



English@Work Employer FAQs

There are many benefits to offering English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes in the workplace. These include:

- Improved and **increased communication** among coworkers, with HR, and with managers
- Increased ability to **build team community** and to work more cohesively
- **Improved safety**
- **Improved productivity and processes** due to increased understanding of a shared language
- Increased **efficiency** due to decreased dependence on interpretation
- General investment in employees, resulting in **increased employee buy-in**
- Added **benefit to talent attraction** and recruitment processes

IWC asks that interested employers fill out our [Employer Inquiry Form](#) after reading this document. Once complete, IWC will reach out to set up a meeting to better understand the goals and specifications the employer may have regarding offering ESOL classes. IWC will also provide further information on partners and options, and a decision on next steps will be made.

What are the expected outcomes of ESOL classes?

A needs analysis will be conducted at the beginning of the partnership, including a test and informal interviews to determine employees' language abilities and the needs of the employer. These will guide curriculum and instruction. The expected outcomes will be defined based on the needs analysis. Outcomes will vary from company to company, depending on what the employer desires the focus to be. These could include English language competency, improved communication with coworkers, job-specific language training or more.

How frequently should classes be offered?

We recommend that class is held at least twice a week. If this is not possible, then once a week is sufficient.

What is an appropriate length of time for class?

The length of the class will depend on the needs and goals of the employer. Employers should determine how much time they are able to give employees for English language learning, though a minimum of two hours a week for in-class instruction is recommended. Hours of instruction may include class time, homework, or independent learning.

What hours can teachers typically hold class?

Teachers can accommodate morning, day, or evening classes depending on the employer's needs and preferences.

Is there a second class that employees can take after they complete a first class?

The employer and the ESOL provider will work together to evaluate if a second class would be necessary and/or helpful, typically as the first class approaches its conclusion.

Can employees who speak different languages participate in the same class session?

Absolutely! Trained ESOL providers are equipped to teach learners from multiple language groups.

How much does a class typically cost?

The cost of ESOL classes varies depending on the partner that is facilitating. Private providers tend to be the highest cost. Adult education providers are typically low cost or may even be at no cost to the employer. Once an employer has shared their needs and preferences, IWC can work to connect them to resources that best fit their needs and budget.

The chart below provides further information on the different partners and options:

	Approximate cost	More details
DWD-funded Adult Education ESOL Provider <i>There are 9 Adult Basic Education providers in the Indianapolis area, and many more around the state</i>	Free to employer, though employer must provide at least one employee incentive (i.e. offer classes on-site, pay employees to attend, offer classes during work hours, provide raises to employees upon completion, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can usually be set up the fastest • Utilize a standardized test, though can add some customizations based on your workplace language needs • Require minimums of: 10 - 15 students, 4-6 hours of class per week, and length of 8-15 weeks
Private Language Company <i>Current partnerships include:</i> Midwest Language Services Indy Language Center International Center for Intercultural Communication (ICIC)	Costs vary from \$100 - 180 per hour for class hours, plus an additional fee ranging from \$300-\$400 for needs analysis and course development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very customizable • Company would design a curriculum and assessment based on your specific workplace language needs • Would be able to track individual performance indicators and metrics • May take longer to set up
Freelance ESOL Provider	Recommended fair pay of \$50-75 (but negotiable) per hour of instruction, plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Site Visit for Needs Analysis & Testing, fee range from \$300-400 • Post-instruction assessment and evaluation, \$100 fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very customizable • Provider would design a curriculum and assessment based on your specific workplace language needs • Would be able to track individual performance indicators and metrics • Likely to take longest to set up

What is the IWC's role?

The Immigrant Welcome Center provides support to the employer in this process in the following ways:

- IWC meets with the employer and helps them to choose a provider that best fits their needs and budget.
- IWC establishes the partnership between the employer and ESOL provider
- For its services, IWC requires:
 - Data-sharing agreement with the ESOL provider
 - Post-instruction feedback form from employer

The IWC will charge the employer a minor fee on a sliding scale for this assistance.

If needed, what are some of the ways the company can get support for funding an ESOL class?

If an employer chooses to partner with one of the Adult Basic Education providers, the DWD funding would be applicable. If an employer chooses to use a private language company, the option of county training grants would come into play. The training grants from SEF and Next Level Jobs are more specific to job training and less to English language skills, but could be explored. If an employer is interested in connecting to an ESOL provider, the IWC can help make that connection, and can support the process along the way.

The list below outlines some of the potential ways in which an employer may fund an ESOL class.

1. **Workforce Education Initiative (WEI)** *(This is an initiative through the Department of Workforce Development, which facilitates partnerships between Adult Basic Ed providers and employers)*
 1. Classroom and training areas (basic skills upgrading and certification courses)
 2. Computers, projectors, white boards, and Internet provided by employers for instruction
 3. Books, materials, and instructional software provided by employers for training
 4. Salaries paid by employers for employees to attend classes
 5. High school equivalency fees reimbursed by employers for employees to take the exam
 6. Externships and/or internships offered by employers for employees to develop career pathways
2. **County Training Grants/Funds** *(Please contact a county representative for more information)*
3. **Skills Enhancement Fund (SEF)** *(This is through Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC))*
 1. The Skills Enhancement Fund (SEF) provides assistance to companies to support training of employees required to assist business growth in Indiana. The grant may be provided to reimburse a portion (typically 50%) of eligible training costs over a period of two full calendar years from the commencement of the project.
 2. Grants from the Skills Enhancement Fund may only support training that leads to a post-secondary or nationally recognized industry credential, or is specialized company training. If the training is provided to an existing employee, the company must also provide an increase in wages.
4. **Next Level Jobs (State of Indiana)** *(These are training grants for employers)*
 1. Companies may be reimbursed for training costs of up to \$5,000 for newly trained employees who are trained, hired, and retained for six months;

- employees must see a wage gain from the start of training to the completion of training
2. Reimbursement of up to \$50,000 per employer
 3. Eligible job fields: Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, IT and Business Services, Building and Construction, Health and Life Sciences, and Transportation and Logistics
 4. Must be job skills training that ties to an in-demand occupation; HR training and informal job shadowing do not qualify

Where can I access resources for translation and interpretation?

The following organizations support with translation and/or interpretation services:

- [Globo](#)
- [Midwest Language Services](#)
- [Indy Language Center](#)
- [Propio](#)

Do you have resources for improving intercultural communication in the workplace?

Yes! The Immigrant Welcome Center offers a variety of trainings and workshops, offered on a sliding scale fee. These include:

- **Lunch & Learn Cultural Trainings:** A session to learn about effective collaboration with diverse groups, and can focus on a specific culture, such as Afghan, Burmese, Haitian, Mexican, etc.
- **Navigating Cultural Bias Workshop:** This training aims to create a safe space for organizations and institutions to examine their ideas and biases while gaining tools to implement cultural humility practices when working with diverse communities. Can be virtual or live, and specifically tailored to your company.

For more information, please contact Bekah Wikham, Manager of Training and Resources at bwickham@immigrantwelcomecenter.org.

Additionally, the **International Center for Intercultural Communication (ICIC) at Indiana University** offers modules and presentations for managing intercultural communication. These can be pressed into action on a quarterly, yearly, or one-time basis, to assist managers and administrative staff. For more information on the offerings from ICIC, please contact Diego Padilla, IU Research Associate, at dipadil@iu.edu.