



**NATIONAL  
IMMIGRATION  
FORUM**

# SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THE NEW AMERICAN WORKFORCE

A contextualized English language training  
program for the retail industry

## NEED

An estimated 1 in 10 working-age adults in the United States have limited English skills, which limits career advancement and business growth. The retail sector alone employs about 11 % of all limited English proficient workers — nearly 1.5 million.

## PROJECT

**2 ROUNDS OF TRAINING**  
**3 CITIES**  
**1000 EMPLOYEES**  
**3 MAJOR EMPLOYERS**

In 2016, the National Immigration Forum partnered with Miami Dade College and the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education to launch *Skills and Opportunity for the New American Workforce*. This first-of-its-kind initiative provides contextualized English language learning for retail employees. The program builds the skills of the company's workforce by aiding with industry-specific vocabulary and communication, with the overarching goal of improving worker upward mobility – utilizing an original curriculum, 40 percent through in-person instruction and 60 percent online, offered by community college partners.

In 2017, we improved the program to offer an effective, mobile-accessible, computer application to deliver the online learning. Over two years we trained nearly 1,000 employees of major retailers in three cities: Kroger in Houston, Whole Foods in Houston and the New York City metro area, and Publix in Miami. *Skills and Opportunity for the New American Workforce* has proven itself as a program ready for the growth necessary to serve the new American workforce.



**NEW  
AMERICAN  
WORKFORCE**

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In the retail industry communicating effectively is the key to success. These classes have allowed our associates to develop the skills necessary to communicate effectively and to provide premier customer service.

- Maria Delly, Publix Retail Associate Relations



This class helped me better engage with my managers and I feel so much more confident in all aspects of my job.

-Sharon Collado, Publix Associate

## IMPACT



### IMPROVED ENGLISH SKILLS

**87%**

As demonstrated by pre & post test scores



### ENHANCED CAREER OUTCOMES

**37%**

Reported  
promotion

**73%**

On track to  
higher wages



### INCREASED EMPLOYEE LOYALTY

EMPLOYEES REPORTING:

**95%**

"Satisfied" or "Very  
Satisfied" at work

**100%**

30-day  
Job Retention



### INCREASED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

MANAGER RATINGS:

**86%**

Improved interaction  
with customers

**91%**

Increased confidence  
on the job



### IMPROVED BUSINESS OUTCOMES

**93%**

Participants reported  
improved job  
performance

**89%**

Managers reported  
increased store  
productivity

#### Project Partners



#### Project Funded by

