



Designing for Opportunity and Empowerment

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS FOR REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS AND
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AT HEARTLAND HUMAN CARE
SERVICES

Refugee and
Immigrant
Community
Services (RICS)
at Heartland
Human Care
Services (HHCS)

In FY24, we served **1,880** participants in our adult education program.

We work alongside our Refugee Family Services department to provide language and literacy instruction to approximately **500** refugees, asylees, humanitarian parolees and special immigrant visa (SIV) holders every year.

In addition to our ESL program, we provide classes about citizenship, GED prep, job readiness, contextualized ESL for career pathways, bridge and ICAPS programming, and IELCE classes.

All participants in our program, no matter their English language proficiency, can access our Transitions services.



Hospitality Skills Bridge

"Hotel Class" was established in 2007 as our premier workforce development program

Served 1000 between 2007 and 2019

Pros: competitive pay with overtime, strong CBO referral network, many jobs did not require high level of English proficiency, positive word-of-mouth

Cons: high and low season, irregular work schedules, physically demanding, not a durable line of work during a global pandemic

Our First ICAPS

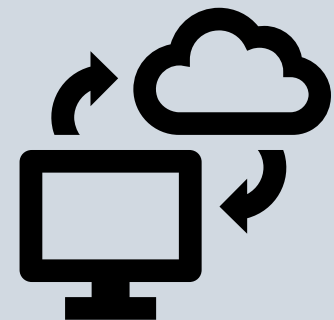
Designed to provide choice of pathway: child care, medical interpreting, or information technology

Leaned into virtual learning communities and cooperative learning

Required high level of English language proficiency

Varying results across the three pathways

Semester format led to significant attrition



Who Do We Serve and What Do They Want?

Brought wealth of industry knowledge from their home countries in many in-demand job sectors

Expansive language and intercultural skills

Broad range of literacy levels, English proficiency, and educational backgrounds

Motivated by contextualized ESL

Interested in career progression

Want flexible learning, flexible work

Need family-sustaining wages

Opting out of one-size-fits-all job training



Truck Driver Training at HHCS-RICS

1

Established our **CDL ICAPS** in 2022, partnering with a local truck driving school

Leveraged transportation/logistics experience of many new arrivals

Required intermediate to advanced English language proficiency and at least one year of driving experience in the United States

Primary focus: test preparation and DMV navigation

2

Many applicants were not language ready!

CLP Bridge was established in 2023

Primary focus: English language acquisition and reading skills, transition to ICAPS

3

Many of our participants were not language ready or life ready!

English for Driving in America was established in **2024**

Primary focus: demystify the driver's license process, language acquisition, DMV navigation

What did we learn?

Establish ICAPS that aligns with participant expertise and motivations

Focus on skills to navigate bureaucratic systems

An inclusive program recruits for itself

Contextualized ESL classes are important within pathways

Even darling programs can become obsolete, observe job market trends

Piloting with small cohorts is essential

Cost of the credential should be weighed with likelihood of completion and earning potential

What's Next?



Career pathway program in the healthcare sector

Developing Healthcare Career Exploration Bridge
With CPR/First Aid certification

Seeking phlebotomy training partner for vocational
training component of a new ICAPS

Continuing to survey our participants and listen to our
colleagues

Intentionally incorporating multilingual activities across
our career pathways programming

Aimee Schneider

Program Manager, Youth Education and Career Pathways

aschneider@heartlandhumancareservices.org

872-763-8725

Natalia Lishchynska

Transitions Specialist, Lead Teacher

nlishchynska@heartlandhumancareservices.org

708-413-5410

**HEARTLAND HUMAN
CARE
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