



ANNUAL REPORT

SPRING 2018

The image on the cover page is of immigrants participating in an Essential Skills class at the Community College of Baltimore County funded by ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant received by DLLR. Find more information about this program on page 7.

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SKILLED IMMIGRANTS IN MARYLAND

DEMONSTRATED NEED

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) reports 1.6 million college-educated immigrants are unemployed or underemployed in the U.S. Immigrants with foreign college degrees earn an average hourly wage of only \$11.40 compared to \$21.60 for those educated in the U.S., and refugees and asylees with a high school diploma make an average of \$9.65 per hour compared with \$14.42 for American-born citizens.¹

In Maryland in particular, 20% of the college-educated foreign-born population is underemployed or unemployed. With immigrants comprising 18% of Maryland’s population and 16% of its working population, these statistics are alarming.²

A study by the George Mason University Institute for Immigration Research used census data to provide data on immigrants ages 25+ in Maryland with at least an associate degree. The following table summarizes results by area of study:

Field	Percentage
Business	18.87%
Social Sciences	12.26%
Physical Sciences	11.88%
Health	11.63%
Engineering	11.36%
IT	8.13%
Educational Services	7.76%
Media & Arts	3.50%
Other	2.31%
No Degree Field Reported	12.23%

With education in a variety of fields, immigrants are well-poised to fill the gaps in existing labor market shortages.

SKILLED IMMIGRANT DEFINITION

A work-authorized foreign-born and foreign-trained worker with at least (2) years of formal or informal education, training, or on the job experience that has led to special skills, training, knowledge, and/or abilities for certain types of work.

¹ World Education, Adult Education and Immigrant Integration: Networks for Integrating New Americans

² Marge McHugh and Madeline Morawski, Immigrants and WIOA Services, Migration Policy Institute, 1

CREATION OF THE SKILLED IMMIGRANT TASK FORCE

Recognizing the detrimental effects of “brain waste” – a waste of human capital to employers, communities, and immigrants themselves due to underemployment or unemployment – on our economy as well as the economic hardships of immigrants looking for employment opportunities that align with their professional backgrounds and training, Maryland submitted a Letter of Interest (LOI) to the White House National Skills and Credential Institute in 2016. The LOI identified four key barriers to the integration of skilled immigrants in Maryland’s workforce, including:

- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

Even though most foreign educated individuals possess technical skills needed to perform skilled jobs, they often lack the English proficiency necessary to communicate effectively in a workplace. A study by the Migration Policy Institute found that Maryland has 113,000 LEP individuals who have completed some form of college or higher.

Many immigrants work long hours and some have more than one job to meet basic financial needs. Basic economic pressures, tuition-based courses, and courses offered during working hours limit immigrants’ ability to attend English courses. In addition, language is also a barrier for individuals seeking to fill gaps in training.

- **Complex licensing and credentialing processes**

Many professional careers in the United States are within regulated professions, many of which are regulated at the state level. In order to return to previous professions, immigrants have to undergo licensing processes that are particularly complex due to foreign credentials not often well understood or fully recognized. In addition, the licensing process is costly, timely, and confusing for many immigrants.

- **Limited experience of Maryland’s workforce system in working with foreign-born individuals**

The ability to assist foreign-born individuals navigate the complex workforce development system requires specialized accommodation and the provision of culturally appropriate services that are often lacking at the local level. Staff at local American Job Centers and other federal or state-funded workforce projects may not be fully equipped to address the needs of a skilled immigrant seeking to re-enter their profession.

- **Lack of social capital on the part of immigrants**

Numerous studies assert the importance of social connections to find employment. For many newly arrived immigrants who have little to no social connections, finding a job can be difficult despite having all other qualifications.

The Maryland Skilled Immigrant Task Force (Task Force) was created in June 2016 to address these issues, believing that the state of Maryland could lead the way in creating a win-win environment in which immigrants secure jobs that match their professional and educational backgrounds while simultaneously meeting the hiring demands of the business community.

FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW

PARTNERSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE

While the Task Force was co-sponsored by two state agencies: the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), many other organizations contributed toward its inception, including Baltimore City Community College, the Baltimore Mayor's Office for Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs, City of Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity of the Montgomery County Government, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service/Higher, Montgomery College, Upwardly Global, and the Welcome Back Center of Suburban Maryland.

DHS is Maryland's primary social service provider, serving more than one million residents annually. Through its 24 local departments of social services and other social programs, DHS aggressively pursues opportunities to assist people in economic need, provides preventive services, and protects vulnerable children and adults. Within DHS' Family Investment Administration is the Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA), which provides support and services to federally recognized refugees and other humanitarian immigrants including asylees, certified Victims of Trafficking, Special Immigrant Visa holders from Iraq and Afghanistan, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and certain Amerasians.

MORA has helped more than 40,000 refugees and eligible humanitarian immigrants make Maryland their home through a state-wide network of public and private organizations. MORA provides transitional cash assistance, employment services, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, vocational training, health case management, and other supportive services. MORA partners assist individuals to become independent, contributing members to the national and local economy through a number of transitional services aimed at helping the clients achieve social and economic self-sufficiency. For more information, visit MORA's website at <http://dhr.maryland.gov/maryland-office-for-refugees-and-asylees/>.

DLLR is Maryland's job development agency. It supports the economic stability of the state by providing businesses, the workforce, and the consuming public with high-quality, customer-focused regulatory, employment, and training services. Divisions within DLLR consist of Occupational and Professional Licensing, Unemployment Insurance, Labor and Industry, the Maryland Racing Commission, and the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL).

DWDAL oversees the state's adult education programming (family literacy, GED preparation, and English as a Second Language) and the American Job Centers (AJCs). DWDAL is responsible for implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in Maryland. WIOA was signed into law on July 22, 2014, and took effect July 1, 2015. It addresses the needs of both businesses and jobseekers and establishes a workforce system that relies on strong, cross-sector partnerships. The Maryland WIOA State Plan is available here: <http://www.dllr.maryland.gov/wdplan/wdstateplan.pdf>.

MORA and DWDAL became co-leads of the Task Force, sharing responsibility for facilitating monthly meetings, scheduling presenters, and inviting relevant partners.

CONVENING AND MEMBERSHIP

Maryland's Skilled Immigrant Task Force held its inaugural meeting in July 2016. The Task Force quickly transformed into a robust network of multi-sector stakeholders, including service providers, educators, and both the public and private sector. First-year membership included representation from the following local, state, and national organizations:

- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Baltimore City Community College
- Baltimore City's Mayor's Office of Employment Development
- Baltimore City's Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs
- Department of Human Services (State of Maryland)
- Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (State of Maryland)
- Ethiopian Community Development Council
- Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (State of Maryland)
- Governor's Workforce Development Board (State of Maryland)
- International Rescue Committee
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
- Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area
- Montgomery College
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity
- Prince George's Community College
- Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation
- Upwardly Global
- Welcome Back Center of Suburban Maryland (Latino Health Initiative)
- WES Global Talent Bridge

STRUCTURE

Monthly meetings were established for stakeholder organizations to build relationships, share ideas, and discuss best practices. These gatherings took place at DWDAL in Baltimore, Maryland, and typically included an organizational highlight, so attendees could learn about fellow member organizations, a presentation regarding a best practice in the immigrant integration and/or workforce development fields, and updates from subcommittees.

In its inaugural year, the Task Force developed subcommittees around five key barriers to the integration of skilled immigrants in Maryland's workforce: Adult Education, Business Engagement, Capacity Building and Best Practices, Financial Literacy and Assistance, and Professional Licensing. Each subcommittee had a volunteer chair who scheduled meetings, drafted agendas, and determined, with other subcommittee members, relevant goals and action items.

MEMBER-IDENTIFIED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Members of the Task Force identified multiple accomplishments from its first year (see graphic on page 12). Most notably, the group recognizes that convening a group of stakeholders who have not

traditionally communicated across sectors is an incredible success. While the group is proud of this expanded network of communication, there are also three tangible successes to share.

To meet the dynamic needs of skilled immigrants, the Task Force's Financial Literacy and Assistance subcommittee explored challenges revolving around immigrant access to and understanding of available financial resources in the state. The subcommittee decided to create a "Financial Education and Resource Guide" to distribute to organizations that touch immigrants (ethnic community-based organizations, non-profits, refugee resettlement agencies, local departments of social services, etc.). The resource guide includes information on basic banking, loans, scholarships, taxes, and frauds. Additionally, a list of organizations by workforce area is included so individuals can access services near where they live. The resource guide is attached as Appendix A.

Secondly, the work from the Task Force's Capacity Building and Best Practices subcommittee contributed to the creation of a workforce system survey. Recognizing the common barriers to employment faced by skilled immigrants and LEP individuals, this subcommittee identified a need to assess the workforce system's current capacity to serve these populations. With guidance from a language access assessment created by the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, the Maryland Workforce System Survey was drafted. In August of 2017, this tool was distributed to leadership *and* frontline staff at AJCs, local departments of social service, WIOA Title II adult education providers, and the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services. Results will drive future technical assistance creation, identify opportunities for cross training, and assist in the planning of targeted breakout sessions for the third WIOA convening. The survey is attached as Appendix B and is also available online at:

<http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/wdskilledimmigrantsurvey.pdf>.

The third accomplishment is the Task Force's contribution to the creation of an innovative registered apprenticeship pilot for skilled immigrants. Following discussions about the challenges foreign-trained individuals face when trying to return to their career fields in the United States, DLLR applied for and received funding to serve unemployed and underemployed skilled immigrants through the ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant. This 18-month pilot program, developed to mitigate hiring and retention challenges found within the healthcare industry, is directed by the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH). BACH is working with Baltimore area hospitals and long-term care facilities to design competency-based registered apprenticeships for in-demand occupations and tapping underemployed or unemployed immigrants with international professional experience and education to meet hiring needs.

Recruitment and outreach are being conducted by the International Rescue Committee with support from Baltimore City's Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs. Participants receive contextualized English as a Second Language instruction from the

Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), occupational preparation through a customized Upwardly Global online portal, a 30-hour essential skills course, and one-on-one meetings with a career coach. The first cohort of apprentices began in June 2017 and will work towards becoming environmental care supervisors at Johns Hopkins Hospital.



I think [the Task Force] brought together a phenomenal group of people with different expertise representing different entities. Number one, it provided a snapshot of the quality of people and organizations that make up immigrant-serving Maryland. Number two, it identified the level of energy and commitment to the issue of skilled immigrants and enhancing services for this population.

– Skilled Immigrant Task Force member on first-year accomplishments, July 2017

STATE-IDENTIFIED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Task Force has greatly strengthened the working relationship of DHS and DLLR. Due to the Task Force, DWDAL and MORA staff are in near-constant communication, which has led to several other significant ongoing and upcoming accomplishments. It is important to note that the Task Force began without a dedicated staff; DLLR and DHS recognized the need for this collaboration and each have staff with a portion of their time dedicated to the Task Force.

1. Language Access Strategies

DWDAL is preparing a Language Access Plan (LAP) in accordance with Section 188 of WIOA (nondiscrimination), the U.S. Department of Justice’s Policy Guidance Document “Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency,” and Executive Order 13166. The LAP will outline how DWDAL and its adult education providers and AJC network will provide equitable access to those with limited English. The Task Force will provide input and review this document before it takes effect.

DHS is revamping its language access strategy and began an LEP Initiative in 2016. This initiative is examining current practices and developing an enhanced policy and implementation plan for all DHS programs and offices, including local departments of social services.

2. Grant Applications

Licensing Grant

The Task Force has identified occupational licensing as a barrier to employment for skilled immigrants. In response, the group will contribute to Maryland’s work as part of a national *Occupational Licensing Policy Learning Consortium*. DLLR applied to and was accepted to this opportunity from The Council of State Governments, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. Participation will include representation from MORA on Maryland’s consortium core team.

Office of Refugee Resettlement Refugee (ORR) Career Pathways (RCP) Grant Application

ORR, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, released a new grant opportunity to assist refugees in obtaining employment in career pathways. As the lead applicant, MORA worked closely with DWDAL to propose a project focusing on integrating refugees into registered apprenticeship opportunities throughout the state. As of this time, RCP recipients have not yet been announced.

3. Technical Assistance

Opportunity from WES Global Talent Bridge

Maryland was chosen for the Technical Assistance opportunity out of the various states/localities that participated in the 2016 White House National Skills and Credential Institute. WES Global Talent Bridge, along with other TA organizations, will provide customized training, coaching, and technical assistance over a 12-month span to advance concrete initiatives and build sustainable networks to advance local skilled immigrant integration efforts.

Maryland will be focusing on building employer engagement strategies and creating career pathways/professional licensing guides through this TA opportunity.

Raising the Bar Presentations

At the Maryland Workforce Association's 2016 Raising the Bar conference, two presentations focused on immigrant workforce integration. One presentation was conducted by refugee resettlement agency and Task Force member the International Rescue Committee, and focused on language access and cultural competency. The other presentation was conducted by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service/Higher regarding a 2016 pilot project which integrated refugees at a Baltimore City American Job Center.

State of Maryland Third WIOA Convening

In January of 2018, DLLR will hold its third and final convening regarding the implementation of WIOA. The focus of this meeting will be nondiscrimination. The Task Force will contribute to this important event by providing presentations or breakout sessions about the development of the Workforce System Survey and cultural competency best practices when serving foreign-born clients. (At the time of publication, this event has occurred).

4. Joint Presentations

A number of joint presentations by DWDAL and MORA staff are planned, including the Adult Education and Family Literacy Services (AEFLS) Leadership Conference in September 2017 and the Welfare Advocates Conference in November 2017. Presentations will focus on immigrant integration in the workforce, including successful strategies being utilized in Maryland and how the Task Force is working to assist in this arena. (At the time of publication, these events have occurred).

5. Policy Involvement

With this strengthened relationship, MORA began to participate in DWDAL's policy process. MORA was particularly involved in the revision of DWDAL's Assessment Policy, and contributed to the change in testing requirements for LEP individuals.

6. Business Engagement

DWDAL and MORA regularly discuss how their programs can collaborate when faced with employer needs.

CHALLENGES

While the Task Force enjoyed a number of accomplishments during its inaugural year, there were also a number of challenges.

1. Representation

Geographic

With 20 different organizations represented in the first year of the Task Force, it is fair to say that there is a great deal of energy and commitment to the integration of immigrants in Maryland's workforce. However, all of the representation was from two counties and one city: Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. While census data shows that the majority of immigrants in Maryland do live between the Baltimore-Washington D.C. corridor, Task Force leadership and members recognize the lack of representation from other regions.

Immigrant-Serving Organizations

With DHS as one of the co-founding organizations, local refugee resettlement agencies were quickly pulled into the work of the Task Force. The Task Force leadership and members recognize that refugees are a small portion of Maryland's immigrants, and that representation from other immigrant groups, immigrant-serving organizations, and ethnic community-based organizations need to be included in the discussion.

2. Volunteer-Based

One major challenge was that all members serving on the Task Force were doing so in a volunteer capacity, including subcommittee chairs and members. Due to time constraints and other work responsibilities, it was often difficult to complete tasks. With the structure of most of the "nitty-gritty" work happening in subcommittees, the volunteer nature of the Task Force became a detriment to achieving goals. Additionally, individuals of varying seniority and responsibility in their organizations were serving on the Task Force, and it was found that senior-level individuals had limited time to dedicate to the Task Force.

3. Organizational Differences

While convening a group of stakeholders who have not traditionally communicated across sectors was one of the incredible successes of the Task Force, navigating different organizational cultures and systems proved to be a challenge. For example, the systems and processes of government agencies are very different than those of non-profit organizations. With different foundational backgrounds and missions, Task Force members often expressed frustration about varied service and engagement strategies.

PREPARATIONS FOR YEAR TWO: FEEDBACK POLLING

BACKGROUND

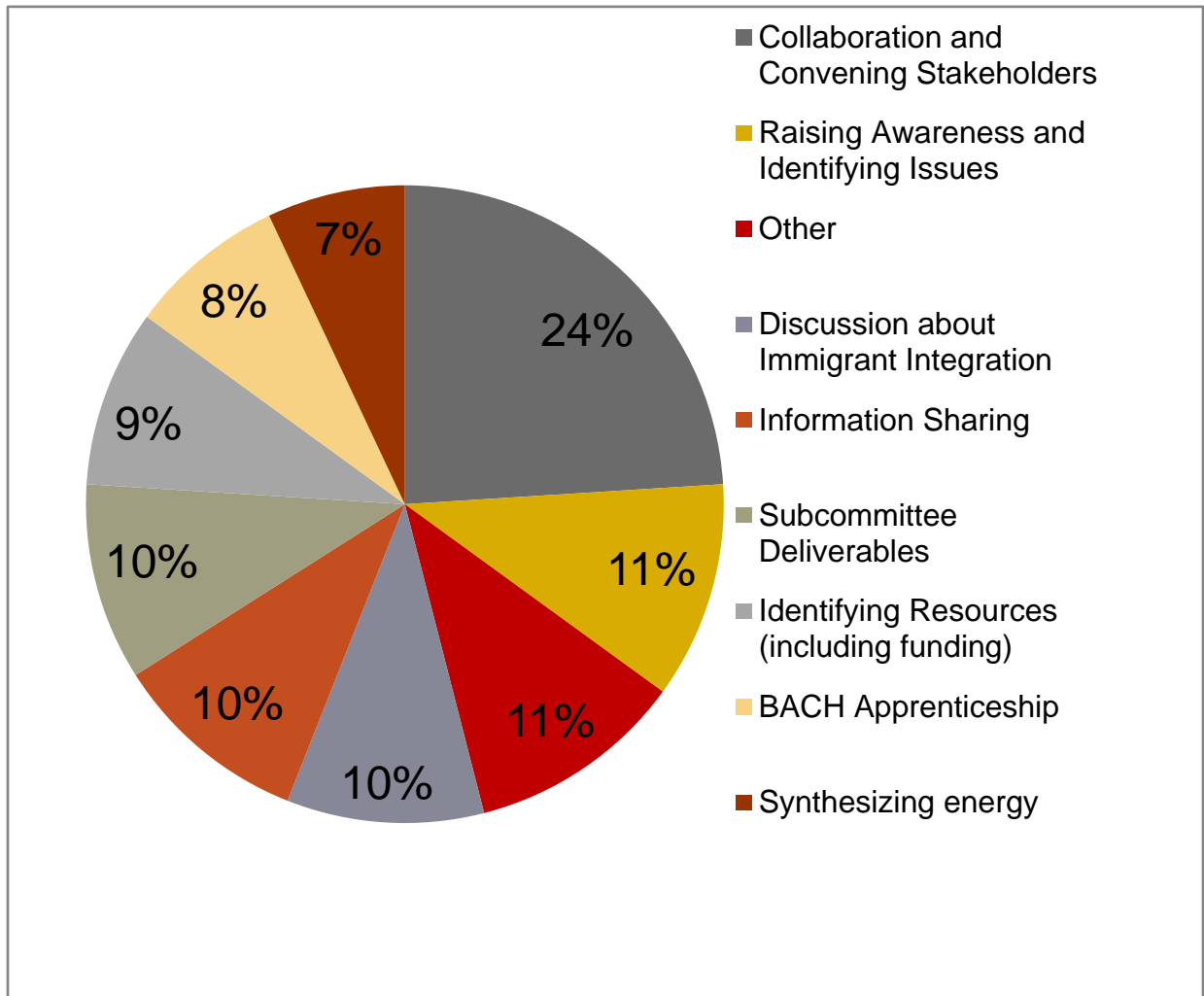
To direct planning for the Task Force, feedback polling was conducted during the summer of 2017 to collect reflections and suggestions from the group's participants. Between July 10th and the 28th, DLLR and DHS staff interviewed 34 members of the Task Force and asked 10 questions about the Task Force's first-year activities and what they hoped the group would do in the future.

Participant responses were collected from AJCs, community colleges, DLLR, the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, local governments, DHS, the Governor's Workforce Development Board, and refugee resettlement agencies.

Responses were compiled into useable graphics and shared at the August 2017 Task Force meeting. Pages 12-18 include polling items and the results.

RESULTS

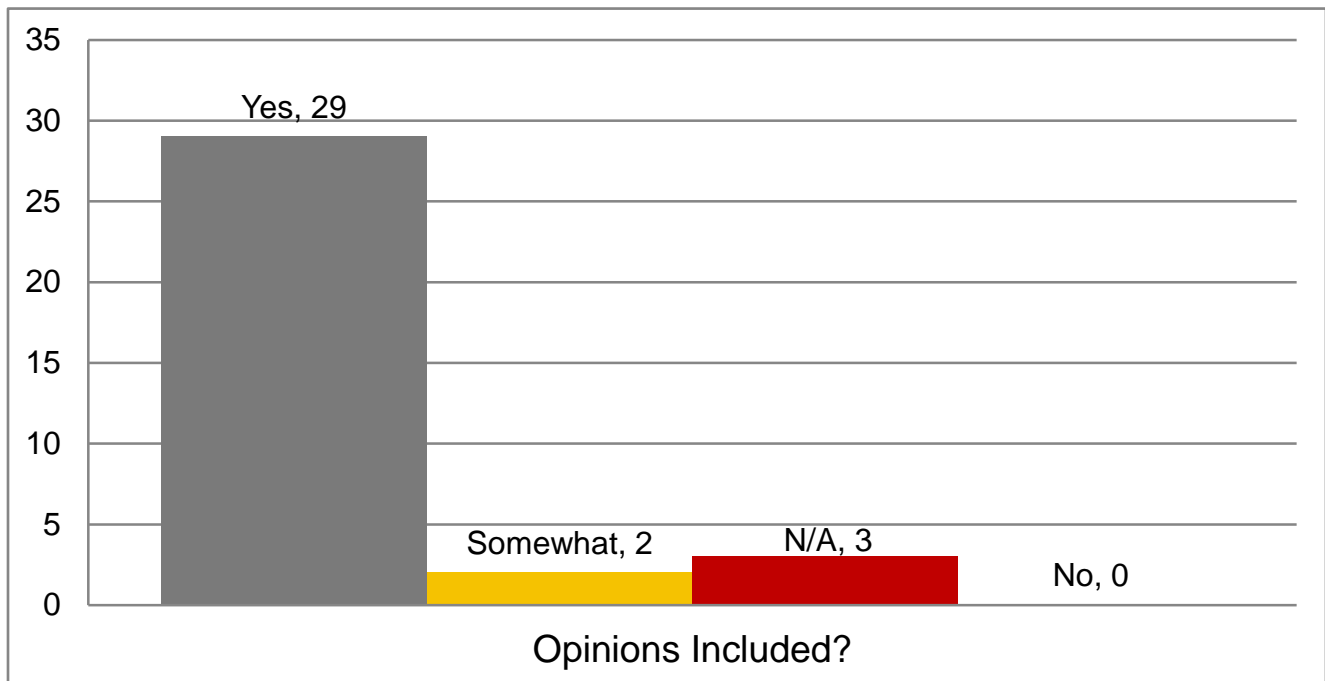
1. What do you think the Task Force has accomplished in this first year?



From the perspective of someone working at a national level, Maryland is really a shining example of what can be done if states focus on this issue. Maryland has set itself apart from anyone else in this space. When looking at other states doing this work, they already have established [New American] offices. I don't see many other communities working collaboratively at the level we are doing. Bringing right stakeholders at the table - especially because it's a volunteer effort!

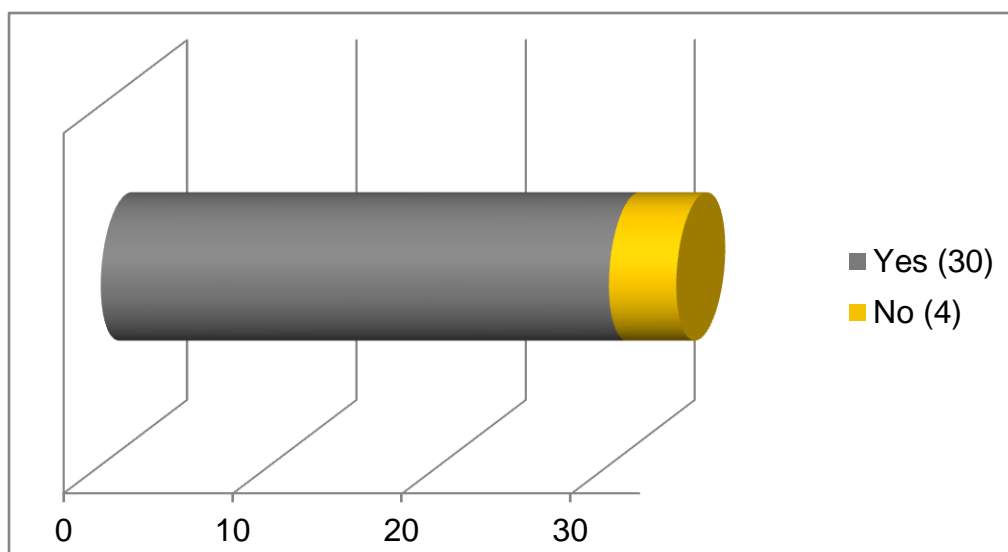
– Skilled Immigrant Task Force member on first-year accomplishments, July 2017

2. Do you feel like your opinions were included in the work of this Task Force and/or subcommittees?



An additional response category was captured in this item. Answers characterized as “Somewhat” were those where respondents felt positively about their inclusion, but wanted to make a caveat about their statement. For example, one member whose response fell into this category felt that their opinions were included, but added that they had not been in attendance for too many months.

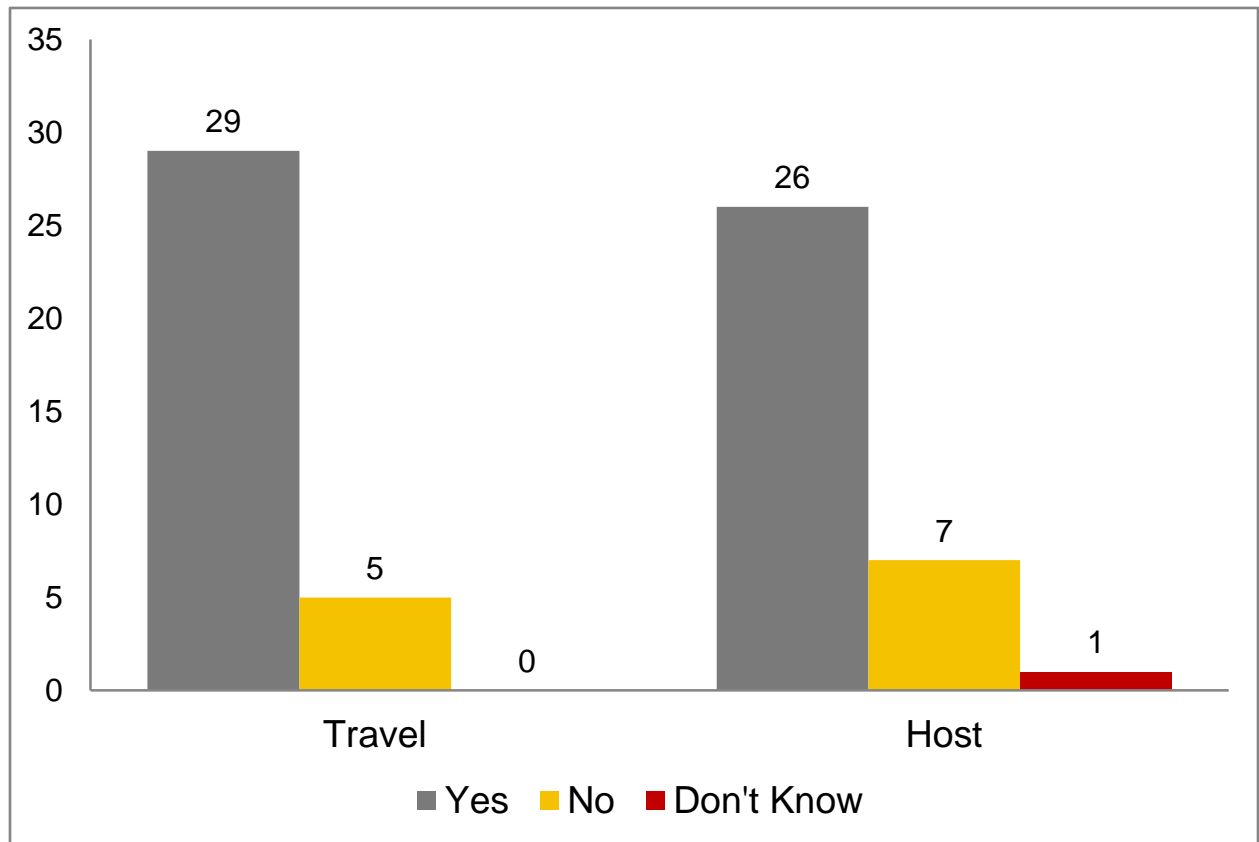
3. Are you still interested in serving on the Task Force in the second year?



For questions 4 and 5, please note that during the first year all monthly meetings were held at DLLR's site in Baltimore City.

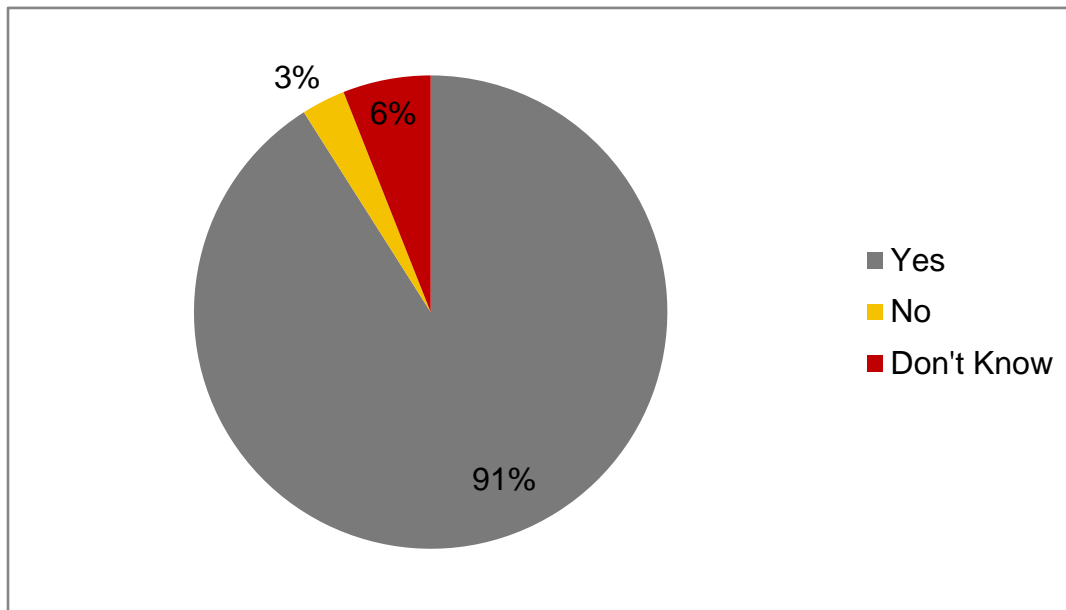
4. For monthly meetings, would you willing to travel to different sites?

5. Would you be willing to host a meeting and provide a tour of your site?



6. Do you find the organizational highlights helpful?

(Note: These were presentations offered during monthly meetings by participating member organizations to share information about their resources and programming).



7. Who else from your organization/any organization would be an asset to the work of the Task Force?

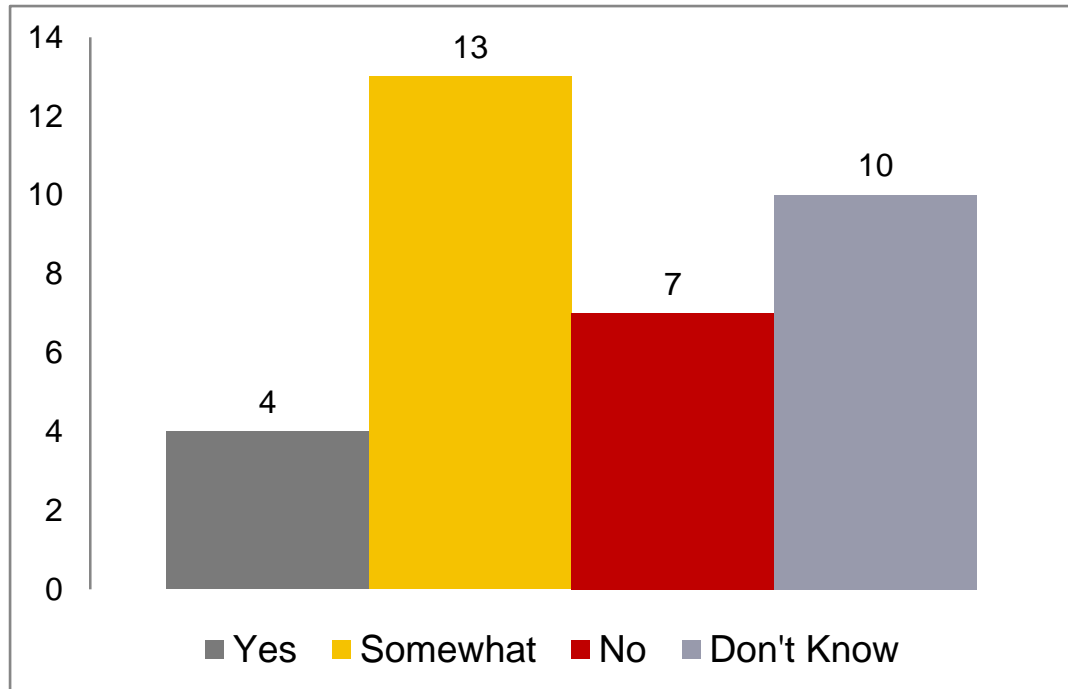
Specific organizations (top 3 responses):

- AJC direct service staff
- Montgomery County AJC direct service staff
- Local departments of social services workforce development staff

General organizations (top 5 responses):

- Ethnic community-based organizations
- Employers
- Latino/Hispanic-serving organizations
- Immigrants
- Maryland regional representation (to include Baltimore County, the Eastern Shore, the Susquehanna region, Anne Arundel County, Frederick County, and Howard County)

7. Do you think the subcommittees have been effective?



This survey item garnered a mixed array of responses. Four out of 34, or approximately 12% of respondents, found the subcommittees to be fully effective and had *only* positive reactions to this question. Ten out of 34, or approximately 30% of respondents, did not participate in or have knowledge of subcommittee work, revealing that many Task Force members were not engaged in this aspect of the group.

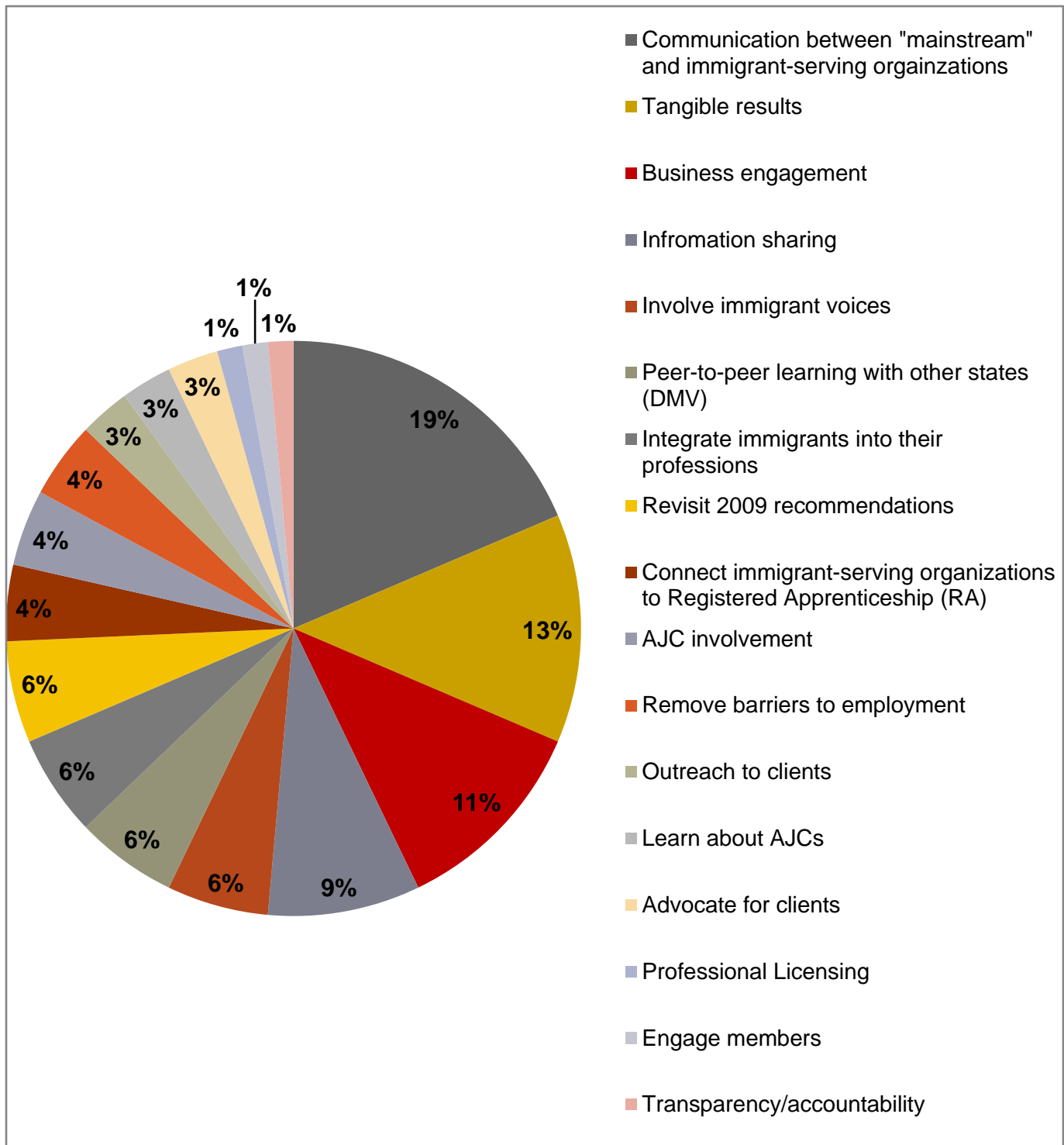
Positives of the subcommittees (top 4 responses)

- Helped with connections and information sharing
- Developed the workforce system survey
- Provided some clarity to the licensing process
- Created cross-functional teams

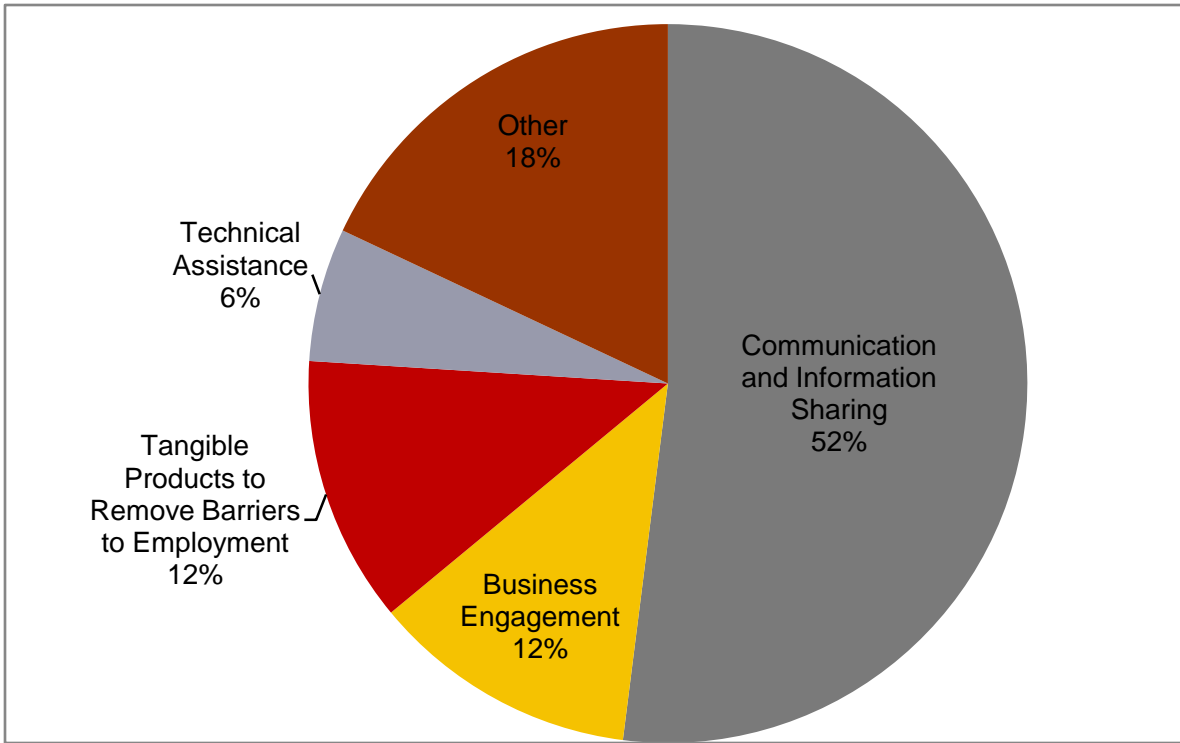
Negatives of the subcommittees (top 3 responses)

- Lack of participation and coordination
- Unclear goals and lack of structure
- Too much overlap among sub-committees

9. What do you think the Task Force goals should be in the future?



Task Force members had a broad spectrum of ideas regarding what the future goals of the group should be. As shown by the graphic above, there were over a dozen meaningful ideas suggested. To identify commonalities, a Task Force member grouped these thoughts into four general areas, as represented by the pie graph on the next page.



10. What do you think the Task Force action items should be?
 (10 most frequent responses)



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YEAR TWO

GENERAL PLANNING

Three recommendations for general Task Force planning evolved from polling responses and will be applied moving forward:

- Rotate the monthly meetings to non-DLLR locations at least four times over the next year and include site tours when applicable
- Discontinue the organizational highlight presentations as they have been conducted
- Invite a more diverse group of representatives to join the Skilled Immigrant Task Force

Additionally noted during polling sessions were several concepts for which DLLR and MORA will take responsibility. The co-sponsoring state agencies will commit to the following:

1. Drafting a Skilled Immigrant Task Force annual report inclusive of client success stories and input from Task Force members to be released annually in September (Task Force to be loosely based on the fiscal year);
2. Working with state agency monitoring and compliance staff/teams to ensure compliance with serving LEPs and those with cultural barriers;
3. Collecting and synthesizing data regarding skilled immigrants utilizing American Job Centers statewide (DLLR) and services provided at immigrant-serving organizations;
4. Expanding Task Force membership by reaching out to individuals and organizations suggested during feedback polling sessions;
5. Participating on the Governor's Workforce Development Board for the purpose of learning about state business engagement strategies and sharing best practices with the Task Force; and
6. Engaging Task Force members in feedback on relevant policies drafted by DWDAL

MISSION STATEMENT

Following the feedback polling sessions, the Task Force discussed trends amongst the suggested goals and action items. Based on responses, the following mission statement was adopted:

The Skilled Immigrant Task Force collaborates across organizations to advance workforce system accessibility and career opportunities for foreign-trained individuals in Maryland.

GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS

In order to adhere to the above mission and in accordance with the opinions of Task Force members, the following four goals have been created for year two:

1. *Communication and Information Sharing*
Increase integration efforts between Maryland’s workforce system and immigrant-serving organizations through the development of a minimum of three (3) events or resources.
2. *Business Engagement*
Explore and conceptualize “business engagement” opportunities that will benefit skilled immigrants and Maryland’s business community through leveraging existing state resources and including two (2) Maryland employers in the work of the Task Force.
3. *Technical Assistance*
Create and deliver two (2) data-driven Technical Assistance opportunities to relevant providers in order to improve statewide service delivery to skilled immigrants.
4. *Tangible Products to Remove Barriers to Employment*
Develop a minimum of two (2) tangible tools that can be utilized by service providers or job seekers to reduce or remove barriers to employment for skilled immigrants.

Each goal listed above was connected with suggested action items. In order to meet or exceed the goals the Task Force has created for year two, a menu of suggested action items is below:

Goals	Potential Action Items
Goal #1: <i>Communication and Information Sharing</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a resource guide comprised of relevant contact and programmatic information to include and be used by the workforce system and immigrant-serving organizations. 2. Prepare and deliver a presentation or series to the Task Force reflecting the resources and processes at Maryland’s American Job Centers. 3. Prepare and deliver a presentation or series to the Task Force reflecting the resources and processes at Maryland’s resettlement agencies. 4. Create and distribute a “second survey” to assess the capacity of immigrant-serving organizations.
Goal #2: <i>Business Engagement</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify two (2) champion employers in Maryland who consistently hire skilled immigrants and invite them to serve on the Task Force. 2. Engage resettlement agency staff in the work of DLLR’s WIOA Business Services workgroups for the purposes of sharing best practices and increasing business connections.
Goal #3: <i>Technical Assistance</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilizing the results of the Capacity Building Workforce System Survey, develop a meaningful TA training that will be administered to the American Job Centers by DLLR. 2. Utilizing the results of the “second survey” to assess capacity of immigrant-serving organizations, develop a meaningful TA training that will be administered to immigrant-serving organizations by MORA. 3. Utilizing the results of the Capacity Building Workforce System Survey, develop and facilitate cross-training sessions between local area AJC and resettlement agency staff. 4. Prepare or contribute to a breakout session for the third WIOA convening on cultural competency or language access that reflects best practices.

<p>Goal #4: <i>Tangible Products to Remove Barriers to Employment</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define “barrier elimination” in the context of skilled immigrant jobseekers. 2. Reformat the resource guide created under Goal #1 into a useable tool for immigrant job seekers and distribute copies to relevant organizations statewide. 3. Create resource guides or toolkits regarding licensing and career pathway information for specific fields in Maryland. 4. Finalize and disseminate the financial literacy guide created by the relevant first-year subcommittee.
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STRUCTURED WORKGROUPS

The final recommendation that evolved from feedback polling was that the Task Force’s standing subcommittees should be dissolved and replaced with finite workgroups. As evident from the graphic on page 16, only 12% of respondents found the subcommittees to be fully effective. Many were unsure about their activities or were not engaged enough in their work to form a reasonable opinion. Since the Task Force is a volunteer-based group, participation was often low.

During its second year, the Task Force will utilize workgroups around the aforementioned action items. Workgroups will be temporary and active for a pre-determined window of time so that participants can gauge their availability based on workload at their primary organization. Deliverables and group goals will be clearly outlined on a schedule that is feasible. The groups will be intentionally staffed with appropriate representation from relevant member organizations to ensure that the group can effectively accomplish their task. Workgroups will be determined by group discussion during monthly Task Force meetings. Please see an example *Task Force Workgroup Planning* document on the subsequent page.

I like the materials presented by the subcommittees, but I wish we could have done more follow-up about what each group was doing. I think it would be good to include small working groups focused on specific topics.

-Skilled Immigrant Task Force Member, July 2017

Task Force Workgroup Planning (Example)



Workgroup Title	Resource Guide Workgroup
Annual Goal	Goal #1: Increase integration efforts between Maryland's workforce system and immigrant-serving organizations through the development of a minimum of three (3) events or resources.
Action Item	Goal #1, Action Item (1) <i>Create a resource guide comprised of relevant contact and programmatic information to include and be used by the workforce system and immigrant-serving organizations.</i>
Deliverable	(1) PDF resource guide to be used <i>by staff</i> at immigrant-serving organizations, adult education providers, AJCs, and resettlement agencies in Maryland; It should be organized in a way that is useful and relevant to those that serve the skilled immigrant population (counties, regions, workforce area) The guide should contain the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization Name • Brief description of what they do or short list of relevant programs (e.g., ESL classes, healthcare training, and GED preparation courses) • Address • Telephone number • Website
Timeline	<u>September</u> - Review goal, action item, and deliverable; Establish workgroup and workgroup leader <u>October</u> - Present progress to Task Force to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workgroup meeting plans • Division of tasks/responsibilities • Identify additional SMEs or representatives needed <u>November</u> - Present a draft of the resource guide to the Task Force <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all prepared items • Solicit feedback in the monthly meeting and share the guide for a two-week comment/edit period <u>December</u> – Present a final copy of the resource guide to the Task Force in PDF format
Workgroup Representation	(1) AJC staff: (1) Resettlement Agency staff: (1) Adult Ed provider staff: (1) DLLR Adult Ed staff: (1) DLLR Central Office staff: (1) Local government or immigrant-serving org staff: (1) Immigrant: Identify workgroup leader from above: