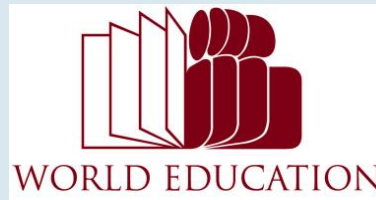


Networks for Integrating New Americans

Presents

Employer Engagement



Presenters



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Director of Outreach and Program
Evaluation Welcoming Center for New
Pennsylvanians



Claudia Green, Director
English for New Bostonians




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Director of Workforce Development
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

What You Said in the Pre-Survey

Most respondents were “somewhat experienced” in engaging employers.

For all respondents, the primary purpose for engaging employers was to secure job placement for high- or low-skilled workers.

Top three areas of interest for this webinar:

- Identifying areas of potential collaboration
 - Gathering data from employers about their needs
 - Informing employers about available education/training services
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Employer Engagement Topics

1. Assessing your context: What is your own capacity to work with employers? Who are your students/clients? How do you understand the employment environment?
2. What is the conversation to have with employers? What engages them? What doesn't work?
3. After initial engagement, how do you build the relationship? Where do you want their engagement to go?



Federal Policy Context

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

One Hundred Thirteenth Congress
of the
United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Friday,
the third day of January, two thousand and fourteen*

An Act

To amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to strengthen the United States workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth, and for other purposes.

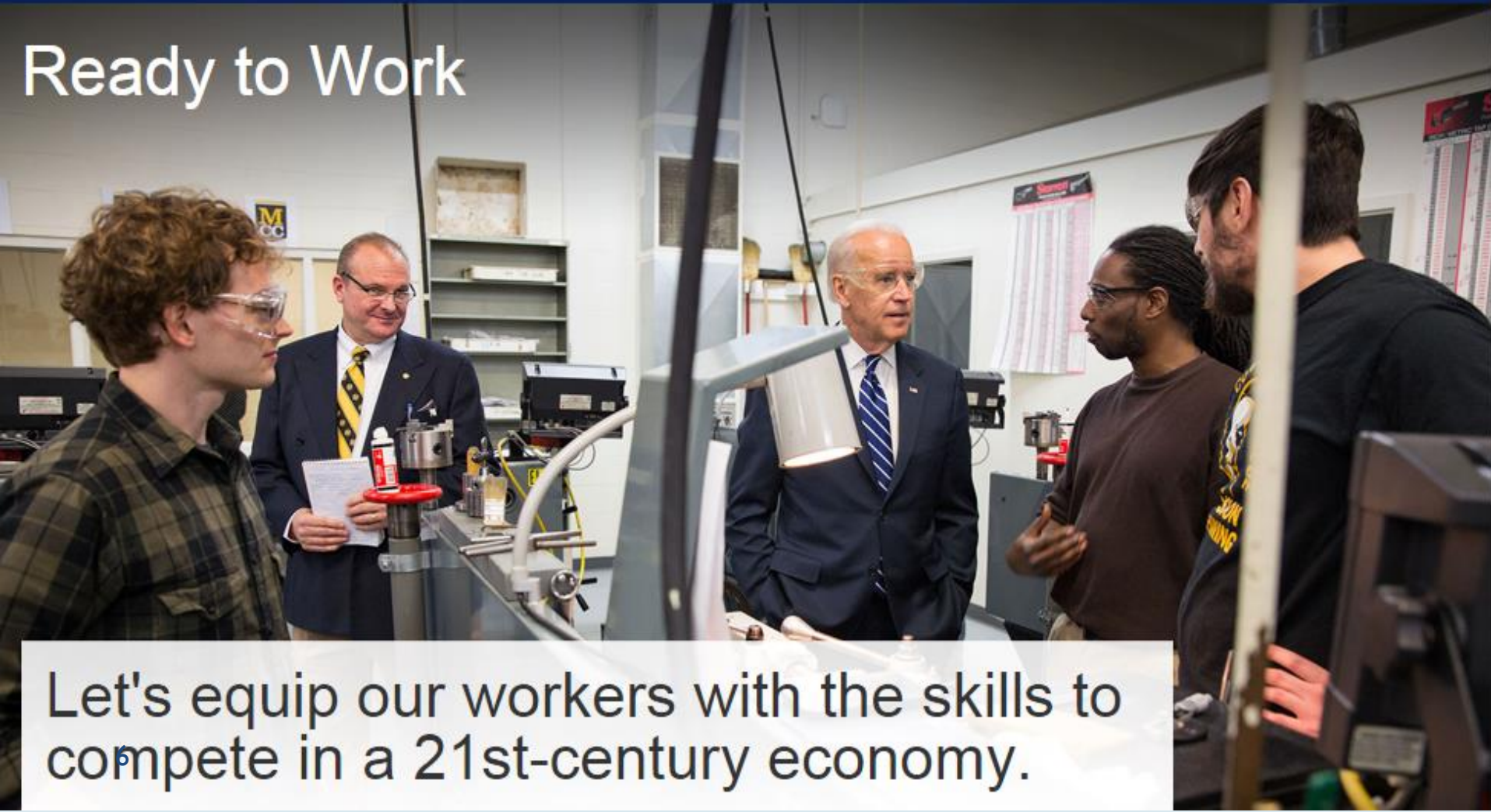
*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act”.



Federal Policy Context



Ready to Work

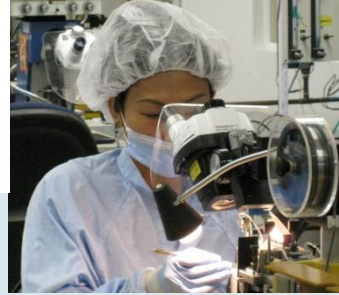
Let's equip our workers with the skills to compete in a 21st-century economy.

I. Assessing your context

- What is your own capacity to work with employers?
- Who are your students/clients?
- How do you understand the employment environment ?



english for **NEW
BOSTONIANS**



english works

Shared Investment,
Mutual Opportunity

ABOUT US

English for New Bostonians: Mission is to increase access to high-quality ESOL classes for adult immigrants in Boston.

Key Programs/Areas of work:

1. Grantmaking (Expansion, Emerging Programs and Targeted ESOL Initiatives including ESOL for Parents and Small Business ESOL)
2. Capacity-building: Training and TA for program staff
3. Statewide English Works Campaign calling on public and private sectors to invest in high-quality ESOL system serving immigrant workers, employers and Commonwealth

Descriptive Information:

Four F-T staff • 15-member Board • Grants to 26 ESOL programs serving 1,100+ adult immigrant learners/year • Funded by City of Boston, 16 private funders, donors

Assessing Your Context: Your Organization

Engaging Employers in meaningful and sustained ways:

- ▶ Takes time and capacity. Be ambitious and realistic.
- ▶ Is different from teaching, providing direct services
- ▶ Requires staff (at different levels) to:
 - ▶ spend time outside the office
 - ▶ be able to pitch the organization
 - ▶ be in close communication with employers, students and each other
- ▶ Requires resources. You'll want to demonstrate
 - ▶ the need
 - ▶ some initial success
 - ▶ how expanding your current capacity will lead to deeper relationships and positive outcomes for your clients and your organization.

Assessing Your Context: Your Students/Clients

Learn where they work. Add summary data to anecdotes.

ENB conducted a survey “Learning English, Talking Jobs” (2011) to

- ▶ identify employer partners for workplace ESOL engagements
- ▶ provide guidance for developing work-oriented ESOL curricula

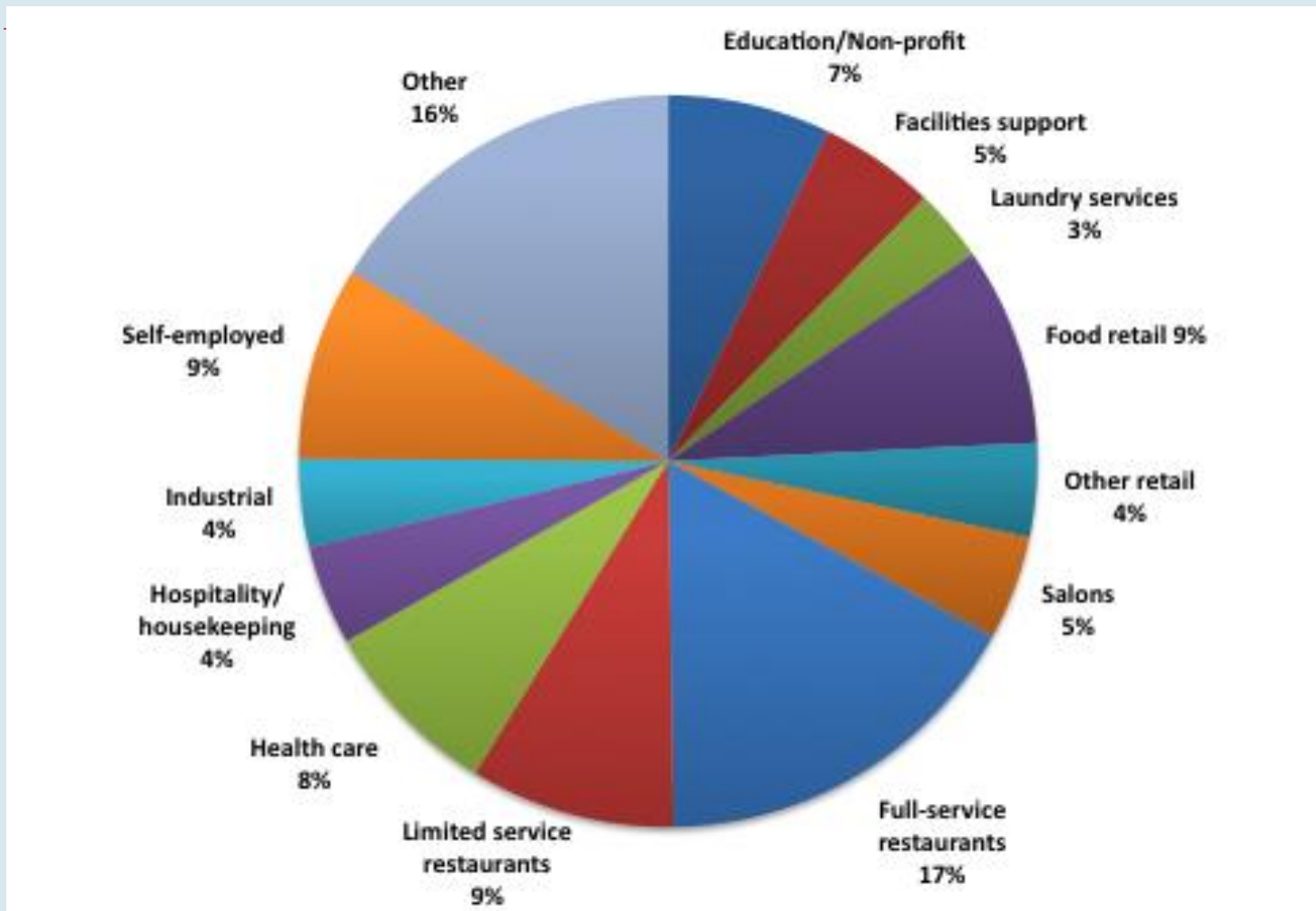
835 students in 18 ESOL programs funded by ENB completed a simple, sensitive, anonymous survey that asked students:

- ▶ their current employment status, experience and goals
- ▶ employer
- ▶ whether their co-workers needed English classes
- ▶ if their employer knew they were enrolled in an ESOL class
- ▶ if the employer might be interested in talking to us about workplace opportunities

“Learning English, Talking Jobs” summary of survey findings

- ▶ 61% of ESOL students were working, but just 56% work full time (compared to 80% in U.S.)
- ▶ Half of working ESOL students—and two-thirds of those who work full time—have problems attending ESOL classes because of their work schedules.
- ▶ 10% of students provided the name of their employer
- ▶ Three-quarters of non-working students say they are looking for work, but most lack work experience in the U.S. and less than one-third have applied for any specific jobs.
- ▶ A majority of working students (57%) say co-workers need ESOL classes.
- ▶ Student responses indicate that employers may be open to workplace ESOL programs.

Where are ESOL students working?*



* “Self-employed” includes private childcare workers and private house cleaners

Assessing Your Context: Your Students/Clients

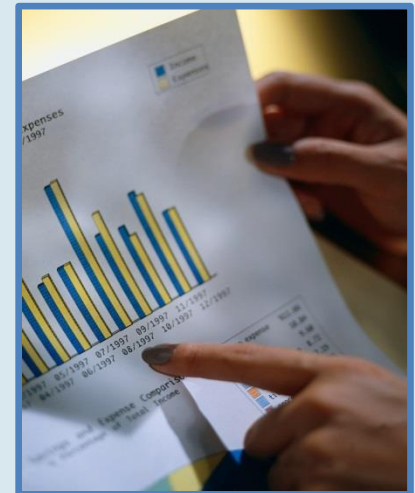
Students are a rich source of information on the labor market and employer opportunities:

- ▶ Allows you to speak to employers with confidence (ex: “Many students that work in your industry are coming to us of English classes. If we work together, you can attract workers with the skills you need,” OR “...they can gain the skills to move into higher level positions.”)
- ▶ Helps you focus your efforts on specific sectors, identify and even specific companies;
- ▶ May suggest ways to enhance job-oriented curricula in existing ESOL programs, including a greater focus on the skills needed to find and apply for jobs; and
- ▶ Can help you better meet the needs of students and enhance what you offer employers.



Assessing Your Context

- ▶ It's helpful to understand as much as possible about the environment in which you are working:
 - ▶ Which occupational categories represent a meaningful degree of employment in your city/region?
 - ▶ What do you know about the current employment settings of your students/clients?



Finding Labor Market Information

▶ **Depending on the time you have available, consider:**

▶ Federal O*Net data

▶ State data centers

(list: www.census.gov/sdc/network.html)

▶ Overview of state and local employment data:

<https://winwin.workforce3one.org/view/2001212365477234753/info>



Finding Actual Jobs

- ▶ **Labor market projections provide big-picture information, but helping your clients often comes down to having ground-level intelligence.**



- ▶ Gathering data from employers about their needs is the fundamental building block for every other kind of employer engagement.
- ▶ Developing a thorough understanding takes time. There is no substitute for shoe leather.

2. Employer Engagement

- ▶ What is the conversation to have with employers?
- ▶ What engages them? What *doesn't* work?



I've Identified an Employer, Now What?

- ▶ **Before you call or visit:**
 - ▶ Put yourself in the employer's shoes
 - ▶ Think through what their priorities are likely to be (*finding reliable workers? shipping a product on time? making customers happy?*)
 - ▶ Rehearse active listening and paraphrasing



Beware of Common Pitfalls

- ▶ Assuming that what motivates a nonprofit staffer will also motivate an employer
- ▶ Believing that the “deservingness” of a jobseeker will prompt the employer to offer a job
- ▶ Thinking of jobs as “rewards” that an employer will hand out to the most needy candidates



Talking to Employers

- ▶ **Keep it short and simple.** Focus on how you can help them accomplish their goals: *I saw that you are looking for CNC operators. I am working with two experienced candidates that I would like to present to you. What is your application process?*
- ▶ **Listen more than you speak.** Paraphrase what you've heard. Take good notes.
- ▶ **Tell the truth in an appealing way.** *She is eager to learn, not She's never done this before.*



Talking to Employers *(continued)*

- ▶ **Pre-empt common concerns.** *Our clients are work-authorized. We do not charge a head-hunting fee.*
- ▶ **Be honest about drawbacks if asked.** *No, there is no tax credit for hiring an immigrant.*
- ▶ **Decide in advance what services you're willing to offer.** Will you help your clients complete an online background check? Credit check? Don't promise what you aren't equipped to deliver.

What DOESN'T Work

Starting by explaining how well-qualified your client is.

Instead: Listen first. Then explain how your candidate meets their specific needs.

Asking for special treatment or to be excused from common application requirements

Instead: Follow protocol (such as completing an online job application) and then follow up personally and courteously.



How Do I Set My Organization Apart?

- ▶ Know your competition (staffing agencies, temporary services, other nonprofits)
- ▶ Have an answer for skeptical questions (FBI screening, tax credits)
- ▶ Be able to explain your “value proposition”



Set Your Clients Up for Success

- ▶ **Avoid “wishful placement.”** It’s tempting to encourage a client to apply for a job they’d like to have, rather than the one they are qualified for.
- ▶ **Use analogy of codebreaking.** What worked in your home country to get a job was not wrong, but it’s a different code. Living here means learning the American codes.
- ▶ **Be explicit about American expectations.** Calling an employer once to follow up is fine. Calling dozens of times will be perceived as extremely rude.

Recap

- ▶ Remember who needs who! Understand the power dynamic and the sales relationship
- ▶ Be upfront: Honesty about your organization's capacity is better than “hum a few bars and fake it”
- ▶ Circle back. There is always turnover among hiring managers
- ▶ Collect data so you can show your impact.
- ▶ Learn from your mistakes. We all make them.

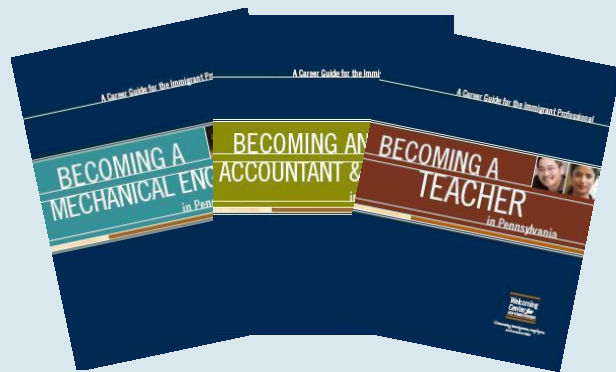


About Welcoming Center

- Annual budget: \$1.6 million
- 20 full-time staff; 7 part-time; 15 volunteers & interns
- Founded 2003
- Serving 1,200 people from 140+ countries each year



**President and CEO
Peter Gonzales**



www.welcomingcenter.org



3. After Initial Engagement...

How do you build the relationship?

Where do you want their engagement to go?



Building the Employer Relationship

Paying attention and following up can help you build a more engaged relationship over time.

- ▶ What (else) have you observed about employer needs?
- ▶ Can you offer services or suggestions to reduce an expensive employer cost?
- ▶ Did you deliver on what you promised?

Build new opportunities as you go. Ex: Mock Interviews → Job shadows → Internships → Curriculum Design Group → Incumbent worker program

- ▶ Keep learning about their industry, business
- ▶ Ask for feedback, be in touch

Building the relationship

Recognize employers for their contributions





Engaging Employers: One Hospital's Perspective

Joanne Pokaski, Director of Workforce Development
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center



Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

- ▶ Boston teaching hospital affiliated with Harvard Medical School
- ▶ 8000 employees, 6100 FTEs, average 450 job openings
- ▶ 649 patient beds, 650,000 patient visits
- ▶ One of 14 teaching hospitals in Boston area
- ▶ 20% of employment in Boston is in healthcare, 15% is in hospitals

Workforce Development

Pipeline Programs

Pharmacy Tech
Surg Tech
Med Lab Tech
Research
Administrator
Patient Care
Technician
Medical Coder
Central Processing
Registration Specialist

Skills Upgrade For Employees

Employee Career Initiative
ESoL
Computer Skills
Career Advising
Career Development Workshops
Financial Literacy

Community Hiring

Adult Referrals
Adult Internships
Youth Summer Jobs
Youth Internships
Job Shadows



Community Hiring

Why?

BIDMC is 3rd largest private employer in Boston

It is important that people who live near us feel connected to employment opportunities here

Community groups can better advise their clients/fewer inappropriate applicants to jobs

The more transparent our hiring process is, the more diverse is the talent we attract.

How

Hosting hands-on internships from local programs.

Feedback on referrals from community providers.

Tips for Community Stakeholders

Understand
your community
connection

- Location
- Connection to staff member or board member

Be efficient, be
on point

- Use employer time well
- High standards of professionalism

Know who
you're sending

- Refer very carefully at first while you are building a relationship



What we look for in a hire

Meets the
minimum
requirements of
the job description

Work
ethic/reliability

Enthusiasm for
role/positivity

Communication
skills in interview

Experience helps

Customer
service/patient
focus



Improving Employee Skills

What We Offer

English for Speakers of Other Languages
(JVS)

Pre-college and college courses
(Bunker Hill Community College)

Career Advising and Career Development
Workshops (in house)

Financial Literacy Program
(From Debt to Assets, Inc.)

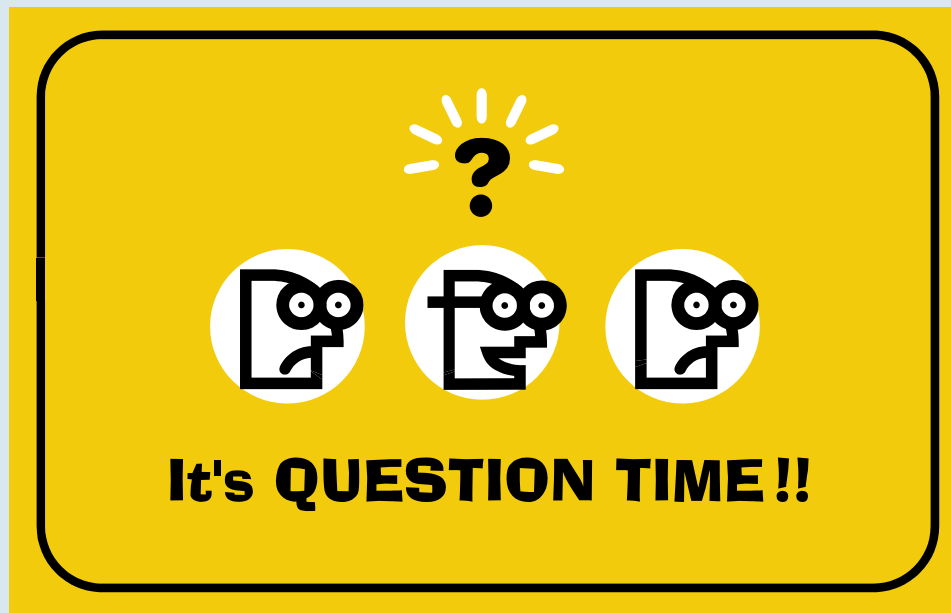
Computer Skills Classes
(was JVS now in-house)

What we care about

Results/Effectiveness

Cost

Smooth Operations



Networks for Integrating New Americans

Thank you!

A recording of this webinar and the follow-up discussion will be available on the VCoP.

To join the VCoP, please contact Araceli Mendez at amendez@worlded.org

