

Serving the Underserved

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LIBS 656: User Services

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1. Target Audience

The underserved population being targeted for this new program is adults with limited English language skills from immigrant communities in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Fairfax county attracts immigrants from across the globe, who speak a diverse array of languages totaling 160. Based on the county's 2019 Demographic Reports, 32% of its residents are immigrants; and 39% have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). LEP refers to anyone above the age of 5 who reported speaking English less than "very well," as classified by the U.S. Census Bureau.

People with limited English language skills face certain challenges and barriers that stem from language and socio-economic factors. According to a 2013 report from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), when compared to the English-proficient population, the LEP population nationally was less educated and more likely to live in poverty.

Employed LEP men in 2013 were more likely to work in construction, natural resources, and maintenance occupations than English-proficient men, while LEP women were much more likely to be employed in service and personal-care occupations than English-proficient women. The Tysons-Pimmit service area, and Fairfax county as a whole, mirror these MPI findings. In Fairfax county, 58% of its immigrants are aged between 18 and 54, and 72.3% of them are in the labor force employed heavily in construction, home care, home health care, hospitality, and landscaping. Immigrants' top countries of origin are El Salvador, India, Korea, Vietnam, and China. The dominant foreign languages Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese. Latino immigrants have the lowest levels of English-speaking ability, followed by Asian/Pacific Islander immigrants

(Equitable Growth Profile, pg. 20). Challenges and barriers are indicated by the following:

- The Poverty in Fairfax County Report notes that close to 10 percent of persons age five and older who speak a language other than English at home live in poverty. Over 29% of the total student population is poor with 34% qualifying for free and reduced-price meals. The numbers of working poor - people working full-time for an income below 150 percent of the poverty level - are on the rise and these households spend 30 percent or more of their income on rent (Poverty in Fairfax County, 2019).
- The number of “disconnected youth” - those without a high school diploma, not enrolled in school, nor working, is on the rise. Of the nearly 9,000 youth currently considered disconnected, half of them is Latinx, and more than a quarter of those Latinx are immigrants. While overall unemployment in Fairfax county is low, (2% in 2021) still, Latinx residents have much higher rates of unemployment than whites and earn lower wages than whites at every education level (Equitable Growth Profile, pg.45).

2 - Justification:

This program is justified on many grounds.

- It is consistent with the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) mission to “build communities and promote literacies through programming” . Akbar and

Asmiyanto (2021) highlighted the role of public libraries in addressing the needs of multicultural communities “especially in supporting adaptation to a new environment while maintaining their original identity and culture.” The ALA Cultural Competency Standard #6 states that language diversity “fosters a climate of inclusion aimed at eliminating discrimination and oppression based on ... linguistic diversities.”

- A similar program could not be located within the FCPL system. The FCPL’s civic engagement goal is to “design events and services that engage our diverse and dynamic community” (FCPL Strategic Plan 2018-2023). This is implemented in many forms across its libraries. For example, at the Tysons-Pimmit library, attention to community demographics is highlighted by a dedicated “citizenship corner”. This space contains CDs for learning English by speakers of Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Hindi, and Punjab; DVDs in five of these languages on citizenship preparation; books on business English and English for job hunting; ESL test preparation books. While there is a program of conversation classes, these are mainly for practicing Spanish (Touré, 2021).
- The Adult and Community Education division of the Fairfax county school system offers an Adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program that provides adult students with the practical English language they need in their everyday lives, as well as English skills that will help them advance in their

education or careers. It has notable limitations. This program has features that may make it less appealing and convenient for the target demographic. It is formal with testing and other intake requirements and there are costs for tuition and books. It does not appear to be convenient for hourly wage laborers, such as restaurant or nail salon workers. While formal, highly structured programs have their clients, less formal, more flexible programs may be more suitable for others.

- The Tysons-Pimmit Regional library is an ideal location for the proposed program. It is located amidst heavy concentrations of businesses that employ immigrants in the areas described. It is located in a major transportation corridor served by multiple public bus lines. A bus stop located at the entrance to the library complex - important because residents earning less than \$35,000 annually rely most heavily on the public transportation network for essential mobility (Equitable Growth Profile, pgs. 53-54). In addition, there is an abundance of surface parking. As a regional library, it is open seven days a week at 10am and is open until 9pm three nights per week, and till 6pm the other days.

People with limited English language skills that are teens, seniors and the working poor would feel more confident, less isolated, and more connected with strengthened speaking skills. The opportunity to practice situational conversation essential for work and social interactions in a stress-free environment will allow participants to grow in confidence in their communications, adapt to a different culture, and explore new career and other horizons.

3 - Goals/Objectives:

The goal of this program is to provide focused literacy services for adults from immigrant communities. Secondary goals are to encourage cultural exchange across communities to facilitate communication and foster a sense of shared belonging to the broader community; and support patrons' learning objectives related to improving their education, economic, and social well-being. Program objectives are

1. To provide targeted English as a Second Language services for speakers of other languages in communities of need.
2. To assist community members to improve their employment prospects and increase cross cultural social interactions.

4 - Program Description:

The program will consist of specialty English classes for conversation, employment success and pronunciation. It will be targeted at patrons aged 16 and older. The bottom age range is aimed at capturing disaffected youth. The program will be structured around rolling six-week sessions for registrants. Drop-ins will be allowed.

Each session will be focused on practicing dialogue based on realistic scenarios related to job hunting, workplace situations (discussing performance, resolving workplace conflict, etc.) Pronunciation will be emphasized. A final component of each session

will be a cultural exchange where participants will be encouraged to share aspect of their culture using acquired conversation skills.

5 - Marketing Plan

The Message: The Tysons-Pimmit library would like to help you practice and improve your English conversation and pronunciation skills on days, at times, and at a location convenient for you. You'll practice dialogue based on realistic scenarios related to jobhunting, communicating at work, and resolving workplace conflict with confidence.

The Program: Targeted English-Language dialogue and pronunciation coaching.

The Target Audience: Working adults who would like to improve their employment prospects and social connections through greater ease with English.

Location: The Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library

Program hours: Evenings and Sundays

Locating the target audience: A number of means will be employed.

A. Fliers will be disseminated and posted on existing bulletin boards as follows:

- Shopping malls in Centreville and Annandale (Korean community)
- Shopping malls in Falls Church - Eden Center and Graham Road (Vietnamese community)

- Other Asian shopping centers and markets such as Hmart, Eden Center, Great wall
- Latinx markets: LA mart, Super A Market,
- Halal markets across the county (Indian and Middle-Eastern, etc.)
- Bus stop shelters
- Public library magazine stands and bulletin boards

B. Social media

Information will be posted to social media in multiple languages including Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Persian/Farsi, Mandarin, Urdu, Hindi - a practice already common in public announcements the county disseminates. In addition -

- Develop targeted Facebook ads and Facebook event pages that can be shared via other Facebook users and community organizations
- Promote program via use of Twitter
- Post to websites of targeted community organizations and their own social media pages

C. Other methods


Advertisements in Korean and Spanish-language newspapers

Make connections with Fairfax County Public Access television and radio producers.

Engage them to incorporate promotion of the program via the shows they air in


Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, etc.


D. Illustrative Message


 Mouna R Toure invited you


☒ Going ☐ Maybe ☐ Can't Go

Details

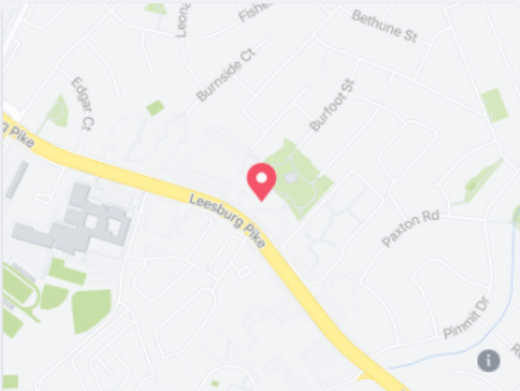
 1 person going, including Mouna R Toure



 **Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library**

 Private · Only people who are invited

The Tysons-Pimmit library would like to help you practice and improve your English conversation and pronunciation skills when and where it's convenient for you. You'll practice dialogue based on realistic scenarios related to jobhunting, communicating at work, and resolving workplace issues with confidence. Meets on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and 1pm on Sundays. Walk-ins welcome!



Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library

Guest List

[See All](#)

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GOING	MAYBE	INVITED

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