

How Better Immigration and Integration Systems Help Business and Industry Compete

Employers across the country are struggling to find the workers they need. Hospitals need doctors and nurses. Manufacturers need skilled talent. Every unfilled role imposes a cost—in overtime, delayed projects, reduced capacity, and stalled growth.

With an aging population and slower labor force expansion, investing in domestic talent is essential but insufficient on its own to meet workforce needs. Immigration is a key part of the equation. Yet the systems that bring people into the country and the systems that connect them to work here often operate separately. Immigration shapes who comes; integration determines if their skills and experience can actually be put to work.

The result is a costly mismatch: Qualified workers, many of whom are already here, are underemployed or sidelined by credentialing barriers, confusing workforce systems, and pathways that do not sufficiently connect talent to employer and regional needs.

The *Built to Work* framework, developed by World Education Services, treats immigration and integration as one economic system. When credential recognition, workforce navigation, immigration policy, and pathways to employment are designed to work together, communities use talent better—and employers connect faster with the skilled workers they need in order to grow, compete, and meet demand.

What's In It for Business

Closing this gap means faster access to skilled workers, more reliable pipelines for hard-to-fill roles, lower recruitment and turnover costs, and resilient local economies that drive business growth.

How to Engage

1. Strengthen integration capacity.

- **Better align workforce programs with business needs.** Connect employers to the broadest talent pool by including immigrants in workforce planning—expanding pipelines, closing skills gaps, and strengthening competitiveness.
- **Lead with local expertise.** Business owners should use their knowledge of hiring needs and skills gaps to modernize credential and skills recognition and workforce navigation.
- **Use data already collected.** Time-to-fill and vacancy data show where shortages limit growth and where system fixes cut costs industry-wide.
- **Invest strategically.** Encourage investments in systems that sustain growth and keep talent pipelines strong.

2. Design immigration pathways with successful integration in mind.

- **Bring your hiring reality to the table.** As part of workforce and immigration conversations, share where jobs are going unfilled, which skills are hardest to find, and where existing pathways fall short.
- **Push for pathways that respond to demand.** Help ensure that immigration and workforce pathways connect people's skills to employer needs and good jobs.
- **Measure what works.** Use existing data to analyze how these approaches fill jobs, sustain pipelines, improve job-skill matches, and reduce costs.

A PRACTICAL AGENDA FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

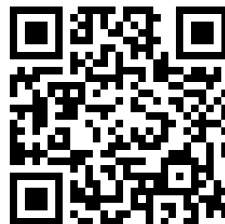
- **Use your voice.** Strong workforce outcomes occur when employers participate, shaping discussions to ensure business and industry have the talent they need to grow—today and in the future.
- **Expand your talent pool.** Fill vacancies faster and find needed skills by tapping the entire workforce, including workers trained overseas. Skills-first hiring can be a useful approach.
- **Investigate where skills get stuck.** Review internal hiring and promotional data to see where immigrant talent goes unrealized.

Looking Ahead

Every business and industry leader can act where it makes the most sense. *Built to Work* is a starting point for businesses and industry to help the U.S. meet workforce shortages, retain talent, and keep growth on track.

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**Explore the
framework:**



ABOUT WES World Education Services is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students.