



THE BARRA FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed Until August 19, 2014 at 9amET

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Attracting and retaining talent in Philadelphia the focus of new credentialing program for high-skilled immigrants

The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians receives \$692,000 from Knight Foundation and The Barra Foundation to launch Immigrant Professionals Career Pathways Program

PHILADELPHIA —August 19, 2014— The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians today announced a program that will allow eligible immigrants to reestablish their professional careers by helping them secure industry credentials. The Philadelphia-based program is supported by \$412,000 from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and \$280,000 from The Barra Foundation.

The nonprofit Migration Policy Institute estimates that there are 32,000 underutilized immigrant professionals in Pennsylvania. Many live in the Philadelphia region. These individuals have college or graduate degrees from abroad, but are often employed here in low-wage jobs that do not draw on their education and skills.

“We are thrilled that this funding will both expand our services for ambitious newcomers and help fill a need for these professionals in our region,” said Peter Gonzales, president and CEO of the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians. “People who were doctors or engineers in their home countries often have to navigate complex pathways in order to return to their professions; our new Immigrant Professionals Career Pathways Program will assist them in that process.”

“Philadelphia is increasingly attracting young, motivated talent from around the country and the world—but we must pursue more opportunities to keep that talent here,” said Donna Frisby-Greenwood, Knight Foundation program director for Philadelphia. “This new program will help do just that by opening new economic and leadership opportunities to established professionals that have the skills to contribute to a better future for our city.”



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The Welcoming Center's new program will help skilled immigrants with lawful status in the United States find training and jobs in Philadelphia in their fields of expertise. The program will guide these professionals in obtaining certification, finding transitional jobs and connecting with others in their fields through social and professional networks.

Support for these projects forms one part of Knight Foundation's efforts to expand opportunities in Philadelphia, while fostering talent retention and attraction. Since 1970 Knight Foundation has invested more than \$100 million in Philadelphia's vitality.

The Barra Foundation's grant reflects its commitment to supporting organizations in their efforts to test significant new approaches to their work. By funding problem-solving initiatives such as the Welcoming Center's, Barra seeks to drive positive change across Greater Philadelphia.

About the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians

The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians is a nonprofit economic development organization based in Philadelphia. Founded in 2003, the agency has served more than 11,000 people from 140 countries worldwide. The Welcoming Center's services include education and training, employment and entrepreneurship. Learn more at www.welcomingcenter.org

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more, visit www.KnightFoundation.org.

About The Barra Foundation

The Barra Foundation invests in innovation to inspire change that strengthens communities in the Greater Philadelphia region. It provides approximately \$4 million in grants annually that are focused on supporting innovation in and across the fields of Arts & Culture, Education, and Health and Human Services. For more, visit www.BarraFoundation.org.

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