



NOVEMBER 2006 www.chny.org

Center for an
Urban
Future
SCAA
Schafer Center
for Analysis and Advocacy

Number of Immigrants in New York State: 3.9 million

Number of adults who speak English less than very well: 1.6 million

Enrollment in state-administered adult ESOL programs: 86,433

Funding for state-administered adult ESOL programs: \$73.9 million

The problem of inadequate resources for English-language instruction is not a new one, but its visibility and seriousness has grown in recent years as hundreds of thousands of new arrivals, from Vietnamese in Syracuse to Mexicans in Yonkers, have settled in the Empire State. More than one in four adult New Yorkers are now foreign-born.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Cities In Nearly Every Corner of New York State Have Been Experiencing a Sharp Rise in Immigrants, But State-run ESOL Programs Aren't Keeping Pace With the Growing Demand

DURING THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FROM every corner of the world shared one dream: to come to America and enjoy a better life for themselves and their children. Not only did they fulfill this dream, they made America—and New York in particular—an immeasurably better place to do just that.

That dream remains powerful as ever, and immigrants still come to New York with their hopes, their dreams and their willingness to work hard to make them come true. But in the knowledge economy of the 21st century, that's not enough. English language skills are much more important for this generation of immigrants than was the case for their predecessors. Without the ability to communicate with employers, co-workers and customers, newcomers "hit the wall" of upward advancement far more often and much more quickly than was true just 50 years ago.

Unfortunately, while new immigrants have been fueling the population growth of communities in nearly every corner of the state, from Suffolk County to Syracuse, the state-run English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program has not come close to keeping pace with the demand. State officials have failed even to acknowledge, much less effectively address, the fact that even though the state's foreign-born population has grown by nearly 1.3 million since 1990, adult ESOL programs administered through the New York State Department of Education added only 15,000 new seats* over the same period.

Report - November 2006

Lost in Translation

This new report finds that while immigrants have become a growing part of the workforce in nearly every corner of New York State, the state-run English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program has not come close to keeping pace with the demand, creating a skills gap that could hurt the state's economic competitiveness.

by Tara Colton

[Click here to read the full report \(PDF\).](#)

RELATED PRESS

[Help More Immigrants Learn English](#)

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, by Tara Colton, December 10, 2006

[Inmigrantes Perdidos en la Traducci](#)

El Diario/LA PRENSA, by Carmen Villavicencio, November 28, 2007

[Demand for English Lessons Outstrips Supply](#)

The New York Times, by Fernanda Santos, February 27, 2007

[Teaching English to Immigrants for Economic Development](#)

North Country Public Radio, by Karen Dewitt, November 28, 2007

[Teaching Adults to Read, Write Helps Their Kids, Our Economy](#)

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, by Robert Mahar and Kevin Smith, May 09, 2007

Why Don't You Teach English?

El Diario/LA PRENSA, November 29, 2007

Facing A Failure to Communicate

Albany Times Union, by Paul Grondhal, December 01, 2007

Lost In Translation Study Finds Immigrant Population Underserved by English Programs

The Journal News, November 14, 2006

Plan to Fund Adult ESL Gains Support

Queens Tribune, by Alex Silverberg, June 22, 2007

Report: N.Y. Falls Short In Literacy Classes

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, by Gary McLendon, November 15, 2006

ESOL Conference Tuesday in Albany

WAMC Radio, by Dave Lucas, November 26, 2007

Empowered through English - ESL on Long Island (video)

Long Island WINS via YouTube, April 24, 2009

State ESOL Programs Fail To Keep Pace With Immigrant Population

The River Reporter, November 16, 2006

Help Wanted: Getting NY's Workers the Language Skills They Need

The Brian Lehrer Show, WNYC, November 26, 2007

New Report Calls On Spitzer To Increase Funding for ESOL

Sing Tao Daily, November 20, 2006

English Classes for Immigrants Lag, Groups Say

The Poughkeepsie Journal, by Dan Osborn, November 28, 2007

Immigrants Face Severe English Class Shortages

Voice of America, by Adam Phillips, March 14, 2007

Politician Wants Federal Grants for English Classes

The New York Daily News, by Nicholas Hirshon, June 14, 2007

NY Business Community Says the State's Competitiveness Is At Risk; Groups Cite Lack of English Instr



CENTER FOR AN URBAN FUTURE
120 Wall Street, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10005
cuf@nycfuture.org © All Rights Reserved.