needed to make it in America. But our economy now requires that you have that work ethic and sometimes a strong back, but you have to have the skills. You have to have the mind to be able to work in the knowledge economy. Too, while we've identified that many immigrants come to the United States with high skills, most have middle on low skills. And they don't know how to navigate the economy, and they don't know how to acquire the knowledge and skill to be full participants. And consequently they linger on the periphery of our economy as has already been documented. And community colleges are the most likely point of entry for them into the knowledge economy.

To give you an idea, at my institution probably between 25 and 30,000 students are either immigrant or first generation second generation. And that would be typical of urban community colleges across the country. So this demographic transformation and assimilation is going on there at the front line. So I want to give an example just of how Northern Virginia Community College connects the dots and makes sense of what's happening in our country so that we are using the assets that we have wisely in our national interest.

So, Northern Virginia Community College, together with some others, created a study a few months ago where we took a look at the future of our region, just a piece of the Washington metro area.

And we identified that over the next 10 years -- really, to your point, Audrey -- looking at our metropolitan regional economy, we said that over the next 10 years, because of the baby boomers that are retiring, because of the influx of new workers from other countries, because of economic growth, we're going to see 650,000 job vacancies in Northern Virginia.

But unlike previous economies, the vast majority of these vacancies are going to require people with post-secondary education. The availability of low-skill work is actually declining. And as we disaggregated the data, it was clear that the largest single sector where these job vacancies were going to occur were going to in scientific, technical, and professional services.

And so we took this data back to the business community, and we said, "You guys are facing a significant challenge. What's your strategy?" and began a conversation with Northern Virginia Technology Council, which is the largest gathering of technology companies in the United States, and five regional chambers, and facilitated a conversation.

Well, the first answer was, “I’m going to steal your employees.” Well, that became obvious that all we would do is bid up the cost of labor.

The second strategy was, “We’ll go to Boston and Austin, and steal their employees.” But that’s really not a solution. 650,000 families, we’re going to recruit into our region, in a region that’s already congested with traffic, and you can’t move around.

Maybe there’s another way. Maybe if we looked inside our existing regional economy, we have people here already who want to participate, but don’t have the knowledge and skill. Maybe we can grow our own.

And so we’re having that conversation right now with those organizations, and they have committed to join as partners in growing our workforce, by looking at new Americans who are here, that are already middle-skilled, that can be skilled up, and the next generation of kids that are in school today.

The largest single sector of our immigrant population does not have a tradition of strong academic achievement traditionally, or college-going. And we have to change that trajectory, or we won’t have the skilled workforce that we need.

So, we’ve created programs with business, and industry, and community-based nonprofits to solve this problem. And I’ll speak to two of them very rapidly. One is highlighted in Audrey’s paper, Training Futures.

It’s a program of Northern Virginia family service -- a social service agency. The individuals that go to them are seeking assistance in job skills. They don’t think of themselves going to a post-secondary education, but what happens is that we team with this organization, we appoint their staff to our faculty, and in the process of getting job training, they gradually become college students, earning college credit. At the end of their program, they enter these middle-skilled jobs, but we don't stop there.

With the employer, we urge them to continue so that they graduate with at least the associates degree, and, often, to continue onto the baccalaureate. This is in the employer's interest, as well as the individual's interest. And we have a very high success rate.

The second area that we're working with is in identifying young people -- low income, immigrant young people who come from families that don't have a tradition of going to college. And we work with our public schools, and we place counselors in the schools to guide them into a pathway to the baccalaureate.

Beginning in the tenth grade, we make a commitment to families. We say, "If your children come into this program, and do as we say, and complete the program, we guarantee their admission to George Mason University, and we will show them the way to complete their baccalaureate with no debt. We will help prepare your child financially, emotionally, socially, and academically."

This program today has 7,500 kids in it, and they are graduating from Nova at twice the rate of our other students.

So, I think I'll stop there.

MS. MASTERS: Just one follow-up. So, can you dig a little deeper on the role that you play in your regional economy with forecasting future growth? Who do you do that with, if you could just get a little more detailed, and then how that reflects back into your programming to meet those needs?

MR. TEMPLIN: Absolutely. So, we look at the changing demographic characteristics of our region, and we do that with our regional planning commission -- the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. We ask for, and help to financially support, and they do the study.

With regard to the economic analysis that we do regarding occupations, we participate with a number of ways of informing them. One is, George Mason University has a Center for Regional Economic Analysis. And so they are the ones that actually do the economic forecasting, and then we work with companies like Monster that is actually tracking where the real jobs are, and where the churn is occurring, and that informs us of the leading edges of the economy and the ways that we need to respond.

For example, right now, we have a conversation going on with the technology community about the whole emerging field of analytics, big data, and the kinds of skills that will be needed to fill the positions that are growing there. By getting that information early, and by it being driven by the businesses, then what we do is we translate that into our curriculum, and we inform our nonprofit partners that we work with, and we create these on-ramps to opportunity through education and training.

MS. MASTERS: Thank you. That's great. So, I'm not going to ask Audrey a question right now, but I'll come back to Audrey in a second.

So, there are a couple things I wanted to cover in the next 15 minutes. I wanted to delve a little deeper in some of the challenges of spreading this work, and I also wanted to get some of the tips from these incredibly innovative programs about, what's the magic sauce? You know, if you want to replicate this, what you're not seeing is that it takes a lot of vision and a lot of elbow grease to really move these programs. They don't just make themselves. You have to break down a bunch of silos. You have to think big. You have to be collaborative. So, let's cover those two topics.

So, let's start with the magic sauce, and then maybe we'll talk a little more about the challenges after that. So, if you could each just give us some perspective on what you think made your program successful, and what advice you would give to others trying to launch similar initiatives. Let's start with Kevin.

MR. KELLY: All right. So, the magic sauce -- I referred to it prior, which is -- I look at the program as being more of a catalytic one, leveraging forces and realities that are present, and figuring out how to harness their power. I think it's part of one of the reasons why Upwardly Global is so successful -- there's alignment on all sides.

Employers want skilled workers for positions that they're having difficulty filling. They want to reduce churn. They're interested in broadening their language and cultural, anthropological perspectives of their employees. Depending on the company that could be near the top of what they're looking for, but for almost all companies it's somewhere in there.

And so you throw those pieces together, and you've got what the companies want. Job seekers are looking to move from survival jobs into jobs that reflect their education and their experience. So, boom, you've got alignment there. People like myself and the other volunteers who work as mentors -- I'm on the board. I've been on the board for the last three years, but I still mentor job seekers. We come from all different perspectives.

Most people have spent some time overseas connected with realities that connect back to overseas, comfortable with cross-cultural realities, were in it for the satisfaction of working with people, and solving problems on a micro level with regard to the individuals, but also societally.

You think about someone who has their salary bumped by $35,000 by moving from a survival job into a job that reflects their skill set. That's $175,000 difference over a five-year period. That's good for society. That's good for the employer.

That's good for them.

And so finding ways in which you could line things up, sort of like concentric circles -- see where the centers of gravity are, and rather than try and move against them, leverage those forces to build your program around. And I think that with Upwardly Global, that's exactly the approach that's been taken.

And the reason why it's so successful is that we're able to harness all of these elements that connect to the job seeker and to the employer to get the results.

On the flip side, when you're talking about some of the challenges, high touch programs aren't ordinarily easily scalable, right, and so one of the things that we're grappling with now as we move certain services online is figuring out how to reach and have the same type of impact with job seekers who don't live in New York, or Chicago, or San Francisco, where we have offices.

Can we replicate the impact of the same type of programmatic service delivery that we've got in the offices, with people who have to access the content and the training remotely?

And so we've launched a bunch of webinars. We also have a set of sessions that sort of mimics what happens in three dimensions with regard to resume writing, with regard to interviewing skills, with regard to networking, job search strategies, et cetera.

And, you know, we're hoping that that's going to help us crack the "how do you scale a very effective model that, you know, relies in high touch, at least in its origins, to get the results that it's gotten, and drive down the cost per placement, and also, reach many more job seekers who aren't part of the three metropolitan areas where we have offices?"

MS. MASTERS: That's great. Bob, what do you think is the magic sauce?

MR. TEMPLIN: Well, I think we've got four critical elements. The first is, this has to work collaboratively, across boundaries, between and with organizations. So, ours typically involves a public school, the employer/employer associations, and community-based nonprofits, as well as the college.

So, ingredient number one: incredibly competent, passionate leadership, okay? We do not work with organizations that are weak. We work with strong organizations as partners, with outstanding leaders.

Number two, we plan our effort, and we jointly own the outcome. In other words, the school superintendant's outcome isn't high school completion. It isn't even college-going. The joint effort is individuals with a portable credential in a career field with a family-sustaining wage with benefits. That's the outcome. And we all own that outcome, and we're not done until it's achieved. So, that's number two.

Number three is, we organize with scale in mind. So, we don't start small and figure out how we're going to grow this, because my experience is, you don't. We start out thinking, "What's the need that we have, and how are we going to get there?" So, we tend to think in terms of tens of thousands, rather than 50 or 100.

And then we think about sustainability. Economic modeling and a business model is absolutely important. The notion of going out -- with all due apologies to philanthropy -- and getting a grant is actually counterproductive. You need to figure out the business model. Are you going to build something? When the grant evaporates, you collapse. So, having a sustainable business model is incredibly important, to begin.

I think those four elements are what the secret sauce is.

MS. MASTERS: Well, if only organizations like Welcome Back and Upwardly Global had tens of thousands that they could serve. Unfortunately, community colleges are in a somewhat better position to do that.

José Ramón, what do you think are some of the opportunities and challenges here? I mean, magic sauce and challenges.

MR. FERNANDEZ-PENA: Right, right. I think that you've covered pretty much everything.

I would add the value of data, collecting data and presenting data accurately so that people, the world know what you're doing. So, validating every statement you make with accurate data, number one.

Number two -- I lost it. I'm coming back to it. I'm having a moment, a senior moment.

MS. MASTERS: Well, for you, it's industry. I mean, you picked a sector that is going to be unbelievably important to the future of our economy.

MR. FERNANDEZ-PENA: It's a very easy sale in the health sector, because it's not just that it's the right thing to do, it's not just the multicultural thing to do it; it's the actual need in terms of jobs that are out there, and the connection between lack of diversity of the health workforce and health outcomes.

So, it's a very easy sale. I don't know that you can make that sale to a bank in the same way.

MR. TEMPLIN: Oh sure you can. We do. I talk to the banks. I say, "Where are your customers? Where's your growth?" And it's in the new American community. And I said, "How many languages do you speak?" "I don't. I speak one." All of my students are bilingual.

MR. FERNANDEZ-PENA: Or trilingual.

MR. TEMPLIN: Or trilingual. And so engage them while they're still students, as part of the learning experience, and show them the pathway in your industry, and you will have a new generation of leadership. And so I think there are opportunities in many sectors to do exactly what you're saying. It's in their enlightened self-interest to do this.

MR. FERNANDEZ-PENA: Right. The thing I was going to add is, the clarity of your purpose and the dismissal of fears -- and by that, I mean what I said in the very beginning. These folks are not taking jobs away from anybody. It's not an "instead of"; it's "in addition to." And that's a very important statement to make. None of us are looking for shortcuts or for bypassing processes for licensure, certification, lowering standards of anything.

So, those are the fears that come up when you're talking about working with those people. So, clarifying our intent and what our outcomes are is very important, because it's a legitimate question. What are these folks going to do? And are they going to take jobs from somebody else in this hurting economy where nobody can find a job? So, that clarity is very important for us.

MS. MASTERS: Okay. So, can I --

MR. KELLY: I'm sorry.

MS. MASTERS: Oh, go ahead.

MR. KELLY: I'm just going to add something quick about data, which is sort of, like, the flip side of scaling. So, when you're delivering services directly in offices, it's much easier to keep track of and to connect with the human beings that you're interacting with, and therefore, getting information associated with placements and the outcomes associated with your service delivery is easier. It's never super easy, but it's easier.

We're going to scale programs, deliver them online, and we've had 1,300 participants this year with webinars and some of our online service delivery around using LinkedIn, and resume workshops, and interviewing skills, et cetera. We're not necessarily going to know what happened afterwards, right? And so does a placement count if you don't know about it?

I mean, we've got real sort of strict rules associated with reporting based on funding requirements and other requirements. Being able to track, and talk about, and quantify the impact of certain types of programs once you move into certain realms becomes increasingly more difficult, and you have to be cleverer, use proxies, think things through, because your prior service delivery and model doesn't necessarily transfer in terms of the ways in which you would gauge success, and measure it, and communicate it out to stakeholders.

MS. MASTERS: Thanks. Audrey?

MS. SINGER: I just wanted to -- since I don't have practical experience myself -- underline some of the things that people said here that, you know, from my perspective, on the outside looking in, there are a couple things that really matter.

One clearly is leadership and people who are able to do this in a way that makes sense, not only to them and their institutions, but to other people -- so reaching other people, and communicating the value of these kinds of programs and these kinds of goals is really, really important. The clarity of purpose is absolutely essential to that.

But I also have to say, I did not pay José Ramón to say this, but the data issue -- I mean, as a person who is looking always for ways of measuring things, and for understanding successes and failures, this is really, really important -- and I think understanding the failures are just as important. And maybe that's a way we can lead into the challenges and the next part of your discussion, Suzette. I'd be happy to start there if you want.

MS. MASTERS: One of the things I wanted to sort of end this portion of the program with is thinking about how to engage local and state governments in doing this work more proactively.

As you'll notice from these programs and the ones profiled in Audrey's paper, not that many are actually led by the local municipality. They're often done in partnership, but frankly, there aren't that many of those either. I mean, community colleges tend to be in a leadership position. You have some nonprofits. You have two of the best ones right here, but they're relatively small.

And José Ramón has partnered with a local government entity in Maryland, which is one of the few Welcome Back centers that's actually housed in a government agency, but I'd like to talk a little bit -- since we're here, really, to talk about metros and how to spur more innovation at the local government level -- really, how we can engage government to look at this more carefully, to view it as a win, and to really spur that level of engagement that we really think is necessary.

And I'll just start us off by talking about one program I happen to know about, just because I am a funder, and I do hear about these things sometimes before they go public. But in New York City, where I live, the New York City Economic Development Corporation just released an RFP for what I think is maybe the most innovative, locally-generated program of its type.

It's called the Immigrant Bridge Program. It's starting pretty small, but it's basically tackling all the issues that we're talking about here, facing a high-skilled population, professional population.

So, there are two components. There's a soft skills piece, along the lines of what Kevin discussed, to help people meet their expectations for where they might end up that works with their existing skills.

But then they have this other component, which is a microloan fund, which is modeled on a program, I think, from Alberta, Canada. And what they found in Canada was that if you married access to some money to pay for recredentialing, to pay for a class, to pay for childcare while you're taking that last class before you can get recertified in a particular profession, that that really enhanced the outcomes.

And so New York City is going to be trying this out. It's pretty small. They're probably going to reach maybe 300 in each of the two programs, and they've identified 58,000 people in New York City that are underemployed and are high-skilled or professional immigrants.

So, that's just one example of -- it's not technically the municipality of New York City. It's their economic development agency, but I just wanted to see if we could get conversation going about what it would take to get local government more actively engaged in this.

Audrey, do you have some thoughts on that, to kick us off, or --

MS. SINGER: I wasn't going to directly touch that, but I will say a few things sort of related to that.

In thinking through -- well, this discussion has stimulated a lot of thoughts in researching the papers and the programs that I was looking into. There are a lot of issues about scalability, sustainability, costs, and replicability that I think are really important to this conversation. And maybe that's where municipalities come in.

Most of the programs are relatively small. I think their success is that they are small. So, the issue around scaling up has a number of different features that complicate whether that's going to happen. One of the great things about most of these programs -- say, for example, Welcome Back Initiative has 10 centers across the country, those who are sort of independently working on issues, from what I understand, before they became Welcome Back centers -- and so there was something organic already happening in those organizations with that population.

So, there is some strength in having local organizations that know the region. As Bob has pointed out, you know, he's doing this at probably a much bigger scale than a lot of other organizations can. But knowing the population, knowing the economy, knowing the industrial structure, really knowing one place well has contributed to the success of a lot of these programs. And I think that's important to keep in mind as we're thinking about the scalability of these programs.

So, I think a lot of these programs maybe are not necessarily poised to scale up in a huge way, but they could be replicated in a lot of different places. And the contexts where these are happening right now -- these kinds of programs that have sort of blossomed over the last decade or so -- are a mix of places that have long-term, established immigrant populations, but also places with a lot of newcomers coming in constantly, and even newer places where immigration is new.

And so often, municipalities do get involved at that point, but it's not necessarily in a direct way. And I think we just have to dig a little deeper to make those connections, going forward.

MS. MASTERS: Bob, anything you want to add?

MR. TEMPLIN: Well, I often visit other communities that are trying to work on the issue of chronic unemployment and moving people from poverty into self-sufficiency, and too often, I find that it's made up of well-intended social service, nonprofit, philanthropy, but business is missing.

And my starting point is always not with the immigrant; with the business. Where are the jobs? What are the needs? What is the strategy? And inevitably, at least in my region, it will bring us back to this.

So, we don't start with deserving people who need a break. We start with companies that need workers, and I have the companies talk to their elected officials about things that schools and colleges should be doing to help them prepare the workforce in the future.

If we do that, at least in metropolitan areas that I'm familiar with, we will inevitably come to the issue that we need all of our people engaged, all of them educated, all of them trained. We can't afford to lose anybody, and then begin a discussion, "Well, how do we do that for this population?"

Otherwise, you end up in a social welfare discussion that actually tends to be politically counterproductive. And so my short answer is, "If it's business-driven, elected officials will pay attention and respond."

MS. MASTERS: You guys don't have to chime in if you don't want to, but we could open it up for Q&A. We have about 10 minutes left. Sound good?

So, we're going to finish the formal part of the program now, and I invite your questions. There's going to be a traveling mic, and we ask you to just state your name and your organization.

Woman in orange?

MS. MACY: Hi, good morning. I'm Janet Macy with GAO, and my question really is for Bob.

We're doing some work in community colleges. Clearly, community colleges -- I don't know specifically about Northern Virginia, although I'd be surprised if you weren't hit by the economy and state funding -- I'd like to drill down a little bit more on the sustainability of the programs you talked about.

I'm assuming you're getting funding from businesses or elsewhere, but community colleges are in dire straits right now, so I'd just be curious about your economic sustainability about these programs.

MR. TEMPLIN: Well, it's not just about the program; it's about the institution. So, over the last five years, we've lost $25 million in state aid. At the same time, we've grown by about 15,000 students, disproportionately first and second generation immigrant.

So, what we've done is diversified our portfolio, and we've learned how to be smart with existing policies. So, for example, we have learned that in cooperating with community-based nonprofits in the low-income and immigrant populations, that when we begin to team with them, and they become part an extension of the college, their clients, under appropriate conditions, become eligible for Pell funding.

And Pell is a scalable, sustainable revenue stream. It doesn't cover everything, but nonprofits by themselves would never be eligible with their grantees to do that.

So, it's about being smart about our existing policies, and tying them together in ways that are appropriate, and making the best use of the resources we have.

At the same time, we do many things that are very worthwhile, and we don't give them away. Too many folks do good work and give it away. So, our clients are expected to pay. They may not be able to pay it all at once. They may have to pay it over time, and so they are financial participants.

We partner with strong nonprofits like Goodwill Industries. God, we now have helped to launch 50 cities across the United States, teaming community colleges and Goodwill. For those of you that are not familiar with Goodwill, Goodwill is a business. Many of you probably donate clothing and buy clothing from Goodwill -- $1 billion a year. It's the largest nonprofit training provider in the United States, training over a million people a year -- disproportionately, again, from the immigrant community.

Joining forces with a high-performing nonprofit and a community college merging your resources helps to drive down overall costs.

And then we've started new lines of business ourselves, actually, in the immigrant community. We've found that American higher education is quite an in-demand service in the world, and we're now one of the top 20 colleges and universities in the United States with foreign students. So, we bring folks from the embassies around here, foreign students. They pay a much higher piece of what it costs, and we use the excess revenues to support programs like this.

So, during the period when we lost $25 million in state aid, we generated $100 million in additional revenues. So, this is not an anomaly. This is the new reality that we have to live with.

MS. MASTERS: Okay, woman in the white jacket, in the front.

MS. MARTINEZ-GARCIA: Hi. My name is Genevieve Martinez-Garcia, and I work for Healthy Teen Network as a researcher.

And I know that at the beginning, you mentioned that we're not going to be talking about immigration. But I cannot help thinking about when you talk about the barriers for labor integration, well, what is the percentage of the high-skilled and moderately skilled labor force that may not have the work permits, and may not feel motivated or have enough incentive to get retrained, recertified, learn English, or get higher training skills, and get integrated into a labor force that might not accept them because of their legal status.

And I'm not only talking about the adults, but also the kids. That kid in high school that might participate in the pathway to the baccalaureate might not have the work permit. And how do you tell the parents, "Save money, motivate the kids so they can go to high school, they can go to Nova, and then George Mason," and then they might not have the immigration credentials in order to have meaningful employment.

MS. MASTERS: Well, I think José Ramón and -- well, everyone has a different take on how they handle that issue. And obviously, none of these organizations are doing immigration policy, so we'll see how we can answer your question.

José Ramón, why don't you start?

MR. FERNANDEZ-PENA: We find some individuals that come to our centers that are not authorized to work in the U.S. We give them all the information they would need to know, in terms of how they would relicense, and we have a candid conversation with them about the fact that without the proper pieces of paper, they're not employable.

We refer them to legal agencies, where they can get the kind of information they need, but our policy is to give anybody that comes to our centers -- as long as they were trained in a health profession in another country; that includes about three percent U.S. citizens -- we give them the information they need. We do not take them there, because that's not what we do.

You raise an important point, and that, clearly, is a larger discussion that I don't know that any of us is prepared to have here.

MS. MASTERS: And Upwardly Global designs its program with exactly that issue in mind. You want to just very briefly --

SPEAKER: Ditto.

MS. MASTERS: Okay, all right.

MS. SINGER: I will chime in here. Really, really important point, and I think when -- it all comes back to demography, labor supply, and long-run change. And I think something's got to give soon.

People who are concerned about where we're going in terms of, you know, the big picture are making different cases for changing the legal status of different kinds of people, including students who are being trained in science, and technology, and engineering professions in this country -- and also, as we've seen, with the deferred action for childhood arrivals, making the case for people who came here at a young age, and who we've already invested in, in terms of public school education, who may be either going further in terms of higher ed, or be barred from higher ed -- that these are people that are here to stay, and we need to open up those barriers.

So, I mean, this -- the discussion always lags the need, I think. And we have to see what happens.

MR. KELLY: Let me just add that, you know, this condition that we have, particularly with young people, affects not only those who may not have legal status; it also affects those other young people who just know that people like them don't go to college.

And so when we work with middle-schoolers, these kids don't know what their status is, but they've heard conversations that people like them can't go to college, or it doesn't make any sense to work harder, because it's not going to pay off. And they don't know what their status is.

And so I'm trying to convince a boy in middle school to take advanced algebra. And the question is, "Why should I do that? What good is it going to do me? I'm not going to be able to work. I can't go to college." And it's part of the folklore that's in the community.

And so our effort is that you need to be ready, because they will come, and I can't promise you when, and I can't say it will be here, but wherever you are that the opportunity presents itself, you will be ready. We will help you get ready. It may not even be in this country, but you will be ready. Otherwise, you have no dream.

MS. MASTERS: Okay, the woman right -- actually, the man in the beige suit in the back.

MR. SOFER: That would be me.

MS. MASTERS: That would be you.

MR. SOFER: I'm Gene Sofer, with the Susquehanna Group, and my question is about the role of adult education in preparing adults, for example, who are not able, because they lack English and other skills, to enter community colleges. And I assume that some of the nonprofits that you have referred to are linked to the adult Ed system, but I wonder if you could expand on it a bit.

MR. TEMPLIN: Yes, I'm assuming you might be directing that to me. So, highly motivated immigrants who are not fluent in English that find their way to nonprofits make easy partners for us, in both the formal adult education program and in other non-formal programs.

I wish we had a more clearly articulated system, where we had some common standards where things meet. It's a little bit of a hodgepodge, but it's a very vibrant community, and we play a very large role.

We are the largest provider of English as a second language in the region. But it tends to be expensive, and adult education programs provide, usually, a less expensive option.

However, these are typically programs that work with adults who are literate in their own country, in their own language. We have a very significant population of those who are literate in their own language. And for this group, it is especially difficult, and I don't think that there is a very good network of solutions.

Existing programs tend to prepare people for GEDs. That's irrelevant to this population. They need survival skills, and it needs to be low-cost, and it needs to be available when they can get to it, which tends to be very unpredictable times. And so this is a gnawing problem that I think we would find virtually in every community in America that has not been addressed appropriately.

MS. MASTERS: Thanks. Last question -- the person in purple in the back.

MR. LLOYD: Good morning. I am Mr. Lloyd. I'm from Baltimore. I have a question about graduate students earning degrees in the United States. I think close to 60% or 70% of students getting their masters and PhDs are not from the United States, and when they get these degrees, they are just kicked out of the country.

Don't you think it's not a nice move, that after they earn their degrees and investing so much billions in human capital that we just kick them out?

And my second question is about the language. They might not be very nice in oral language the way American English speak the language, but they have very excellent reading language skills and reading language skills.

So, are we addressing any of these things? Thank you.

MS. MASTERS: Audrey, do you want to take that one, because you know about some of the stuff happening on the Hill?

MS. SINGER: Sure. You know, I think there's growing, if not complete, bipartisan consensus that opening the doors for some foreign students who are being trained here to allow them to stay longer term or permanently is in the works. And I think there's a lot of agreement around this issue, that opportunities are here, and people should take advantage of it, and it's to the benefit of the U.S. economy. So, a lot of discussion about that right now.

And on the second question about skills, English skills that are not oral, right, but written or otherwise -- I think somebody else here might be able to speak to that better. So, I'll turn that over to José Ramón.

MR. FERNANDEZ-PENA: The Welcome Back Initiative developed exactly for the population you're talking about -- folks that are highly literate in their own language, and can read English very well, and probably used English texts in their training.

We developed an accelerated health-focused ESL curriculum that takes one year instead of the typical three to five years that traditional ESL programs take, and they take you to a point where they don't give you the language skills that you need to be proficient in your field.

So, the concept of contextualized adult ESL training, we developed this course we called the English Health Train. You can check it online by that name -- healthtrain.org.

Just one point regarding the kicking out -- I think we need to be careful with that, because it depends how a graduate student comes to the United States, what kind of visa they come on, and what kind of funding they have for their training.

So, some visas -- a J1 visa, for example -- may have a two-year rule that requires that the person that has a visa return to their country of origin for at least two years before they attempt to come to the U.S.

I'm no immigration expert, but when the training of a foreigner in the U.S. is paid by their country of origin, the question of kicking them out is not necessarily the question that I would ask -- so just my opinion.

MS. MASTERS: Well, thanks, everybody. It's 11:00, and I'm glad that everyone is still here and engaged. So, I hope we've given you some things to think about, and inspired you to bring this back to wherever you work, and think about it some more.

So, I want to thank the panelists, and thank all of you for coming. Thanks.

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2012