READY TO WORK

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) believes successful integration starts with learning English and acquiring a living wage job. That’s why OIRA helped design the Ready to Work (RTW) program, an innovative combination of English as a Second Language classes, computer literacy curriculum, job training, and case management to successfully connect immigrants and refugees who need the most assistance with an education and a stable job.

Genesis
Mayor Ed Murray, Seattle City Council, three City agencies – the Human Services Department, Office of Economic Development, and the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs – along with a group of engaged stakeholders took action to create RTW, a prototype model of English language and employment acquisition.

Program Design
Based in the Communities and Neighborhoods
• Resources for student supports, such as transportation and food vouchers.
• Case management is an essential component.
• Small classes allow for more personalized instruction.

Appropriate Student Supports
• Case managers speak multiple languages, focus on intercultural competence, and are involved in documenting personal and family challenges.
• Students receive information about language rights.
• Languages other than English are used to facilitate learning.

Intensive Case Management and Advocacy
• Close interactions between case managers, program coordinators, and instructors.
• Integration of digital literacy for in-class and out-of-class learning.

Pro-Active Advising and Job Development
• Strong relationship with selected employers.
• Reality-based career exploration including employers and local work site visits.

Active Engagement of Quality Employers
• Employers engaged in identifying opportunities for job seekers with limited English outlining industry specific soft skills and occupation related technical skills.
• Mock interviews and job fairs.

English Plus 3
• Workshops led by a caseworker or other specialist on such topics as problem solving using the internet, navigating banking issues, and increasing employability.
• Workshops are linked to ESL classes and re-enforced by site visits.

Personalized Instruction
• Learning through multi-lingual resources, such as video, visuals, and storyboards.
• Development of career skills through project-based learning.
• Problem-solving tasks mirroring college and career readiness standards for adult English language learners.