

## EL Workforce Navigator Pilot Project Case Study

### Sacramento Works ELL Navigator Pilot Program

#### Lead Grantee

Sacramento Employment and Training Agency <http://seta.net/>

#### Named Grant Partners

Sacramento City Unified School District <https://www.scusd.edu/>

Elk Grove Unified School District <http://www.egusd.net/>

Folsom Cordova Unified School District <https://www.fcusd.org/>

San Juan Unified School District <https://www.sanjuan.edu/>

#### Project Overview

Sacramento is one of the most diverse cities in the United States and has long been a destination for immigrants who are typically also English learners. In addition, Sacramento County is home to immigrants from around the world, as well as a high number of refugees, asylees, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders, and foreign-born victims of human trafficking. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, Sacramento County is home to 327,990 foreign born residents, 52.2% of whom report that they “speak English less than very well”. An additional 2.1% of native-born Sacramento County residents also report speaking English “less than very well.” 26.8% of foreign-born Sacramento County residents 25 years of age or older lack a high school diploma or equivalent. Nearly 17% of foreign-born Sacramento County residents live at or below 100% of the poverty level compared to 13.4% for native-born residents.

Additionally, according to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Refugee Programs Bureau (RPB), between October 1994 and September 2015, Sacramento became home to over 30,151 refugees. Since 2015, Sacramento has experienced an unprecedented spike in SIV arrivals as a result of the withdrawing of U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Due to this spike, refugee/SIV arrivals over that period total approximately 7,000, the largest county resettlement numbers in California. This number doubles over the same period when including the secondary migrants that move to Sacramento following their initial resettlement in another county or state.

Despite hiring instructors and adding classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) and Vocational ESL (VESL) providers have struggled to keep pace with demand for services for the County’s large and growing immigrant population. VESL classes in particular have been oversubscribed. While the workforce development system has always provided universal access to available workforce services, without dedicated funding, there is a lack of specialized programming that would accelerate the success of ELLs. For example, language instruction and vocational skills training are often offered separately; there can sometimes be a perception among service providers that WIOA outcomes will be negatively impacted by enrolling adult ELLs, and they may choose to refer ELLs to adult education to improve language skills before addressing workforce needs; and existing services for ELLs can be very fragmented and require multiple steps to access. For these and other reasons, ELLs have been primarily provided services through adult education or targeted programs like Refugee Support Services (RSS) for refugees, SIVs, Asylees, and federally certified, foreign born, victims of human trafficking.

## Project Goals

The pilot targeted all English learners, with a focus on Special Immigrant Visa holders (SIVs) and refugee populations due to the high number of arrivals in Sacramento County. Priority was given to those who were Limited English Proficient (LEP), basic skills deficient, lacked a high school diploma and/or work history. Specific pilot goals included conducting culturally and linguistically relevant outreach and increasing co-enrollment of English learners in WIOA Title I & Title II; leveraging local partnerships to build and/or expand a network to provide wrap-around services; increasing partnerships/collaboration with CBOs; and improving labor market outcomes for ELLs. The pilot planned to serve 120 clients.

## Program Design

The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA), the lead grantee, is a joint powers agency of the City and County of Sacramento. SETA operates Sacramento Works, the local Workforce Development Board, as well as Head Start and programs funded by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). SETA procures providers to operate the local AJCC network (12 Job Centers) and a Refugee Program that provides Vocational English as a Second Language combined with Employment Services (VESL/ES), employment services, and social adjustment and cultural orientation for older refugees.

### Key Features of Program Design

- Established 4 ELL Navigators throughout Workforce Area
- Adult Education is also provider for Sacramento Works America's Job Centers where Title I and II services were co-located
- Refugee Employment Services programs also co-located at Adult Ed-hosted SWAJCCs
- Long-term case management from ABE/ESL through VESL/job readiness/vocational training/CTE all the way to job placement and retention provided by navigators

San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD), Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD), Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD), and Folsom Cordova Community Partnership, Inc. (FCCP) in collaboration with Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD) were named partners in this pilot due to growing populations of ELLs in communities they serve. Three operate local Job Centers: SCUSD, EGUSD, and FCUSD and administer WIOA Title I and Title II programs. Each school district hired their own ELL Navigator and worked in co-located service environments (the SJUSD navigator spent time at both the AJCC and adult school). In addition to being co-enrolled in Title I and II services, some ELL refugees and SIVs were co-enrolled with refugee resettlement and employment services providers through funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement and administered by SETA in partnership with the County of Sacramento's Human Assistance (DHA). Many participants were also co-enrolled in the CalWORKs Welfare to Work

program through DHA.

SETA facilitated closer collaboration between the four school district partners, refugee resettlement, refugee employment service providers, and DHA staff through training and quarterly project meetings, while navigators facilitated collaboration through outreach, referrals, Multi-Disciplinary Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meetings, and coordinated case management.

## Flow of Services

The navigators conducted outreach at adult education ESL orientations, job fairs, community centers, schools, stores, and places of worship, and enrolled eligible clients. Navigators conducted assessments of language and basic skills proficiency, educational levels, and work experience/history. In addition, navigators conducted a Full Life Domain assessment to document the client’s overall health, stability, and support systems in areas of need that often present barriers to participation for immigrants and refugees. Navigators used these assessments to inform the development of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and identify which partners to bring in to the IRT. The IRT members, including the client, identify and coordinate services and supports, for the client through a variety of convening and communication means, typically coordinated by the ELL Navigator who oftentimes takes on the role of the IRT lead. Navigators also served as the primary case manager, coaching clients and providing any assistance needed to access or participate in services, and tracked their progress.

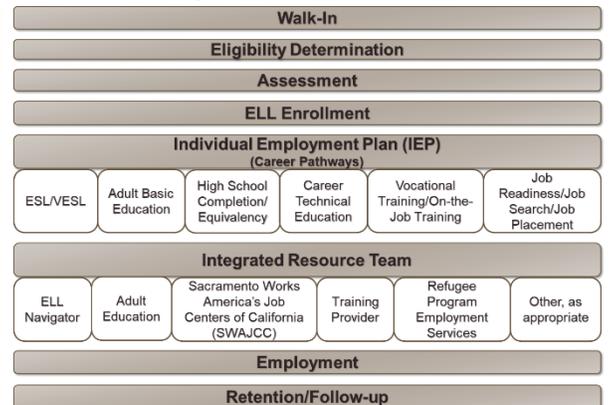
## Navigators’ Roles

Navigators performed many duties. Key roles and responsibilities included:

- Outreach to prospective clients
- Individualized assessment and case planning
- Helping newly arrived individuals and their families to understand requirements in multiple service systems
- Completing documentation and forms
- Supporting participation in adult education and employment services, and tracking progress
- Planning and coordinating resource and job fairs
- Supporting acculturation by coaching and advising on communication and behavior in a variety of contexts
- Helping clients as they move through every step of adjusting to life in the United States
- Being available as a mentor and guide, including sharing stories based on personal experience
- Providing pre-employment skills/job readiness training
- Providing job search assistance and conducting job development



## Program Flow Chart

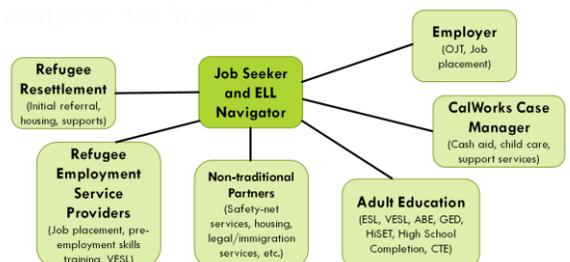


## Coordinated Case Management: Integrated Resource Team (IRT)

Key elements of the IRT strategy included:

- ✓ Human-centered design approach
- ✓ Getting to know the client
- ✓ Pulling in services and resources instead of pushing out referrals
- ✓ Creating a team to make sure client is always supported
- ✓ Strategic use of available resources
- ✓ Working smarter, not harder

### Sample IRT for EL Navigator Pilot



- Resource management/assistance with locating necessary support services and resources

Qualifications and experience varied across the four school districts that employed navigators. All required a mix of education and experience working with unemployed or under employed adult populations and requirements including:

- Cultural competency
- Job development, placement and follow-up procedures
- Labor market and post-secondary education; applicable laws, codes, rules and regulations.
- Case management techniques. Basic public relations techniques
- Meeting facilitation and strong interpersonal communication skills
- Partnership development
- Data entry, records maintenance

## Collaboration with Partners

SETA actively cultivated new and strengthened existing partnerships for the pilot. SETA worked with Refugee Resettlement Agencies and Refugee Support Services (RSS) employment service providers to help coordinate efforts with the ELL Navigators. For example, navigators were included in RSS Refugee Program meetings. SETA also tracked co-enrollments with the RSS program to coordinate services through IRTs led by the navigators.

SETA procured Educational Evaluation Records Service (ERES) to conduct evaluation of foreign credentials and degrees. SETA's agreement with ERES expedites services and prevents clients from having to pay out of pocket for the service and wait for reimbursement.

Navigators coordinated directly with DHA CalWORKs and Refugee Cash Assistance case workers to access additional services, including transportation assistance, child care assistance, and access to additional funds for vocational training. In addition, the DHA case workers participated in IRTs.

Additional partners participating in IRTs and supporting the pilot included:

- Refugee Resettlement
- Refugee Support Services (RSS) providers
- SETA's Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA) case managers
- Cosumnes River College (CRC)
- Sacramento City College (SCC)
- California State University, Sacramento (CSUS)
- Northern California Construction Training (NCCT) for construction apprenticeships
- Sacramento Chinese Community Center
- AARP Back to Work 50+ at Hillsdale Job Center
- Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD)
- Immigration and Legal Services

## Featured Successful Practices

### Integrated Education and Training (IET)

#### ESL Paraeducator Training Program

Elk Grove USD launched an Integrated Education and Training (IET) for its Paraeducator Training Program, which prepares students to become Paraeducators working in schools. The 96-hour course combined ESL and the paraeducator instruction to accelerate success for ELLs. Topics of instruction included: Roles and Responsibilities of a Paraeducator; Special Education; Cornell Note-Taking; Paraeducator Training; Mandated Reported; and NCLB Paraeducator Study Guides.

#### Business Essentials Training Program

The Sacramento City USD, Charles A Jones Career & Education Center (CAJ) implemented the Business Essential IET Program in June 2018. The course combined ESL and business instruction to accelerate success for ELLs. Topics of instruction included: keyboarding, Microsoft Word and Excel, customer service, memo and letter writing, lists, flyers, resume development, how to self-market for employment, mock interview skills, actual employer interviews (practice), digital literacy, and career pathway development. Credentials received include: Business Essential IET Certificate of Completion, Customer Service Certificate, Typing Certificate, and 10-Key certificate and Data Entry & Accuracy.

#### Career Pathway Program

##### EGACE Training Institute – Medical Technician, Medical Office Assistant

Through its Career Training Institute, EGACE offers career training programs in the Allied Health Care field that lead to industry-recognized certificates. Each program includes multiple courses which can be taken separately or as a part of a comprehensive training program. Some programs include required or optional externships or clinical experiences. The programs, which can be completed under six months, offer small class sizes and are taught by teachers who have worked in the career pathway. In addition, students have access to a Job Developer for employment resources, such as job placement assistance. Programs offered include: Medical Assistant, Medical Office Specialist, Medical Administrative Assistant with Billing & Coding; and Billing and Coding Specialist.

#### Customer Success Stories

##### **Weiquan – China**

Prior to the ELL Workforce Navigator pilot project, Weiquan worked 80-hour weeks providing elder care for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS). Despite the long hours, Weiquan struggled to support himself and his spouse on his earnings. Before immigrating to the United States 30 years ago, Weiquan worked as an Electronics Design Engineer. Wanting to return to the mechanical and electrical repair industry, Weiquan chose to pursue training to become an HVAC Technician. Weiquan enrolled in the Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HVAC) training program at Charles A. Jones Career & Education Center on August 25, 2017, and successfully completed the program on May 17, 2018. Weiquan has since obtained full-time employment as an HVAC Installer with Beutler Air Conditioning & Plumbing for which he receives health benefits and a starting hourly wage of \$16.00. This is his first stop on his career path, with the next stop possibly as an HVAC Technician.

##### **Sahar – Afghanistan**

A Special Immigrant VISA holder from Afghanistan, Sahar was previously employed by the United States Embassy in Kabul as an IT Information Technician. Despite her experience and skills, Sahar was unable to secure employment upon emigrating to the United States. Sahar enrolled in the A+/CISCO (CCENT) Network + Preparation (Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications) at Charles A. Jones

Career & Education Center on August 4, 2017, and successfully completed the program on May 17, 2018. Sahar has since obtained full-time employment as a Computer PC Technician for Volt where she receives fringe and health benefits and a starting hourly wage of \$20.00.

**Mohammad – Afghanistan**

Mohammad, a Special Immigrant VISA holder from Afghanistan, previously worked for the U.S. Army Corps as a Quality Assurance Monitor. Unable to find work in the United States and with a family of six to support, Mohammad enrolled in the Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HVAC) training program at Charles A. Jones Career & Education Center on August 25, 2017, and successfully completed the program on May 17, 2018. Mohammad has since obtained full-time employment as an HVAC Technician with Sears for which he receives health benefits and a starting hourly wage of \$20.00.

**Abdul – Iraq**

Abdul is a refugee with a developmental disability that was working with one of SETA's partners in the Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA) grant, In- Alliance. The ELL was experiencing both cultural barriers and disability related barriers to obtaining employment. SETA determined that the best possible outcomes for this client would come from a co-enrollment in SETA's DEA program as well as the ELL program, in order to meet all of the needs of the client and his family. SETA pulled in an ELL Navigator and the DEA job developer to work together to address the needs of the client. The client was placed into a DEA subsidized On-the-Job Training, which he successfully completed, and is now continuing his employment unsubsidized. Without the engagement of both programs, it is unlikely that there would have been such a positive outcome so quickly.

**Gabriella – Mexico**

Gabriella was able to obtain employment as an Accounts Payable Supervisor, making \$27 an hour after enrolling in the ELL Navigator Pilot, and the ELL Navigator assisting her in getting her education credentials evaluated.