
English Proficiency: What Employers Need for their Spanish Speaking Workforce

Final Draft Report

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By

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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 some challenges in the workforce including: more than two in five Hispanics aged 25 and older have not graduated from high school, creating a need for basic and occupational skills; two in five Hispanics are foreign born, which presents language and cultural barriers; and Hispanics are more likely to live in poverty.

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 identifying the employment barriers that Hispanic workers face, especially those who are limited-English proficient (LEP). English proficiency is a key factor for Hispanics employment success and advancement.

As part of DOL's 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 Hispanic LEP workers. The purpose of this study is 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 will provide DOL an employer perspective regarding the types of workforce development programs that are needed to assist Hispanics obtain language, basic and occupational skills needed to succeed in the workplace. This report identifies promising practices and recommends strategies for implementing programs that will help businesses meet the needs of their Hispanic LEP 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 a series of employer focus groups. At the request of the U.S.-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation, the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce utilized 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.

The study team took advantage of opportunities to hold executive roundtable discussions with established business networks that followed a focus group format. These occurred in DePere, Wisconsin on August 18, 2004 and Ft. Worth, Texas on February 2, 2005. One-on-one interviews with executives of two large manufacturing companies were conducted to yield greater depth of information. Participants were Tyson Foods, Inc. in Springdale, Arkansas on November 17, 2004 and February 2, 2005, and QuadGraphics in Sussex, Wisconsin on January 27, 2005. 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.

Participating employers represented eight high-growth sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, transportation, health care, information technology, construction, hospitality, biotechnology, and energy. A total of 161 employers participated in the study.

FINDINGS

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

- Although employers are investing in training their LEP workforce, executives believe they do not have the sufficient training resources and tools available to help them, and are utilizing ad hoc solutions such as developing communication materials that are language free and rely only on colors.
- Employers expressed an interest in having the federal government provide matching grants or tax credits to offset the expenses related to training LEP individuals.
- Employers predict 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 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.
- Overall, employers believe that once the language barriers of LEP employees are resolved, they will be able to promote LEP employees. However, employers recognized that in the near future, a Spanish-speaking customer will impact their approach to management training.
- Employers also 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 believe that public services delivered at their site are more effective in integrating the needed language skill sets as well as the occupational skills.
- Employers are finding new ways to work together, often relinquishing competitive approaches in favor of finding solutions for their Hispanic LEP workforce language training and skill development. For instance, in the construction sector, employers in the study are temporarily hiring employees during a company's down time so as to retain a skilled workforce available to all; and in Wisconsin employees are working together to bring resources to the table to help them train their Hispanic LEP workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study call for remedies that can immediately and positively impact employers. Policymakers can develop tax incentives that help businesses offset the costs of language training and skill acquisition, and also develop sector-specific models for training and skill acquisition that benefit businesses by industry. Employers also 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. Limited-English Hispanic employees can benefit from the development of a learning channel that operates 24 hours and seven days a week and offers learning opportunities that work with their schedules, since many Hispanics work more than one job.

CONCLUSION

Employers identified the immediate challenges as well as long-term benefits from their available Hispanic LEP workforce. Challenges include communication barriers that affect costs associated with safety, productivity in the areas of recruiting, training, promotion and retention. Employers are actively seeking effective solutions by investing 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 Hispanic LEP workers and elementary schools from which they hope to draw future employees. Long-term approaches for training, promotion and retention are concurrently being used by employers as they view the Hispanic LEP workforce as their future workforce and want to advance these workers to management positions.

Employers' fear that their investment will not pay off if their workers follow through on their claims that they are going to "return to Mexico" is fading as more and more of this cohort population is investing in houses and businesses in the U.S. This waning fear is balanced by what they perceive as Hispanic loyalty to remain with an employer and the emerging customer base of Spanish speakers that can be served by employees who speak both Spanish and English.

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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 speak a language other than English at home, of which Spanish is by far the most common, with 28 million speakers. Hispanics are often hindered in their ability to obtain and retain employment and to 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 is 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. By understanding employers' English proficiency needs, the U.S. Department of Labor can develop more effective programs, strategies and policies to assist 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).

The Hispanic population in the United States is projected to increase rapidly over the 1995 – 2025 period, 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., 2006, 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 aged 25 and older were less likely to have graduated from high school when compared to non-Hispanic Whites and the proportion with a bachelors degree or more was much lower for Hispanics than for non-Hispanic Whites. These statistics suggest that Hispanics are at a disadvantage for career progression and advancement for 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, so 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 both because of overall population growth—from higher birth levels and increased migration—and because of increases in the participation rate of Hispanic women.

According to a new 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 the foreign workers has grown dramatically over the past four years. Foreign workers have been responsible for 60 percent of the civilian labor force growth and captured 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 form 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.

Hispanic Worker Initiative

The U.S. Department of Labor recognizes the unique needs of the growing Hispanic worker population and established 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 identifying the employment barriers that Hispanic workers face, especially those who are limited-English proficient (LEP). 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 is moving in a positive direction from 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, a year ago 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 January 2005, the U.S. Economy added 146,000 jobs, replacing all the jobs lost since the events of 2001. 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.

The Department's Secretary Elaine L. Chao said in a recent interview that, "Our economy remains very robust. We are seeing productivity begin to increase. Because of that we expect greater numbers in job creation." 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 and will employ about 1,600 workers. (Bloomberg News, February 4, 2005).

By understanding what employers need for their Hispanic LEP workforce, and how employer and employee success are vital to sustaining business growth and industry success in global markets, both the private and public sectors can better collaborate in the development of targeted interventions to address challenges and opportunities faced by employers and help their Hispanic LEP workers achieve success. To accomplish this, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration 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 where there are large numbers of Hispanic LEP workers and to survey other employers who were located in areas where employer meetings were not held.

RESEARCH METHODS

In addition to the literature review of materials provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA), data were gathered from five sources. These include a review of the literature, focus groups, executive interviews, executive roundtable discussions, and surveys which added depth and allowed for triangulation of the results to ensure validity.

Literature Review

Materials provided included U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 data which identified geographic areas with large Hispanic populations. These areas include the states of Arizona, California, Illinois, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, and Wisconsin among others. DOL/ETA also provided information on the President's 12 high growth sectors. Based on this information, the DOL/ETA asked the U.S.-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation to recommend methods of research and undertake a targeted survey of business needs for their Spanish-speaking workforce to inform employment and training policy. Business executives contributed to the study by participating in focus groups, executive interviews and roundtable discussions, and a web-based telephone survey using Manufacturing Extension Partnership Management Services (MEP MS) Supply Point techniques.

A team composed of the following individuals conducted the study:

Al Zapanta, Chairman of the U.S. Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation, served as project director.

Kay Bulow, President, The Bulow Group, served as project coordinator.

June Suhling, Labor Consultant, served as the focus group facilitator.

Carol Crockett, Ph.D., Educational Policy Consultant, served as analyst/writer.

Gerardo Funes, Communications Director, U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, served as economic researcher.

MEP Management Services, Inc. conducted a 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 are used by employers to recruit, train and retain employees so that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited-English speaking ability, have the necessary tools to succeed?

The research was conducted between July 1, 2004 and February 2, 2005.

This report provides the results of the focus group meetings, executive interviews, and survey responses as well as recommendations for how employers can more effectively address English language proficiency.

Focus Group Meetings

At the request of the U.S.-Mexico Cultural and Educational Foundation, 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. The focus group sites were 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 also expected to increase in these areas.

Locations where focus groups were held and the dates the meetings were conducted are: 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 executives identified participants, issued letters of invitation, and made logistical arrangements for the focus group meeting. Chamber officials provided the study team with advance information on each participating business as well as general employment information in the area.

The U.S. Mexico Chamber of Commerce sent letters of invitation to all participants explaining the purpose of the study and the expected outcomes as outlined in the interview protocol guidelines. The letter 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 in order to allow them sufficient time to develop thorough and thoughtful responses.

Focus group participants occupied senior executive positions ranging from president and chief operating officer to vice president of human resources, diversity representative, and senior trade association executive. Each was generous in giving of time and expertise in a frank discussion of the company's business needs and practices in relation to its limited-English proficient 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. Some started at 11:00 a.m. and others ended after 1:30 p.m. but each lasted for two-and-a-half to three hours and included a working lunch. After 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, 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. Participating members of the focus group were again assured of anonymity in order to encourage a frank discussion.

Protocols were developed in advance and followed at each focus group (Appendix A) to assure that the study questions were answered and provided comparable data among the sites. All focus group meetings were tape recorded and professionally transcribed, except the focus group in Irvine which could not be recorded due to technical problems.

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 meeting in order to obtain additional data to achieve 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 on an employer's needs for its Hispanic LEP workforce than can be achieved in focus groups. Two executive interviews were conducted for no longer than 90 minutes and each was conducted by one member of the study team at each site. The interviews were conducted with executives of large companies with multiple business sites in high-growth sectors that have significant numbers of Hispanic employees. 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 then 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 had the opportunity to access the business community through already 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 was 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 executive roundtables followed the focus group format; however executive Interview protocols (Appendix B) were utilized and they were professionally facilitated by members of the team. These sessions were not tape recorded but were summarized in a timely fashion (Appendix F) and sent to participants for their comments (Appendices F1-2)

Survey of Manufacturers in Border States

MEP Management Services Inc. (MEP/MSI) is a member of the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce. MEP developed a web-based tool, "Supply Point," for another federal agency that allows small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to input capability and capacities information on their companies. MEP/MSI deployed its web-based tool with Department of Labor 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 with large Hispanic populations. Four hundred small and medium manufacturing firms in Arizona and New Mexico were asked to participate in an electronic survey that follows 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 Using All Data Collection Methods

Fifty-nine employers participated in the study as members of a focus group, one-on-one executive interviews, and existing networks of 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 services sector (7), agriculture (1), and education (2). Participating employers in the service sector were: janitorial, temporary employment services, consulting firms and trade associations.

Forty-two percent, or 25 of the 59 employers that participated in focus group meetings, executive interviews, and 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. There were a few exceptions, in which participants had minor corrections. The corrections were incorporated into the final documents to reflect participant views.

Analytic Approach

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

The focus group data were coded and compared multiple times to discover similarities and differences in employer perspectives and stated needs for their Hispanic LEP workforce by sector, business size, and geographical 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 Hispanic workforce succeed is an important question for policymakers and business leaders. It is anticipated the results of this study will provide germane information about a critical issue and inform the development of training and education programs for limited-English proficient Hispanics in the U.S. workforce.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Four Areas of Employment: Recruitment, Training, Advancement, and Retention

Hispanic laborers who are limited-English proficient 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. In light of these problems, this study seeks to answer questions that focus on four areas of employment: recruitment, training, advancement, and retention. Following are responses from employers regarding their Hispanic workforce.

Recruitment

What methods and resources employers use to recruit Hispanic employees, including those who are Spanish speaking, and for what jobs was an important question of the study. The research yielded data indicating employers used a wide variety of methods to recruit Hispanic LEP employees. Many employers rely on temporary-to-permanent employment agencies and other conventional employment resources, such as the DOL One-Stop Centers and state workforce delivery systems. However, many say they now use less traditional sources to find Hispanic LEP 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 of these 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 Hispanic LEP 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 identified language with work and

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 Hispanic LEP workers, a significant number of employers noted that the publicly funded assistance that is currently available to help them in the area of recruitment is not satisfactory. Of those who participated in the study, 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 resource office, and the Wisconsin employer network has used its collective influence to persuade the public employment and job training services to be more responsive to their needs.

The DOL One-Stop Centers and state workforce development agencies are viewed by most focus group participants and by one of the employers in the executive interviews as lacking understanding of their (business) needs; rather they are viewed by employers as more interested in processing candidates than whether the employer and employee are a suitable match. Some employers noted that applicants from these sources often do not show up for their interviews. While employers said they did not expect to find employees through publicly funded employment agencies, they posted job opportunities with them to remain in compliance with laws governing equal employment opportunities.

The numbers of Hispanic workers recruited by employers vary by business sectors. Those sectors with high numbers of Hispanic LEP employees were identified as construction and hospitality. Employers in the construction industry uniformly indicated that nearly 90 percent of their workforce is Hispanic and 70 percent of the Hispanic workers are limited-English proficient. This contrasts sharply other sectors such as health care and manufacturing. Health care employers, such as hospitals, indicated they recruit Hispanic LEP employees for housekeeping and food service only, representing approximately 15 percent of their total workforce. Manufacturing employers in the food processing sector indicated they hire substantial numbers of limited-English proficient employees, while advanced manufacturing employers said they hire few, if any, limited-English proficient employees. Most manufacturers, except food processors, 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 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 between management and Hispanic LEP workers. Across sectors, employers said they often utilize families of Hispanic LEP 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 of these were recruited from countries south of the U.S. border.

Training

Another important question of the study was how employers trained Hispanic LEP employees and to discover best practices that businesses use to help their employees be successful in skill and language acquisition.

One manufacturing company in Wisconsin noted that conventional methods of corporate training recently changed to accommodate advances in technology; now, training his Hispanic limited-English proficient employees requires new ideas, new approaches and methodologies, and the methods he uses can be classified as experimental.

Employers indicated that they are considering various factors when developing training models for their limited English-proficient workforce. These factors include employee language acquisition and comprehension, literacy in reading and math, technology skills, cultural understandings, availability of transportation and time constraints. The majority of employers articulated a need to bundle these skills to maximize workforce productivity. Their most immediate stated need is to find and deliver low-cost solutions to help employees gain English proficiency.

Whether the size of a business impacts the availability of training resources for English language acquisition surfaced during focus group discussions with little agreement. An executive in a large construction firm noted that small companies in his industry were at a

disadvantaged because they have limited training resources and opportunities for their limited-English proficient employees. For instance, 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. Yet another executive in the same sector stated that small companies have an advantage when training limited-English proficient employees because they can respond more quickly to the worker's needs than larger organizations.

In addition to providing videos in Spanish, translators, GED and college classes, the employers who participated in the focus groups shared that they have discovered that successful training techniques for their limited-English proficient Hispanic workers incorporate "a lot of pictures" as well as "shop (sector specific) talk." Training videos and visual aids using color codes that are devoid of language altogether is another approach used to teach occupational skills to limited-English proficient Hispanic workers that employers have found to be effective.

As voiced by employers in manufacturing, many employers in the construction sector also 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 Hispanic LEP workers ranged from training managers in Spanish to unique methods such as bingo games that engage the Hispanic LEP worker in learning English by matching pictures to words, and then saying the word out loud. These practices are again discussed under "What Works." The overarching message from employers is that these approaches are experimental and have associated costs.

Of all study participants, one employer said her company provided no in-house support for language training; rather the approach used was to announce classes that are available through publicly 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, and some mentioned the need to develop and utilize apprenticeship-based guilds.

Advancement

While employers more commonly hire Hispanic LEP workers for entry level positions, there is recognition by all employers that this population cohort represents their available

workforce of the future. How employers view the need to provide management training to their Hispanic LEP workforce and what steps they are taking to help their employees be successful was also addressed in the study.

Without exception, employers who participated in the focus group meetings cited 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. Some noted a discrepancy when it came to their company policy of embracing diversity due to difficulties in promoting individuals from entry-level to mid-level or higher positions if there is an English language barrier.

Employers indicated they prefer to retain employees and promote from within, yet concede that opportunities for advancement, including management, are scarce without being proficient in English. One employer stated, "We promote from within, therefore to attain a management position the employee must be proficient in English." Nearly all employers reported that English proficiency is a requirement for employees to advance within their companies, and, since their policy was to promote from within the organization, they recognized their future managers are those who currently occupy entry-level positions but lack the necessary English language comprehension and communication skills to attain managerial jobs. Further research is needed to determine what level of English language proficiency employers need of their Hispanic workforce to help them advance within the company.

While employers view the Hispanic LEP workforce as today's entry level workers and tomorrow's managers, the data revealed that employers in places with more recent geographical migration by Hispanic LEP 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 Hispanic LEP 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," causing employers to be concerned about their investment in training and promoting the Hispanic LEP workers. Several employers in Texas believe this notion is fading as Hispanics are increasingly purchasing homes and starting businesses in the U.S. Also noted by many employers were cultural barriers they perceived to prevent their Hispanic employees from learning English in

order to advance in their careers. Some of these were identified as the Hispanic LEP employee's reluctance to assume leadership positions, or for a female to supervise male employees.

Employers participating in the study also suggested that a lack of knowledge of professional opportunities was another reason Hispanic workers do not advance in the workplace. Employers also stated that morale is boosted when employees can communicate better, and those who can communicate better will advance.

An employer, speaking for others in the hospitality industry, including restaurants and hotels, says he 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 during hours when conventional training opportunities are unavailable. He and others noted that workers are often dependent on transportation provided by others and are often not available to learn English at times and places that classes are offered by employers.

Supervisors who are Hispanic and who have come up through the ranks in the construction business are highly valued by those employers.

Retention

Retaining employees is important to employers because training involves significant costs to them as well as the direct and indirect costs to replace a worker. How employers are addressing the issue of Hispanic LEP employee retention and what employers need to optimize retention with this cohort is a fourth focus of the study.

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

Executives in the Texas construction industry indicated they are, by necessity, cooperating with competitors by hiring others' workers during downtimes so as to retain an increasingly trained construction workforce. This approach was regarded as successful by participants.

Although the Hispanic workforce is recent as a cohort of U.S. employees, without exception, employers generally 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

Although different business sectors identified similar challenges with limited-English proficient Hispanic employees, such as the safety issues (specifically in construction, manufacturing, and health care), some important differences among sectors were revealed. These affect employer perspectives and approaches to recruiting, training, advancing and retaining the Hispanic LEP worker.

The study found that distinctions existed among industry sectors as it relates to the number of limited-English proficient Hispanic workers they employ, the type of work the Hispanics workers perform, and the Hispanic worker's position within the company.

Employers in the manufacturing industry indicated they are increasingly using advanced technology in their operations. As a result, English language proficiency is becoming necessary even for entry level positions.

Some industries such as manufacturing and health care require high levels of English proficiency; however, there are differences in the minimum educational attainment levels required. Although some employers do not require employees to have a high school education, most stated their minimum qualifications for hiring included a high school education or its equivalent and a stable work history.

Health care employers report that Hispanic LEP employees (approximately 15 percent of their workforce) can compete only at entry-level positions; other positions within the sector require a minimum of a ninth grade education. Health care employers indicated that their

consumer base is increasingly Spanish speaking, therefore they expressed the desire to hire greater numbers of Hispanic caregivers. Looking ahead, some health care companies are proactively adopting elementary schools with large Hispanic populations in the area to begin recruiting by creating an awareness of professional opportunities in health care beginning in the elementary and middle school grades.

Employers in the construction industry indicated that nearly 70 percent of their workforce is Hispanic LEP. Supervisors are required 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 that of health care, recruitment is an informal word-of-mouth process in the construction industry.

Employers in the hospitality industry indicated that they employ 50 percent of their workforce in “front-of-the-house” positions, and 50 percent in the “back-of-the-house” positions. “Front-of-the-house” positions require interaction with customers, therefore employees must be proficient in English if they aspire to move from the “back-of-the-house” positions to the front.

Educational Investment in Hispanic LEP Workforce

Employers participating in this study believed that investing in the education of their Hispanic LEP workers had substantial benefits including: (1) increasing Hispanic purchasing power of U.S. goods and services; (2) reducing employer retention costs by hiring loyal Hispanic workers; and (3) maintaining employer competitiveness in the global marketplace. As a result, employers are strategically investing in long-term solutions for their Hispanic workforce. For example, since consumers of health care services are increasingly of Hispanic origin, one hospital has developed a program in which the company adopted an elementary school that is 92 percent Hispanic, and operates the program for students throughout their K-12 education. A successful element of this program includes an exchange where students visit the hospital and are exposed to highly technical labs, while nurses, pharmacists, and other professionals visit the schools to discuss possible careers in health care.

Another health care employer indicated that it provides Hispanic workers with an educator to work with them one-on-one to learn 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 indicated they are re-evaluating their requirement of a high school education, yet noted 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 a college-level 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. Another employer in the hospitality industry said previous attempts to train his limited-English workers were unsuccessful; however, he is confident of a new approach in which he purchased computers for his employees and provides on-site computer training. He believes this investment will be worthwhile as early results indicate higher employee productivity and improved employee retention.

What Works

Varied and innovative employer-driven solutions emerged from the focus group discussions. Employers are finding that new approaches to training must be developed so that their limited-English proficient Hispanic workers can attain the language skills required to advance in their career. The following is a list of a variety of training approaches that employers have discovered work with their Hispanic LEP employees.

- Hands-on training with the equipment is more effective than using manuals.
- Spanish-as-a-second-language training for supervisors inspired Hispanic employees to become more willing to learn English.
- Language proficiency classes and 2 – 4 year college tuition support for programs in management have been successful.
- An accelerated English language training program was conducted by a certified trainer to teach Hispanic workers for a period of six weeks during the employees lunch time; and during this time, the children of employees were asked to only speak English to their parent, resulting in an employee retention rate of 75 percent. Although some left for better jobs, the employer felt the experience improved the employees' lives on the job and in the community.

- A 15-week ESL program was developed for employees who worked from 7:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon daily and then took English classes from 1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. every day. Each participating employee was given a 50 cent per hour raise to stay in the program. Only one person missed one day of the program. The program proved to help Hispanic workers become literate in English even though some participants were not literate in their first language.
- Laptop computers with ESL software tailored to Hospitality industry vocabulary were provided to employees who were encouraged to use the computers to study during long breaks between lunch and dinner times. The results of this approach are not known at the time of this report.
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) supervisor-level meetings where the safety issues were discussed in Spanish and products were discussed in English.
- Smaller English language acquisition classes of no more than 6 employees were more successful than classes with greater numbers of employees.
- Employers disagreed about the amount of time needed to teach English to non-English speaking Hispanic employees. Some employers indicated that six weeks was adequate if employees are motivated, while others believed English-language acquisition is a long-term endeavor.

Employer Costs

Employers participating in this study indicated that employees must have English language proficiency to receive other types of occupational skills training. Employers cited both a lack of English language skills and occupational skills as problems that raised employers' costs. For example, one employer said lack of adequate skills and communication abilities raise his company's sheetrock hanging costs by 300%.

Employers noted that even simple warnings by fellow English speaking workers, such as, "Heads up," in the construction industry are not understood by the Hispanic LEP worker and can result in serious injury. 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. Another employer with a high percentage of limited-English proficient Hispanic employees agreed that although his company has a large number of Spanish-speaking supervisors and provides training in both English and Spanish, safety is an area with associated high costs for human injury due to language barriers and in turn affects the ability to remain competitive.

Most, but not all, employers offer their limited-English proficient Hispanic employees some on-the-clock time to learn English with additional company resources available to employees after work. Since many Hispanic LEP workers are recent immigrants and work more than one job, they have limited time available after work. Another reason employees do not take advantage of this opportunity is that they often have to depend on others for transportation, and as a result, are not in control of their own schedule. 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 limited-English proficient workers attain success.

What Employers Want

The study found that employers recognized that 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 Hispanic LEP workers success in the workplace. Employees identified the acquisition of skill sets rather than just the ability to speak English as important for employee success and business productivity. Solutions that bundle occupational skill acquisition with English language acquisition are needed. A commonly identified need is for employees to also develop basic skills such as math, reading, and use of technology.

Employers have different educational requirements of their employees depending on the positions available and their particular business sector. Sector specific language acquisition for Hispanic LEP workers is a primary interest by all employers.

Participants made various suggestions about what they think would be the best tools to help their Hispanic LEP employees succeed. Some employers speculated that an ideal recruiting resource would be a system similar to the guild systems where future employees learned their trade by apprenticing with skilled professionals. One employer suggested manufacturers of equipment should provide training in English and Spanish on the equipment they sell. Employers indicated that efforts should be made to better leverage community resources to train limited-English proficient Hispanic employees. Others expressed great need for using technology to train workers, such as 24-hour radio and television literacy training programs and free ESL classes at community colleges to accommodate shift employees.

Employers indicated they would like their executives to have access to a web-based portal that is structured as a business-to-business model both for information on best practices and research but also to have opportunities to connect to other businesses in their respective sectors. For their employees, they noted a 24-hour/7days a week learning channel would be useful in helping Hispanic employees gain proficiency in English and other key skills.

An overarching concern by employers was that education and training remedies must be developed that are cost effective and increase company productivity; these were deemed critical for employers to remain competitive.

DISCUSSION: NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

A full spectrum of employer attitudes emerged during the research about how employer needs are being met with limited-English proficient Hispanic employees. Some employers have a hands-off approach to the problem, while others support strong top-down leadership embracing diversity. Most employers appeared to occupy a middle ground by recognizing the need to support and train Hispanic LEP employees, and yet do not sense they have achieved the results they would need to successfully train, promote and retain them. Employers cited cost as a limiting factor in terms of the training services that they can provide to Hispanic LEP employees.

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

New technology is creating additional opportunities and challenges for both employers and employees. Employers indicated they 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 limited-English proficient Hispanic applicants has declined. Possible reasons for this include the applicant's lack of reading and writing skills in the native language, 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 to meet growing consumer demand, in the short-term the health care industry is hiring employees whose second language is Spanish. In the long-term, health care providers are pursuing Hispanic populations aggressively by developing interest in the profession through educational programs beginning at the elementary school level.

Safety issues related to those with limited-English proficiency continue to be an issue of concern to employers because safety issues can increase the cost of doing business. Workman compensation and paid time off while nursing an injury are further increased when the LEP employee does not report an injury until it requires more serious medical treatment. The concern for safety is the inhibitor to hiring non-English proficient workers in all sectors but hospitality and construction, even though it is an expressed concern of employers in construction.

Employers seek to obtain more effective training materials and develop a more systematic approach to helping their limited-English employees attain the proficiency and literacy needed for their long term growth and success.

Employers recognize that there is an emerging 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 also be required to speak the language of their customers.

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

Employers also identified common misperceptions about Hispanics that create additional barriers for these employees. For example, a representative of the manufacturing sector, who is a Hispanic senior executive, said that though he graduated from high school a semester early, his counselor suggested he go into boxing. A scenario such as this can be interpreted to mean that some Hispanics do not have the opportunity to find out about all the professions

available to them. Another common misperception about limited-English proficient 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 stayed in the United States, the more likely it is that the U.S. would be their permanent home. Some felt that some of the social and economic factors that immigrants are currently dealing with would disappear within the next decade.

Employers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to frankly discuss their views and voice concerns about their needs for their limited-English proficient Hispanic workforce. Employers who participated in the focus groups said that they valued the opportunity to meet in this type of forum and learned from hearing others' concerns, solutions, and ideas for improvement, and expressed the desire for additional forums of this type. They also expressed the desire to learn about the results of the study.

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 below as each offers a unique perspective in the areas of recruitment, training, advancement, and retention, and provides nuance than enhances the results of the study.

Executive Interviews

Two executive interviews were conducted, each by one member of the study team. Both companies represented are large manufacturing enterprises; one is a food processor and the other is a printer. The former requires very little English for its entry level jobs, relying on bilingual employees in positions such as assistant hourly trainers, lead trainers, and supervisors. Although the employer provides its employees access to English language classes through community colleges, it would like to have ESL classes customized to its industry, and notes that it takes longer to train a team member whose English proficiency is limited.

The other company also utilizes bilingual team leaders for its Hispanic LEP employee team members. It has made several changes to its initial approach to training them. At first, Hispanic employees attended separate meetings, conducted in Spanish, where shop rules are presented; however the company now holds all such meetings in English because it determined that Hispanic employees felt isolated as a result of the separate meetings. Another change was to decrease the English language acquisition class size to a maximum of six employees because company found this approach allowed for greater depth of training.

The executive of this company further noted his printing company initiated a “star performer” program, where individuals who show managerial promise are coached one-on-one with the goal of having Hispanic workers assume management positions by 2015.

The executive noted his company utilizes community based organizations and community colleges for training; the publicly funded employment system could be of greater value to the company if it would provide computer training, ESL classes and basic math skills prior to applicants coming to the company. He expressed the desire to have the publicly funded employment agencies come to the company site to learn what skills the employer is looking for in a job applicant, a request also voiced by employers who participated in focus groups.

Executive Roundtables

The Employers Workforce Development Network (EDWN) is an Wisconsin business network is an affiliation of 35 companies and 24 providers and partners in the Green Bay, Wisconsin area. EDWN was founded specifically to resolve the multiple issues surrounding the large number of newly-arrived Hispanic LEP employees during the 1990s. At this meeting, roundtable participants included executives representing three manufacturers and one service company.

In these roundtable discussions, the employers noted they often set-aside their normal competitive styles to meet the challenges they mutually faced. A similar approach where competitors became allies surfaced in the focus group research; in particular, construction industry employers in a border state worked together to hire each others’ employees during slow times to retain an increasingly trained but limited-English proficient Hispanic employee pool in order to avoid losing the training investment they had made.

Members of the employer networks view their Hispanic LEP employees as an asset and work together to solve mutual issues and take responsibility to implement solutions which benefit all businesses. For instance, the network employed the Literacy Council, local tech colleges and others to design training programs. Limited-English proficient employees who show a strong interest in improving are offered English language classes on their time off. Wisconsin executives noted their bi-lingual employees are valued as assets in several areas: team leaders, human resource representatives, and translators.

Some employers believed some barriers experienced by their Hispanic workforce were self-imposed, and identified these as 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 five employers who participated in the executive roundtable in Texas are manufacturers, which is the primary focus of this established network. In addition, two association representatives and one educational technology representative who were community partners in the network, also participated in the discussion. These executives reported a wide range of views about their Hispanic LEP workforce that agreed fully with the employer views from the focus groups. The range included employer-initiated partnerships with school districts where half the students population was Spanish speaking to others that were more concerned with skill development than English language acquisition.

MEP Supply Point Survey

MEP Management Services, Inc. (MEPMSI) 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 were Hispanic-owned enterprises, and four New Mexico enterprises were Hispanic-owned and four were Native-American-owned. The geographical distribution of surveyed SME's in both states included those located in metropolitan areas and those near the Mexican border.

The survey revealed that just over one-third of the surveyed Arizona employers provide some type of assistance to help their employees develop English language skills, and all but one are Hispanic-owned firms. Many of those who do not provide assistance used to do so but stopped because of the cost and loss of production.

Fewer than half of the Arizona employers who hire English only employees also said they do not test for English proficiency. The remaining firms, including Hispanic-owned enterprises, hire workers who speak Spanish only for entry-level positions.

Similar to the findings among Arizona manufacturing employers, New Mexico enterprises hire bilingual translators to bridge the language gap.

Survey results indicated that more than half of Arizona enterprises and over one-third of New Mexico enterprises surveyed hired only English-speaking workers, even for entry-level jobs. However, when examining the issue of retention, the surveyed employers indicated they do not equate English proficiency with the type of work to be performed; rather, most believe that if you teach the work skills the language will follow.

In both states, users of publicly funded One-Stop Centers expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with them due to their lack of understanding of the manufacturing world which hinders the ability of employees at One-Stop Centers to recruit qualified workers. Like their counterparts in the focus groups, these 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 Hispanic LEP 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 allow them to adjust their approach to management training.
- Employers are more willing to pay for sector-specific training solutions that have been proven to work rather than invest in the 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 Hispanic LEP employees need to develop skills in addition to English language acquisition. Training solutions must be developed that build language, technology, reading comprehension, math skills as well as 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 because needed skill sets can be better integrated with their particular type of business.
- Tax incentives or matching grants are vehicles to assist and encourage employers to train limited-English speaking employees.
- A business-to-business web-based portal would be valued as an important communication tool for employers of limited-English proficient Hispanic employees to provide best practices and to ensure opportunities to network with other businesses in their respective sectors about solutions and models that work.

Policy Implications

The results of this study provide policymakers a snapshot that allows for targeted interventions to help the limited-English proficient Hispanic employee become successful and at the same time, allows business to remain competitive. The employers in this study were very positive about having the opportunity to be convened by an entity that is business oriented at the request of the U.S. Department of Labor for a frank discussion of their needs for their limited-English proficient Hispanic workforce.

Employers believe that their Hispanic LEP 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 limited-English speaking workforce, these employers believe there are insufficient training resources and tools available to help them, and are want help in developing knowledge 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 limited-

English proficient Hispanic workforce possesses the language and occupational skills needed to increase productivity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A full spectrum of employer attitudes emerged from responses to questions relating to what their business needs to help their LEP employees be successful, ranging 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 appeared to occupy a middle ground by their positive recognition of the Hispanic LEP worker's 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 limited-English proficient 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 that help them remain competitive with a high productivity rate and low costs, while helping their limited-English proficient 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 a limited-English proficient Hispanic workforce. The results of this study call for remedies that can immediately and positively impact employers.

APPENDIX

- 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 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.

I Recruitment

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

- A. How do you find limited-English proficient 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 center, 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 training?
 - 2. How satisfied were you with these services?
 - 3. Are there other services/programs you would like to have made available?

II Retention

Are there methods and programs in place to help limited-English proficient 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?
 - 1. How problematic is this for limited-English proficient employees?
- D. 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 limited-English proficient employees?
 3. How are safety rules addressed with limited-English proficient employees?
- How problematic are safety concerns? How does your company deal with these issues?
- F. Of all the strategies that have been utilized, what works, what doesn't?

III 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 limited-English proficient employees advance in the workplace?

IV Corporate Culture

How does corporate culture affect the full integration of limited-English proficient 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 Meetings and Executive Roundtable Discussions

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 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

I 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 least valuable?
- D. What would you like to see done differently by these entities?

II 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 on 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 issues related to the workplace for limited-English proficient 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 limited-English proficient 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 limited-English proficient employees, what strategies work best and what strategies have not produced the desired outcomes

III Advancement

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

IV 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. a Human Resource 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

I Recruitment

- List language requirements to be hired by your company for entry level jobs? [Text]
- Do you test for English Proficiency? [Yes or No]
- 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] and
- What is your satisfaction level with that entity? [very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied]

II 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? [Text]
- Do the demands of your industry require specific language skills, oral or written? [Yes or No]
- If you answered Yes, to the previous question please list them [Text]
- Does your business have industry specific terminology? [Yes or No]

Please check the boxes that best describe what your company does to provide your workers assistance to help 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]

III Advancement

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

IV Corporate Culture

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

- If No, do you want to change your corporate culture to make it Spanish-speaker friendly?
[Yes or No]
- Do your managers have a working knowledge of Spanish? [Yes or No]
- 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

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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.

Manufacturers are slightly less likely to forecast third-quarter employment increases (34% see increases vs. year-ago levels) than non-manufacturers (where 38% see such gains).

The Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) business forecast for the third quarter of 2004 is one of tempered optimism in a period of economic expansion and

employment growth. According to the MMAC, the local employment trend may return to growth in 2004's third quarter.

Survey results suggest that job growth is likely for 2004 as a whole. Those forecasting employment increases in 2004 for their local operations (44%) outnumber those who expect job declines (12%) by nearly a four-to-one margin. Presently, manufacturers are 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 is projected over the next 12 months, matching the percent increase forecast three months ago. Small employers and non-manufacturers predict higher wage and salary increases over the next year.

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).

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 were not in attendance: Dickten Masch, EMMPAK, EWDN, Garden Fresh Foods, and Regency Janitorial.

Three-quarters of the employers in attendance 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 were generous in giving of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their limited-English proficient workforce. Although there was consensus that their hiring objective was governed by good quality at a reasonable price, no one-size-fits-all solution 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 will have a negative effect on their business overall.

Focus Group Responses

This summary follows the four questions that the study attempts to answer and provides preliminary analysis of the data that is gathered to ultimately inform the study. Each question is examined below:

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

In addition to English language literacy, math, reading, and computer skills were considered to carry nearly equal weight for limited-English proficient 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 speaking knowledge of English may not be enough to ensure success; rather, job applicants must have knowledge of writing, reading, and technology.

How the level of English proficiency required is 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?

In this group, 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 were less likely to be aware of these standards, creating an environment that could lead to harm. This was cited as an important problem, and was augmented by 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 cited that they use signage in both English and Spanish to help Limited-English proficient employees, but indicated that method could not be relied on exclusively for employee safety and success in the workplace.

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

Most companies do not want to bear the cost of training Limited-English proficient (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 so 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 said they recruited their employees using a variety of methods, including on-line searches, temporary-to-permanent employment agencies, and walk-ins.

While the business representatives indicated they 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; rather 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 were common to all, such as training managers in

Spanish, to 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 work day. Two employers are proactive in training LEP workers during the day and with hours spent in class paid; of these programs, one is funded by a literacy grant.

Some employers cited problems that may be associated with immigrant populations generally, such as those who are unsure that they can learn the host country language but encourage their children to do so, or those who hope to return to their country of origin and may not wish to learn a new language. Also, two employers cited English speaking employees raised a fairness issue in providing second language classes in English but not also in 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 tax 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. Most others appeared to occupy a middle ground by 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 just the ability to speak English are cited as 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, and 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.

End

Appendix D-2

Focus Group Summary: Houston

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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.

For three consecutive years, Houston has ranked first in the nation in new business growth. A recent survey shows that 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 is the only large sector expected not to grow in 2004 (Greater Houston Partnership Economic Forecast, 2004).

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.

Based on rapid growth in economic base employment, It is predicted that employment growth will 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)

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 reaching one-third of Houston's population (U.S. Census 2000).

Houston Focus Group Meeting Summary and Preliminary Findings

The Houston focus group, held on September 9, 2004 is the second in a series and follows a focus group meeting 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 were not in attendance are: 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 are 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 are 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 were generous in giving of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their limited-English proficient 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 follows the four questions that the study attempts to answer and provides preliminary analysis of the data that is gathered to ultimately inform the study. Each question is examined below.

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

Focus group participants agreed that proficiency in the English language and computer skills are important for limited English employees (LEP) to succeed. They agreed that even if an employee has the desire to learn to read but does not know how to write his or her name or even how to write letters, it is difficult. There are many different literacy programs available to employers in Houston, though no cohesive effort exists.

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

Employers in Houston agree with those in Milwaukee that available training materials are inadequate and must be more innovative utilizing sight and sound in English and Spanish and include the use of more pictures. 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 oft repeated phrases 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 and raised 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.

To advance in the communication services sector English proficiency is necessary for entry level employment, while 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 stayed the greater likelihood of permanent residency was 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 could 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 employee's position in the company taking into consideration the type of accommodation the employer is willing to take. These contrasts are addressed by sectors.

Health care employers are most successful in hiring LEP employees for entry level positions, e.g., housekeeping and food court employees. According to these employers, LEP employees can only compete at entry-level positions. 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 to help them compete in the industry but do not pay educational costs associated with the GED.

As consumers of health care services are increasingly Hispanic, representatives expressed the desire to hire greater numbers of Hispanic caregivers. Their 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 a nurse or pharmacist, go directly to the school. The hospital also gives its employees volunteer time and to go into the schools and talk about their jobs. In addition, the hospital partnered with Scholastic Magazine. The participant believes it is the employer's responsibility to be proactive in recruiting educated employees.

Health care employers are proactive in computer training, providing employees an educator 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 limited in English proficiency (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 said they 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 limited-English proficient employees?

When discussing the level and/or type of a company's management training programs currently being offered limited-English proficient 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 captured their interest and 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. And the company pays 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 workman's comp.

One company has internal educators who continually assess safety risks with employees. Another sees safety as a behavior issue and believes that training is more effective if it is a face-to-face interaction with the equipment versus using a manual.

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

Families of LEP employees are cited as a primary resource for recruiting in construction.

The construction companies that are in this focus group described themselves as large and sophisticated in contrast to most companies that are smaller and with fewer resources to address these issues. This was echoed by an employer services company who noted that small business clients do what they have to do (training in-house) to remain competitive. In some cases, such as maintaining airport terminals, an in-house solution won't work. Another employer said that although a small company might have a self-paced CD to use for English acquisition, the only computer available might be 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 all employees so that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English speaking ability, have the necessary tools to succeed?

What programs employers use to recruit, train, and retain employees so that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English speaking ability have the necessary tools to succeed are varied and innovative.

Eighteen months ago, one company hired outside certified providers for an accelerated (English) learning program for 15 Hispanic workers for six weeks over lunch. Half the program was on the employee's time and half was on the company's time. The employer asked the children of employees to only speak English to their parent during this time. It was considered a big success. Seventy-five percent of the employees were retained; some left for better jobs. The participant felt the experience improved the employee's lives outside of the job 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 and 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 devoting time in the public agencies to telling them 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, in the short-term, solutions are more likely to be found only 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 those with limited English proficiency continue to be an issue of concern to employers because it 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 limited English employees attain the proficiency and literacy needed for their long term growth and success.

End

Appendix D-3

Focus Group Summary: Dallas

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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).

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 – are 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).

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.

Dallas Focus Group Meeting Summary and Preliminary Findings

The Dallas focus group, held on September 29, 2004 is the third in a series and follows focus group meetings 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 (Verizon, the 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 were generous in giving of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their limited-English proficient workforce. The primary discussion focused primarily on recruitment and training as employers' interests seemed centered in these areas, thus providing greater depth of information than was possible in Milwaukee and Houston.

Focus Group Responses

This summary follows the four questions that the study attempts to answer and provides preliminary analysis of the data that is gathered to ultimately inform the study. Each question is examined below.

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

Dallas employers believe English language acquisition and technology are necessary for limited-English proficient employees to succeed. Participants expressed more concern with the need to accomplish this goal and the associated methodologies than they were with costs. They also see their financial investment in education as worthwhile.

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

Yet another employer encourages all employees, even those who work part-time, to get a college-level 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 willingness to make accommodations generally.

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 limited-English proficient employees?

Most employers in the focus group indicated they promote from within the company.

Some acknowledged the discrepancy between their company policy of embracing diversity, yet experiencing difficulty in promoting 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 incentive for others to advance.

At this time, 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 adjust their needs and approach to management training.

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

Participants said they recruit from the following organizations: the Department of Labor, Catholic Charities, housing authorities, colleges and community 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 seemed adequate if the employees are motivated, while others believed 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 is emerging from the focus group sessions in Dallas, Houston and Milwaukee is that the construction sector hires up to 80 percent non-English proficient 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 non-English proficient in all but construction, even though it is an expressed concern of employers in this industry.

Finally, what is apparent from the three focus groups held to date 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. **End**

Appendix D-4

Focus Group Summary: Chicago

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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 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.

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).

Chicago Focus Group Meeting Summary and Preliminary Findings

The Chicago focus group, held on October 21, 2004 is the fourth in a series and follows focus group meetings 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. Over 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 were generous in giving of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their limited-English proficient workforce. Their discussion focused on recruitment, retention, and promotion within their respective business sectors and organizations.

Focus Group Responses

This summary follows the four questions that the study attempts to answer and provides preliminary analysis of the data that is gathered to ultimately inform the study. Each question is examined below.

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

The majority of employers present indicated that they need English proficient workers, regardless of their business sector. Even in tight knit employment communities, such as union contractors where bi-lingual classes are offered, it is problematic for companies and limited English speaking 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 were informed that to be retained with the company, they must learn English. They test and interview in English. Testing reveals that those applicants who are limited-English proficient do well in math but lack English comprehension skills. The company signage is in English. Some companies offer bi-lingual training classes but cited that they ran into problems on the job when verbal communication was 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, the company pays a bonus to the employee who completes the class. The same employer said this type of program is costly. Larger employers indicated they 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 the employee is afraid it is a way of checking the employee's legal status.

An 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 to holding training costs down by working with churches and apartment complexes for English language training. He asks the apartment manager to give him use of the clubhouse and asks a priest to conduct the classes.

What level and/or type of a company's management training programs are currently being offered limited-English proficient employees?

English language training that incorporates "a lot of pictures" as well as math and shop talk has been successful for one employer who cites 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 it makes them 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.

English proficiency was called the “glass ceiling” by one employer.

What public or private programs are used by employers to recruit, train and retain all employees so 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 were 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, 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 outreached 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 skills and English skills.

Employers said they 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 50 cent 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 utilize in helping employees gain proficiency in English included leveraging existing technology, such as radio and television, tax credits, 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. Community colleges could 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 differs from manufacturers in other locations where focus groups were held. One possibility for this sector distinction is 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.

End

Appendix D-5

Focus Group Summary: Irvine

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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). 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 recent 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 confirms 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).

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.

Irvine Focus Group Meeting Summary and Preliminary Findings

The Irvine focus group, held on December 7, 2004, is the fifth in a series, following focus group meetings 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
Mission Hospital
PacifiCare

Retention Education
St. Joseph's Hospital
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 were generous in giving of their time and expertise in a frank discussion of their business needs and practices in relation to their limited-English proficient workforce. Their discussion focused on recruitment retention, and promotion within their respective business sectors.

Focus Group Responses

This summary follows the four questions that the study attempts to answer and provides preliminary analysis of the data that is gathered to ultimately inform the study. Each question is examined below.

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

While English language acquisition, particularly the acquisition of sector specific language, is acknowledged as important, employers are quick to add that the acquisition of work skills (including reading and math) and life skills, are integral to the success of limited-English proficient 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 require all new hires not only to read and understand English but because they can be identified by their uniforms, they must be able to respond to customer questions. Employers in the manufacturing sector represented at the focus group require new hires for assembly line work to speak English, understand schematics, and what “process” is. Employers in the hospitality sector hire limited English 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?

The hospitality industry cites the 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, in full or matched, from the government 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 limited-English proficient employees?

One employer offers a one-hour lesson once a week during work to its food service staff. Even though the employees who participated in this program are proud of the English they learned, the employer 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 correlates 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 so that all employees, including newly arrived immigrants with limited English speaking ability, have the necessary tools to succeed?

Focus group participants are familiar with public agencies such as One-Stops, and report mixed success in meeting employer expectations. Regional Occupational Programs (ROPs) are 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, are highly valued by the health care sector representatives present.

Conclusion

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

Standardized English language proficiency tests in words, reading comprehension, and writing that are easy to administer and can be made to be 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 note 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 though 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 limited-English proficient 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.

End

Appendix E

Executive Meeting Summaries: QuadGraphics and Tyson Foods, Inc.

Appendix E-1

Executive Meeting Summary: QuadGraphics

Participant

The participant is the human resources director of QuadGraphics, a commercial printing company with locations in Wisconsin, West Virginia, Oklahoma, Georgia and New York. It also has international partnerships with companies 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 these employees 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. They also test applicants, necessitating a rudimentary knowledge of English.

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 the 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 would provide 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 the company. To date, the public system has not come to the company to ask how it could be 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 limited-English proficient workers in the future, the company 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 so that workers 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 be 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, as 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 requirements are communicated through the team leaders. Quality is important in the publications the company prints, such as National Geographic and Architectural Digest.

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. Often migrant workers would work the minimum time period and file for unemployment, so the company has moved away from these hires.

The company goes beyond the minimum requirements for 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. However, the company is 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 Resource 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.

End

Appendix E-2

Executive Meeting Summary: Tyson Foods, Inc.

Participant

The participant is 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 time 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 in Spanish. Tyson's 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 our 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 the 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 manager and the training coordinator via video, telephone, and an annual conference. Tyson human resource directors meet weekly to discuss concerns. Other methods Tyson uses include:

- Plant newsletters
- Learning Center at Pasco

- Migrant education conference speaker
- Bi-national conference speaker
- Participation on the Nebraska Interstate Migrant Education Council
- Sponsor seminars for industries to share best practices
- Brings community resources to orientation.

End

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)

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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 focus group 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 per week in the Green Bay area. Today, it is estimated that 10 percent of the population is Hispanic.

The Network 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 the Network 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, the Network 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 the Network is that information be shared among the membership about what worked, what didn't and what should be done differently.

The Network 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, the Network's Executive Director, organized the focus 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 are identified by the President as economically vital to the American economy as a high growth/high demand sector.

Recruitment

For limited-English proficient employees to succeed, it is important that the private and public sectors find a way to communicate in order 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.

Employers noted that 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 in improving are offered English language classes that are 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 second language are also being offered employees.

Retention

A local hotel offers Spanish and English classes during working hours that are 90 minutes for four weeks. 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 those employees feel free to speak out about safety issues and other things of concern in workplace.

One company said Hispanic workers thought that if they were injured they would be fired. To resolve that and create a better dialogue it has instituted monthly luncheon sessions, offering financial literacy, Spanish for managers and cultural literacy programs.

Advancement

The Network 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 to teach how to write checks, use checking accounts, buy a car, house, savings, etc. and handed the financial training tool over to Literacy Council who is partnering with the financial institutions and employers group to deliver to 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, provide quality inspections and training.

Corporate Culture

Companies are addressing the cultural issues also. In addition to helping them gain information about the American culture, employers offer their employees information on the value of literacy, health care system issues, concepts of banks, preventative healthcare and wellness, and how to buy a car. The Network 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 leadership 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. Since the Network's members represent a large percentage of employers in the Green Bay area and have created 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 that requires public agencies to come out into the workplace and see to better understand what the employers need to recruit and retain a quality workforce.

Conclusion

According to the Network 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 was more important to work together to find the best ideas to address the multitude of social, economic, education and other needs of a limited-English proficient 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.

End

Appendix F-2

Executive Roundtable Summary: Texas Manufacturing Assistance Centers (TMAC)

Appendix F-2

Executive Roundtable Summary: Texas Manufacturing Assistance Centers (TMAC)

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

Preliminary Analysis

This report begins with a brief overview of the TME to provide context to the focus group 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 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 is the second of two executive roundtables and follows 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 in the TMAC executive roundtable discussion 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 supporting organizations (Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options, Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center, and the University of Texas at Arlington).

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.

Recruitment

Many participants use online services, such as monster.com, and temporary agencies for recruiting employees. These means of recruitment do not ensure employees have the language and math skills required for US technology-based industries. Several participants believe that the Texas Workforce Commission is not a helpful resource for identifying qualified employees.

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 for even entry level positions. Several participants indicated they would like to see schools address the need for technology training as early as the 1st grade, and definitely by the 8th grade. They propose working with the schools to train students for an aircraft worker certificate. 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, in which 50 percent of its students are Spanish speaking. It has hired eight students, on a contractual basis, to work in a pilot training program. The organization will develop curriculum, provide all training instruction and materials, and offer positions to graduates within the industry at their completion of the program.

To ensure it hires skilled workers, one participant representing a manufacturing business said his company coordinates with the 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 US companies is their ability to retain employees. This problem not only concerns defining standards for measuring employee job proficiency, but also concerns the means companies must take to increase employee loyalty, ensure their integration within the company community, and offer opportunities for advancement.

Unlike their counterparts in the Dallas focus group and others, 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 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® Huddle program.

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 concluded by recommending having an organization such as the US-Mexico Chamber of Commerce serve as a catalyst for bringing local organizations together to identify, define, and develop strategies for employee recruitment and retention. Employers also identified the need to form a network of organizations, such as a Dallas/Ft. Worth Coalition, to discuss skills proficiency, rather than tackle the issues related to limited-English proficient employees. In addition, they are seeking to identify and find information on best practices for training in job skills, corporate culture, and community integration. Finally, they would like to develop work-specific programs, on site and through local educational institutions, to train potential employees in the skills required of company jobs.

End

Appendix G

Survey Report on Arizona and New Mexico Manufacturing Firms

Appendix G

Survey Report on Arizona and New Mexico Manufacturing Firms

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Arizona and New Mexico Manufacturing Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

Final Report

Prepared for:

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Prepared by:

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

January 20, 2005

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 the major metropolitan areas and near the Mexican border. Over 80 percent the combined surveyed SMEs employed less than 50 employees although a few manufacturers who employed greater than 100 workers were included.

In Arizona, the predominate industry sectors represented in the survey were Primary Fabricated Products, Plastics and Rubber Products and Chemicals. In New Mexico, the predominate industry sectors were Primary Fabricated Products, Plastics and Rubber Products, Electrical Equipment and Computers Components and Electronics.

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 aggregate findings from the survey are listed below. In general, the responses to the survey questions were similar among both 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 hired 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 some many Spanish dialects to deal with, requiring English as a language requirement minimizes communication difficulties in their businesses. 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 and state, most employers have used government and non-government venues to recruit employees. The top three venues include private employment service, 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 for employees of the One-Stop Centers to help manufacturing employers to recruit 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” even though they expressed the belief that the increasing global competition is putting significant pressure on them to ensure that their employees have basic soft 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 relation 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 economic development sources.
- 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. 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 and do not support government-funded language training programs because of their perception of lack of benefits particularly since they do not have a problem with this issue. 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 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 suite 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 that are involved the following manufacturing subsectors:

Food Processing	Primary & Fabricated Metals
Automotive	Products
Chemicals	Telecommunications
Electrical Eqp, Appliance & Compts	Textile, Apparel, Fibers & Yarn
Computer and Electronic Products	Transportation Equipment
Plastics & Rubber Products	

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 to New Mexico in order to safely meet the survey requirement of 212 SMEs.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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 allowed for the development of a MEP profile only and precluded 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 are to be tabulated and analyzed as required by the Foundation.

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

Summary Results

1. Arizona

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™.

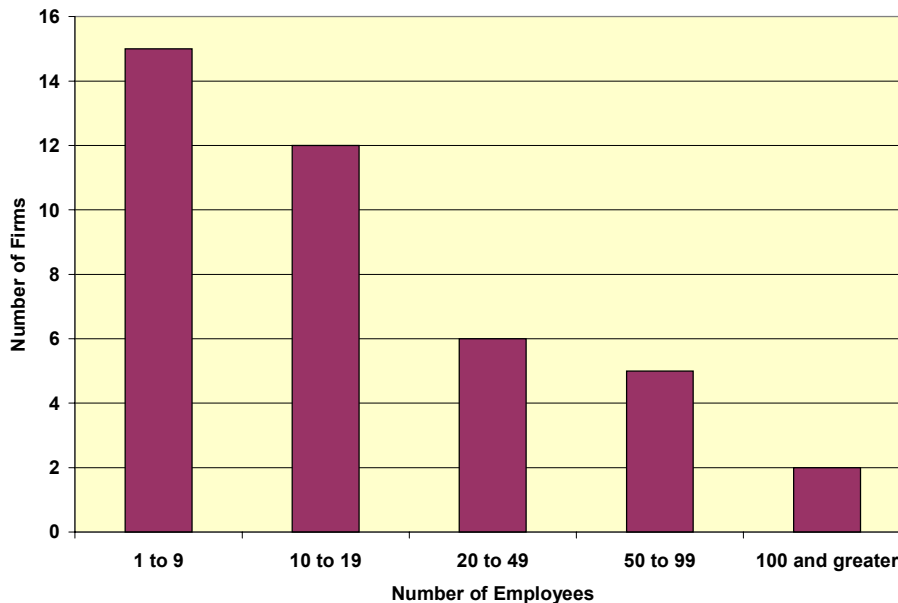
Location

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.

Employee Size

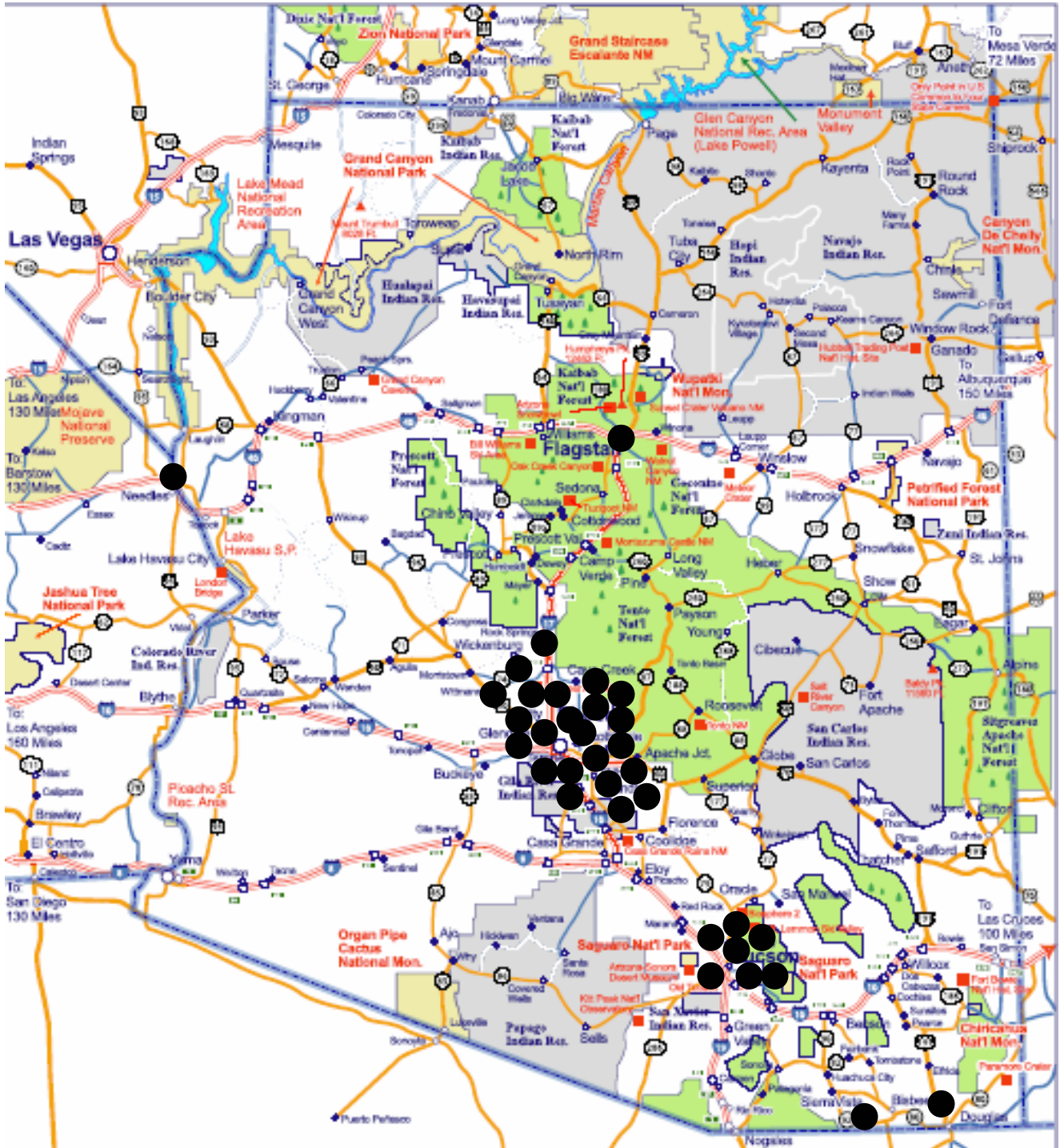
As shown in Figure 2, 27 participating firms, or 67.5% of total participating firms employed 1-19 employees, 11 firms employed between 20 and 99 employees. One firm employed 155 workers.

Figure 2: Firms by Employee Size



English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

Figure 1: Distribution of Arizona Participating Firms

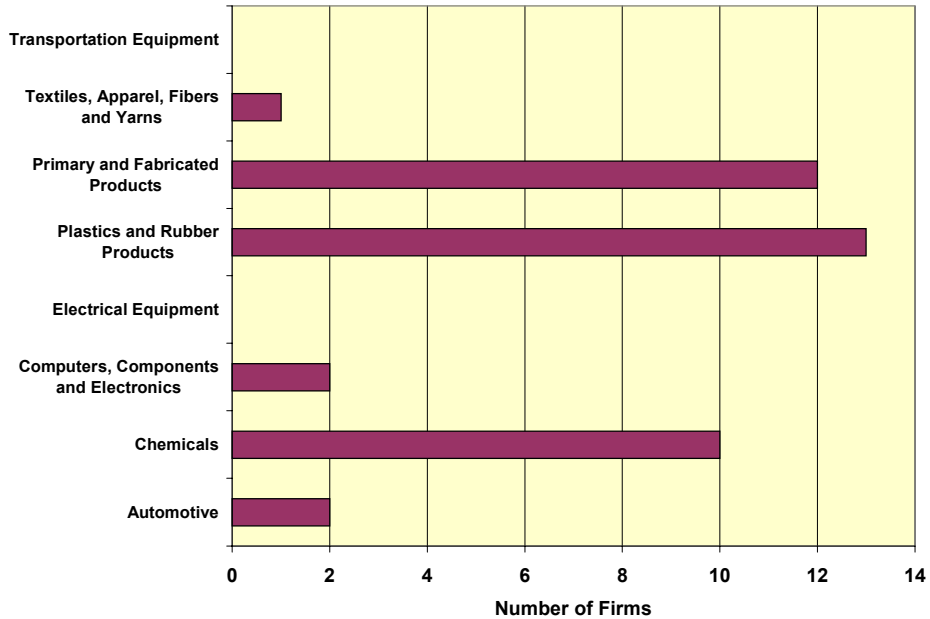


Firms by Industry Category

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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

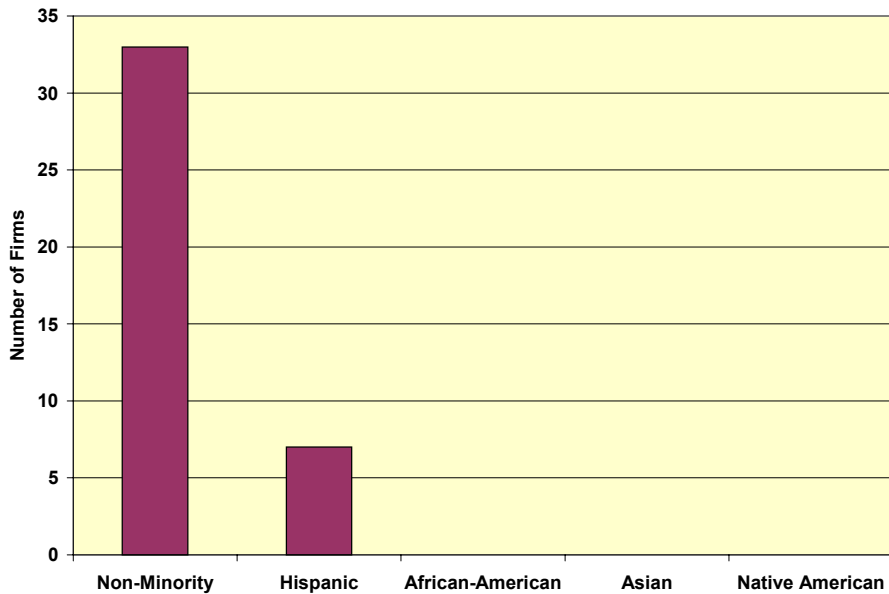
Figure 3: Firms by Industry Sector



Firms by Ownership

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

Figure 4: Firms by Ownership



English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

I 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 only speak Spanish for entry level jobs. Seven of the 14 firms that hire Spanish-speaking only workers are Hispanic-owned.

The employers who require English as a condition of employment indicate 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 require their all their employees to have good skills in reading, writing and speaking English.

It was mentioned that there are many Spanish dialects that are being dealt with in Arizona and that too presents a problem in communication, translation etc. Therefore, requiring English as a language 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 then needed to make sure that bilingual employees were on hand to translate.

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 would employers in the greater Phoenix area.

Do you test for English Proficiency?

Testing for English proficiency is a requirement only for the 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.

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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

Table 1: Use of Publicly Funded Programs

	Yes	No	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
One-Stop 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 for the firms in the primary and fabricated metal products category, all employers in the remaining industry groups find no shortage of employees, bilingual or otherwise. There seems 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 venues to recruit employees. The top three venues include private employment services, local community colleges, newspapers, Internet and “word of mouth” which is usually successful when there is a glut in qualified candidates. The least successful venues are job fairs and the One-Stop Centers. The high level of dissatisfaction among the users of the One-Stop Centers is due to the lack of appreciation and understanding of the manufacturing world which hinders the ability for employees of the One-Stop Centers to help manufacturing employers to recruit qualified workers.

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

II 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 relation 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 language skills, oral or written?

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

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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 English speaking, reading and writing, math, problem solving, communication and computer literacy.

Please check the boxes that best describe what your company does to provide your workers assistance to help 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

A small fraction 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. Thirteen of the 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 economic development sources. Five employers of the 28 employers that do not provide assistance, used to do 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 the ones that are using or have used public and private programs to increase the English proficiency of their workforce. 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. Even those who are bilingual

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

often need additional basic skills to be able to move up in the company. For employers with 10 or less employees, teamwork was less of a problem.

Ten (10) of the 26 employers who have English as an employment requirement have never used and do not support government-funded language training programs because of their perception of lack of benefits particularly since they do not have a problem with this issue. The remaining 16 employers have rarely used government or private funded language training programs and would like to learn more about them.

III Advancement

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

The response to this question is relevant to the 14 employers who hire Spanish-speaking only employees. They were the only ones who responded to this question. All 14 employers have career advancement opportunities for all their employees in shop floor supervisory and management positions. For intermediate and advanced skills positions, all employees are required to be competent in soft skills including: reading, writing, math, problem solving, communication, teamwork, and computer literacy. All firms require their Spanish-speaking only 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?

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 Centers. The One-Stop Centers included the City of Phoenix, Maricopa County, Mohave County, Pima County, Santa Cruz County, and Coconino County.

IV 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 this question and many refused to answer them. These employers were emphatic that all workers should speak English and management and employees should not be placed in the position to be forced to learn to speak non-English language.

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

The respondents to these 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 of the firms do not make this a work requirement or provide job-related incentives

2. New Mexico

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.

Firms by Employee Size

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

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

Figure 6: Firms by Employee Size

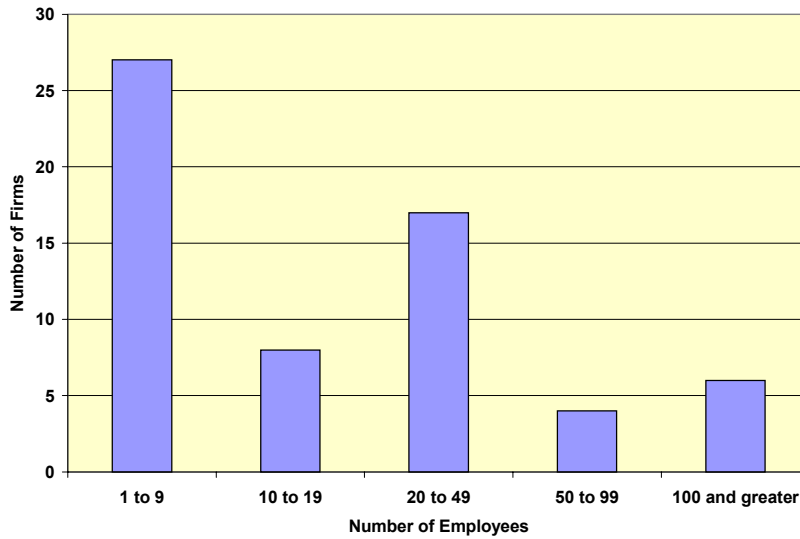
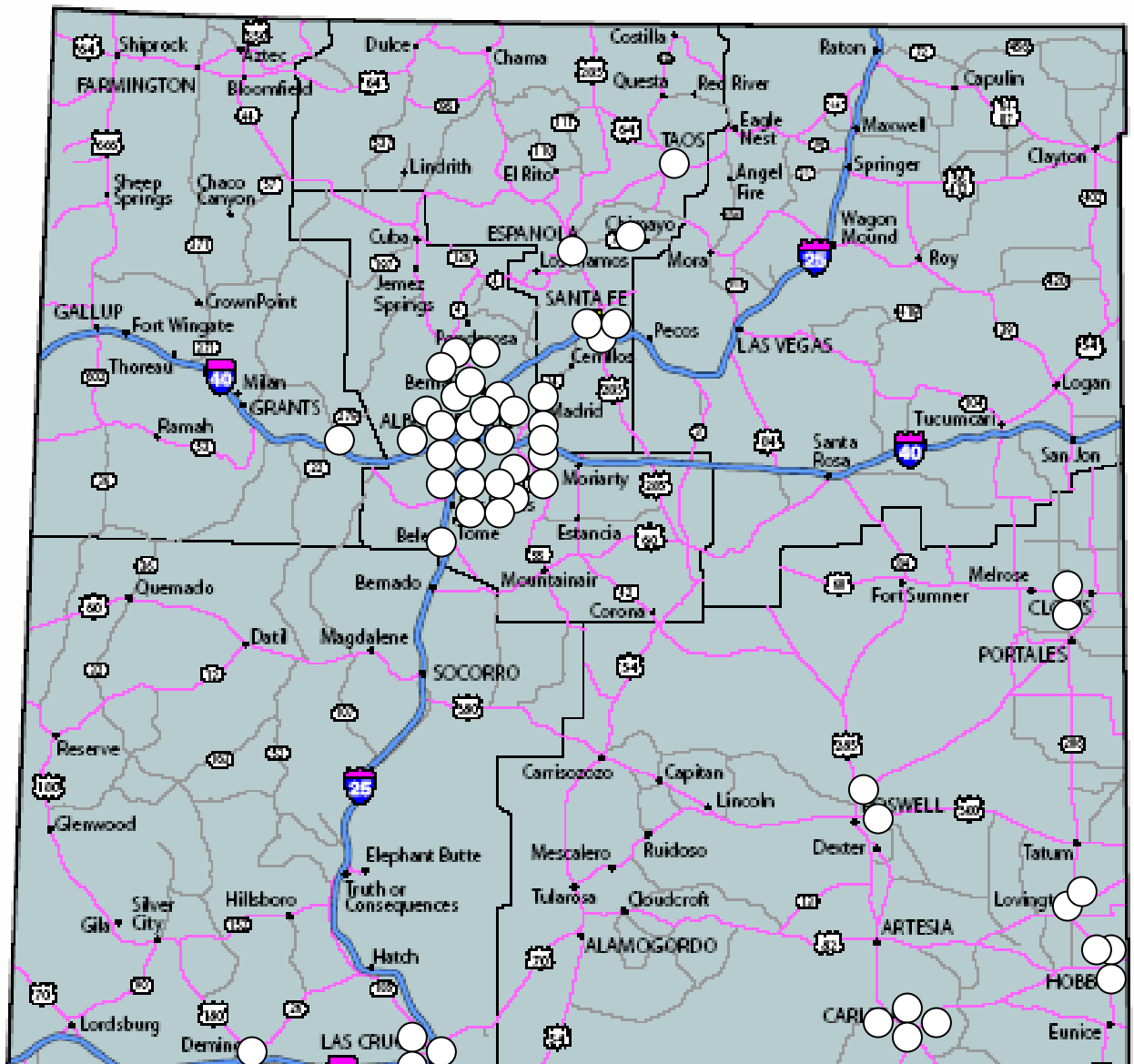


Figure 5: Distribution of New Mexico Participating Firms

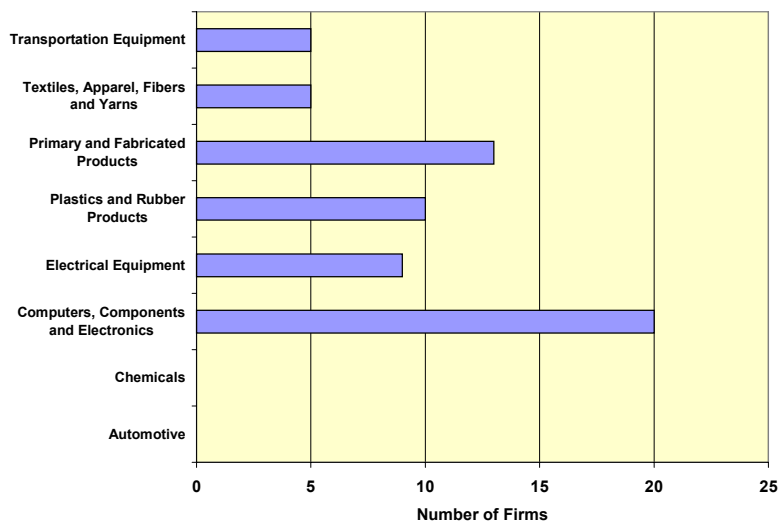


English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

Firms by Industry Category

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

Figure 7: Firms by Industry Sector

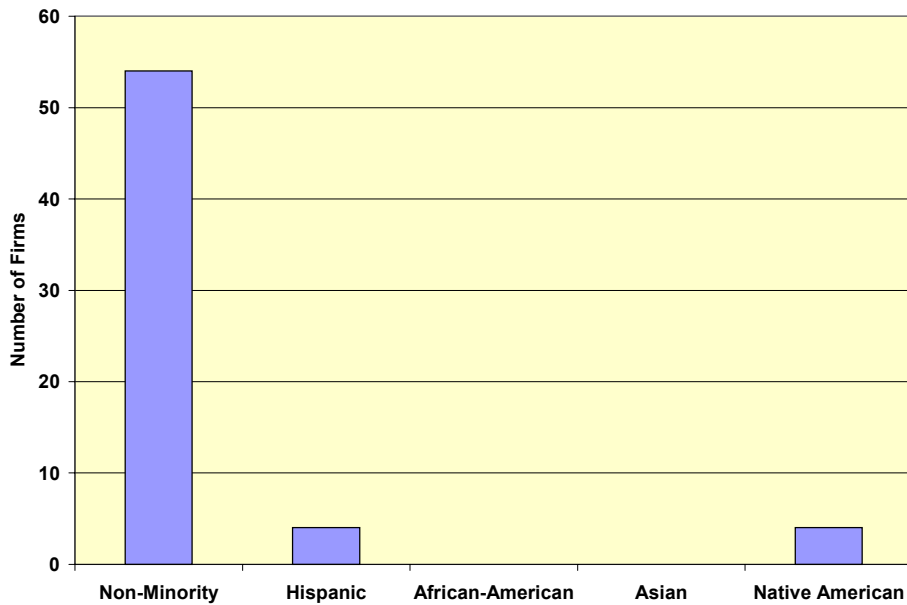


Firms by Ownership

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

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

Figure 8: Firms by Ownership



I 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	34
Hispanic-owned	0	4
Native American-owned	2	2
Woman-owned	1	4

Twenty-one (21) of the 62 surveyed employers require all their employees to speak, read and write English prior to employment, even for entry level jobs. In contrast, the remaining 41 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.

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

In New Mexico, recruitment by employers in the primary and fabricated metal products group is hampered by government facilities like Los Alamos and Sandia who 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 21 employers that specify English as a language requirement for employment. Of the 21 employers that require English, thirteen 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 that entity.

Table 6: English Proficiency Requirements

	Yes	No	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
One-Stop 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 venues to recruit employees. The top three venues include private employment services (e.g. Manpower, Inc.), local community colleges, newspapers, Internet and “word of mouth” which is usually successful when there is a glut in qualified candidates. The least successful venues are job fairs and the One-Stop Centers. Again, as with Arizona employers, the high level of dissatisfaction among the New Mexico users of the One-Stop Centers is due to the lack of appreciation and understanding of the manufacturing world which hinders the ability for employees of the One-Stop Centers to help manufacturing employers to recruit qualified workers.

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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 employee can come for a trial period and then the employer can choose to hire or not. If he does not hire there are no repercussions. Other employers use local high school for employees. Most are only part time and summer/help.

II 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 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 taught them their Spanish-speaking workers to speak English if they are skilled in the areas they need.

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

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

English Proficiency: A Survey of What Employers Need for Their Spanish-Speaking Workforce

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.

Please check the boxes that best describe what your company does to provide your workers assistance to help 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 assistance. The assistance is provided primarily by third party trainers in local community colleges and is paid for primarily with community economic development sources. Internal training is predominantly conducted 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.

III 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 and only for employees that are competent in soft skills including: reading, writing, math, problem solving, communication,

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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 Centers. The One-Stop Centers included Albuquerque, Espanola, Valencia, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, Roswell, Carlsbad, Hobbs, Deming, Las Cruces, Clovis, and Valencia.

IV 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 DOL training funds for this purpose.