



English for
New Bostonians

a public-private-community solution initiated by the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians and committed to expanding the city's long-term capacity to meet the demand for English classes

ESOL in the Workplace

Unlocking workers' potential and moving business into the future

“The employees were very excited. They loved that Dancing Deer was doing this. It helps us to be a competitive employer. We have low turnover, and this was one of several reasons for that.”

Dancing Deer Baking Company



“It makes a difference that the employees are in an English class with their co-workers. They see that this is a class for me, in my own department.”
Food and Nutrition Services, Boston Public Schools

Workplace ESOL is on-site, targeted education that uses work situations and tasks as the curriculum. It can provide optimum conditions for learning: material that is relevant and skills that can be practiced on the job.

By improving communication, ESOL classes at work help

- reduce errors
- cut translation time
- improve customer service
- enhance safety
- open the door for innovation

Workers who participate in ESOL classes and other job-related training are able to better use their skills, and have higher mobility and retention rates. Workplace ESOL programs serve adult learners who need English classes but may be otherwise unable to access them due to child care or other constraints.

The opportunity: *Immigrants account for 14% of the workforce in MA, and our state will continue to be dependent on immigrants for all of its workforce growth in the coming years. Though immigrants bring a variety of skills to our state, 22% do not speak English well.* ESOL can make an important contribution to our state's economic potential.*

*U.S. Census; MassINC, the Changing Face of MA, 2005

Getting started:

Workplace ESOL requires planning and input from workers, supervisors, managers and union representatives. It also needs an experienced ESOL provider who understands your company's needs, and an inside "champion" who will support the program. Industry groups like the MA Lodging Association's Education Foundation have created successful programs by helping members develop a common curriculum and share resources.

Most workplace ESOL classes take place on half or full paid release time. Companies without workplace ESOL can create tuition reimbursement programs for workers that take ESOL at outside locations.

Businesses may be able to secure match funds from the MA Dept. of Education, the MA Workforce Training Fund, and other sources.

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c/o Mayor's Office of New Bostonians • 617-635-2980 • cheng.tan@cityofboston.gov