

2. **LaGuardia's successful proposal for a U.S Department of Labor grants to train workers in the hotel industry (2005).**

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Hotel TEACH (Teaching English and Careers in Hospitality)**

Nationwide there are large numbers of potential hospitality workers whose limited English is a barrier to employment. The demand for entry-level workers in the hospitality industry in New York City is high but many local immigrants are unprepared for these jobs. One of the most effective ways to train Limited English Proficient (LEP) people for the workplace is to integrate contextualized English language instruction with skills training that is geared to a particular industry's needs. LaGuardia Community College has had success recruiting and training LEP students and has worked with the National Retail Federation (NRF) Foundation to adapt curriculum to this population. This project will work with them, local hotels, other experts and other community partners to accomplish its goals.

#### **a) Objectives**

- 1) To develop a replicable model curriculum that integrates English language acquisition with soft skills and other skills needed in entry-level hotel jobs.
- 2) To conduct two cycles of training using this curriculum with a total of at least 40 people; to place at least 75% of the graduates in hotel jobs.
- 3) To develop, test and evaluate at least 3 new instructional materials designed specifically to prepare LEP (Limited English Proficient) trainees for hotel jobs.
- 4) To conduct an extensive evaluation of the project to improve this program and guide future efforts.
- 5) To produce a written report on the curriculum for wide distribution and to make at least 2 conference presentations on the project.
- 6) To host a national conference to highlight promising practices nation-wide that combine vocational and soft skills with English language instruction with at least 15 presenters and at least 125 attendees.
- 7) To convene a Leadership Forum for top professionals who are committed to developing a work plan to institutionalize such a network.

#### **b) Procedures**

At the start of this 18-month project, partner hotels will be engaged in a needs assessment of the specific available entry positions. In collaboration with NRF and other consultants a pilot curriculum will be created that fully integrates job skills and contextualized language instruction. The curriculum will be evaluated and refined over 2 cycles of training. The effectiveness of the training will be carefully evaluated. The project partners will review the findings and make recommendations for those who wish to replicate.

The college and its partners will plan a national conference to draw at least 125 people to hear presentations on promising practices nation-wide that combine vocational and soft skills with English language instruction. Co-sponsors for the 2-day event will be sought among interested national professional and industry

organizations. Conference leaders will hold a summit during the event to develop recommendations for establishing a national network to institutionalize these collaborations. The curriculum report and a conference report on promising practices and the plan for a national professional network will be widely distributed.

### **3. Problem**

Approximately 12% of the U.S. population is made up of immigrants, many of whom are not skilled in English. Yet these people need well-paid jobs to support their families. Employers on the other hand, are seeking under-tapped segments of the workforce to fill their labor force needs. As an August, 2003 Policy Brief from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) entitled The Language of Opportunity: Expanding Employment Opportunities for Adults with Limited English Skills by Wrigley and others points out, "Virtually all of our new workforce growth for the foreseeable future will come from immigration, so failure to assist immigrants in improving their language and job skills is likely to hurt workforce productivity in the long term".

One industry that has had a significant concentration of immigrant workers is the hospitality industry, a sector of the economy that has been identified as a high growth industry. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the accommodation and food services industries will grow their workforce by 18% between 2002-2012. However, industry leaders have identified English proficiency as a barrier to both recruitment and advancement in the industry. Improving the language skills of the large supply of job-seeking immigrants can be a significant answer to this laborforce need.

New York City, the traditional entry-point for immigrants dreaming of starting a new life, has an exceptionally high foreign-born population, many of whom have limited English skills. This is even more pronounced in the borough of Queens, one of the most ethnically diverse counties in the nation, where Census 2000 showed that almost half the population (46%) is foreign born. The number of people living in Queens grew dramatically between 1990 and 2000; its population now numbers 2,229,000, a 14.2% rise over the past decade. In 2000 there were over one million people in the borough who were foreign-born. Over 53% of Queens residents age 5 years and over speak another language at home. Fourteen percent (14%) of that age group (more than 285,000 people) speaks English not well or not at all.

According to NYC&Company, the city's official tourism marketing organization, tourism is a \$21 billion industry, accounting for 226,000 jobs. The October 29, 2004 monthly report on economic conditions issued by the Office of the Mayor of City of New York indicates that Wall Street and tourism are two of the industries most vital to the city's economic health. The report cites recent data that indicates that the tourism industry is on an upswing and faring well in New York City. Not only has air travel into New York increased (up almost 10% comparing July 2004 to July 2003) but hotel occupancy is also up compared to last year (79.9% in August 2004 as compared to 79.2% in August 2003). As reported in Crain's New York Business in the October 11-17, 2004 issue, the leisure and hospitality sector is up about 8,900 positions this year or 3.4%, with hotels leading the way with a gain of 3,300 jobs or

8.6%. Growth is expected in the hotel industry in the New York City region, building on its existing 70,000 rooms. According to the Occupational Employment Statistical Survey one occupation expected to be among the top 25 in number of openings in the region is maids and housekeeping cleaners (total annual average opening are expected to be 1,980). In addition, one of the top 25 fastest growing occupations in the city will be hotel, motel and resort clerks (up 36.5% from 2000 to 2010). This growth will be spurred by the fact that 13 new Manhattan hotels with almost 2,000 rooms are expected to be completed by 2006. If the city is successful in landing the 2012 Summer Olympics bid, additional hotel capacity can be expected.

It is clear that hospitality is a high growth sector in New York City. Our recent informal telephone survey of a number of local hotel managers and the New York City Hotel Association staff confirms that our local employers face workforce challenges similar to rest of the nation. Not only are they struggling to fill entry-level positions such as housekeeper and desk clerk, but they also cite lack of English proficiency as a major problem in their applicant pool. At the recent Hospitality Workforce Solutions Forum hosted by the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration in Las Vegas, the stakeholders identified a number of these challenges. Chief among them were the need for training programs that address “soft skills” training among entry-level workers and the need for better oral communication and reading skills among their immigrant employees.

Besides the CLASP study entitled The Language of Opportunity noted above, we know of only one other recent major national study that addresses issues related to job training programs for immigrants who are not proficient in English. That study was conducted by the AFL-CIO Working for America Institute. Its May 2004 report entitled Getting to Work: A Report on How Workers with Limited English Skills Can Prepare for Good Jobs speaks to the need to develop training programs that can specifically address the needs of English language learners and promote teaching English and jobs skills in an integrated manner, a key feature of this project:

ESL teachers often do not have experience in developing contextualized curriculum and may only have limited knowledge of occupational content and working conditions. Occupational/vocational instructors are unlikely to know much about second language acquisition. Consequently they are likely to miss opportunities to teach and reinforce practical and functional language in their classrooms

According to the CLASP study, their research leads them to recommend that a key way to improve job training for LEP students is to:

Create programs that combine language and literacy with job skills training. ... Language instruction should be tied to training in particular occupations and should incorporate key elements, including general workplace communication skills, job-specific language needed for training, certification and testing, and soft skills to help navigate U.S. workplace culture.

Both studies also recommend the development of demonstration models to address this national need and call for the identification and dissemination of promising practices so that training program designs can build on existing research and knowledge. There are pockets of interested professionals in various national

organizations who are developing programs that integrate language instruction with both soft skills and specific job skills training. However, there is no one national organization devoted to this type of program knowledge and no annual event where program successes can be shared and future research needs defined.

We plan, therefore, through our proposed project to address the following priority investment areas:

- *Building a demand-driven Workforce Investment System:* We propose to partner with local employers to develop a curriculum and training program where language is taught to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) trainees in a context specifically customized for the hotel industry's needed skills sets.
- *Building the capacity of workers to obtain good jobs with good wages:* The hospitality industry has been identified as a sector with good paying jobs and a clearly identified career ladder. More effective training will enable immigrants to access these jobs because of their enhanced English proficiency and their readiness to work in the industry.
- *Focusing on Key Segments of the Workforce:* By targeting the large immigrant population, this project expands their opportunities to participate in the laborforce while address the needs of the hospitality industry.
- *Building Comprehensive Systems:* We propose to develop a local partnership of employers and trainers including community based organizations and the local One Stop who will be involved in the development of the training and curriculum and who will help integrate the lessons learned into the local and national workforce development system.
- *Evaluating Program Effectiveness.* Included in the project plan is an evaluation that will carefully document the project and evaluate its outcomes using qualitative and quantitative measures. We also propose to disseminate the report through a national conference and a professional network of training providers for immigrants with limited English proficiency.

## **Objectives**

1. To develop a nationally replicable model curriculum based on existing national standards and curriculum work that integrates English language acquisition with soft skills and other skills particularly needed in entry-level hotel jobs; to develop this curriculum in collaboration with appropriate national organizations, local public workforce development partners, local employers and local community agencies.
2. To conduct two cycles of training using this curriculum with a total of at least 40 people, each cycle running for 16 weeks with 160 hours of instruction; to place at least 30 (75%) of the graduates in hotel jobs; to verify with employers that at least 25 of them are performing satisfactorily on the job after 3 months of employment.
3. To develop, test and evaluate at least 3 new instructional materials designed specifically to prepare LEP (Limited English Proficient) trainees for hotel jobs, including an accent reduction tool based on recent advances in voice recognition software, training video tapes to coach trainees on handling industry-specific

situations and the related language, specialized CDs to reinforce industry-specific listening comprehensive and oral skills.

4. To conduct an extensive, research-based formative and summative evaluation of the project that can serve to improve both the curriculum and the training as they are being repeated for the second cycle

5. To produce a written report on the curriculum and training and its evaluation that will be distributed widely and can be utilized by other training programs nationwide; to make presentations at the project's national conference and at least one other national conference on the project and its findings.

6. To plan, market and host a national conference co-sponsored by at least 5 appropriate national organizations representing different professionals; to highlight at the conference the promising practices in instruction that combines vocational and soft skills with English language instruction from programs and organizations throughout the country; to attract at least 15 presenters and at least 125 attendees.

7. To convene a Leadership Forum for top professionals who are committed to integrating language and work-related training; to host a session at the conference to plan a national network of such professionals to stimulate program planning, research, replication and expansion in this field; to develop a work plan for such a network and to recruit at least 10 leaders committed to implementing the plan.

## **5. Relationship to other research or experimental or demonstration project**

As noted above, two recent studies have looked nationally at the employment needs of adults with limited English proficiency. The first of these, [The Language of Opportunity- Expanding Employment Prospects for Adults with Limited English Skills](#), by Wrigley *et al*, published by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) in August 2003 begins by stating the following:

The number of [limited English] individuals in the U.S. workforce has grown dramatically over the past decade—accounting for half of all workforce growth—yet the workforce development implications of this growth have received scant attention. Moreover, few programs focus on providing the nexus of language, cultural, and specific job skills that is key to helping low-income adults with limited English skills increase their wage and economic status—and to helping our nation's economy grow.

The study reviews 11 programs nation-wide that have provide employment related programs for adults with limited English proficiency, using a variety of strategies. As the study notes, "Most of the programs...have not been rigorously evaluated, but they are included because they use approaches that push the boundaries of traditional program design". As part of the current project we propose to undertake such a rigorous evaluation of our efforts.

We will also create a curriculum and training program to address the development of soft skills, a much needed skill set in service industries such as hospitality, and one that presents particular challenges for this population. The programs cited in the CLASP study focus on teaching technical skills (construction, manufacturing, culinary arts, CNC machining). Our own experience with technical training programs has suggested to us that soft skills training is crucial to both getting and advancing at the job in many service industries such as hospitality. However, many employers are willing to provide the specific occupational training, but expect employees to have the soft skills necessary to be successful at the workplace.

The second study, Getting to Work: A Report on How Workers with Limited English Skills Can Prepare for Good Jobs published in May 2004 by AFL-CIO's Working for America Institute, also points out the need for programs that address the needs of adults with limited English proficiency. "Most of the programs funded by WIA are geared towards workers with at least a 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading level... Even those (i.e. immigrants) who attain higher levels of education may still have difficulty demonstrating educational achievement on tests given in written English."

The AFL-CIO study too expresses concern about the lack of rigorous evaluation of existing training programs. They reviewed 8 training programs with Union involvement, offering a variety of training models. This study too, echoes the earlier study's calling for "further research, identification of best practices and technical assistance in replicating those best practices". The study also makes a number of recommendations that are similar to those made by the CLASP study, including the need to support dissemination of best practices, capacity building and demonstration projects.

These two studies provide useful directions for the next steps in developing such programs. The findings of the recent Hospitality Workforce Solutions Forum provide another set of related recommendations on what needs to be done to address training needs in that industry. A number of the recommendations focused on the need for improving "soft skills" of entry-level workers, with a suggested solution of developing "a soft skill competency training" in partnership with various training organizations in the relevant industries, including the American Hotel and Lodging Association Educational Institute.

As noted by industry leaders at the Forum, a particular challenge in hospitality and other service industries is the changing nature of the industry, as the distinctions between "back of the house jobs" (positions that have a preponderance of non-English speaking immigrants) and "front of the house" jobs have disappeared. Customer service skills and the need to interact with customers and respond to their needs have become important in all roles.

The National Retail Federation (NRF) Foundation, an organization that has been in the forefront of identifying and developing national skills standards in the industry, has developed curricula to train entry level workers in the sales and service fields, using the National Institute for Literacy's *Equipped for the Future*, (EFF) content and

skills standards for adults' roles as workers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. NRF has also developed a curriculum designed for LEP entry-level workers using these standards, a curriculum that LaGuardia's Center for Immigrant Education & Training is currently piloting in a Customer Service class for dislocated and unemployed workers. This curriculum and the EFF framework will provide the starting points for developing a curriculum geared to the needs of LEP workers entering the hospitality industry.

The American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) Education Institute too has developed a variety of curricula designed to train staff for various positions at all levels of the hospitality industry. However, these curricula do not address the needs of non- English speaking immigrants. As part of the proposed project, we will consult with the Educational Institute at AHLA curriculum about curriculum needs for the industry. We also intend to build on NRF's Customer Service Curriculum and adapt it for the Hospitality industry. The resultant curriculum would be one that integrates customer service skills in the context of the Hospitality industry with the English language skills needed on the job.

Recent developments in voice recognition software make it possible to address a persistent issue in workforce preparation involving English Language Learners: how to modify accents and improve oral communication. As part of this demonstration project, we propose to explore newer voice-recognition technology that allows language learners to "see" as well as hear how their pronunciation, accents and intonation patterns differ from the right pronunciation, accent or intonation. This technology has the potential to help language learners evaluate their oral production and gives them accurate and scientific feedback on what they need to do to improve it. Multi-media instructional resources of workplace scenarios are another possible instructional resource that we wish to develop. Technological advances will allow us to create videos and CDs infused with hotel related content and language to enhance student's learning.

## **6. Project Design and Components**

### **1) Work plan**

The major components of the proposed demonstration project are: the development of an appropriate curriculum that will integrate language skills with soft skills and other skills particularly needed in the hospitality industry; development of instructional materials to support improvement in communication skills and soft skills; a training program for entry-level workers; a carefully conducted evaluation of the training and curriculum and dissemination of the materials; and, finally a national conference to highlight promising practices and to convene a Leadership Forum to plan a national professional network. Our plan for accomplishing these components is outlined below:

#### Curriculum Development

The first three months prior to the start of the training program will focus on the different steps involved in developing an appropriate curriculum and supporting instructional materials, a process that will begin with an assessment and

documentation of the specific needs identified by our partner hotels. In collaboration with NRF, AHLA, our curriculum consultant and our Advisory Committee (see Section 5, last paragraph) that will include at least 3 local hotel employers, a pilot curriculum will be developed utilizing the Equipped for the Future content standards. NRF's customer service curriculum will be cross-walked to the hospitality industry. The curriculum will contain English language instructional material contextualized to the hospitality industry to support the development of appropriate soft skills and customer service skills.

The curriculum development will be the responsibility of the Instructor and the Training Coordinator who will guide and support the instructor in this effort. The instructor will collect environmental print used in the industry (notices, bulletins, announcements etc) as well as more formal training materials. In order to identify the kinds of tasks the employees are called to do on a daily basis, we plan to interview hotel supervisors, conduct hotel management focus groups, shadow individuals, attend orientations and other similar activities, all of which will form the basis for developing real-life instructional materials.

NRF's Customer Service Curriculum and the Equipped for the Future framework with its focuses on broad workplace skills such as decision-making, interpersonal communication, setting priorities, planning tasks, etc. will inform this curriculum. By having students reflect on and identify how they perform along these standards, the EFF framework helps students develop an understanding of workplace expectations and take responsibility for meeting those expectations. The Training Coordinator and the Instructor are currently involved in piloting the National Retail Federation's Customer Service curriculum and developing the language supportive materials needed to adapt it for English Language Learners.

While the core of the curriculum development will be accomplished during the initial phase of the project, the curriculum development will be an emergent process that will evolve and be shaped through feedback from the participants and other stakeholders and through observations of how well it meets its goals. Under the leadership of an external evaluator, a formal process will take place to evaluate the curriculum and training through feedback from participants, the faculty, members of the Advisory Committee as well as our consultants. Included in the Time Schedule is a period between the two cycles of training which will provide us the opportunity to review and revise the training program and the curricula, incorporating any modifications suggested by the various stakeholders in the project.

#### Recruitment, Training & Job Placement

At least 40 entry-level workers will be trained through 2 cycles of training. Each cycle will run for 16 weeks, a total of 160 hours; classes will be conducted in the evening to accommodate both working and unemployed applicants. Participants will be recruited from existing grant funded programs at LaGuardia (see Section 11. b), other community programs, the Workforce1 sites as well as through other avenues such as ethnic language media advertising. Potential participants will go through an orientation and screening to ensure their eligibility for work in the industry. During the orientation, students will be pre-tested using the Center for Applied Linguistics' Basic

English Skills Test (BEST) Plus. Because of the demand for good English communication skills in these positions and the limited length of the training, we propose to accept students who score at Levels 4 and 5 (high intermediate and low advanced levels) on the National Reporting system scale. This test will also be used to document post test gains. Various members of the project staff --the Training Coordinator, the Instructor, Administrative Assistant, Career/Job Placement Counselor—will be responsible for various aspects of the recruitment and assessment of participants.

The training will focus on language as a vehicle for communication and social interaction and not just grammatical knowledge or discrete skills/phrases or vocabulary. The goal will be to have participants develop a comprehensive understanding of their roles and to learn the language and cultural knowledge needed to perform this role effectively. The materials that hotel employees will need to read (OSHA regulations, company policies, procedures for performing various tasks) all will form the content of the class. Students will work on real-life tasks of the kind they have to perform: writing messages, reading job evaluations, following instructions, explaining customer problems or resolving problems related to their roles, interacting with customers, all with the goal of developing occupational language proficiency. Instructional strategies will involve pair and group work as well as independent learning. Role plays and simulations of work problems will provide opportunities to make decisions, solve problems and reflect on their performance in scenarios that reflect real workplace issues.

Job readiness will be addressed in a variety of ways. All classes will spend 2 hours a week in a computer lab where they will develop computer literacy (emailing, internet search, the basics of computer operations). Participants will do job searches on the Internet, accessing streamed video through websites. Resources such as the O-net are valuable ways for students to learn about work roles in the hotel industry. We also hope to include an internship/job shadowing component in the training and will look to our hotel partners to provide workshops on work expectations and responsibilities. We also hope to identify workers from the hotels who can prove to be valuable as resources and workshop presenters. Included in the training schedule will be a Career Counseling class taught by the Career/Job Placement Counselor during which students will also do simulated interviews and prepare resumes.

Job placement will be the responsibility of the Career/Job Placement Counselor. By working with the students throughout the training program, this staff member will have developed an understanding of participants' strengths and weaknesses and will be able to make an appropriate employment match. This Counselor will also be responsible for post placement follow-up and will seek input from hotel supervisors on how well participants are performing their jobs. Participants will be invited back for periodic workshops as which will also provide them opportunities to reflect on their effectiveness as workers and address issues and problems that may emerge. The Case Manager will link trainees to community support services that help trainees manage family and personal issues during training and after they are employed.

#### Development of Multi-media & Digital Instructional Materials

In order to reinforce and accelerate classroom learning, one of the objectives of this training program is to utilize recently developed software (voice recognition software; digital videos and cameras) to develop English language instructional materials specific to the hospitality industry. Through some newly acquired technology from a grant from Verizon, we will have access to voice-recognition software with authoring capability. We plan to use this capability to create instructional materials (dialogues, orally delivered instructions and directions, information on company policies), contextualized for hotel jobs. In order to have students' listening comprehension and oral skills reinforced, we propose to purchase low-cost CD players for each of them and burn CDs with these specifically created materials which will be developed by the instructor with the support of the Instructional Technology assistant.

Digital cameras can capture students as they perform role plays in workplace simulations, which can then be put on CDs or videotapes for students to evaluate their own performance in simulated work settings with other more appropriate responses for the situation. The instructor can evaluate their work and the students themselves will be able to work on their pronunciation and accents within the context of simulated work settings, thus facilitating transfer of language skills to real-life work situations.

Another use of technology in the training will be through classroom management tools such as Blackboard, an instructional software that facilitates on-line learning. All of the students will spend a minimum of 2 hours in a computer lab where they will develop computer literacy. The class Blackboard site will allow students to reinforce these computer skills and also support asynchronous independent learning. Students will be able to connect to the Blackboard site from home, or during independent lab time. Through the Blackboard site we will be able to link students to streaming video as a means to improving their listening comprehension and also learning new concepts, encountering "real-life" scenarios and samples of authentic language.

#### Research and Evaluation of Demonstration Project

A carefully developed and well-developed evaluation of the training, instructional materials and the curriculum is an important outcome of the project. We propose to contract with an outside evaluator who will be involved in the project from the beginning and will identify the evaluation questions to be answered through the data collected. As a job training program, one of the questions to focus in the evaluation will be the value added by the training as defined by the employers. We anticipate that other outcome measures to be collected will include pre-and post test scores on a national standardized English test and job placement data as well as more qualitative data such as participant satisfaction. While the consultant will define the methodology and the data to be collected, the collection of the data will be the responsibility of the program staff. The evaluation is conceived of as formative and summative. A formative evaluation will be completed after the first cycle of instruction and the curriculum and training modified based on the findings of the formative evaluation. The final summative evaluation will be completed at the end of the second cycle of instruction and disseminated at the planned conference and in the final written report.

## Conference

Planning for the proposed national conference will begin soon after the start of the project. The conference will be a two-day event with keynote speakers each day, a variety of workshops and presentations, and ample time for structured but informal networking and information exchange. We expect at least 15 presenters from around the country and at least 125 attendees. The City University of New York has appropriate conference rooms at two of its Manhattan campuses. Hopefully we will be able to use these facilities at a reduced cost that is underwritten by the University. This will enable us to keep conference registration fees low to encourage attendance.

The Conference Coordinator will play a key role in planning the conference but will continually consult with all of the project's experts, including the Advisory Committee and the external consultants. The Conference Coordinator will recruit other appropriate co-sponsorships among national professional and industry organizations such as the National Conference of Workforce Educators (part of the American Association of Community Colleges), American Society for Training & Development, National Institute for Literacy, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), American Society for Training & Development, UNITE HERE, the Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association. The co-sponsoring organizations will be invited to be part of a conference steering committee that will help make key decisions about the focus, content and logistics of the conference.

With advice from the Steering Committee, the Conference Coordinator will handle all the logistics for the conference site, prepare materials for the Request for Presentation Proposals, create a database of potential presenters and attendees, prepare the conference announcements, oversee mailings and advertising, etc. Four months before the conference, a Conference Assistant will be hired to help with preparations, including processing of registration and fees, finalizing site requirements, etc. The Conference Coordinator will also create a logistics team from LaGuardia staff who will help manage the two-day event.

At the two day event, conference speakers will be invited to share outstanding job training program models for limited English proficient workers, including a presentation on the LaGuardia project, examples of other training and credentialing systems, cross-industry training etc. Conference presentations will be made available for distribution (see Section 10) and a Promising Practices Report will be written.

A highlight of the conference will be the Leadership Forum attended by invited professionals who are already working in the field of contextualized training for LEP students. The Forum will discuss what is needed to continue the expansion of program models and research efforts in this field and will draft a plan to establish an on-going professional network. Their recommended action steps will be included in the conference report.

## **6. (2) Organizational arrangements for administration**

The project will be administered by the Center for Immigrant Education & Training, a department of the Division of Adult and Continuing Education at LaGuardia Community College, a part of the City University of New York.

Despite the educational barriers that must be overcome by its largely immigrant student population, LaGuardia Community College succeeds in graduating associate degree students in large numbers. In a recent United States Department of Education report ranking the nation's community colleges by the number of associate degrees awarded to Hispanics, LaGuardia was first among New York City institutions and fifth among the nation's top 50 two-year colleges. With 30 degree programs and three certificate programs, students have a choice of well-paid career paths in such majors as business administration, computer information systems, sciences, and allied health. Its award-winning First Year Experience Program is comprised of innovative activities that help incoming students make an easy transition to college life. To help its immigrant credit students succeed, LaGuardia has put into place a host of programs and services that include affordable tuition, evening and weekend classes, smaller class sizes, part-time enrollment, free tutoring labs, and on-site child care.

The Division of Adult and Continuing Education offers a wide range of programs and services designed to promote the economic well being of New York City, especially the Borough of Queens. The largest continuing education enterprise at a public college in New York City, the Division served over 25,000 people through its non-credit offerings in 2003. Annually the Division successfully lands 40 or more competitive grants from NYC, NYS, federal and private funding sources. Services are targeted to incumbent workers, new job entrants, new immigrants, low-income residents, out-of-school youth, incarcerated youth, existing businesses, and new start-up businesses. Through its many community partnerships with community-based organizations, the public workforce development system, and a wide range of local employers, the College is highly effective in assisting the overall workforce development in the region. For example, since its inception 3 years ago our Small Business Development Center has secured over \$14 million in loans for the 1300 small businesses it has helped. Our Center for Corporate Education provides on site training for incumbent workers for over 40 local businesses each year.

The Center for Immigrant Education & Training offers comprehensive educational and training programs designed to advance low-income immigrants to economic and social self-sufficiency. The Center was established a little over two years ago as a focused effort on the part of the College to address the educational and training needs of low-income immigrant adults in its neighboring communities. With a funding of close to \$1 million from New York State Education Department and the NYS Department of Labor the Center currently serves over 500 students through four major program strands. With an experienced staff of 8 full time administrators and instructors as well as 4 support staff, the Center has consistently exceeded State targets for educational gain, and currently has 2000 prospective students on a waiting list. The Center has been a pioneer in the New York City area in developing

contextualized English classes integrated with job training programs. These programs also provide career counseling and case management services to support low-income immigrant adults to address the multiple barriers that they face. The Center has offered job training programs in a number of areas including Security Guard Training and Customer Service Skills. In the Security Guard Training, 100% of the students successfully completed the program, and 75% were placed in jobs.

The Director of the Center for Immigrant Education and Training, Dr. Suma Kurien (see resume and organizational chart attached) will provide overall oversight for this project and will supervise the Training Coordinator and the Conference Coordinator.

LaGuardia Community College is highly committed to working in partnerships with other organizations in the community to maximize resources and avoid duplication. Our many past successes in working together with community agencies and public workforce professionals has created a strong reputation for LaGuardia as a reliable, creative and committed partner in workforce development service delivery. For instance, our commitment to community partnerships has led us to recently form and lead a 8 member coalition of colleges, retail employers, and community agencies that is working to establish a Sales and Services Skills Center in Queens with consultation from the National Retail Federation Foundation. In addition we are currently one of the lead members of a coalition to seek funds to train entry-level workers at the two major airports in Queens.

Our staff works very closely with the Queens Workforce1 Center (NYC's WIA One Stop for the borough). The City University of New York (CUNY) is a mandated One Stop partner and links many of its services directly to the One Stops. Our college has been selected by the New York City Department of Small Business Services to be one of two CUNY Workforce1 Affiliate Centers. The Center is projected to open in early 2005 right on campus, thus increasing our linkages to community resources. Dr. Kurien is a member of the Queens Workforce1 Center's working group on services to immigrants and another staff member serves on a Committee on Immigrants formed by the Queens Borough President's office to ensure coordinated, unduplicated services.

In order to ensure that this particular project is carefully coordinated within the community, we will form an Advisory Committee that will include public workforce representatives, union representatives, managers and human resources directors from local hotels, and representatives from community agencies and educational providers that serve immigrants and/or provide job training. The top program staff will work very closely with the group to be certain that the curriculum developed is responsive to local needs, to ensure that local agencies refer appropriate trainees, and to develop ways to incorporate the best practices identified in this project into the local network of workforce training providers.

### **6.(3) Time schedule**

For the purpose of this time line, the project is separated into two components. However both aspects of the project will be developed in a coordinated, integrated

way with all staff reporting through one administrative structure and working together in order to maximize effective planning and service delivery.

<b>A. Time Schedule for Major Project Activities</b>		
	<b>Curriculum Development &amp; Training</b>	<b>Conference Planning</b>
Month		
1	Hire new staff; recruit Advisory Committee; set up administrative and fiscal systems	Hire new staff; begin recruitment of national organizations to co-sponsor conference
2	Hold first Advisory Committee meeting; meet with national consultants and evaluator; conduct interviews and focus groups with local hotels	Convene co-sponsor steering committee; create draft plan for conference focus
3	Write draft curriculum; share with Advisory Committee and consultants for review; recruit 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle participants	Finalize conference co-sponsors, focus, format
4	Refine curriculum; assess and finalize participants in 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle of training	Secure conference site & date; draft Request for Presenters & initial marketing material; recruit keynote speakers;
5, 6, 7, 8	Conduct 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle of training; work with local hotels to identify vacancies; work with local hotels to interview graduates	Review possible presenters with Steering committee; confirm conference presenters; create and distribute full marketing materials of conference
9,10	Review curriculum with participants, Advisory Committee, consultants; revise as needed; continue job placement efforts; monitor job performance on employed graduates; recruit and assess participants for 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle	Refine site arrangements; process conference registration; maintain data base on conference attendance
11, 12, 13, 14	Conduct 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle of training; related activities as above; continue to monitor job performance of 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle	Recruit Leadership Forum participants; develop agenda for Leadership Forum; finalize site arrangements and keynote travel arrangements.
15	Continue job placement efforts; monitor job performance of employed graduates; review and assess all activities above with Advisory Committee & consultants; assist evaluator in full review;	Continue as above
16	Write final report and final curriculum; print and distribute final report and curriculum with advice from consultants and others; make presentation at project conference; work with Advisory Committee and consultants to promote replication and future funding	Hold national conference conduct Leadership Forum at conference
17	Make presentation at one other national conference; work with Advisory Committee and consultants as above.	Review plans for national network; collect and edit conference presentations
18	Continue as above.	Finalize plans for national network; print and distribute conference findings; write final grant report; do fiscal closeout.

## **7. Personnel**

### Project Director:

The project Director, Dr. Suma Kurien, has extensive training and experience in the field of language acquisition (see attached resume). Prior to starting the Center she was a Visiting Scholar at Teachers College, Columbia University where she conducted extensive investigation of vocational skills training programs across the country that are targeting those with limited English. Under Dr. Kurien's leadership, the Center has been a pioneer in New York City in developing job training programs that integrate job training with English Language instruction and career counseling and has offered training in areas such as Basic Food Preparation & Service, Coaxial Cabling, Customer Service, funded through grants and WIA vouchers. Dr. Kurien has made presentations at various national conferences on the work of the Center and in particular, its approach to job training for limited English proficient adults.

Training Coordinator: The Assistant Director of the Center, John Hunt, will be the Training Coordinator. Mr. Hunt has had over 10 years of experience in curriculum and in administering programs for adults English Language Learners. He has a graduate degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults and supervised language students interning in American corporations.

Instructor: Melinda Thomson, full-time instructor at the Center, will be the instructor for the proposed training class. Ms Thomson is currently the instructor in our pilot Customer Service class, utilizing NRF's Customer Service curriculum and has developed appropriate English language instructional materials for the course. Ms Thomson has also developed a Blackboard site for the class and is currently developing her skills in digital media for use with the class. Ms. Thomson holds a Masters degree in English and has many years of teaching English and prior to entering the teaching field was for many years involved in the retail industry as a customer service specialist.

The two other key staff members, the Conference Coordinator and Career/Job Placement Counselor will be identified at a later time.

## **8. Facilities**

LaGuardia Community College occupies 5 large buildings in Western Queens near the foot of the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and just 15 minutes by subway or car into Manhattan. The Division of Adult and Continuing Education has 25 dedicated classrooms and 5 computer labs for the use of its programs and is able to use other college classrooms and labs if needed. The computer labs are equipped with 25 or more up-to-date computers, networked to support a variety of software applications. The college employs a team of experience computer technicians to support these labs as well as the computers in use for administrative purposes. High-speed Internet connectivity allows students to use a wide variety of on-line learning opportunities. Several labs are configured to support language acquisition software for our many ESL classes.

The Division also has dedicated office complexes which house our programs. They are fully furnished and equipped with computers that support all administrative functions. We also have two career development resource rooms that are equipped with a full library of on-line and print career information. These rooms are overseen by staff who guide students in the use of the latest career guidance tools, resume writing, on-line job hunting and on-line job application.

## **9. Subcontracting**

The consultants that we have identified for this operation include:

National Retail Federation Foundation will consult on curriculum content. This organization has been a leader in developing skills standards for the retail industry and has also expanded its work to other related sales and service occupations.

The Educational Institute of The American Hotel and Lodging Association will consult on the laborforce and training needs of the hotel industry. For 50 years the Educational Institute has provided industry-tested, research-driven hospitality training resources worldwide.

We plan to identify a nationally recognized expert on job training and English language instruction to adult immigrants as a curriculum consultant. One possible candidate for this role is Heide Spruck Wrigley, who specializes in education and training for language-minority adults. In addition to co-authoring the CLASP study cited above, she has done a two-year study on language literacy and employment on the U.S.-Mexico border.

As program evaluator, we hope to secure the services of Dr. Johann Uvin, Vice President for Research and Evaluation at the Commonwealth Corporation in Massachusetts. Dr. Uvin has specialized in researching the economic impact of job training programs for limited English proficient adults.

## **10. Utilization**

There are number of potential users of the project's findings and end products. Nationwide, thousands of programs exist in educational and community service settings to prepare immigrants for entry-level jobs. However, relatively few integrate job training and language instruction. The model curriculum developed in this project will be appropriate for eventual use in training and literacy programs funded by both Title I and Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. In addition programs funded by the Refugee Resettlement Program at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and TANF funded employment and training programs can adapt the curriculum for their own use. There are also many other privately funded job training and literacy programs that seek better ways to prepare immigrants for the workforce.

We expect to product a final report on the curriculum and training project that provides:

- Overview of project
- Design of the training program
- Detailed curriculum

- Information on the self-directed learning tools used
- Evaluation of the project
- Recommendations for replication and future projects

In addition the key presentations at the national conference will be summarized and the recommendations of the Leadership Forum will be put into a written report. Both the curriculum report and the conference report will be made widely available through press announcements, articles in professional publications, the website developed for the conference, emailings to key professional organizations, distribution at national conferences, etc. In addition LaGuardia is committed to continuing to work closely with the key national organizations to promote further activities that will support national models for preparing those with limited English for jobs in the hospitality and related industries.

## **11. Other Information**

### **A. Other organizations participating in this project**

- Jamaica Workforce1 (NYC One Stop for the Borough of Queens) – will refer clients and advertise the program. See letter attached.
- National Retail Federation Foundation – will consult on curriculum and participate in the conference planning. See letter attached
- The Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association – will consult on curriculum. Verbal and email confirmation received from Jeff Gerber, Director of Workforce Development
- Ramada Plaza Hotel – will serve on the Advisory Committee, help with curriculum development, employ appropriate graduates. See letter attached
- Sheraton LaGuardia – will serve on the Advisory Committee, help with curriculum development, employ appropriate graduates. Verbal confirmation received from General Manager; letter of support expected.

### **B. Financial and Other support**

The Division of Adult and Continuing Education secures between \$5M and \$6m in grants from NYC, New York State, federal and private foundations each year. The grants fund a wide variety of services for target populations. However, several grants target low-income and/or limited English job seekers. Staff in each of those grants will help with recruitment of trainees and with connections to local hotels with whom those project's job counselors are working. A conservative estimate is that the staff of these grants will contribute time that equates to at least \$130,000 in staff time. For additional cost sharing, see 12. Budget, Section B - Cost Sharing

<b>Name of grant</b>	<b>Source of funds</b>	<b>Total funding</b>	<b>Period of funding</b>	<b>Purpose of grant</b>	<b>Contribution to this project</b>	<b>Estimated support to this project</b>
Workforce1 Affiliate Center	WIA- NYC Dept of Small Business Services	\$1.1M (Contract pending)	2/05 to 1/05	Job search services; assess to education and training	Recruitment and job development	\$50,000 (intake, job developers staff time)
English Language Civics Education	WIA- NYS Education Dept	\$299,998	7/04 to 6/05	ESL and Civics classes for low income adults	Recruitment	\$10,000 (intake, assessment staff time)
Family Literacy Program	NYS Education Dept	\$265,774	7/04 to 6/05	ESL classes for low income parents and children	Recruitment	\$10,000 (Recruiter, assessment staff time)
Adult Literacy Program	WIA - NYS Education Dept	\$498,484	7/04 to 6/05	GED, ABE and ESL classes	Recruitment	\$20,000 (Recruiter, assessment staff time)
Employment Services and Placement	NYC Human Resources Administration	\$1.5 M (performance based)	2/03 to 1/06	Job placement for public assistance recipients	Recruitment and Job development	\$30,000 (Job developer, recruiter, assessment staff time)
Career Advisement Program	NYC Dept of Housing, Preservation, and Development	\$760,000	3/04 to 2/05	Career planning, training and education for Section 8 Housing residents	Recruitment and Job development	\$10,000 (Job developer, recruiter, assessment staff time)

**C. Extension**

This proposal is not an extension or an addition to a previously Government supported project.

**D. Other requests**

We have not requested financial support for this proposal from any Government or private organization other than the Employment and Training Administration.

**E. Innovation/Uniqueness of Proposer**

This project offers some unique and innovative ways to address the workforce development issues outlined in Section 3. These aspects of the project are described in detail in other section (especially Section 5 and Section 6 (1)) but are summarized here:

- The project will result in a unique curriculum that combines English language acquisition with training for entry-level hotel jobs; the curriculum will be made available for replication nation-wide.
- The project will develop customized learning tools build on new technology that will enhance classroom instruction and promote self-directed learning.

- The project will result in a first-ever national conference focused on innovative programs that address both the language learning needs of immigrants and the jobs skills they need to succeed in employment.
- For the first time, the Leadership Forum at the conference will assemble those most experienced in ESL job training and will create a plan to establish an on-going network of these providers and experts to promote program research and expansion.
- The training report and the conference report will provide valuable information to a wide variety of practitioners who are dedicated to helping immigrants prepare for successful employment.

There are many reasons why LaGuardia Community College is an ideal organization to take on these tasks. We have had a long and successful history of conducting both job training and ESL instruction but have also developed very effective programs that integrate the two. We have had experience working with the National Retail Federation Foundation and with adapting the EFF curriculum to LEP students. Our Center for Immigrant Education and Training is staff by highly qualified and experienced staff and instructors who understand both industry needs and teaching contextualized English. Our college is highly committed to serving its many immigrant students but has also forged very strong partnerships with the business community to promote local economic development.