

# What **Adult Educators** Need to Know About **Serving Skilled Immigrants**

Please Note: This publication summarizes selected content from a 60-minute webinar. To view the complete webinar slides, visit [www.imprintproject.org](http://www.imprintproject.org)

Adult education programs often serve immigrant English-language learners who were doctors, engineers, or teachers in their home countries.

**Your organization can serve these individuals more effectively** by:

- 1) Gathering more information about students' educational and professional backgrounds;
- 2) Building staff members' knowledge of credentialing and professional licensure;
- 3) Incorporating professional-career path activities into adult education classrooms.

**Read on for more details about each of these steps.**

## 1. Understanding the skilled immigrant population

Are you getting key information at intake? Use a **standardized intake form** to collect data on your students' foreign educational backgrounds, including:

- Type of degree (and major field of study)
- Date of graduation
- Name of college or university
- Country of education (*this may not be the same as the student's country of birth*)



## 2. Transferring international degrees or credentials to the US

### **HOW PROFESSIONS ARE ORGANIZED IN THE U.S.**

- The US is **decentralized**. Each state typically has own laws to regulate professions.
- **Regulated professions** are generally overseen by a state professional licensing board.

### **DEFINITIONS: CREDENTIAL TYPES**

- An **industry-recognized** credential holds meaning in the job market.
- A **proprietary credential** is unique to the school or company that provides it. It may *not* be industry-recognized.
- A **portable credential** is relevant to multiple employers and may be state-regulated. It is generally industry-recognized. For example, a Registered Nurse.
- **On-the-job and non-accredited training** may not be recognized by future employers – always check for their transferability.

## IMMIGRANTS DON'T HAVE TO START OVER

A Ph.D. shouldn't be told to get her GED. But she may need a skills refresher.

### UNDERSTANDING CREDENTIAL EVALUATION

**Credential evaluation** is a rigorous, third-party review of an international degree. A credential evaluation report explains a person's international education in US terms such as grades, GPA, and degree equivalent.

Evaluation reports can be used to apply for US professional licensure, apply for employment, or apply to a US college for additional education.

The cost is typically \$150-300, not including translation.

**Beware:** Each US college or licensing board has its own rules for which evaluations it will accept. *Make sure to check with the specific entity.*

For a list of credential evaluation services, see the **National Association of Credential Evaluation Services** ([naces.org](http://naces.org))

### 3. Helping Adult Immigrant Students Prepare for Professional Employment

**Is US job market information integrated into your ESL curriculum?** Use role-play and other activities to help immigrant students hone soft skills in these areas:

- **Nonverbal:** handshakes, eye contact.
- **Self-promotion:** practice an "elevator speech" about oneself, mock interviews, leaving voicemail/email, writing short thank you e-mails to interviewers.
- **Seeking key information:** transcribing voicemail, finding company locations on a map, determining public transportation routes.



### RESOURCE LIBRARY

There is a wealth of resources to guide skilled immigrants:

- **welcomingcenter.org** has publications including *How to Succeed in the Workplace* and four industry-specific Career Guides.
- **upwardlyglobal.org** has *Guides for Licensed Professionals* for CA, IL and NY, and online training via webinars.
- World Education Services has licensing, certification, and alternative careers information at **globaltalentbridge.org**, and a toolkit specifically for adult educators.