

# MAWB Summer Conference

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# Office of New Americans

Minnesota's **New Americans** create robust businesses, offer extraordinary cultural contributions, and play a critical role in meeting labor needs throughout the state.



1. Reduction of Immigrants Permitted to Enter the USA
2. Reinterpretation of PRWORA
3. TEGL 10-23, Change 2

- *Lauren Villagran can be reached at [lvillagran@usatoday.com](mailto:lvillagran@usatoday.com).*
- *Interpretation of 'Federal Public Benefit,'" 90 Fed. Reg. 31,232 (July 14, 2025) ("HHS PRWORA Notice")*
- *<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/tegl-10-23-change-2>*





## Minnesota Benefits from International Migration

- Although Minnesota benefits from international migration, we have lost domestic migration for most of the last 20 years.
- In this year's report, Minnesota ranks 35th in the nation, with a net loss of 4,686. Bringing and retaining our workforce is critical for our long-term success.
- MN's skilled workforce is often noted as a key component of business success.
- MN's net international immigration from '22 to '23 has us ranked 19th keeping our ranking relatively the same. Our labor participation rate is ranked 6th we've moved up one spot from 2023.
- *Source: Minnesota Chamber Foundation 2025 report*





## Minnesota Immigration Facts

- In 2023, foreign-born Minnesotans made up 8.6% of the state's population.
- International migration to Minnesota increased sharply between July 2023 and July 2024—reaching 29,540.
- In 2022, Minnesota's undocumented population was about 95,000 people.
- *Source: Minnesota Chamber Foundation 2025 report*





# International Credential Evaluation Pilot

Sonji Davis, Program Manager, DEED

Ann Meyer, Director of Adult Career Pathways, DEED

# Economic and Cultural Contributions

Immigrants will contribute \$7 trillion to the U.S economy over the next decade.

They own over 19,000 businesses in Minnesota.

Almost half of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their children.

Expanding Cultural Competency

# Benefits to Hiring Immigrants and Refugees

Filling labor gaps

Bring different problem-solving approaches and global perspectives

Reducing turnover in some industries

Bilingualism enhances workforce productivity and global business connections.

What are the biggest benefits to hiring immigrants and refugees?

Join at [menti.com](https://menti.com) with code 1619 6267



# Foreign Trained Healthcare Grant

## Internationally Trained Professionals Competitive Grant Program

- Awarded to grantees in 2022, by DEED's Adult Career Pathways Division
- Assists internationally trained healthcare workers earn Minnesota healthcare licensures



# Overview of Adult Career Pathways

Administers  
different types of  
adult employment  
and training grant  
programs

Programs provide  
training and  
support services  
to adults who  
traditionally face  
multiple barriers  
to employment

Programs help  
eliminate racial  
disparities and large  
economic gaps in  
Minnesota and  
increase  
Minnesotans' literacy  
and access to high-  
growth and high-  
wage jobs

# SFY 22/23 Internationally Trained Professionals Competitive Grant

- **Seven organizations received grant funding**

- Central MN Jobs & Training
- Global Fatherhood Foundation
- Somali Medical Association
- CAPI, USA
- Hired
- International Institute of MN
- Workforce Development, Inc.

**Service Areas Included**

- Metro Area
- Southeast MN
- Central/Northern MN
- Statewide virtual options available

# Lessons Learned from Foreign Trained Healthcare

## Challenges:

- **Systemic barriers**
- Minnesota has independent licensing boards
  - Other states have all their licensing boards under one umbrella.
  - This meant there was inconsistent information depending on the person you spoke with from the board and delayed responses.
  - There was no guide for translating professional certifications/licenses.
- Length of time it takes a participant to successfully complete the process would surpass the end date of the grant making it difficult for us to achieve the goals.
- **Varied English proficiency levels to progress with post-secondary training.**

# Lessons Learned from Foreign Trained Healthcare

## Successes:

- **Understood the need to incorporate a workgroup of providers to share resources and discuss challenges.**
- **Obtaining transcription of certificates/licenses**
- Understanding the steps it will take to do same or similar work in MN
- Individuals were able to be matched into residency slots.
- Participants were able to start test prep classes for any required exams.
- The knowledge the grantees gained.
- Understanding the need for services like this

# International Credential Evaluation Pilot (ICEP)

Bridging Connections to Careers

Led by: The Office of New Americans  
(ONA), Minnesota Department of  
Employment and Economic  
Development

# Education and Workforce Partners



DHS Resettlement Programs Office: Provides services to eligible newcomers to MN.



CareerForce Centers: Offer job placement and career counseling.



Community-Based Organizations: Provide culturally specific support.



Minnesota State Colleges: Offer accessible education and training programs and CPL Opportunities.



Employers and Industry Partnerships: Help in job placement and career advancement.

# The Journey: From Arrival to Economic Stability

Initial Phase: Securing housing, legal documentation, and basic needs

Months In: Job search, basic ESL courses, and community integration

Years In: Skill-building, higher education, career progression

# Common Barriers Faced by New Americans

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Language proficiency and cultural differences.

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Financial instability and limited access to resources.

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Transportation and childcare responsibilities.

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Employers' hesitancy due to immigration status  
misunderstandings.  
Lack of recognition for foreign degrees and credentials.

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# Employment Career Support (ECS) Counselors

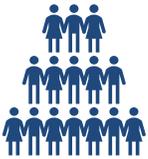
## Employment Counselor Activities:

3 tracks:  
Initial job placements  
Job upgrades  
Career pathways

Address barriers to work  
Connect to resources  
Job readiness training  
Transportation support  
Employer outreach and  
advocacy

## **Potential Challenges:**

- Are student's college ready?
  - Assess developmental learning needs
- Can students get needed documents?
- Do students need additional support services?
  
- Who does CPL assessment?
  - Lack of capacity
  - Siloed departments
  - Internal departmental processes
  
- When does everything get done?
  - Timing – prior to admission
  - Timing – program starts



## Operations

Creating a cross-departmental collaboration and a student-centered approach:



## Information

Early education / information resources available for ICEP participants



## Process

Flexible / Improved processing within institution and across Minnstate system



## Connection

Cultural liaison/peer mentor who could help them navigate the culture of college

Tutors

Centers of Excellence

Faculty and Staff doing CPL work  
CPL / ITP Champions

Accessibility offices

External support services

## **Potential Challenges**

- Reduction in federal funding.
- Low ESL level takes time for development.
- Other agencies' lack of awareness of what ABE is and does.
- Challenge of choosing between work and ABE English Language in person classes / schedules

## **Opportunities**

- Free workforce training courses for a variety of ESL level in multiple pathways.
- Free ESL for work specific purposes.
- Many ABE sites have navigation for college and employment.
- More individuals are learning about ABE's flexible online platform

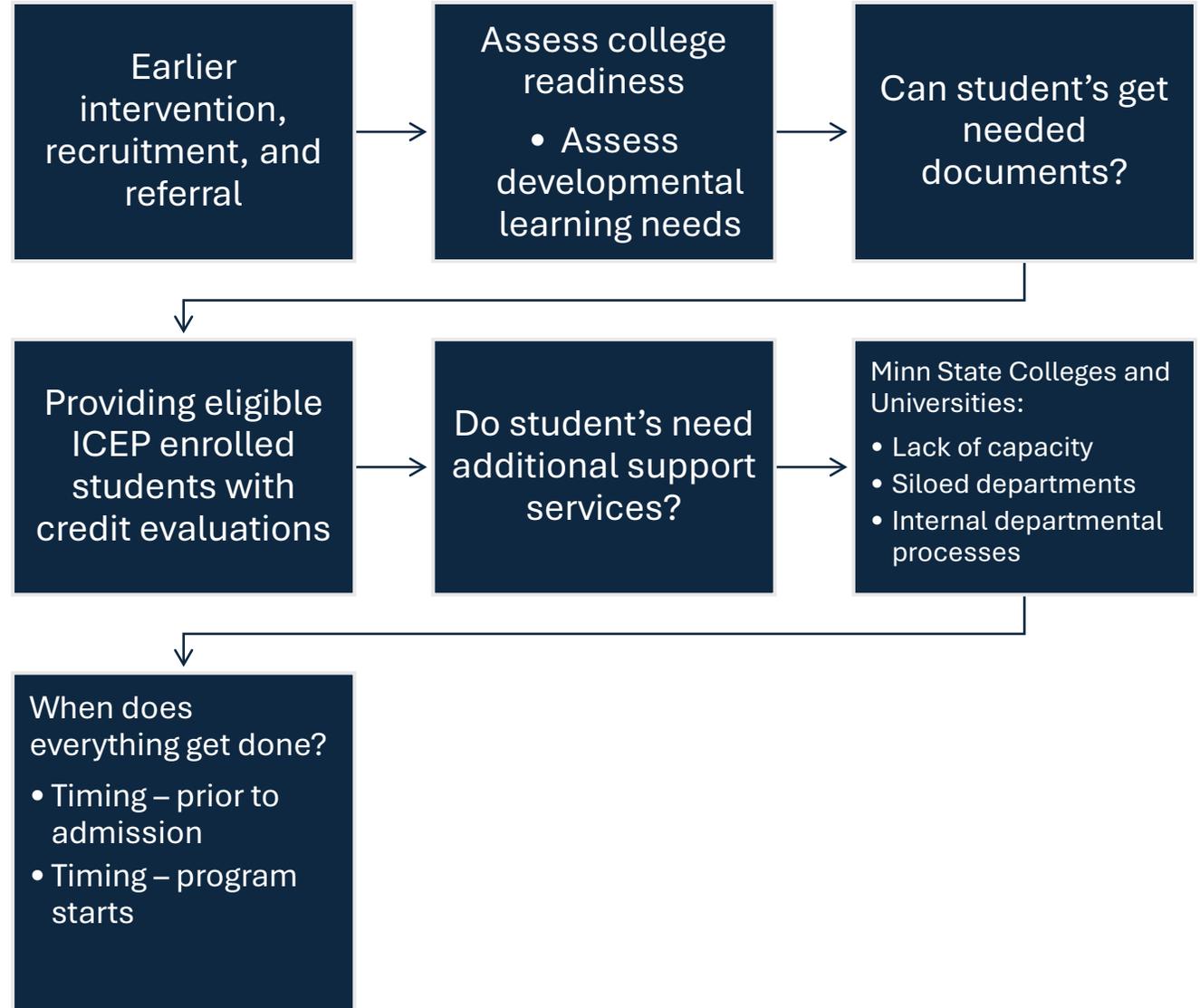
## **Potential Challenges**

- Reduction in federal funding and decreased capacity
- Documentation needed for program enrollment is sometimes challenging for students to acquire
- New Americans that are internationally trained are often unaware of the opportunities for accessing training, education and supportive services that are available at designated CareerForce and Workforce Development offices across Minnesota
- Internationally Trained Professionals can be bounced around in a series of referrals

## **Opportunities**

- Increased engagement with career planner and available tools and resources
- Strengthening partnerships, and connections for increased participant support
- Increased opportunities for successful outcomes with internationally trained professionals
- Building a new pipeline network

# What challenges will ICEP's collaboration address?



Stronger Partnerships

More tools and resources for New Americans to get credit for their education

New Americans are better prepared to get credit for prior learning when starting at a new school

New Americans have easier referrals to schools for credit for prior learning

Better jobs for New Americans trained in other countries

Partners creating a student-centered approach

Improved processing within the Minn State school system

Access to funding for assessments, transcript evaluation, training and supportive services

Connection to a family sustaining wage and career advancement

# Collaborative Connections

## Intentional Collaborative Programmatic Transparency

- Bridging Providers and Participants to Connection and Resources

## DHS/RPO – Employer Career Support (ECS) Counselors

- Early assessment, intervention, and as needed referral
- Provide training on
  - CareerOneStop – career interest survey
  - ICEP Assessment Tool
  - LWDA referral

## Local Workforce Development Area Career Planners

- Assistance with Outreach, Recruitment, and ICEP Referrals
  - From all partners – Educational Institutions, Community Based Organizations, and ECS
- MN State College and University “Champions”

# Reasons for Collaboration



Increased interagency coordination between state agencies.



Addressing organizational challenges and aligning services.



Working together on outreach, recruitment, and referrals.



Increased access to credit evaluations, credit for prior learning assessments, and training.

# Why Credit for Prior Learning?

Allows immigrants to earn academic credit for prior training and experience.



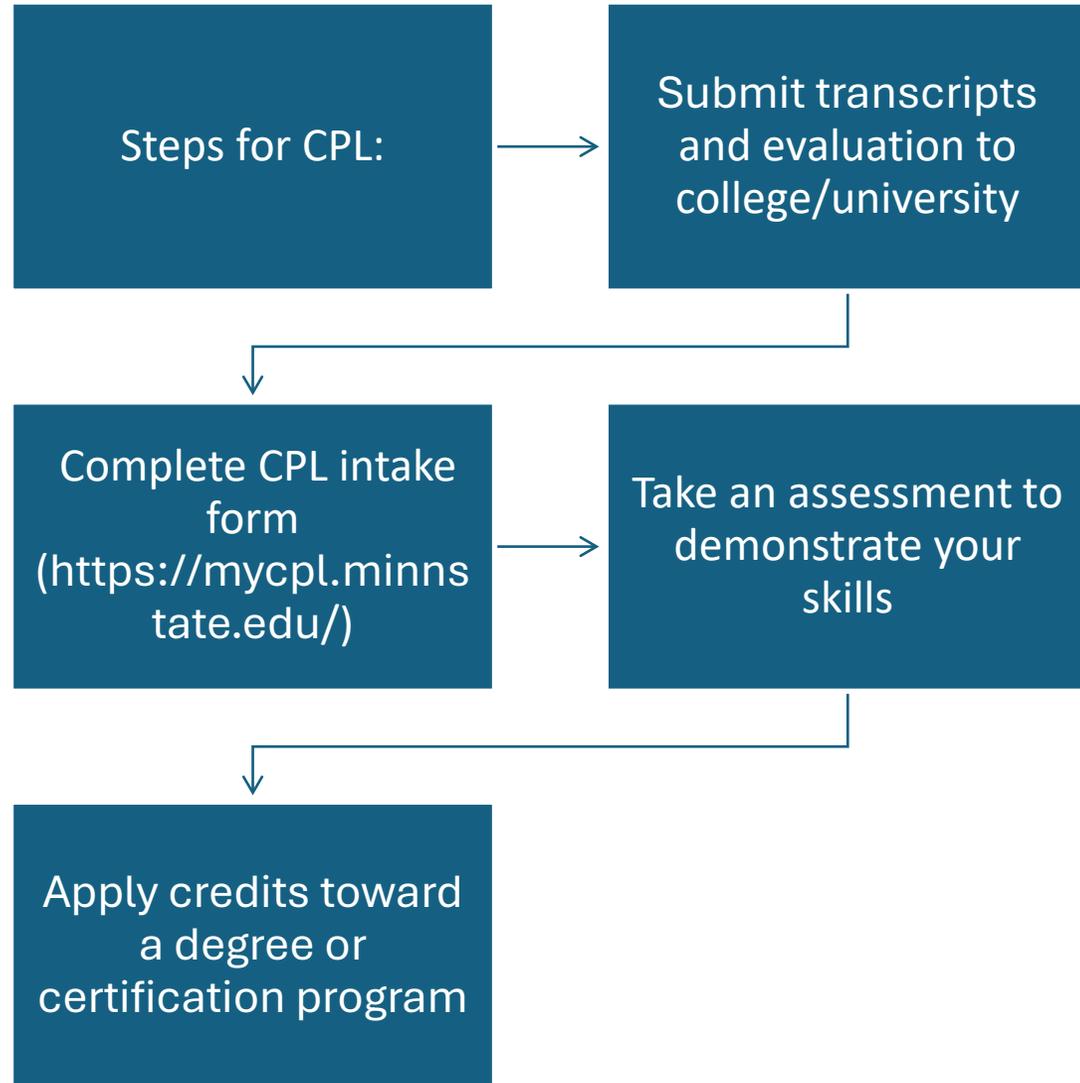
Reduces time and cost for degree completion.

# Preparing for Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

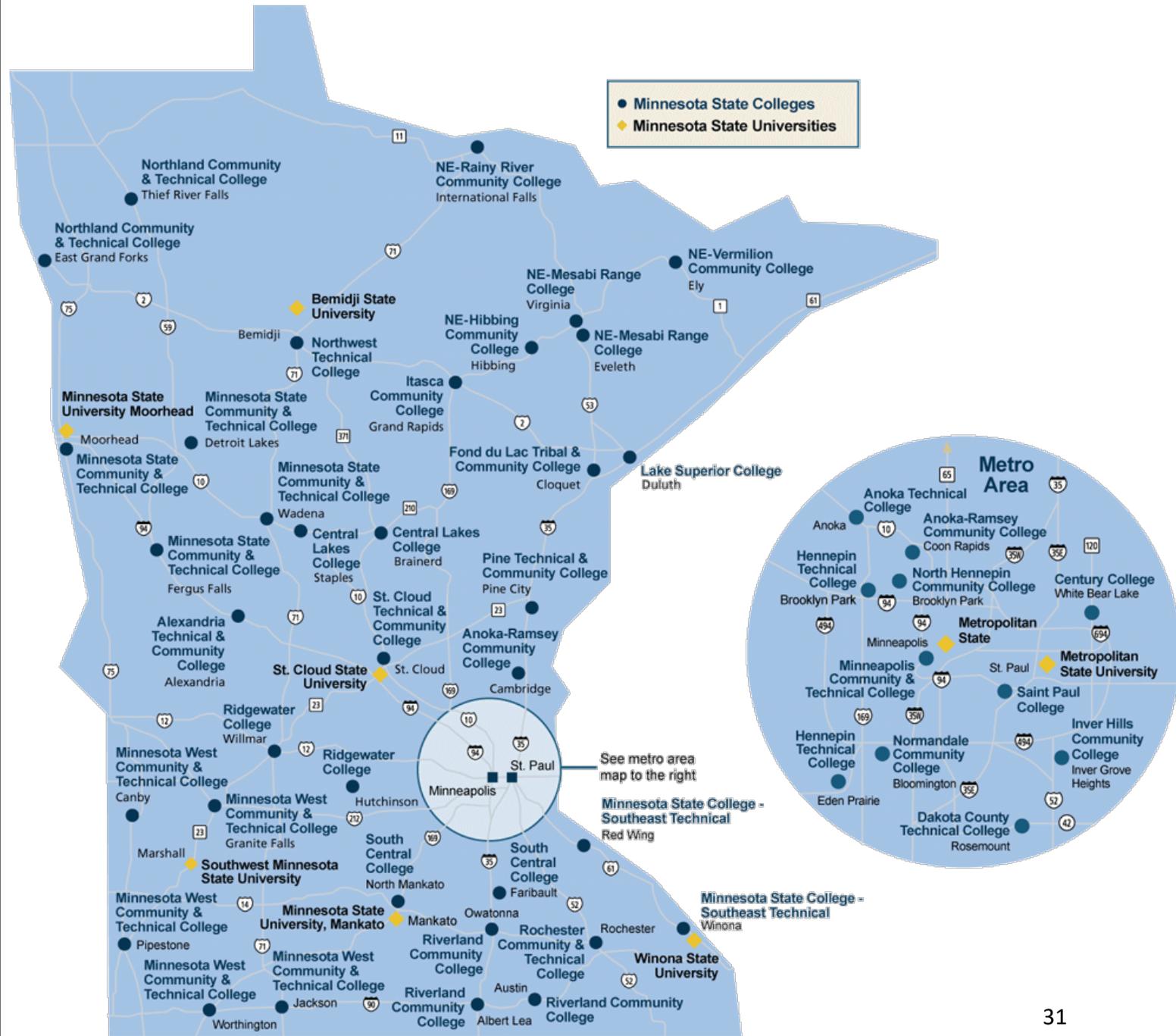
1. Evaluation through valid credential evaluation company
2. Research options and connect with college/university ICEP Champions
3. Apply to the college/university
4. Connect with Credit for Prior Learning Assessment Network (C-PLAN)

C-PLAN supports and serves the 26 colleges and 7 universities at Minnesota State to implement, sustain, and improve CPL policy and practice.

# Steps to Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)



# MN State Colleges and Universities



# 4 Credit for Prior Learning Assessments/Industry Pathways



Engineering



Healthcare



Education



Information Technology



# Participant Eligibility

## International Credential Evaluation Pilot Eligibility:

- Services must target internationally trained in Healthcare, Engineering, Education, or Information Technology professionals of at least 18 years of age
- Who have had education, job training, licensure, work experience for same or similar work in their country of origin
- Seeking to re-enter the workforce requiring a post-secondary degree, diploma, or certificate for licensure and obtain professional licensure to do similar work in Minnesota



# Basic Eligibility Criteria for ICEP

Eligible to work in the United States.

18 years or older at the time of enrollment.

Is a resident of Minnesota.

Not enrolled in any K-12 school.

Actively seeking employment in area of expertise (e.g., unemployed, underemployed, or seeking career advancement).

Born outside the United States or is a child of someone born outside the United States.

Does not hold a J-1, H-1 or F-1 visa (international student not eligible).

Has education or significant experience in one of the pathways related to the NATI Pilot program: medical, IT, engineering, and education fields.

Verified by:

- Self-Attestation
- Transcripts
- Certificates
- Resume or work portfolio

# Eligibility, Referral, and Program Enrollment



**Step One** – Use screening pilot assessment tool to identify program eligible referrals



**Step Two** - Identify partnering LWDA's with contact information



**Step Three** – After confirming eligibility make referral with the identified local workforce development agency

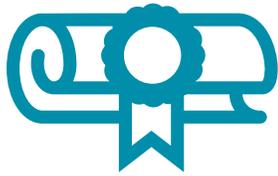


**Step Four** – Schedule a virtual intake with participant and (RNS Employment Case Manager and LWDA Career Planner)



**Step Five** – Collect required documents, and facilitate program enrollment

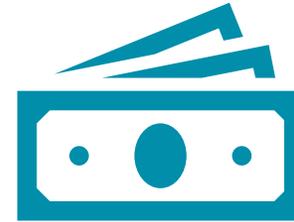
# Resources for Degree Evaluation



**Many immigrants have international degrees that need evaluation.**

Most colleges and universities accept these course-by-course evaluations:

- WES (World Education Services)
- ECE (Educational Credential Evaluators)



**Costs range from \$170–\$275, with some financial assistance options available.**

What does success look like in your local area?

Join at [menti.com](https://menti.com) with code 1619 6267

# Defining Success: What does it Look Like?

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Stable initial employment in their field.

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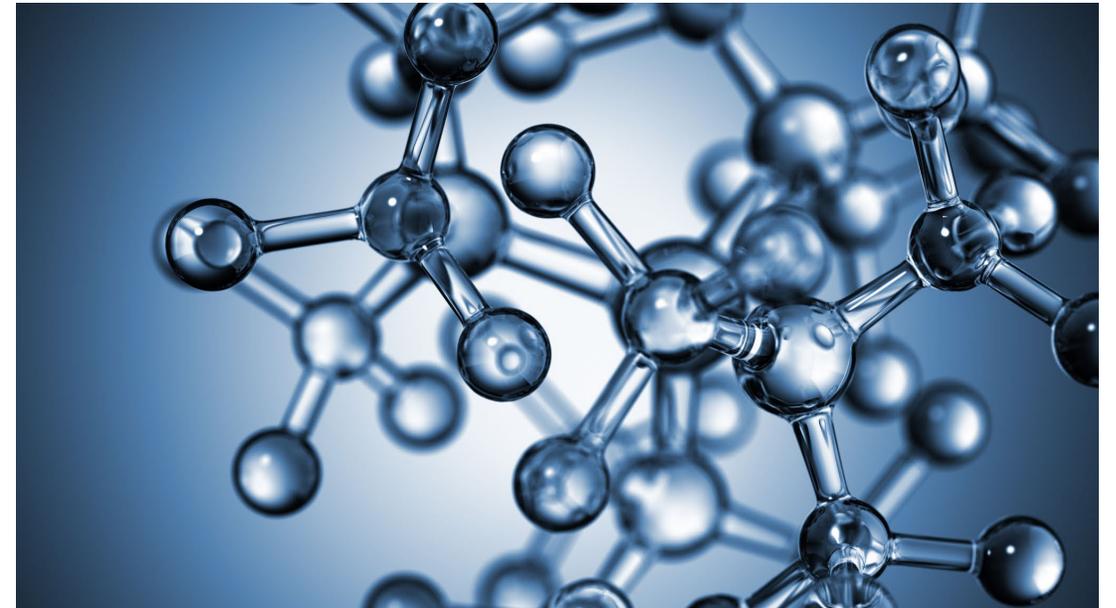
Professional growth and career progression tracking.

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Participants earn a family-sustaining wage.

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Self-sufficiency and long-term community integration.



# MAWB Regional Planning Grant



Modification funded by the Office of New Americans, DEED



Enhancing Service Delivery to Minnesota's Immigrants and Refugees



Up to Three Local Workforce Development Areas will be Selected



Proposals were submitted and MAWB will soon announce which local areas will receive the award

# MAWB Regional Planning Grant Modification

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ONA saw an opportunity to support 3 initiatives that will expand workforce integration services for new Americans residing in Minnesota.

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The respondents were asked to demonstrate a strong potential for impactful and sustainable programming.

# Monitoring

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Minn. Stat. §16B.97 Subd. 4(a)(1)

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At least one monitoring visit on all state grants over 50,000.

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ONA plans to conduct in-person monitoring using a standardized form and procedures for monitoring visits so that grant management information is tracked consistently.

Discussion/Questions?

# Thank You!

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