

English Proficiency

What Employers Need For Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce



U. S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration



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ENGLISH PROFICIENCY: WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED FOR THEIR SPANISH-SPEAKING WORKFORCE

FINAL REPORT

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By

The United States-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation

and

Harrison Maldonado Associates, Inc. (HMA)

Prepared by:

The Bulow Group, Inc.

Under the direction of:

Al Zapanta, President & CEO

U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Immigrant workers are becoming an increasingly integral part of America's workforce. According to a recent report by Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, new immigrants made up nearly half of the overall growth in the nation's workforce during the 1990s. Hispanics represent a growing segment of the immigrant population and of the U.S. workforce. Fifty-six percent of all new immigrants entering the workforce between 2000 and 2004 were Hispanic. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Hispanic workforce is projected to grow 2.9 percent annually between 2002 and 2012, totaling approximately 24 million by 2012. While some Hispanics are recent immigrants to the United States and entering the workforce, others have been long standing workforce participants. In either case, Hispanics face challenges in the workforce including: more than two in five Hispanics age 25 and older have not graduated from high school, creating a need for basic and occupational skills; two in five Hispanics are foreign born, presenting language and cultural barriers; and Hispanics are more likely to live in poverty than other segments of the population.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) recognizes the needs of the growing Hispanic worker population, and has responded by establishing a Hispanic Worker Initiative. The initiative helps Hispanic workers take advantage of job opportunities in high-growth sectors of the economy. One of the key components of the initiative is to identify the employment barriers that Hispanic workers face, especially those who are limited English proficient (LEP) Hispanic. English proficiency is a key employment success and advancement factor for Hispanics.

As part of its strategy to improve the employment outcomes of Hispanic workers, DOL commissioned HMA and the U.S. Mexico Chamber of Commerce to conduct a study of employers of LEP Hispanic workers. The study's purpose was to determine the level of English proficiency employers require of their Hispanic workforce to remain competitive in the global economy. The study focused on four key areas: recruitment, training, advancement, and retention. The results of the study provide DOL with an employer perspective regarding the

types of workforce development programs that are needed to assist Hispanics obtain language, basic and occupational skills to succeed in the workplace. This report identifies promising practices and recommends strategies for implementing programs to help businesses meet the needs of their LEP Hispanic workers and increase overall productivity.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study consisted of a series of focus groups with business participants, executive interviews with business and/or industry leaders, executive roundtables utilizing established business networks, and a survey of small and medium-sized manufacturers in two border states, Arizona and New Mexico.

The main component of the study was the series of employer focus groups. At the request of the U.S.-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation, the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce used its network of chapters to convene five focus groups in communities with large Hispanic populations and diverse high-growth industries. Focus groups were conducted in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 16, 2004; Houston, Texas on September 9, 2004; Dallas, Texas on September 29, 2004; Chicago, Illinois on October 21, 2004; and Irvine, California on December 7, 2004.

- Executive roundtable discussions with established business networks were held in DePere, Wisconsin on August 18, 2004 and Ft. Worth, Texas on February 2, 2005, using a focus group format.
- One-on-one interviews with executives of Tyson Foods, Inc. in Springdale, Arkansas on November 17, 2004 and February 2, 2005, and QuadGraphics in Sussex, Wisconsin on January 27, 2005 were conducted for greater depth of information.
- A web-based survey of small and medium manufacturers in Arizona and New Mexico was conducted during September/October, 2004, to gauge Spanish requirements for training and workforce development by small and medium manufacturers.

A total of 161 participating employers represented eight high-growth sectors of the economy: manufacturing, transportation, health care, information technology, construction, hospitality, biotechnology, and energy.

FINDINGS

Information gathered during the focus groups, executive interviews, executive roundtables, and the survey of small and medium-sized manufacturers resulted in the following findings:

- Employers are investing in training their LEP workforce, but believe they do not have the sufficient training resources and tools available to help them. Rather, they are utilizing ad hoc solutions such as developing communication materials that are language free and rely only on colors and pictures.
- Employers predicted that their LEP workforce, currently in entry-level positions, is the base of their future management pool. Therefore, investing in LEP individuals to obtain the necessary English-language, literacy and technology skills is critical to their continued competitiveness.
- Employers in the manufacturing sector expressed interest in the development of sector-specific language acquisition and communication models that would allow them to retain a high rate of production and keep costs low, while helping their LEP workforce advance in their careers.
- Employers believed overall that once the language barriers of LEP Hispanic employees are resolved, they will be able to promote LEP Hispanic employees. However, employers recognized that in the near future, a Spanish-speaking customer base will impact their approach to management training and customer services.
- Employers expressed a willingness to invest in their Spanish-speaking workforce with solutions that work, such as industry-based models that demonstrate results in employee English-language acquisition, as well as their attainment of reading, mathematical and technological skills.
- Employers stated that public services delivered at their sites are the most effective in integrating both needed language skill sets and occupational skills.
- Employers have discovered new ways to work together, often relinquishing competitive approaches in favor of finding solutions for their LEP Hispanic workforce language training and skills development. For instance, in the construction sector, employers indicated they temporarily hire each other's employees during down times to retain a skilled workforce available for all companies in the area. In Wisconsin employers are working together to bring resources to the table to help train their LEP Hispanic workers.
- Employers expressed an interest in having the government provide innovative financial support to offset the expenses related to training LEP individuals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study call for remedies that can immediately and positively impact employers. Policymakers can offer incentives that help businesses offset the costs of language training and skill acquisition, and develop sector-specific models for training and skill acquisition that benefit businesses by industry. Employers believe they would benefit from the establishment of a web-based portal to disseminate promising practices; identify common problems; and provide opportunities to network with other employers in their respective industries about what is working. LEP Hispanic employees would benefit from the development of a learning channel that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, offering learning opportunities that fit into their schedules, since many Hispanics work more than one job.

CONCLUSION

Participating employers identified the immediate challenges as well as long-term benefits available to their LEP Hispanic workforce. Challenges include communication barriers that affect costs associated with safety and productivity in the areas of recruiting, training, promotion and retention. They are actively seeking effective solutions by investing in and developing ad hoc training approaches, and participating in networks to collectively find solutions. Other short-term solutions include partnerships with community colleges to train LEP Hispanic workers and with elementary schools from which they hope to draw future employees. Employers are concurrently using long-term approaches for training, promotion and retention to prepare the LEP Hispanic workforce to advance into management positions in the future.

An existing fear of employers that their investment will not pay off if their workers follow through on claims to “return to Mexico” is beginning to fade as more of this cohort population invests in homes and businesses in the U.S. Hispanic loyalty to supportive employers and the emerging customer base of Spanish speakers that can be serviced by employees who speak Spanish and English have helped to reinforce employer willingness to continue language and occupational training efforts.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	7
▶ PROBLEM STATEMENT	7
▶ THE HISPANIC POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES	7
▶ THE HISPANIC WORKFORCE IN THE UNITED STATES	8
▶ HISPANIC WORKER INITIATIVE	9
▶ A POSITIVE ECONOMIC CLIMATE	9
▶ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE	10
II. RESEARCH METHODS	11
▶ DATA SOURCES	11
▶ ANALYTIC APPROACH	15
▶ POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION	15
III. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	16
▶ FOUR AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT: RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, PROMOTION, AND RETENTION	16
▶ SECTOR DISTINCTIONS	21
▶ EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT IN LEP HISPANIC WORKFORCE	22
▶ WHAT WORKS	24
▶ EMPLOYER COSTS	24
▶ WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT	25
IV. DISCUSSION: NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS	27
▶ MAJOR FINDINGS	32
▶ POLICY IMPLICATIONS	33
▶ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	33
V. APPENDICES	
▶ APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS (P. 36)	
▶ APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS (P. 40)	
▶ APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR SMALL MANUFACTURERS IN THE BORDER STATES (P. 43)	
▶ APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES: MILWAUKEE (P.48), HOUSTON (P. 54), DALLAS (P. 62), CHICAGO (P. 68), AND IRVINE (P. 75)	
▶ APPENDIX E: EXECUTIVE MEETING SUMMARIES (P. 80)	
▶ APPENDIX F: EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE SUMMARIES: EWDN (P. 89) AND TMAC (P. 93)	
▶ APPENDIX G: SURVEY REPORT OF ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO MANUFACTURING FIRMS (P. 96)	

INTRODUCTION

▶ **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Hispanic workers are a large and growing component of the American workforce. A recent report by the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) shows that one in five U.S. residents speaks a language other than English at home—Spanish being the most common with 28 million speakers. Hispanics are often hindered in their ability to obtain and retain employment and advance in the job market due to limited English comprehension and articulation proficiency, and deficiencies in basic and occupational skills.

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of English proficiency employers need of their Hispanic workforce to remain competitive in the global economy. The study focused on four key areas: recruitment, training, advancement, and retention. By understanding employers' English-proficiency needs, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) can develop more effective programs, strategies and policies to help limited-English speaking workers become successful.

▶ **THE HISPANIC POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

The U.S. Census projects the Hispanic population will reach 40 million, or 13.5 percent of the U.S. population in 2005. This represents an increase of more than 50 percent since 1990, making Hispanics the largest minority population in the United States. Since 1990, almost every state has experienced nearly 100 percent increase of its Hispanic population. In two states, Georgia and North Carolina, the Hispanic population has grown 300 percent during this same period. Hispanics in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas represent 25 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). In addition, the Hispanic population in the United States is projected to increase rapidly from 1995 to 2025, accounting for 44 percent of the growth in the Nation's population. That is, 32 million Hispanics out of 72 million persons projected to be added to the Nation's population (Campbell, Paul R., 2996, Population Projections for States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2025, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, PPL-47).

Educational attainment of Hispanics lags behind non-Hispanic Whites. According to the U.S. Census, Hispanics age 25 and older were less likely to have graduated from high school compared to non-Hispanic Whites, and the proportion with a bachelor's degree or more was much lower for Hispanics than non-Hispanic Whites. These statistics indicate that Hispanics are at a disadvantage for career progression and advancement due to lack of basic skills. Those who have attained professional certification in their country of origin, however, often cannot contribute to their profession in the United States because they (1) lack English proficiency or (2) may not be aware of existing international education certification agencies (U.S. Census, 2002).

▶ **THE HISPANIC WORKFORCE IN THE UNITED STATES**

A report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Labor Force Projections to 2012: The Graying of the U.S. Workforce) indicates that in 2002 Hispanics represented 12.4 percent of the labor force, with nearly 18 million workers. Because of their higher levels of migration, nearly 8 million Hispanics are projected to enter the labor force during the period 2002-2012. Reflecting their relatively young age composition, only 2 million Hispanics are expected to leave the labor force, therefore the number of Hispanics in the labor force is projected to grow by more than 5.8 million. By 2012, the Hispanic labor force is anticipated to reach 23.8 million. The Hispanic share of the labor force is expected to grow because of overall population growth—from higher birth levels and increased migration—and because of increases in the rate of employed Hispanic women.

According to a report from Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies (April 2003) new immigrants accounted for nearly half of the overall growth in the nation's labor force during the 1990s. The U.S. labor market reliance on foreign workers has grown dramatically over the past four years with foreign workers representing 60 percent of the civilian labor force growth, capturing all of the net gains in employment between 2000 and 2004, despite the recession of 2001, the jobless recovery of 2002-2003, and post-September 11 restrictions on immigration.

The report also found that at no other time in its history has the U.S. been so dependent on immigrants for growth in the labor force. Hispanics account for the majority of this group, with

migrants from Latin America playing particularly key roles. More than half of all new labor force immigrants (56 percent) who came to the U.S. between 2000 and 2004 were Hispanic.

▶ **THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S HISPANIC WORKER INITIATIVE**

Recognizing the unique needs of the growing Hispanic worker population the U.S. Department of Labor launched the Hispanic Worker Initiative in 2004. The initiative is a strategic effort to prepare Hispanic workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high-growth/high-demand and economically vital industries and sectors of the American economy. One of the key components of the initiative is to identify the employment barriers that Hispanic workers face, especially those who are LEP Hispanic. English proficiency is a key factor for Hispanics' employment success and advancement. Therefore the initiative is designed to ensure that worker training and career development resources in the public workforce investment system are targeted to helping Hispanic workers gain the skills and competencies they need to obtain jobs and build successful careers in growing industries.

▶ **A POSITIVE ECONOMIC CLIMATE**

The U.S. economic forecast has been moving in a positive direction since the recession of 2000 and the negative economic effects felt from events surrounding September 11, 2001. According to Michael Moskow, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, in 2003 businesses were optimistic that the economy was ready to accelerate. Although most sectors experienced modest growth during that time, the manufacturing sector was waiting for definitive signs of a stronger economy before hiring new workers and replacing equipment. During the second half of last year, real Gross Domestic Product expanded at the fastest rate in nearly 20 years. Since then, economic growth has expanded for all sectors, including manufacturing, at a solid pace (U.S. Economic Outlook, 2004).

In February 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor reported that the unemployment rate fell to a three-year low of 5.2 percent from 5.4 percent in December 2004. Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao said in an interview that, "Our economy remains very robust. We are seeing productivity begin to increase. Because of that we expect greater numbers in job creation." (Bloomberg News, February 4, 2005). An example of this optimism is found at Tyson Foods Inc., the world's largest meat processor, and a participant employer in this study. The company plans to invest

\$100 million in a plant in Texas to create the company's biggest processing facility for fresh beef and pork that will employ about 1,600 workers.

▶ **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE**

By understanding what employers need for their LEP Hispanic workforce, and how employer and employee achievements are vital to sustaining business growth and industry success in global markets, the private and public sectors can better collaborate in the development of targeted interventions to address challenges and opportunities faced by employers, and help LEP Hispanic workers advance in their careers. To accomplish this, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) sought the assistance of private sector entities to convene employers to frankly discuss these issues and report back their findings. The U.S.-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation provided leadership in utilizing the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce's network to convene employer groups in geographical areas with large numbers of LEP Hispanic workers and to survey additional U.S. employers.

RESEARCH METHODS

In addition to the literature review of materials provided by the DOLETA, data were gathered from four sources: focus groups, executive interviews, executive roundtable discussions, and surveys that added depth and allowed for triangulation of the results to ensure validity.

▶ DATA SOURCES

Literature Review

Materials provided included U.S. Census Bureau 2000 data that identified geographic areas with large Hispanic populations including Arizona, California, Illinois, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, and Wisconsin among others. DOLETA also provided information on the President's 12 high-growth sectors.

Study Team and Methodology

Business executives contributed to the study by participating in the focus group meetings, executive interviews and roundtable discussions, and a web-based survey using Manufacturing Extension Partnership Management Services (MEP MS) Supply Point techniques.

The following team conducted the study:

- Al Zapanta, Chairman of the U.S.-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation, Project Director.
- Kay Bulow, President, The Bulow Group, Project Coordinator.
- June Suhling, Labor Consultant, Focus Group Facilitator.
- Carol Crockett, Ph.D., Educational Policy Consultant, Analyst/Writer.
- Gerardo Funes, Communications Director, U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, Economic Researcher.
- MEP Management Services, Inc. conducted the web-based survey.

The study focused on the following specific questions:

- What do employers perceive as necessary for their limited-English proficient employees to succeed?

- How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee's position in the company, and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?
- What level and/or type of management training programs are currently being offered to limited-English proficient employees?
- What public or private programs do employers use to recruit, train and retain employees so that all employees, including new immigrants with limited-English proficiency have the necessary tools to succeed?

This report provides the results of the focus group meetings, executive interviews, executive roundtable discussions, and survey responses conducted between July 1, 2004 and February 2, 2005, as well as recommendations for ways employers can more effectively address English-language proficiency.

Focus Group Meetings

The U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce utilized its network of offices and chapters to convene five focus groups in communities with large Hispanic populations and diverse high-growth industries. Sites were also chosen for their urban, cultural and economic vibrancy. All metro areas in the study are experiencing population growth and support substantial numbers of jobs. Employment increases in the study sites are expected to outpace job declines. In addition, business start-ups are expected to increase in these areas. Focus groups were held as follows:

- Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 16, 2004,
- Houston, Texas on September 9, 2004;
- Dallas, Texas on September 29, 2004;
- Chicago, Illinois on October 21, 2004, and
- Irvine, California on December 7, 2004.

At each location, U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce staff identified employer participants, issued letters of invitation, and made logistical arrangements for the focus group. The letters of invitation explained the purpose of the study and the expected outcomes as outlined in the interview protocol guidelines. The letter also included the meeting time, date, and place, and a statement of confidentiality with respect to the information provided by participants. Each invitation was accompanied by the study questions in advance, to allow participants sufficient time to develop thorough and thoughtful responses. Chamber officials provided the study team

with advance information on each participating employer as well as general employment information about the area.

Focus group participants held senior executive positions ranging from president and chief operating officer to vice president of human resources, diversity representative, and senior trade association executives. Participants gave generously of their time and expertise in frank discussions of their companies' business needs and practices in relation to LEP Hispanic workforce.

To ensure consistency, the same facilitator conducted every focus group. The focus groups convened at approximately 10:00 a.m. and adjourned before 2:00 p.m. each lasting between two-and-a-half to three hours including a working lunch

Following the first focus group, the study team determined it would be useful to participants to open subsequent meetings with a 30 minute overview of the role of the U.S.-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation in the study, provide information about the growing Hispanic population in the United States and levels of Hispanic educational attainment, as well as an overview of the purpose of the study and how it was being conducted. Protocols were developed in advance and followed at each focus group meetings (Appendix A) to assure that the study questions were answered and provided comparable data among the sites. Most focus group meetings were tape recorded and professionally transcribed. At the conclusion of each focus group meeting, the study team convened to discuss the results and determine whether or not to request an executive interview to obtain additional data from participants and provide greater depth and nuance with the analysis. A written summary of each meeting was developed and sent to participants for their comments (Appendices D 1-5).

Executive Interviews

One-on-One executive interviews were designed to elicit greater depth of information regarding the employer's needs for their LEP Hispanic workforce than could be achieved in a focus group. Two executive interviews were conducted for no longer than 90 minutes. One member of the study team at each site conducted each interview. Executives of large companies with multiple business sites in high-growth sectors and significant numbers of Hispanic employees participated. Interviews were conducted with an executive from Tyson Foods, Inc. in Springdale, AR on November 17, 2004 and February 2, 2005, and an executive from

QuadGraphics Printing in Sussex, WI on January 27, 2005. Protocols for executive interviews were developed in advance (Appendix B), provided to the participants prior to the meeting, and followed during both interviews. A written summary of each meeting was developed and sent to participants for their comments (Appendices E 1-2).

Executive Roundtables

The study team accessed the business community through established networks. As a result, two informal executive roundtables were conducted. The first was with the Employers Workforce Development Network (EWDN) on August 18, 2004 in DePere, Wisconsin and the second with the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Centers (TMAC) in Ft. Worth, Texas on February 2, 2005. Four businesses participated in the Wisconsin roundtable, and eight businesses participated in the Texas roundtable. The roundtables followed the focus group format; used the executive interview protocols (Appendix B) ;and were professionally facilitated by members of the study team. These sessions were not tape-recorded, but were summarized in a timely fashion (Appendix F) and sent to participants for their comments (Appendices F 1-2).

Survey of Manufacturers in Border States

MEP Management Services Inc. (MEP MSI), a member of the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, previously developed a web-based tool, "Supply Point," to allow small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) input capability and capacities information on their companies. MEP MSI deployed this web-based tool with DOL-approved workforce questions to SMEs in Arizona and New Mexico. The purpose was to gauge Spanish requirements for training and workforce development by small and medium manufacturers in these two states. Four hundred small and medium manufacturing firms in Arizona and New Mexico were asked to participate in an electronic survey that followed the study questions (Appendix C). Forty manufacturing firms in Arizona and 62 manufacturing firms in New Mexico responded, providing a total response rate of 26 percent. A detailed summary of the results was developed (Appendix G.)

Business Participation in Focus Groups, Executive Interviews and Executive Roundtables

Fifty-nine employers participated in the study as members of a focus group, one-on-one executive interviews, or executive roundtables; and 102 employers participated in the web-based survey. The majority of employers represented eight of the U.S. Department of Labor's high-growth business sectors: manufacturing (127), transportation (4), health care (6),

information technology (1), construction (4), hospitality (6), biotechnology (1) and energy (2). The remaining 10 employers were in the service sector (7), agriculture (1), and education (2).

Forty-two percent, or 25 of the 59 employers that participated in focus groups, executive interviews, or executive roundtable discussions responded to the opportunity to comment on the summary of the meeting attended. All respondents indicated the report accurately reflected the discussion that they participated in. With a few exceptions, participants had minor corrections. The corrections were incorporated into the final documents to reflect participant views.

▶ **ANALYTIC APPROACH**

The study was both formative and summative. By providing a business-to-business forum where executives across industry and geographic sectors could discuss their needs and what they are doing to meet these needs, the study is formative. The study is summative in that it provides policymakers with relevant information on the needs of employers for their LEP Hispanic workforce, helping to ensure both U.S. business competitiveness and an LEP Hispanic workforce that is successful.

The focus group data were coded and compared multiple times to reveal similarities and differences in employer perspectives and stated needs for their LEP Hispanic workforce by sector, business size, and geographic location. Similar comparisons were then made with the results of the executive interviews (Appendix E), executive roundtable discussions (Appendix F) and survey data (Appendix G).

▶ **POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION**

What employers need to help their LEP Hispanic workforce succeed is an important question for policymakers and business leaders. It is anticipated that the results of this study will provide useful information about a critical issue and assist with the development of effective training and education programs for LEP Hispanics in the U.S. workforce.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

▶ **FOUR AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT: RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, ADVANCEMENT, AND RETENTION**

LEP Hispanic laborers are often hindered in their ability to obtain and retain employment and advance in the job market due to their inability to communicate with U.S. employers, and deficiencies in education and/or occupational skills. This study seeks to answer questions that focus on four vital areas of employment: recruitment, training, advancement, and retention.

▶ **RECRUITMENT**

An important element of the study was to ascertain the methods and resources employers use to recruit Hispanic employees and for what jobs. The research yielded data indicating employers use a wide variety of methods to recruit LEP Hispanic employees. Many employers rely on temporary-to-permanent employment agencies and other conventional employment resources, such as the DOLETA One-Stop Career Centers and state workforce delivery systems. However, many said they now use less traditional sources to find LEP Hispanic employees, including: Catholic Charities, housing authorities, universities, colleges, community colleges, industry associations, trade schools, walk-ins, the military, friends and family of current employees, customers, Hispanic community organizations and associations, and Hispanic newspapers and internet services. The most frequently cited sources were family and friends of an employer's current Hispanic employees, followed by an increasing frequency of using internet recruitment websites.

Many employers either do not test LEP Hispanic employee applicants or rely on outside sources, such as community colleges, to test applicants. Some employers who participated in the web-based survey in both Arizona and New Mexico agreed that proficiency with the English language was less important than the "language of work."

Although a majority of employers expressed a desire for publicly funded solutions for training LEP Hispanic workers, a significant number noted that the publicly funded assistance currently available to help them in the area of recruitment is not satisfactory. Only two employers from

the focus groups said they relied on publicly funded agencies to screen prospective employees and refer those employees to the company human resources office. The Wisconsin Employer Network reported that it has used its collective influence to persuade public employment and job training services to be more responsive to their needs.

The DOLETA One-Stop Career Centers and state workforce development agencies were viewed by most focus group participants and by one of the employers in the executive interviews as lacking understanding of their business needs. Participants viewed the Centers as being more interested in processing candidates than matching suitable employers with suitable employees. Some employers noted that job applicants from these Centers often do not show up for their interviews. While employers said they did not expect to find employees through publicly funded employment agencies, they do post job opportunities with them to remain in compliance with laws governing equal employment opportunities.

The number of Hispanic workers recruited by employers varies by industry sectors. For example, the construction and hospitality sectors reported high numbers of LEP Hispanic employees. Employers in the construction industry uniformly indicated that nearly 90 percent of their workforce is Hispanic and 70 percent of the Hispanic workers are LEP. This contrasts sharply with other industry sectors such as health care and manufacturing. Health care employers, such as hospitals, recruit LEP Hispanic employees for housekeeping and food services only, representing approximately 15 percent of their total workforce. Manufacturing employers in the food-processing sector hire substantial numbers of LEP Hispanic employees, while most manufacturing employers said they hire few, if any, LEP Hispanic employees because they require all their employees to speak, read and write English prior to employment, even for entry-level jobs.

A representative of the manufacturing sector said his company is increasingly using teams at the entry level, making it necessary for job applicants to be English-proficient to be hired. For companies structured in teams, management has often accommodated Hispanic workers by ensuring that one member of the team is proficient in both English and Spanish to serve as the conduit of communication. Across sectors, employers said they often utilize families of LEP Hispanic employees as a primary resource for communication between employer and employee.

Mature industries, such as oil and gas companies, recruit primarily at the professional levels. A business executive in this field noted that only three percent of new hires in his company were recruited from the United States; the majority were recruited from countries south of the U.S. border.

▶ TRAINING

Another important element of the study was to discover how employers trained LEP Hispanic employees and the best practices that businesses use to help their employees achieve success in skill and language acquisition. One manufacturing company in Wisconsin noted that conventional methods of corporate training recently changed to accommodate advances in technology. Training LEP Hispanic employees now requires new ideas, new approaches and methodologies, with many of the methods used classified as experimental.

Employers consider various factors when developing training models for their LEP workforce. These factors include employee language acquisition and comprehension, literacy in reading and math, technology skills, cultural understanding, availability of transportation, and time constraints. The majority of employers articulated a need to bundle skill development to maximize workforce productivity. Their most immediate need is to find and deliver low-cost solutions to help employees gain English proficiency, and they are looking beyond standard methods such as Spanish-language training videos, GED and college classes, and the use of translators.

During focus group discussions, the question of whether the size of a business impacts availability of training resources for English-language acquisition surfaced with little agreement. An executive in a large construction firm noted that small companies in his industry were at a disadvantage because they have limited training resources and opportunities for their LEP employees. For example, a small company might have a CD available for LEP workers to use for English acquisition, but the only computer available might be the one the accountant uses. Another executive in the same sector stated that small companies have an advantage when training LEP employees because they can respond more quickly to the workers' needs than larger organizations.

Focus group participants shared that successful training techniques for their LEP Hispanic workers incorporate “a lot of pictures” as well as “shop (sector-specific) talk.” Employers found training videos and color-coded visual aids that are devoid of language altogether effective in teaching occupational skills to LEP Hispanic workers.

Many employers in the construction sector do not relate an employee’s English proficiency with the type of work performed except as it relates to safety. Employers indicated that in-house methods of training support for LEP Hispanic workers ranged from training managers in Spanish to unique approaches such as bingo games that engage the LEP Hispanic worker in learning English by matching pictures to words, and then saying the word out loud. These practices are further discussed under the section titled “What Works” in this report. The overarching message from employers was that these approaches are experimental and have associated costs.

One study participant said her company provided no in-house support for language training, but did announce classes that are available through public funded agencies or other community resources. Many employers would like to see more training opportunities geared toward the trades, such as vocational education programs offered in high schools. Some mentioned the need to utilize apprenticeship-based guilds.

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

While employers more commonly hire LEP Hispanic workers for entry-level positions, there is recognition by all employers that this population cohort largely represents the available workforce of the future. The study also addressed how employers view the need to provide management training to their LEP Hispanic workforce and what steps they are taking to help their employees be successful.

Without exception, focus group participants said their policy is to promote from within. This is problematic for those companies with a high percentage of Hispanic workers who lack English- language skills. Although they prefer to retain employees and promote from within, participants conceded that opportunities for advancement, including management, are scarce if employees are not proficient in English. One employer stated, “We promote from within, therefore to attain a management position the employee must be proficient in English.”

While employers view the LEP Hispanic workforce as today's entry-level workers and tomorrow's managers, the data revealed that employers in places with more recent geographical migration by LEP Hispanic workers may initially be more reluctant to invest in the cost of training. Employers in states that border Mexico, where Hispanic immigration has occurred for some time, are not as reluctant to bear the cost of training LEP Hispanic employees and are more likely to offer management training programs to these employees.

On several occasions employers stated that their Hispanic workers are reluctant to learn English or to be promoted because "they want to return to their country of origin." This causes employers concern about their investment in training and promoting the LEP Hispanic workers. Several employers in Texas believe this notion is fading as Hispanics are increasingly purchasing homes and starting businesses in the U.S. Some employers noted that cultural barriers exist that prevent their Hispanic employees from learning English in order to advance in their careers. Among these were LEP Hispanic employees' reluctance to assume leadership positions, or the hesitation of females to supervise male employees. Participants also suggested that a lack of knowledge of professional opportunities may be another reason Hispanic workers do not advance in the workplace. Employers stated that morale is boosted when employees can communicate better, and those who can communicate better will advance.

One employer, speaking on behalf of the hospitality industry including restaurants and hotels, classifies his employees into "front-of-the-house" and "back-of-the-house" positions. Approximately 50 percent of the employees working in the "front-of-the-house" are English proficient and those in the latter category are not. Despite his desire to actively promote employees from "back to front," he noted the difficulty of providing English- language training to employees who often are working more than one job, and who are not available during hours when conventional training opportunities are available. Several noted that workers are often dependent on others for transportation and are often not able to attend English classes offered by employers.

▶ **RETENTION**

Retaining employees is important to employers due to the significant costs related to training and replacing workers. The fourth focus of the study was how employers address the issue of

LEP Hispanic employee retention, and what employers need to optimize retention with this cohort.

Despite employer concerns that LEP Hispanic employees may leave to return to their country of origin, many believed that the acquisition of English skills would positively affect the retention rate of Hispanic employees. This was cited often as a reason to invest in English-language training for LEP Hispanic employees.

Executives in the Texas construction industry are, by necessity, successfully cooperating with competitors by hiring each others' workers during downtimes so as to retain a trained construction workforce.

Although the Hispanic workforce is a recent U.S. employee cohort, without exception, employers spoke in positive terms about Hispanic worker loyalty, often citing their loyalty as a positive reason to invest in their training and success.

▶ **SECTOR DISTINCTIONS**

The study found that distinctions exist among industry sectors regarding the number of LEP Hispanic workers they employ, the type of work the Hispanics workers perform, and the Hispanic workers' positions within the company. Although different business sectors identified similar challenges such as the safety issues (specifically in construction, manufacturing, and health care), some important differences among sectors were revealed that affect employer perspectives and approaches to recruiting, training, retraining and advancing LEP Hispanic workers.

Employers in the manufacturing industry are increasingly using advanced technology in their operations making English-language proficiency necessary even for entry level positions. Other industries require advanced levels of English proficiency, although there are differences in the minimum educational attainment levels required. Most employers stated their minimum qualifications for hiring included a high school education or its equivalent and a stable work history.

Health care employers reported that undereducated LEP Hispanic employees (approximately 15 percent of their workforce) can compete only for entry-level positions; other positions within the sector require a minimum of a ninth grade education. However, with an increasingly Spanish-speaking consumer base health care employers expressed the desire to hire greater numbers of Hispanic caregivers. Looking ahead, some health care companies are adopting elementary schools with large Hispanic populations in the area to proactively begin creating an awareness of professional opportunities in health care in the elementary and middle school grades.

Employers in the construction industry indicated that nearly seventy percent of their workforce is LEP Hispanic and supervisors must be able to communicate in English because they deal with suppliers, vendors, and clients. Supervisors who have come up through the ranks in the construction industry are highly valued by their employers. Unlike the health care industry, recruitment is an informal word-of-mouth process in the construction industry.

Employers in the hospitality industry employ fifty percent of their workforce in “front-of-the-house” positions, and fifty percent in “back-of-the-house” positions. “Front-of-the-house” positions require interaction with customers; therefore employees must be proficient in English to advance from “back-of-the-house” positions to the front.

▶ **EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT IN LEP HISPANIC WORKFORCE**

Employers believe that investing in the education of their LEP Hispanic workers has substantial benefits including:

- increasing Hispanic purchasing power of U.S. goods and services;
- reducing employer retention costs by hiring loyal Hispanic workers; and
- maintaining employer competitiveness in the global marketplace.

As a result, employers are strategically investing in long-term solutions for their Hispanic workforce. For example, recognizing that consumers of health care services are increasingly of Hispanic origin, one hospital has adopted an elementary school that is 92 percent Hispanic as part of a long-range employee development program. A successful element of the program, which follows students throughout their K-12 education, includes an exchange component. In the exchange students visit the hospital and are exposed to highly technical equipment and nurses, pharmacists, and other professionals visit the schools to discuss possible careers in health care. Another health care employer provides Hispanic workers with one-on-one training

in computer basics. If workers request computer training and an educator is not available, the employer pays the costs of acquiring training through the local community college. A few employers are re-evaluating their requirement of a high school education, yet offered that without educational attainment, employees cannot advance to a supervisory, management or executive position in the health care sector.

One employer encourages all employees, even those who work part-time, to get an Associate of Arts Degree or greater, and reimburses tuition up to \$4,000 per year for part-time employees and \$8,000 per year for full-time employees. An employer in the hospitality industry was unsuccessful in previous attempts to train LEP workers, but was exploring, new approaches for successful interventions. For example, the employer purchased computers for his employees and provided on-site computer training, resulting in higher employee productivity and improved employee retention.

In one situation a certified trainer conducted an accelerated English-language training program with Hispanic workers for a period of six weeks during the employees' lunchtime. During this period, the children of employees were asked to speak only English with their parent. The program resulted in an employee retention rate of seventy-five percent. Although some employees left for better jobs, the employer felt the experience improved the employees' lives on the job and in the community.

A hospitality industry employer provided employees with laptop computers equipped with ESL software tailored with hospitality industry vocabulary. Employees were encouraged to use the computers to study during long breaks between lunch and dinner times.

Finally, a 15-week ESL program was developed for employees who worked from 7:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon daily and then attended English classes from 1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. each day. Participating employees were given a 50-cent per hour raise to remain in the program. Only one person missed one day of the program, which helped Hispanic workers become literate in English, even though some participants were not literate in their first language.

▶ **WHAT WORKS**

Varied and innovative employer-driven solutions were shared during the focus group discussions. As witnessed above, employers are finding that new approaches to training must be developed to enable their LEP Hispanic workers to attain the language skills required to advance in their careers. The following is a synopsis of some training approaches that employers discovered work well with their LEP Hispanic employees.

- Hands-on training with the equipment is more effective than using manuals.
- Spanish-as-a-second-language training for supervisors encourages Hispanic employees to become more willing to learn English.
- Language proficiency classes and college tuition support for management programs are successful.
- Work-site classes during or immediately after the employees' shift are better attended than classes that require the employees to travel to another location.
- Incentives such as pay increases or access to new technology encourage employees to persevere and complete the ESL training.
- Work site training integrated with family and community involvement has a high success rate.
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) supervisor-level meetings discussed safety issues in Spanish and products in English.
- Small English-language acquisition classes of no more than six employees are more successful than classes with greater numbers of employees.

Employers disagreed as to the amount of time needed to teach English to non-English speaking Hispanic employees. Some employers found that six weeks is adequate if employees are motivated, while others consider English-language acquisition a long-term endeavor.

▶ **EMPLOYER COSTS**

Study participants affirmed that employees must have English-language proficiency to receive other types of occupational skills training. They cited both a lack of English-language skills and occupational skills as problems that raise employers' costs. One construction employer said his employees' lack of adequate skills and communication abilities raised his company's sheetrock hanging costs by 300%.

Employers noted LEP Hispanic workers in the construction industry may not understand even simple warnings such as, “Heads up,” by fellow English-speaking workers, which can result in serious injury. In addition to safety as a human issue, one employer stated that safety issues affect the company’s ability to compete for contracts due to worker’s compensation costs. Another employer with a high percentage of LEP Hispanic employees agreed that although his company has a large number of Spanish-speaking supervisors and provides training in both English and Spanish, high costs for human injury due to language barriers affects their ability to remain competitive.

Most participating employers offer their LEP Hispanic employees some on-the-clock time to learn English, with additional company resources available after work. As stated earlier, many LEP Hispanic workers have more than one job with limited time available or depend on others for transportation, and are not in control of their own schedules. Further, employers indicated their willingness to invest in low-cost English-language training solutions, but noted a lack of successful industry-specific approaches in helping their LEP workers attain success.

▶ **WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT**

The study found that employers recognize the Hispanic population is an integral part of their future workforce and they expressed an interest in accommodating their skill development. Learning English may not be enough to ensure LEP Hispanic workers’ success in the workplace. Employers identified the acquisition of skill sets in addition to the ability to speak English as important for employee success and business prosperity. Solutions that bundle occupational skill acquisition with English-language acquisition are needed. A commonly identified need is employee development of basic skills such as math, reading, and use of technology.

Employers have different educational requirements depending on the positions available and the particular business sector. Sector- specific language acquisition for LEP Hispanic workers is a primary interest.

Participants made various suggestions about what they think would be the best tools to help their LEP Hispanic employees succeed:

- An ideal recruiting resource would allow future employees to learn their trade by apprenticing with skilled professionals.
- Equipment manufacturers should provide training in English and Spanish on the equipment they sell.
- Efforts should be made to better leverage community resources to train LEP Hispanic employees.

Technology should be used to train workers and accommodate shift employees through such venues as 24-hour/7days a week radio and/or television learning channels, and free ESL classes at community colleges.

Employers would like their executives to have access to a web-based portal structured as a business-to-business model for information on best practices and research, and to provide opportunities to connect with other businesses in their respective sectors.

Finally, employers expressed an overarching concern that education and training remedies be cost effective and increase company productivity to ensure employers remain competitive.

DISCUSSION: NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

A full spectrum of employer attitudes emerged about how LEP Hispanic employees are meeting employer needs. Some have a hands-off approach to the problem, while others support strong top-down leadership embracing diversity. Most employers recognize the need to support and train LEP Hispanic employees, but have not achieved the needed results to successfully promote and retain them. Employers cited cost as a limiting factor in terms of the training services that they can provide.

Although employers agreed that their hiring objectives were governed by good quality at a reasonable price, there was no one-size-fits-all solution for helping LEP Hispanic employees succeed due to leadership, sector-specific vocabulary, and corporate culture. However, several important findings with major implications for the development of employment policy for all stakeholders did result from the focus groups.

New technology is creating additional opportunities and challenges for employers and employees. Employers are increasingly using technology in their hiring and training practices. One employer with a diverse workforce has on-line job applications in both English and Spanish; however the number of LEP Hispanic applicants has declined. Possible reasons for this include lack of reading and writing skills in English and Spanish, concern with immigration issues, and lack of computer skills. Finding ways to overcome these barriers and bundle skills that are sector specific surfaced as both a challenge and a potential benefit for employers and employees.

Although there is a need for Spanish-speaking health care providers, in the short-term the health care industry is hiring employees whose second language is Spanish. In the long-term, health care providers are aggressively pursuing Hispanic workers by developing interest in the profession through educational programs beginning at the elementary school level.

Safety issues related to workers with limited-English proficiency continue to be an matter of concern to employers because safety issues can increase the cost of doing business. The

concern for safety inhibits hiring non-English proficient workers in all sectors except hospitality and construction, even though it is an expressed concern of all employers.

Employers seek more effective training materials and more systematic approaches to helping their LEP employees attain the proficiency and literacy needed for their long-term growth and success. Employers recognize that there is an increasing customer base that requires proficiency in Spanish, suggesting the need for the English-speaking workforce to acquire Spanish-language skills. For example, the traditional model in the restaurant sector requires English proficiency of its employees interacting with customers, as Spanish-speaking customers increase, businesses must adjust to meet this new reality – that employees will be required to speak the language of their customers.

All sectors of the business community expressed the need to bridge the language gap with LEP Hispanic employees. Employers predict that these workers will become the future replacement pool of employees in all sectors and at all skill levels, including management and suggested various interventions, including a public TV or radio channel that offers bilingual and multilingual training 24 hours a day, and incentives for employers to offset their language and skills training costs. Employers also suggested development of an industry-specific standardized English-language proficiency test of oral fluency, reading comprehension and writing.

Employers identified common misperceptions about Hispanics that create additional barriers for these employees. For example, an Hispanic senior executive in the manufacturing sector, who graduated from high school a semester early, was advised by his school counselor to go into boxing. Such stereotyping by school officials prevents some Hispanics from learning about all the professions available. Another common misperception about LEP Hispanic employees is that they are not educated. However, many non-English speakers have academic credentials from their native countries. Employers cited the lack of international academic credential assessment capacity as a barrier to remedying this problem.

Many employers expressed the opinion that the longer immigrants stay in the U.S., the more likely it will become their permanent home. Some are confident that many of the social and economic factors immigrants currently face will disappear within the next decade.

Data gathered from employers who participated in the executive interviews, executive roundtables and the web-based survey yielded similar findings to that gleaned from the focus groups. However, these specific approaches are discussed separately as each offers unique perspectives on recruitment, training, retention, and advancement, and provides nuances that enhance the results of the study.

Executive Interviews

One member of the study team conducted two executive interviews with two large manufacturing enterprises: a food processor and a printer. The food processor requires very little English in its entry-level jobs, relying on bilingual employees in positions such as assistant hourly trainers, lead trainers, and supervisors to communicate with entry-level employees. This employer provides its employees access to ESL classes through community colleges, but would prefer ESL classes customized to the industry, noting that it takes longer to train LEP team members.

The printing company uses bilingual team leaders to communicate with their LEP Hispanic employee team members and has made several changes to its initial approach to training these workers. Previously, new Hispanic employees attended separate Spanish presentations of the shop rules. The company now holds all orientation meetings in English to avoid isolating the Hispanic employees. They have also decreased the English-language acquisition class size to a maximum of six employees to allow for greater depth of training and often use community-based organizations and community colleges for training. The company's executive participant expressed a desire to have the publicly funded employment agencies visit the company site to learn what skills the employer is looking for in job applicants. Several employers agreed that these agencies could be of greater value to employers by providing computer training, ESL classes and basic math skills to applicants. This company also initiated a "star performer" program, providing individuals who show managerial promise one-on-one coaching, with the goal of having Hispanic workers assume management positions by 2015.

Executive Roundtables

Two executive roundtables were conducted: with the Employers Workforce Development Network (EWDN) in Wisconsin and with the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC). The Employers Workforce Development Network (EWDN) is an affiliation of 35 companies and 24 providers and partners in the Green Bay, Wisconsin area. EWDN was founded to resolve

the multiple issues surrounding the large number of limited-English speaking employees in Wisconsin during the 1990s. EWDN is funded by a \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor plus corporate member contributions. In turn, EWDN funds projects to meet evolving workplace needs and challenges and better recruit, retain and advance a quality workforce and compete in the increasingly global economy. Among these are language training, cultural awareness, financial literacy, health insurance literacy, leadership, mentoring, teamwork, computer and automated technology skills, planning skills, creativity and adaptation to change. EWDN executive roundtable participants represented three manufacturers and one service company. These employers noted they often set-aside their normal competitive styles to meet mutual challenges. They agreed that for LEP employees to succeed, it is important that the private and public sectors communicate to achieve positive outcomes for employers and employees. One employer who experiences a 60 percent turnover rate, said that his company hired 100 percent of its Hispanic workforce from the public job service agency.

EWDN members view their LEP Hispanic employees as an asset and work together to find and implement solutions that benefit all businesses. For instance, the network engaged the Literacy Council, local technical colleges and others to design training programs for LEP employees who show a strong interest in improving their English on their time off. Spanish as a second language classes are also being offered to employees. Wisconsin executives noted that their bilingual employees are valued as team leaders, human resource representatives, and translators. Many non-Hispanic employees have become volunteer tutors to help LEP employees improve their language skills.

The Wisconsin companies are addressing cultural issues by providing information about American culture and the value of literacy, as well as working with the local school system to address inter-generational language issues. Some employers believe barriers experienced by their Hispanic workforce may be self-imposed, among these being a hesitancy to make the move into management due to peer pressure, not wanting to supervise other Hispanics, cultural class issues, and lack of comfort in leadership positions.

The Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC) is an affiliate of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program of the National Institutes of Standards and Technology within the U.S. Department of Commerce in partnership with the University of Texas in Arlington.

TMAC exists to enhance the competitive position of the state's manufacturing sector offering services in:

- Cost management
- Productivity improvements
- Environmental improvements
- Software systems selection and application
- e-Commerce
- Assessments and Planning

Five employers, two association representatives and one educational technology representative participated in the TMAC executive roundtable. These executives reported a wide range of views about their LEP Hispanic workforce that corresponded with the employer views expressed in the focus groups. This discussion included employer-initiated partnerships with school districts where half the students are Hispanics and concern regarding skill development other than English-language acquisition.

Participants commented on the need for innovative means to identify and support employee needs for improving English-language proficiency. Efforts by one company (through a grant from the Dallas Workforce Board) that implemented a two-phase ESL program with the possible addition of the Daily Dose® English program were cited as a good example. (Appendix F-2).

MEP Supply Point Survey

MEP Management Services, Inc. (MEP MSI) surveyed 40 small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMEs) in Arizona and 62 SMEs in New Mexico to determine the English proficiency requirements for their Spanish-speaking workforce. Of these, seven Arizona companies and four New Mexico enterprises were Hispanic-owned. The geographical distribution of surveyed SMEs in both states included those located in metropolitan areas as well as those near the Mexican border.

Survey results indicated that 65 percent of Arizona enterprises and 29 percent of New Mexico enterprises hire only English-speaking workers, even for entry-level jobs. The remaining firms, 35 percent in Arizona and 71 percent in New Mexico, including Hispanic-owned enterprises, are more flexible and hire workers who speak only Spanish for entry-level positions.

Thirty-five percent of the surveyed Arizona employers provide some type of assistance to help their Spanish-speaking employees develop English-language skills. By contrast, seventy-five percent of the New Mexico surveyed employers provide some type of assistance to help their Spanish-speaking employees learn English. The assistance is provided primarily by third party trainers, after work in local community colleges and is paid for by community resources. Many of those who do not provide assistance stopped because of the cost and loss of production.

On the issue of retention, the surveyed employers in both states do not equate English proficiency with the type of work to be performed. Rather, most believe that if you teach work skills the language will follow. To bridge the language gap between English-only speakers and Spanish-only speakers, employers in both states hire bilingual translators to facilitate communication.

In both states, users of publicly funded One-Stop Career Centers expressed a high level of dissatisfaction due to the lack of understanding of the manufacturing industry that hinders the ability of One-Stop Career Center staff to help manufacturers recruit qualified workers. Similar to the focus group employers, the surveyed firms prefer to recruit from temporary employment agencies, giving them a window of opportunity to determine whether or not to hire the employee on a permanent basis.

▶ **MAJOR FINDINGS**

Following are the major findings of the study:

- Employers believe that promoting LEP Hispanic employees will continue to be a problem until the language issue is resolved. Employers speculate that in the future a Spanish-speaking customer base may allow them to adjust their approach to management training.
- Employers are more willing to pay for proven sector-specific training rather than invest in ad hoc solutions for their Spanish-speaking workforce.
- Employers are seeking training models, by industry type, that demonstrate results in employee English-language acquisition.
- Employers believe that their LEP Hispanic employees need to develop skills in addition to learning the English language. Training solutions must be developed that build language, technology, reading comprehension, math skills and occupational skills.

- Employers want publicly funded employment agencies to be more responsive to their needs. Further, they believe it would be more advantageous to have publicly funded job training services delivered at the employer's business site to better integrate needed skill sets with their particular type of business.
- Employers see incentives as vehicles to assist and encourage industry to train LEP employees.
- Employers would value a business-to-business web-based portal for employers of LEP Hispanic employees to share best practices and to provide opportunities to network with other businesses in their respective sectors about solutions and models that work.

▶ **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This study provides policymakers with recommendations for targeted interventions to help LEP Hispanic employees become successful while allowing business to remain competitive. The employers in this study were very positive at having the opportunity for a frank discussion of their needs for their LEP Hispanic workforce.

The employers believe that their LEP Hispanic workforce is the base of their future management pool, making the investment in their employee acquisition of the English language, literacy, and technology skills critical to their future competitiveness. While the private sector is investing in its LEP workforce, these employers believe there are insufficient training resources and tools available to help them, and want help in developing information, materials, and proven sector-specific training models rather than having to rely on ad hoc solutions. A holistic approach that includes employers, the public workforce system, educational institutions and community-based organizations partnering and leveraging resources will help employers remain competitive by ensuring their current entry level LEP Hispanic workforce possesses the language and occupational skills needed to increase productivity.

▶ **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

A full spectrum of employer attitudes emerged relative to what their businesses need to help their LEP Hispanic employees be successful. These ranged from a hands-off approach to strong top-down leadership embracing diversity and a willingness to make significant investment in their employees' success. Most employers supported a middle ground through positive

recognition of the LEP Hispanic workers' current and potential value; the need to support and train these employees; yet not sensing they had achieved the results that they need to successfully train, promote and retain them.

Employers universally stated they are seeking help in obtaining more effective training materials and a more systematic approach to helping their LEP Hispanic employees attain the proficiency and literacy needed for their long-term growth and success. The acquisition of skill sets rather than just the ability to speak English are cited as important to employee success and business productivity. Finding ways to overcome these challenges and bundle skills that are sector-specific surfaced as the mutual challenge and potential benefit for business and labor.

Employers expressed interest in the development of sector-specific models to help them remain competitive, with high productivity rates and low costs, while helping their LEP Hispanic workforce become successful. At the same time, employers are seeking immediate information on best practices and targeted communication vehicles to solve the challenges and problems associated with training an LEP Hispanic workforce. The results of this study call for remedies that can immediately and positively impact employers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR MANUFACTURERS IN THE BORDER STATES

**APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES - MILWAUKEE, HOUSTON, DALLAS,
CHICAGO, AND IRVINE**

**APPENDIX E: EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW SUMMARIES - QUADGRAPHICS AND
TYSON FOODS, INC.**

**APPENDIX F: EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION SUMMARIES - EMPLOYERS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (EWDN) AND TEXAS MANUFACTURING
ASSISTANCE CENTERS (TMAC)**

**APPENDIX G: SURVEY REPORT ON ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO MANUFACTURING
FIRMS**

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN THE WORKFORCE

Spanish-speaking workers are a large and growing component of the American workforce. They are often hindered in their ability to obtain and retain employment and to advance in the job market due to limited English proficiency (LEP) and deficiencies in basic and occupational skills. Today, we want to explore with you the levels of English proficiency you require for jobs at various levels in your organization. We also want to learn what types of programs you may have in place to help these workers achieve success in the workplace.

This dialogue will help the U.S. Department of Labor develop strategies to assist you in your efforts to help Hispanic Americans attain the language and occupational skills necessary for American business to remain competitive in a global economy.

▶ RECRUITMENT

How do you recruit your workers, and is English a necessary qualification to perform entry-level jobs?

- A. How do you find LEP Hispanic applicants?
- B. Are they actively recruited or are they just a percentage of the applicant pool?
- C. What language requirements are required to be hired by your organization?
- D. How is language proficiency assessed?
 - 1. Are there established standards for language proficiency?
- E. Have you used publicly funded entities such as one stop centers, job centers, the Employment Service and technical schools in the recruitment process?
 - 1. Have you used any of these entities to provide follow-up service such as English as a Second Language (ESL) training?
 - 2. How satisfied were you with these services?
 - 3. Are there other services/programs you would like to have available?

▶ RETENTION

Are there methods and programs in place to help LEP Hispanic employees improve their language and occupational skills?

- A. What level of English proficiency is necessary to perform the job?

- B. Do the demands of your industry require specific language skills, oral or written?
- C. Does your business have industry specific terminology?
- D. How problematic is this for LEP Hispanic employees?
- E. What kind of assistance is available to help develop English-language skills?
 - 1. Is it provided on-site and by whom?
 - 2. Is it provided during or after work hours?
 - 3. Is it funded by the company, community resources or a combination?
 - 4. Are workers paid for the time spent in instruction?
 - 5. Is there a need for translators at company meetings or on the work site?
 - 6. What services/programs make a difference?
 - 7. Are any of these programs/services provided by publicly funded entities?
- E. What kinds of training are available to help develop occupational skills?
 - 1. Do you utilize technology to train your employees?
 - 2. What are some effective ways to provide occupational training to LEP Hispanic
 - 3. employees?
 - 4. How are safety rules addressed with LEP Hispanic employees?
- F. How problematic are safety concerns? How does your company deal with these issues?
- G. Of all the strategies that you have utilized, what works, what doesn't?

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

How does the level of English proficiency relate to the employee's position in the company?

- A. Do Spanish-speaking employees have access to a career ladder?
 - 1. What are the barriers?
 - 2. Are there specific programs to help them advance within the company?
 - 3. Do these programs work?
- B. What level of English proficiency is necessary for intermediate and advanced skill jobs as well as management positions?
- C. Are there standards of proficiency in place? If so, what are they?
- D. Have publicly funded entities provided any programs or services to help LEP Hispanic employees advance in the workplace?

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

How does corporate culture affect the full integration of LEP Hispanic workers into the organization?

- A. What strategies have you utilized to change corporate culture?
 - 1. What works, what doesn't?
 - 2. Do managers have a working knowledge of Spanish?
 - 3. Is there a program for Spanish as a second language?
- B. Have publicly funded agencies provided any assistance to you in helping to change corporate culture?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN THE WORKFORCE

Spanish-speaking workers are a large and growing component of the American workforce. They are often hindered in their ability to obtain and retain employment and to advance in the job market due to limited English proficiency (LEP) and deficiencies in basic and occupational skills. Today, we want to explore with you the levels of English proficiency you require for jobs at various levels in your organization. We also want to learn what types of programs you may have in place to help these workers achieve success in the workplace.

This dialogue will help the U.S. Department of Labor develop strategies to assist you in your efforts to help Hispanic Americans attain the language and occupational skills necessary for American business to remain competitive in a global economy.

Follow-up Questions for Executive Session Participants

▶ RECRUITMENT

- A. How does the level of English proficiency relate to the type of work being done?
- B. What services/programs provided by publicly funded agencies are of most value to you as an employer?
- C. What are of least valuable?
- D. What would you like to see done differently by these entities?

▶ RETENTION

- A. What standards are in place to measure English proficiency?
- B. How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee's position within the company and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?
- C. How are shop rules, e.g. punctuality and regular attendance at work, safety rules, presented to the workers?
 1. What kinds of problems do you encounter because of language barriers?
 2. What would be helpful in eliminating these issues?
- D. How are job instructions presented?

1. What kinds of problems occur due to language barriers?
 2. What would be helpful in eliminating these issues?
- E. How does lack of English proficiency impact the quality of products?
1. How are quality requirements communicated?
 2. What kinds of training are necessary to ensure quality outcomes?
- F. Are there other workplace issues for LEP Hispanic employees, e.g. understanding social security, workers compensation, health insurance, working in teams?
1. How are these issues addressed?
- G. Are there other issues for LEP Hispanic employees not directly related to the workplace, but important for their integration into the community and their adaptation to a new environment, e.g. housing, banking, car buying, driver licensing, education for themselves and their children?
1. How are these issues addressed?
- H. To retain your LEP Hispanic employees, what strategies work best and what strategies have not produced the desired outcomes

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

- A. What do you as an employer do to provide advancement opportunities to your LEP Hispanic workforce?
- B. Do you use any publicly available resources or community-based resources to help LEP Hispanic employees advance within the organization?

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

- A. Is there a method to share common concerns and promising practices, and perhaps develop solutions, within and across industrial sectors, e.g. Human Resources professional association?
- B. What can U.S. DOL do to promote and share promising practices within and across industrial sectors?
- C. Immigrants will continue to make up a large percentage of entry-level positions in the US economy. Has your company developed long-term strategies to deal with the workforce of the future? What type of dialogue and strategies do you think would be beneficial?

APPENDIX C

SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR MANUFACTURERS IN THE BORDER STATES

APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

▶ RECRUITMENT

1. List language requirements to be hired by your company for entry-level jobs? [Text]
2. Do you test for English Proficiency? [Yes or No]
3. Please list publicly funded entities you may have used in the recruitment process [One Stop Centers; Job Centers, Employment Services; Technical Schools; Other] [Drop down list].
4. What is your satisfaction level with that entity? [very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied]

▶ RETENTION

1. How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee's position within the company and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake? [Text]
2. Do the demands of your industry require specific language skills, oral or written? [Yes or No]
3. If you answered Yes, to the previous question please list them [Text]
4. Does your business have industry-specific terminology? [Yes or No]

Employer Tools

Please check the boxes that best describe what assistance your company provides to help your workers develop English-language skills.

- Assistance is provided on-site by internal trainers.
- Assistance is provided on-site by third party. If so, who? [Text]
- Assistance is provided during work hours.
- Assistance is provided after work hours.
- Assistance is funded by the company.
- Assistance is funded by community resources. If so, who? [text]
- Company does not provide assistance.
- Workers are paid for the time spent in instruction.
- Other, Specify.

What services/programs (public or private) make a difference for your company, for example: upgrading the skills of the workforce, ensuring the workforce obtains required English-language skills to succeed, etc. [text entry]

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

- A. Do your Spanish-speaking employees have access to a career ladder? [Yes or No]
- B. For Intermediate skill jobs
1. What level of English proficiency is necessary? [Text only]
 2. Do you have standards of proficiency in place? [Yes or No]
 3. If yes, what are those standards?
 - Literacy measures
 - Prose measures
 - Document measures
 - Quantitative skills
- C. For advanced skill jobs
1. What level of English proficiency is necessary? [Text only]
 2. Do you have standards of proficiency in place? [Yes or No]
 3. If yes, what are those standards?
 - Literacy measures
 - Prose measures
 - Document measures
 - Quantitative skills
- D. For management jobs?
1. What level of English proficiency is necessary? [Text only]
 2. Do you have standards of proficiency in place? [Yes or No]
 3. If yes, what are those standards?
 - Literacy measures
 - Prose measures
 - Document measures
 - Quantitative skills
- E. Has your company accessed public funds to help your LEP Hispanic employees advance in the workplace? [Yes or No]

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

1. Do you think your corporate culture is Spanish-speaker friendly? [Yes or No]
2. If yes, what strategies have you used to make your corporate culture Spanish-speaker friendly: what worked best [Text] and what did not [Text]?

3. If No, do you want to change your corporate culture to make it Spanish-speaker friendly?
[Yes or No]
4. Do your managers have a working knowledge of Spanish? [Yes or No]
5. Have you used public funds to help change corporate culture? [Yes or No]

APPENDIX D

**FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES:
MILWAUKEE, HOUSTON, DALLAS, CHICAGO, AND IRVINE**

APPENDIX D-1:
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY - MILWAUKEE

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

As many Hispanics are recent immigrants to the United States and entering the labor force, English proficiency is a factor in their success and advancement. The U.S. Department of Labor asked the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce's Cultural and Educational Foundation to convene a group of employers in geographic areas of increasing Hispanic population, such as Milwaukee, to determine what employers need for their Spanish-speaking workforce.

This report begins with a brief overview of Milwaukee's economic outlook and jobs forecast to provide context to the focus group participants and their views.

▶ **MILWAUKEE'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND JOBS FORECAST**

Milwaukee is the largest city in the state of Wisconsin and the county seat of Milwaukee County. The city's population, including the surrounding consolidated area, is 1.5 million (Census 2000). The metro Milwaukee economy supports more than 1 million jobs in more than 49,000 businesses with a gross metropolitan product of \$65.4 billion. Where formerly Milwaukee's manufacturing base provided thousands of relatively high-paying jobs to low-skilled workers, Milwaukee, like other metropolitan areas, is attempting to make the shift to a knowledge economy.

The racial/ethnic makeup of Milwaukee is 49.98% Caucasian, 37.34% African American, 12 % Hispanic, 2.94% Asian, 0.87% Native American, 0.05% Pacific Islander, 6.10% from other races, and 2.71% from two or more races. Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group. Statewide, Wisconsin's Hispanic population has increased more than 300% since 1980 (U.S. Census 2000).

At the time of this study (2004), manufacturers were slightly less likely to forecast third-quarter employment increases (34% anticipated increases vs. previous year levels) than non-manufacturers (where 38% anticipated such gains).

The Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) business forecast for the third quarter of 2004 was one of tempered optimism in a period of economic expansion and employment growth. According to the MMAC, the local employment trend could potentially return to growth in 2004's third quarter.

Survey results suggested that job growth was likely for 2004 as a whole. Those forecasting employment increases in 2004 for their local operations (44%) outnumbered those who expected job declines (12%) by nearly a four-to-one margin. Manufacturers were more likely to forecast annual increases in employment, sales and profits than non-manufacturers. Expectations toward wage and salary increases held steady. A 2.7% increase in per employee wages and salaries was projected over the 12 months following this study, matching the percent increase forecast three months previously. Small employers and non-manufacturers predicted higher wage and salary increases over the next year.

▶ **MILWAUKEE FOCUS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

The first focus group was held in Milwaukee on August 16, 2004. The following eight employers were present:

Ametek	Patrick Cudahy
Aurora Healthcare	QuadGraphics
Hyatt Regency	Tramont
Klement's Sausage	Wisconsin Cheeseman

The following five employers accepted our invitation but did not attend: Dickten Masch, EMMPAK, EWDN, Garden Fresh Foods, and Regency Janitorial.

Three-quarters of the attending employers are in light manufacturing (Ametek, Klement's Sausage, Patrick Cudahy, QuadGraphics, Tramont and Wisconsin Cheeseman), while the remaining are in the service sector: health care (Aurora Healthcare) and hospitality (Hyatt Regency). Manufacturing, health care, and hospitality are three of twelve high growth/high demand sectors identified by the President as economically vital to the American economy.

The focus group participants gave generously of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their LEP Hispanic workforce. Although there was consensus that their hiring objectives are governed by good quality at a reasonable price, no one-size-fits-all solutions emerged due to leadership, sector-specific vocabulary, and corporate culture.

What did emerge was a stated need to find education and training remedies that are cost-effective and increase company productivity, because the cost of not addressing these issues can negatively affect their businesses.

▶ **FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES**

This summary discusses the four questions the study was designed to answer, and provides preliminary analysis of the data gathered.

What do employers perceive as necessary for LEP Hispanic employees to succeed?

In addition to English-language literacy— math, reading, and computer skills were considered to carry nearly equal weight for LEP Hispanic employees to succeed. Many of the companies now use technology for on-line employee searches and job applications beginning with entry-level positions. They also use technology for safety training and other communication applications. This reveals that a basic knowledge of spoken English may not be enough to ensure success; rather, job applicants must have knowledge of writing, reading, and technology.

How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee's position in the company, and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?

English proficiency was a major concern around the issue of U.S. safety standards, which are higher than those in many other countries. Immigrant populations are less likely to be aware of these standards, creating an environment that could lead to harm. This is an important problem, as well as related safety concerns, such as an immigrant's reluctance to report an injury due to fear of being fired, legal status, or lack of ability to communicate.

Many employers use signage in both English and Spanish to help LEP Hispanic employees, but stated signage can not be relied on exclusively for employee safety and success in the workplace.

What level and/or type of the company's management training programs are currently being offered to LEP Hispanic employees?

Most companies do not want to bear the cost of training LEP Hispanic (LEP) employees and do not offer management training programs to LEP employees. They want to retain employees and promote from within, yet concede that opportunities for advancement, including management, are scarce without being proficient in English. One company stated the "company promotes from within, so to attain a management position the employee must be proficient in English." The same company is increasingly using teams at the entry level, making it necessary to be English proficient to be hired. Other similarly structured companies are ensuring one member of the team is proficient in both English and Spanish.

What public or private programs are used by employers to recruit, train and retain all employees to ensure that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English speaking ability, have the necessary tools to succeed?

The businesses that participated in the Milwaukee focus group recruit their employees using a variety of methods, including on-line searches, temporary-to-permanent employment agencies, and walk-ins.

While the business representatives want publicly funded solutions for their LEP employees, there were twice as many negative comments as there were positive comments about service provided by publicly funded agencies, particularly in the area of recruiting. The reasons most often cited were a lack of understanding of their (business) needs or a lack of responsiveness by public agencies.

Only one company relied on publicly funded agencies to test job applicants. The same company was also alone in providing no in-house support for language training. Its approach is to post classes that are available through publicly funded agencies or other community resources.

The remaining companies represented in the focus group provide in-house support for their LEP workforce utilizing some methods that are common to all, such as training managers in Spanish, and unique approaches such as a bingo game that engages the LEP employee in learning English by matching pictures to words, and then saying the word out loud. The companies that are proactive in offering on-site language acquisition offer classes after the workday. Two employers are proactive in training LEP workers during the day with hours spent in class paid; of these programs, one is funded by a literacy grant.

Some employers cited general problems associated with immigrant populations, such as:

- Some are uncertain that they can learn the host country language, but encourage their children to do so.
- Others hope to return to their country of origin and may not wish to learn a new language.

Two employers were concerned with the fairness issue for English-speaking employees if second-language classes in English are provided but not Spanish or other languages. These concerns, however, did not dominate the discussion.

Some success-oriented ideas that surfaced from the focus group include:

- Provide employer studies by type of industry that demonstrate results.
- View the problem as more than English-language acquisition and develop solutions that systemically bundle language, technology, reading, comprehension, and math.
- Deliver public services at the business site, e.g., utilize public funds to work on-site with LEP employees in language acquisition, computer literacy, and reading and math skill acquisition.
- Provide incentives as a vehicle to encourage employers to train LEP workers in English.

▶ **CONCLUSION**

A full spectrum of employer attitudes emerged from responses to how their business needs are being met with ESL employees, ranging from a hands-off approach to strong top-down leadership embracing diversity. Some were in the middle, recognizing the need to support and

train LEP employees, and yet not sensing they had achieved the results they would need to successfully train, promote and retain them.

The acquisition of skill sets rather than merely the ability to speak English are important to employee success and business productivity. Companies said they are increasingly using technology in their hiring and training practices, and, even though on-line applications are in both English and Spanish, the number of LEP applicants has dropped for one company that boasts of its diverse workforce in its literature. Possible reasons for this include the applicant's lack of reading and writing skills in the native language, concern with immigration issues, or lack of computer skills. Finding ways to overcome these barriers and bundle skills that are sector specific surfaced as the mutual challenge and potential benefit for business and labor.

APPENDIX D-2: FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY - HOUSTON

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

As many Hispanics are recent immigrants to the United States and entering the labor force, English proficiency is a factor in their success and advancement. The U.S. Department of Labor asked the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce's Cultural and Educational Foundation to convene a group of employers in geographic areas of increasing Hispanic population, such as Houston, to determine what employers need for their Spanish-speaking workforce.

This report begins with a brief overview of Houston's economic outlook and jobs forecast to provide context to the focus group participants and their views.

▶ HOUSTON'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND JOBS FORECAST

With a population of 1.9 million, Houston, Texas ranks as the fourth most populous city in the nation (trailing only New York, Los Angeles and Chicago). The metro area's population of 4.8 million is 10th largest among U.S. metropolitan statistical areas.

The racial/ethnic makeup of Houston is 58.7% Caucasian, 32.9% Hispanic, 18.5% African American, 0.4% Native American, 5.1% Asian, 14.2% from other races, and 3.0% from two or more races. Asian and Hispanic populations are the fastest growing ethnic groups, with Hispanics comprising one-third of Houston's population (U.S. Census 2000).

Houston offers a richly diverse pool of highly-skilled, multilingual, multicultural workers. Nearly 25 percent of all adults have completed four years of college, surpassing the national average.

For three consecutive years, Houston ranked first in the nation in new business growth. A recent survey shows that during this period more than 31,000 new local businesses were started in Houston. Los Angeles was a distant second with 16,780 (American Business Information).

Houston is home to a thriving business economy that is rapidly diversifying from its strong energy base into high-technology, medical research, health care, and professional services (American Business Information). Manufacturing was the only large sector not expected to grow in 2004 (Greater Houston Partnership Economic Forecast, 2004).

Based on rapid growth in economic base employment, employment growth is predicted to outpace that of the nation and is expected to be a vital contributor to the Houston economy over the 2003-2030 timeframe (The Perryman Group for the Greater Houston Partnership, Spring 2004).

▶ **HOUSTON FOCUS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

The Houston focus group, held on September 9, 2004 was the second in a series, following a focus group in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on August 16, 2004. In Houston, seven employers and two trade associations were represented:

Administaff, Inc.	Marek Bros. System
Association of General Contractors	Phonoscope
Baker Concrete	T.A.S. Commercial Concrete Construction
Construction Workforce Coalition	Texas Children's Hospital
FMC Corporation	

Five employers that accepted the invitation but did not attend were: Fiesta Mart, Inc., Four Seasons, Petroleum Club, Rowan Companies, and Texas Medical Center.

A variety of industry sectors were represented in the focus group. Three employers and the two associations were in the construction sector (Baker Concrete, Marek Bros. System, T.A.S. Commercial Concrete Construction, Association of General Contractors, and Construction Workforce Coalition). The remaining employers were in health care (Texas Children's Hospital), communications services (Phonoscope), employer services (Administaff, Inc.) and diversified fields of oil and gas equipment supplies and chemical manufacturing (FMC). Two representatives from the hospitality sector (Four Seasons Hotel and the Petroleum Club) cancelled at the last minute.

Six of the U.S. Department of Labor's twelve high-growth/high-demand sectors identified by the President as economically vital to the American economy were represented in the focus group:

health care, information technology, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, construction, and energy.

The focus group participants gave generously of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their LEP Hispanic workforce. Group consensus centered on a number of issues. As in Milwaukee, participants expressed the desire to find proven versus haphazard remedies for helping employees become English proficient. They also cited the need for exposure to high growth career and job opportunities for elementary students as early as the fifth grade along with the hope that the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education will collaborate in addressing this issue. Finally, clarification of immigration issues emerged as a paramount concern of the participants.

▶ **FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES**

This summary discusses the four questions the study was designed to answer, and provides preliminary analysis of the data gathered.

What do employers perceive as necessary for LEP Hispanic employees to succeed?

Focus group participants agreed that English-language proficiency and computer skills are important for LEP employees to succeed. And, they agreed that an employee's desire to learn to read does not compensate for his/her inability to write. There are many different literacy programs available to employers in Houston, though no cohesive effort exists.

Value based issues related to an LEP employee's ability to be successful included a lack of understanding of cultural expectations related to longevity of service, transportation and health benefits.

Employers in Houston agreed with those in Milwaukee that available training materials are inadequate and must be more innovative, utilizing visuals and sound in English and Spanish. Most employers do not feel they have adequate tools to train their LEP employees, and the time they spend trying to address this inadequacy is costly in time and energy. Companies reported having no defined path to achieve success. "Winging it" or "flying by the seat of our pants" were repeated in addressing the needs described above. Participants would like government to be more helpful in this area.

English -language proficiency is considered a precursor to effective training in skill acquisition. Both were cited as problems that raise employer's costs. As an example, one participant said lack of adequate skills and communication abilities raise his company's sheetrock hanging costs by 300%.

Employers from various sectors, including construction and health care, utilize families of LEP employees as a primary resource for communication between employer and employee. Only one employer's business (communications) requires English. It utilizes temp-to-perm hiring agencies. The company does not use Spanish-speaking supervisors because there are good numbers of Hispanics who speak English. Employees are encouraged to take training in technical schools.

English proficiency is necessary for entry-level employment and advancement in the communication services sector. In the health care sector, English proficiency is required for advancement. Many employers agreed that literacy is a challenge with all employees, but more time must be dedicated to LEP employees, creating games to help with concepts and using color association to help with memorization. They agreed it becomes obvious quickly when people don't understand.

Employers generally expressed concern about what motivates new immigrants to stay and build careers in the U.S. Some expressed belief that a significant number of immigrants are in the U.S. voluntarily and planned to return to their country of origin in contrast to the immigrant who cannot return to the country for political reasons. Others felt that the longer an immigrant stays the greater likelihood permanent residency is possible. Educational interventions for career explorations were believed to be an effective tool in motivating LEP students to gain literacy. Participants said dual language programs are important and expressed hope the government will promote Spanish as a second language.

How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee's position in the company, and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?

The dominant employer representatives in the Houston focus group were those in the construction and the health care sectors. Contrasts in the sectors relate to the number of Spanish-speaking employees, the type of work they perform and the employees' positions in the company, considering the accommodations the employer is willing to make.

Health care employers are most successful in hiring LEP employees for entry-level positions, e.g., housekeeping and food court employees. Other positions within the sector require a minimum of a ninth grade education. Without education, an employee cannot advance to a supervisory, management or executive position. Employers in this sector provide employees guidance to help them obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent (GED) so they can compete in the industry, but do not pay educational costs associated with the GED.

With increasing numbers of Hispanic consumers of health care services employers are looking to hire greater numbers of Hispanic caregivers. One hospital's long-term approach is a 2-year old program in which the company adopted an elementary school that is 92% Hispanic and plans to follow the students through high school. Students go to the hospital and are shown highly technical labs. Speakers such as nurses or pharmacists, go directly to the school. The hospital gives its employees paid volunteer time to go into the schools and talk about their jobs and partnered with Scholastic Magazine. The participant believes it is the employer's responsibility to be proactive in recruiting educated employees.

Participating health care employers are proactive in computer training, providing employees educators to work with them one-on-one to learn computer basics. If employees request computer training and an educator is not available, the employer pays the costs of acquiring training through the community college.

Currently, there are 435 employees who are immigrants in one health care company; of these, only 17% are Hispanic. Because of this, there are too few to be mentors to other Hispanics. In contrast, employees in the construction sector are nearly 90% Hispanic, 70% of whom are LEP. Employers in this sector do not require English proficiency, as they have a large number

of Spanish-speaking supervisors and provide training in both English and Spanish. However, safety is identified as an area that is costly both on a human and competitive scale.

The construction sector representatives rely on their competitors to tell them how good the workers are.

What level and/or type of a company's management training programs are currently being offered to LEP Hispanic employees?

When discussing the level and/or type of a company's current management training programs for LEP Hispanic employees, a number of approaches were described. For instance, one construction company encourages English acquisition by conducting certain supervisor-level meetings in both English and Spanish. The safety portion is in Spanish and the product portion is in English. The company noticed that topics of high interest to LEP employees helped them learn English.

Supervisors who are Hispanic and who have come up through the ranks in the construction business are highly valued by those in the construction business. Supervisors are required to communicate in English because they deal with suppliers, vendors, and clients. At least one construction company has programs within its organization for improving English and teaching supervisory skills at the same time in addition to paying local colleges to teach its employees English.

Industry-specific language is addressed internally by company and no employer expressed added concern about this with LEP employees.

Participants from the construction, manufacturing and health care industries were unanimous in their concerns related to language proficiency and safety. In addition to safety as a human issue, one employer stated it affected the company's ability to compete due to costs associated with worker's compensation.

One company has internal educators who continually address safety risks with employees. Another sees safety as a behavioral issue and believes that training is more effective if it is a hands-on activity with the equipment rather than using a manual.

Yet another company uses a multi-pronged approach for safety if the supervisor is not strong enough in (language) skills, utilizing Spanish videos and translators.

Families of LEP employees are cited as a primary resource for recruiting in construction. The construction company participants described themselves as large and sophisticated in contrast to companies that are smaller with fewer resources to address these issues. An employer services company noted that small business clients do what they have to do (training in-house) to remain competitive. In some situations, such as maintaining airport terminals, in-house solutions don't work—a small company might have a self-paced CD to use for English acquisition, but the only computer available is the one the accountant uses. The participants agreed there is a significant need for low-cost solutions, and suggested a video game as one example.

What public or private programs are used by employers to recruit, train and retain employees to ensure that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English-speaking ability, have the necessary tools to succeed?

Programs employers use to address this question are varied and innovative. Eighteen months ago, one company hired outside certified providers to provide an accelerated (English) learning program to 15 Hispanic workers for six weeks during lunch. Half the program was on the employees' time and half was on the company's time. The employer asked the children of these employees to only speak English to their parents during this period. The program was very successful—seventy-five percent of the employees were retained; some left for better jobs. The participant felt the experience improved the employee's lives on the job and in the community.

Another participant identified his sector as an old industry (oil and gas) that recruits engineers only. Recruiting from the U.S. workforce produces 3% of its new hires. To address this, the company established a presence in Puerto Rico and recruits engineers from South American countries.

Yet another company hired 2,600 new employees last year, but had a hard time locating Hispanic applicants. The representative reported addressing this issue by moving beyond its

normal recruitment and going directly to the Hispanic communities as well as placing ads in Hispanic newspapers and associations.

Recruitment is an informal process in the construction industry. In order to keep a skilled worker pool, construction companies have recruited from their competitors when there is a drop off in work.

A few companies are using public entities to recruit employees with mixed results. Reasons employers gave for being dissatisfied with public services were applicants from public sources not showing up and a general lack of results despite company representatives spending time at the public agencies to tell prospective employees about the company and its needs. Several indicated an ideal recruiting resource would be a system similar to the guild systems where future employees learned their trade by apprenticing with skilled professionals.

It was noted the Hispanic association was a helpful resource for construction companies that recruit in Dallas.

▶ **CONCLUSION**

Although there is a need for Spanish-speaking health care providers to meet growing consumer demand, short-term solutions are more likely to be found in employees whose second language is Spanish. In the long-term, health care providers are aggressively pursuing Hispanic populations by developing interest in the profession through educational programs beginning at the elementary school level.

Safety and communication issues related to LEP workers continue to be an issue of concern to employers because they increases costs of doing business up to 300%.

Employers are seeking help in obtaining more effective training materials and a more systematic approach to helping their LEP employees attain the proficiency and literacy needed for their long-term growth and success.

**APPENDIX D-3:
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY - DALLAS**

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

As many Hispanics are recent immigrants to the United States and entering the labor force, English proficiency is a factor in their success and advancement. The U.S. Department of Labor asked the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce's Cultural and Educational Foundation to convene a group of employers in geographic areas of increasing Hispanic population, such as Dallas, to determine what employers need for their Spanish-speaking workforce.

This report begins with a brief overview of the Dallas economic outlook and jobs forecast to provide context to the focus group participants and their views.

▶ **DALLAS ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND JOBS FORECAST**

Dallas, Texas is the nation's eighth largest city with a population of 3.8 million. The Dallas/Ft. Worth metro area's population is 5.6 million, the largest in the South. It is projected that by 2030, Dallas/Ft. Worth will grow by 2.7 million people, increasing the total population to 8.3 million (Greater Dallas Chamber, 2004).

The racial/ethnic makeup of Dallas is 57.1% Caucasian, 23.5% Hispanic, 13.3% African American, 4.2% Asian, 0.6% from other races, and 1.3% from two or more races, (Greater Dallas Chamber, 2004). According to the US Census Bureau, Dallas' Hispanic population has doubled over the last decade, making Latinos the city's largest ethnic group.

According to Forbes Magazine, Dallas ranked fourth among major metropolitan areas in the nation as the best places for business and careers in 2003. This is not surprising considering that Dallas/Ft. Worth (DFW) has one of the nation's most diverse economies. Recent losses in three important industries – technology, transportation, and tourism – have been largely offset by gains in health care and education. However, the region's fundamentals remain strong with a highly educated workforce, top-notch research institutions, and an excellent transportation and logistics network (Greater Dallas Chamber Annual Report, 2002).

▶ **DALLAS FOCUS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

The Dallas focus group, held on September 29, 2004 was the third in a series following focus groups in Milwaukee on August 16, 2004, and Houston on September 9, 2004. In Dallas, eleven employers and one educational technology institute were represented:

American Eagle Airlines	Pappas
ACP	Parkland
Bill Priest Institute	Texadelphia Restaurants
Consolidated Restaurants	TXU
DFW Airport Board	UPS
ELK Corp.	Verizon

Seven employers that accepted the invitation but were not in attendance are: American Eagle Airlines, Capital Gemini, Community Credit Union, Gaylord Texan, Hyatt Hotel, New York Life, and Trevino Mechanical.

A variety of industry sectors were represented in the Dallas focus group. Three employers are in the hospitality sector (Consolidated Restaurants, Pappas, and Texadelphia Restaurants). The remaining employers are in health care (Parkland), transportation (American Eagle Airlines, DFW Airport Board and UPS), technology (Bill Priest Institute and ACP), manufacturing (ELK Corp), and energy (TXU). A representative from the financial sector (New York Life) cancelled at the last minute.

Six of the U.S. Department of Labor's twelve high-growth/high-demand sectors identified by the President as economically vital to the American economy were represented in the focus group: health care, information technology, hospitality, advanced manufacturing, transportation, and energy.

The focus group participants gave generously of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their LEP Hispanic workforce. The primary discussion focused primarily on the employers' expressed interests in recruitment and training providing greater depth of information than was possible in Milwaukee and Houston.

▶ FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

This summary discusses the four questions the study was designed to answer, and provides preliminary analysis of the data gathered.

What do employers perceive as necessary for LEP Hispanic employees to succeed?

Dallas employers believe English-language acquisition and technology are necessary for LEP Hispanic employees to succeed. Participants expressed more concern with the need to accomplish this goal and the associated methodologies than with costs, considering their financial investment in education worthwhile.

Employers spoke passionately about the need for English-language training, whether it is offered on-site or not. One employer is investing in on-site computer training for his LEP Hispanic employees because he believes Hispanic employees are loyal and his investment will result in high production and retention rates.

Another employer encourages all employees, even those who work part-time, to get an Associates Degree or greater, and pays tuition up to \$8,000 per year for full-time employees and \$4,000 per year for part-time employees.

How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee's position in the company, and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?

Participants agreed that the level of English proficiency is directly related to the type of work performed and the employee's position in the company. The Dallas employers spoke of their future needs as dependent on an educated Hispanic workforce and expressed a general willingness to make accommodations.

Some employers do not require a high school education; however, most stated their minimum qualifications for hiring included a high school education or its equivalent and a stable work history.

What level and/or type of a company's management training programs are currently being offered LEP Hispanic employees?

Most employers in the focus group promote from within the company. Some acknowledged the inconsistency between their company's policy of embracing diversity and inability to promote individuals from entry-level to mid-level or higher positions if there is an English-language barrier.

In one company that only offers part-time employment to all new employees, managers are chosen from the part-time employee pool, which is an effective advancement incentive for others.

The overall perception is that promoting employees will continue to be a problem until the language issue is resolved. In the future, employers speculate that a Spanish-speaking customer base may cause employers to adjust their needs and approach to management training.

What public or private programs are used by employers to recruit, train and retain all employees to ensure that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English-speaking ability, have the necessary tools to succeed?

Employers use varied programs to recruit, train, and retain employees to provide all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English speaking ability, with the necessary tools to succeed.

Participants recruit from the following organizations: the Department of Labor, Catholic Charities, housing authorities, colleges, trade schools, the military, friends and family of current employees, customers, and internet services, including those specifically aimed at the Hispanic market.

As in Houston, the Dallas focus group participants identified language and technology training as necessary for employees to be successful. An owner of multiple restaurants spoke of trying numerous methods to help his Spanish-speaking employees learn English. Currently he is

optimistic about a new program where he provides his employees with laptop computers using ESL software that is geared to the vocabulary of his business. Because many hospitality sector employees work 80 hours per week, his employees are encouraged to study during the two-and-a-half hour lull between lunch and dinner times instead of watching television.

Participants disagreed about the amount of time needed to teach English to non-English speaking employees. For some, six weeks seem adequate if the employees are motivated, while others believe English-language acquisition is a long-term endeavor.

The majority of participants were critical of the state workforce commission that authorizes local “One-Stops,” citing their lack of responsiveness to employers’ needs, lack of bi-lingual centers, and lack of thoughtful matchmaking between employee and employer.

Unlike Milwaukee and Houston focus group responses, there was no hesitation among Dallas employers when asked if immigrants expressed a desire to return to their country of origin. These employers believe that to be an outdated notion and offer as proof that many Hispanics have become realtors and are selling homes to the Hispanic market.

Employers seemed not to be concerned with retention issues. They described “loyalty” as an important characteristic of the Hispanic employee and stated that the acquisition of English proficiency would not negatively affect employee retention.

▶ **CONCLUSION**

In both Houston and Dallas there is recognition of an emerging customer base that requires proficiency in Spanish, suggesting the need for the English-speaking workforce to acquire Spanish-language proficiency. As an example, where the traditional model in the restaurant sector requires English proficiency of its front-of-the-house employees, as Spanish-speaking customers increase, businesses must adjust to meet this new reality.

What emerged from the focus group sessions in Dallas, Houston and Milwaukee is that the construction sector hires up to 80 percent LEP employees while manufacturing, energy, or health care, hire up to 17 percent of these employees, and for entry level positions only. The

concern for safety is the inhibitor to hiring LEP workers in all but construction, even though it is an expressed concern of employers in this industry as well.

Finally, what is apparent from the three focus groups is the need to bridge the language gap in all business sectors as the reality of a Hispanic dominated workforce becomes the future replacement pool of employees in all sectors and at all skill levels, including management.

**APPENDIX D-4:
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY - CHICAGO**

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

As many Hispanics are recent immigrants to the United States and entering the labor force, English proficiency is a factor in their success and advancement. The U.S. Department of Labor asked the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce's Cultural and Educational Foundation to convene a group of employers in geographic areas of increasing Hispanic population, such as Chicago, to determine what employers need for their Spanish-speaking workforce.

This report begins with a brief overview of the Chicago economic outlook and jobs forecast to provide context to the focus group participants and their views.

▶ **CHICAGO ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND JOBS FORECAST**

Chicago is the third most populous city in the nation (trailing only New York and Los Angeles) and is the most populous city in the Midwest with nearly 2.9 million residents (U.S. Census 2000). The population of the consolidated metro area (Chicago, Illinois; Gary, Indiana; and Kenosha, Wisconsin) is over 9 million (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor).

The racial/ethnic makeup of Chicago is 31.3% Caucasian, 36.4% African American, 4.3% Asian, 26 % Hispanic, and 2% Other. The Hispanic population in Chicago is the third highest in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

The average median per-capita income is \$35,583. Five of Chicago's ten largest industries are included in the President's High Growth Job Training Initiative: health care, financial services, manufacturing, hospitality/food service, and transportation.

The city of Chicago has 378,929 total business establishments, ranking number three in the nation. The cost of doing business in Chicago is lower than seven other major metropolitan areas in the United States.

▶ **CHICAGO FOCUS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

The Chicago focus group, held on October 21, 2004 was the fourth in a series following focus groups in Milwaukee on August 16, Houston on September 9, and Dallas on September 29, 2004.

Corporate representatives from sixteen employers participated in the focus group. A representative from the National Safety Council and the U.S. Department of Labor were present but did not participate in the focus group discussion.

Alcan	National Safety Council
American Airlines	Nu-Way Industries
Carl Buddig & Co.	Offsite
Casey Consulting Services	Pepper Construction Co.
Caterpillar	Seal Master Bearings
Duraco Products	Tidy International
Hyatt Hotel	Two-Key
International TRKT Engine	Wrigley
Kraft Corp.	U.S. Department of Labor

One employer that accepted the invitation but was not in attendance is System Sensor, a Honeywell Company.

A variety of industry sectors were represented in the Chicago focus group. More than half of the corporate employers that participated are in manufacturing. Of these, four are in light manufacturing (Carl Buddig & Co., Kraft, Two-Key, and Wrigley), and six are in heavy manufacturing (Alcan, Caterpillar, Duraco, International TRKT Engine, Nu-Way Industries, and Seal Master Bearings). The remaining employers are in the following sectors: restaurant/hospitality (Hyatt Hotel), janitorial (Tidy International), construction (Pepper Construction Co), transportation (American Airlines) and services (Offsite, Casey Consulting Services).

Four of the U.S. Department of Labor's twelve high-growth/high-demand sectors identified by the President as economically vital to the American economy were represented in the focus group: advanced manufacturing, construction, hospitality, and transportation.

Corporate representatives were provided an executive summary of the study questions in advance of the meeting.

The focus group participants gave generously of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their LEP Hispanic workforce. Their discussion focused on recruitment, retention, and promotion within their respective business sectors and organizations.

▶ **FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES**

This summary discusses the four questions the study was designed to answer, and provides preliminary analysis of the data gathered.

What do employers perceive as necessary for LEP Hispanic employees to succeed?

The majority of employers present need English proficient workers, regardless of their business sector. Even in tight knit employment communities, such as those with union contractors where bi-lingual classes are offered, it is problematic for companies with LEP employees on the job site where there is much verbal one-on-one. As manufacturing becomes more automated, it is increasingly a criterion that new hires must speak English even during the interview. Another employer noted that, among its employees 16 languages are spoken, and it does not want to appear that it favors one group over another, so all its signs are in English.

How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee's position in the company, and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?

As manufacturing becomes more automated, basic knowledge of the English language is necessary for new hires. Current employees of one company were informed that to be retained, they must learn English. Companies test and interview in English, revealing that those

applicants who are LEP Hispanic do well in math but lack English comprehension skills. Some companies offer bi-lingual training classes, but run into problems on the job when verbal communication is primary.

Although trade classes are bi-lingual, the problem is on the job site where there is much verbal one-on-one.

One employer pays for in-house ESL programs and, while it does not pay employees for their time, it does pay a bonus to employees who complete the class. This same employer said this type of program is costly. Larger employers can more readily absorb these costs than can the small supplier.

Employers believe that some employees do not take advantage of training classes offered because they are afraid it is a way of checking the employees' legal status.

A Hispanic employer relayed his journey as an undocumented child who dropped out of high school to protect his anonymity to a successful business owner and U.S. citizen today. He spoke about holding training costs down by working with churches and apartment complexes for English-language training. He asks the apartment managers to give him use of their clubhouses and asks priests to conduct the classes.

What level and/or type of a company's management training programs are currently being offered to LEP Hispanic employees?

English-language training that incorporates "a lot of pictures" as well as math and "shop talk" has been successful for one employer who stated that morale is boosted because employees can communicate better and those who can communicate better will advance. He further observed that the training that was effective 10-15 years ago is no longer effective due to advances in technology.

Another employer encourages his supervisors to take Spanish as a second language. He noted the participation in this program is low but that it is effective for those who participate because the Hispanic employees gain respect for the employer and they are more willing to learn English.

Participants noted proficiency in English is needed in top management positions, and one company stated it offers a wide variety of programs from language proficiency classes to 2-year or 4-year college programs in management. One employer referred to English proficiency as the “glass ceiling.”

What public or private programs are used by employers to recruit, train and retain all employees to ensure that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English-speaking ability, have the necessary tools to succeed?

Most, but not all, focus group participants said they had a favorable opinion of state employment agencies and were likely to recruit employees from these organizations. Those companies that received referrals from friends and families guided them to the local state agency where the organization’s jobs were posted so as to stay within the laws governing equal employment opportunities. Again, most said the state agencies did a good job of screening and expressed the view the state agencies as good partners.

Those who indicated dissatisfaction with public agencies stated that state agencies “will give you what comes through the door rather than saying to the applicants that they have certain jobs available.” These participants felt two problems with applicants from state agencies were transportation and a poor job history.

Some businesses used community colleges, and tool and manufacturing associations to recruit and train employees.

The role of education at the community colleges and high schools was an issue of importance to participants. For instance, one community college was closing its manufacturing program for lack of interest, but participants wondered if it had reached out to the Hispanic community. Yet another community college was launching a marketing campaign for a manufacturing program as a career option. Some participants wondered why the emphasis in high school is to go to college rather than offering the opportunity to also study for a trade. Others criticized high schools for not producing qualified candidates for manufacturing because the schools did a poor job of teaching computer and English skills.

Employers provide employees with opportunities to take ESL classes, GED classes, and sector training with specific vocabulary. They do not pay employees for their time to attend classes or training.

Several participants discussed language proficiency models they felt were successful.

One such model was a 15-week program for 15 people. They worked from 7 am – 12 Noon daily and then took English classes from 1pm – 7 pm. They were given a 50cents per hour raise to complete the class. Only one person missed one day of the program. The consultants who designed and delivered the program learned that although the Hispanics were not literate in Spanish, they became literate in English as a result of the program.

Another employer created an English learning class using the game show, “The Weakest Link,” based on cultural differences that resulted in more cultural awareness within the organization and a greater comfort level with those speaking with an “accent.”

One employer suggested the manufacturers of equipment should provide training in English and Spanish on the equipment they sell.

Other ideas that emerged from the focus group discussion of effective tools to help employees gain proficiency in English included leveraging existing technology, such as radio and television, and a business website that provides relevant practices and links related to their Hispanic workforce. They also voiced the hope that high schools would play a greater role in providing vocational training, including hands-on shop experience, and that community colleges would offer free ESL classes in three shifts to make it convenient for workers to attend.

▶ CONCLUSION

Chicago businesses were more likely to use state agencies to recruit employees than at other locations in this study.

It is interesting that although the manufacturing sector dominated the Chicago focus group, there were few direct concerns expressed about safety, which differed from manufacturers in other locations where focus groups were held. One possibility for this sector distinction may be that the meeting was held at the National Safety Council and there was an implicit assumption

that safety is a concern. Several comments addressed this indirectly, such as the desire for equipment manufacturers to provide training on the equipment in both English and Spanish.

This focus group provided a rich array of possible solutions and tools to help the emerging Hispanic workforce gain proficiency in English.

**APPENDIX D-5:
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY - IRVINE**

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

As many Hispanics are recent immigrants to the United States and entering the labor force, English proficiency is a factor in their success and advancement. The U.S. Department of Labor asked the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce's Cultural and Educational Foundation to convene a group of employers in geographic areas of increasing Hispanic population, such as Irvine, California, to determine what employers need for their Spanish-speaking workforce.

This report begins with a brief overview of the Irvine economic outlook and jobs forecast to provide context to the focus group participants and their views.

▶ **IRVINE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND JOBS FORECAST**

Incorporated in 1971, Irvine is the largest city in Orange County and is ranked by the U.S. Census Bureau as the sixth fastest growing city in the nation both in population and geographic size. The City of Irvine boasts that it is a national model of a successful master-planned urban community with a dynamic business environment (2004).

With a growing population, the City of Irvine reports its 2004 ethnic distribution as: non-Hispanic White (57%), Asian and Pacific Islander (29.8%), Hispanic (7.4%), Black (1.4%), and Other (4.4%). Orange County uses data from the Orange County Regional Occupation Programs (ROPs) to assess the status of career training and workforce development. Enrollment in these programs during 2001/02 were 44% Latino, 32% White, and 15% Asian; a survey of graduates conducted six months after program completion indicated 61% were employed in a field related to their course of study.

The manufacturing, construction and high tech sectors dominate the economy. The county's high-tech economy has been a factor in shielding it from the more serious impacts of the recent slowdown in technology.

The Irvine, California economy experienced stress related to national economic conditions, including events on September 11, 2001, and the fiscal management crisis particular to California. Currently, the economic outlook in California is modestly optimistic. While the manufacturing sector in California has declined in the past 12 years, Orange County, home to Irvine, gained manufacturing jobs (Keystone Study, 2004). A recent Dun & Bradstreet survey of business executives in Orange County confirmed a 2004 gain in jobs as a key indicator of fiscal health, and the fourth best county for entrepreneurs in the western United States (2003).

▶ **IRVINE FOCUS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

The Irvine focus group, held on December 7, 2004, was the fifth in a series, following focus groups in Milwaukee (August 16), Houston (September 9), Dallas (September 29), and Chicago (October 21).

Eight corporate representatives from six employers participated in the focus group, held at the Supplier Excellence Alliance.

Boeing Corporation	Retention Education
Mission Hospital	St. Joseph's Hospital
PacifiCare	Tavilla Sales

One employer that accepted the invitation but was not in attendance due to an emergency is Reyes Machining.

The industry sectors represented in the Irvine focus group include manufacturing (Boeing), health care (Mission Hospital, PacifiCare, and St. Joseph's Hospital), education (Retention Education), and agriculture (Tavilla Sales). Although both Mission Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital are direct providers of health care services, PacifiCare provides employee health insurance across industry sectors.

Two of the U.S. Department of Labor's twelve high-growth/high-demand sectors identified by the President as economically vital to the American economy were represented in the focus group: advanced manufacturing and health care.

Corporate representatives were provided an executive summary of the study questions in advance of the meeting.

The focus group participants gave generously of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their LEP Hispanic workforce. Their discussion focused on recruitment retention, and promotion within their respective business sectors.

▶ **FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES**

This summary discusses the four questions the study was designed to answer, and provides preliminary analysis of the data gathered.

What do employers perceive as necessary for LEP Hispanic employees to succeed?

While English-language acquisition, particularly the acquisition of sector-specific language, was acknowledged as important, employers were quick to add that the acquisition of work skills (including reading and math) and life skills, are integral to the success of LEP Hispanic employees. Cultural barriers in the workplace, such as male employee responses to women in leadership or supervisory roles, were cited as inhibitors to employee success.

Employers participating in the focus group expressed differing needs depending on their particular business sector. For instance, health care providers not only require all new hires to read and understand English, but because employees can be identified by their uniforms, they must also be able to respond to customer questions. Employers in the manufacturing sector require new hires for assembly line work to speak English, and understand schematics, and what “process” is. Employers in the hospitality sector hire LEP speakers for back-of-the-house positions.

As LEP purchasing power is increasingly recognized, some employers point to limited-Spanish proficiency as a growing issue.

How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee's position in the company, and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?

Hospitality industry employers cited acquisition of English as critical to promoting current employees from the back-of-the-house to the front-of-the-house. Generally, lack of knowledge of professional opportunities was cited as an adjunct reason that LEP employees do not advance.

Employer representatives indicated that financial support from the government, in-full or matched, to provide employee English-language acquisition, is highly valued.

What level and/or type of a company's management training programs are currently being offered to LEP Hispanic employees?

One employer offers a one-hour lesson once a week during work to its food service staff. Even though the employees who participate in this program are proud of the English they learn, the employer has noted a drop in interest in the class. Another employer said training videos and visual aids using color codes that are devoid of language altogether is a successful approach to teaching occupational skills. Yet another employer's program for LEP employees includes a homework component whereby employees listen to the news in English and speak English with their children.

Sector-specific language acquisition is a primary interest of employers in Irvine and is consistent with what employers expressed at other focus group sites.

What public or private programs are used by employers to recruit, train and retain all employees to ensure that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English-speaking ability, have the necessary tools to succeed?

Focus group participants were familiar with public agencies such as One-Stops, and reported mixed success in the agencies meeting employer expectations. Regional Occupational Programs (ROPs) were cited by employers as a viable resource. Public-private educational partnership grants are valued by the hospitality sector. Community colleges that provide job-

site programs, particularly nursing programs, were highly valued by the health care sector representatives present.

▶ **CONCLUSION**

Employers in this focus group tended to believe that the longer immigrants stay in the United States, the more likely the United States will be their permanent home. Some felt that social and economic factors facing immigrants now will disappear within the next decade.

Standardized English-language proficiency tests for words, reading comprehension, and writing that are easy to administer and can be made industry specific should be developed and used. Another suggestion for a government-sponsored solution across industries calls for a public TV or radio channel that offers bi-lingual and multi-lingual training 24 hours a day.

An important issue that surfaced in this focus group was the identification of certain misperceptions that factor into the success of the minority populations even when individuals are English proficient. For example, a representative of the manufacturing sector, who is a senior executive and Hispanic, said that although he graduated from high school a semester early, his counselor suggested he go into boxing. A problem with scenarios such as this is that the individual does not have the opportunity to gain knowledge of a range of available professional opportunities. Another public misperception is that LEP Hispanic employees are not educated, even though many non-English speakers have academic credentials from their native countries. Lack of international academic credential assessment capacity was cited as an inhibitor to remedying the problem.

APPENDIX E

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES: QUADGRAPHICS AND TYSON FOODS, INC.

APPENDIX E-1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - QUADGRAPHICS

▶ COMPANY PARTICIPANT

The participant was the human resources director of QuadGraphics, a commercial printing company with locations in Wisconsin, West Virginia, Oklahoma, Georgia and New York. The company also has international partnerships with firms in Brazil, Argentina and Poland. It is the largest privately held commercial printer in the United States and is the third largest printer in the world. QuadGraphics prints catalogs, books and magazines including National Geographic, Time, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated and Playboy. Worldwide, the company employs over 10,000 people, 10 percent of whom are Hispanic. Of these, 70 percent have limited English proficiency. At times during the year the company employs temporary help, the majority of whom are Hispanic.

▶ RECRUITMENT

The company is in the process of changing its recruitment process due to new complexities in production, including extensive use of computers. By March, it will accept only on-line applications, thus testing the applicant's knowledge of English and computers. The One-Stop system is not utilized extensively. Jobs are posted on JobNet, Wisconsin's one-stop job listing, but only because it is required. The company does use Waukesha Technical College, a partner in the one-stop system for some training. The one-stop system could be of greater value to the company if it provided computer training, ESL classes and basic math skills prior to applicants coming to the company. Skills such as reading a ruler and understanding postal sheets are vital to this company. To date, the public system has asked the company how it could be more helpful.

▶ RETENTION

The company operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Employees work 12 hours for 3 days and are off 4 days one week, and work 4 days the second week work and are off 3 days.

Workers stand during their shift. The first 60 days are the test period. If the worker is going to leave due to the type of work it is usually during this period.

Realizing that the company will have more LEP Hispanic workers in the future, it has changed its philosophy regarding ESL training. Originally the company conducted this training in a large class; now no group is larger than 5 or 6 to enable workers to get more in-depth training. Also, it has initiated a “star performer“ program, where individuals showing managerial promise are coached one-on-one. They are taught the production and control systems and skilled use of the computer. The goal is to have Hispanic workers able to assume management positions by 2015.

There is some fear that the resources used for this intensive training may not be wisely spent if, in the end, the worker decides to return to Mexico. But overall, the company is hopeful that the pool of management potentials will be greatly increased.

Shop rules are presented at company meetings. Hispanic workers attended separate meetings conducted in Spanish, but the company discarded this approach because it was determined the employees felt isolated. Now all employees attend meetings conducted in English; sometimes there is a follow-up session for Hispanics led by a bi-lingual Employee Services person in order to check for understanding and respond to questions.

All mass mailings and all safety communications are written in English and Spanish. Safety is a major concern. An outside firm is employed to translate these communications. Otherwise, within each plant there is an Employee Services representative who is bi-lingual who is always available for assistance to Hispanic workers. There is one person in each plant to explain benefits.

The interviewer noticed Wisconsin's employment laws were posted in the lobby in English and Spanish.

QuadGraphics is a direct deposit company, making it necessary for employees to have a bank account. This is explained during employee orientation. In addition, the company has moved to a team approach for production. There is one bi-lingual crew member per shift who is dedicated to translating floor instructions when needed.

Quality is important in the publications the company prints, such as National Geographic and Architectural Digest and quality requirements are communicated through the team leaders. Security is also a concern. For example, when Time Magazine was about to come out with the man of the year issue, it was vital that no one at the printing plant reveal who it was to be. No one did. One issue that has emerged is that when there is a quality problem, there is a tendency to blame the Hispanic employees. It is often difficult to find out whether or not this is true.

The company subsidizes on-site day care so that the rates are competitive. Health care clinics are on-site at five plant locations and health benefits are available for all full-time employees.

When the company employed migrants, it made housing available but no longer does that. Migrant workers often worked the minimum time period and filed for unemployment, so the company has moved away from these hires.

The company goes beyond the minimum requirements checking on the legal status of Hispanic employees. It requires the temporary agencies they use to do the same. Even so, there are problems and the company randomly checks 10 percent of the temporaries. Interest was expressed in the President's guest worker proposal.

It is difficult to determine how much the training of Hispanic workers has increased productivity. Other factors such as automation and new equipment have also had an influence on increased productivity. The company has been shifting to the use of teams for production with an emphasis on team-building and good communication. These have definitely increased productivity.

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

According to the company executive, it would be ideal to have publicly-funded agencies come in-house or help pay for what the company is currently doing one-on-one to train future managers.

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

It was noted that corporate culture often differs by geographic location. In the South, there is a desire to get to know the person and then work, whereas in northern states, such as Wisconsin and New York, the work comes first and then, if there is time, get to know one's co-workers.

The local Human Resources group has not taken up the question of issues surrounding large numbers of Hispanics in the workforce, but has focused on the larger issue of diversity.

The company encourages its employment agencies to represent the diversity of the local population in the job applicants they send, including Caucasians, women, and the range of minorities. Currently most applicants sent to the company are Hispanic.

A web site to share successful strategies might be helpful. More useful might be a "Think Tank" type of organization across industries that would try "out of the box" solutions.

**APPENDIX E-2:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - TYSON FOODS, INC.**

▶ **COMPANY PARTICIPANT**

The participant was a senior level executive with Tyson Foods, Inc. With the recent acquisition of IBP Fresh Meats, Tyson is now the largest producer of chicken, pork and beef in the world, serving retail, wholesale, and food service customers in the U.S. and 80 countries overseas. In addition to fresh meats, Tyson produces processed and pre-cooked meats, refrigerated and frozen prepared foods, and animal feeds.

▶ **RECRUITMENT**

Very little English is needed for entry-level jobs at Tyson's plants as the company utilizes bi-lingual employees in positions such as assistant hourly trainers and lead trainers. Also, many supervisors are bi-lingual. Employees at many company plants have participated in an interpreter training program.

The company has developed collaborative partnerships with many community colleges in areas where plants are located. Through these partnerships, Tyson employees can access ESL classes, attain a GED, and take classes to gain U.S. citizenship.

Tyson would like to have customized ESL classes specific to its industry. These classes must be at flexible/convenient times for Tyson team members, such as around shift changes. Child-care for employees' children and adult classes that focus on nutrition and parenting skills are highly desirable. Finally, transportation to and from classes would increase employee attendance.

▶ **RETENTION**

The company does not have standards in place to measure English proficiency, although there is a language assessment for candidates who apply for interpreter training positions. Tyson employees who attend the community college are assessed when they enter ESL classes.

All orientation materials, signs, and postings are in Spanish, and all videos are translated into Spanish. Tysons uses the Multi-Lingual Orientation Training System (MOTS) in Sedalia, Emporia and Storm Lake plants for orientation and line meetings. Using MOTS assists with the communication process when team members are first hired.

Policies and procedures are covered in orientation meetings. Interpreters and bi-lingual orientation trainers and assistant hourly trainers are used with the transition from orientation to the floor. The company notes that it takes longer to train a team member whose English proficiency is limited.

Sixty-four languages are spoken by Tyson employees, which is a major challenge. In one plant, Goodlettsville, nineteen languages are spoken. The company actively markets the ESL programs offered in the community during employee orientation meetings. Migrant recruiters attend the orientation meetings to talk to new employees about services provided by the local public schools. They also talk about the migrant programs offered for the children of team members. During orientation at some plants, employees receive information about time and attendance, personal hygiene, and banking/financial services.

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

The company provides many services to help employees advance, including classes in ESL, GED, and citizenship. In addition, Tyson provides educational assistance and scholarship programs for children of team members in some plants. Internal training is offered to help employees gain self-confidence. This is seen as important to helping employees advance to become assistant hourly trainers, quality assurance employees, front-line supervisors, and maintenance employees. All jobs are posted and employees bid on them.

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

Common concerns and promising practices are shared between the production training managers and the training coordinators via video, telephone, and an annual conference. Tyson human resources directors meet weekly to discuss concerns. Other methods Tyson uses include:

- Plant newsletters
- Learning Center at Pasco
- Migrant-education conference speakers
- Bi-national conference speakers
- Participation on the Nebraska Interstate Migrant Education Council
- Sponsor seminars for industries to share best practices
- Bring community resources to orientation.

APPENDIX F

EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE SUMMARIES: EMPLOYERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (EWDN) AND TEXAS MANUFACTURING ASSISTANCE CENTERS (TMAC)

APPENDIX F-1:
EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLES
EMPLOYERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (EWDN)

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

This report begins with a brief overview of an employer network established in the Green Bay, Wisconsin area, the Employers Workforce Development Network (EWDN) in order to provide context to the roundtable participants and their views.

▶ **EMPLOYERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (EWDN)**

Employers Workforce Development Network (EWDN) is a network for more than 35 companies and 24 providers and partners in the Green Bay, WI area organized to share information, best practices, and specific actions to recruit, retain and advance a quality workforce in northeast Wisconsin. In the late 1990s, 250 Hispanics were arriving in the Green Bay area per week. Today, it is estimated that 10 percent of the population is Hispanic.

EWDN was originally founded to resolve the multiple issues surrounding the large number of limited-English speaking employees in the workforce, and has since become a comprehensive workplace development approach to bring companies together to resolve mutual challenges. Funding for EWDN is both from a \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and corporate contributions based on the number of employees. In turn, EWDN makes grants to fund specific projects, including language training, cultural awareness, financial literacy, health-insurance literacy, leadership, mentoring, teamwork, computer and automated-technology skills, planning skills, creativity and adaptation to change. A requirement of a grant from EWDN is that information be shared among the membership about what worked, what didn't and what should be done differently.

EWDN achieves its goals by sharing information, identifying best practices, and taking specific action. The members work in task forces to find the best ideas to address articulated needs and propel the ideas into reality. The members set aside normal competitive styles to come together and share ideas and accomplishments so everyone can benefit.

▶ MEETING SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The first executive roundtable was held in DePere, Wisconsin on August 18, 2004. Wendy Seronko, EWDN's Executive Director, organized the group.

The following four employers were present: American Foods Group, Bay Towel, Services Plus, and Tufco Technologies. Of these, three are in manufacturing (American Foods, Bay Towel, and Tufco Technologies) and one is in the service sector (Services Plus). The manufacturing businesses have been identified by President Bush as economically vital to the American economy as a high growth/high demand sector.

▶ RECRUITMENT

For LEP employees to succeed, it is important that the private and public sectors find a way to communicate to develop positive outcomes for employers and employees. One participant said his company hired 100 percent of its Hispanic workforce from the public job service agency but that it experienced a turnover rate of 60 percent.

Supervisory-level employees need to be able to read English. Member companies choose service providers such as the Literacy Council, the local tech colleges and others for help in designing training programs. Companies pay the Council for this service. Employees who show a strong interest are offered English-language classes held before or after working hours and on days off. These classes can be tailored to the needs of the employer. Classes in Spanish as a second language are also being offered employees.

A local hotel offers Spanish and English classes during working hours that are 90 minutes for four weeks.

▶ RETENTION

Some companies have full time bi-lingual employees in their human resources departments that work as liaisons. Translators are used at employee meetings.

Members of the Network discussed the need to create a secure environment so employees feel free to speak out about safety issues and other things of concern in the workplace. One company said Hispanic workers thought that if they were injured they would be fired. To resolve that misconception and create a better dialogue, the company has instituted monthly luncheon sessions, offering financial literacy, Spanish for managers and cultural literacy programs.

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

EWDN employers view their employees as an asset. They are dedicated to building their skills, and giving them the opportunities they need to keep them in the community. To achieve this, many non-Hispanics are volunteering to act as tutors.

EWDN companies have developed a financial-training tool on how to write checks, use checking or savings accounts, buy a car or house, etc. and handed the financial-training tool over to Literacy Council, who is partnering with the financial institutions and employers group to deliver to the Hispanic workforce. EWDN members thought employees would be uncomfortable having their employers involved in personal financial training.

When asked if the lack of English proficiency affected quality, the companies responded that they can't afford to let that happen. To offset this, many employers have removed words and use colored pictures to communicate, provide quality inspections and training.

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

Companies are also addressing the cultural issues. In addition to helping employees gain information about the American culture, employers offer their them information on the value of literacy, health care system issues, concepts of banks, preventative healthcare and wellness, and how to buy a car. EWDN is working closely with the local school system, recognizing that the issue of language proficiency is inter-generational.

Employers believe that there is hesitancy by the Hispanic worker to make the move into management. Peer pressure, not wanting to supervise other Hispanics, cultural class, and lack of leadership skills were identified as possible barriers toward advancement.

It was a commonly held view of participants that the public workforce delivery system tends to promote what they have instead of what employers need. Given that EWDN's members represent a large percentage of employers in the Green Bay area and have initiated communications with the public delivery system, the public delivery system is becoming more responsive. Despite that, there was consensus among participants that a new paradigm of service could be established by the U.S. Department of Labor requiring public agencies to come out into the workplace to better understand what the employers need to recruit and retain a quality workforce.

▶ **CONCLUSION**

According to the EWDN participants, common pain was the catalyst that led to total abandonment of parochial thinking in the establishment of the Employers Workforce Development Network. There is a community recognition that employers need to retain their Hispanic workforce to keep their businesses operational. The realization was that it is more important to work together to find the best ideas to address the multitude of social, economic, education and other needs of an LEP workforce.

As these companies learn and develop solutions, which are shared throughout the community, they are developing a workplace that could be a model for many other U.S. communities.

APPENDIX F-2:
EXECUTIVE ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY
TEXAS MANUFACTURING ASSISTANCE CENTERS (TMAC)

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

This report begins with a brief overview of TMAC to provide context to the roundtable participants and their views.

▶ **TEXAS MANUFACTURING ASSISTANCE CENTERS (TMAC)**

Texas Manufacturing Assistance Centers (TMAC) is an affiliate of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). TMAC exists to enhance the competitive position of the state's manufacturing sector and services are delivered through partners such as University of Texas at Arlington, El Paso and Panamerica campuses; Texas Engineering Extension Services, Texas A&M and University of Houston.

The Texas Manufacturing Assistance Centers (TMAC) executive roundtable, held on February 2, 2005 was the second of two executive roundtables and followed the Employers Workforce Development Network (EWDN) meeting held in DePere, Wisconsin on August 18, 2004. Five employers, two associations and one educational-technology institute were represented:

Alcon Laboratories Inc.	Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options
Bell Helicopter	Lockheed Martin
Fresh Express	Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC)
General Motors	University of Texas at Arlington

The industry sectors represented are primarily in manufacturing (Alcon Laboratories Inc., Bell Helicopter, General Motors, and Lockheed Martin). One employer is in the hospitality/restaurant sector (Fresh Express). The remaining participants are business support organizations (Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options, Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center, and the University of Texas at Arlington).

Two of the U.S. Department of Labor's twelve high growth/high demand sectors identified by President Bush as economically vital to the American economy were represented: health care, information technology, hospitality, advanced manufacturing, transportation, and energy.

▶ **RECRUITMENT**

Many participants use online services, such as Monster.com, and temporary agencies to recruit employees, although these services do not ensure employees will have the language and math skills required for US technology-based industries.

The aerospace industry is faced with an aging workforce. When it looks at the talent pool in the schools, however, it sees that students are not trained in the math and technology skills necessary for entry-level positions. Several participants would like to see schools address the need for technology training as early as the first grade, and definitely by the eighth grade. They propose working with the schools to train students for aircraft worker certificates. This program would train students and their parents in English, math, and computer technology.

One company has formed a partnership with the Arlington school district with 50 percent Spanish-speaking students. It has hired eight students on a contractual basis to work in a pilot training program. The company will develop curriculum, provide all training instruction and materials, and offer positions within the industry to graduates at their completion of the program.

To ensure it hires skilled workers, one manufacturing participant said his company coordinates with Tarrant Community College to sponsor a twelve-week program to train applicants in the basic skills required for jobs within the company. As a result of this program, the company has been able to identify employee needs, build a curriculum that is job-specific, and address language and math proficiency and citizenship awareness.

▶ **RETENTION**

The major problem facing these US companies is their ability to retain employees. This problem not only concerns defining standards for measuring employee job proficiency, but also concerns the actions the companies must take to increase employee loyalty, ensure their integration within the company community, and offer opportunities for advancement.

Unlike their counterparts in other groups, participants believe that, once trained, their newly English-proficient employees will move on to higher paying jobs. To offset turnover, these companies are finding ways to build personal relationships and increase employee loyalty.

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

Participants agreed that the workforce system does not identify and support employees' needs nor does it implement viable plans for improving proficiency in English, math, and computer skills. Small companies that supply goods and services to large corporations are doing a better job of training employees. One company, through a grant from the Dallas Workforce Board, has developed training through a two-phase ESL program and possible adoption of the Daily Dose® English program, a revolutionary language system designed by Daily Dose Learning Systems to develop both English and job skills at work in only 10 minutes a day.

▶ **CONCLUSION**

All participants urged continuing the dialog started at the meeting and suggested meeting quarterly to discuss issues related to jobs skills and employee training. They recommended the following actions:

- Enlist an organization such as the US-Mexico Chamber of Commerce to serve as a catalyst for bringing local organizations together to identify, define, and develop strategies for employee recruitment and retention.
- Form a network of organizations, such as a Dallas/Ft. Worth Coalition, to discuss skills proficiency, rather than tackle the issues related to LEP employees.
- Identify and find information on best practices for training in job skills, corporate culture, and community integration.
- Develop work-specific programs, on-site and through local educational institutions, to train potential employees in the skills required for company jobs.

**APPENDIX G:
SURVEY REPORT ON
ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO MANUFACTURING FIRMS**

FINAL REPORT

JANUARY 20, 2005

**ENGLISH PROFICIENCY:
A SURVEY OF WHAT ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO MANUFACTURING EMPLOYERS NEED FOR THEIR
SPANISH-SPEAKING WORKFORCE**

Prepared for:

The United States-Mexico Cultural and Education Foundation
Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite G-0003
Washington, DC 20004-3021

Prepared by:

MEP Management Services, Inc.
87 Winthrop Street
Augusta, Maine 04330

SUMMARY

MEP Management Services, Inc. (MEP MSI) surveyed 40 small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMEs) in Arizona and 62 SMEs in New Mexico to determine the English proficiency requirements for their Spanish-speaking workforce. The survey questions addressed recruitment, retention, advancement and corporate culture. The geographic distribution of the surveyed SMEs in both states included those that were located in major metropolitan areas and near the Mexican border. Over 80 percent the combined surveyed SMEs employ less than 50 employees, although a few manufacturers who employed greater than 100 workers were included. In terms of ownership, the Arizona survey included 33 non-minority-owned SMEs and seven Hispanic-owned SMEs. In New Mexico, 54 were non-minority-owned, four were Hispanic-owned and four were Native American-owned (non-tribal-owned).

The predominant industry sectors represented in the survey for both states were fabricated products and plastics and rubber products. Chemicals was another predominant industry in Arizona while electrical equipment, and computer components and electronics were predominant industries in New Mexico.

The aggregate findings from the survey are listed below. In general, the responses to the survey questions were similar among Arizona and New Mexico SME employers and were not influenced by location or industry sector. However, where appropriate, differences in responses between states are noted. Detailed statistics are provided in the body of the report.

▶ RECRUITMENT

- Sixty-five percent of surveyed Arizona SMEs hire only English-speaking workers. In New Mexico, the percentage was lower at 34 percent. These employers require all their employees to speak, read and write English prior to employment, even for entry-level jobs. With so many Spanish dialects, requiring English minimizes communication difficulties. Even with this requirement, less than 50 percent of these employers test for English proficiency and those that do use local community colleges for the testing.

- The remaining surveyed SMEs, including all Hispanic-owned SMEs, do not have such requirements, are more flexible, and hire workers who speak Spanish only for entry-level jobs. These employers have bilingual employees to help translate if needed especially for Spanish-speaking employees at the lower levels of production. None of these employers test for English Proficiency.
- Regardless of recruitment practices, most employers have used government and non-government methods to recruit employees, including private employment services, local community colleges, newspapers, the Internet and “word of mouth”.
- Of the 27 surveyed Arizona and New Mexico employers who have used the One-Stop Centers, a little over 50 percent expressed dissatisfaction with the services due to the lack of appreciation and understanding of the manufacturing world, which hinders the ability of the One-Stop Career Center staff to help manufacturing employers in recruiting qualified workers.

▶ **RETENTION**

- The majority of surveyed employers do not equate English proficiency with the type of work to be performed. In fact, most believe that “work has its own language—teach the skills and the language will follow.” They did express the belief that the increasing global competition is putting significant pressure on them to ensure that their employees have basic skills in English speaking, reading and writing, math, problem-solving, communication and computer literacy, regardless of industry sector.
- In contrast, English proficiency is definitely related to an employee’s position in the company, as well as the level of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake. This seems to stem out of the need to ensure management is well prepared to handle most situations in the front office and shop floor.
- Accessing assistance to help employees develop English-language skills seems to be restricted to the employers with flexible recruitment policies in terms of English proficiency, i.e. those that hire Spanish-speaking-only workers. The assistance is provided primarily by third party trainers in local community colleges and is paid for primarily with community sources.
- These employers would rather have training in basic skills for their employees: basic math, keyboarding, reading and writing, communication, and problem- solving. Even those who are bilingual often need additional basic skills to be able to move up in the company.

- Among the Arizona and New Mexico employers that have English as an employment requirement, about 30 percent have never used government-funded language training programs because they do not have English-language issues. The remaining 70 percent have rarely used government or private-funded language training programs and would like to learn more about them.

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

- SMEs who hire Spanish-speaking-only employees have career advancement opportunities for all their employees in shop floor supervisory and management positions. Proficiency in soft skills is required for intermediate and advanced skills and management positions. These employers have accessed public training funds primarily from the federal Department of Labor through the local workforce boards and One-Stop Career Centers.

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

- SMEs who hire Spanish-speaking-only employees believe their corporate culture is Spanish-speaker friendly. Nearly half of these employers promote such a culture by encouraging their non-Spanish speaking employees, including managers, to learn Spanish, and have accessed public funds to train their employees in Spanish.
- Unfortunately, many of the employees do not take advantage of this opportunity because their firms do not make this a work requirement or provide job-related incentives.

METHODOLOGY

The United States-Mexico Cultural and Educational (USMCEF) Foundation contracted the services of MEP Management Services, Inc. (MEP MSI) to gauge Spanish requirements for training and workforce development by small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises (SMEs who employ less than 100 workers) in Arizona and New Mexico.

The original work plan required the following:

1. *Develop DOL-approved workforce development and training questions for SupplyPoint.*

The Foundation provided MEP MSI an initial list of questions that focused on recruitment, retention, advancement and corporate culture. MEP MSI reviewed and reduced the number of questions to a manageable one that would suit the methodology. The shorter list of questions was submitted to the Foundation and to the Department of Labor for review and approval. The DOL-approved questions are presented in Appendix A.

2. *Survey 212 SME employers in Arizona and New Mexico (in the following manufacturing subsectors:*

Food Processing	Plastics & Rubber Products
Automotive	Primary & Fabricated Metals Products
Chemicals	Telecommunications
Electric Equipment, Appliance & Components	Textile, Apparel, Fibers & Yarn
Computer & Electronic Produces	Transportation Equipment

The number of SMEs to survey in each state was determined by calculating the proportion of manufacturers in each state¹ (4,917 in Arizona and 1,593 in New Mexico) to the total number of manufacturers in both states (6,510). Accordingly, the projected number of SMEs to survey was calculated to be 160 in Arizona and 52 in New Mexico. To account for SMEs that would not agree to participate in the survey or could not be reached, we estimated the need to initially contact at least 300 SMEs in Arizona and 100 SMEs in New Mexico to safely meet the survey requirement of 212 SMEs.

The initial list of SMEs to contact was developed by using MEP MSI annually updated MEP client databases in both states. These databases are annually cross-referenced with published data such as Harris to ensure that new manufacturers are added to the MEP client database.

3. Deploy SupplyPoint™

The original protocol called for the use of MEP MSI's web-based SupplyPoint™ as the primary vehicle for facilitating the collection of responses to all the questions outlined in Appendix A, including capabilities and capacities profiles under the banner of the U.S-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation. MEP MSI's Call Center would provide the SMEs any support that may be required to complete the survey.

This requirement turned out to be difficult to achieve because of the structure of SupplyPoint™. The current SupplyPoint™ infrastructure allows for the development of an MEP profile only and precludes the development of a profile specific to this project for the Foundation. In lieu of a SupplyPoint™-specific profile, MEP MSI used a different web-based approach that preserved the electronic link between each SME and his/her responses to the survey including manufacturing capabilities and capacities as registered in SupplyPoint™. In this approach, Call Center personnel contacted each SME and invited them to participate in the survey and register in SupplyPoint™. For each SME that agreed to participate in the survey, Call Center personnel asked and recorded the responses directly into the web-based survey.

4. Analyze information and report-finding

The results from each state were tabulated and analyzed as required by the Foundation.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau

ARIZONA SUMMARY RESULTS

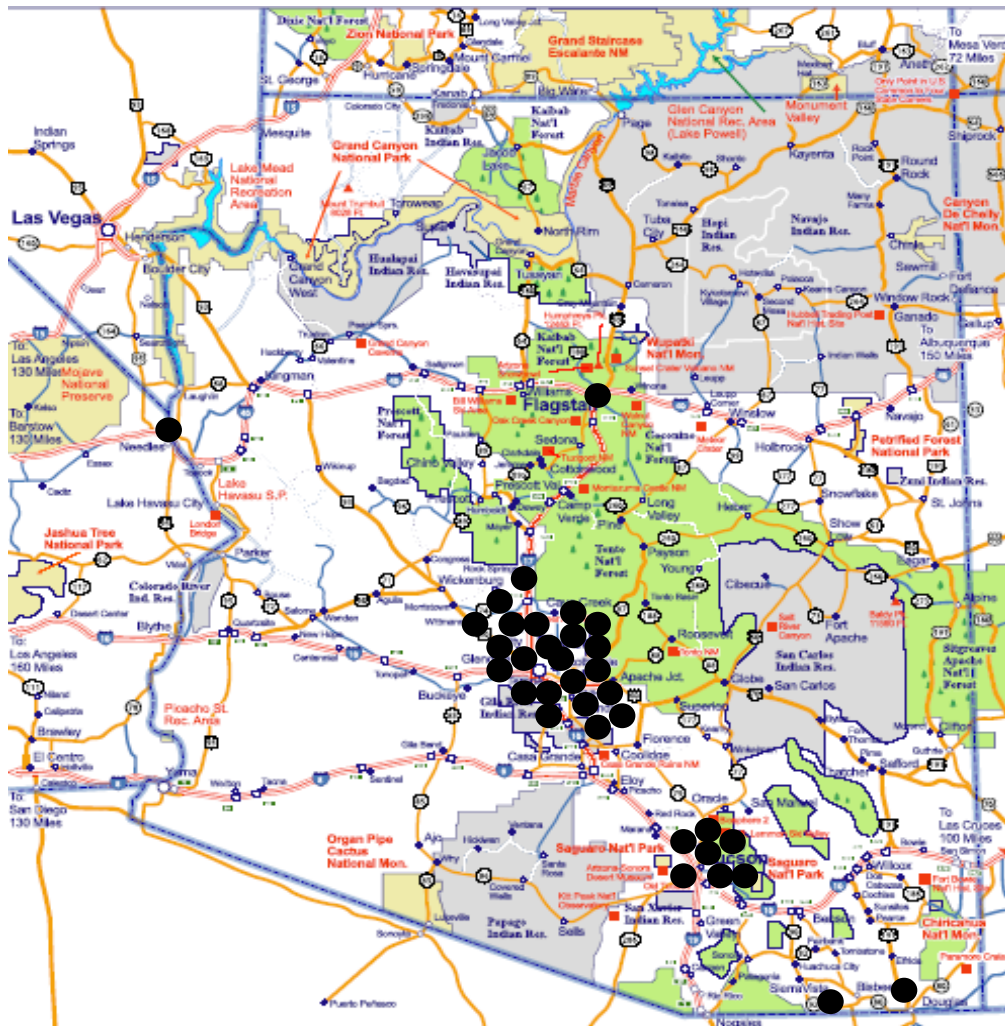
Number of Participants

Three hundred (300) companies were contacted. Forty (40) or 13 percent of the contacted firms agreed to participate in the survey and register in SupplyPoint™.

Location

As shown in Figure 1, 40 participating firms are located in the greater Phoenix area and seven firms are located in the greater Tucson area. Two participating firms are located south of Tucson near the Arizona-Mexico border. Finally, two participating firms are located north of Phoenix near Flagstaff and on the California-Arizona boarder.

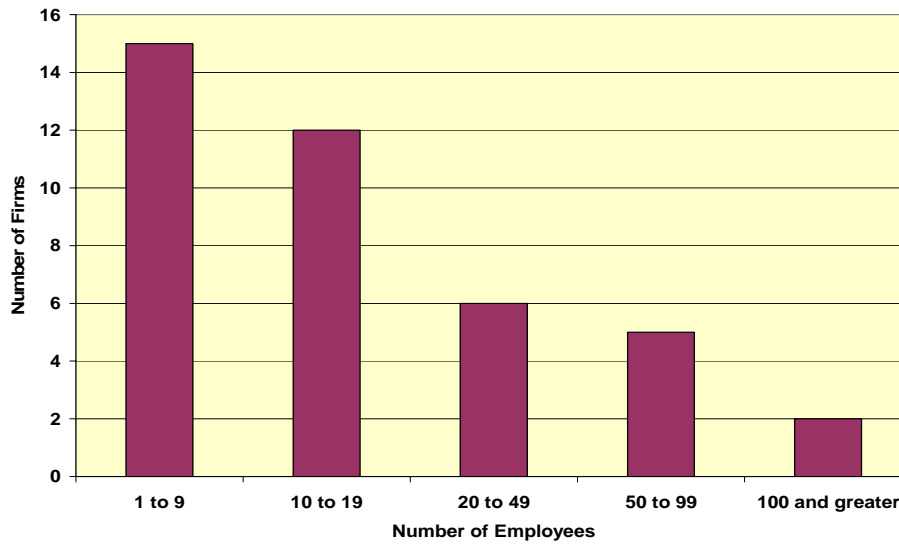
Figure 1: Distribution of Arizona Participating Firms



Employee Size

As shown in Figure 2, 27 participating firms, or 67.5% of total participating firms employ 1-19 employees, 11 firms employ between 20 and 99 employees. Two firms employ 100 or more workers.

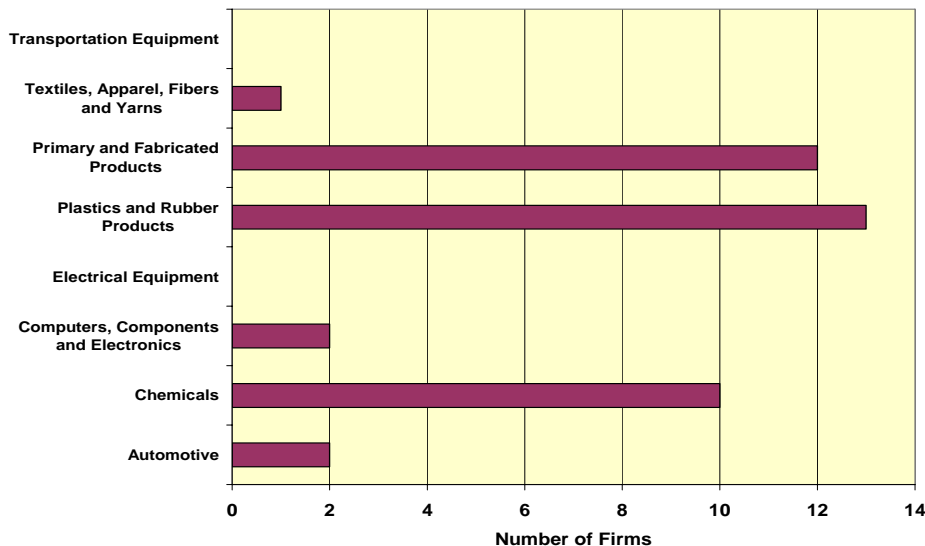
Figure 2: Firms by Employee Size



Firms by Industry Category

The participating firms manufacture a wide range of products (see Figure 3). The largest proportion of firms manufacture Plastics and Rubber Products followed by Primary and Fabricated Metal products and Chemicals.

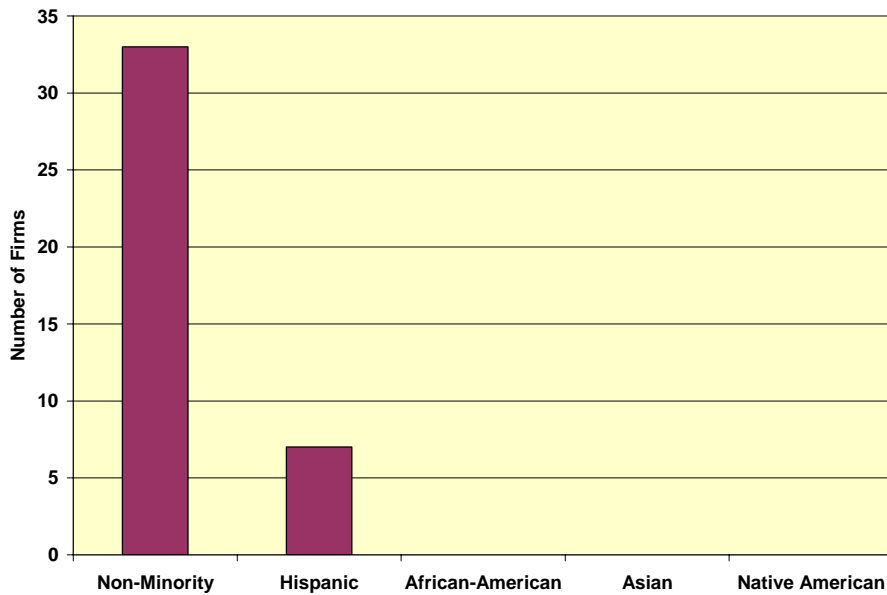
Figure 3: Firms by Industry Sector



Firms by Ownership

Thirty-three (33) firms are non-minority owned and seven (7) are Hispanic-owned (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Firms by Ownership



► RECRUITMENT

List language requirements to be hired by your company for entry-level jobs.

Twenty-six (26) of the 40 surveyed employers require all their employees to speak, read and write English prior to employment, even for entry-level jobs. Fourteen (14) firms do not have such requirements, are more flexible, and hire workers that speak only Spanish for entry-level jobs. Half of the 14 firms that hire Spanish-speaking-only workers are Hispanic-owned.

The employers who require English as a condition of employment indicated that their employees need to be able to read plans or technical drawings, which are in English. Also, their increased emphasis on quality customer service requires that all their employees have good English reading, writing and speaking skills.

It was mentioned that the many Spanish dialects in Arizona also present problems in communication, translation, etc. Therefore, requiring English for employment minimizes this difficulty in their businesses.

For the employers that hire Spanish-speaking-only workers, most of them have at least a few bilingual employees to help translate if needed, but that is rarely the case. These employers are able to accommodate Spanish-speaking employees at the lower levels of production and have bilingual employees on hand to translate as needed.

The location of the employer, e.g. near the border or further inside the state, has no bearing on language requirements. For example, employers with plants near the Arizona-Mexico border are as likely to require English as an employment requirement as are employers in the greater Phoenix area.

Do you test for English Proficiency?

Testing for English proficiency is a requirement only for employers that specify English as a language requirement for employment. Of the 26 employers that require English, 10 test for English proficiency through local community colleges.

Please list publicly funded entities you may have used in the recruitment process and indicate your satisfaction level with each entity.

Table 1: Use of Publicly Funded Programs

	Yes	No	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
One-Stop Career Centers	10	30	2	2	6
Employment Services	25	15	5	15	5
Community Colleges	35	5	17	14	4
Newspapers	40	0	30	10	0
Job Fairs	10	30	3	5	2
“Word of Mouth”	21	0	5	16	0
Internet	27	13	18	9	0

With the exception of the firms in the Primary and Fabricated Metal Products category, all employers find no shortage of employees, bilingual or otherwise. There seem to be more candidates than job openings. In general, employers in the primary and fabricated metal products industry have no difficulty recruiting workers in most job categories except for CNC operators and machinists – a local picture that is consistent with a national skills shortage.

Most employers have used several government and non-government methods to recruit employees. These methods include private employment services, local community colleges, newspapers, Internet and “word of mouth,” which is usually successful when there is an excess in qualified candidates. The least successful methods are Job Fairs and One-Stop Career Centers. The high level of dissatisfaction among the users of the One-Stop Career Centers is due to the lack of appreciation and understanding of the manufacturing world which hinders the ability of One-Stop Career Center staff in helping manufacturing employers recruit qualified workers.

▶ **RETENTION**

How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee’s position within the company and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?

Table 2: Relation between English Proficiency and Job Requirements

	Yes	No
Is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed?	13	27
Is the level of English proficiency required related to the employee’s position within the company?	24	16
Is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?	26	14

The responses to the retention question clearly demonstrate that the majority of employers do not equate English proficiency with the type of work to be performed. In fact, most believe that "work has its own language; teach the skills and the language will follow". This seems to be the

case with employers who hire only English-speaking workers as well as employers who hire both English and Spanish-speaking workers.

In contrast, English proficiency is definitely related to an employee’s position in the company as well as the level of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake. This is the case for companies that hire only English-speaking employees or hire both English and Spanish-speaking workers. This seems to stem out of the need to ensure management is well prepared to handle most situations in the front office and shop floor.

Do the demands of your industry require specific oral or written language skills?

Table 3: Language Skills by Industry Sector

	Yes	No
Automotive	2	0
Chemicals	10	0
Computer, Components and Electronics	2	0
Electrical Equipment	0	0
Plastics and Rubber Products	13	0
Primary and Fabricated Products	12	0
Textiles, Apparel, Fibers and Yarns	0	1
Transportation Equipment	0	0

All employers, regardless of industry group, indicated that the increasing global competition is putting significant pressure on them to ensure that their employees have basic soft skills in speaking, reading and writing English, math, problem-solving, communication, and computer literacy.

Please check the boxes that best describe what assistance your company provides to help your workers develop English-language skills.

Table 4: Assistance to Develop English-Language Skills

	# Firms
On-site by internal trainers	1
On-site by third party	13
During working hours	0
After working hours	12
Funded by the employer	4
Funded by community sources	12
Does not provide assistance	28
Workers are paid for the time spent in instruction	10
Other	0

Approximately one-third of the surveyed employers provide any type of assistance to help their employees develop English-language skills. Of the 40 participating firms, only 14 responded positively to providing assistance. Half of these 14 respondents are Hispanic-owned firms. The assistance is provided primarily by third party trainers in local community colleges and is paid for primarily with community resources. Five of the 28 employers that do not provide assistance, did so a few years ago but stopped because of the cost and loss of production.

What services/programs (public or private) make a difference for your company, for example, upgrading the skills of the workforce, ensuring the workforce obtains required English-language skills to succeed, etc.?

The respondents to this question were primarily those that hired Spanish-speaking-only workers. They are using, or have used, public and private programs to increase the English proficiency of their workforce. These employers would rather have training in basic skills for their employees: basic math, keyboarding, reading and writing, communication, and problem-solving. Even those who are bilingual often need additional basic skills to be able to move up in the company.

Ten (10) of the 26 employers who have English as an employment requirement have never used government-funded language training programs because they do not have employees who lack English-language skills. The remaining 16 employers have rarely used government or private-funded language training programs and would like to learn more about them.

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

Do your Spanish-speaking employees have access to a career ladder?

The only respondents to this question were the 14 employers who hire Spanish-speaking-only employees. All 14 employers have career advancement opportunities for all their employees in shop floor supervisory and management positions. For intermediate and advanced skill positions, all employees are required to be competent in soft skills such as teamwork, as well as reading, writing, math, problem solving, communication, and computer skills. All firms require their Spanish-speaking-only employees be fluent in English if they want to advance to management positions. In these situations, mastering high school-level English proficiency is enough to move up the career ladder.

Has your company accessed public funds to help your limited-English proficient employees advance in the workplace?

All respondents to the advancement questions have accessed public training funds primarily from the federal Department of Labor through the local workforce boards and One-Stop Career Centers. The One-Stop Career Centers included the City of Phoenix, Maricopa County, Mohave County, Pima County, Santa Cruz County, and Coconino County.

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

Only those 14 employers who hire Spanish-speaking-only workers responded to the Corporate Culture questions. The remaining employers did not care for these questions and many refused to answer them. These employers were emphatic that all workers should speak English and management and employees should not be forced to learn non-English languages.

The respondents to this series of questions believe that their corporate culture is Spanish-speaker friendly. These employers promote such a culture by encouraging their non-Spanish-speaking employees, including managers, to learn Spanish. To this end, seven of the 14 firms have accessed public funds to train their employees in Spanish. Unfortunately, many of the employees do not take advantage of this opportunity because the firms do not make this a work requirement or provide job-related incentives.

NEW MEXICO SUMMARY RESULTS

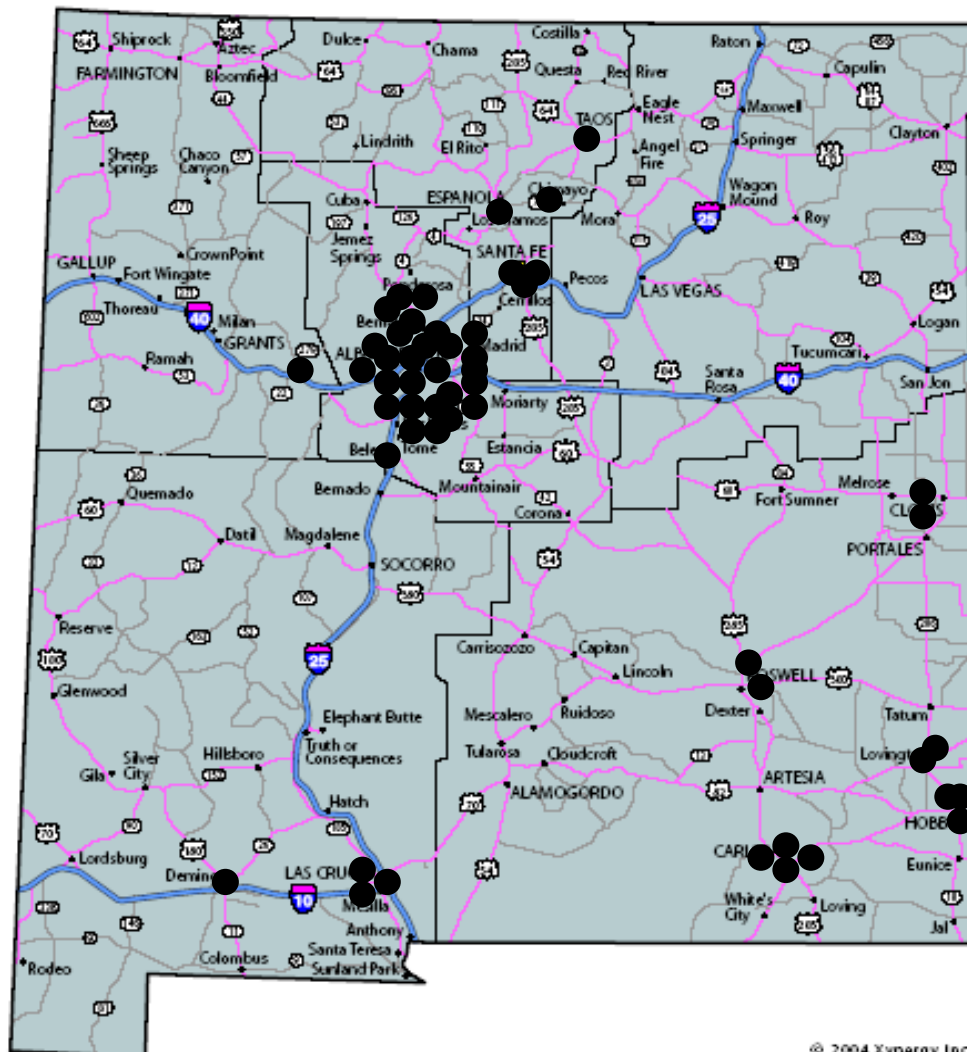
Number of Participants

One hundred (100) companies were contacted. Sixty-two (62) or 62 percent of the contacted firms agreed to participate in the survey and register in SupplyPoint™.

Location

As shown in Figure 5, 57 participating firms are located in the greater Albuquerque area including Santa Fe. Fifteen (15) firms are located in southern New Mexico near the New Mexico-Mexico border, specifically in Hobbs, Carlsbad, Roswell and Las Cruces.

Figure 5: Distribution of New Mexico Participating Firms

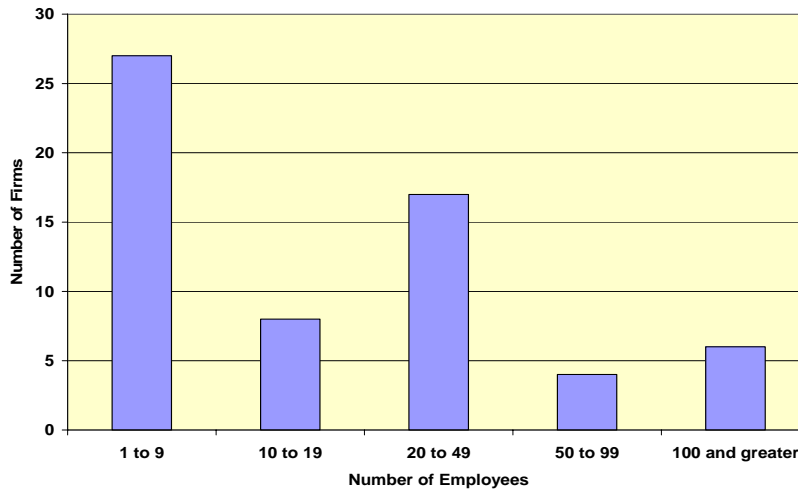


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Employee Size

Thirty four (34) participating firms employ 1-19 employees; twenty-two (22) firms employ between 20 and 99 employees and six firms employ 100 or more workers of which one company employs 8,000 workers and another employs 500 workers (see Figure 6).

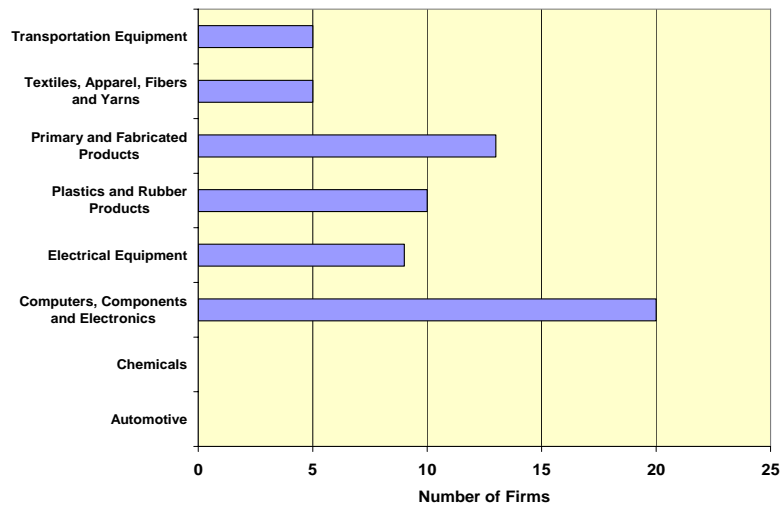
Figure 6: Firms by Employee Size



Firms by Industry Category

The participating firms manufacture a wide range of products (see Figure 7). The largest proportion of firms manufacture Computers, Components, and Electronics; followed by Primary and Fabricated Metal Products, Plastics and Rubber Products, and Electrical Equipment.

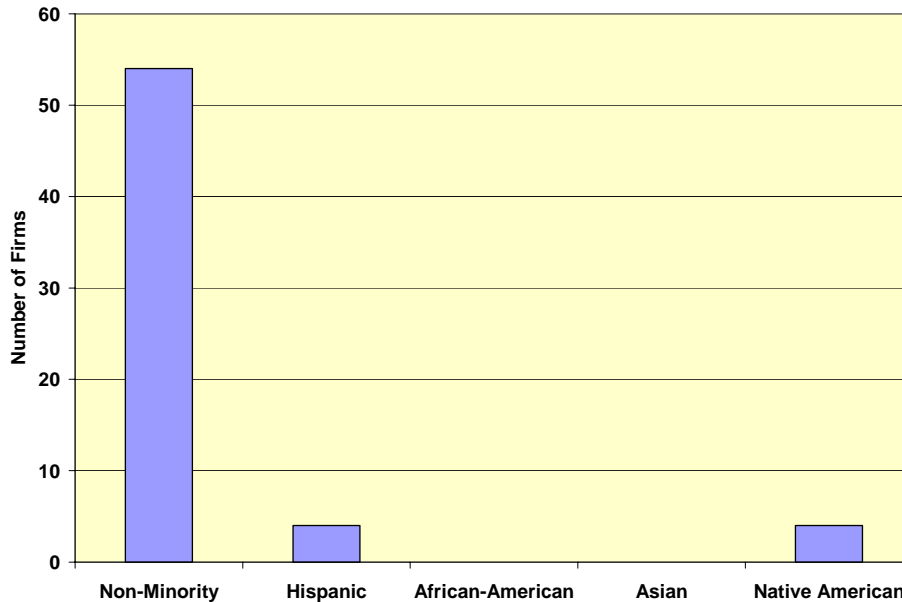
Figure 7: Firms by Industry Sector



Firms by Ownership

Fifty-four (54) firms are non-minority owned, four (4) are Hispanic-owned, and four (4) are Native-American-owned (non-Tribal-owned) (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Firms by Ownership



► RECRUITMENT

List language requirements to be hired by your company for entry-level jobs.

Table 5: Firms by Language Requirements

	English Requirement	Flexible, English/Spanish
Non-Minority	16	38
Hispanic-owned	0	4
Native American-owned	2	2

Eighteen (18) of the 62 surveyed employers require all their employees speak, read and write English prior to employment, even for entry-level jobs. In contrast, the remaining 44 firms do not have such requirements, are more flexible, and hire workers that speak Spanish-only for entry-level jobs.

Similar to the findings among Arizona manufacturing employers, New Mexico employers that hire Spanish-speaking-only workers have bilingual employees to help translate if needed. As with the Arizona findings, the location of the employer, e.g. near the border or further inside the state, has no bearing on language requirements.

In New Mexico, recruitment by employers in the Primary and Fabricated Metal Products group is hampered by government facilities like Los Alamos and Sandia that hire a significant number of skilled laborers/machinists/technicians.

Do you test for English Proficiency?

Testing for English proficiency is a requirement only for the 18 employers that specify English as a language requirement for employment. Of the 18 employers that require English, 13 test for English proficiency through local community colleges.

Please list publicly funded entities you may have used in the recruitment process and indicate your satisfaction level with each entity.

Table 6: English Proficiency Requirements

	Yes	No	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
One-Stop Career Centers	17	45	5	3	9
Employment Services	31	31	7	19	5
Community Colleges	29	33	10	13	6
Newspapers	62	0	39	23	0
Job Fairs	21	41	5	15	1
“Word of Mouth”	62	0	13	49	0
Internet	43	19	33	10	0

Most employers have used government and non-government methods to recruit employees. These methods include private employment services (e.g. Manpower, Inc.), local community colleges, newspapers, Internet and “word of mouth” which are usually successful when there is an excess of qualified candidates. The least successful methods are Job Fairs and the One-Stop Career Centers. Again, as with Arizona employers, the high level of dissatisfaction among

the New Mexico users of the One-Stop Career Centers is due to their lack of appreciation and understanding of the manufacturing world which hinders the ability of One-Stop Career Center staff in helping manufacturing employers recruit qualified workers.

Thirteen (13) employers complained about the state’s unemployment laws, which have made employment termination practically impossible. To circumvent these laws, several employers use Manpower, Inc. to pre-screen and train potential employees for certain skills. The potential employees are employed for a trial period and then the employer decides whether to hire the employee or not. If the decision is not to hire, then there are no repercussions. Other employers recruit potential employees from local high schools - most work only part-time and/or as summer interns.

► **RETENTION**

How is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed, the employee’s position within the company and the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?

Table 7: English Proficiency Requirements for Retention

	Yes	No
Is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of work performed?	23	39
Is the level of English proficiency required related to the employee’s position within the company?	19	43
Is the level of English proficiency required related to the type of accommodation the employer is willing to undertake?	24	38

The responses to the retention questions fell along the line of employers who hired only English-speaking workers and those that hired both Spanish-speaking-only and English-speaking workers. New Mexico employers who hired both Spanish and English-speaking workers expressed the same belief as their Arizona counterparts in that "work has its own language; teach the skills and the language will follow". These employers train their own employees and teach their Spanish-speaking workers English if they possess the skills they need.

Do the demands of your industry require specific oral or written language skills?

The New Mexico responses were similar to those expressed by the Arizona employers. New Mexico employers, regardless of industry group, indicated that their employees need competency in the soft skills if they are to compete in the global economy.

Table 8: Language Skills Requirements by Industry

	Yes	No
Automotive	0	0
Chemicals	0	0
Computer, Components and Electronics	20	0
Electrical Equipment	9	0
Plastics and Rubber Products	10	0
Primary and Fabricated Products	13	0
Textiles, Apparel, Fibers and Yarns	5	0
Transportation Equipment	5	0

Please check the boxes that best describe what assistance your company provides to help your workers develop English-language skills.

Table 9: Assistance by Language Skills

	# Firms
On-site by internal trainers	7
On-site by third party	40
During working hours	4
After working hours	40
Funded by the employer	16
Funded by community sources	47
Does not provide assistance	18
Workers are paid for the time spent in instruction	33

Of the 62 participating firms, 47 responded positively to providing language assistance. The assistance is provided primarily by third-party trainers in local community colleges and is paid for primarily with community sources. Internal training is conducted for the most part by manufacturers that employ 100 or more workers.

What services/programs (public or private) make a difference for your company, for example, upgrading the skills of the workforce, ensuring the workforce obtains required English-language skills to succeed, etc.?

The responses of New Mexico manufacturers to these questions were similar to their Arizona counterparts. These employers indicated that they would rather have training in basic skills for their employees (basic math, keyboarding, reading and writing, communication, and problem solving) than solely focus on the English-language skills.

▶ **ADVANCEMENT**

Do your Spanish-speaking employees have access to a career ladder?

All employers have career advancement opportunities for all their employees in shop-floor supervisory and management positions, but only for employees that are competent in skills such as: reading, writing, math, problem solving, communication, teamwork, and computer literacy. All firms require their employees to be fluent in English if they want to advance to management positions. In these situations, mastering high school-level English proficiency is enough to move up the career ladder.

Has your company accessed public funds to help your limited-English proficient employees advance in the workplace?

Fifty (50) of the 62 responding firms have accessed public (federal and state) training funds through the One-Stop Career Centers. The One-Stop Career Centers include Albuquerque, Espanola, Valencia, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, Roswell, Carlsbad, Hobbs, Deming, Las Cruces, Clovis, and Valencia.

▶ **CORPORATE CULTURE**

Forty three (43) of the 62 respondents believe that their corporate culture is Spanish-speaker friendly and they promote this culture by encouraging their non-Spanish-speaking employees, including managers, to learn Spanish. These employers provide English and Spanish training opportunities for all their employees and most access public training funds for this purpose.