



The ROI of ESOL

The Economic and Social Return on Investment
for ESOL Programs in Greater Boston

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U N D E R S T A N D I N G B O S T O N

The ROI of ESOL

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Preface

When the Boston Foundation was founded more than 100 years ago, immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were pouring into the city through the Port of Boston—more than 11,000 in our founding year of 1915 alone. The majority of the Foundation’s grants in those days went to the settlement houses and other organizations that were helping new arrivals with housing, English language instruction, education and job training.

Those immigrants brought a new energy to Boston and to the entire Commonwealth and helped to transform our region—just as today’s immigrants are helping to power Greater Boston’s resurgence as a world-class city. Indeed, if it weren’t for people moving to our city from other countries, Boston’s population would essentially be the same today as it was in 1980. But the true impact of immigration is felt in much more than numbers—newcomers have helped to boost the economic vigor and cultural vibrancy that make Massachusetts so strong and today’s Boston the envy of so many other cities.

Today, a large share of our immigrant population comes here from Central and South America. In 2013, the Boston Foundation, in partnership with Latino leaders and Hispanics in Philanthropy, established the Latino Legacy Fund at the Boston Foundation, the first Latino-focused philanthropic resource in Greater Boston. And in 2017, the Boston Foundation and the Latino Legacy Fund came together to publish a report and hold a major convening on the central role the Latino community plays in Boston’s continued prosperity. Many of the findings of that report apply to other newcomer communities as well, such as immigrants arriving here from China, now the leading country of origin for Greater Boston’s foreign-born residents. Still, there are barriers to the successful integration of immigrants into our community, especially as seen through the lens of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) system.

Now, the Boston Foundation and the Latino Legacy Fund have teamed up again to publish research that helps to quantify what so many people understand intuitively: The power of language to expand personal—social, civic and economic—opportunity, advocate for children and fight for justice is immense.

In fact, the ESOL system in Massachusetts is essential to the well-being of our immigrant community, but it has been many years since we’ve conducted a comprehensive study of this. Are the overall needs being met? How are the programs funded? Are some more effective than others? Is enough saved in other services (or earned through an increased tax base) to make government funding of ESOL training cost-effective? These and other questions prompted the research behind this report. And its findings prompt broader follow-on questions: What would it take to have a robust ESOL system Commonwealth-wide and how would that impact the life trajectories of speakers of other languages as well as the region’s economy?

Immigrants from all over the world face daunting challenges in pursuit of their American Dream, whether they have very little formal schooling or come armed with a Ph.D. We believe the initiative and the determination that brings people here drives not just their own economic and personal growth but, cumulatively, the well-being and vitality of our entire region. We owe it to ourselves to understand and address the challenges of the systems designed to help them.

Paul S. Grogan
President and CEO
The Boston Foundation

Aixa Beauchamp
Co-Chair
Latino Legacy Fund

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Executive Summary

Recognizing the importance of immigrants to Greater Boston and the value of English classes and other supports to building an inclusive and welcoming community, the Boston Foundation and the Latino Legacy Fund commissioned a study that explores the “return on investment” (ROI) for teaching English to adults who are speakers of other languages. Known as ESOL programs, these services are an important component of adult education and a key piece of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The result of that study is this report, comprising an analysis of the region’s ESOL landscape that provides background and context for the in-depth case studies and ROI estimates that follow.

We utilized a variety of techniques drawn from quantitative and qualitative research methods. Key steps included:

1. compiling existing data on socio-economic and demographic trends of the demand for ESOL services;
2. conducting a review of the research literature and policy-related documents;
3. interviewing key stakeholders and creating a database of adult ESOL programs in Greater Boston to paint a picture of the sector in broad strokes; and
4. collecting data on programs to calculate a return on investment.

We identify key demographic, socio-economic and policy factors that shape the context in which ESOL programs operate, and provide an overview of the ESOL system that highlights the funding sources and stakeholders who are the principal drivers of the system. Our landscape analysis provides an assessment of the need for English language services and a snapshot of the current supply of ESOL services

AS IMMIGRANTS ACCOUNT FOR AN EVER-INCREASING SHARE OF GREATER BOSTON’S POPULATION AND WORKFORCE, OUR ECONOMY WILL DEPEND ON OUR ABILITY TO CULTIVATE AND DRAW UPON THE SKILLS AND TALENTS OF THESE NEWCOMERS.

in Greater Boston, with a focus on discovering gaps and barriers. This is followed by our qualitative analysis that draws on our survey results and case studies to offer deeper insights into program operations, including the challenges faced by different types of ESOL programs. Finally, our

ROI analysis assesses the economic and social return on investment for ESOL programs in Greater Boston including the effective-ness of the ESOL system with regard to participation, Measurable Skill Gains and long-term outcomes such as employment and wage gains.

Based on the key findings from our analyses, we identified the following gaps and barriers to ESOL services.

- The size of the Limited English proficiency (LEP) population in Greater Boston is roughly 320,000 people, of whom 75 percent (240,531) are working-age adults. This number is expected to increase by 7,740 individuals each year due to continued immigration, further straining the capacity of existing services.
- Currently, there are 116 active ESOL programs in Greater Boston, serving 11,600 adult English language learners annually. While laudable, this limited capacity would need to increase by 20 times to serve all LEP working age adults, as evidenced by the sizeable waitlists for many programs across the region.
- Although ESOL programs are geographically concentrated in Greater Boston, this roughly aligns with the areas that contain the largest population with the greatest need. In addition, programs are serving the language groups most represented in the LEP population, suggesting that services are provided in a fairly efficient manner.

- Populations underserved by ESOL programs are people at either end of the education continuum—those without a high school or secondary level education and those with graduate or professional degrees. At the lower end of the distribution, one of the potential barriers identified was the relatively small number of programs offering child-care services.
- Despite most ESOL participants being of working age, only 7 percent of ESOL programs are vocational, suggesting a large misalignment of the types of services offered and the demands of LEP individuals. In contrast, the most common types of ESOL services that are provided are general ESOL, followed by civics/citizenship; the least common are vocational, workplace and pre-academic.
- Of the programs we surveyed, most report having a mix of ESOL-certified and non-certified teachers. Comparatively speaking, vocational and incumbent worker programs are more likely to have certified staff than are community-based programs. However, all programs reported that their teachers have extensive experience teaching English at different levels and in various educational settings, even if they were not always certified. Still, programs report difficulties in retaining staff who can often find better paying and full-time jobs elsewhere.
- According to data from the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE), just over half (51.2%) of adult ESOL students in Massachusetts achieve at least one Measurable Skill Gain compared with only 45 percent of students in Connecticut, potentially due to the higher share of students that are continuously enrolled in the Commonwealth. In addition, roughly 30 adult ESOL students in Massachusetts attained some sort of secondary credential in FY2017 whereas no adult students achieved this measurable skill gain in Connecticut, as evidenced by the sizeable waitlists for many programs across the region.
- The share of students achieving at least one Educational Functional Level gain has improved from 33 percent in 2002 to 44 percent in 2009 to 51 percent in 2017. At the same time, the cost per advancement has decreased by one-third in Massachusetts from \$5,958 in 2002 to \$4,024 in 2017, indicating that the ESOL system has become both more effective and more efficient over time. Yet there is considerable variation among even just DESE-funded programs, with performance ranging from meeting only 49 percent of the Measurable Skill Gain target to 136 percent of the target.
- Although DESE-funded ESOL programs have only minimal focus on employment outcomes, roughly one-third of participants in these programs were employed after exiting the program. In contrast, vocational programs with a greater focus on workforce development successfully placed roughly 67 percent of unemployed students within six months of enrollment, with average weekly wages of \$460 translating into annual incomes of roughly \$23,000.
- Based on the employment and wage gains associated with the one vocational ESOL program for which we have data, these types of programs appear to break even from a societal standpoint within 5 years. Adding in the cost savings associated with the gain in employer-sponsored health insurance produces a break-even time of just 1.5 years. Given that both the economic benefits of higher employment and earnings as well as the additional social benefits from educational attainment, increased consumption and greater civic engagement continue to accrue over the individual's lifetime, the program clearly yields a net positive return on investment.

Our research points to six broad areas where strategic leadership and investment could lead to transformative changes in the ESOL system. They are:

1. the immense gap between the capacity of the system and the need for ESOL services;
2. the need for more and better ESOL teacher professional development;
3. the lack of student support services to ensure continuous participation;
4. the need to grow the number of vocational and workplace ESOL programs to help immigrant workers meet their long-term goals of improving their earnings and career prospects;
5. the fragmented nature of the system and need for coordination; and
6. the need to support data collection and reporting on ESOL programs and outcomes.

As immigrants account for an ever-increasing share of Greater Boston's population and workforce, our economy will depend on our ability to cultivate and draw upon the skills and talents of these newcomers. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act passed in 2014 has the potential for re-aligning the supply and demand for ESOL services. Through the unified state plan and common performance measures and reporting requirements, this legislative shift is promoting change in funding streams, data and reporting systems and other institutional structures and processes. Yet progress has been slow as the greater focus on longer-term goals such as employment, education and training outcomes requires more meaningful integration between ESOL and workforce development services. Until we are able to meet the demand for ESOL services in Greater Boston, we will fail to realize the full potential of the economic and social return on this critical investment in our residents.

CHAPTER ONE

Landscape Analysis

THE ESOL SECTOR IN GREATER BOSTON IS A COMPLEX NETWORK OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES PROVIDING AN ARRAY OF SERVICES TO PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES AND NETWORK COUNTERPARTS.

Due to the fragmented nature of the sector and lack of a central data clearinghouse or reporting system, the database of adult ESOL programs had to be built from the ground up. As a result, we focused on the Greater Boston area as defined by the Boston Foundation (see Appendix A for map). To create the database, we consulted a wide range of sources to identify ESOL programs, then reviewed the accuracy and sought to fill in missing information (see Appendix B for description of the methodology). The resulting database of 116 programs operating in the Greater Boston area created for this project is the most complete snapshot of the ESOL sector possible.

In preparing this snapshot of ESOL services in Greater Boston today, we were guided by the following questions and prompts:

- Describe the ESOL programs in the area—how many programs are in operation? Are they geographically dispersed or concentrated in a few areas?
- Examine ESOL service providers—what types of organizations are most active in providing ESOL services? What are the most common types of services provided?
- Assess the limited English proficiency (LEP) population receiving services—how many people are served? Which beneficiaries are well-served by existing organizations?
- Compare the data on need and supply to identify gaps in services.
- Identify barriers to participation for Greater Boston’s LEP population.
- Consider gaps and barriers, and identify potential areas for impactful investment—are there any “blank spaces” where no organization is currently active?

In this section, we present the results of our landscape analysis to describe the ESOL ecosystem in Greater Boston. First, we provide a brief look at the key demographic, socio-economic and policy factors that comprise the context in which

ESOL programs operate. Second, we give an overview of the ESOL system that highlights the funding sources and stakeholders who are the principal drivers of the system. Third, we assess the need for English language services and the connection with key outcomes. Finally, we describe the current supply of ESOL services with a focus on discovering gaps and barriers.

Background and Context for ESOL Services

There is widespread agreement that immigrants play an increasingly vital role in the Massachusetts economy and that of Greater Boston, driving population and labor force growth in the region (see for example BPDA, 2017; Osterman et al., 2017; Schuster and Ciurczak, 2018). This section focuses on select data points that are most relevant for the ESOL sector. One key takeaway: Not only is the population growing but it is also diverse, comprising people who differ in their educational background, needs and goals.

From a policy perspective, ESOL programs fall within adult education and workforce development. The guiding piece of federal legislation shaping the system is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), under which all states report on the same six performance measures. To reach the goals set by our state and local officials, it is necessary to incorporate immigrant adult learners and workers. This section briefly summarizes the relevant parts of WIOA and how it is being implemented in the Commonwealth. At a time when many areas of federal policy are in turmoil, WIOA appears to be relatively stable and to present a real opportunity for state and local

leadership to fill gaps through innovation and smart investments.

Socio-Economic and Demographic Trends

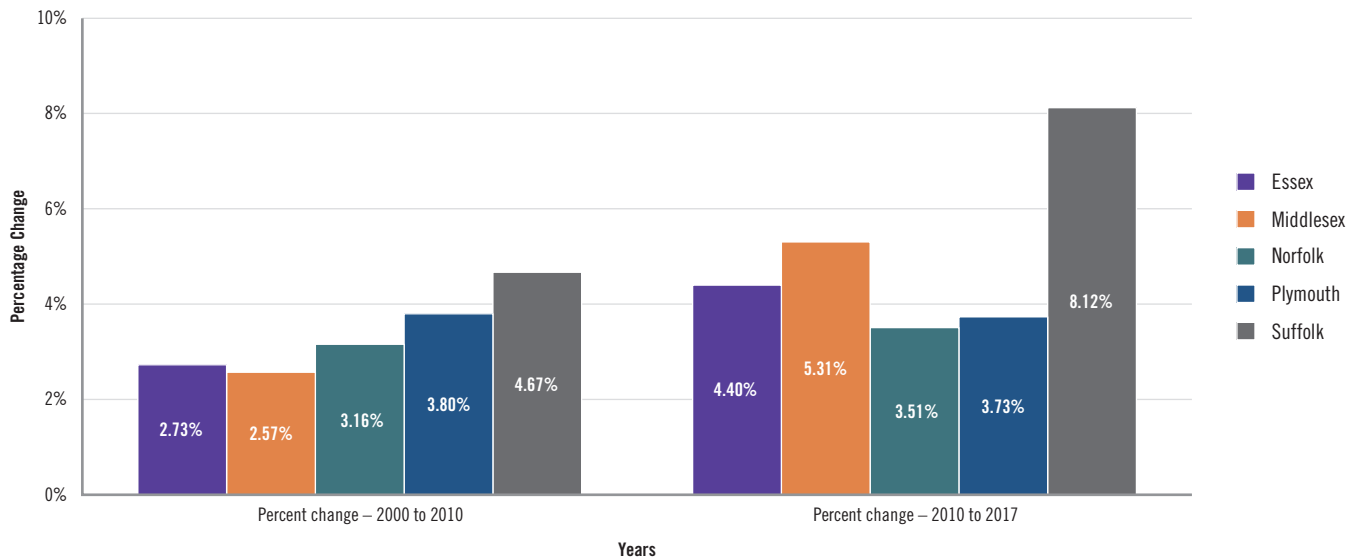
Population growth has accelerated in most parts of the Greater Boston area, with the exception of Plymouth County. The growth in population has been exceptionally strong in Suffolk County, largely due to increasing numbers of individuals living in the city of Boston (see **Figure 1**).

Since 2010, the majority of Greater Boston’s population growth has been fueled by international migration, particularly in Suffolk County. In each county, the

net rate of international migration is roughly twice that of the natural increase in the native population (see **Figure 2**). In contrast, since the end of the Great Recession net domestic migration has been negative across the Commonwealth and most of Greater Boston as the recovering labor market in other parts of the country has lured residents away.

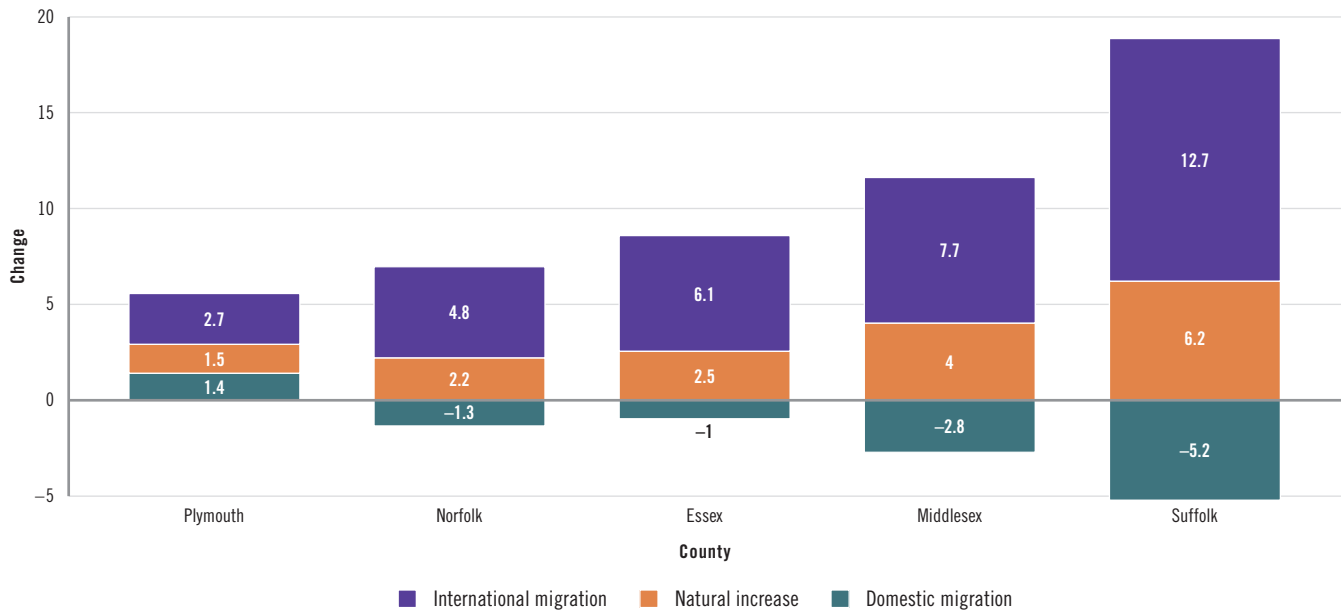
Greater Boston increasingly relies on immigration to drive its population and labor force growth. The share of the foreign-born population has increased over time in all five counties. In Suffolk County, nearly 30 percent of the population was foreign-born as of 2017, with the city of Boston attracting most of the region’s immigrants (see **Figure 3**).

FIGURE 1
Population Change, Greater Boston, 2000–2017



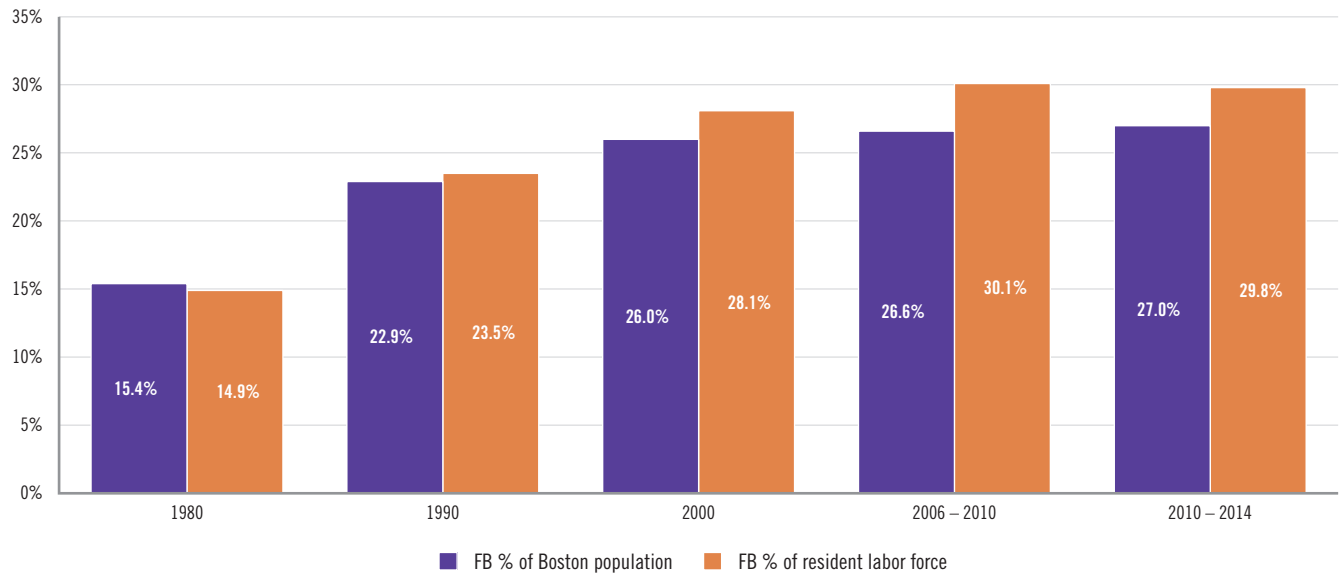
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Census and American Community Survey, various years.

FIGURE 2
Average Estimated Rates of the Components of Population Change, April 1, 2010–July 1, 2017



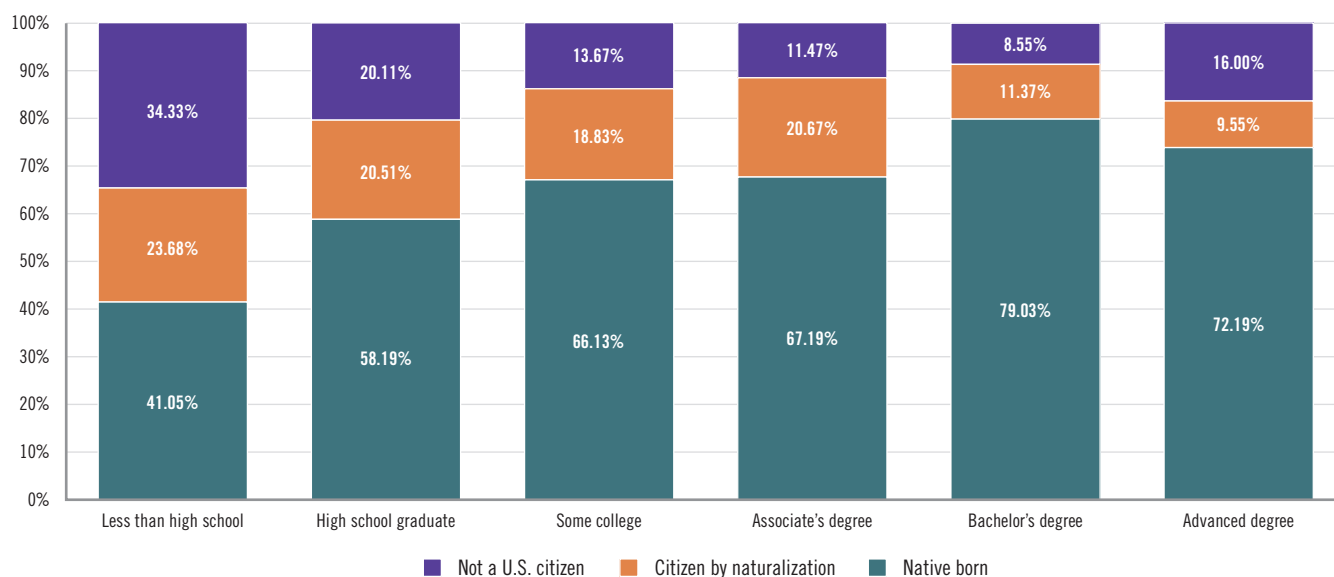
Source: Authors' calculations using the 2017 Population Estimates provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. March 22, 2018. Rates are per 1,000 average population. For population estimates methodology statements, see <http://www.census.gov/popest/methodology/index.html>.

FIGURE 3
Foreign-Born Share of Boston's Population and Resident Labor Force, 1980–2014



Source: Authors' calculations from the U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Decennial Censuses, 2006–2010 & 2010–2014 American Community Surveys, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA.

FIGURE 4
Nativity by Educational Attainment



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Census and American Community Survey, various years.

Immigrants in Greater Boston are represented throughout the educational spectrum. This is due to the many higher education institutions in the region that attract students from all over the world, many of whom stay upon graduation. This is particularly true for graduate degree programs. As a result roughly one-quarter of advanced degree holders in Boston are foreign-born (see **Figure 4**).

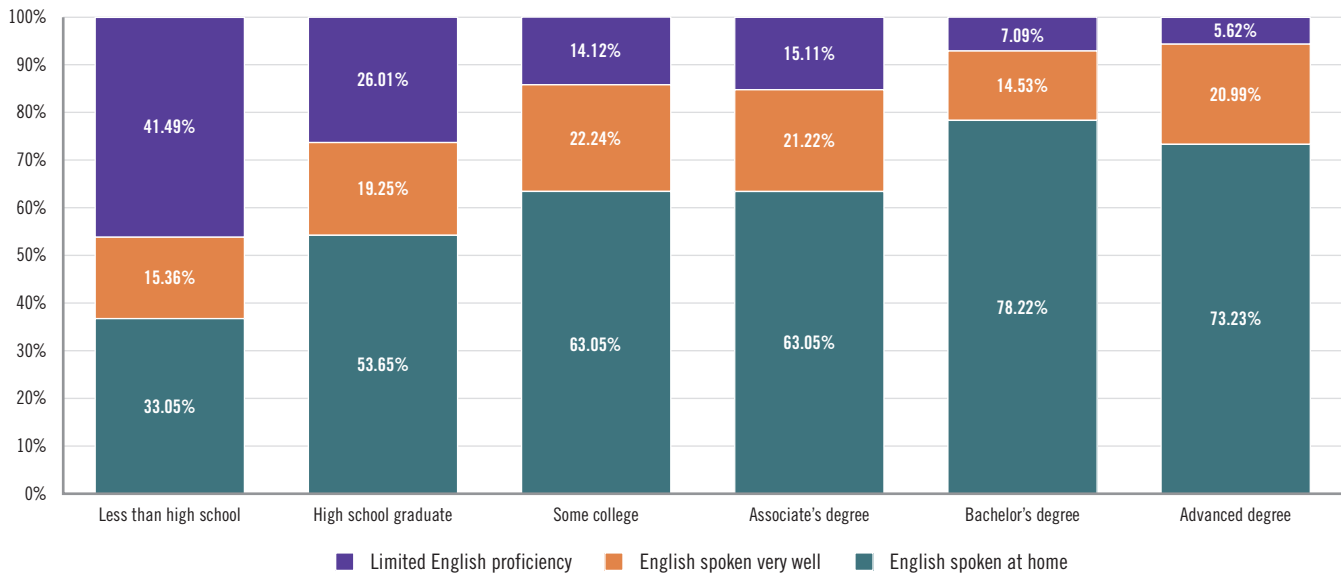
The extent to which individuals have limited English proficiency is highly correlated with their level of educational attainment. Those with less education tend to be more likely to lack English proficiency. Yet even 5 to 10 percent with some type of post-secondary education have limited English proficiency (see **Figure 5**). This span of education levels can make it challenging to develop ESOL programming.

Federal and State ESOL Policy

WIOA is one of the primary federal mechanisms for providing education and English language services to adults. Title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), is essential for an ESOL context: It directly impacts the capacity for ESOL programming in the adult education arena, helping immigrants and others who are English language learners (ELLs) as they develop and master English reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills. State and local Workforce Development Boards collaborate with providers of adult English language acquisition services with the goal of integrating ELLs and nonnative English speakers into the workforce (TESOL International Association, 2017).

This linking of adult basic education and literacy to workforce development, employment and economic self-sufficiency is a relatively recent development. In terms of federal policy, each emerged in the 1960s and remained distinct until passage of the Workforce Investment Act in 1998 (see **Table 1**). WIOA was intended to establish increased coordination among federal workforce development and related programs by requiring unified planning and common performance indicators across programs that support

FIGURE 5
English Proficiency of Boston Residents by Educational Attainment



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Census and American Community Survey, various years.

employment services, workforce development, adult education and vocational rehabilitation activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

WIOA includes five titles with Title I and Title II being the most important for ESOL. Title I, Workforce Development Activities, constitutes the largest portion of the WIOA budget, authorizing job training and other services to individuals who are unemployed or underemployed. Title I also develops the governance and performance accountability system for WIOA.

State and local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) are key players in Title I service delivery. WIOA requires states to prepare a single plan for the core programs that “includes the strategic vision and goals of the state and the operational elements that support the four-year strategy” (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, p.1) covering all core programs authorized under the bill. Local plans should assure alignment with the state plan strategy and local plans must illustrate how services provided at the local level will address regional labor market needs (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, p.3).

Under Title II, AEFLA, the federal government makes grants to states for services aimed at improving

TABLE 1
Timeline of Federal Legislation Affecting ESOL and Employment

1962	Manpower Development Training Act
1965	Economic Opportunity Act
1966	Adult Education Act
1973	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
1982	Job Training Partnership Act
1991	National Literacy Act
1998	Workforce Investment Act, Including the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
2014	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including the Reauthorization of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

basic skills and advancement in English literacy instruction to nearly 1.8 million individuals (TESOL International Association, 2017). Title II focuses on helping adults acquire the skills and knowledge needed to obtain employment, improve economic opportunities for their family, become full partners in the educational development of their children and

aid in postsecondary education and training (TESOL International Association, 2017, p.9). Beginning with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1998, adult basic education was joined with workforce development but it was a loose coupling. Under WIOA this relationship is strengthened through the requirements of a unified plan and reporting on a common set of performance measures.

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is responsible for adult education and ESOL and it is managed by DESE's Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) unit. ACLS funds a network of service providers that include local school systems, community colleges, libraries, nonprofit organizations and correctional facilities. Under WIOA there is a greater emphasis on the service providers' role in preparing English language learners for further education, training and employment.

Performance Standards and Metrics

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) creates a single set of performance measures to be used across all programs that focus on employment, employment retention, median earnings, credential attainment and Measurable Skill Gains (MSG). ESOL programs play a vital role by helping English language learners become skilled in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension of English as a necessary step to achieving these goals.

The National Reporting System (NRS) for Adult Education is the accountability system for the state-administered, federally funded adult education program (American Institutes for Research, 2016). In NRS, the Educational Functional Level (EFL) descriptors are intended to guide teaching and assessment for adult learners with six educational functioning levels: Beginning, Low Beginning, High Beginning, Low Intermediate, High Intermediate and Advanced (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems, n.d.).

ACLS recently released the Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards (MA ELPS), which identify six corresponding ESOL levels. In addition to aligning with the NRS proficiency levels, these new standards combine the English Language Proficiency Standards created by the American Institutes for

Research with the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education and are further evidence of a focus on preparing English language learners for postsecondary education, training and employment (Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2019).

Measurable Skill Gains is a WIOA-required indicator used to demonstrate participants' progress toward achieving a credential or employment. MSG includes the following outcomes: Educational Functioning Level completion, High School Equivalency (HiSet) credential attainment, and Postsecondary Education or Training enrollment. ACLS determines program targets based on a federal target assigned to the Commonwealth by the U.S. Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. This new methodology was announced by ACLS in January 2019 and will be applied to program targets in fiscal year 2020 (Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.). Changes in Educational Functioning Level are measured by pre- and post-test assessments administered by service providers using NRS-approved standardized tests.

Overview of the ESOL System in Greater Boston

The growth of an increasingly diverse immigrant population whose English language learning needs have to be incorporated into a unified workforce plan that emphasizes employment, education and training outcomes has led to a complex landscape with many players at the federal, state, regional and local levels. This multi-faceted system is shaped by the changing socio-economic and demographic context and policy changes described in the prior section. However, it also reflects the local institutional structures and actors—the English language learners, service providers, intermediaries, funders, policymakers—of Greater Boston and this makes it also place-based. It is a dynamic system, underscoring the need to treat these findings as a snapshot of the ESOL landscape at this point in time.

Funding Sources

The ESOL sector in Greater Boston is a complex network of public and private entities providing an array of services to program beneficiaries and network counterparts. Involved organizations and agencies may serve as funders, direct service providers, technical assistance resources, advocates and coalition-builders, intermediaries, performance and accountability overseers, or a combination of functions. In Appendix C, we outline the relevant actors of the Greater Boston ESOL system, their relationships with one another, level and role within the overall system, functions and funding sources.

Funding for the majority of free ESOL programs in Massachusetts comes from a mix of federal and state sources. The primary federal funding sources are Titles I and II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Title I authorizes workforce development activities and is administered primarily by the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor; Title II is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), for which funds are administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) (Bradley, 2015). States are required to match 25 percent of the total expenditures on adult education and literacy services to be eligible for AEFLA funding.

For state fiscal year 2019 (SFY19), Massachusetts was allotted \$54,687,159 in Title I funds, a 5.38 percent decrease from the previous year (Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, n.d.). These funds flow through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development to support the operations and service delivery of Workforce Development Boards, or MassHire Workforce Boards (MWBs), as they are known in Massachusetts. MWBs are the centerpiece of WIOA as they serve to centralize and unify all federal workforce initiatives into a single physical location.

AEFLA funds are distributed as grants to states for education and English language training for unemployed or underemployed adults (TESOL International Association, 2017). Education programs "aimed at improving literacy skills in English, numeracy skills and American civics" is a specific focus of AEFLA. In SFY19 Massachusetts was

Challenges for Speakers of Any Language

FEDERAL

ACS: American Community Survey
AEFLA: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
CDBG: Community Development Block Grants
GAO: Government Accountability Office
HUD: Housing and Urban Development
NRS: National Reporting System
WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

STATE

ACLS: Adult and Community Learning Services
DESE: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
ENB: English for New Bostonians
LACES: Literacy, Adult and Community Education System
MA ELPS: Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards
MOIA: [Boston] Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement
OCTAE: Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education
WDB: Workforce Development Board

GENERAL

ABE: Adult Basic Education
EFL: Educational Functioning Level
ELL: English language learner
ESL: English as a second language
ESOL: English for speakers of other languages
HiSet: High School Equivalency
IELCE: Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education
LEP: Limited English proficient/cy
MSG: Measurable Skill Gains
ROI: return on investment
SABES: System for Adult Basic Education Support
TESOL: Teaching English to speakers of other languages

allocated \$10.89 million, of which \$2.16 million was awarded for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs, and the remaining \$8.74 million were for general adult basic education (ABE) (Keenan, 2018). The previous year, Massachusetts was awarded \$10.23 million overall, of which \$2.02 million was directed to IELCE. These federal dollars are administered by the Commonwealth's Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) unit of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

ACLS oversees federal- and state-funded ESOL programming across Massachusetts, as part of its ABE responsibilities. At least 82.5 percent of all Massachusetts AEFLA funding is used to make subgrants to eligible adult education and literacy service providers through a multiyear competitive grant process administered by ACLS, with assistance from the MWBs.

Up to 12.5 percent of AEFLA funding is used by states to conduct "leadership activities" to support adult education being delivered at the local level, such as providing professional development opportunities for ESOL teachers. The Massachusetts System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) is the Commonwealth's professional development system for the adult education system, also overseen by ACLS.

A third federal source, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), also provides funding for ESOL classes through its Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program. CDBG funds are awarded to the state and re-distributed by the Massachusetts' Community Development Fund, housed under the Department of Housing and Community Development. Three of the municipalities awarded Community Development Fund grants in SFY18—Chelsea, Everett and West Springfield—planned to spend the funding on ESOL services, among other initiatives (FY2018 Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Program Awards (CDBG), 2018). CDBG funds can also be applied for and awarded directly to municipal governments. For example, the City of Boston allocates about \$2 million a year of CDBG for ESOL through the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (OWD). Similarly, the town of Brookline was awarded \$10,000 in CDBG funding directly from HUD. (Subrecipient Agreement by and between the Town of Brookline and

Brookline Housing Authority, July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019, 2018).

At the state level, budget allocations for adult education services are made under the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, which allocated \$33.35 million to ABE in SFY19 (Budget Browser - 7035-0002 - MassBudget, n.d.). Roughly \$21 million of that amount went to ESOL programming, and the remaining \$12 million was used for other ABE services (Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, 2019). State funding to ABE and ESOL services has fluctuated for a number of years. Recent advocacy by the Black Advisory Commission, in addition to continued efforts by Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education, resulted in an increase in allocations in SFY19 and another expected increase in SFY20 (Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, 2019).

ESOL classes are also funded by the state through public-private partnerships under the Executive Office of Workforce Development's Workforce Training Fund, administered by the quasi-public Commonwealth Corporation, which awarded \$24.5 million in training grants to businesses for ESOL and other programs in SFY19 (Budget Browser - T10-21 - MassBudget, n.d.).

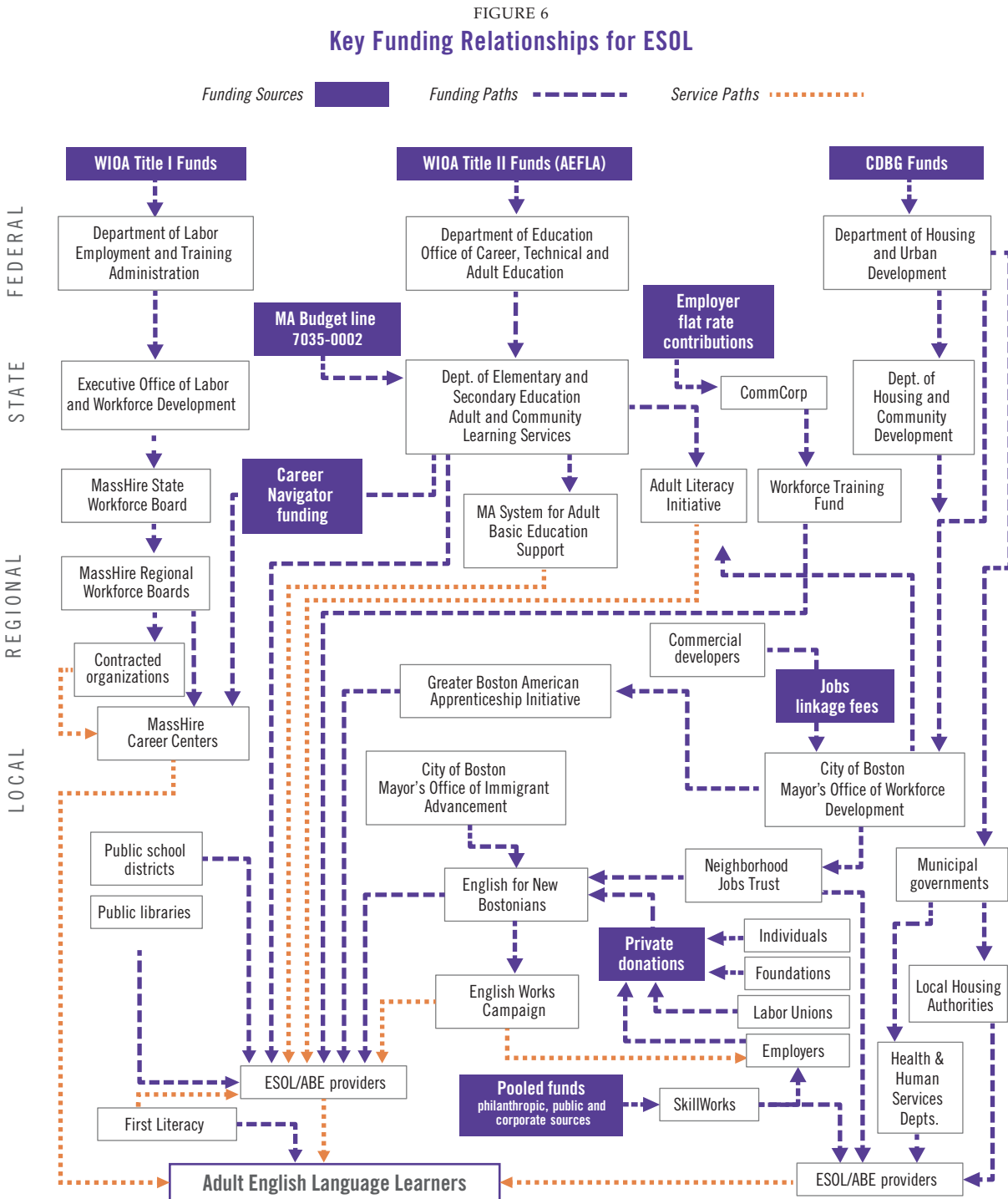
Municipal governments and public agencies also fund ESOL services for adults within their jurisdictions. English for New Bostonians (ENB) is an important funding source for programs delivered by community-based organizations in the city of Boston. ENB is a public-private partnership that receives financial support from the Boston Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA), private foundations and institutions, employers and labor unions, and makes grants to 16 Boston-based ESOL programs (English for New Bostonians, "Funded Programs," n.d.).

Support from philanthropic foundations, employers, labor unions and individual donors also plays a critical role in the funding and delivery of ESOL services. SkillWorks aggregates funding from a variety of sources, including the Boston Foundation, to fund ESOL classes directly and award grants to employers to source ESOL services for their workforce (SkillWorks, n.d.). In addition to funding program development, First Literacy awards \$1,000 scholarships for further training or education directly to English language learners who complete a language course (First Literacy, 2015). Data gathered by this research team also revealed that in a few cases

revenue-generating activities and tuition fees provided primary or supplementary funding for ESOL service delivery (see Appendix C).

Local Initiatives and Partnerships

The ESOL system is a continually evolving web of interconnected actors. **Figure 6** below is a snapshot highlighting the key funding sources and pathways that support the ESOL system in Greater Boston.



Source: Various local, state, regional, and federal legislative sources.

TABLE 2
**Job Openings and Language Requirements:
Occupations with Entry Level Requirement of a High School Degree or Less**

Detailed Occupation	Annual Openings	Average Income	Minimum Requirement	Language Requirement Quartile
Waiters and Waitresses	618	\$ 32,118	Less Than High School	1
Retail Salespersons	450	\$ 25,217	Less Than High School	2
Customer Service Representatives	387	\$ 44,245	High School Diploma or Equiv	3
Cashiers	323	\$ 22,150	Less Than High School	1
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	313	\$ 22,271	Less Than High School	1
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	269	\$ 32,541	Less Than High School	1
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	240	\$ 69,169	High School Diploma or Equiv	4
Cooks, Restaurant	226	\$ 29,489	Less Than High School	1
Office Clerks, General	223	\$ 36,518	High School Diploma or Equiv	3
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	186	\$ 45,340	High School Diploma or Equiv	4
Bartenders	177	\$ 32,514	Less Than High School	2
Parking Lot Attendants	177	\$ 22,865	Less Than High School	1
Security Guards	167	\$ 32,558	High School Diploma or Equiv	2
Hand Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	613	\$ 37,456	Less Than High School	1
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	156	\$ 33,457	Less Than High School	1
Dishwashers	145	\$ 22,833	Less Than High School	1
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	141	\$ 38,703	High School Diploma or Equiv	3
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	138	\$ 47,354	High School Diploma or Equiv	3
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	133	\$ 20,377	Less Than High School	2
Home Health Aides	133	\$ 26,885	Less Than High School	2

Source: Authors' calculations using the Occupation and Employment Statistics, O*NET Database, 2017.

Note: The English requirement is calculated based on averaging data from O*NET (a free online database containing occupational definitions to help define the world of work in the United States) on the level of reading, writing and speaking required in each occupation. These averaged scores are then ranked and weighted by national level employment, so a score of 4 indicates an occupation with English language requirements higher than jobs employing 75 percent of the national workforce. A score of 1 indicates that reading, writing and speaking requirements are lower than those in jobs employing 75 percent of the national workforce. All but one of the jobs in the first quartile of language proficiency average full-time pay of less than \$35,000 a year. According to the Boston Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, opportunities for advancement beyond this level without additional English language training will be limited.

Need for English Language Services in Greater Boston

English language proficiency is linked to multiple dimensions of individual, family and community well-being that cut across both economic and social outcomes. In terms of economic outcomes, limited English language proficiency is a major barrier for immigrants in the labor market. Although immigrants who reported speaking English “very well” were just as likely to be employed as immigrants whose primary language is English, immigrants who did not speak English or were of limited proficiency were between 8 and 9 percentage points less likely to be employed (Sum et al., 2005). As shown in **Table 2** (page 16), many occupations require a certain level of English proficiency. Occupations with higher wages typically require higher levels of English proficiency. Thus, ESOL programs provide a pathway for immigrants to achieve higher wages.

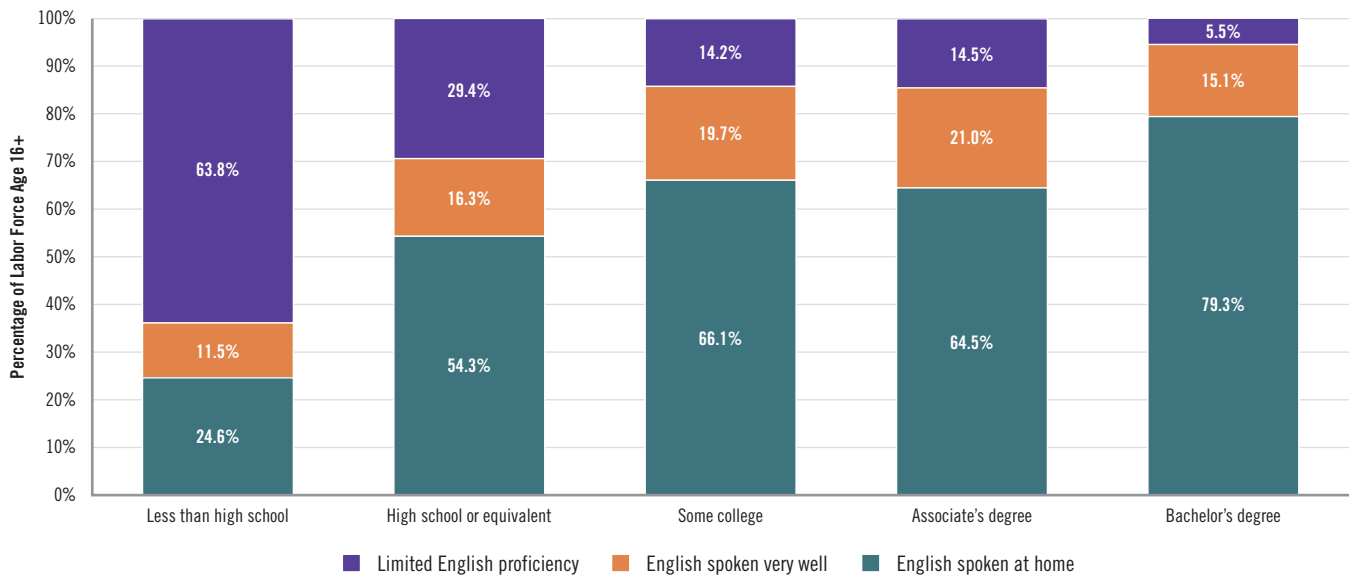
Moreover, limited English proficiency is a major barrier to employment for immigrants across all levels of educational attainment. According to a 2015 report by the Boston Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development, 63.8 percent of those with less than a

high school degree and 29.4 percent with a high school degree have limited English proficiency (see **Figure 7**). Yet even among individuals with higher levels of education, a non-trivial share are LEP. For example, roughly 14 percent of those with some college or an associate’s degree have limited proficiency in English. The report notes that a significant share of immigrants “who earned their degrees abroad may have trouble using those credentials in fields with occupational licensing requirements” (City of Boston, 2016).

Indeed, a national study of the LEP population found that over 90 percent had some form of schooling outside of the United States, with 22 percent completing high school and 23 percent completing four or more years of college or university education before emigration (Vickstrom et al., 2015). Moreover, the higher the level of English language proficiency, the more transferable the human capital acquired pre-emigration was to the destination country. The study authors found that as proficiency in English increased, earnings increased “directly through higher productivity on the job.” The study concluded that immigrants with higher English language skills have earnings that are 26 percent higher than immigrants with very poor language skills (Vickstrom et al., 2015).

FIGURE 7

Limited English Proficiency by Educational Attainment, Boston Resident Labor Force



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey

Characteristics of the Population in Need of ESOL Services in Greater Boston

According to American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, the five counties of Greater Boston are home to approximately 845,500 foreign-born residents, a population that has been increasing. The Greater Boston area has a higher concentration of immigrants (19.5%) than the state of Massachusetts as a whole (16.2%). In Suffolk County, foreign-born residents made up nearly 30 percent of the population as of 2017, with the city of Boston attracting most of the region's immigrants.

Over 11 percent of Greater Boston's total population is of limited English proficiency (see **Table 3**). Overall Latin Americans make up the largest share of LEP immigrants (see **Table 4**). Over the past five years, the

TABLE 3
Greater Boston's LEP Population, 2017

	Number LEP	LEP as a % of Population	LEP as a % of Foreign Born
Greater Boston	320,708	11.30%	43.50%
Massachusetts	582,948	9.10%	43.10%
United States	25,654,421	8.50%	48.90%

Source: American Community Survey, 2012–17 5-Year Estimates.

foreign-born population in Greater Boston has grown by about 18,000 per year. Given that 43 percent of the foreign-born population are LEP, then the net increase in the number of LEP individuals is likely to be about 7,740 per year if recent trends continue.

TABLE 4
Spatial Distribution of LEP Population by Origin Country*, Greater Boston

Foreign Born: Asia	Eastern Asia	Number LEP	South Central Asia	Number LEP	South Eastern Asia	Number LEP	Western Asia	Number LEP
Essex	5,395	2,266	4,919	1,495	7,402	4,301	2,458	1,023
Middlesex	51,812	23,212	44,313	10,591	26,239	14,090	10,937	3,423
Norfolk	27,448	17,073	10,659	1,876	11,101	6,328	4,951	1,901
Plymouth**				0		0		0
Suffolk	25,330	15,806	8,474	2,127	14,114	9,769	4,330	1,355
Greater Boston (Except Plymouth)	109,985	58,356	68,365	16,089	58,856	34,485	22,676	7,702
Foreign Born: Europe	Northern & Western Europe	Number LEP	South & Eastern Europe	Number LEP				
Essex	6,845	178	16,002	6,993				
Middlesex	22,487	1,169	41,016	13,904				
Norfolk	11,092	555	17,172	6,182				
Plymouth	3,332	120	3,821	1,223				
Suffolk	10,319	795	17,725	8,154				
Greater Boston	54,075	2,816	95,736	36,455				
Foreign Born: Latin America	Mexico	Number LEP	Other Central America	Number LEP	Caribbean	Number LEP	South America	Number LEP
Essex	1,740	1,056	12,710	8,795	48,984	30,419	8,386	3,581
Middlesex	3,829	1,547	19,459	12,162	23,401	10,203	44,009	23,677
Norfolk	430	90	2,801	1,162	12,208	4,041	7,622	3,102
Plymouth	94	46	1,033	529	10,373	5,083	6,280	3,711
Suffolk	3,227	1,578	35,112	26,720	57,439	27,915	24,683	14,514
Greater Boston	9,320	4,317	71,115	49,369	152,405	77,661	90,980	48,585

Source: Authors' calculations from the American Community Survey.

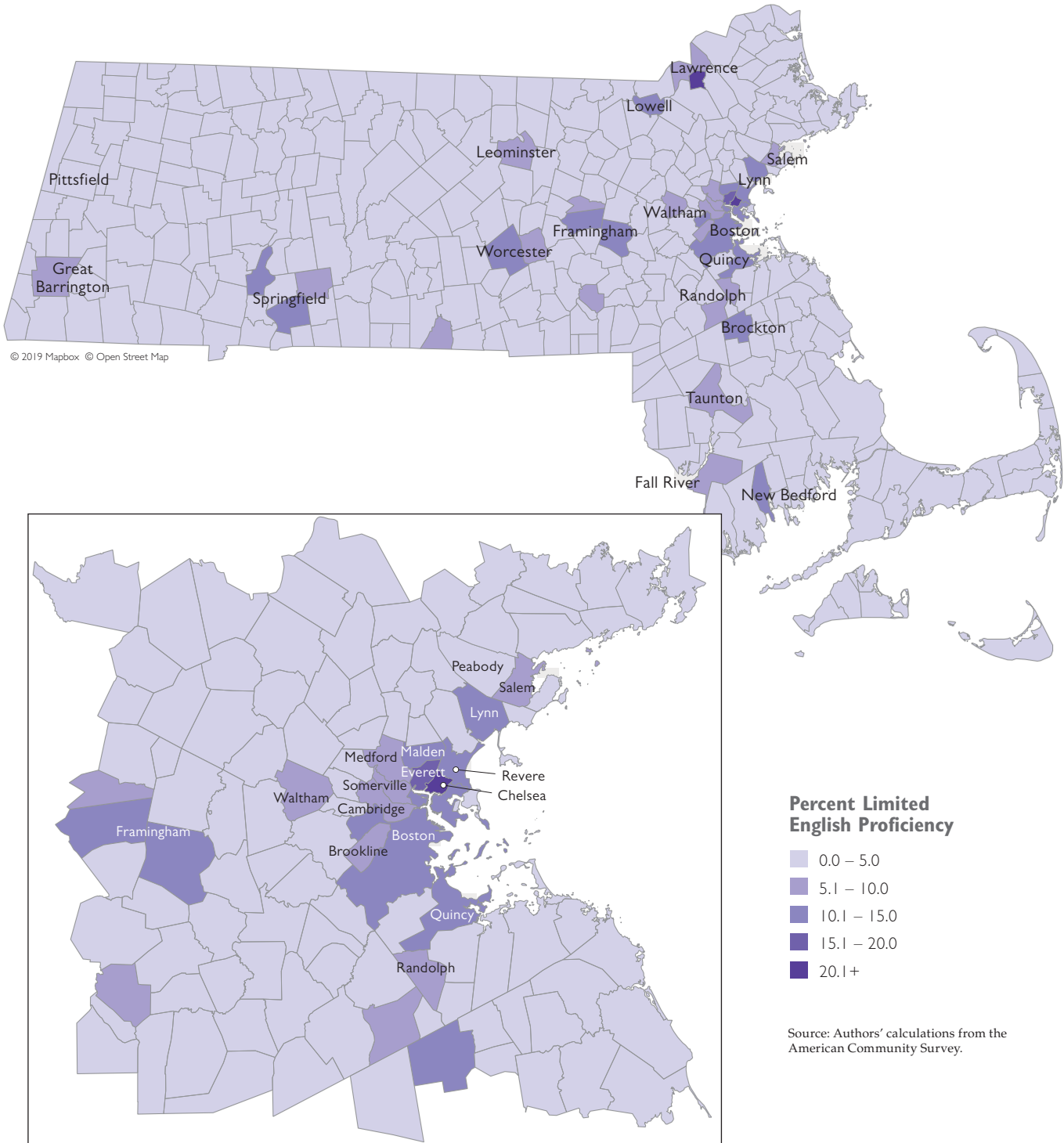
* ACS data not available for Africa, North America and Oceania.

** No data were reported for 2017.

In the state of Massachusetts, limited English proficiency residents are concentrated in the city of Boston and in the towns immediately north (see

Map 1). Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Revere and Lynn have even higher concentrations of LEP immigrants than Boston itself.

MAP 1
Spatial Distribution of LEP Population by Current Residence, Greater Boston



In terms of age, three quarters of LEP individuals are of working age, representing just over 1 in 10 individuals of working age in Greater Boston (Table 5). The elderly also have a high percentage of LEP individuals, representing over 13 percent of their age group.

TABLE 5

Age Distribution of LEP Population, Greater Boston

	Number LEP	As a % of LEP	As a % of Age Group
Age 5–17	20,375	6.4%	4.8%
Age 18–64	241,530	75.3%	12.3%
Age 65+	58,656	18.3%	13.3%

Source: Authors’ calculations using the 2012-17 American Community Survey.

Looking at the languages spoken in Figure 8, Massachusetts has more than 200,000 Spanish-speaking residents, making up nearly 40 percent of LEP individuals in the state. Compared with the United States as a whole, the distribution of languages spoken in the Greater Boston area is more evenly split across Spanish, Indo-European and Asian or Pacific Islander languages. Greater Boston also has a higher

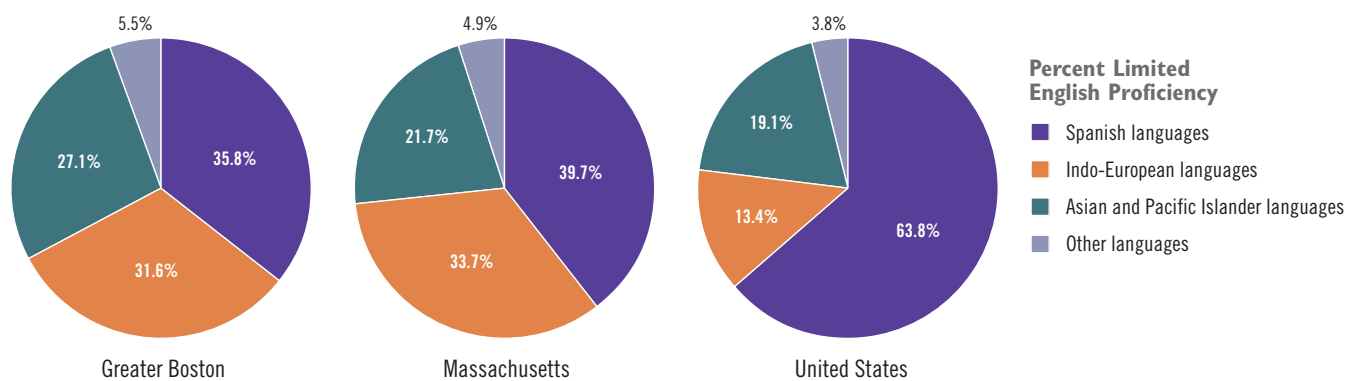
concentration of LEP residents speaking Asian and Pacific Islander languages than the state of Massachusetts as a whole.

Supply of ESOL Services in Greater Boston

Due to the fragmented nature of the ESOL system, it is challenging to gather systematic data on ESOL programs. In the absence of available information, a database was created that includes 116 programs providing English language services in the Greater Boston area. The strength of this dataset is that it captures the broad range of programs operating in the ESOL space—from small, volunteer-led programs to programs run by large organizations with many professional staff. However, because the database was built from the ground up, information is often incomplete; missing data limits its generalizability. Appendix B describes the methodology used to create the database.

FIGURE 8

Frequency of Languages Spoken by LEP Individuals in Massachusetts



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2016.

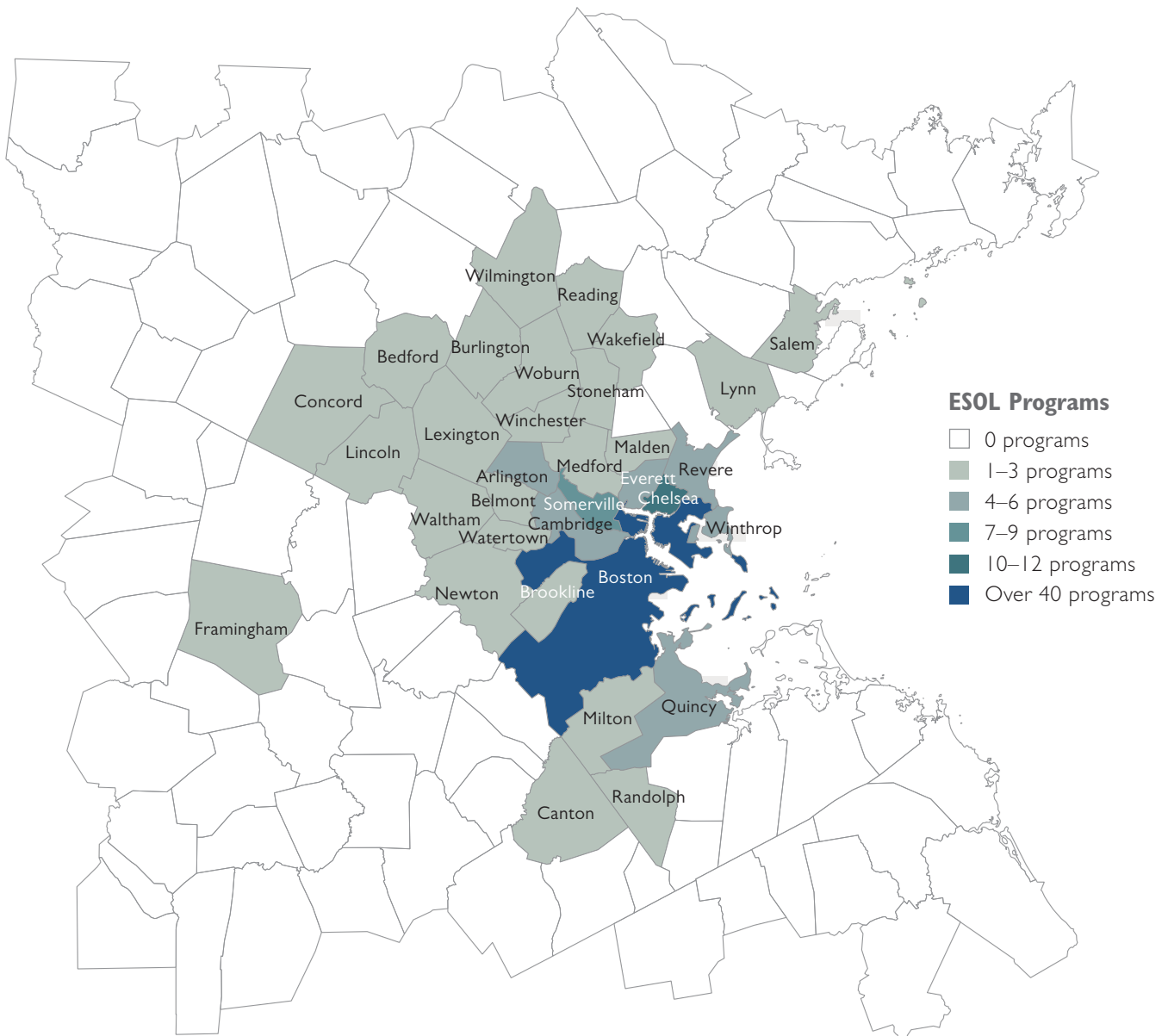
Note: Other Indo-European languages, excluding Spanish and English, include French, Haitian, Italian, Portuguese, German, Yiddish, Greek, Russian, Polish, Serbian-Croatian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Persian, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Nepali, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada. Asian and Pacific Islander languages include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hmong, Vietnamese, Khmer, Thai, Lao, Tagalog, Ilocano, Samoan, and Hawaiian. Other languages include Navajo, Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, Somali, Yoruba, Twi, Igbo, Swahili, and other Native languages of North America. <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/language-use/about.html>

ESOL Program Characteristics

ESOL programs are geographically concentrated largely in and near the city of Boston. **Map 2** is a heat map of the service area by town for the 60 programs for which we had data.

Within the city of Boston, most programs are located in Allston, Dorchester, Roxbury, Charlestown and East Boston. **Map 3** (next page) is a heat map by neighborhood of the 45 programs that serve English language learners in the city of Boston.

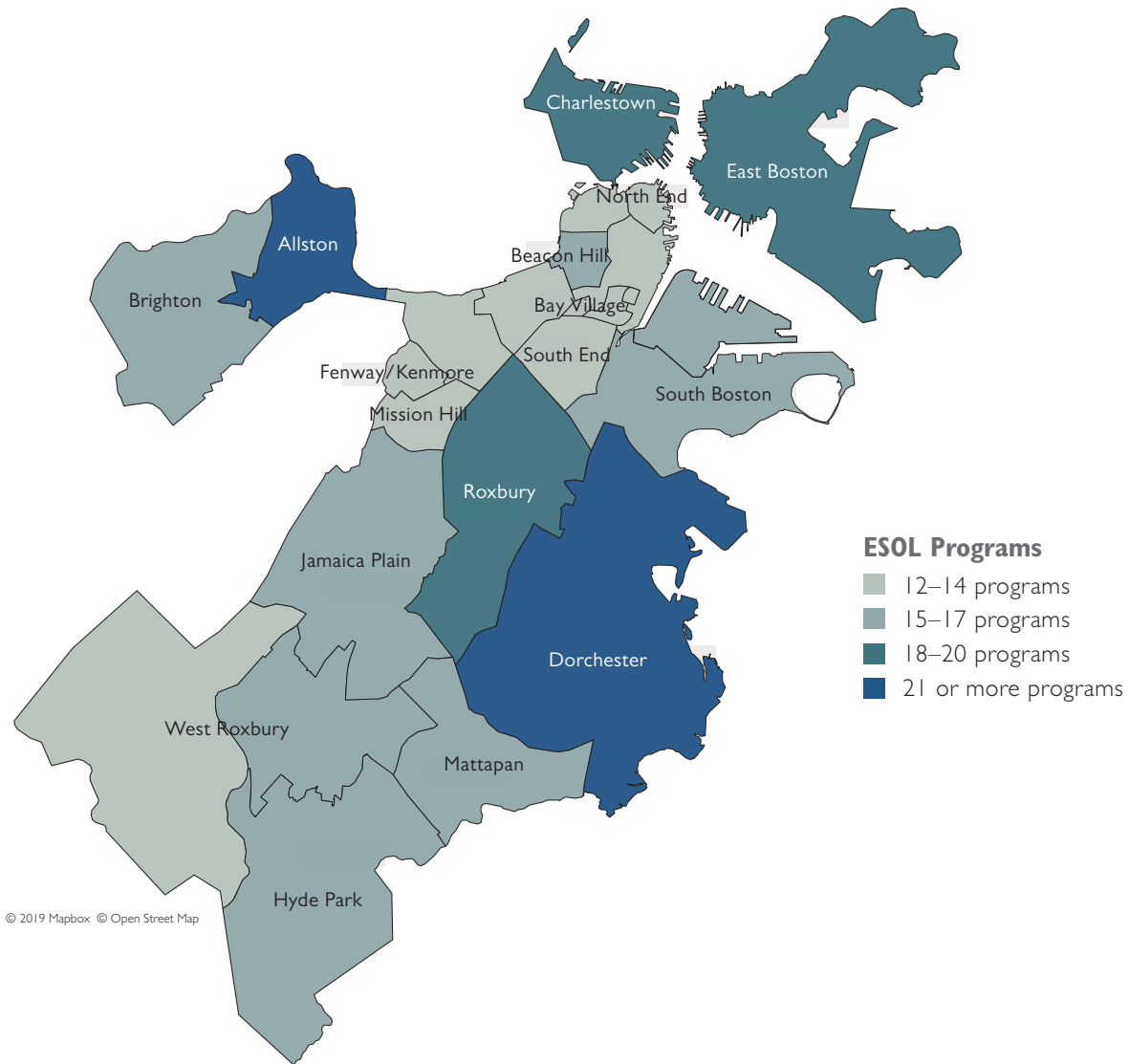
MAP 2
Spatial Distribution of LEP Population by Current Residence, Greater Boston



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

MAP 3

Spatial Distribution of ESOL Programs by Neighborhood in the City of Boston



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

Programs were grouped by the type of organization they are located within—a public or government agency, a nonprofit organization or a for-profit business. These data are available for all 116 programs. More than half of ESOL programs are in the nonprofit sector (see **Table 6**). Among public/government programs, the single largest group are libraries.

TABLE 6
Frequency of ESOL Programs by Type of Organization

	Number of Programs	Percent
Public/government	51	44.0
NGO/nonprofit	61	52.6
For-profit/business	4	3.4

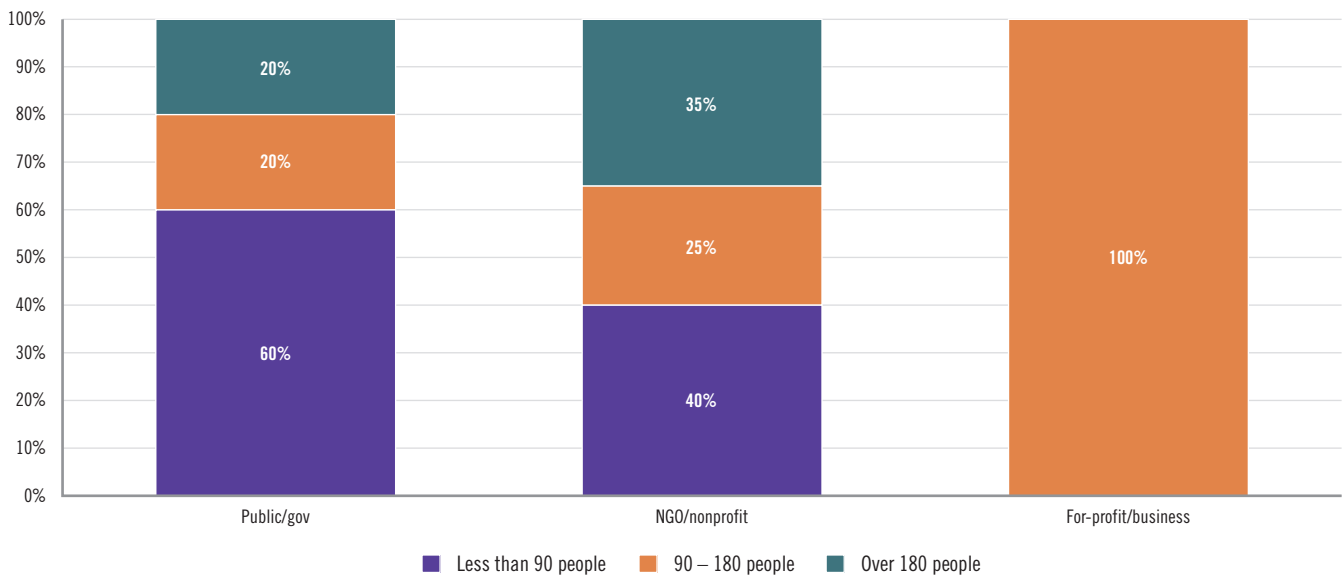
Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

One measure of program size is the annual number of people served. Public organizations have proportionately more programs serving smaller numbers of people (fewer than 90 people per year) than programs operated by nonprofit or for-profit organizations (see **Figure 9**). The programs operated by nonprofit organizations appear to be the most varied in terms of size, with over 30 percent serving more than 180 people per year.

ESOL programs can also be characterized by the type of services that they provide. The Center for Adult English Language Acquisition developed the following typology of ESOL programs (CAELA, 2005):

- General ESOL serving a broad range of learners with a focus on developing skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing
- Family ESOL focusing on the knowledge and skills parents need to help their children succeed in U.S. schools
- Vocational ESOL focusing on the language skills relevant for job training in specific occupational areas
- Workplace ESOL focusing on the language skills needed by currently employed or “embedded” workers
- Civics/Citizenship ESOL focusing on the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill naturalization requirements and participate in civic affairs

FIGURE 9
Annual Number of Individuals Served by ESOL Programs, by Organization Type



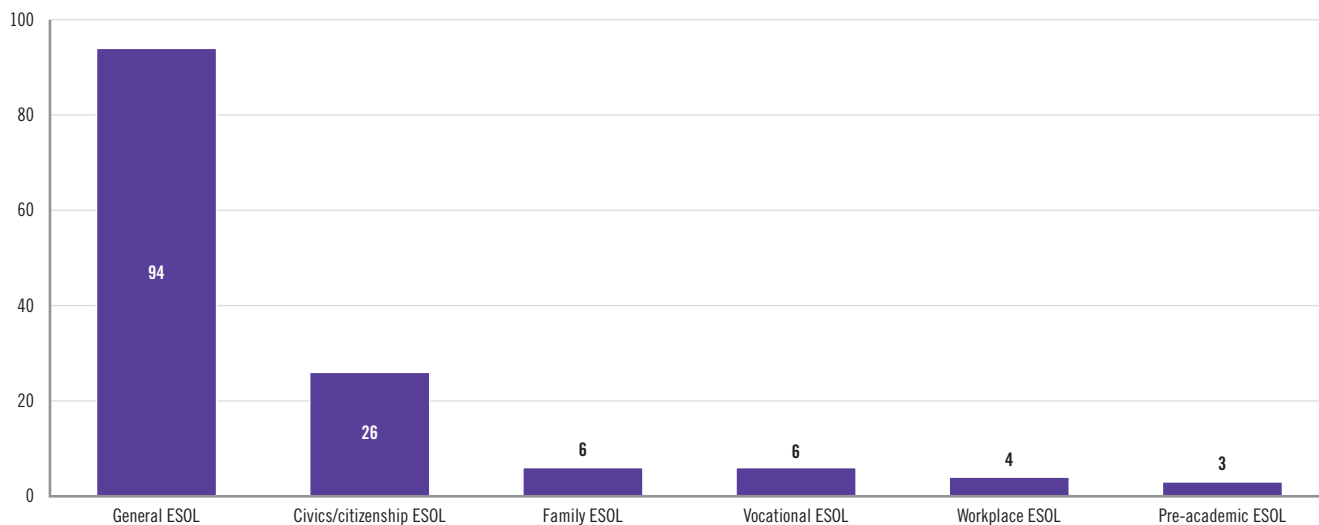
Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

Figure 10 shows a breakdown of the number of programs offering specific types of ESOL classes. There are 93 programs offering General ESOL. Civics/Citizenship ESOL is the second most common, with 26 programs offering these types of classes. Vocational and Workplace ESOL is the least common with just 10 programs with classes of this type.

In addition to English language instruction, programs frequently offered additional services to learners.

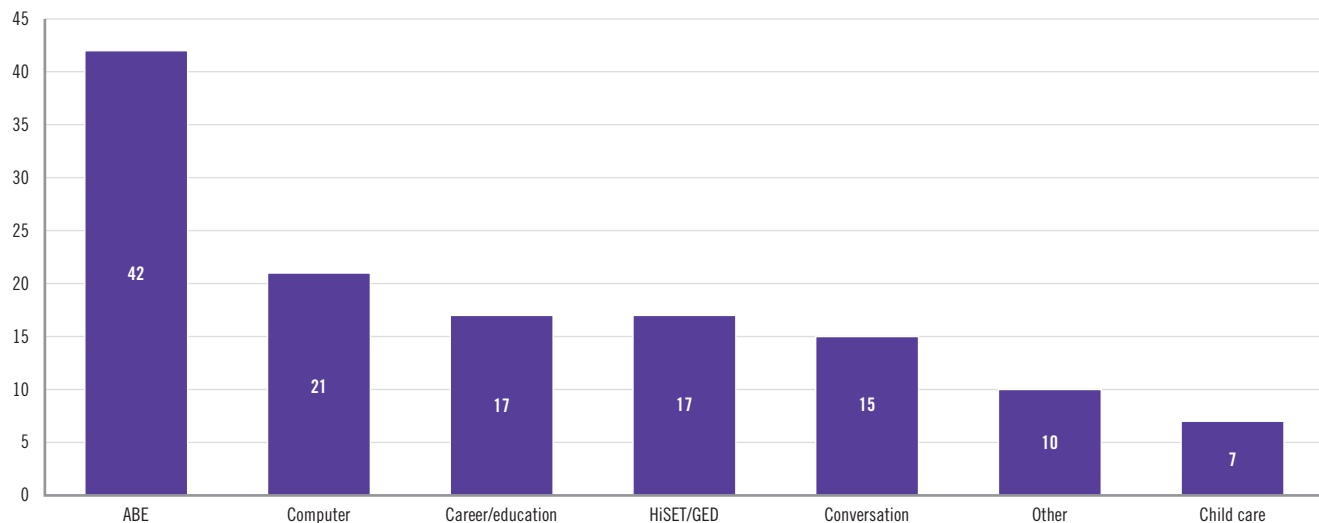
Figure 11 shows a breakdown of the number of programs offering specific support services. Adult Basic Education (ABE), which includes all classes below the postsecondary level, is most common, followed by computer proficiency classes, and career/education readiness support. At the other end, it is notable how few programs offer child-care services—a potential barrier for adults with children.

FIGURE 10
Number of ESOL Programs, by Type of Services Provided



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 11
Number of ESOL Programs, by Type of Support Services



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

Gaps and Barriers to Participation

To derive an estimate of the overall capacity of the ESOL programs in Greater Boston, we extrapolated from the data available on the annual number of people served. Due to the rather large range, the median of 100 people per year is the more stable measure as a multiplier that would give us an estimate of 11,600 spaces per year across the 116 programs identified in the Greater Boston area (see **Table 7**).

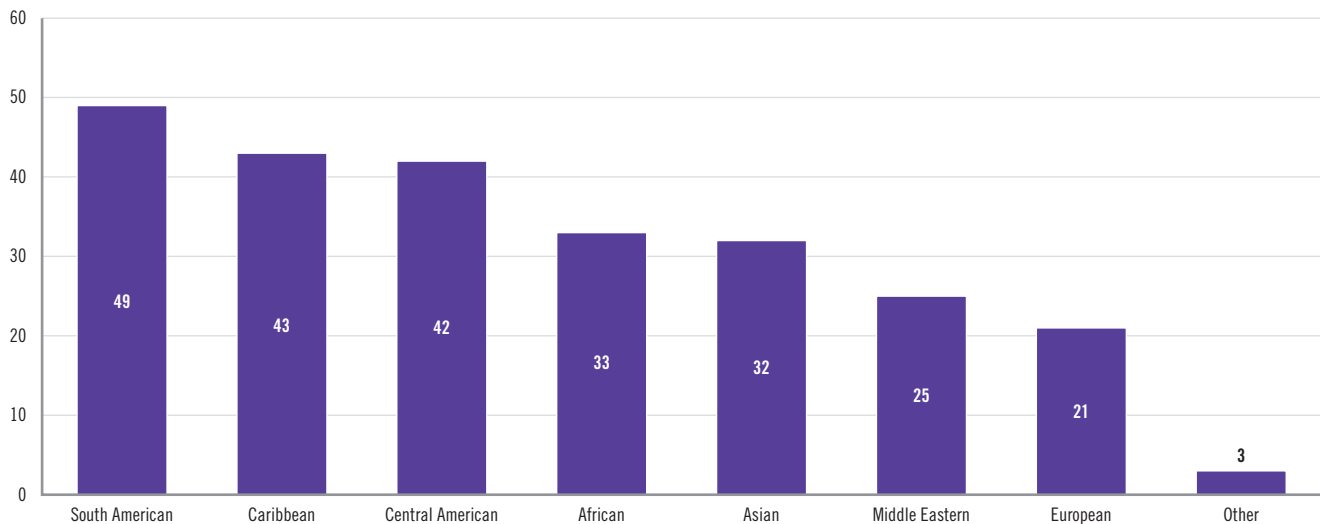
In terms of country of origin, most programs are providing ESOL services to immigrants from South America, Central America and the Caribbean (see **Figure 12**). Also represented in half the programs are immigrants from African and Asian nations.

TABLE 7
Estimates of the Number of Individuals Served by ESOL Programs

Number of programs for which we have data on annual number served	38
Total number of people served annually by these programs	6,649
Average annual number of people served per program	175
Median annual number of people served per program	100
Range of annual people served per program	20 to 1,000

Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 12
Number of ESOL Programs by Population Served



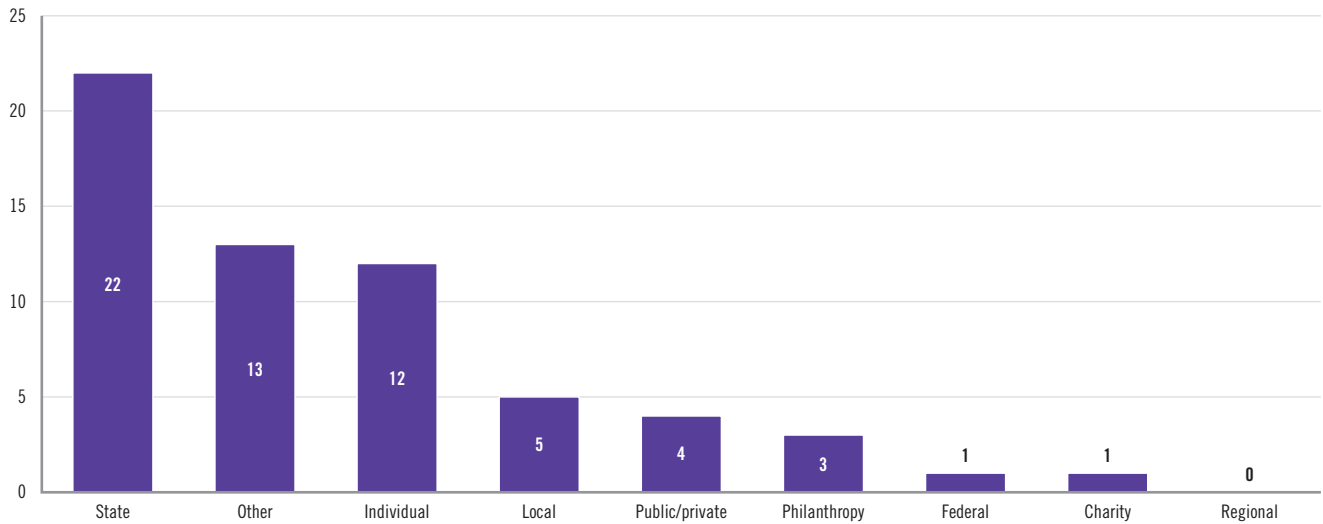
Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

Funding information was especially difficult to gather as programs were often reluctant to share such sensitive information. Among programs for which we have data, funding from the state (e.g., Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) is the most common, followed by a mix of unspecified grants and support, individual donations, gifts and fundraisers (see **Figure 13**). At the other end, it appears that there

are opportunities for foundations, public/private partnerships, local and regional entities to play a larger role.

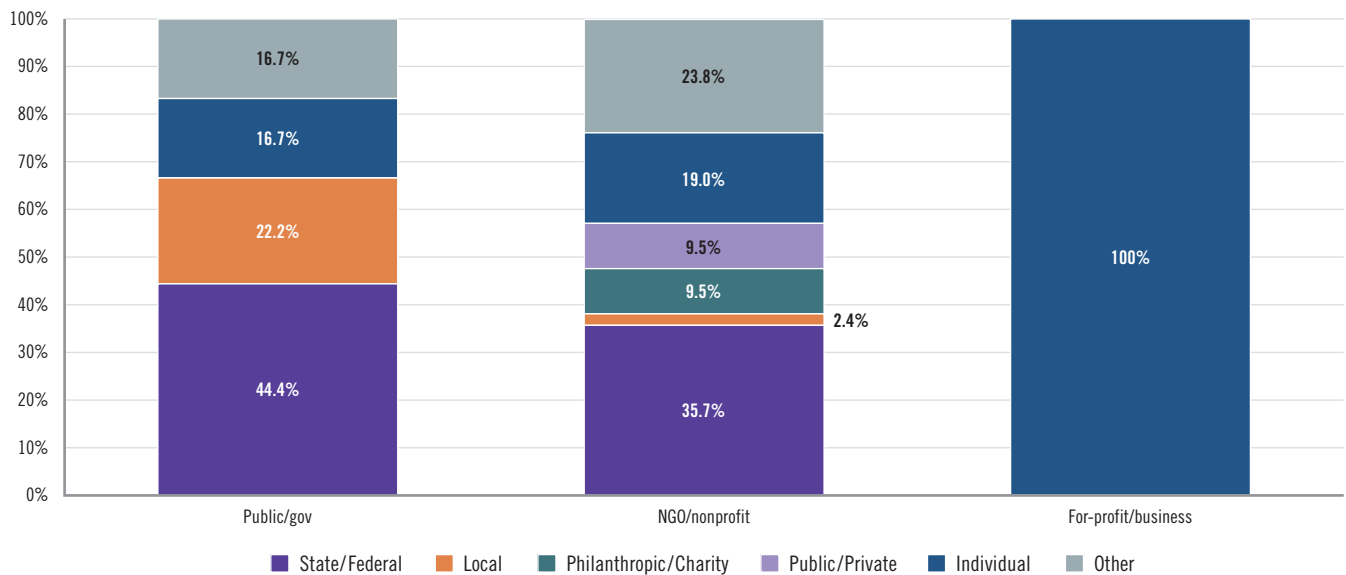
Below is a breakdown of funding by organization type. Not surprisingly, public/government organizations tend to receive the most state, federal and local funding (see **Figure 14**). In comparison,

FIGURE 13
Number of ESOL Programs by Funding Source



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 14
Percentage of Funding, by Organization Type



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

nonprofit organizations have a fairly substantial proportion funded by “other” (often this means small grants) and have to braid together support from many sources; while the for-profit programs are funded by the tuition received from individuals attending class.

In terms of accessibility, the data suggest that ESOL programs are fairly accessible, as long as there is sufficient capacity. Programs are offered throughout the day and over multiple days per week, allowing flexible access for working adults, if they can find transportation and childcare (see **Figure 15** and **Table 8**).

FIGURE 15
Programs by Number of Days per Week

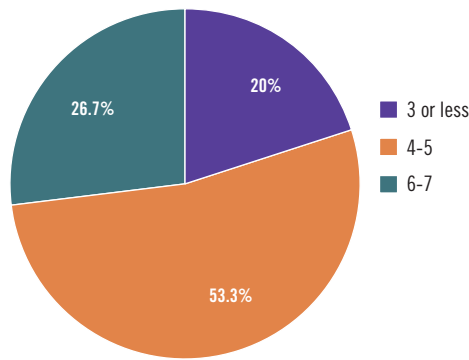
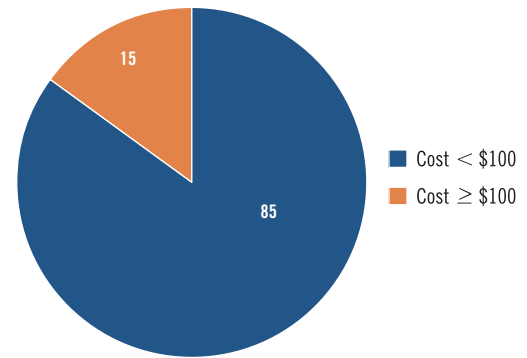


TABLE 8
Programs by Time of Day

	Number of Programs	Percent
Morning	37	39.3
Afternoon	26	27.7
Evening	31	33.0

Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

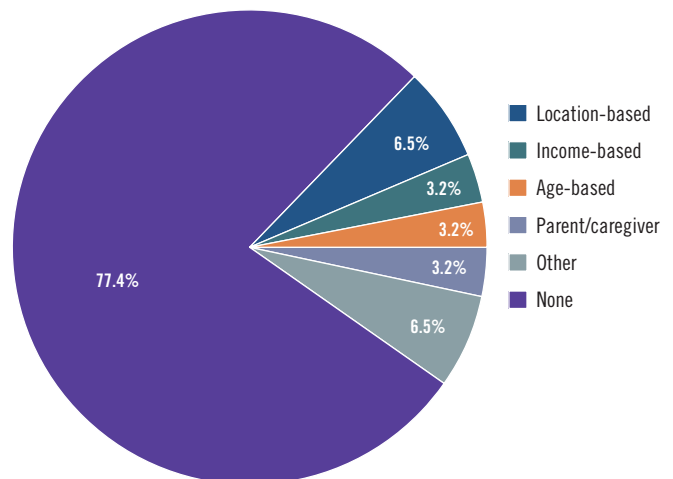
FIGURE 16
Books and Materials Costs for ESOL Programs in Greater Boston



Most participants pay less than \$100 per person to cover books and materials (see **Figure 16**).

Eligibility requirements for program participation can also be a barrier. In some cases, these requirements are linked to the context in which the program is provided. For example, a program provided by a local housing authority may be limited to residents, or a program focused on Family ESOL may be limited to caregivers with a child in school. The majority of programs, however, have no eligibility requirements (see **Figure 17**).

FIGURE 17
Eligibility Requirements for ESOL Programs in Greater Boston



Qualitative Analysis: Survey Results and Case Studies by Type of Program

Introduction

In this section we present findings from an online survey and in-depth interviews conducted with program directors and/or managers of three types of ESOL offerings in Greater Boston: community-based, vocational and incumbent worker programs. The goal is to provide a more nuanced picture of services provided, staff capacity, size and type of population served, challenges faced and lessons learned.

Producing this report involved significant challenges, the most important being to motivate ESOL program administrators to complete an online survey and participate in in-depth interviews. Anticipating some of these challenges, we designed a short online survey consisting of 21 questions to collect information on the total number of staff and students, average size class, cost per class, eligibility criteria, funding source and, when applicable, descriptions of students' progress assessment.

In April 2019, we e-mailed an invitation letter with the link to the online survey to 116 program managers/directors whom we had identified through our landscape analysis, covering a wide range of programs, from small, volunteer-led programs (i.e., NGO/nonprofit) to programs run by large organizations (i.e., public/government, for-profit/business). The invitation explained that the research team was seeking data for a report commissioned by the Boston Foundation and that their information would be reported anonymously to facilitate a candid dialogue about program operations, including strengths and weaknesses. We then made several phone calls to check whether the invitation had been received, but the majority of the individuals contacted were unavailable due to irregular work schedules, working offsite, no longer being affiliated with the

IT IS CLEAR THAT THESE PROGRAMS HAVE MADE GREAT EFFORTS TO HELP INTEGRATE THIS INCREASINGLY DIVERSE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION. IT IS CLEAR TOO THAT INTEGRATION HAS MEANT MORE THAN SIMPLY SECURING CITIZENSHIP STATUS OR A VOTER REGISTRATION CARD.

program, or unwillingness to take part in our study. We also later learned that program staff were engaged in the annual reporting of their program performance as required by DESE, which had adopted new metrics as well as a new system this year (LACES).

Due to these impediments, only 18 program representatives (15.5%) completed the online survey, either partially or in its entirety. We classified these 18 programs into our three categories using the following definitions:

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS (N=12): Focus on life skills and functions of daily life, such as going to the doctor, getting a job, shopping, public transportation or managing money. These programs are characterized by:

- Formal, structured classes with beginning to advanced levels
- Development of general English language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing
- Evaluation and placement of students in appropriate level
- State-approved competency-based curriculum
- Use of texts, reading and writing
- Taught by paid teachers and volunteers

VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS (N=3): View career preparation and support for job placement and advancement as an integral part of their services. These programs are characterized by:

- Combined vocational and ESOL instruction
- Preparation of the ESOL population for jobs

- Focus on skills such as resume building, job search techniques, preparing for an interview and communicating in the workplace
- Taught by paid teachers

INCUMBENT WORKER PROGRAMS (N=3): Build English language and other foundational skills for employees, often on-site at the employer, and in some cases, during paid work time. These programs are characterized by:

- Implementation by an ESOL provider under contract for the employer
- Customization of class materials based on the competencies that participants and supervisors identify as most important
- Inclusion of topics such as reading, writing, grammar, conversation and pronunciation
- Combination of beginning, intermediate and advanced level classes

Of the 18 surveyed programs, six program administrators participated in our in-depth interviews, representing two community-based programs, two vocational programs and two incumbent worker programs. Despite our low survey and in-depth interview response rate, our discussion with these six programs reassured us that they were indeed representative of most programs. As such, we believe that our findings will be valuable in informing the development of a strategic plan to address the gaps we identified in the local ESOL service sector from our landscape analysis.

The rest of this section is organized as follows: First, we describe our survey data, highlighting the most salient aspects of each program type, focusing on the services offered, population served, staffing competency, funding sources and challenges faced. Note that we group the survey results for the vocational and incumbent worker programs since there were so few responses and both are focused on providing ESOL in a workforce development context. We then provide case studies of each program type based on the data collected from our in-depth interviews. The case studies complement, expand and deepen our understanding of the local ESOL sector, the gaps in services, the barriers to participation and potential areas for impactful investment.

Findings from Online Self-Administered Survey

With the exception of one vocational ESOL program located in Western Massachusetts, all of the ESOL programs that responded to our survey currently operate in the Greater Boston area. Within the City of Boston, surveyed programs serve foreign-born populations that predominantly reside in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Mission Hill, Roslindale and Roxbury. Some programs also serve immigrants living in Allston, Brighton, Charlestown, Chinatown, Fenway/Kenmore, South Boston, South End and West Roxbury.

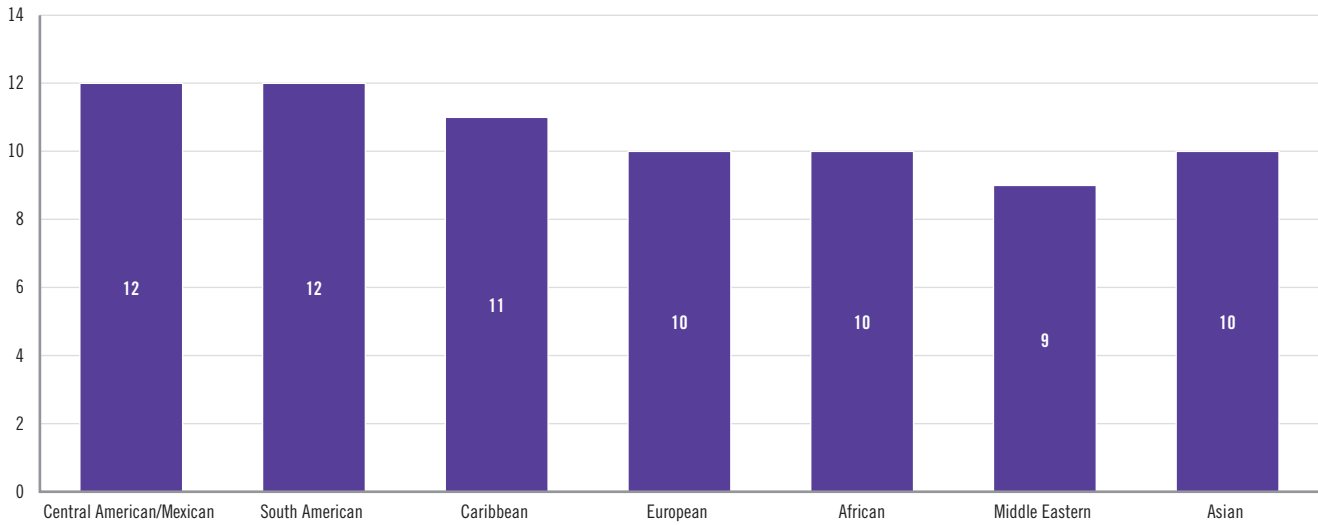
Program Size

Program size varied considerably across all program types answering our survey. When asked about the total number of students enrolled during the last year, two programs enrolled fewer than 50 students, three programs reported to have enrolled between 50 and 99 students; six programs enrolled 100–199 students; four programs recruited 200–299 students; one program recruited 300–399; and two programs reported recruiting 400 or more students. Class sizes ranged from as few as 10 to as many as 25 students with an average class size of 14.7 students.

Population Served

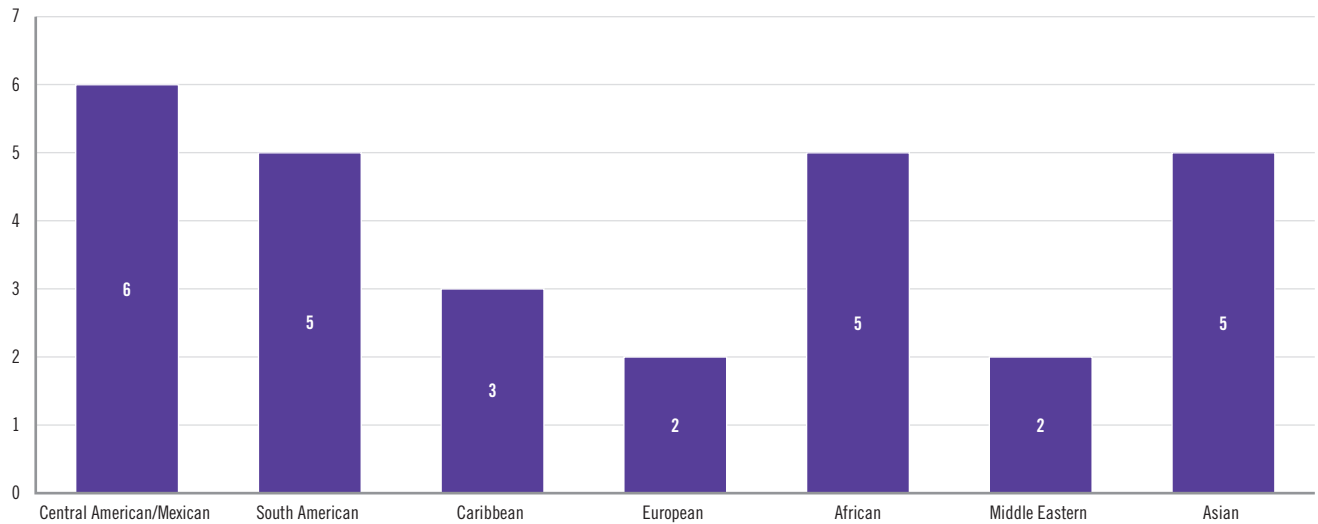
All three program types enroll adult students from almost every continent where there are non-English speaking countries. As **Figure 18** shows, nearly all 12 community-based programs serve students from Mexico and Central America (e.g., Hondurans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans), South America (e.g., Ecuadorians, Colombians) and the Caribbean (Haitians, Puerto Ricans, Virgin Islanders). Roughly 80 percent (10 out of 12) serve students from Europe (e.g., Bulgarians, Hungarians, Russians), Africa (e.g., Nigerians, Moroccans) and Asia (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese). Only nine out of the 12 programs serve students from the Middle East (e.g., Syrians, Emirati people, Lebanese, Iranians).

FIGURE 18
Country of Origin for Population Served, Community-Based Programs (N=12)



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 19
Country of Origin for Population Served, Vocational/Incumbent Worker Programs (N=9)



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

Vocational/incumbent worker programs show a similar trend in their enrollees' country of origin, except for Europeans and Middle Easterners, whose numbers are considerably lower compared with those recruited in community-based programs. Of the programs that responded to the survey, all served the Central American and Mexican population and

five out of six served South American, African and Asian populations. Less than half of the programs served Europeans, likely because immigrants from those countries are more likely to be able to obtain employment. In addition, less than half of vocational/incumbent worker programs served the Middle Eastern population.

Types of Classes Offered

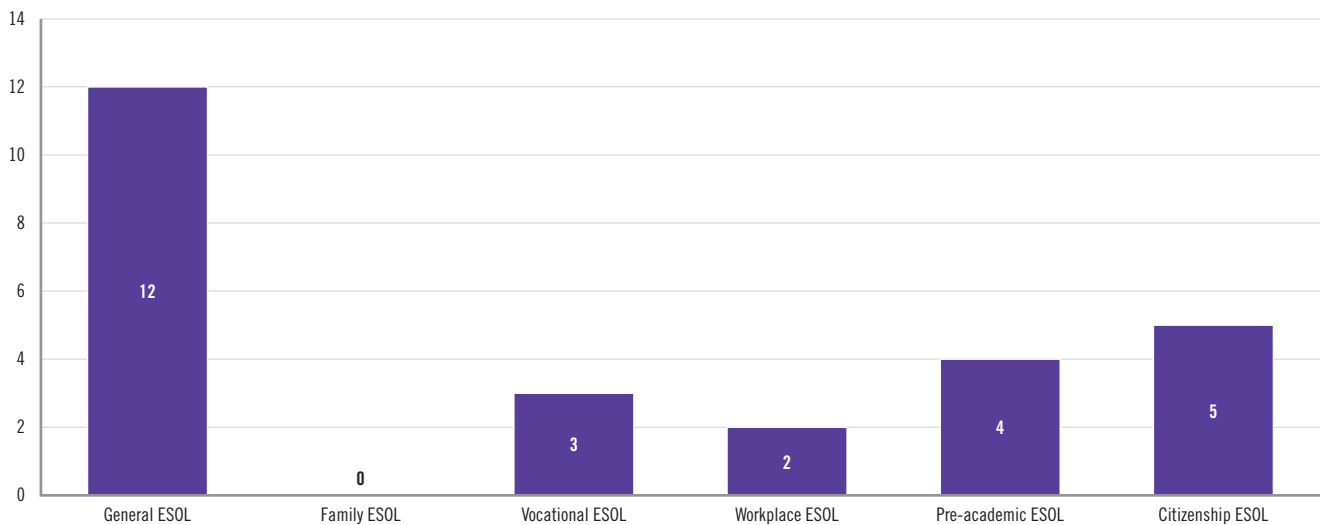
While both community-based and vocational/incumbent worker programs offer a similar range of ESOL classes, the mix of classes differs considerably by program type. **Figure 20** shows that all of the community-based programs that responded to our survey offer general ESOL classes that teach life skills, with less than half of programs teaching vocational and/or workplace ESOL classes. About one-third or four out of 12 programs offer pre-academic ESOL classes that concentrate on preparing learners for further training and education in postsecondary institutions, vocational education classes, or ABE and GED classes. Nearly half of community-based programs offer citizenship classes that integrate English language instruction with opportunities to learn about civic participation, civil rights and responsibilities and citizenship.

Perhaps not surprisingly, vocational and incumbent worker programs that answered our survey were much more likely to offer vocational and workplace ESOL classes, as shown in **Figure 21**. Half of them (three out of six) also offered general and pre-academic classes, with two of the three representing the incumbent worker programs. Only two programs offered citizenship classes and only one program offered family ESOL classes that include parenting elements and/or information that parents can use to further their children’s literacy and general educational development.

Additional Services Offered

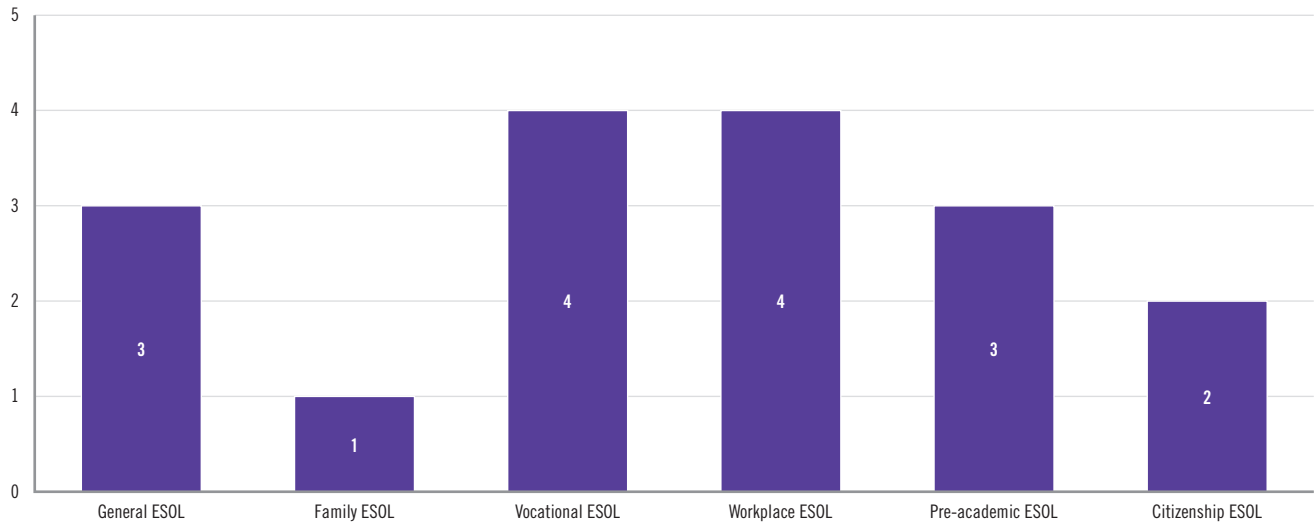
The type of additional services offered also varies by program type. For example, **Figure 22** shows that although few community-based programs offer vocational or workplace classes, nearly all (11 out of 12) offer career and education readiness that includes help with job searching and resume writing.

FIGURE 20
Type of ESOL Classes Offered, Community-Based Programs (N=12)



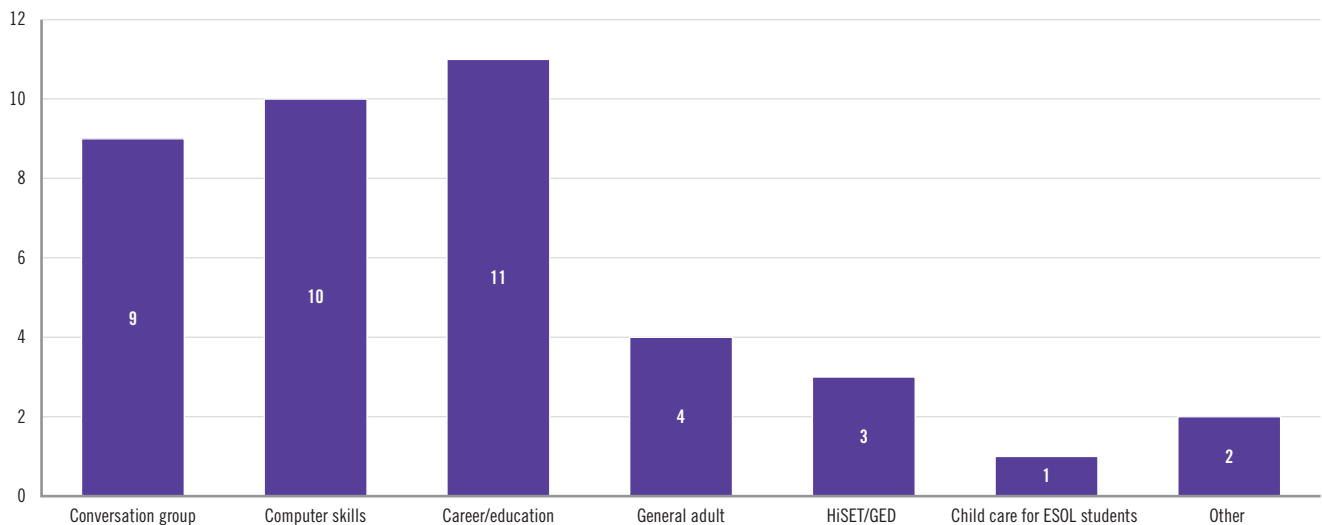
Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 21
Type of ESOL Classes Offered, Vocational/Incumbent Worker Programs (N=6)



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 22
Additional Services Offered, Community-Based Programs (N=12)



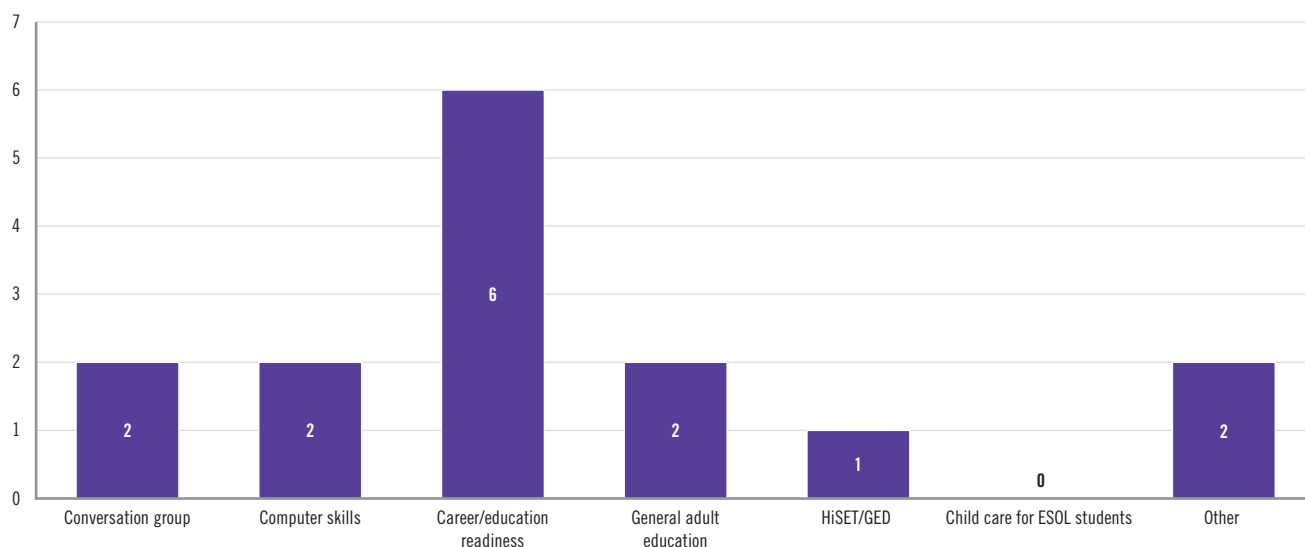
Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

Most programs that answered our survey also provide computer skills (10 out of 12) and conversation groups (nine out of 12) that offer one-on-one talk time often facilitated through a workbook with structured exercises. About one-third of community-based programs offer general or adult education with

another 25 percent offering HiSET or GED classes. Only one program offered child-care services. Other services included book club, leadership, one-on-one tutoring in basic math and skills training classes with an employment placement focus.

FIGURE 23

Additional Services Offered, Vocational/Incumbent Worker Programs (N=6)



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

Consistent with their focus on the workplace, fully 100 percent of vocational/incumbent worker programs offered career and educational readiness services as shown in **Figure 23**. Only one-third of programs (two out of six) offer conversation groups, computer skills and general adult education services. None offer child-care services to ESOL students. Other services included specific training in a job-related or vocational skill.

Both community-based and vocational/incumbent worker programs reported providing classes most days of the week, but most offer classes between three and five days a week. In addition, most classes take place during the morning and evening hours.

Staffing Capacity

When asked, “What is the total number of staff in your ESL/ESOL program?” community-based and vocational/incumbent worker programs reported having between three and six teachers. Further, staff competency was measured by whether teachers received an ESOL teaching certificate or equivalent. In our surveyed sample, both community-based and vocational/incumbent worker programs reported having a mix of certified and non-certified teaching staff. However, all programs reported that their

teaching staff have extensive experience teaching English at different levels and in various educational settings, even if they were not always certified.

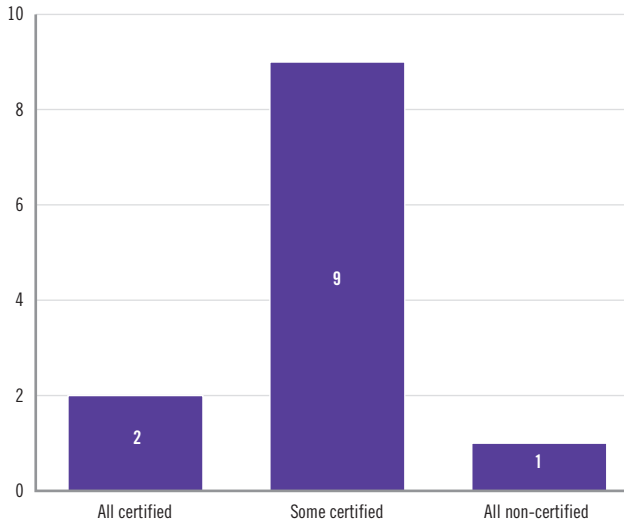
Among the community-based programs we surveyed, as **Figure 24** shows, only two reported having exclusively ESOL-certified teachers. On the other end of the spectrum, only one community-based program reported having exclusively non-certified teachers. The majority of community-based programs (n=9) have some certified and some non-certified teaching staff.

In contrast, none of the vocational/incumbent worker programs that answered our survey used exclusively non-certified teachers. As shown in **Figure 25**, half used certified teachers exclusively, and the other half reported using a mix of certified and non-certified teaching staff. Comparatively speaking, vocational and incumbent worker programs are more likely to have certified staff than are community-based programs.

Funding Sources

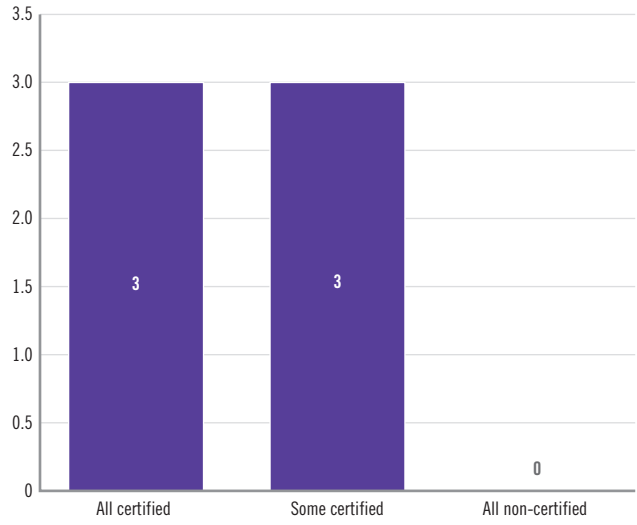
Sources of funding varied to a large degree by program type. In our surveyed sample, as **Figure 26** shows, most of the community-based programs (11 out of 12) reported that they received either federal or state funding through the Department of Elementary

FIGURE 24
**Share of Teaching Staff with Certification,
 Community-Based Programs (N=12)**



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 25
**Share of Teaching Staff with Certification,
 Vocational/Incumbent Worker Programs (N=6)**

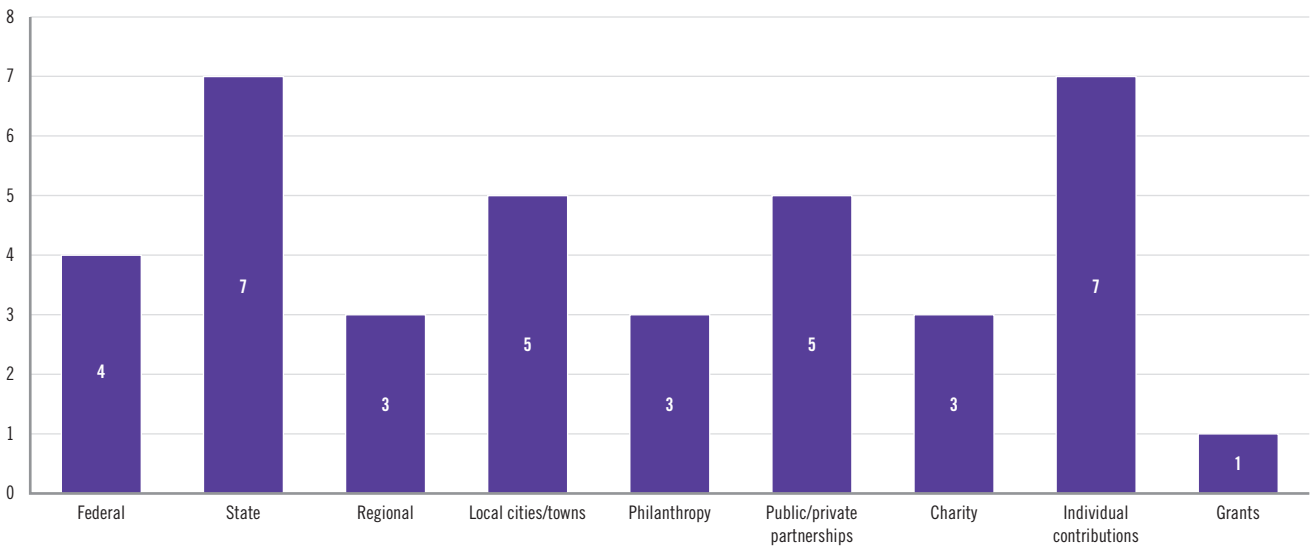


Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

and Secondary Education. Another eight programs reported that they were funded by regional entities such as housing authorities or local cities and towns through channels such as public libraries. Half (six out of 12) reported funding from philanthropic or charity institutions such as the Boston Foundation.

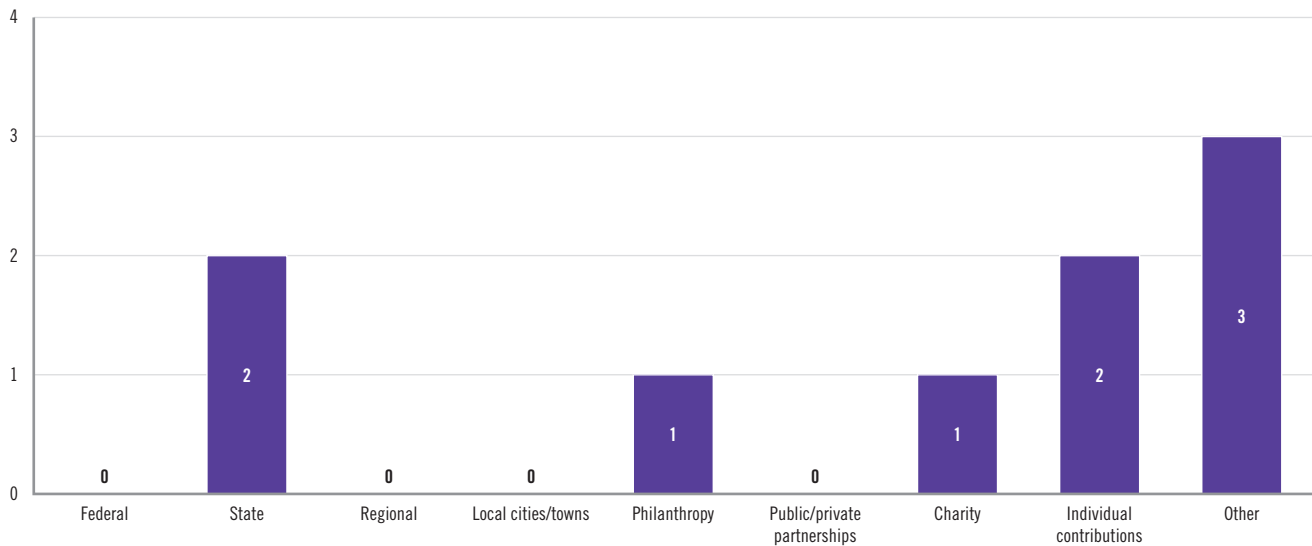
A little less than half (five out of 12) received funding from public/private partnerships such as regional workforce boards, and one had received a grant from Harvard University. Amazingly, seven out of 12 were funded by individual contributions, such as donations, fundraisers and tuition.

FIGURE 26
Sources of Funding, Community-Based Programs (N=12)



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 27
Sources of Funding, Vocational/Incumbent Worker Programs (N=6)



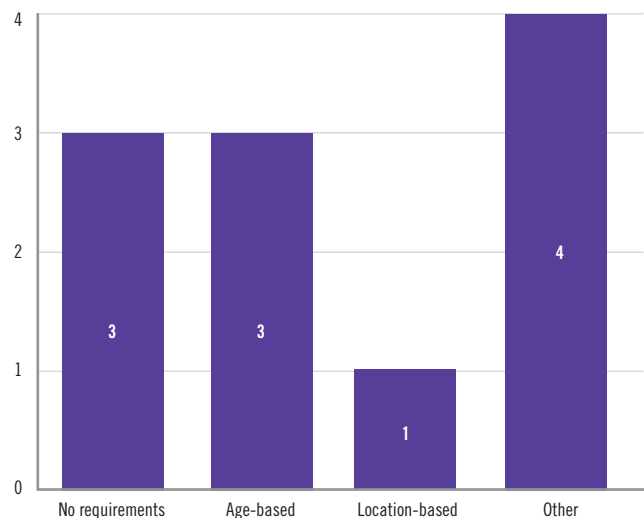
Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

In the case of vocational/incumbent worker programs, **Figure 27** shows that half of programs responding to our survey (three out of six) reported being funded by other sources that largely includes employers. About one-third (two out of six) reported receiving funding from the state via the Workforce Training Fund overseen by the Commonwealth Corporation. Another third reported being funded by individual contributions that included tuition, union dues and Greater Boston Hospitality Employers Trust Fund education and training funds. Finally, one-third reported receiving funding from philanthropic foundations such as the United Way.

Program Eligibility Criteria

As **Figure 28** shows, among all the community-based programs surveyed, the majority (n=8) reported having some kind of requirement for applicants, whether it be a minimum age; having a work authorization, refugee status permit or plan to stay in the U.S.; or wanting to have a job. Although programs do not have explicit locational requirements, some slots, such as those funded by Community Development Block grants are only open to Boston residents.

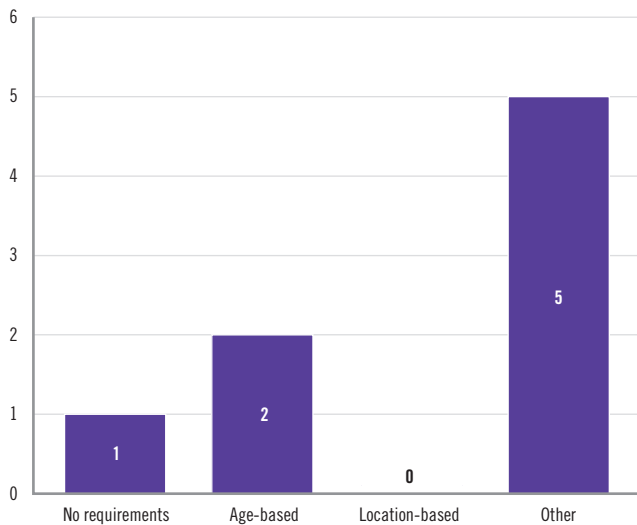
FIGURE 28
Program Eligibility Criteria, Community-Based Programs (N=12)



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

FIGURE 29

Program Eligibility Criteria, Vocational/Incumbent Worker Programs (N=6)



Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

As **Figure 29** shows, among all the vocational/incumbent worker programs surveyed, only one requested no eligibility criteria. One third (two out of six) set a minimum age. Nearly all vocational or incumbent worker programs had other requirements such as being an employee or qualifying for Local 26 Education and Training Program benefits.

Learning Outcome Assessment

Our survey also asked whether programs collect information about learning outcomes and progress, such as educational functioning levels, postsecondary education or training, and/or employment. The majority of respondents answered that they collect such information, but many did not specify what type of learning outcome they collected. Some participants did volunteer some information on this issue, which is listed in the form of verbatim quotations below.

- “ We like to assure that our students are progressing and getting the best support from our staff and peers. We collect attendance sheets, along with progress reports from teachers to assure our students are progressing...”
- “ The program does follow-up on exited students’ employment status and education progress/training to provide continued support.”

- “ Assessments and goals are input in a database. As part of counseling, we follow up with students to encourage them and learn about their progress toward their goals.”
- “ All entered in Dept. of Ed’s database”
- “ We gather this information in intake forms and enter it in LACES [Literacy, Adult and Community Education System].”
- “ Contextualized language assessment; job placement outcomes; job retention.”
- “ We test according to DESE guidelines and follow up with students after they leave.”
- “ Mostly tracking language proficiency level and requirements for participation: attendance and homework (80–90%).”

Finally, our online survey concluded by asking respondents if there were anything else they would like us to know, or whether they wanted to make any clarification to the information they had provided in the survey questions. The need to strengthen and expand program capacity by providing more funding and better working conditions for teaching staff stands out from these statements.

- “ I currently am new to the position... I have seen a summer class that we run for six weeks so far. Getting ready to gear up for our classes that start in September. Our goal ... is to ensure our students are getting the best out of the classes to progress in their English in regards to conversation, grammar and writing. We also have a computer lab, where students can come in on their own time and practice their English with the use of our computer lab and the mini courses.”
- “ We need more money to serve more students. Students also struggle with transportation costs. Additional money to be able to provide transportation assistance to students would be helpful.”
- “ Our classes are paid for by the hotel employers and are held in a convenient location on the Orange Line. We have room for additional students in each class but unless we get funding for slots, we cannot admit additional students. We did, in 2018, receive funding for slots from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission through the Boston Private Industry Council. That’s been great!”

- “ We should also address the working conditions. I would be more than happy to meet with your researchers and provide them with more details.”
- “ Different programs: One is free based on requirements (low income, Everett residency, attendance). Another has no requirements and tuition is paid by the student. ”

In-Depth Interviews with ESOL Program Directors/Managers

METHODOLOGY

As stated earlier, six in-depth interviews were conducted with ESOL program managers and/or directors from six programs that we have classified as community-based programs (n=2), vocational programs (n=2) and incumbent worker programs (n=2). Five of these programs operate in the Greater Boston area, and one operates in Western Massachusetts. To comply with confidentiality agreements, we have identified the two community-based programs as “CB1” and “CB2,” the two vocational programs as

“VP1” and “VP2” and the two incumbent worker programs as “IW1” and “IW2.”

In-depth interviews were conducted between May and September 2019. They were digitally recorded, except for those conducted with incumbent worker programs, in which case notes were taken during the interviews. All interviews were conducted either in person or over the

phone. In-person interviews took place in private offices at the program sites, and those over the phone were conducted from Northeastern University. They lasted between 45 and 55 minutes.

In compliance with study protocol, we explained the objectives of the interviews to all participants, assured

them that their identity would be held in confidence and that their participation in the interview was voluntary. Audio-recordings were partially transcribed for the purpose of this report. No formal coding or content analysis was conducted as transcripts were used to summarize participant responses related to interview themes. The interview instrument consisted of 14 questions with their respective probes, addressing issues such as type of services offered, enrollment capacity and trends in enrollment (increasing/decreasing and reasons why), staffing and staff competency, funding mechanisms, infrastructure issues affecting service delivery, eligibility criteria, measurable learning outcomes, as well as weaknesses and strengths and possible ways to correct them. We shall first address findings from our community-based programs, followed by our vocational programs and lastly, our sample from incumbent worker programs. Suffice it to say that despite their differences, at the core of each of these programs lies the conviction that English language learning and continued education are passports to better integration into U.S. society, and that better integration then furthers the overcoming of limited English-speaking skills and achieving economic self-sufficiency.

In other words, there is an underling mission that connects all these programs: empowering newcomers through education and work to secure better integration into the fabric of this society. Interestingly, each of these programs has walked a similar path, as they all opened their doors at a time when they were just small-scale community initiatives geared toward meeting the immediate needs of immigrants and refugees. Today, and after several decades of strengthening their presence in the local community these programs have grown considerably with either a vocational or community focus.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS*

Two programs comprise our community-based sample, each serving refugees and other immigrant populations in Massachusetts for over 30 years. While program CB1 serves populations residing in areas of Western Massachusetts (e.g., Holyoke, Springfield, Chicopee), program CB2 provides ESOL services

* Given the information we were able to collect from our interview participants, this segment on community-based ESOL programs is organized differently from the following segment on vocation-based programs.

to populations settled in Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, Mattapan, Roxbury and vicinities. CB1 has a long-lived trajectory serving predominantly Poles, Russians and individuals from other Eastern European countries, followed by a smaller component of Brazilians, Puerto Ricans, Colombians and Mexicans. CB2 serves predominantly Hispanic populations, among which are Dominicans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Salvadorans. It was rather recently that this program started to enroll some Laotians, Brazilians and Vietnamese. In both programs, enrollees tend to be working adults between the ages of mid-twenties to mid-forties. Both programs operate in areas well-provisioned with other ESOL service agencies. These are areas where immigrants find attractive pockets of job placement in the blue-collar or service sector. In fact, a good number of students enrolled in program CB1 are currently working, most of them have a high-school diploma and only very few come with a college degree from their home country.

ESOL Services, Eligibility Criteria and Enrollment

Both CB1 and CB2 offer similar packages of ESOL classes, all of which, with time, branched out to Adult Education and GED. They offer General ESOL, Pre-Academic ESOL, computer skill classes and career advice. CB1 has a sequence of four levels (two lower and two upper levels) that run twice a week and at night. Occasionally, and provided that the program receives additional funding, they may also offer an additional class that combines the two lower levels. Most often this additional class is taught in the morning, serving students who are not currently working. In the case of CB2, ESOL classes are organized into six levels, from beginner (level 1) to intermediate (level 2), to advanced (level 3), to levels 5 and 6, which are designed to help students through career pathways or getting into college. According to participant CB2, this package of ESOL classes is rather rare within the community, because generally speaking immigrant populations are not expected to transcend high-school and/or low-paid jobs.

Community-based programs also offer additional services designed to meet other needs of immigrant populations. Among these services are assistance with immigration paperwork, residence and citizenship, and preparation of resumes and other documents they could need to secure social benefits. Even though

these additional services can aid members of this population to insert themselves into the receiving society and job market, community-based programs do not get funding for them.

The ESOL community-based programs in our sample reported child-care and transportation service gaps. In the case of CB1, child-care services are only provided to students enrolled in the Adult Education program on a full-time basis. In the case of CB2, child care has not been a pressing need as the majority of students do not have children or have children in the school system. For CB1, more than provision of daycare services, the urgent need is transportation, as classes start at 5:30 p.m. and buses stop running by the time classes end. In CB1's words:

"At a certain time buses stop running, then you can't get home. For a long time we did provide a van that the Department of Education [gave] funding for, but it was a little under-used and then they decided not to pay for transportation. This is the second year that we don't have transportation at night. We have lost some students because of that. We have to tell them when they apply. We try to match people up, if possible, to ride with each other but there are all sorts of cultural things that [make it] hard to ask people if they want to ride with a stranger. Luckily, there are other programs in the area they can go to if they can't come to us. And we tell them about those. In fact, the first question we ask when they come is, 'Where do you live?' and if they say [we live in this or that place] we tell them about those."

Except for a minimum age (16 years and older), neither community-based program is run according to eligibility criteria, as both ESOL programs are funded by DESE and thus are open to anyone who wants to attend. All classes are free of charge. At this point, CB1 and CB2 state:

CB1: "Our funders only require us to ask if [students] have a Social Security [number] that they wish to provide. If they don't have it or they don't wish to provide it we just check off that SS was not provided, and that is fine."

CB2: "We don't discriminate. Whoever comes in, we bring them in. We don't want to discriminate against age, but older we give them the option of coming to class twice a week."

The annual ESOL enrollment capacity for each program ranges between 150 and 200 students. In both cases enrollment has increased in the last few years, either because of the influx of new immigrants or because of the success in re-enrolling students who had previously taken only Basic English and came back for Advanced ESOL in the hope of pursuing a college degree later. In the case of CB2, out of the 200 students enrolled annually, DESE pays for 142. The remaining 52 are served for free and the extra work to keep the program running at its maximum capacity goes uncompensated. In the case of CB1, recent additional funding allowed it to increase class sizes from 15 to 20 students each; however, it operates in a building that has become too small for the needs it is committed to meet. Like ESOL vocational programs that depend on DESE funding (see p. 47), community-based ESOL programs must keep filling student slots as they become vacant. As CB2 states, “Every day we need to have 142 slots filled, otherwise we get penalized.” Drop-out rates are high, and this is mostly due to students having a change in work schedule or finding a supplementary job. As program CB1 states:

“Right now, unemployment is low and people are finding more work, so [some] people are leaving us for that reason. There is a fair amount of turnover, perhaps more than what we would like, but we don’t want people not to have jobs.”

At CB2, dropping out is rare and it mostly happens due to pregnancy or family issues back in their home country that require students to travel. As for waitlists, CB1 fills those rather quickly due to high demand. This seems to be a pattern among programs that offer transition to college services, especially programs that have average graduation rates of 90–100 percent, as is the case of CB2.

It is worth noting that due to easy enrollment, neither CB1 nor CB2 invest great efforts in advertising ESOL services, other than putting flyers and posters in key locales, such as public libraries, churches and community agencies. They also rely on K–12 and adult education website platforms. For both CB1 and CB2, word of mouth continues to be the best recruitment strategy to this day.

Staff Capacity and Competencies

As with the vocational programs in our sample, CB1 and CB2 count on highly experienced ESOL teachers. CB1 is staffed with four teachers, each of whom work four nights a week, including the program director. All teachers have vast experience teaching ESOL in different educational settings; all of them hold an ESOL certificate and regularly attend teacher trainings. Most of the teaching staff work on a part-time basis. CB2 has five well-trained teachers, some with bachelor’s degrees and some with master’s degrees. Not all of them are ESOL certified but attend as many trainings as their schedule allows them. They are all full time and thus benefited. CB2 says:

“We would like to have more teachers but we don’t have the capacity because we don’t have many classrooms. Our teachers are full time, which is very rare. We are innovative here because we created full-time positions and our teachers are benefited. That is very rare and our teachers are happy with their jobs. Even if the pay is not great, they have benefits.”

As described later, community-based programs often struggle with staff retention due to low salaries and unbenefited part-time job demand. Hence, within this type of program, having a transient teaching staff is the norm rather than the exception.

Program Infrastructure

The community-based ESOL programs described here count their infrastructure as one of their main strengths. Operating in what used to be a private school, CB1 has its ESOL facilities on a third floor with adequately sized classrooms and current teaching equipment. Further, CB1 describes:

“Everybody has a white board, each 10 feet long. There is a lab unit that has 16 or 17 laptops. Everybody has their own computer time. Each teacher has a smart board. All the classrooms have a cart with a projector. As for the teachers, they have their offices; they are former classrooms. On the admin side or the teacher support side: I am a full-time administrator and we also have a 25-hour-a-week assistant director whose specialty is curriculum and teacher support, and he coordinates professional development for teachers and helps them with curriculum and meeting their

requirements, making sure that they are aligned with current standards. So, teachers get a fair amount of support from us.”

At CB1, all teaching staff get a professional development day and mileage cost covered if they need to travel to specific trainings. Even though providing a comfortable teaching space does not compensate for low salary, the program makes great efforts to provide holiday time prorated and flexibility to allow them to have additional jobs. Our respondent says:

“We try to be really flexible: This is their part-time job and people have to work somewhere else too. So we try to be as flexible as possible with people’s needs and time. We exceed the rate of the state. The state has a half hour of prep for every hour of teaching. We have 50 percent for 80 percent, so we allow them to have more hours for their prep.”

In the case of CB2, the program feels it has enough space and teaching equipment to meet the needs of its students. At this point, participant CB2 states:

“We have five classrooms ... computer labs with 20 computers. We have another office for educational counselor and admin assistance. Our infrastructure is great and we have parking lots for our students.”

Funding Mechanisms

Historically speaking, community-based programs started to provide ESOL classes through good-hearted community members who never sought to be compensated for it. As the need emerged to insert immigrants more formally into the local community and the society at large, and then into the labor force, community-based programs solidified their language service and became eligible for state funding. For several years now, both CB1 and CB2 have received funding primarily from DESE. This funding has either been channeled directly to ESOL classes, or to their Adult Education Program, which in turn sustains ESOL services. At times, community-based ESOL programs have also contracted with real estate companies to serve residents, or with local libraries.

Running community-based ESOL successfully also entails overcoming budgetary constraints and potential funding cuts. In fact, currently, both CB1 and CB2 report struggling to survive on a tight budget.

This is happening at a time when DESE has opted to condition funding upon programs’ being able to increase enrollment or fill class slots as they become vacant. As programs CB1 and CB2 explain:

CB1: “DESE policies sometimes are more oriented towards quantitative than qualitative. They want more students, more waiting lists, but what about the quality? They don’t pay for services. They pay per student but the range of money per student is from \$2,200 up to \$3,300 max. And we cannot ask for more, which is ridiculous. What we are doing here to take students to college is a huge effort. We start from scratch teaching English...”

CB2: “How does funding work? When we go to legislators... there is an immigration day, we bring our students to the legislators, we try to convince them to give us extra money. But there is one ACLS (Adult and Community Services, which is under DESE)—they are the ones which get the funding and decide how they are going to allocate the money. They don’t do a good job, because they fund quantity and not quality.”

In the eyes of community-based ESOL program administrators, funding works in ways that prioritize a “banking concept of success”—a quantitative standard measure that every program has to comply with should they plan on continuing to exist. As indicated earlier, this tight funding has forced CB1 and CB2 to invest great energy in maneuvering larger ESOL classes due to space limitations, and on retaining their ESOL teaching staff, which is constantly enticed by better salaries and working conditions elsewhere.

Learning Outcome Assessment and Job Placement

Both programs rely on standardized tests required by the state for student assessment. However, as both participants pointed out, there is a great deal of information that does not get reported or that funders are not interested in looking into. One example is brought by CB1:

“Often times we mark peoples’ success by things that happen in class. Somebody who tells, ‘Hey, I rode the bus by myself,’ or ‘I drove my car to a different town and went shopping there.’ That is progress to us, but nobody really cares but us. We care and the people here care. From the

standpoint of the state and what the funders care about is all under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Almost all that matters now is employment as an outcome. Employment and that we can demonstrate measurable skills, retaining employment and getting into postsecondary training—those are the measures that everybody cares about the most. We used to care about ‘registration to vote,’ getting your citizenship, participating in activities with your child at school—we used to track all those things. Sadly, over time we stopped doing that as nobody seemed to care about those things. We still advocate for all those things, we still advocate for registering to vote, we still help people to get their driver license, we still want to help people get their citizenship, and those are things we continue to work on, but as a note to ourselves; it doesn’t get reported.”

At times, it seems to be discouraging for community-based programs to be part of a system where everything is “accountability,” or about demonstrating that one’s students, or one’s program, makes a difference. “In such a system,” says CB2, it matters little if anything that “students write letters to us [or come] in person to tell us how much we meant to them, how we helped them achieve many of their own goals to make their lives easier.” For program CB1, what matters to funders and state authorities with regard to ESOL teaching reflects a societal shift toward somehow “documenting and proving everything according to narrow measures.” As our respondent says:

“Even getting a high-school equivalency, even if someone writes now [who couldn’t before] doesn’t count, all that counts is if the person has a job a year later.”

When asked whether their ESOL programs have students moving up in the job scale as a result of their ESOL training, CB1 responded:

“We have some students who are working toward some specific goals and promotions. We do report some of that somehow, if somebody had a wage improvement or if they had a promotion. We used to keep track of those things but not anymore because it doesn’t count anymore and we are supposed to focus only on what the funder wants. The funders want so many things from us that they overwhelmed us. We don’t have enough staffing to

do every single thing we want to do, so we have to focus only on the things we are funded for and this is not one of them.”

Strengths and Weaknesses

There is a growing concern among the community-based programs in our sample that they provide more services than what they receive funding for, and that they do so even at a time when their ESOL staff have heavy workloads and less-than-desirable salaries. Both program administrators do not seem to hold an optimistic view about what looms ahead for each of their ESOL programs, as funders do not seem to listen to their concerns about relying heavily on part-time teachers, and on teachers who often juggle several jobs to afford their living expenses. These are high quality teachers who, understandably, may be looking for more stable high-school jobs.

When describing the strengths of their ESOL programs, both CB1 and CB2 highlighted the quality of their teaching staff and how much they manage to do with so little. Our CB1 respondent said:

“I have the best teachers in the world, you know. They are so good, they work so hard, they go the extra mile. Last year we did a lot of things statewide to advocate for more funding for adult education. We got a very large increase in Massachusetts for adult education and we advocated equally for improving working conditions—meaning salaries for teachers, meaning hours for teachers, meaning more services for us to be able to provide—and we were told that we had to clear seats out of the waiting list, and that was just very disappointing. They can’t work any harder than they currently work. The way they fund us is based on the assumption that we are not already working as hard as we can work. So, they want us to meet more than 100 percent of the target that they set for us, and if we work more than 100 percent then we are worthy of more funding. We have to do more than 100 percent, and then we are punished if we don’t. They set the quota, we don’t set the quota. It’s hurtful to the program and to the teachers who work so hard, and somehow there is this idea that we are holding back. In the last three years I’ve seen more people leaving the field than ever before. It’s so demoralizing.”

CB2 placed the emphasis on the fact that its ESOL teaching, which has a strong advising component, is such that it secures retention even when students transition into college. That's because teachers spend a good amount of time providing mentorship to ESOL students while they are in college. CB2 says:

"When our students go to college they don't drop out. While they are in college we help them with their essays. But we need more support for this. We used to have volunteers but that is not enough. Developing resumes, we help them with everything. But when we send [funders] our outcome, they don't acknowledge what we do. Everything they want is functionary."

In the case of program CB1, insufficient funding, the need to provide students with transportation, and the need to strengthen the program with more career advisers are the most salient program weaknesses. CB1 says:

"I wish that we could solve the transportation problem for the night classes. We've tried advocating with the bus company to add a stop or to ride a little bit later, like an hour... We also need more advisers to help the students. We have one adviser now and he is an adjunct, but he works during the day and at night is when we may have, on a given night, 35 students. How to write a resume, how to deal with the landlord...There is a need for those things to be attended. [For example], one of our student's doctor told her that she needed an ultrasound, and she had problems because they didn't know if she had a tumor...she didn't have health care and we had to make a lot of calls, we managed to get her care but it took a long time, and we didn't have the resources."

VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Vocational Programs 1 and 2 (VP1 and VP2) share a long and reputable trajectory serving foreign-born populations from every continent. Throughout the years, responding to the needs of the immigrants themselves and the needs of the local economy, each program has strategized toward expanding its ESOL services and evolving from basic ESOL programs to larger programs that have partnered with workforce development providers.

VP1 and VP2 serve a large geographical area in Greater Boston. This reaches various towns and cities, from Dorchester, East Boston and Jamaica Plain to Mattapan, Roslindale, Hyde Park, Lynn and other neighboring communities. In terms of population served, both programs provide ESOL services to foreign-born adults from various nationalities: Bulgarians, Chinese, Dominicans, Haitians, Laotians, Portuguese, Puerto Ricans, Russians, Salvadorans and Somalis, to name a few. In what follows, we address some of the features of these programs, how they serve this diverse community, and what challenges they face in doing so.

ESOL Services

Even though it could appear that ESOL services are pretty standard, both of these vocational programs have designed, in rather creative ways, different types of classes and different levels of spoken and written English to meet the needs of the population they serve and the demands of the workforce sector.

VP1 has three types of ESOL classes, all free of charge. A first type aims to help students improve their language skills, earn a high-school diploma, get ready for college, and earn a TOEFL certification. A second type of class is designed to improve students' language skills, help them in the process of residence or citizenship status attainment, and teach the first steps in navigating the employment service sector. And, finally, a third type is geared toward training students in the health-care sector through a series of programs within the umbrella of Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Training Programs.

VP2, for its part, has an ESOL program that consists of types of classes comprising different levels. A first type of class consists of five levels of tuition-based ESOL curriculum designed to improve spoken and written language skills. A second type of class is a four-level tuition-free learning module targeting the needs of students interested in either pursuing a job training program or getting into college. And, finally, a third type of class, targeted to skilled immigrants, is designed to prepare students for a job readiness program. Additionally, in its package of services VP2 has a multi-service center that provides housing assistance and other public benefit assistance to students. This center plays a critical role in the

program as ESOL students reach out to it at different times during enrollment and for other reasons.

Eligibility Criteria

For both vocational programs, enrollment eligibility criteria are similar as both run under similar funding mechanisms. Thus, classes funded by the City of Boston, or by the Community Development Block Grant Program, require that students reside in Boston and prove they are of low income. Similarly, job readiness training classes require that students hold a U.S. work permit authorization, and classes enrolling refugees demand a refugee permit or its equivalent. As participant VP1 explains below, other programs that do not fall within this umbrella, such as those funded by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), have open enrollment:

“With DESE money we can serve anybody; we don’t have to check status of any kind, which is really great. [DESE is] federal, but they don’t have any criteria. There is open access. So, if people are not [from] Boston we put them in [the DESE] seats. And then for the other classes we have to fill those with Boston residents. But we check, say, if someone comes here and wants ESL classes but they don’t want to enroll into a [job advancement class]—we tell them, ‘Have you ever heard of this other type of class?’”

It is worth noting that during our interviews both organizations reported having a great commitment to meeting the needs of every individual who wants to enroll—those who want to pursue a college education or move up the workforce ladder, and those who do not. However, given the nature of some of their funding sources, they need to recruit strategically; that is, recruit to meet the quota or fill the class slots required by the funding sources. If the funding sources are labor-based, the recruitment has to somehow match these expectations. As participant VP1 states:

“Since you get points for placing people in jobs, you can’t load your entire program up with people who are not eligible. This is an issue, for example, with some ESOL programs where two thirds of their clients ... do not have documentation. [These programs] can put themselves at risk for not being able to meet job outcomes because they can’t get jobs for these clients. But in terms of who we want to serve, we want to serve everybody...”

The Intricacies of Student Enrollment and Waitlists

Of all the ESOL programs surveyed in this study, VP1 and VP2 are two of the programs reporting the most robust enrollment. Both have a capacity that ranges from 450 to 800 students, and at the time of this report, both were fully enrolled, and had been fully or almost fully enrolled for the last six years. According to both interviewees, their long record serving foreign populations and their solid reputation in doing so has helped them meet the enrollment demands. None of these programs invests considerably in strategizing for student recruitment. Both rely on word of mouth, and on regular online platforms (e.g., Massachusetts Literacy Hotline, DESE). However, since recruiting the high-school population poses some challenge, and this is one of the capacities of VP1, the program also advertises its high-school-based classes through radio announcements and flyer distribution. For recruitment purposes, this program relies on a full-time recruitment specialist.

Enrollment and filling each class slot demand some kind of creative managerial maneuvering, especially during the summer. At this point, VP1 says:

“It’s never worth running all classes during the months of July and August. So, at the end [of the summer] we call everyone that was in level zero, level one, level two and so on, and say, ‘Are you coming back? Here is when the classes are. Are you coming? Are you still here?’ And we fill those classes up, and then we take everybody on the waiting list so that we start in September with our classes full. Some people will leave because they got a job, some people for whatever reason—this seems to be the year of the pregnancy! So, then we try to refill those slots.”

In addition, both programs have long waitlists. In the case of VP2, applicants’ wait time can stretch up to three or four months, and even six to eight months for the “popular classes,” namely, those classes involving job placement.

Typically, the waitlist in these classes can reach between 50 and 80 applicants. “Basically, students have to wait a whole cycle in order to

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get in,” reports participant VP2. For VP1, the program waitlist, which also extends up to three or four months, is usually filled with up to 200 individuals. In VP1’s words:

“An interesting thing about the waiting list is that we have 200 people on it, and you can assume that 100 of those people are smart enough to be on multiple waiting lists. So, within the city, if you add up all the programs, the waiting list may be 2,000, but you have to take with a grain of salt that number and think that, on average, people put themselves on two or three waiting lists.”

For both programs the *modus operandi* is to alert people when they anticipate having a slot opening. As VP1 explained, when potential enrollees inquire about class openings, enrollment staff take note of the individual needs, where they are in terms of English proficiency, and what their time availability is to enroll in class. Our interviewee says:

“If we call [potential enrollees] a month from now it will probably be the same [availability]. If we call them six months from now, things can be different. So, we always have a rolling waiting list for some of our classes, we almost always can fill a slot tomorrow, or we might have to call 10 different people to find someone who still has the same availability.”

Two things are worth noting at this juncture. First, that filling the slots of afternoon classes is more difficult than filling those that run at a different time. Afternoon classes may interfere with parenting responsibilities (e.g., the need to care for kids after school hours) or with employment. This is precisely what other ESOL programs keep in mind when offering morning and afternoon classes. As we will see below, being able to do so is almost a luxury that programs like VP1 cannot afford due to its space limitations. A second thing worth noting relates to a recent change in DESE’s ESOL funding requirement: While formerly paying per classes filled, the funder is now paying per slot; in other words, if a seat becomes vacant, that slot or seat needs to be filled immediately with another student. As VP2 explains, this new requirement has impacted not only the program’s usual recruitment efforts, but also various aspects of the teaching and learning process:

“If a student leaves for college or a job training program, that means that we have to fill that slot with another student, and that has been really, really hard [because] for a student that comes in in the middle of the semester it can be challenging; for teachers [it] is very disruptive to get a new student in week eight. The curriculum needs to change in some ways and we have to be more flexible. So, it has been very challenging to fill in a seat at any given time.”

Staff Capacity and Competencies

One of the strongest commonalities between programs VP1 and VP2, as well as the other two community-based programs represented in these case studies, is the extent to which they value and praise their teaching staff. These are staff with a solid teaching record, teachers who may or may not hold an ESOL teaching certificate, but who nonetheless have taught various levels of English in high-school, college or other educational settings. Both programs have teachers who hold either a bachelor’s degree or, in few cases, a master’s degree. But most important of all, these are teachers with great experience and familiarity with the ESOL learning challenges of foreign-born/immigrant populations. Both programs have a teaching staff able to meet the needs of the curriculum and the enrollment capacity. How to keep them, or not to lose them to better paid high-school teaching positions, has been challenging at times; however, both vocational programs, each with six teachers, have managed to retain teaching staff by making part-time teaching positions into benefited or full-time positions. As VP2 states: “Ninety-five percent of our teachers are full time. We have been fortunate to come up with creative ideas to combine part-time positions to make them full time.” The following two interview excerpts from both participants explains this further:

ONE OF THE STRONGEST COMMONALITIES BETWEEN PROGRAMS... IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY VALUE AND PRAISE THEIR TEACHING STAFF.

VP2: “Some of our teachers have certification. Some don’t. We do not necessarily require certification, but we do look for experience. We require at least three or five years of teaching

experience to immigrant and refugee populations. When we hire, we ask teachers to do a sample lesson so that we can see that they can actually teach, and sometimes we get feedback from students. At least two of our teachers have taught here for at least 10 years. Our staff retention and student retention are pretty high.”

VP1: “[For these teachers] to be certified is not necessarily relevant because they teach adults. [Our] manager is a teacher. We do have three people who are teaching almost full time and they have certificates in ESOL teaching. They have been teaching for many, many years and they are constantly going to different professional development activities as well. They are not K–12 certified but they do have ESOL certification. All our teachers have been teaching for almost 20 years. We have been lucky to have fairly stable teaching staff and a very qualified teaching staff.”

As we reiterate below, both programs cite their teaching staff as their biggest strength, but the concern around losing them due to budgetary constraints, or the swinging patterns and requirements of funding mechanisms, is always present.

Program Infrastructure

Program infrastructure has been a deficiency in both vocational programs, and remains so for VP1, which hasn’t had its own teaching space, nor the space to carry out some of its managerial functions, for over a year. The program has recently partnered with other community organizations to operate in its facilities. To convey the magnitude of this deficiency, VP1 describes the following:

“We literally are depending upon the generosity of the community... We can’t hold night classes, just because the [temporary facility] is not opening consistently in the evenings... People can’t just walk in like walking into a school anymore... One of our ESOL programs runs [elsewhere] ... In the closet we have a photocopier, they put in there some of our internet stuff, we have 20 laptops to teach students, and then the staff have their own laptops. So, one person is teaching there at a given moment, and then around the corner, in the community center. So, each class cycles through [the facility] to be able to have their computers every day. And

then we have a classroom for afternoon classes on [this street] which is a mile up the street.”

For VP2, infrastructure was a deficiency for a period of time, but not as severe as in the case of VP1. At one point it was forced to run its classes in a basement; now it has seven classrooms, two computer labs, two smart boards and technology carts with a projector and films.

Learning Outcome Assessment

As mentioned, ESOL programs are designed to meet the needs of students for whom English is not their first language. The goal of these programs is to prepare students for success in school, jobs and in society through the development of cultural awareness and English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. To these aims, programs set learning outcomes, which describe the essential learning that students have to achieve and reliably demonstrate at each level to move toward program completion. How these programs keep track of the learning outcomes varies based on the type of programs and on the sources from which they secure funding. The primary purpose of these assessments is to determine the areas of language in which students need improvement, to improve student learning, increase ESOL instructional capacity and comply with funders and government mandates. Both vocational programs in our sample reported being very consistent in assessing learning outcomes and in complying with the funding criteria. Both programs reported assessing student achievement through pre- and post-standardized testing. With regard to program VP1, our respondent says:

“We pre-test everybody in the fall; we test everybody again in around December. If they disappear we have a post-test, because our funding requirements are that we pre- and post-test. And then we post-test people again in June. So, I think this year like 85 percent of students made learning gains on these tests. We have been pretty consistent and successful.”

According to participant VP1, learning gains reached to “near optimum,” because the new administrator of the program set the goal of “teaching to the test.” Even though these results have secured funding, pedagogically speaking, “teaching to the test” is by no means the way to go. Our respondent adds:

“It is not the most useful [way], but if we are going to get checked on it... I think our gains went up by 10 percent because we spent more time preparing students. I mean, if you want to be able to continue to run your program, you have to be able to show numbers. It’s not that we teach students anything un-valuable, just maybe less valuable with two or three classes, but that is okay.”

OUTCOME ASSESSMENTS ARE MEASURED BY PROFICIENCY LEVEL TESTS. FOR HOWEVER ACCURATE THESE TESTS TURN OUT TO BE, THEY ARE NOT CAPTURING THE WHOLE PICTURE OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS.

Outcome assessments are measured by proficiency level tests. And, for however accurate these tests turn out to be, they are not capturing the whole picture of the teaching and learning process, nor of the efforts made on both ends. Within the package of ESOL classes offered at VP1, those geared toward vocational training are taught in the context of the job, which may mean that students do not need to show a high level of proficiency. It could even mean that the student just needs to know the words required to perform as a pharmacy technician, certified nursing assistant, bank teller or maintenance worker. Participant VP1 states:

“When [refugees] arrive here they have very little English. We create a resume for them, we prep them and we also work with the employer—like, if you need eight people who can cut fish at night, these are your people. If you happen to have a Somali-speaking manager who never needs to speak English? You know, my grandparents never spoke English even though they lived here. And that is just what is going on—that’s what I mean by [saying] there are really ESL needs at so many different levels.”

If the goal were to assess outcome and put a dollar value on what the program is doing for the labor market, some of this value would be represented by employing those students who did not have a job, and by giving those who already had a job a better job or making them into better employees. Measuring job promotion has been, until now, an untapped area. VP1 says:

“In our high school program, for example, we have a student who came to us for an incumbent worker program (...that no longer exists). She was an incredibly good student. So, she came back one day and said, ‘My supervisor said that she can tell

enormous differences between when I started the high school program and now, in terms of my written communication.’ So, the return on investment in the value of the work that people are getting and their promotions is a totally untapped area. Sometimes people will come and say, ‘I’ve gotten a promotion’ and then you can try to probe if in fact he is speaking English better.”

In addition to job promotions, increased job productivity is also hard to measure because student graduates are placed in different jobs.

Program VP2 assesses ESOL learning outcomes or job placements through the same standardized testing VP1 uses, but, according to participant VP2, the best assessment is what they do after they graduate: Are they entering a job training program? Are they entering a community college or some other educational institution? Our respondent says:

“We implement this idea, even from when students enter the program... they do workshops, fill out forms, and continue relationships and partnership with an adviser. Even after they finish [our ESOL program], the advisers reach out to them every semester when they are in college. If there is nothing to report it’s okay, but we keep in touch.... Staying in touch with our students is not difficult because in some ways they kind of become part of our family when they finish 1-10 levels and then they begin the job training program.”

And yet, it is still hard to keep track of the students, especially those who, for various reasons (e.g., more hours on the job or a job change), do not complete the program. For participant VP2, these assessment measures are limited, and as a policy recommendation she would like to propose adding a couple of standardized measures used in other states, such as the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System.

Funding Mechanism

Running a vocational program successfully means having to navigate through the challenges posed by budgetary constraints and potential funding cuts. Both vocational programs we interviewed run on a combination of funding sources that includes

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private funding, state funding and donation money. Even though funding cuts have not occurred recently, program administrators constantly worry that a budget cut will force them to make drastic changes in the services

they offer. Program VP2 suffered one such cutback in 2009. This was a 5 percent cut, which made the organization eliminate one class level from the package of ESOL services offered and add additional hours to another level. Fortunately, the program was not forced to reduce its ESOL staff, but in the face of funding cuts one of the strategies would be to let some of the ESOL advising team go, and that is, precisely, the part of the staff able to maneuver to boost student enrollment and retention. And it is enrollment and retention that facilitate keeping track of graduates after they leave the program. According to VP2:

“We’ve been very fortunate to be able to receive DESE funding. It definitely provides us with the possibility to run a good program. But, working at a nonprofit means that we have to do constant fundraising, and organize a gala. We have a team of people involved in ways to raise money. It’s a non-stop thing. That is the most challenging part of our work.”

VP1 echoed these words and added that its ESOL program would not be able to exist had it not been for the state core funding, and the resourceful development team that is constantly raising money to strengthen specific ESOL services. At this juncture, VP1 states:

“We are not depending on one single stream of funding. But without the core funding I couldn’t turn around and say, ‘Oh, let’s pay for this with our private gift money.’ That wouldn’t work. So, we need public funding. Philosophically, we think that [these vocational programs] should be for public funding before we get to private donors.”

Weaknesses and Strengths

Interviewing ESOL providers allowed us to grasp not only the essential role they have in our society, but also the many challenges they face in carrying out this role. In the case of these two vocational programs, for the most part the challenges they face go hand in hand with having to accommodate various limitations derived from lack of resources. In the case of both VP1 and VP2, the most severe of these limitations is lack of space to run the classes and provide what teaching staff need for delivering their very best to the students. “If we had our own space,” claims VP1, “our program could do much better... there would be better communication among staff, and the staff and students. We could run more things with more flexibility.” But, she adds: “To have our own space we have to have more funding.”

Program VP2 has its own space; however, accommodating students and teachers comfortably is still an ongoing issue. VP2 says:

“Classrooms are very tight and it’s very challenging to operate that kind of program in Boston. Chairs are really small and it’s not always ideal for adults to have small chairs. Our agency operates from 9 to 5 and so we have office hours 9 to 5. There are not evening classes. Space is a challenge.”

With regard to program strengths, both participants highlighted their teaching staff, because due to their professionalism, experience and commitment they are able to deliver good quality services and retain a large percentage of their student population until graduation. Further, it is because of high quality teachers that both programs display strengths in the areas of enrollment, retention, graduation and transitioning to job-based programs.

This is particularly important given that ESOL teachers are described by and large as a transient population due to the precarious and unstable working conditions they face. It is a common trend among teachers to switch to ESOL settings when the larger labor market does not seem promising. In other words, ESOL teaching is a type of “standby” job while waiting for more stable opportunities in high-school settings. In anticipating staff attrition, both vocational programs have made great financial efforts to convert

their teaching positions into “benefitted positions.” Programs VP1 and VP2 say, respectively:

“Our strength is that we are able to attract and maintain valuable and talented staff, and probably part of the reason that we are able to do that is that we offer benefits, health care, 401K.... This is part of a larger agency. Also, our strength is in our ability to offer the quality—we require a level of excellence that we want to see, and we have ESL in different areas. We are doing a good job and I think our outcomes are evidence of it.”

“Staff retention and being able to provide placement and post-placement retention for our graduates—these are two things that we are happy about.”

INCUMBENT WORKER PROGRAMS

The purpose of incumbent worker programs is to secure and empower the existing workforce through continued learning and career advancement so that participants can obtain desirable skills for current or potential employers (e.g., improve employee retention, business competitiveness, customer satisfaction) and improve their own job prospects and goals.

Our sample of incumbent worker ESOL programs consists of two hospital-based programs with a long record of commitment to the local workforce: Incumbent Worker Program 1 (IWP1) and Incumbent Worker Program 2 (IWP2). For almost two decades, both programs have invested in strengthening skills through targeted training for their non-English speaking foreign-born employees—a good number of whom reported having foundational language skills gaps at the time of being hired. Both programs are very similar in their goals, their capacities and their success level. Both have also partnered with a nonprofit workforce-development agency offering vocational ESOL to provide classes that transcend basic “life-skills English” to help employees improve communication skills in the areas that are pertinent to their specific jobs (e.g., medical terminology classes, business writing, conflict communication, interpersonal effectiveness and time management).

More specifically, IWP1 is an academic medical center that, since 2005, has offered four on-site “pipeline” programs to train its frontline workers into hard to fill

roles. IWP1 also offers academic counseling, on-site academic assessment, on-site pre-college, and college-level science courses offered free of charge. Because one of its goals is to make employment opportunities available to qualified community residents, IWP1 also provides training internships conducted in partnerships with other community agencies. ESOL and basic computer skills predate this umbrella of the pipeline program services. However, they are currently integrated in the workforce program and are specifically designed to meet the needs of an increasing foreign-born population predominantly composed of people from Central and South America and the Caribbean—and more recently, from various African and Asian countries. ESOL classes run from September through June and cost just over \$2,000 per slot. IWP1 enrolls approximately 25 students per year and hosts two- to three-hour classes two days per week distributed in five training levels.

The success of IWP1 is evident in the workers who have advanced their education and job skills, moved into new jobs within the facility, and increased their lifetime earning potential. As IWP1 reflects, the success of the ESOL and the pipeline programs also manifests in the ability of employees to gain access to additional education and training as a direct result of gaining English proficiency. The program’s success is also demonstrated in the partnerships developed between the medical center and other peer facilities in order to attend to the increasing demand from their incumbent population. For example, IWP1 pools students and infrastructure with IWP2, including a new building with fully ESOL-equipped rooms, to be able to offer more classes at a variety of levels and meeting times. This has helped address concerns about trying to meet the needs of ESOL participants at different levels (e.g., beginning, intermediate and advanced) within a single class at just one employer. New managers of front-line workers encouraging people to pursue language skills and making schedule adjustments to facilitate class attendance has increased enrollments.

According to IWP1, one of the challenges that the program faced in the past was the lack of data on student class progress, professional advancement and what incumbent workers were learning in the ESOL program or the pipeline program. Now, through pre- and post- standardized tests and regular

reports on results, the program can consistently measure acquired English skills. According to a report on the program's benefits, in 2017, 19 employees were enrolled in ESOL classes; 107 employees participated in a 10-week computer skills class; 11 attended citizenship classes; and 123 attended financial literacy class (Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, p. 44). Further, and as IWP1 reported, it is not uncommon to see workers move from ESOL classes into college programs on-site and into pipeline programs to enhance their career opportunities within the health-care field. At the same time, it remains common to see incumbent workers in need of English skills but prevented from achieving these due to family responsibilities, a second job or other barriers.

Another challenge identified by IWP1 is that of funding. Grants through the state's Workforce Training Fund are not available to hospitals because they self-insure for unemployment insurance benefits. Moreover, such funds require employers to pay for employee time spent in training, which is difficult for hospitals that rely on employees working particular shifts to meet patient needs. IWP1 suggested that greater flexibility within the Workforce Training Program could help expand ESOL services in the health-care industry and enable more employees to access higher paying jobs within the sector.

As noted earlier, IWP2 is a non-academic medical center with very similar ESOL features to those of IWP1. The program offers its service staff (e.g., environmental services, food service, parking/visitor services, supply chain workers) basic skills development and the chance to learn skills that will further these workers' careers. Like IWP1, IWP2 recognizes that access to a safe and supportive educational environment is vital to academic success and to ensuring future economic mobility and opportunity. IWP2 has a long record partnering with the Boston Public Schools to support and empower individuals to overcome barriers due to low socio-economic and immigrant statuses. Hence, the program is currently focused heavily on promoting English language and computer skills, with courses offered to strengthen professional communication, pronunciation, computer basics and ESOL.

IT REMAINS COMMON TO SEE INCUMBENT WORKERS IN NEED OF ENGLISH SKILLS BUT PREVENTED FROM ACHIEVING THESE DUE TO FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, A SECOND JOB OR OTHER BARRIERS.

The primary purpose of ESOL classes is to help employees communicate and interact with supervisors, patients and co-workers. ESOL runs from September to June and offers Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced level classes. The program instructors customize class materials based on the competencies required in the specific

job placement. For example, IWP2 provides ESOL classes specifically tailored to researchers and fellows on a J1 visa, most of whom are Ph.D. scientists.

Similar to program IWP1, all classes are free of charge and are complemented with other services of the incumbent workforce program similar to those offered by program IWP1 (e.g., citizenship services, computer skills, online college preparation program). According to IWP2, the program started with grant and foundation funding, and due to its success, it has moved toward self-funding to strengthen its capacities. The program now has a pathway from ESOL level 1 through college; for this it partners with the College for America at Southern New Hampshire University to offer an innovative online competency-based degree program aimed at increasing access to higher education for working adults. In 2017, the partnership with College for America helped program IWP2 secure an annual enrollment of 80 students with a pathway to college. Tracking progress on career advancement is still done on more of an ad-hoc basis at this point but IWP2 is seeking ways to track progress on career progression in the future. ESOL services are seen as a "ticket to a better career at the hospital." For example, one employee moved from a maintenance position in environmental services to a front desk position. Another employee moved into a lab position with better hours and pay. Our respondent credited both moves directly to their taking ESOL classes provided by the hospital. In the first case, general ESOL instruction improved the employee's communication skills enough to take on a more patient-focused position. In the second case, vocational ESOL instruction provided in the context of the job gave the employee the necessary vocabulary to work in a laboratory setting. Our respondent also noted that many employees do not necessarily move across departments or positions but simply become more

productive on the job because of the ESOL services that they have received, which serves to improve patient care and hospital services while reducing staff turnover.

Currently, program IWP2 pays for 20 ESOL slots at the vocational ESOL agency, and between 12 and 15 slots in college programs. Both either fill or come close to filling the available slots. In addition, approximately 12 and 15 students complete the program. The estimate indicates that no more than five students dropped out of these ESOL classes. Reasons for dropping out are related to challenges with shifting work responsibilities and/or for family-related reasons. According to program IWP2, to address this dropping-out factor, the ESOL program moved to a pre-shift or post-shift class schedule to meet students' needs.

Summary

We've taken a close-up look at three types of ESOL programs serving a large segment of the immigrant population within the Greater Boston area and, in one case, in Western Massachusetts. Based on stakeholder testimonies, it is clear that these programs have made great efforts to help integrate this increasingly diverse foreign-born population. It is clear too that integration has meant more than simply securing citizenship status or a voter registration card. It has also meant being able to communicate in English and learn to navigate different mechanisms that can increase one's opportunity to achieve financial stability through different employment niches and career pathways. In its own capacity, each of the presented programs (community-based, vocational and incumbent worker ESOL programs) has played a vital role in the socio-economic integration of immigrants in the local community and workforce. It is interesting to note that, even though community-based, vocational and incumbent worker ESOL programs are different, each is helping provide a solid platform from which immigrant populations may find their way into the very fabric of society, and each program in its own way is feeding directly or indirectly into the workforce.

From the evidence presented, it is possible to assert that these three types of ESOL programs do not present a drastic divergence, nor should they be placed in some sort of unbridgeable ranking where funding should be channeled to one type of program over the other. Further, even though our study cases weigh heavily on efforts to provide work-related skill-building for immigrants seeking to climb the labor ladder or to secure an undergraduate or graduate degree, it is also important to acknowledge that not everybody plans to or will achieve full integration into society. For some people, low levels of English language ability and/or limited education will be the maximum attained. In light of that, the question that lingers in the air is how low-level ESOL services can compete for funding against high-level ESOL services?

It is also worth noting the call that program administrators make throughout these interviews for expanding our understanding about the intricacies of the functioning of these programs, the challenges they face, the lessons learned, what each of them offers, as well as of the need to transcend the economic view of what is "measurable."

Finally, throughout these testimonies, we find robust evidence that community-based and vocational programs struggle severely to meet the exigencies of their funding institutions, oftentimes risking enrollment due to poor infrastructure, or staff retention due to the low-paying and unstable conditions of ESOL teaching positions. Thus, efforts should be made to correct these deficiencies if the goal is to further succeed in assisting immigrant success and incorporation.

CHAPTER THREE

The Economic and Social Return on Investment for ESOL Programs

While providing ESOL services to immigrants is a laudable goal in and of itself, the Commonwealth has limited resources and so it seems reasonable to ask what the societal return might be on this investment. Indeed, the goals of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) are quite broad and include both economic as well as social aims that are similar to those of many educational interventions. In terms of economic objectives, the Department of Education requires ESOL programs to report on their efforts to help adults acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to obtain employment and/or transition to postsecondary education and training. Yet there is also an expectation that ESOL instruction will enable participants to become full partners in the educational development of their children, improve economic opportunities for their family and understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

In this section, we assess the economic and social return on investment in ESOL programs in Greater Boston. First, we review what prior studies have shown regarding the effectiveness of ESOL instruction and the returns to gaining English language proficiency. We then examine the effectiveness of the ESOL system in Greater Boston and throughout the Commonwealth both over time and relative to comparable state systems. Finally, we link the limited data available on education and employment outcomes to assess the economic value of ESOL programs in Greater Boston and place this in the context of the broader societal return on investment.

WHILE PROVIDING ESOL SERVICES TO IMMIGRANTS IS A LAUDABLE GOAL IN AND OF ITSELF, THE COMMONWEALTH HAS LIMITED RESOURCES AND SO IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO ASK WHAT THE SOCIETAL RETURN MIGHT BE ON THIS INVESTMENT.

Measuring the Value of English Language Proficiency

Our landscape analysis revealed that as of 2017, approximately

11.3 percent of the population in Greater Boston (320,708 individuals) reported that they were Limited English Proficient (LEP) according to the American Community Survey. Of these individuals, approximately 241,530 are of working age (i.e., between 18 and 64 years) and unlikely to receive ESOL services through school. Based on the data that we collected, we estimate that there are only 11,600 spaces per year across the 116 programs identified in the Greater Boston area. Given the size of the population needing services and the number of annual slots, it would take just over 20 years to meet the existing demand for ESOL services—let alone keep pace with the ESOL-learning population, which expands each year due to continued immigration. Yet if we are to consider expanding ESOL programs to meet demand, it would be prudent to ask in advance how effective and efficient these programs are regarding both economic and social outcomes.

Economic Outcomes

In the United States, the ability to speak English may affect a person's ability to earn income for a variety of reasons. Difficulty speaking English can adversely affect one's ability to obtain a job, maintain employment, pursue an upward career trajectory and earn a living wage in the U.S. labor market. Employers may avoid hiring otherwise qualified individuals who have difficulty communicating effectively in English. Conversely, people who have difficulty with English may feel uncomfortable applying for jobs they would otherwise be qualified for but that require proficiency in English.

Previous research has examined the relationship between language skills and earnings. Several studies have shown that language attributes play an important role in explaining the wage differences in earnings among Hispanic and non-Hispanic white workers (Reimers, 1983; Greiner, 1984; McManus, Gould and Welch, 1983). Other studies have found a positive relationship between earnings of immigrants and the length of time in the host country, often interpreted as an indication of the degree to which immigrants have assimilated into the host country's labor market (Chiswick, 1978; Carliner, 1980; Borjas, 1985). Finally, there is evidence to suggest that wage differences often explained by ethnicity, nativity and time in the United States can actually be explained by differences associated with English-language skills (McManus, Gould and Welch 1983).

More recently, a Census Bureau study showed that people who spoke a language other than English at home were less likely to be employed and less likely to find full-time work when employed. In addition, even having found full-time employment, those who spoke a language other than English experienced lower median earnings than those who spoke only English (Day and Shin, 2005). Even more importantly, this study made use of a new question added to the Census in 2000 to measure labor market outcomes according to the degree to which non-English speakers could speak English (i.e., very well, well, not well, not at all)—rather than just focusing on proficiency. This is an important distinction because workers might also experience labor market penalties for their immigrant status, aside from their English proficiency. However, this study provides a direct link between how well one speaks English and how well one succeeds in the labor market.

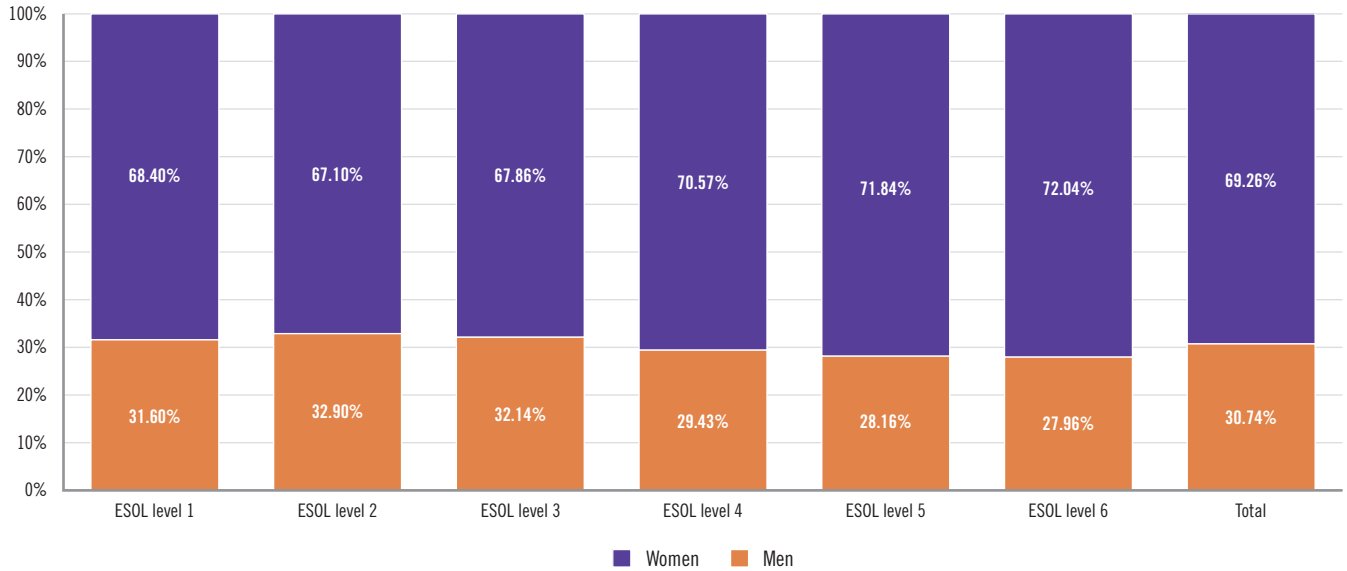
The Census study revealed that among those who spoke another language, employment, work status and earnings varied directly with their ability to speak English. Those with the lowest English speaking ability had the lowest employment rate, lowest rate of full-time employment and lowest median earnings (Day and Shin, 2005). On average, workers who spoke only English earned \$5,600 per year more than people who spoke another language. However, the differences in earnings between those who spoke English at the highest ability (very well) and English-only speakers was relatively small (\$966). The earnings difference

between the “very well” and “well” levels of English speaking was \$7,000—the largest gap between adjacent proficiency levels.

These economic outcomes also varied by demographic characteristics that align with program participation. This suggests that individuals for whom English speaking matters the most for economic outcomes are also those who are more likely to seek out ESOL services. For example, the Census Bureau study found that women suffer a higher employment penalty than men, perhaps explaining why two-thirds of ESOL participants in DESE-funded programs are women (see **Figure 30**). Moreover, the gender split was consistent across all ESOL levels from 1 through 6. This is important to be able to determine whether ESOL programs are serving those with the greatest need rather than those who are most able to acquire language proficiency and succeed in the labor market anyway.

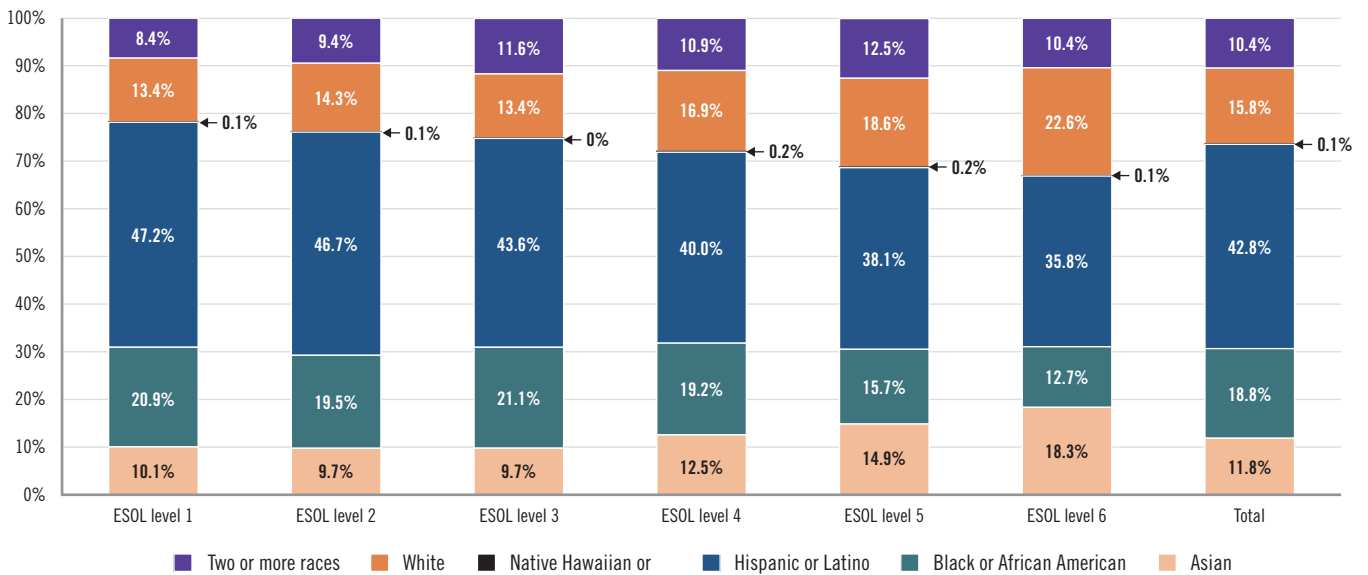
Similarly, the Census study found that at most ability levels, white non-Hispanics and Asian non-Hispanics had a higher percentage employed, a higher percentage working full time, and earned more than black non-Hispanics or Hispanics. **Figure 31** shows blacks and Hispanics were the two groups most likely to enroll in DESE-funded ESOL programs, at 18.2 and 42.8 percent, respectively, and they represent even higher shares at lower ESOL levels—again confirming that ESOL services in Massachusetts appear to be serving those with greater need. Interestingly, the relationships between English-speaking ability and employment status, work status and earnings did not differ among various language groups according to the Census study, suggesting that all non-English speakers are equally likely to benefit from ESOL services regardless of the native language that they speak.

FIGURE 30
ESOL Enrollment in DESE-Funded Programs by Level and Gender, Massachusetts FY2017



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, FY 2017.

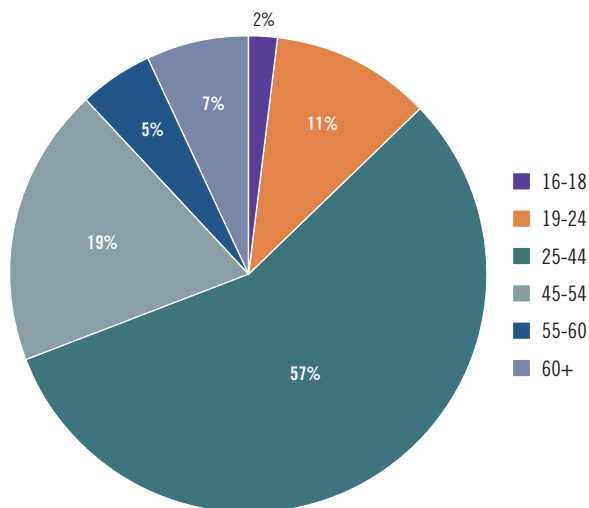
FIGURE 31
**ESOL Enrollment by Level and Race/Ethnicity, Massachusetts FY2017
 DESE-Funded ESOL Programs**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, FY 2017.

Finally, it is worth noting that roughly three-quarters of ESOL enrollment in DESE-funded programs is among the working age LEP population (25–54 years). (See **Figure 32**.) According to a 2016 survey conducted by English for New Bostonians, the overwhelming majority of ESOL students (85%) were in the labor force—that is, either currently employed or looking for work—yet only 62 percent were employed (ENB, 2016). In response, ESOL services have shifted from teaching “life-skills English”—the communication and community skills that immigrant and refugee students need to navigate their daily lives—to preparing learners for postsecondary opportunities, career training and better paying jobs.

FIGURE 32
ESOL Enrollment by Age, Massachusetts FY2017



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, FY 2017.

As this brief review of the literature has demonstrated, it is quite clear that English speaking ability influences a worker’s ability to succeed, regardless of the particular language spoken at home. Moreover, as the literature has demonstrated, the degree to which a person can communicate in English influences employment status and, once employed, his or her ability to find full-time, year-round employment. Even among non-native speakers who have full employment, those with the highest ability to speak English have the highest earnings, approaching those of English-only speakers.

While it has been shown that the Census Bureau’s English ability question is highly correlated with scores on national proficiency tests, it is unclear how the Census categories align with ESOL class levels. For example, **Figure 33** shows that a self-assessment of speaking English “very well” in response to the Census question is associated with a mean test score that falls in the range of intermediate proficiency (265–338) on the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, typically given at the conclusion of a given ESOL class level. Note that this is quite similar to the score achieved by those who report only speaking English. Speaking English “well” is associated with the basic level, while “not very well” and “not at all” fall into the below basic range.

Yet there is no such crosswalk between the Census categories and ESOL class levels. To some extent, ESOL levels 1–3 can be thought to correspond to the basic level, ESOL levels 4–5 may correspond with the intermediate level, and ESOL levels 6–7 with proficient (see Appendix C for information on these levels). Yet ESOL providers report that there is a lot of variation in the curriculum and instruction such that it is unlikely that the correlation between the two scales would hold across all programs or all participants. As such, while there is likely some economic value between moving from one ESOL level to another, we cannot say for certain how it corresponds to the returns found in the literature associated with speaking English “very well,” “well” or “not well.” Moreover, no such research has been conducted at the program level to associate different ESOL levels with better employment and earnings outcomes, largely due to a lack of resources to allow sufficient data collection and record-keeping to conduct those types of rigorous analyses.

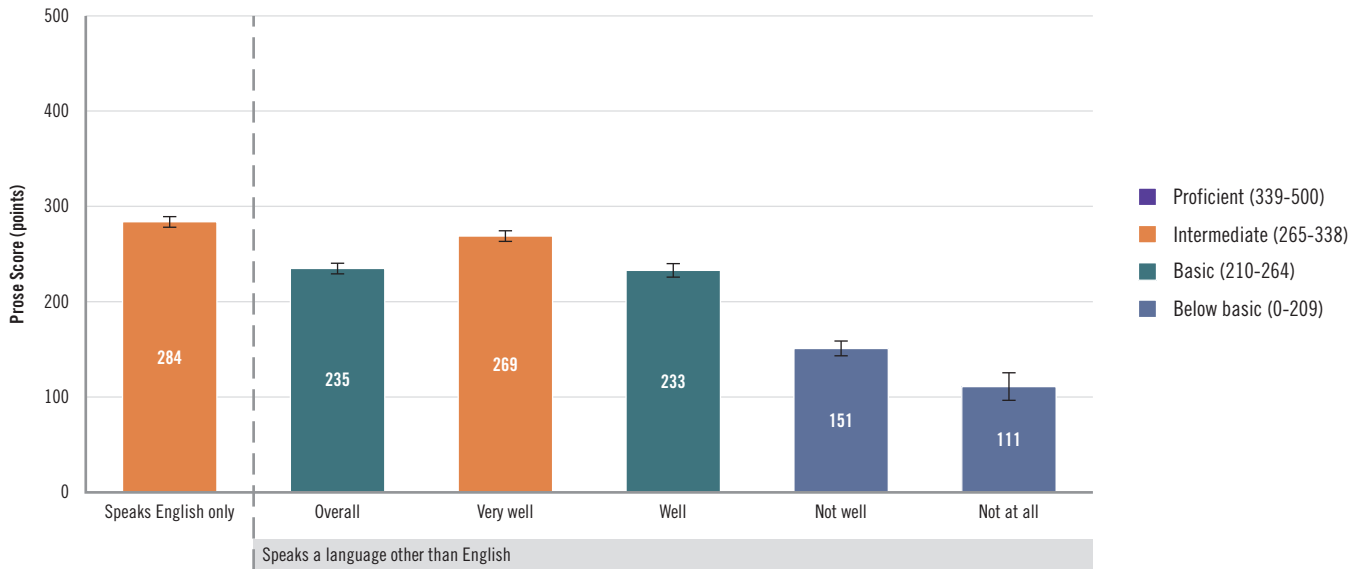
Social Outcomes

In terms of social outcomes, the literature has examined four main areas: health, education, finance and civic participation. Some aspects of these social outcomes are inextricably linked to the economic outcomes discussed above. For example, children in non-English-speaking households are less likely to have health insurance or contact with a doctor, likely because their parents do not have jobs that provide employer-sponsored health insurance (Yu et al., 2006).

However, non-English-speaking parents are also less likely to take their children to emergency rooms or to

FIGURE 33

Average Prose Literacy Scores by Self-Reported English Ability National Assessment of Adult Literacy



Source: Vickstrom, Erik. 2015. How Well Do You Speak English? Assessing the Validity of the American Community Survey English-Ability Question. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census Blogs, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/research-matters/2015/10/how-well-do-you-speak-english-assessing-the-validity-of-the-american-community-survey-english-ability-question.html>

report delayed/foregone care or discrimination experienced in health-care settings. Such children were also more likely to travel to other countries for health-care services (Yu et al., 2006). Another study found that LEP patients were 24 percent more likely to return to the emergency room within 72 hours of an initial visit, possibly indicating a different quality of care received by LEP patients than English-proficient patients (Ngai et al., 2016). Overall, these findings suggest that the lack of English proficiency creates a social barrier to achieving health outcomes.

Not surprisingly, English proficiency also has a sizable effect on educational outcomes for immigrant children. Speaking English very badly or badly can explain 27 to 33 percent of the achievement gap between native and immigrant children in standardized language-related tests (Fenoll, 2017).

Consumers with limited English proficiency are less likely than other U.S. residents to have mainstream bank accounts and are more likely to use alternative financial services, such as payday lenders and check-cashing services, which often charge high fees and have other unfavorable terms and conditions (U.S.

Government Accountability Office, 2010). As a result, limited English language skills may make people more vulnerable to predatory financial services and fraudulent tactics.

Most of the attempts to measure and assess civic engagement and participation among immigrant populations have been limited. Civic engagement is often measured based on the willingness of individuals to participate in the decennial census and the likelihood of being involved in the court system. For example, the Census Bureau raised concerns in a 2017 memorandum after field workers reported that non-native English speakers and immigrants were frequently and spontaneously sharing concerns about the confidentiality of their personal information and fears about how the information might be used punitively. Staff also reported an increase in falsifications and greater refusal to complete surveys during usability studies while preparing for the 2020 Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Similarly, research by the Vera Institute of Justice showed that parents' language barriers increased the likelihood of their children being prosecuted, detained or sentenced to incarceration following an arrest (VERA Institute of Justice, 2010).

The Effectiveness of the ESOL System in Greater Boston

Before we assess the return on investment in ESOL programs, it is necessary to establish some baseline of their effectiveness in improving outcomes for students. Under WIOA, states are expected to better align their workforce development systems with their education and economic development efforts to create collective responses to economic and labor market challenges on the national, state and local levels. WIOA encourages an improved response to labor market needs by connecting broad performance to outcomes that require an understanding of the correlation between training investments and economic return.

As a result, programs that receive federal funding are required to reach certain target levels based on three indicators:

1. Demonstrated improvements in skill levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language; numeracy; problem solving; English language acquisition and other literacy skills;
2. Placement in, retention in or completion of postsecondary education; training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement; and
3. Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Although our landscape analysis revealed a range of ESOL programs operating in Greater Boston, due to resource limitations many programs do not keep records that can be used to assess effectiveness. In this section, we draw on data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), collected for all programs that receive funding under WIOA. While not exhaustive of all types of programs in Greater Boston, DESE-funded programs are some of the largest in the area, serving most of the

region's LEP population. They largely provide general ESOL services, with some courses providing limited integration with education and/or civics.

Participation

One way to assess the performance of an ESOL program is to examine time spent participating. If students do not attend for a significant number of hours then it is unlikely that they will make measurable progress in learning (Soricone et al., 2011).¹ Similarly, if students cycle into and out of the program multiple times in a year, then it may be more difficult for them to make continuous progress compared with a period of uninterrupted enrollment. **Figure 34** looks at the number of hours and the number of periods of participation per participant for Massachusetts versus the neighboring state of Connecticut for FY2017.² Note that hours per participant for Massachusetts are higher than those for Connecticut across all ESOL levels. In addition, the average across all levels meets the DESE standard of 130 to 159 hours per year, although hours per participant seem to follow an inverted U-shaped pattern with lower attendance among ESOL levels 1 and 6. Within ESOL Level 1, providers report that lower hours of participation are likely to reflect additional difficulties in obtaining transportation and/or child care that can make ESOL courses particularly challenging. Within ESOL Level 6, providers report that students often gain employment or switch to a new job with higher hours and/or greater responsibility, which can make it difficult to attend all hours of instruction.

Moreover, the periods of participation per student in Massachusetts are very close to 1.0, indicating that students are continuously enrolled for the most part. In comparison, the periods of participation per student in Connecticut are as high as 1.21, indicating a considerable degree of cycling in and out of ESOL courses. We should note that while learning gains are likely to be affected by the degree of participation in ESOL

1. An earlier Boston Foundation report found that learning gains were highest among students who attended 90 or more hours of instruction. Not surprisingly, those who attended 29 hours or less had the lowest percentage of gains.

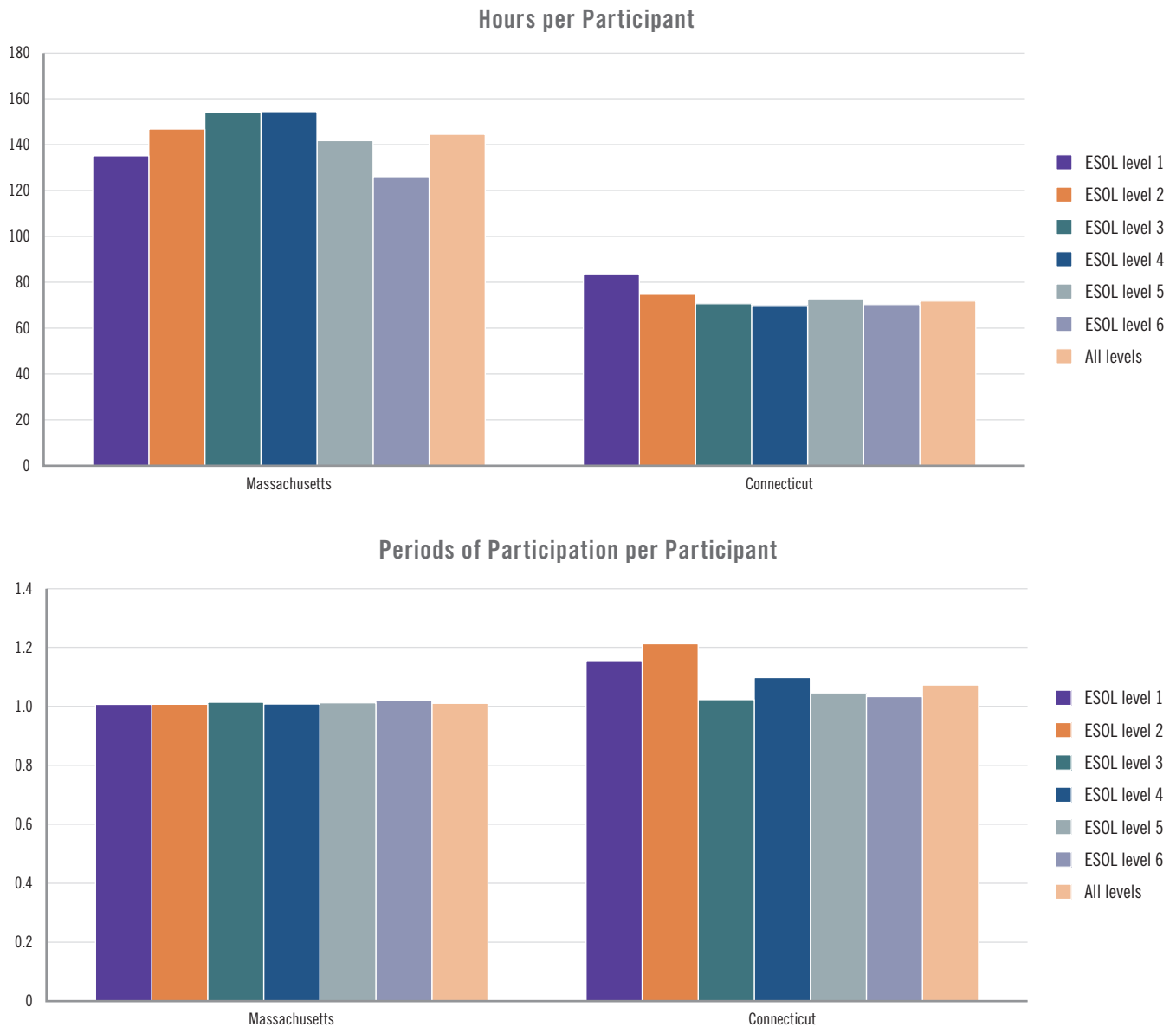
2. A period of participation begins when an individual enrolls in adult education and obtains at least 12 hours of service. When a participant exits the program, the period of participation ends; but if there is a new enrollment during the program year, a new period of participation begins. A participant may have more than one period of participation in a program year.

services, differences in attendance could be more a function of an individual situation than a program's ability to keep that individual engaged and provide good instruction. Indeed, some students may not stay long enough in programs to make progress, and some who make progress may not complete the pre- and post-testing that allow documentation of progress.

Educational Functioning Levels and Measurable Skill Gains

Given the variation in attendance, DESE takes into consideration student enrollment when calculating performance measures. Learning gains for ESOL students are often based on Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs), which measure students' general language ability as well as the four skills of listening

FIGURE 34
Attendance by Enrollment Level DESE-Funded Programs, Massachusetts versus Connecticut, FY2017



Source: Authors' calculations from data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

TABLE 9
Measurable Skill Gains by Entry Level
DESE-Funded Programs, Massachusetts versus Connecticut, FY2017

Entering Educational Functioning Level	Total Number Enrolled	Percent Enrolled	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain	Number who attained a secondary school diploma or its equivalent	Total Number Achieving Measurable Skill Gains	Percentage Achieving Measurable Skill Gains	Percent Separated Before Achieving Measurable Skill Gains	Percent Remaining in Program without Measurable Skill Gains
Massachusetts								
ESOL Level 1	2,247	19%	1,229	3	1,232	54.8%	3.6%	41.5%
ESOL Level 2	2,672	22%	1,555	4	1,559	58.3%	3.5%	38.2%
ESOL Level 3	2,035	17%	1,155	8	1,163	57.1%	2.8%	40.0%
ESOL Level 4	2,049	17%	1,123	5	1,128	55.1%	3.6%	41.4%
ESOL Level 5	1,939	16%	769	8	777	40.1%	4.3%	55.6%
ESOL Level 6	1,030	9%	274	2	276	26.8%	4.3%	68.9%
Totals	11,972	100%	6,105	30	6,135	51.2%	3.6%	45.1%
Connecticut								
ESOL Level 1	623	6%	395	0	395	63.4%	24.2%	12.4%
ESOL Level 2	794	7%	490	0	490	61.7%	24.2%	14.1%
ESOL Level 3	1,973	18%	1,101	0	1,101	55.8%	27.7%	16.5%
ESOL Level 4	3,207	29%	1,393	0	1,393	43.4%	32.6%	24.0%
ESOL Level 5	2,046	19%	931	0	931	45.5%	29.4%	25.1%
ESOL Level 6	2,293	21%	569	0	569	24.8%	43.2%	32.0%
Totals	10,936	100%	4,879	0	4,879	44.6%	32.2%	23.1%

Source: Authors' calculations from data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

comprehension, oral communication, reading and writing. Standardized assessments developed specifically for ESOL students are calibrated to correspond to these levels. The levels are also integrated into the National Reporting System (NRS), which defines student EFLs for federally funded ESOL programs. Student progress for EFLs is assessed through pre- and post-testing procedures approved by DESE and the federal Department of Education.

Under WIOA, programs are required to report Measureable Skill Gain (MSG), a performance measure that includes gains in EFLs, program exit with entry into postsecondary education, or receipt of a secondary credential (e.g., high school diploma or equivalent). **Table 9** reports MSG for Massachusetts versus Connecticut—by entering educational level. We compare MSG by ESOL levels because the percentage

of students enrolled in ESOL level 1 and 6 vary considerably across the two states, and the composition of students could affect comparisons of the overall mean. Overall, just over half (51.2 %) of ESOL students in Massachusetts achieve at least one Measurable Skill Gain compared with only 44.6 percent of students in Connecticut. This is despite Massachusetts' having a greater share of students at lower ESOL levels. Moreover, roughly 30 students attained some sort of secondary credential whereas no students achieved this Measurable Skill Gain in Connecticut. Finally, the percentage of students separating before achieving a Measurable Skill Gain is much lower in Massachusetts than Connecticut as students are much more likely to stay continuously enrolled.

How does performance compare across the two states if we only look at the population of students who were

TABLE 10
**Educational Functioning Level Gain for Pre- and Post-Tested Participants:
 DESE-Funded Programs, Massachusetts versus Connecticut, FY2017**

Entering Educational Functioning Level	Total Number Enrolled	Total Number Enrolled and Tested Pre/Post	Percent Tested Pre/Post	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain	Percentage of those Tested Achieving EFL Gain
Massachusetts					
ESOL Level 1	2,247	1,663	74%	1,232	74%
ESOL Level 2	2,672	2,036	76%	1,558	77%
ESOL Level 3	2,035	1,601	79%	1,167	73%
ESOL Level 4	2,049	1,594	78%	1,127	71%
ESOL Level 5	1,939	1,441	74%	772	54%
ESOL Level 6	1,030	653	63%	249	38%
Totals	11,972	8,988	75%	6,105	68%
Connecticut					
ESOL Level 1	623	470	75%	395	84%
ESOL Level 2	794	580	73%	490	84%
ESOL Level 3	1,973	1,433	73%	1,101	77%
ESOL Level 4	3,207	2,398	75%	1,393	58%
ESOL Level 5	2,046	1,548	76%	931	60%
ESOL Level 6	2,293	1,684	73%	569	34%
Totals	10,936	8,113	74%	4,879	60%

Source: Authors' calculations from data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

able to be tested both before and after their participation in the ESOL program? **Table 10** shows that despite both states testing roughly 75 percent of their students, Massachusetts had a higher percentage of students who achieved an EFL gain (68%) than did Connecticut (60%). This suggests that Massachusetts ESOL programs are more successful at moving students up at least one ESOL level during a given year of participation.

Moreover, previous research has found that learning gains among DESE and non-DESE programs are quite similar (Soricone et al., 2011). As of FY10, among DESE-funded programs, 77 percent of students had both pre- and post-test data available compared with 70 percent of the 19 non-DESE programs that were

surveyed. Of the students tested, 58 percent in DESE programs demonstrated a learning gain compared with an estimated 43 percent of those tested in non-DESE programs. This suggests that while there is some variation across ESOL program types in Massachusetts, measurable learning gains are achieved for a significant share of all students.

Yet there is also considerable variation even among DESE-funded programs. Recognizing that programs vary in terms of their composition of students across EFLs and that each EFL varies in the degree of difficulty at each level, DESE sets an individualized target for each program. Program performance is assessed relative to the MSG target that year.³

3. For example, an ESOL program with a target of 45% and an actual MSG of 50% will have exceeded its target by 11%; performance would be considered 111% relative to target. Another program with a target of 55% and actual MSG of 50% will be 91% of target.

Figure 35 plots the target and actual MSG across 23 programs in the Greater Boston area. Across these DESE-funded programs, performance ranged from meeting only 49 percent of the target to 136 percent of the target.

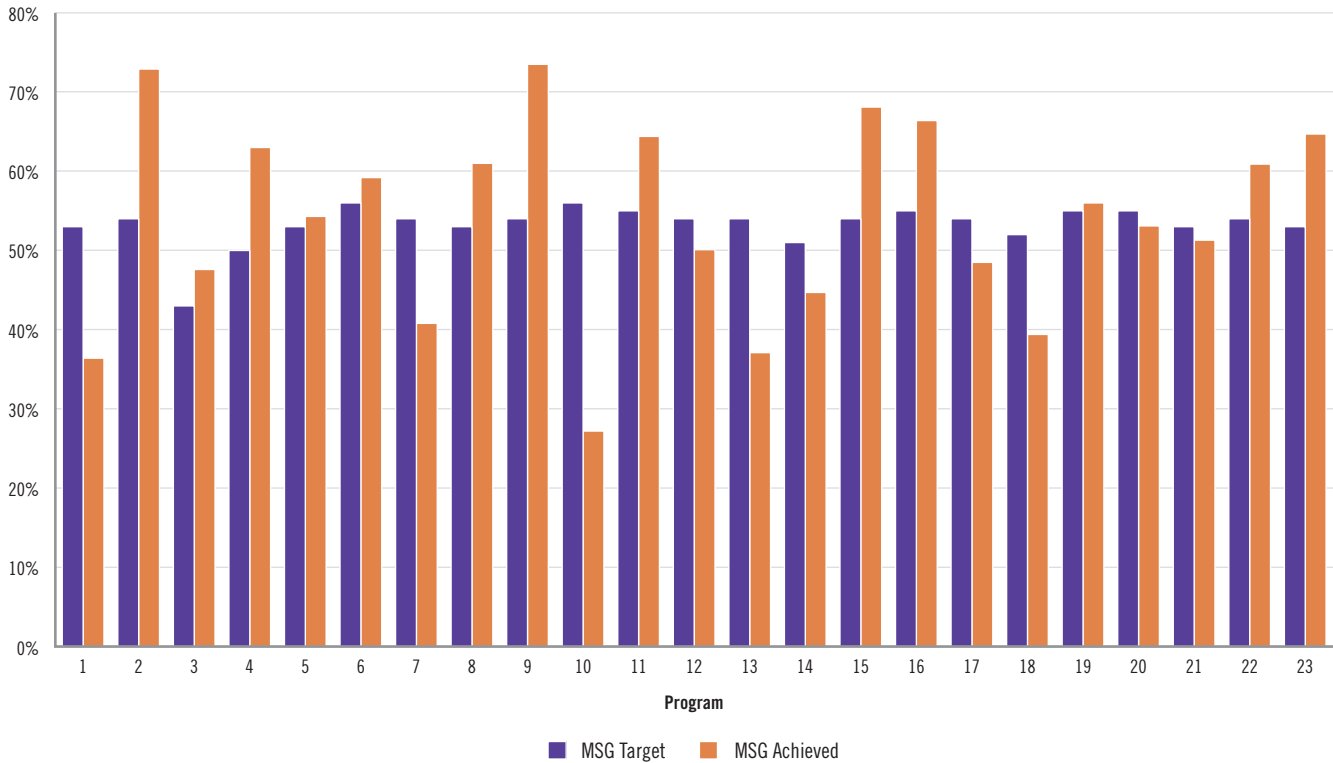
Overall, more than half of programs in Greater Boston achieved their target goal and roughly three-quarters were within 90 percent of their target goal—similar to the percentages achieved across all 70 programs providing data to DESE across the Commonwealth. We should note that MSG is only one component of grantee performance evaluation and is not intended to rank grantee recipients. The other components include program quality reviews, site visits, desk (data) monitoring and risk analysis.

What about online ESOL students? Delivering ESOL services online could alleviate space constraints while also making instruction more accessible to students who live far away or whose schedules do not allow

them to attend class at certain times. Currently, less than 5 percent of students in DESE-funded programs at any ESOL level participate online. In addition, the percentage of pre- and post-tested online participants achieving at least one EFL gain (47%) is considerably lower than that of non-online students who take courses at a given location (68%). Finally, more than half of all online students separate from their online program before achieving an EFL gain.

There are several caveats to keep in mind when considering the documented learning gains that we have presented above as a measure of the effectiveness of ESOL services. First, the assessments used to measure learning gains may not capture all of the progress made by individuals, particularly if programs respond to student interests and goals to teach specialized vocabularies and other skills that may not be captured by standardized tests. Advancement across levels as a measure of system effectiveness also has limitations with researchers noting that “a student

FIGURE 35
**Measurable Skill Gains by Program, Greater Boston FY2017
 DESE-Funded Programs**



Source: Authors’ calculations from data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

who entered a program very close to the benchmark and then reaches that benchmark will be counted as a success, while another student who entered at a far lower level and just misses the benchmark is considered a failure” (Crandall and Sheppard, 2004).

Nevertheless, these learning outcomes have been measured consistently across years and can provide an overall picture of both effectiveness and efficiency over time. For example, the share of students achieving

at least one EFL gain has improved from 33 percent in 2002 to 44 percent in 2009 to 51 percent in 2017 (see **Table 12**). Moreover, although the state’s investment per student has increased over the past eight years, improving system performance has led to both better outcomes and lower costs per outcome. The cost per advancement has decreased by one-third from \$5,958 in 2002 to \$4,024 in 2017, indicating that the ESOL system has become both more effective and more efficient over time.

TABLE 11
**Educational Functioning Level Gain and Attendance for Pre- and Post-Tested Participants
DESE-Funded Programs, Distance Education Participants, Massachusetts FY2017**

Entering Educational Functioning Level	Total Number Enrolled	Total Number Enrolled in Distance Education	Percent Distance Education	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain	Percentage of those in Distance Education Achieving EFL Gain	Percentage Separated Before Achieving EFL Gain
ESOL Level 1	2,247	13	1%	5	38%	62%
ESOL Level 2	2,672	25	1%	18	72%	28%
ESOL Level 3	2,035	31	2%	20	65%	35%
ESOL Level 4	2,049	39	2%	16	41%	59%
ESOL Level 5	1,939	43	2%	17	40%	60%
ESOL Level 6	1,030	27	3%	7	26%	74%
Totals	11,972	178	1%	83	47%	53%

Source: Authors’ calculations from data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

TABLE 12
Cost per Learning Outcome, DESE-Funded Programs, Massachusetts FY2002, FY2009, FY2017

Entering Educational Functioning Level	Total Number Enrolled	Percent Enrollment	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain	Percent completing of all enrolled ESOL students	Total ESOL Funds	Cost per Completion
FY2002	12,273		4,038	33%	\$24,057,995	\$5,958
FY2009	12,264		5,356	44%	\$23,893,970	\$4,461
FY2017	11,972	100%	6,105	51%	\$24,566,294	\$4,024
ESOL Level 1	2,247	19%	1,229	55%	\$4,610,797	\$3,752
ESOL Level 2	2,672	22%	1,555	58%	\$5,482,888	\$3,526
ESOL Level 3	2,035	17%	1,155	57%	\$4,175,778	\$3,615
ESOL Level 4	2,049	17%	1,123	55%	\$4,204,505	\$3,744
ESOL Level 5	1,939	16%	769	40%	\$3,978,788	\$5,174
ESOL Level 6	1,030	9%	274	27%	\$2,113,538	\$7,714

Source: Authors’ calculations from data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Core Follow-Up Outcome Achievement: Employment Measures

Other outcomes of interest in assessing ESOL system effectiveness are related to employment after program exit. Exit date is the last day of service, which is determined after 90 days have elapsed since the participant last received services with no plans to provide the participant with future services. Specifically, under WIOA, programs are required to report the following:

- The percentage of participants employed during the second quarter after program exit
- The median earnings for all participants who are in unsubsidized employment in the second quarter after exit

Programs can opt to survey participants over time or provide DESE with the name and Social Security number of participants to match with administrative wage and employment records. Each approach has its drawbacks. On the one hand, surveying participants after they exit the program is logistically difficult and resource-intensive and may yield a very low response rate. On the other hand, participants must consent to a wage record match in advance and also supply a valid Social Security number—two significant barriers for a population that fears government involvement in general and may also be dealing with issues of documentation in particular.

Although DESE-funded programs have only minimal focus on employment outcomes, a considerable share of participants are employed after exiting the program.

As of FY2017, roughly one-third of participants in DESE-funded ESOL programs were employed in either the second or fourth quarter after exit. However, their median earnings during the second quarter are quite low, averaging \$6,234 (see **Table 13**). This translates into approximately \$25,000 per year, which is roughly equivalent to the poverty line for a family of four in Massachusetts. In addition, we do not know how many of these individuals gained employment or whether they experienced an increase in wages after participating in the program.

A greater focus on workforce development and/or additional resources to expand engagement in such activities with students is likely to yield better employment outcomes. One vocational program provided us with employment data on roughly 1,000 participants over a three-year period. Upon exit, 54 percent had a job, with average quarterly wages of \$6,700 translating into annual incomes of roughly \$26,845.

Assessing the Economic and Social Value of ESOL

Historically, adult ESOL services in the United States have focused on teaching “life-skills English”—the communication skills that immigrant and refugee students need to navigate their daily lives. For example, topics frequently included going to the grocery store, finding housing, exploring occupations, interacting at various places in our cities, and managing family health. Although these are vital skills for new arrivals coming to the United States, one must

TABLE 13
Core Follow-Up Outcome Measures
DESE-Funded Programs, Massachusetts FY2002, FY2009, FY2017

Core Follow-Up Outcome Measures	Number of Participants Who Exited	Number of Participants Who Exited Achieving Outcome or Median Earnings Value	Percent Achieving Outcome
Employment Second Quarter after Exit	9,662	3,417	35.37%
Employment Fourth Quarter after Exit	2,015	719	35.68%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after Exit	3,055	\$6,233.74	N/A

Source: Special calculations supplied by Brian Newquist of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

also consider students' long-term goals. Under WIOA, ESOL practitioners have taken a renewed interest in preparing learners for postsecondary opportunities, career training, employment and better paying jobs.

Yet it is unclear the extent to which ESOL programs in Greater Boston address these longer-term goals of English language learners, particularly when it comes to employment and earnings. Interviews with stakeholders revealed that ESOL offerings lie on a continuum regarding the extent to which career preparation is embedded throughout the program across levels. This range can be categorized as follows:

- High = programs that view career preparation and support for job placement or advancement as an integral part of their ESOL services
- Medium = programs that make some effort to integrate career-related services into their ESOL programs
- Low = programs that focus almost exclusively on the more generalized English language skills with only minimal attention to career preparation

Overall, among the programs that we interviewed, most indicated that job-related services are loosely integrated into their ESOL programs. More intentional and contextualized services are typically available only to students at proficiency levels of EFL 4 and above. Moreover, among programs that integrate some career-related and skill-building activities across all levels, the intensity and level of integration appear to vary substantially. For example, some programs cover careers as a single topic or unit, while others offer a general overview to prepare students for searching for jobs or training. All programs use some form of an individual education and career plan, which appears to be a requirement for DESE-funded programs.

Many programs noted that a large proportion of students are already working in entry-level, low-wage jobs. Yet students' work schedules often make it hard to refer them to attend job-training programs that would allow them to access better-paying jobs because they typically take place during the day. Few programs focus on helping move students beyond those jobs and tend to focus their efforts on higher-level students.

In addition to collecting DESE data, the research team also sought to gather data about the job placement rates of program completers, their earnings, job types,

industries and occupations. Our interviews revealed that many programs did not collect this range of information and almost none make any kind of pre/post comparisons. We thus focused on understanding the job-related outcomes for two groups:

- Of students who were unemployed and looking for a job upon program entry, how many did the program help to get a job?
- Of students already employed and looking for a better job at entry, how many was the program able to place in a better job (with a higher wage, more working hours and/or health insurance benefits)?

Only one program was able to provide this data and so we will only report high-level aggregate outcomes to protect confidentiality. Among the roughly 339 participants who were unemployed prior to the program, approximately 67 percent (268) had a job six months after enrollment, with average wages of \$20,300 per year. In comparison, estimated effects of other vocational training programs on the probability of employment range from about 5 to 29 percentage points, depending on specific training type and time following program entry (Heinrich 2016).

Moreover, among the remaining 362 participants who started the program as employed, six months after enrolling in the program their average wages increased from \$12.25 to \$13.37 per hour (a 9% increase) and average hours increased from 30 to 34 hours per week (a 13% increase). As a result, average weekly wages increased by 29 percent from \$358 to \$460 per week, boosting annual earnings from \$17,900 to \$23,000 for a net gain of \$5,100 per year. In comparison, meta-analyses of vocational job training programs find estimated earnings increases ranging from 5 to 26% of average earnings (Heinrich 2016).

Given the outcomes of the roughly 700 students who entered this particular vocational program, we can provide a back-of-the-envelope cost calculation to determine a basic return on investment for ESOL programs in Greater Boston. Based on interviews, we know that the cost per participant is typically \$2,500. Using this estimate, providing ESOL for 700 participants would result in an expenditure of \$1.75 million. Among those 268 students who will become employed and earn additional wages of \$20,300 per year, they will pay 5.05 percent in state taxes or \$1,025 per year for an aggregate total of \$274,740. Although

most families in Massachusetts with incomes in this range would be eligible for the state's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), immigrants who file taxes using an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN), which is issued by the Internal Revenue Service, are not eligible. If Massachusetts expands eligibility of the state EITC to include these families, the state would be the first in the nation to do so. As such, we do not assume that ESOL participants receive the state EITC as an offset to their state taxes paid (Children's HealthWatch, April 2019). The other 362 individuals, who improve their earnings by \$5,100 per year, result in an extra \$258 in taxes each year for a total of \$93,233. Adding the tax revenue from the gains from employment and the gains in wages produces an extra \$368,000 in revenue for the Commonwealth.

Yet, these are gains that occur each year over the individual's lifetime. Given that over 57 percent of ESOL participants are between the ages of 25 and 44, we can assume that they will likely work in the labor force for at least an additional 20 years, resulting in a total tax revenue gain of \$7.4 million over the next 20 years. This is likely to be a conservative estimate as it does not include additional future wage gains that are likely as individuals gain more work experience over time. Based on our calculations, the program breaks even on the initial program investment in less than 5 years based on just the return from the improved labor market outcomes. In comparison, few studies of vocational training programs have even attempted some accounting of costs and benefits, citing limitations of obtaining accurate data on even direct program costs (Heinrich 2016). These studies typically find that vocational training programs are not cost effective within the first 2.5 years after completion or are only cost effective for younger participants (Schochet et al. 2006, Hollenbeck 2009).

From a societal perspective, one might also include the added value of the workers' productivity as captured by the wages that they earn—especially in a tight labor market where jobs are hard to fill. In that case, ESOL training focused on job placement appears to break even within the first quarter after program completion.

And this does not even take into consideration the other social benefits that we mentioned earlier in this chapter. For example, 112 of the 700 participants also

THE PROGRAM ALSO PRODUCES AN ADDITIONAL COST SAVINGS OF \$887,000 PER YEAR. ONCE THESE COST SAVINGS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, THE PROGRAM BREAKS EVEN IN JUST 1.5 YEARS.

gained health insurance through their employer. Alternatively, the maximum benefit per eligible family member is \$660/month for MassHealth, the state's Medicaid health insurance program. Thus, the program also produces an additional costs savings of \$887,000 per year. Once these cost savings are taken into account, the program breaks even in just 1.5 years.

Additional social benefits that accrue to society include increased educational attainment, becoming banked, higher local spending and greater civic engagement over a lifetime. While little data are available to put a dollar value on these additional benefits, descriptive evidence suggests that these gains are not trivial. For example, we know that based on the DESE-funded programs, approximately two out of every 1,000 participants are able to earn a postsecondary degree. By some estimates, college graduates earn upwards of an additional \$1 million dollars over their lifetimes, conferring additional benefits to taxpayers (Carnevale et al. 2014).

As with any study, there are limitations to this analysis. We were unable to collect data from other programs that may offer job-related services for ESOL students in the Boston area and likely have missed information on the breadth of programs that are in operation. The timing of this research during the submission of program proposals for state adult education grants may have limited staff availability, as well as their ability to provide outcome data. Some programs articulated reluctance to share much information about their services based on concerns that this information would be used to assess or rank individual programs against one another. Finally, we cannot say for certain that these effects are purely causal as we cannot control for self-selection into an ESOL program among the most capable or motivated individuals.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Demographically, the rapidly growing immigrant population and the increasingly vital role immigrants play in the local and state economy is challenging the capacity of the system and creating an immense gap between the number of people who can be served and the number who need English language classes. Drawing from our landscape analysis, case studies and ROI analysis, we have identified the following gaps and barriers to ESOL services. While not exhaustive, this list may serve to inform future funding or programmatic initiatives already under way.

Identification of Gaps and Barriers to ESOL Services

- The LEP population in Greater Boston is 43 percent of the area's foreign-born residents, or about 320,000 people. Due to continued immigration, this number is expected to show a net increase of 7,740 annually. While not all of these individuals may need or want to learn English, for the 75 percent (240,531) who are working-age adults it certainly makes good sense.
- We identified 116 active ESOL programs in Greater Boston, serving 11,600 adult English language learners annually. According to our rough estimates, this limited capacity would need to increase by 20 times to serve all LEP working age adults.
- While ESOL programs are geographically concentrated, this roughly aligns with the areas that contain the largest population with the greatest need. Slightly more than half of the organizations providing ESOL services are nonprofits, with most of the remainder public agencies. This suggests that services are provided in a fairly efficient manner through a diverse set of providers.
- ESOL programs are serving the language groups most represented in the LEP population. In terms of accessibility, one of the few potential barriers identified was the relatively small number of programs offering child-care services.
- Anecdotal evidence, confirmed by studies from the literature, indicates that the populations underserved by ESOL programs are people at either end of the education continuum—those without a high school or secondary level education and those with graduate or professional degrees (Wrigley et al., 2009).
- Of the programs we surveyed, most report having a mix of ESOL-certified and non-certified teachers. Comparatively speaking, vocational and incumbent worker programs are more likely to have certified staff than are community-based programs. However, all programs reported that their teachers have extensive experience teaching English at different levels and in various educational settings, even if they were not always certified. Still, programs report difficulties in retaining staff who can often find better paying and full-time jobs elsewhere.
- The most common types of ESOL services provided are general ESOL, followed by civics/citizenship; the least common are vocational, workplace and pre-academic. Despite most ESOL participants being of working age, only 7 percent of ESOL programs are vocational, suggesting a large misalignment of the types of services that are needed to meet the demands of LEP individuals.
- Overall, just over half (51.2%) of ESOL students in Massachusetts achieve at least one Measurable Skill Gain compared with only 44.6 percent of students in Connecticut. In addition, the cost per advancement has decreased by one-third from \$5,958 in 2002 to \$4,024 in 2017, indicating that the ESOL system has become both more effective and more efficient over time. Yet there is considerable variation even among DESE-funded programs, with performance ranging from meeting only 49 percent of the Measurable Skill Gain target to 136 percent of the target.
- Although DESE-funded programs have only minimal focus on employment outcomes, around

one-third of participants in DESE-funded ESOL programs were employed in either the second or fourth quarter after exit with median earnings during the second quarter of \$6,234. In contrast, vocational programs with a greater focus on workforce development successfully placed approximately 67 percent of unemployed students within six months of enrollment, with average weekly wages of \$460 translating into annual incomes of roughly \$23,000.

- Given the employment and wage gains associated with the one vocational ESOL program for which we have data, the program breaks even in terms of the return on investment within 5 years. Adding in the cost savings associated with the gain in employer-sponsored health insurance produces a break-even time of just 1.5 years. Although general ESOL programs are likely to achieve lower results, given the time horizon for benefits to accrue (e.g., an additional \$74 million in tax revenues over the next 20 years) plus the additional social benefits from increased consumption, educational attainment, becoming banked, and greater civic engagement over the lifetime, the program clearly yields a net positive return on investment.
- WIOA is a driving force that has the potential for re-aligning the supply and demand for ESOL services through the unified state plan and common performance measures and reporting requirements. This is promoting change in funding streams, data and reporting systems, and other institutional structures and processes. It also puts the focus on employment, education and training outcomes.

Opportunities and Recommendations for Investment

There are six broad areas that offer opportunities for impactful leadership and investment that could lead to transformative changes in the ESOL system. They are:

1. Reduce the gap between the capacity of the system and the need for ESOL services;
2. Improve working conditions such as more full-time work, greater employment stability, better benefits, higher earnings and more professional development to reduce turnover among ESOL teachers;

3. Provide student supports to increase continuous participation;
4. Grow the number of vocational and workplace ESOL programs;
5. Connect the fragmented parts of the ESOL system; and
6. Improve data collection and reporting on ESOL programs and outcomes.

Reduce the Gap between the Demand and Supply of ESOL Services

There is an enormous gap between the relatively small number of people that can be served annually and the much larger population requiring ESOL services. Basic infrastructure is lacking for some programs outside of the DESE-funded system. The issue of space, including the appropriateness and cost of facilities was the most frequently noted in our interviews with providers.

In addition, the bulk of the resources are allocated to lower levels of instruction with fewer services available to higher-level learners. Indeed, federally funded programs serve learners entering programs up to EFL 6, leaving students with skills at level 7 without instructional options in the public system. At the same time, the state is encouraging the development of transition programs to encourage students to enter into postsecondary education following their participation in ESOL services. However, ESOL students who are at a EFL 6 do not have the skills to enable them to take advantage of transition services and may be limited in how far they can advance in the workforce without increasing their skill levels.

The ability to provide instruction at all levels is critical. On one end of the spectrum, those who have had a college education in their country need more advanced English for the workplace and connections to professional communities/mentors to facilitate the transition into their area of training; offering this would constitute a more efficient use of resources. At the other end of the skill spectrum are gaps in the services available to support literacy development among ESOL students who are not literate in their first language.

For those needing ESOL services, the shortage of slots in existing English language classes is acute. Impacts are felt within the family and immediate community as well as in our larger economy. Strategic leadership

and investments are needed to close this gap. The Latino Legacy Fund and the Governor's Advisory Committees are showing the difference that effective advocacy can make. Due to their efforts the state allocation increased last year. Yet both public and private funding is needed to fill the gap and provide effective, high-quality services to all LEP adults.

Improve Working Conditions to Reduce Teacher Turnover and Increase Learning

Many teachers are part-time and lack credentials or training that would allow them to be more effective in providing services. Stakeholders confirm that the system as a whole has a heavy reliance on part-time teaching staff, with low compensation levels that encourage staff turnover, even though DESE has made great progress in the past two decades to provide decent salaries, benefits and paid professional development release to its teachers.

When teachers do not stay in programs, any knowledge or skill that they acquire related to teaching is lost to a program, and when teachers work part-time and are often working multiple jobs to make ends meet for themselves, they cannot fully engage in program-level efforts to coordinate and strengthen services. All of this can compromise the quality of instruction and pose challenges to effective professional development. Professional development research indicates that one-shot workshops are not as effective a means of developing teachers' capacity as ongoing, sustained high-quality opportunities for developing their skills.

Through System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES), DESE has attempted to move beyond the workshop model by providing program-based technical assistance to underperforming programs so that teacher professional development and program development go hand in hand. As noted above, the state has one of the nation's most rigorous certification processes, but, since not every teacher is required to complete this process, the system must rely on other means to strengthen its teaching force. DESE is also developing a systemic method of ensuring that all practitioners have a foundation in adult learning theory and/or second language acquisition theory as well as content knowledge. Such efforts seem necessary to ensuring that all educators are equipped to teach in alignment with state curriculum frameworks to better promote student learning.

Provide Student Supports to Increase Continuous Participation

Stakeholder interviews revealed that immigrant LEP students require a number of other services beyond language instruction to facilitate their successful integration into the economic and social lives of their communities. Immigrants often need help understanding and navigating public service systems, as well as developing self-advocacy skills. Students require support in learning what resources exist and how to access them through face-to-face and online means in academic, health, social service and other contexts. ESOL students also need a set of core life and time management skills, including decision-making, problem-solving and working with others. While these types of skills can be integrated into curricula at low cost, other services, such as bilingual counseling and job placement support, in addition to resources for child-care services, housing, food pantries and support for dealing with domestic violence typically require ESOL providers to partner with other agencies to make such services available.

Another important area to address is the role LEP immigrants have as parents. The ESOL system can work with school systems to develop services to meet the needs of parents. By offering relevant and accessible services at times and venues that account for parental roles, the system can engage parents to support their own learning as they support that of their children. Several efforts are underway in the city, such as the Boston Public Schools program described earlier and English for New Bostonians' efforts to provide targeted ESOL for parents. Such efforts should not limit their focus to parents of elementary school age children. Adolescent parenting can also pose challenges for immigrant parents. In addition to managing adolescent social issues, LEP immigrant parents require help acquiring language and navigation of systems involved in supporting their children's secondary education and paths to higher education.

Grow Vocational and Workplace ESOL Programs

There are only a small number of providers linking ESOL to vocational training, providing ESOL services to employees, and helping adult English language learners transition to academic programs. WIOA provides a favorable framework for collaborating to

expand existing services and develop new, innovative approaches. Yet, while under WIOA the dialogue around ESOL and vocational training has changed, the implementation in practice has not, with only a small integration of vocational and ESOL under the new requirements.

In part, this lack of coordination regarding the types of ESOL services provided stems from the old accountability system that awarded points to programs for attendance, increasing EFL, graduating high school, and enrolling in postsecondary education—everything but helping a student find a job. Furthermore, helping a student gain employment often means losing them in the classroom as they have less time to attend ESOL classes—something that programs would lose points for under the old system. Although the new system encourages tracking of employment and wages outcomes, these measures still do not count as Measurable Skill Gains.

Few DESE-funded programs have the connections with employers, sufficient expertise in matching workers to jobs, and the capacity to be able to move the needle very far even if they were incentivized to do so. As such, DESE-funded programs will need to acquire additional resources for workforce development and/or develop new partnerships with organizations that have such expertise.

Aside from re-aligning the DESE-funded programs to become more focused on workforce development, another factor is the ability to increase private sector support for ESOL programs. This could take the form of incumbent worker programs that are serviced by ESOL organizations. The advantage is to be able to improve and apply English skills on the job. The disadvantage is that only large employers have the resources and capacity to engage in incumbent ESOL training, with most smaller-sized companies lacking that capacity. Even with funding from the Workforce Training Fund, firms are required to allow students to attend class during working hours and/or get paid their hourly wage while attending class. Greater support for incumbent worker programs could go a long way to filling in the lack of vocational ESOL in the Greater Boston area.

Connect the Disjointed Elements of the ESOL System

The diverse and fragmentary nature of the ESOL field—with a wide range of service providers and English language learners—makes it difficult to connect service providers, advocates and funders. There is a need to develop structures that connect practitioners, advocates, funders and experts to share information, coordinate services and develop shared policy goals.

WIOA offers a common framework and requires collaboration to achieve long-term success. For example, two populations widely recognized as most in need of services are (1) low or beginning level ESOL students, including those lacking native language literacy and/or limited formal education; (2) higher level ESOL students looking to transfer to an academic or vocational track. In both cases, there is a need for bridge programs to help English language learners transition between programs and access additional supports.

From an advocacy perspective, a priority of such a collaborative might be to develop communication strategies for building support of ESOL programs. As a first step, research might be undertaken to better understand how the general public and key stakeholders perceive ESOL issues and how best to communicate with specific audiences.

Strengthen Research and Data Collection

A robust research and data collection capacity is needed to help inform policy and program development. Strategic leadership and support can assist by ensuring that ESOL programs collect and report data on English language learners. As we discovered with the landscape analysis, these data are not currently available.

The substantial increase in the state budget for adult education has the potential to address many of the recommendations presented above. As the largest increase in adult education funding in recent years, these new funds could be used to adopt a more workforce development-focused model as envisioned under WIOA that provides the resources and expertise needed and also puts in place robust systems of accountability that can facilitate better tracking of outcomes and the return on investment.

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APPENDIX A
Map of Greater Boston (as defined by the Boston Foundation)



© 2019 Mapbox. © Open Street Map

APPENDIX B

Landscape Analysis Methodology

We consulted the following sources:

- Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)-Adult Education Program Directory
- MA Adult Literacy Hotline
- National Reporting System for Adult Education
- Center for Adult English Language Acquisition
- Adult Literacy Initiative
- The Boston Foundation's LLF grant recipients
- First Literacy
- English For New Bostonians
- Library search
- Google search

We reviewed the accuracy of these sources and filled in missing information through online searches and phone calls with key personnel at ESOL sites.

We created a spreadsheet that included the following content:

- Organization and program address
- Contact name, email, phone
- Organization type (government, nonprofit, private for-profit)
- Location (towns and neighborhoods)
- Staff size (number of staff in ESOL program)
- Staff qualifications (credentials of the ESOL teachers)
- Type of program (e.g., General ESOL, Family ESOL, Vocational ESOL, etc.)
- Type of services (e.g., employment assistance, child care, etc.)
- Population served
- Annual number served
- Schedule (e.g., duration, days per week, time of day, etc.)
- Average class size
- Cost
- Eligibility criteria for enrollment
- Sources of funding (e.g., federal, state, charity, individual, etc.)

APPENDIX C
The Greater Boston ESOL System

Level	Entity	Parent Agency	Description	Funding Source	Funder	Role			
						ESOL Provider	ESOL Support	Performance Measurement	Advocacy
	Employment and Training Administration (ETA)	Dept. of Labor	Administers WIOA Title I funding, three state formula grant programs, multiple national programs, and Job Corps	WIOA Title I	X			X	
	Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE)	Dept. of Education	Administers WIOA Title II funding, includes a state formula grant program and National Leadership activities	WIOA Title II	X			X	
	HUD	-	Funds some ESOL through CDBG (as of 2011), CDBG funds are managed by OWD and distributed through competitive RFP process to nonprofit service providers	CDBG	X				
	Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD)	-	Receives federal and state funding for MWBs	MA budget line T10-21	X				
	Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp)	EOLWD	Quasi-public workforce development agency, administers WTF and other programs for the state				X		
	Workforce Training Fund Program (WTF)	CommCorp	Provides resources to Massachusetts businesses to fund training for current and newly hired employees, including ESOL classes	Employers pay a flat contribution rate into fund	X				
	Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)	DESE	Oversees and improves no-cost basic educational services (ABE) for adults in Massachusetts	WIOA, MA budget line item 7035-0002 (ABE)	X		X	X	
	System for Adult Basic Education (SABES)	ACLS	Professional development for ABE teachers	DESE			X		
	MassHire State Workforce Board	EOLWD	State workforce development board	WIOA Title I	X				
	MassHire Career Centers (MCCs)	MWBs	Regional/local partners operating job services centers under MOUs with workforce development boards	WIOA Title I	X		X		

FEDERAL

The Greater Boston ESOL System – continued

Level	Entity	Parent Agency	Description	Funding Source	Funder	Role			
						ESOL Provider	ESOL Support	Performance Measurement	Advocacy
	English Works Campaign	ENB	Advocates for investment in ELL programs, assists employers and unions in finding low- to no-cost options for providing ESOL classes at work	ENB					X
	Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts	-	Train volunteers to deliver ESOL services	private and public sources		X			
	Mass. Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE)	-	Statewide member org of educators, adult students, individuals, organizations, and businesses, works to improve the field	grants, donations, fees		X			X
	Mass. Educators of English Language Learners (MATSOE)	-	Professional association for ESOL educators			X			X
	Mass. Adult Literacy HOTLINE	DESE	referral service	DESE			X		
	Mass. Literacy Foundation	-	Grantmaking and advocacy literacy organization		X		X		X
	Mass. Workforce Alliance (MWA)	-	Workforce development advocacy group						X
	Mass. Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)	-	Coalition promoting rights and integration for immigrants and refugees	UnitedWay					X
	SkillWorks		Workforce funder	philanthropy, corporate donations, public source	X				
	Workforce Solutions Group	-	Advocacy coalition for skills training and workforce development	UnitedWay					X

STATE

The Greater Boston ESOL System – continued

Level	Entity	Parent Agency	Description	Funding Source	Funder	Role			
						ESOL Provider	ESOL Support	Performance Measurement	Advocacy
REGIONAL	Local MassHire Workforce Boards (MWB)	MassHire State Workforce Board	16 regional workforce development boards across Mass that oversee OSCCs and the federal investment in job training	ACLS					
	Greater Boston American Apprenticeship Initiative (GBAAI)	OWD	Grantmaking workforce development initiative	OWD	X				
	Employers	-			X				
	Labor Unions	-			X				
	Foundations	-			X				
	Adult Literacy Initiative (ALI)	OWD	Consortium of 29 adult literacy programs throughout Boston funded through ACLS and OWD. Meets five times a year to share best practices, coordinate efforts, work on professional development, and advocate for the city's adult literacy ecosystem.	ACLS, OWD			X		X
	Boston Private Industry Council (PIC)	OWD	Boston's workforce development board, OWB serves as fiscal agent	foundations, state, city, federal funds,					
LOCAL	Boston Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement (MOIA)	-	Contributes to English for New Bostonians program		X				
	Boston Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (OWD)	-	Receives jobs linkage fees to fund NJT		X				
	English for New Bostonians (ENB)	-	Grant-making organization funding ESOL programs in Boston; also trains educators, designs programs and evaluations, student assessments	MOIA, NJT, employers, foundations, individuals	X		X		X

The Greater Boston ESOL System – continued

Level	Entity	Parent Agency	Description	Funding Source	Role				
					Funder	ESOL Provider	ESOL Support	Performance Measurement	Advocacy
	Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT)	OWD	Funds job training programs, employment counseling, job placement services, adult literacy and education programs	jobs linkage fees	X				
	Nonprofit organizations	-			X	X			
	Individual donors	-			X				
	Public school districts	-			X				
	Public libraries	-			X				
	Municipal governments	-			X				
	Local Health and Human Services offices	-			X				
	Housing authorities	-			X	X			
	First Literacy	-	Offers professional development and best practice sharing for ESOL teachers, awards scholarships to English language learners	philanthropy, corporate donations	X		X		
	Privately funded ESOL program providers	-		private donations	X	X			

LOCAL

APPENDIX D

ESOL Level Descriptions

ESOL Level	Description	Skills Obtained
ESOL/Beginning Literacy 1	Develop basic language skills needed in classroom and in day-to-day adult situations. Focus on listening and minimal speaking tasks necessary to satisfy routine classroom and social demands and limited work requirements. Introduction to reading and writing skills. For those with little or no literacy in English.	Alphabet Numbers Vocabulary words
ESOL/Beginning Low 2	Develop greater skills in listening and speaking for basic communication in the classroom, outside the classroom and at work. Expand reading and writing skills, introduction of basic grammar. Must have completed Beginning Literacy or equivalent.	Listening Speaking Reading Writing – simple forms, sentences Grammar: commands, pronouns, simple present tense, present continuous, simple past, future, can/can't
ESOL/Beginning High 3	Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to function satisfactorily in most real-life situations related to immediate needs. Must have completed Beginning Low 2 or equivalent.	Listening Speaking Reading Writing – forms, notes, series of sentences, paragraph Pronunciation Grammar: Review of present, present continuous and future with <i>going to</i> questions and answers, Future tense with <i>will</i> , Introduction of <i>have to, should, may, must, would</i>
ESOL/Intermediate Low 4	Refine skills needed in conversations beyond survival needs. Function independently in most familiar situations and use appropriate language in routine social situations. Must have completed Beginning High 3 or equivalent.	Listening Speaking Reading Writing – notes, 2-3 paragraphs, short letters, applications Pronunciation Grammar: Review of present, past and future tenses, modals, present perfect, present perfect continuous, past continuous, future conditional, comparative, infinitives and gerunds
ESOL/Intermediate High 5	Skills needed to function effectively in familiar and unfamiliar social situations and familiar work situations. Communication needed to discuss/interpret cultural differences and use English to solve problems outside the class. Must have completed Intermediate High 4 or equivalent.	Listening Speaking Reading Pronunciation Writing – short essays or series of paragraphs, reports, letters Grammar: Review of verb tenses in levels 1–4 and review of present conditional, Difference between past tense and present perfect tense, comparatives and superlatives, past perfect, conditional unreal, reported speech, verbs + prepositions, adjective clauses

ESOL Level Descriptions— continued

ESOL Level	Description	Skills Obtained
ESOL/Advanced Low 6	Fluency and communication skills. Self-monitor effectively when using basic grammatical structure and introduction to more complex structures. U.S. cultural values and thinking patterns are introduced through discussions, readings and writing. Must have completed Intermediate High 5 or equivalent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversation and oral presentations Reading Vocabulary American culture Writing – essays, letters, reports Pronunciation Research on the internet Grammar: Review of grammar from levels 2 – 5, Modals in the past, past conditional, passive voice in the present, past and future, tag questions, reported speech in the past, use of articles, adjectives, adverb and noun clauses, future perfect
ESOL/Advanced High 7	Demonstrate knowledge of written and spoken English well enough to pass the TOEFL and/or participate in a college or university program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversation and oral presentations Reading Vocabulary American culture Writing – essays, letters, reports Pronunciation Research on the internet Grammar: Review of grammar from levels 2 – 5, Modals in the past, past conditional, passive voice in the present, past and future, tag questions, reported speech in the past, use of articles, adjectives, adverb and noun clauses, future perfect

https://www.morgan.edu/Documents/ADMINISTRATION/DIVISIONS/AOE/ESL/ESL_Level_Descriptions.pdf

APPENDIX E
Interview Guide Questionnaire

What Is the Return on Investment for ESOL Programs?

Interview Guide to Implement with ESOL Providers

May 31, 2019

Claudia Santelices

1. Can you describe your role in this ESOL program?
 - a. How long have you been working here?
 - b. How has your experience been so far?
 - c. Is this your first experience working in an ESOL program?

2. For how long has this organization been offering ESOL services to the non-English speaking community?

3. What ESOL services do you currently offer?
 - a. Have these services been offered since the beginning, or have some of these been added throughout the years? If added throughout the years, why?

4. In our online survey you answered that this program enrolls _____ (X number of students) per year.
 - a. Is that the maximum number of students the organization can enroll in a year? If not, what would be the maximum?
 - b. Has your enrollment number (_____) changed (increased or decreased) throughout the years? What do you attribute this change (increase or decrease) to?
 - c. How many students are currently enrolled?
 - d. Do you have a waiting list of people wanting to enroll in the program but not being able to do so due to program capacity? How does the waiting list work in this case? How long do these people have to wait to be able to enroll?
 - e. In the survey you completed online, you said that the ESOL students come from _____ (countries), and that they live in different neighborhood in Boston, like _____ (neighborhoods selected in survey). I would like to know:
 - i. How do they find out about this program, what recruitment strategies (if any) do you implement to bring them or attract them to this program?
 - ii. [If strategies were mentioned, ask...] Have you changed the recruitment strategies? Why? How so?
 - iii. Have these populations changed throughout the years in terms of country of origin? And, how about in terms of the neighborhoods in Boston they are coming from?

5. In the online survey you completed, you said that there are (number of staff) providing ESOL classes or ESOL-related services. I would like to know:
 - a. Has the number of staff changed (increased or decreased) throughout the years? Explain.
 - b. Is this number of staff enough or sufficient to meet the needs of the program, or the number of students enrolled in it?

6. We learned from the online survey you completed that of the XX staff, XXX number is certified to teach ESOL classes. I would like to know:
 - a. Do you hire teachers who are already certified, or did they get certified once they started working in this program?
 - b. [If only half are certified]

7. Tell me about the infrastructure that this place has to provide ESOL services [e.g., rooms, computers, books, films, day care unit]. Is there something in regard to this infrastructure that in your opinion should change to better serve the ESOL population? Explain.

8. On eligibility criteria, I would like to know if these have changed throughout the years. For example, in the online survey you said that the eligibility criteria of this program are age-based requirements. Has it always been like that?
 - a. [If eligibility criteria have not changed] How many people/applicants do you turn away because of this eligibility criteria?
 - b. [If eligibility criteria have changed] What caused this change? [e.g., meet the demands of an increasing foreign population]

9. Can you tell me what funding mechanisms do you rely on to run this ESOL program? Have this/these funding sources changed through time? Have they increased/decreased? How sustainable is your ESOL program in regards to funding?

10. In our online survey we asked you whether you gather information about students' progress (e.g., learning outcomes, job placement). Your answer was _____. Can you expand a little bit on that? For example:
 - a. What kind of information do you collect? How do you collect it?
 - b. [If doesn't collect outcome information] Why do you not collect this information? Would the program like to collect it?
 - c. Tell me about the students' outcomes, for example, percentage of them graduating, finding a job after completing ESOL program

11. What about "desertion", or students dropping out? Any idea about reasons for this?

12. Can you identify any weakness (if there is any) in the program, and possible ways to correct them? Explain (e.g., recruitment, infrastructure, teachers training, funding)

13. Can you identify the strengths (if there are any) of the program? Explain.

14. Is there anything else that I haven't asked you in regard to the ESOL program that you would like to add?

THANK YOU for your time and generosity.

