Questions to Ask: Getting a Workplace English Program Started

Workplace English language training programs can solve two problems at once: enable New Americans with English skills—the key to ntegration and economic advancement—while addressing systemic talent shortages. Many HR and workforce development leaders see the benefits of upskilling employees with English. However, they struggle with where to start. Use this checklist as a guide to help your organization get started.

1. WHO NEEDS TO LEARN ENGLISH?

Knowing, specifically, who your organization would offer this program to can tell you a lot about the type of program(s) needed for success.

- ☐ Identify job roles
- ☐ Identify proficiency levels

2. WHY DO YOU WANT THIS PERSON OR GROUP TO LEARN ENGLISH?

Determine the end goal and work backward from there. Your organization may feel it's a worthwhile employee benefit, while others may view it as a pathway to greater opportunity within the organization. For many, it's a combination.

- ☐ Because it's the right thing to do
- ☐ To perform current role better
- ☐ To become eligible for promotion
- ☐ To become eligible for further training

3. WHAT DO THEY NEED TO LEARN?

Based on what you determine in questions one and two, consider what type of language skills would push those goals forward most successfully for the learners that the organization would be targeting.

- ☐ Reading and writing skills
- ☐ Speaking and listening skills
- ☐ Other (e.g. digital literacy, job-specific language)

4. WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ENGLISH LEARNING?

It's important to understand what resources your organization realistically has to offer English Language Learners. There are multiple program models, including state and grant-funded options available for organizations with fewer in-house resources.

- ☐ Funding
- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ Time investment
- ☐ Equipment (e.g. laptops, tablets, mobile phones)
- ☐ Existing state or grant-funded programs

5. WHAT MODEL WILL WORK BEST FOR US?

Consider what type of program would be most accessible to the population you are serving. What is the level or stage of digital literacy? Will in-person-only instruction lack the flexibility required for meaningful participation? Multiple models exist to meet your workforce needs and goals.

☐ **Model 1 Workplace-focused content with Blended Instruction**

- Model relies on digital platform to personalize learning at scale, with targeted, synchronous support (in-person or virtual)
- Goal is to prepare a target group of employees with specific, workplace-related English
- Employees typically offered some release time for instructor-led English training
- Expectations set around time spent learning, objectives, and achievement targets
- Learners use digital tools with industry-specific content for learning on their own time
- Stakeholders (often trainers or managers) track progress
- Synchronous support/tutoring often offered, sometimes in partnership with a local education provider or nonprofit organization

☐ **Model 2 English as a Benefit with Personalized Instruction At Scale**

- Goal is to offer interested employees access to an English training program
- Employees generally not offered release time
- Expectations set around engagement with the learning platform and expected outcomes
- Employees can decide whether they want to learn English for career purposes or for further academic study
- In-person support generally not offered
- Learners use digital tools for learning English on their own
- Program administrator "champion" tracks progress and provides encouragement/recognition for accomplishments

EnGen is a language upskilling platform for organizations, educational, and government institutions that want to improve their talent pipeline while providing economic mobility, civic participation, and a better quality of life for workers, immigrants, and refugees. *Still not sure what English Learning Program models make the most sense for your organization? Learn more with a demo from one of our workforce development experts.*