

Meeting Date: July 12, 2021
Type of Item: Informational
Subject: ESL Mentoring service – Innovation project update
Presented by: Eileen McCluskey and Anne Million

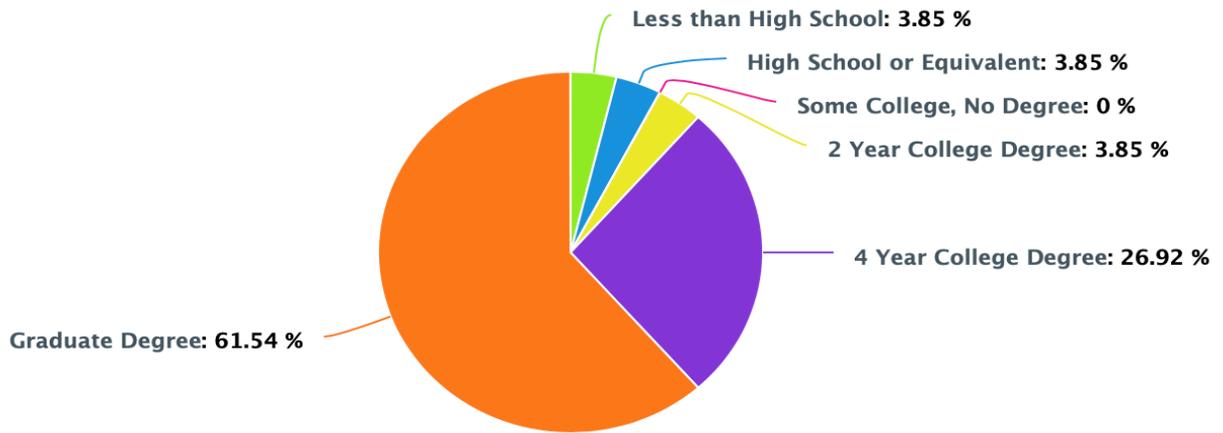
Background

The ESL Mentoring service was approved as a 2019 Innovation grant project and officially launched in 2021, due to pandemic-related delays. Without advertising this service broadly to the community, the service has already exceeded our expected goals for 2021 in regard to participation numbers. The qualitative aspects of the service are also impressive. Every one of our English learner applicants possess both an amazing story of arriving in Fort Collins and an incredible drive to complete project-based goals in order to become a more integrated part of our community. From a determination to resume a career as a Librarian, to re-certify in the US as a nurse, to move up to an executive level job as an Electrical Engineer, to resume a career fighting childhood poverty and human rights abuses (and many more), our English learners are inspiring and driven. We are fortunate to be able to support their goals through mentoring, and to support our larger goal of building opportunities for ESL learners to thrive while supporting a diverse workforce that reflects our community.

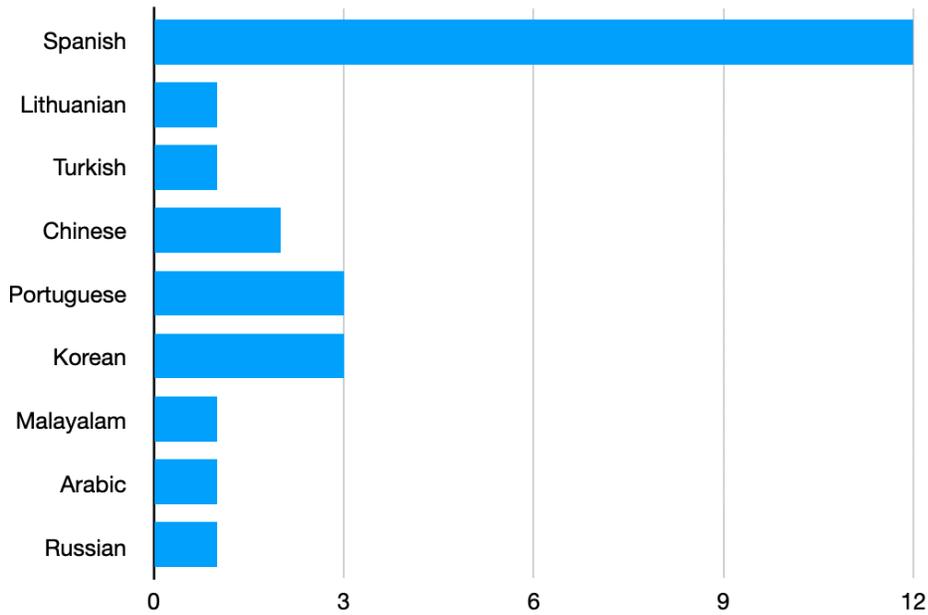
Goal for 2021: 20 Pairs of English Learners and Mentors working together
To Date: 32 Trained Mentors / 25 English Learners (8 in process to be matched)

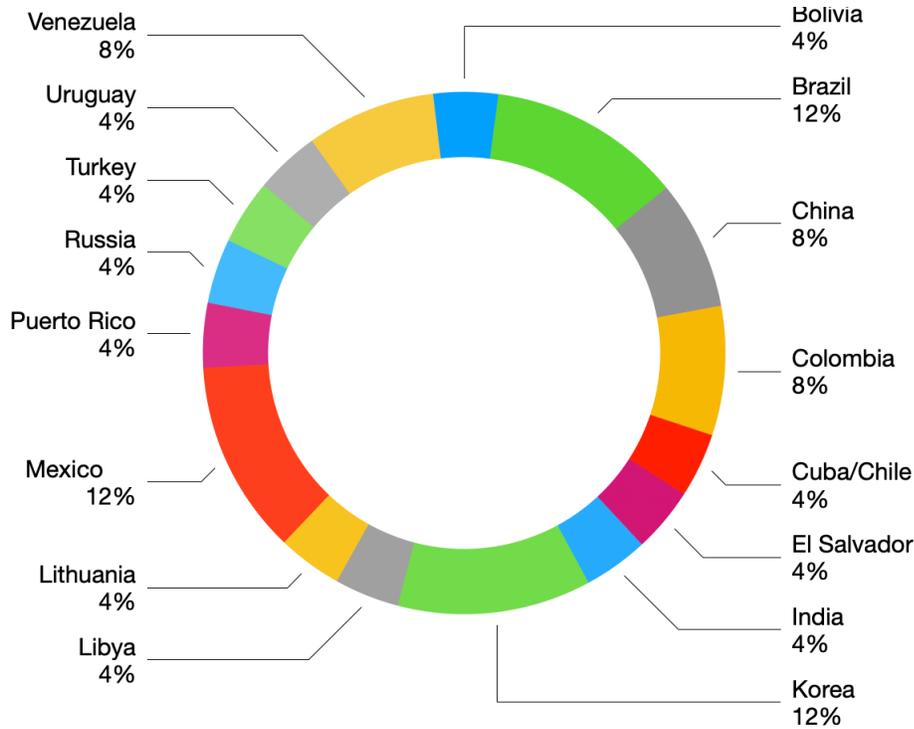
Because ESL Mentoring’s goal is to fill a gap in community English language-learning services, we are only admitting intermediate and above English learners.¹ Even considering this, the previous education level of our participants is astonishing: 88.5% have at least a 4-year college degree and 61.5% have a graduate degree from their home country. Most of these individuals are currently either unemployed or extremely under-employed. This demonstrates the broad need for this service in our community!

¹ We refer lower-level English learners to other community resources including Front Range Community College.



The cultural breadth of English learners is also of note: while Spanish accounts for 48% of our learners, 8 other native languages are represented. The native countries are even more diverse.





Staffing and Next Steps: The ESL mentoring service was initially staffed with up to 20 hours of staff vacancy hours per week at Old Town Library. In order to ensure stable staffing, Eileen requested to transfer 32 vacant OTL classified hours per week to the ESL mentoring service. Anne Million applied for and accepted the position of the District’s Mentoring Coordinator. As she continues to match learners and mentors for ESL mentoring, she is working with Africa Garcia to transfer relevant parts of the mentoring model to Citizenship test tutoring. Eventually, digital literacy tutoring will also be offered by matching trained, volunteer tutors to learners with specific goals. Our goal is to build the program slowly and with intention, without diminishing the quality of the services provided. We are also intent on developing a brand of service excellence to our community stakeholders, which will eventually include partnerships within the community.