



## White House Task Force on New Americans Call for Letters of Interest National Skills and Credential Institute

Dear Colleague,

In order for the economy to successfully continue to innovate and grow, we must ensure that we are able to take full advantage of all of America's talented labor. Many immigrants and refugees arrive to the United States having already completed extensive education and job training, or with significant work experience abroad. While about one-third of all immigrants have college degrees, representing over 15% of all college-educated individuals in the US workforce, they are disproportionately likely to be unemployed or underemployed. Language barriers, lack of access to job networks, variability in credit for their prior learning, and other challenges with the certification and licensing processes can all contribute to under- or unemployment for skilled immigrants.

Finding solutions to this challenge provides benefits for both the individual, their families, and communities as a whole. For immigrants, providing more or better opportunities to apply their skills will result in an increase in productivity and household income. For employers, breaking down barriers to employment will address workforce shortages and bring new, multicultural, and linguistically diverse employees into their businesses. For communities, finding solutions to the problems of under- and unemployment provides a way to utilize already existing skills in an area where there is high need. Together, these three groups can help eliminate "brain waste" in our communities by recognizing the talents, experiences, and credentials of foreign born and educated professionals.

As part of the White House Task Force on New Americans' (Task Force) commitment to facilitating credentialing for immigrants and refugees, the White House will host a **National Skills and Credential Institute** this June. The Institute will bring together leaders from state and local workforce areas; adult and post-secondary education systems and institutions; representatives from departments of labor, licensing, and regulatory affairs; immigrant serving organizations; and experts from federal agencies. These groups will learn about strategies for addressing barriers that immigrants and refugees face related to credential attainment and credential recognition, particularly in the health care, IT, engineering, and education sectors.

The Task Force, in partnership with the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor, are now inviting communities to apply to participate in the **National Skills and Credential Institute** that will take place in Washington, DC on **June 29, 2016**.

This peer-learning forum aims to connect a consortia of leaders from state and local workforce areas; adult and post-secondary education systems and institutions; representatives from departments of labor, licensing, and regulatory affairs; immigrant serving organizations; and external technical assistance providers. The goal of the forum is to help communities understand how policies and practices help or hinder credential attainment and recognition, and assist in developing strategies for how the public, private and nonprofit sectors can strengthen career pathways for skilled immigrants. We ask that you submit a letter of interest describing the following:

- Demographic information and data about your skilled immigrant population and the common challenges they face;
- The members of your State or local team (e.g. public sector, private sector, workforce boards, community colleges etc.) and their interest in this issue;
- An articulation of the problem(s) for which your State or local team would like to identify solutions;
- Possible metrics or milestones to assess whether your community's intervention is improving outcomes for skilled immigrants;
- Information on technical assistance that would be helpful to address those issues;
- Evidence of your team's commitment to improving the outcomes of skilled immigrants; and
- Your potential contributions to an ongoing community of practice.

To be considered, communities must submit letters of interest by **May 1, 2016**. Letters of interest can be submitted to [NewAmericans@who.eop.gov](mailto:NewAmericans@who.eop.gov).

Together key members of the Task Force, including the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor will select 10 -15 sites to participate in this important institute.

We look forward to receiving letters of interest from communities across the country!