

# Why We Exist

## OVERVIEW

ENGLISH @ WORK (E@W) was founded on the following beliefs:

- Language proficiency can lift individuals and families out of poverty.
- Instruction must be human and accessible.
- If the workplace is the gateway to the American dream, employers must be a part of the literacy solution.

## HOW DOES E@W WORK?

Fueled by these beliefs, E@W sends paid instructors into workplaces across Central Texas. Our instructors use curricula that have been customized to the workplace and to students' job descriptions. The program typically last 6 months, with classes meeting twice a week for an hour and a half each time.

## WHO IS E@W?

Our students are hotel and hospital housekeepers, food service workers, and grocery store prep cooks.

They hail from 30 different countries and speak over 20 languages, but they all have one common goal - to speak English well enough to do a good job and support their families.

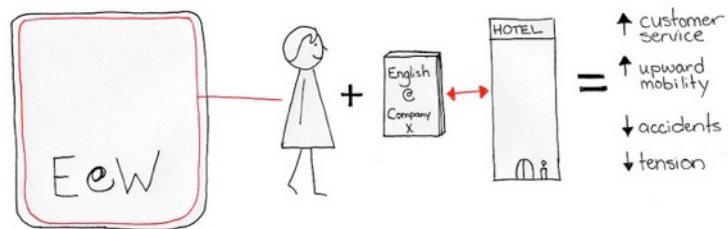
## NEED

There are over 147,000 people living in Central Texas who are of limited English proficiency and that number continues to grow. Of this population, **8,000 individuals work service jobs that require them to know a specific type of English**. Limited proficiency puts these workers at a greater risk of:

- Getting stuck in minimum wage positions, despite their skills and tenure,
- Being injured on the job,
- Receiving poor-quality health care,
- Having children with poor health and education outcomes,
- Perpetuating the cycle of poverty for their families.

Furthermore, limited literacy skills cost businesses and taxpayers approximately \$20 billion a year in lost wages, profits, and productivity.

## SOLUTION



ENGLISH @ WORK's model and approach maximize the learning experience by:

- **Eliminating travel time** to class and the need for transportation,
- **Reducing childcare costs** because classes take place during the normal work day,
- **Making the content relevant** and applicable to learners' jobs,
- Increasing their **opportunities to advance** at work, therefore earning more money and moving into English-speaking positions,
- **Engaging employers**, which leads to more support for their immigrant employees, faster promotion rates, and better overall business performance,
- Helping learners **understand** U.S. business culture, and
- **Customizing learning** to the individual.

## IMPACT

ENGLISH @ WORK's student retention rate is at 75 percent compared to that of 57 percent from traditional language providers, and our students make greater proficiency gains in less time. In addition,

- 75 percent of partner businesses promoted students after they participated in the program. In some cases, students increased their income by 150 percent.
- 100 percent of partner businesses reported a positive return on investment associated with hosting the program.
- In 2010, students at every business went on to make significant life achievements, including buying their first homes, getting their GED, enrolling in courses at Austin Community College, and attaining U.S. citizenship!