



INTERNATIONAL
RESCUE
COMMITTEE

Immigrant Youth and Young Adult Career and Education Technical Assistance Project



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This Learning Report provides a comprehensive overview of the Immigrant Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Career and Education Technical Assistance Project, implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation from 2024 to 2026.

It begins by outlining the project's purpose, scope, and context, including the demographic shifts, systemic barriers, and evolving immigration landscape shaping the experiences of immigrant YYAs across the United States. The report then details the technical assistance provided to 12 alternative education organizations, highlighting the modalities, pilot efforts, and areas of focus designed to strengthen provider capacity to deliver high-quality, culturally and linguistically accessible services.

Building on these activities, the report presents key learnings gathered throughout the project—from enrollment trends and digital access barriers to promising practices in outreach, English language instruction, financial capability support, and career navigation. The final section translates these findings into actionable recommendations for practitioners seeking to enhance their programs accessibility and effectiveness for diverse immigrant YYAs.

This Learning Report seeks to –

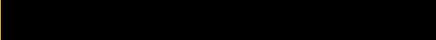
- ▶ Provide an overview of the activities undertaken as part of the Immigrant YYA Career and Education Technical Assistance Project
- ▶ Highlight key learnings and findings from this work
- ▶ Provide recommendations for delivering accessible and high-quality alternative education services for diverse immigrant YYA

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I. Introduction



The International Rescue Committee (IRC) serves over 200,000 newcomers annually through programs delivered in 30 U.S. cities. This work is designed to help families build thriving lives in their new communities. The IRC's approach incorporates a wide range of programming, including refugee resettlement, workforce development, financial capabilities services, health and wellness programming, youth services and comprehensive immigration services. The IRC brings an unparalleled reach into some of the United States' most diverse immigrant communities, serving families from more than 100 nations and employing staff that speak more than 30 languages.

With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the IRC implemented the Immigrant Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Career and Education Technical Assistance Project beginning in January of 2024 and ending in March of 2026. Through this project, the IRC has worked directly with 12 organizations to strengthen their capacity to serve disconnected YYAs from diverse immigrant communities. In working to support YYAs – especially those that are disconnected from education and quality jobs and careers – there is a growing need to intentionally focus on the diversity within this population and, in particular, on the growing number of YYAs that are also immigrants to the US. There are currently nearly 51 million immigrants in the U.S., the highest number on record. Immigrants make up more than 15% of the American population, and in some states like CA, FL, NY and NJ, nearly a quarter of the population are immigrants.

While immigrants are very active in the labor force (exceeding the labor force participation rates of native-born Americans year after year), they also have higher rates of poverty and lower median earnings (12% lower than native-born workers in 2021). Immigrant workers disproportionately fill low-wage jobs in sectors that often offer little opportunity for continued education or career and economic advancement. Immigrant women – especially young women with children – are especially likely to get derailed from education and career opportunities. In 2021, less than half (48.4%) of immigrant women with children under 3 were working, compared to 66.8% of their native-born counterparts. In 2024, foreign-born workers aged 25 and over with less than a high school diploma earned an average of \$717 per week, while those with a bachelor's or advanced degree earned nearly 2.4 times as much. Furthermore, immigrants are unbanked at nearly five times the rate of native-born Americans, with the FDIC reporting that 51% of foreign-born noncitizens are either unbanked or underbanked. This limits immigrants' ability to access traditional banking services such as loans and credit cards, and to build a credit history, which can impact housing opportunities, insurance premiums and access to essential services and utilities.

It is crucial for immigrant or refugee YYAs to receive opportunities to enroll and persist in education and career training activities as they move through the critical late teen and early 20s phase of their life. The programs and services they need to be successful must be responsive to their unique situation and needs.

II. The Immigrant YYA Career and Education Technical Assistance Project



Project Goal: Build the capacity of practitioners – including alternative high schools and youth re-engagement centers – to more effectively reach and serve immigrant and refugee YYA in identifying and achieving their education and career goals.

Engaging with 12 alternative education providers across the United States over the course of two years, the IRC provided in-depth technical assistance with the goal of supporting these organizations to deliver high-quality, accessible career and education services to diverse immigrant YYAs.

With nearly 51 million immigrants living in the United States, a growing number of immigrant YYAs are enrolling in alternative education options. According to the [Migration Policy Institute](#), these numbers include an increasingly diverse YYA population hailing from all over the world with trends showing fewer newcomers from Mexico and more from the global south broadly, including Central and South America, Asia, and Africa. Current global events have also driven an increased number of immigrants from Afghanistan and Ukraine to the United States.

The diversification of immigrants in the United States has taken place amidst a backdrop of a complicated and dynamic national discourse on immigration. There have been rapid changes to long-standing policies regarding the logistics of employment authorization documents, statuses such as temporary humanitarian parolee and temporary protected status (TPS), and general immigration enforcement. This has created a complex and confusing atmosphere for immigrant YYAs to navigate.

These two simultaneous shifts - the increasingly diverse immigrant population in the U.S. alongside a dynamic immigration context – have increased the urgency and importance of this work. Alternative education providers are experiencing an increasing number of immigrant YYAs enrolling in their programs as well as an increase in the challenges this population faces. Practitioners working with immigrant YYA need to manage connections to legal service providers, navigate a changing work authorization landscape, counsel youth facing racism and xenophobia in their communities, and advocate for their students with discriminatory employers, all while providing high-quality education and workforce development services.

To this end, the Immigrant YYA Career and Education Technical Assistance Project aimed to build the capacity of alternative education practitioners to navigate this complicated dynamic in support of their YYAs achieving their education and career goals.

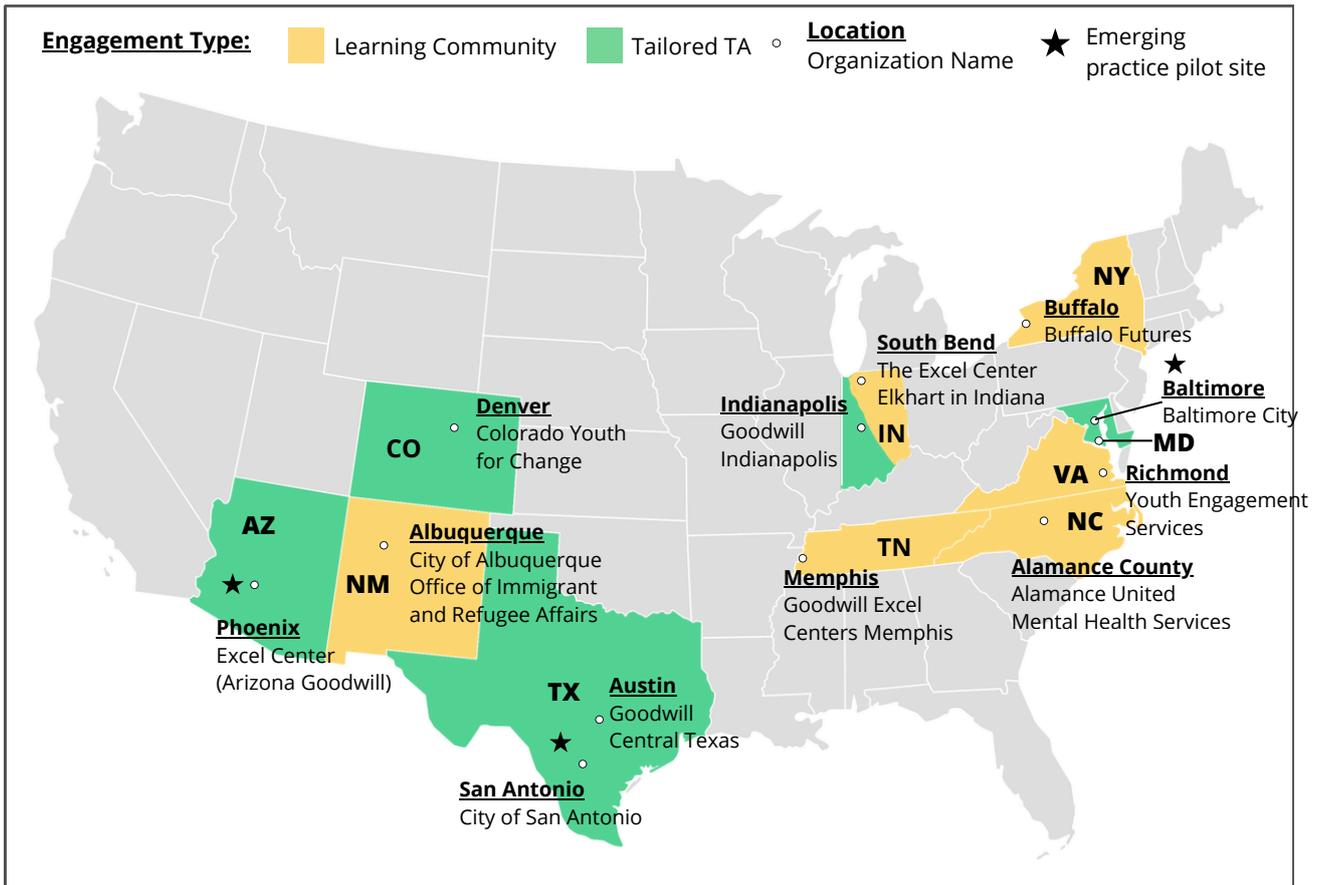
Technical assistance modalities delivered over the course of the Project included:

Technical Assistance Modality	Frequency
Project Kick-Off Needs Assessment Survey and Focus Group	Once per site
Site-Specific SWOT analysis on serving immigrant YYAs, including priority areas for capacity-building	Once per site
Site-Specific Activation Workshop	Once per site
Individual Coaching	Monthly
Community of Practice Meeting	Quarterly
Training Webinar	Quarterly
Learning Brief	2x/year
Learning and Exchange Convening	Once

Approaches for this technical assistance included both context-specific problem-solving with each individual organization and general training and capacity building. Topic areas of focus for this work included the following:

- ▶ Building culturally and linguistically accessible programs
- ▶ Implementing effective education and career assessment tools that are accessible to immigrant youth, including safe data storage and management
- ▶ Serving multi-level learners with no to low English language proficiency
- ▶ Best practices and considerations for credential and transcript evaluation
- ▶ Trauma-informed care for diverse immigrant populations in an alternative education setting
- ▶ Integrating digital literacy and digital access programs for learners with low to no English language proficiency
- ▶ Financial capability coaching in an alternative education setting for diverse immigrant YYAs
- ▶ Best practices for conducting outreach and recruitment in new American communities
- ▶ Delivering accessible career navigation services for immigrant YYA
- ▶ Integrating employer engagement into career and education programming in an alternative education setting
- ▶ Cultivating and maintaining high-quality partnerships to serve new American YYAs
- ▶ Navigating a dynamic workforce, education funding, and immigration context

YYA-serving organizations across the United States were invited to apply to participate in this technical assistance initiative. Of all applicants, six were selected to receive intensive tailored technical assistance as part of this project and six were selected to be part of the general learning community. While participating organizations hailed from across the country, the focus area for this work was primarily the south and southwest regions. All organizations received a stipend to support their time and effort to engage in this work.



In addition to the technical assistance component, the Goodwill Excel Center Phoenix, the City of San Antonio Next Level team, and Baltimore Public School’s Re-engagement center were selected to receive an additional stipend to pilot an emerging practice in service of their immigrant YYA population.

Baltimore Public Schools piloted enhanced outreach and community engagement with their local immigrant communities with the goal of increasing enrollments in their youth re-engagement center. They developed culturally and linguistically responsive outreach methods that adapted to the current national immigration context, including door-to-door outreach and in-language take-home resource packets. They targeted youth whose caregivers may have been deported, were currently working, or preferred to participate in re-engagement activities virtually.

Goodwill Excel Center Phoenix purchased manipulatives and classroom realia to support the build-out of their new English Immersion program. The new Immersions level one and two classes provide a dedicated space for English Language Learners with no to low English language proficiency to improve their language skills before joining the general education classes offered at the Excel Center.

The City of San Antonio’s Next Level Team designed a program to provide career and education mentorship to work-authorized Afghan youth ages 18-24. This program will run for 8 weeks, beginning in January of 2026, and include two cohorts of ten youth each – one exclusively female-identifying and one exclusively male-identifying. Topics will include cultural competency training, job readiness, and digital literacy, among others. Participants will also complete a paid internship as part of the mentorship program.

III. Key Learnings

Throughout this project, the technical assistance team gathered key learnings from the project applications, kick-off needs assessments, routine grantee engagements, and Site-Specific Activation Workshops. Detailed highlights of these findings include:

Learning 1: A strong need for ongoing and responsive training on tailoring alternative education work to be culturally and linguistically accessible exists nationwide.



Youth-serving organizations in the alternative education space are enrolling an increasing number of diverse immigrant YYAs and have a strong desire for additional training and capacity building to ensure their programs are effective for this population.

All participating organizations reported growth in immigrant enrollment over the past five years, and most indicated that immigrants and refugees make up a significantly larger share of their programs than in the surrounding community. The most requested areas for technical assistance were: 1) collecting data related to immigrant YYA populations and 2) strengthening approaches to developing English skills in tandem with basic and occupational skills.

Program	Percentage of Immigrants in Program	Percentage of Immigrants in Local Community
Goodwill Excel Center Phoenix	20%	14.5%
Goodwill Central Texas	35%	18.3%
Colorado Youth for Change	17%	12%
Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana	71%	9.4%
Baltimore Public Schools	73%	11%

A variety of **approaches** to ensuring culturally and linguistically accessible programs and classrooms stood out among program participants:



While most practitioners had at least one Spanish-speaking staff member, very few had team members who spoke any other language that aligned with their non-Spanish-speaking immigrant students. **Youth service providers that intentionally hired staff from the communities that they served – bringing with them cultural and linguistic competency – saw stronger community engagement and better career and education outcomes for their immigrant YYAs students.** Another successful strategy was engaging with student and family volunteers from the target community. This served as a leadership opportunity and a resume-building activity for the students that volunteered their time.



Leveraging real-time language-access and interpretation tools, such as phone-based apps, PowerPoint voiceovers or subtitles, Zoom and Skype interpretation functions, and AI-based tools like OtterAI and Jamworks, provided immigrant YYAs with greater opportunities to learn both language and content in otherwise English-only classrooms. Teachers and administrators across youth service providers noted that **getting staff buy-in was an important first step, especially for those concerned that virtual tools lack a personal touch.** However, overall, they hailed these tools as critical to ensuring students did not fall behind on content learning due to language limitations in the classroom, and had the ability to express themselves in their language of choice during intake sessions or other one-on-one meetings. Staff felt most confident using these tools when they had set them up and practiced using them in advance.



Family and community engagement in immigrant YYAs' education and career progress led to greater student engagement. Providers that invited family members and parents to career navigation meetings, milestone ceremonies, and parent-teacher meetings – *and specifically ensured that accessibility accommodations such as interpretation were included – reported stronger student outcomes for their immigrant YYAs.* Providers also noted the importance of offering culturally-appropriate food choices.



Participants with no or very low English abilities struggle to succeed in general education classes, even when supplemented with a language learning course. Students with very limited English learn best in a dedicated language learning space intended to develop English language foundations before joining a general education track.

Due to the greatly increased population of immigrant and refugee students who had very limited English language abilities, the Goodwill Excel Center in Central Texas developed a specialized ESOL Academy at one of its campuses. This academy provides English language learners with a dedicated space to gain language proficiency before they transition into general education courses.

Across geographies and contexts, new American YYAs in alternative education programs face similar **challenges**. Most common among them include:



New American YYAs have varied levels of digital skills and digital access with many lacking the tools and capabilities required to succeed in a high school education program. Digital skills and access are both critical components of success in career and education pathways and must be addressed at the outset of alternative education programming to ensure success.



The ongoing national dialogue regarding immigrants and subsequent rapid changes in work authorization rules and status types is complex for new American YYAs to navigate. A complex immigration system compounded by quickly evolving rules has left immigrant YYA a step behind. With so many immigrants in the United States impacted by these changes, legal service providers across the country are over capacity – leaving very limited options for new American YYAs to connect with professional support to navigate new circumstances. Finding a legal service provider that has the cultural and linguistic competency to best support these young people is nearly impossible in many locations. **This has left many immigrant YYAs unsure about their abilities to work legally, pursue job training opportunities, and, in some cases, pursue higher education.**

The **current immigration dialogue** in the U.S. has affected immigrant YYAs access to education and workforce development in multiple ways. Beyond challenges related to work authorization and legal status, reductions in funding, changes in program implementation and shifts in public perception have reshaped education and workforce systems at a foundational level.



Funding to serve vulnerable populations such as immigrant youth has become increasingly limited. This has impacted programs that support immigrant youth across the education landscape. Of particular note is the reduction in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes nationally due to funding reductions. Throughout this project, re-engagement centers and Excel centers alike reported a shortage of seats in ESOL classes in all of their local areas. Students in need of additional language support were extremely lucky to get a seat in an ESOL class at a local adult school or community college, with most being added to multi-year-long wait lists. Providers also noted that government funding sources for ESOL have become increasingly difficult to navigate for the communities they serve, citing an example where ESOL funding excluded immigrant populations.



Immigrant YYAs – even those with appropriate documentation to be in the U.S. - have become reluctant to participate in in-person events and services for fear of engagement with immigration authorities. Immigrant students became more likely to drop out of school, become unresponsive to re-engagement center staff or be unwilling or unable to attend in-person community events due to fear of apprehension by law enforcement or community harassment.



Employers, already reluctant to hire youth, became increasingly cautious about hiring immigrant youth. Despite national labor laws that prohibit discrimination based on national origin, practitioners reported increased hesitancy from employers to hire immigrant youth for roles, citing the need for all candidates to have English fluency (even when this was not previously required) and to have specific I-9 documents beyond the federal guidelines (although requiring employees to have specific I-9 documents is illegal). Some practitioners noted an unfortunate increase in employers exploiting immigrant YYAs by making them work long hours and underpaying them for their labor. This made it increasingly difficult for immigrant YYAs to earn an income while completing their schooling and to consider their employment options after graduation.

Learning 2: Strategic delivery and services uniquely tailored to immigrant YYA are critical to their success in alternative education pathways.



Culturally and linguistically accessible career navigation and exploration support are critical for immigrant YYAs to overcome barriers to education and career progress.

Career exploration – the process of learning about different occupations and industries to identify career paths that align with an individual's skills and interests, as well as local labor market opportunities - empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their education and career paths that are both personally fulfilling and economically sustainable in the short and long term. Newcomer YYAs may face language barriers that prevent self-guided career exploration, experience limited exposure to diverse jobs and careers available to them, operate within cultural and family contexts that may contribute to a limited set of beliefs about possible career paths, and experience financial pressure to prioritize immediate earnings over continued education and training opportunities. Career exploration facilitated by a culturally and linguistically aligned navigator or mentor can help to mitigate or overcome these barriers. Mentorship is particularly important for YYAs who are not sure what they want to do yet or who find the career navigation process to be overwhelming or intimidating.



Partnerships that provide tailored culturally and linguistically accessible wrap-around services and supports for immigrant YYAs are critical to their success in education and career pursuits.

Immigrant YYAs have diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs. Each of their journeys to the United States is unique, and as such, each has a very particular set of circumstances. Plugging these youth into culturally and linguistically aligned community-based organizations allows them to receive tailored support that meets them where they are and provides them the best chance to succeed in their educational and career journeys. Practically speaking, this means connecting immigrant YYAs to legal service providers, mental health support, workforce training, ESOL classes, employers, and others who have cultural and linguistic competency aligned with the individual youth, which will lead to the strongest outcomes. It is challenging for a single organization to meet all these needs, and as such, partnership and coordination among partners are critical to student success.

Building and accessing this network of partners can be exceedingly difficult in rural areas. For example, the network of Goodwill Excel Centers in Indiana frequently reported a lack of social service institutions within reach of their centers and partner organizations that did exist were often over capacity with long wait lists. This lack of wrap around support further increases demand on the alternative education providers to provide comprehensive services to their immigrant YYA.

Partnerships with public workforce institutions have the potential to provide an additional layer of support to immigrant YYAs with employment and job training. American Job Centers (AJCs) throughout the country specialize in providing free, accessible job readiness training, covering the cost of credential certification programs, and connecting job seekers with barriers to high-quality employment opportunities. Although the AJC system works differently across geographies and can be difficult to navigate for immigrants, its mission remains the same and as such, can be a valuable partner for alternative education providers in supporting their YYAs with career opportunities. For proactive alternative education providers, building a strong partnership with their local AJC and public workforce system can unlock benefits for the immigrant YYAs they serve.



IV. Recommendations

Based on lessons learned and key findings from this technical assistance work, the IRC Economic Empowerment Technical Unit recommends the following strategies to alternative education service providers to maintain programming that is accessible to and effective for diverse immigrant YYAs:

Recommendation 1: Build staff capacity to deliver culturally and linguistically accessible services that are relevant and responsive to immigrant YYAs.



Provide routine training to all alternative education provider staff, across roles and departments, on creating and maintaining culturally and linguistically accessible services.

All team members have a role to play in ensuring services are effective for all YYAs, especially populations with unique barriers. In the nation's current context, where the opportunities, limitations and regulations behind different immigration statuses continue to change and the experience of immigrant YYAs remains evolving and complex, ongoing professional development is critical to ensuring services remain responsive and aligned with the needs of new American YYA. This training should include:

- Understanding the opportunities and limitations of common immigration statuses
- The common challenges faced by immigrant YYAs new to the U.S.
- Best practices for centering diverse immigrant voices
- Delivering services through a trauma-informed approach
- Fostering community building and adopting a strengths-based approach specific to serving new American groups.
- Multi-cultural calendar awareness

In order to do this effectively and promote accountability, providers must determine who is responsible for coordinating and delivering the training.

The following resources offer foundational knowledge and training in creating and maintaining culturally and linguistically accessible services:

- [Switchboard Refugee & Newcomer Services 101](#)
- [Switchboard: Child, Youth & Family Services Resource Hub](#) – contains toolkits, guides, webinars and family engagement strategies specific to immigrant YYAs
- [The Center on Immigration and Child Welfare Initiative Inclusive Practices Training Series](#) – Modules cover culturally responsive approaches, political context and inclusive organizational practices



Hire and maintain a dedicated Immigrant Services Strategist, or related role, to provide tailored and timely support to immigrant YYA students.

During the project period, the Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana assigned a team member to serve in the role of Immigrant Services Strategist, serving new American students across the Goodwill's Indiana network. This team member regularly assessed the needs of their immigrant students and worked to address them; for example, building connections with local legal service providers, resettlement agencies and ESOL programs, conducting research into the process for foreign credential and transcript evaluation, and helping youth to navigate the dynamic immigration context. This individual intentionally built relationships with Indiana's local immigrant communities, building trust and channels of communication that led to stronger outcomes for the Goodwill, the new American communities of Indiana and the immigrant YYA students in their programs. The Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana's Immigrant Services Strategist position provides a template for other youth service providers looking to assign a point person for ensuring program accessibility to new American students across their organizations' many areas of operation. Centralizing this responsibility provides a single point of both accountability and the information necessary to ensure program effectiveness for immigrant YYAs. Other participating organizations expressed an interest in hiring a staff member to serve in this role, but had not yet done so for various reasons, including funding.



Hire and maintain a trained financial coach who has experience serving immigrant YYAs from different backgrounds.

Financial capabilities are foundational skills for economic mobility, yet immigrant YYAs often face systematic barriers to accessing relevant and trustworthy financial education and coaching. Many young immigrants arrive in the United States with limited exposure to and understanding of formal financial systems and may carry different cultural understandings of money management. Alternative education providers have the opportunity to equip young people in their programs with essential life skills that foster the financial capability necessary for achieving economic independence and stability. Specifically, financial coaching, accessible and tailored to the immigrant experience, helps individuals apply financial knowledge to their unique circumstances. By integrating financial coaching into their programs in a culturally responsive and linguistically accessible manner, providers have the opportunity to support YYAs with building confidence and self-sufficiency that will extend beyond their time in the classroom. Several of the participating organizations had a financial coach on staff. Others relied on community partnerships.

When it's not an option for an organization to maintain a financial coach on staff, consider exploring one of the following partner or remote options:

- [IRC's Supporting Access to Financial Empowerment \(SAFE\) initiative](#) aims to empower newcomers as they begin their journey to financial stability and economic security in the U.S. SAFE offers free in-language financial education and coaching services with certified financial coaches and low interest and fee-based rates for auto, education, immigration and personal loans with 0% APR for credit-building loans.
- Connect and partner with a [local financial empowerment center \(FEC\)](#). Located throughout the country, FECs provide free, 1:1 financial counseling along with a multitude of related services.
- Connect and partner with a [local Financial Opportunity Network \(FOC\)](#). FOC sites offer career and financial coaching programs for families on a low to moderate income so they can build effective money habits. Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) has a network of more than 120 FOCs across the country, embedded in local community organizations that are trusted and known for their history of providing quality services.

Recommendation 2: Engage a team of aligned local organizations to provide wrap-around supports, population-specific expertise, deeper community connections, and additional service offerings.



Engage in a local immigrant-serving partnership network to coordinate services across organizations.

Most geographies across the United States have networks of immigrant serving organizations that meet routinely to align efforts, share resources, engage in advocacy, and refer clients to each other. This engagement supports the creation of a rolodex of aligned organizations with different areas of expertise. These partners may be able to cross-refer participants or provide wraparound supports.



Partner with a resettlement agency.

Resettlement agencies - including faith-based resettlement agencies- have deep expertise in serving diverse immigrant populations, including YYAs. They possess considerable cultural and linguistic expertise tailored to the immigrant communities in a particular geographic region. They also often have ESOL programs, legal service components, and a variety of complementary services targeting new Americans. Alternative education providers can benefit from this expertise as well as from being able to refer immigrant YYAs to the wrap-around supports that resettlement agencies offer. Resettlement agencies can advise on the specifics of who qualifies for their services based on the funding sources.



Build Strong Employer Partnerships

Effective employer partnerships are a two-way street. Employers can make valuable contributions to program design, job-readiness, and career navigation activities for immigrant YYAs. They can also provide work-based learning or internship opportunities, and hire immigrant YYA for open roles. On the other side, youth serving providers can be a wonderful support to employers who are engaging with immigrant communities by:

- Supporting employers with understanding diverse I-9 documents for legal, work-authorized immigrants.
- Providing interpretation services during training and onboarding.
- Serving as a cultural liaison and coaching employers on culturally and linguistically inclusive workplace practices.

Recommendation 3: Offer specific services for immigrant students that are responsive to their unique needs.



Offer virtual service options to ensure at-risk immigrant YYA communities have options to continue their education when they do not feel safe leaving their homes.

In today's dynamic immigration environment - where deportation raids outside schools and community centers have become common and individuals with legal status have been swept up in immigration enforcement efforts - many immigrant YYAs and their families do not feel safe leaving their homes. This has led to Goodwill Excel and re-engagement centers to report an increasing number of immigrant YYAs dropping out of programs, being unwilling to return to school or youth programming, and becoming unreachable. Although in-person learning has traditionally been hailed as more effective, in today's environment, providing remote options for this population is critical in order to keep them engaged and progressing towards their education and career goals.

Baltimore Public Schools Re-engagement center reported a significant decline in enrollment over the past year in their elementary programs due to an increase in immigration enforcement efforts. They did not see this same decline in their middle and high school programs, both of which have virtual options.



The benefits of remote services extend to partner engagement and wrap-around support.

For youth service providers operating in rural areas or "service deserts," remote service delivery options can fill missing links for immigrant YYAs. For example, if a legal service provider with a specific linguistic capacity does not exist in a particular geography, having the capacity to connect an immigrant YYA remotely to one with such capacity may be a strong alternative option. In order for this to be effective, it is important to ensure that immigrant YYAs have the digital literacy skills needed to engage in a virtual meeting, or to have a staff member available to support.



Provide a dedicated language learning space for immigrant YYAs with very low English language skills prior to enrolling them in content learning courses with other learners.

While intermediate and above language learners may thrive in their language acquisition in general education classes, English language learners with low to no English skills learn best by starting in a dedicated language learning space. In practice, this could look like the creation of a specific English immersion class (or series) for immigrant YYAs to complete before moving on to High School classes, or a referral to a local community college or adult school for external study. If these options are not realistic, other alternatives may be explored that create dedicated space for these early language learners to acquire a foundational level of English before moving forward. Providers noted that additional support would be required for learners who did not have foundational literacy skills in their home language.

V. Conclusion

The Immigrant YYA Career and Education Technical Assistance Project highlights the urgency of strengthening systems that support immigrant YYAs as they navigate education, workforce entry, and new community landscapes. The demographic shifts in alternative education participants and rapidly evolving immigration environment in the U.S. illuminate the importance of alternative education providers to be equipped with the knowledge, tools, and partnerships necessary to respond effectively.

Immigrant YYAs bring extraordinary resilience, language abilities, cultural assets, and experiences, yet they continue to face systemic barriers in pursuing education and careers—from limited English proficiency and digital access challenges to complex legal landscapes and discriminatory labor market practices. Without intentional, ongoing investment in culturally and linguistically accessible services, these YYAs risk being left behind.

The findings, learnings, and recommendations in this report make clear that building organizational capacity to serve immigrant YYAs is not a temporary or peripheral need—it is a long-term imperative for creating equitable pathways to opportunity. As immigration patterns continue to diversify and federal and state policies shift at unprecedented speed, practitioners must remain agile, well-trained, and deeply community-centered in their approaches. The strategies and tools included in this Learning Report offer a roadmap for providers committed to meeting this moment. By embracing these practices, alternative education organizations can play a transformative role in expanding access, strengthening belonging, and unlocking the full potential of immigrant YYAs across the U.S.

