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English Language and Civics Education Initiative: Common Ground Partnerships

The President's FY 2000 budget supports a \$190 million increase for adult education and family literacy, including a \$70 million investment for the **English Language and Civics Education Initiative: Common Ground Partnerships**. This initiative will help states and communities provide limited English proficient adults (LEP) with expanded access to high quality English as a Second Language (ESL) programs linked to civics and life skills instruction on understanding and navigating our government system, the public education system, workplace, and other key institutions in American life.

Importance of Civics Education and Life Skills Instruction

Civics education and life skills instruction are important in assisting immigrants to become full participants in American life. In 1997, the United States Commission on Immigration Reform found that understanding the basic principles and values of American society provides immigrants, particularly new United States citizens, a shared commitment to the American values of liberty, democracy and equal opportunity. Last year, the Advisory Board for One America, the President's Initiative on Race, recommended strategies to include immigrants in the American community and foster a greater degree of community cohesion by promoting programs that provide instruction on the rights and duties of citizenship. Existing civics programs focus specifically on helping immigrants pass the naturalization test, but do not typically address broader issues of helping immigrants learn about life in America.

Demand for ESL Services

For LEP students and immigrants to succeed and become full participants in American life, they must be able to read and communicate in English. Evidence from immigrant communities demonstrates high levels of enthusiasm for learning English and participating in civic life; however, the demand for ESL instruction outweighs the current supply.

- ◆ ESL instruction is the fastest growing component of adult education; enrollment in ESL has increased 105 percent over the past ten years (in 1997, the ESL enrollment was 1.85 million).
- ◆ Adult education programs currently provide funding for ESL, but more targeted services are needed to meet the overwhelming demand for both ESL and civics instruction.¹ For example, Los Angeles has a waiting list of 50,000 people for ESL classes, Chicago's ESL programs are filled to capacity as soon as they open their doors and New York State has resorted to a lottery system to select individuals who wish to learn English.
- ◆ Evidence demonstrates that learning English in a community-based setting using everyday experiences is particularly effective in helping LEP immigrants become highly valued students and employees. The Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement and

¹ The Department of Education currently funds a \$365 million Adult Education basic grant program, in 1998, \$166 million funded ESL programs administered by states.

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several neighborhood-based projects have demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach.² For example, in Southern California, grades improve when parents of Cambodian refugee children are involved in school activities. In Minnesota, Nuer-Sudanese refugee women who participate in ESL literacy and work-related English programs have higher job retention rates.

Eligible Grantees

- ◆ Grants would be available to states and communities with significant need for adult ESL services.
- ◆ States will compete for about \$30 million in discretionary grants to support ESL/civics instruction. Each state grant will provide the adult education system with additional ESL federal funding to increase access and improve adult education ESL services, including capacity building.
- ◆ Community based organizations, local educational agencies, colleges (including community and tribal colleges and universities), libraries, unions and other non-profit entities will compete for another grant fund of about \$40 million. Preference will be given to eligible grantees prepared to provide a 25 percent cash or in-kind match for the discretionary grant amount.

How Does It Work?

- ◆ Common Ground Partnerships will allow communities to develop ESL/civics projects tailored to their unique needs and populations.
- ◆ Grants could be used for varied purposes related to English language/civics instruction including staff, materials, personnel training and support services such as child care and transportation costs for program participants (if not otherwise available). Grantees would be strongly encouraged to include volunteers groups (such as Literacy Volunteers of America, Americorps and VISTA volunteers, Retired Senior Volunteer Corps and immigrant mentors), and to partner with employers or employer groups to improve work and life skills.
- ◆ Grant recipients would report annually to the Secretary of Education on the progress of participants toward achieving English and civic proficiency, and how these funds improved and expanded the programs that support teaching LEP students.
- ◆ It would be a competitive grant program run by the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE).
- ◆ A portion of funds will be set aside for purposes of evaluation, technical assistance and the dissemination of best practices.

Required Program Components

- ◆ Offer English language education that incorporates: instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (civics and U.S. history) and information on naturalization eligibility requirements and application procedures; navigating various parts of American life (health care, child care, education -- including parental involvement in schools, banking, housing and transportation systems); accessing employment; improving work skills; understanding legal rights; and paying taxes.
- ◆ Have an underserved population with a significant demand for ESL/civics instruction and a demonstrated need for increased funds to provide ESL services in the state or community.
- ◆ Demonstrate effective links with existing programs at the state or local educational and community

levels including education, employment, housing, and transportation programs.

- ◆ Use flexible approaches (such as evening and weekend hours), technology as a tool to expand access, and providing instruction at workplaces and/or community-based sites.
- ◆ Assess program effectiveness using performance measures required by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of Workforce Investment Act).
- ◆ Meet other selection criteria and considerations related to program quality and effectiveness required for State Adult Education grants under the Workforce Investment Act.

**For more information, please call the U.S. Department of Education,
Office of Vocational and Adult Education 202-260-9279
Or 1-800-USA-LEARN**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE:
COMMON GROUND PARTNERSHIP
WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING**

**248 Old Executive Office Building
September 16, 1999
AGENDA**

LAURA EFURD

*Deputy Assistant to the President and
Deputy Director of the Office of Public Liaison*

MARIA ECHAVESTE

*Assistant to the President and
Deputy Chief of Staff*

ERIC LIU

Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

IRENE BUENO

Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

HEIDI RAMIREZ

*Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Education*

RON PUGLSEY

*National Director of Adult Education and Literacy
U.S. Department of Education*

Q & A

ESL/CIVICS EDUCATION BRIEFING
List of Attendees/Invitees
September 16, 1999

CONFIRMED ATTENDEES:

IMMIGRANT/CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS

1. Dinah Wiley
National Immigration Law Center
2. Marcela Urrutia
National Council of LaRaza
3. Roberto Rodriguez
National Council of LaRaza
4. Tyler Moran
MA Immigration Coalition
5. Helene Tobin
NJ Immigration Coalition
6. Mila Laschkewitsch
IL Immigration Coalition
7. Maria Jimenez
Texas Immigration Coalition
8. Oscar Chacon,
No. Calif Immigration Coalition
9. Claudia Gomez
No. Calif Immigration Coalition
10. Ada Gonzalez-Peterson
Texas Immigration Coalition
11. Phavann Chhuan
Cambodian Network Council
12. Jennifer Grayson
United Jewish Communities

13. Eun Sook Lee
National Association Korean American Service & Education Consortium
14. Joann Lee
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
15. Jayne Park
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
16. Fong Her
Hmong National Development, Inc.
17. KaYing Yang
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
18. Sonia Gutierrez
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19. Abel Nunez
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Education Statistic Service Institute
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DC Education Agency, Adult Education

27. Jon Randall
Literacy Volunteers of America

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MCA Enterprises, Inc.

29. Moire Lenehan-Razzuri
MCA Enterprises, Inc.

OTHERS INVITED

These are other organizations that have been invited, and have not responded, not yet decided who will attend, or those who cannot attend. I fully expect to receive a few more confirmations tomorrow morning.

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities – no confirmed attendee
National Association of Latino Elected Officials – no confirmed attendee
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund – no confirmed attendee
League of United Latin American Citizens – Can't attend
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Leadership Conference on Civil Rights – Can't attend
National Citizenship Coalition – no confirmed attendee
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society – Can't attend
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① Crisis? all 88
② examples -

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**For more information, please call the U.S. Department of Education,
Office of Vocational and Adult Education at 202-205-5451.**

Irene Bueno

09/16/99 10:51:03 AM

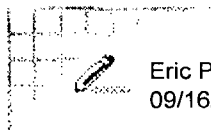
Record Type: Record

To: Eric P. Liu/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc: Anna Richter/OPD/EOP
bcc:
Subject: Re: ESL/Civics Meeting 

As you request, here is some info on the \$7 million. Please let me know if you need more info.

In FY 1999, Education received \$7 million to support projects that demonstrate effective practices in providing and increasing access to English Language literacy programs linked to civics education. These grants are authorized under the Adult Education National Leadership Activities section of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The FY 2000 proposal for \$70 million is a major expansion of this program. Education is working to get a RFP cleared by OMB soon and award the funds in Spring 2000 (it's a forward funded program). According to Education, they have been getting numerous calls about groups interested in applying for these funds.

Eric P. Liu



Eric P. Liu
09/16/99 10:14:51 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP@EOP
cc:
Subject: Re: ESL/Civics Meeting 

I just want to chat briefly before the mtg about what folks are expecting to happen.

Also, can you prepare a Q&A on the ESL/Civics initiative that we can give to press office with the statement tomorrow? Thanks.

**DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT ON CITIZENSHIP DAY AND ENGLISH
LANGUAGE/CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE
September 17, 1999**

Today, as we celebrate Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, thousands of individuals in naturalization ceremonies across America are pledging their allegiance to the United States and to the ideals that undergird our nation. Like generations of immigrants past, they are driven by a dream – and to achieve that dream, they seek to learn the ways of this land. I believe we can help these new citizens become full participants in American society. That is why my Administration has proposed the creation of the Common Ground Partnerships, an innovative initiative that would combine expanded English language instruction with education in civics and life skills. This initiative, which my FY 2000 budget funds at \$70 million, will help ensure that those who become Americans learn not only the words of the citizenship oath but also the broader language of our civic life. I hope that Members of Congress from both parties will recognize the power of this important initiative to build a stronger American community.

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