



Bridging the Gap for New Americans Final Report

SUMMARY

In 2023, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Employment and Training Administration \(ETA\)](#) and commissioned contractor Westat Insight to conduct a study to address key questions in the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act, [Pub. L. No. 117–210](#), enacted in October 2022. This study sought to better understand the labor market dynamics of a growing segment of the U.S. workforce by identifying the New American population's employment patterns, education, and training, and the strategies that may help ease their transition into employment that leverages their existing skills, experience, training, and knowledge.

The Westat Insight study team conducted a targeted literature review and engaged with subject matter experts to identify relevant studies, programs, and data sources on this population. The study team also developed (1) a data catalog by evaluating and documenting data sources identified in the studies and (2) a program catalog by conducting a review of public and private programs that help New Americans secure employment in the United States.

This Department of Labor-funded study contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [data, methods, and tools](#) and [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The number of immigrants with at least a college degree obtained outside the United States was estimated to be approximately 7 million, based on 2019 ACS data (Batalova & Fix, 2021). In 2021, an estimated 13.6 million (34%) of the United States' 40.2 million immigrants held at least a college degree (Ward & Batalova, 2023).
- Based on the 2019 ACS, 24% of immigrants who obtained college degrees outside the United States accepted a job that did not require a college degree or were unemployed, in contrast with 16% of U.S.-born individuals and 17% of U.S.-educated immigrants (Batalova & Fix, 2021).
- 29% of foreign-born workers with at least a college degree held occupational licenses compared with 50% of U.S.-born workers with the same education level (Boesch et al., 2022).
- Recredentialing or relicensing for New Americans who received their credentials outside the United States is complex, expensive, and time-consuming. Common barriers cited in the literature included limited English proficiency, lack of recognition from licensing boards or postsecondary institutions for credentials and experience obtained outside the United States, problems navigating licensing systems, and lack of sufficient support to complete requirements, such



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as financial assistance or English language learning support (Friedman, 2018; Liebert & Rissler, 2021; Special Commission on Foreign-Trained Medical Professionals, 2022; WES [World Education Services], 2022).

- Governors from various states have signed executive orders to remove barriers that prevent New Americans from gaining skill-appropriate work (Morse & Chanda, 2023; NCSL [National Conference of State Legislatures], 2020; Sanz & Francis, 2021; WES, 2022). Nonprofit organizations, state initiatives, and community colleges have implemented strategies and approaches intended to integrate New Americans into the U.S. workforce (Casner-Lotto, 2011; Harrington et al., 2020; McHugh & Morawski, 2017; Special Commission on Foreign-Trained Medical Professionals, 2022; Upwardly Global, 2023).

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

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SUBMITTED BY: Westat Insight

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PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration

SPONSOR: Chief Evaluation Office

CEO CONTACT: ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov

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