

# State Recovery Now

Photo taken from the Cambridge Community Learning Center. City of Cambridge website: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/services/basicadulteducationprogram>



State Recovery Now  
a project of America Achieves

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Creating avenues for populations with limited English proficiency (LEPs) to join and advance in the workforce, will promote equitable economic outcomes and accelerate economic recovery, by expanding the supply of skilled workers

## WHY USE ARP FUNDS?

ARP funds can be used to monitor and measure program effectiveness in moving immigrants and LEP populations into the labor force. Collecting further evidence of impact will help begin a conversation about transitioning some existing state and local spending (e.g., adult education funds) to this type of long-term model in the future.

## WHY DO THIS NOW?

With so many low-skill immigrants and LEPs out of work right now, interventions to move them into the workforce would help economic recovery while creating more equitable economic opportunities for underserved communities.

## English for Advancement



**What are we trying to accomplish?** Helping LEPs enter and advance in the labor force through contextualized English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and career coaching services, while simultaneously transforming the way adult education is delivered, funded, and measured to better align with workforce development goals.



**Problem we're addressing:** The skills of LEP residents are underutilized, even when employer demand for skilled workers is high. Traditional workforce development initiatives have typically overlooked this population, while adult education and ESOL programs are not typically designed with employment as the end goal. Strategies are needed to blend these two systems.



**Why does this matter?** Populations with limited English proficiency face high barriers to entering into and advancing in the workforce, worsened by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



**What is the policy intervention?** EfA transforms the ESOL classroom into a work readiness environment, with employment-contextualized English lessons and personalized career coaching services who know the labor market, identify quality jobs, and help students through the hiring process.



**Cost:** The cost per student ranges between \$4,000 and \$5,400, which covers staffing, physical space, support structures, advertising, and administrative expenses. To further advance equity, policymakers may want to consider incorporating a stipend to pay students for their participation.

**ROI:** A randomized control trial evaluating the impact of EfA in Massachusetts found a **net earnings benefit two years after enrollment of \$3,580** (in 2019 dollars). With a net cost per participant of \$4,940, sustained earnings benefits are expected to exceed net costs by the third year after enrollment.



**Why now?** With so many low-skill immigrants and LEPs out of work right now, interventions to move them into the workforce would help economic recovery while creating more equitable economic opportunities for underserved communities.



**What does success look like?**

- Employment gains for English language learners and immigrant communities
- Sustained wage gains over time
- Higher rates of under-employed individuals advancing into positions with higher wage opportunities
- Increased tax revenue collected by the state, as well as decreased spending on social safety net programs for participants



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**Additional benefits**

- Increases diversity in the workforce
- Supports immigrant and refugee communities, whose skills are underutilized in the labor force
- Advances equity by making labor market and education opportunities more accessible to English language learners through improved language skills, career coaching, and increased social capital

**About the Authors**



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**TAKEAWAYS**

Substantial ROI	Novel Approach	Evidence-Based
<p>English for Advancement (EfA) was created under a Pay for Success model, predicated on creating a positive return on investment. The intervention is proven to pay for itself through increased tax revenue.</p>	<p>Most students take ESOL courses because they want a new or better job, but the current system is not designed to target employment goals. EfA is a new approach that transforms ESOL training to achieve workforce development outcomes.</p>	<p>Evaluated by an independent RCT, EfA is proven to produce employment and wage gains for LEP communities. The model is replicable in other communities with large immigrant populations, which require a targeted approach to workforce development.</p>