

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR MANUFACTURERS & HR LEADERS

The Manufacturer's Guide to Hiring New Americans

How to access New Americans — refugees, immigrants, and foreign-born workers — the most loyal, motivated, and underutilized talent pool in American manufacturing — including the agencies, incentives, and tools you need to get started.

4%

New American turnover vs.
11% industry average

73%

Of firms report higher
retention with New Americans

Up to \$15,000

Per hire — WIOA OJT wage reimbursement
+ state workforce training grants

1 Why New Americans — And Why Now

American manufacturing is facing a structural workforce crisis that traditional recruiting cannot solve. With 3.8 million manufacturing positions to fill by 2033 and nearly half at risk of going unfilled, manufacturers are competing for a shrinking pool of domestic workers while an eager, authorized, and underutilized workforce sits largely untapped.

1.8 million New American workers entered the U.S. labor force in 2022

Compared to 1.3 million native-born — Bureau of Labor Statistics

New Americans are a distinct category within this workforce — individuals who have been through a rigorous federal vetting process, are fully authorized to work immediately upon arrival, and are actively placed by resettlement agencies that function as de facto recruiting partners. They are not a charity hire. They are a business decision.

4%

New American turnover rate vs. 11% manufacturing average

73%

Of firms report higher retention among New American employees

13%

Of New Americans are entrepreneurs vs. 9% of U.S.-born population

\$56B

In U.S. consumer spending power held by New Americans

Sources: Tent Partnership for New Americans / Fiscal Policy Institute / New American Economy

“On-time delivery is up, quality is up, residual knowledge is staying here, and I think we have a more connected workforce.”

— Head of manufacturing company, Tent Partnership for New Americans study of 26 firms across 4 U.S. regions

What Makes New Americans Different

- Fully work-authorized immediately — no sponsorship required
- Pre-screened and placed by resettlement agencies (free to employers)
- Higher retention driven by community ties and limited job-hopping culture
- Strong motivation — employment is critical to maintaining status and building stability
- Self-sustaining referral pipelines — workers recruit from their own communities

What New Americans Need From You

- Job-specific training materials in their native language
- Onboarding that doesn't assume English literacy
- A structured first 90 days with clear milestones
- Access to HR resources (benefits, schedules, policies) in their language
- A workplace culture that signals “you belong here”

The Single Biggest Barrier — and How to Remove It

The #1 reason manufacturers hesitate to hire New American workers is language. The concern is valid — but the solution is no longer expensive or complicated. TheLanguageGap.com, powered by UnDesked, instantly translates every critical system on your factory floor into any worker's native language. The barrier that held you back is now a solvable problem.

2 The Hiring Playbook — Step by Step

Hiring New Americans is simpler than most manufacturers expect. Your job is to create the conditions for success — clear role requirements, accessible language infrastructure, and a structured first 90 days — then connect with the service providers who can place the workers.

01

Define Your Role Requirements Clearly

Share job descriptions, physical requirements, shift schedules, and any certification needs. The more specific you are, the better the match. Service providers will pre-screen candidates against your criteria before sending referrals.

→ Don't list English fluency as a requirement unless it's genuinely essential. This unnecessarily filters out strong candidates.

02

Prepare Your Language Infrastructure

Before Day 1, ensure safety training, LOTO procedures, onboarding forms, and benefits materials are available in the languages your new hires speak. This is not optional — it's OSHA-required and the single biggest retention driver.

→ UnDesked deploys in under 2 weeks. Workers access everything via tablets, kiosks, or mobile — no company email needed.

03

Structure a Strong First 90 Days

Pair new New American hires with a designated culture guide (not a language interpreter — a colleague who helps them understand workplace norms). Check in weekly. Clear milestones and regular feedback in accessible formats prevent early attrition.

→ The first 30 days determine 90% of retention outcomes. Invest here.

04

Connect with Refugee and Immigrant Job Seekers

There is no single one-stop service center for this workforce — candidates come through a network of service providers. Work with your state's workforce development board to identify local partners: resettlement agencies (see list page 4), refugee employment services, immigrant job-seeker programs, and community-based organizations.

→ See our Employer Toolkit at TheLanguageGap.com for a curated directory of workforce boards and service providers by region.

05

Access Training Reimbursement and Wrap-Around Funding

Contact your local American Job Center or state workforce board to set up WIOA On-the-Job Training reimbursement — up to 50% of new-hire wages during the training period (often \$5,000–\$15,000 per hire). Many states layer additional workforce training grants on top. Your resettlement agency partner can also access ORR-funded pre-employment support on your behalf at no cost to you.

→ Most manufacturers leave \$5,000–\$15,000+ per New American hire on the table by not coordinating these programs with their state workforce board.

06

Build the Referral Pipeline

New American workers recruit from their communities at remarkably high rates when they feel valued. Create a formal employee referral program specifically for your New American workforce — offer a bonus tied to 90-day retention. This is your lowest-cost recruiting channel.

→ One strong hire can generate 3–5 additional candidates from the same community within a year.

The 30-Day Readiness Checklist

- Identify refugee and immigrant service providers through your state workforce board
- Identify culture guides (not interpreters) for each shift
- Set 30/60/90 day check-in schedule with new hires
- Deploy language translation for safety and onboarding materials
- Contact state workforce board to enroll new hires in WIOA OJT reimbursement
- Launch employee referral program with 90-day retention bonus

3 Financial Incentives & Key Resources

Beyond the operational benefits of lower turnover and stronger retention, hiring New Americans comes with direct financial incentives that most manufacturers aren't fully utilizing. These programs are administered through state workforce boards and federally funded partners — with minimal administrative effort to access.

PROGRAM	BENEFIT	HOW TO ACCESS	NOTES
WIOA On-the-Job Training State workforce boards	Up to 50% of wages during training (75% for small employers)	Contact your local American Job Center or state workforce board	Typically 3–6 months. Often \$5,000–\$15,000+ per hire depending on wage and role complexity.
State Workforce Training Grants State-administered	Varies by state — typically \$1,500–\$5,000 per trainee	Apply through your state workforce development agency	Kentucky BSSC, Michigan Going PRO, Georgia Quick Start, Texas SDF, Indiana ETG, and more.
ORR-Funded Resettlement Services Federal, via agencies	Free wrap-around support (transportation, case management, soft skills)	Work through your local resettlement agency	Reduces onboarding friction and first-90-day attrition.
Turnover Cost Savings Operational benefit	~\$5,200 per retained worker per year	Accrues automatically with lower turnover	4% vs. 11% on 100 workers = \$36,400/year saved in recruiting, onboarding, and training costs.

NATIONAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCY PARTNERS — ALL OFFER FREE EMPLOYER SERVICES

- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Church World Service (CWS)
- Catholic Charities
- Lutheran Immigration & New American Service
- World Relief
- Hebrew New American Aid Society (HIAS)
- U.S. Committee for New Americans & Immigrants
- Episcopal Migration Ministries
- Ethiopian Community Development Council

The Missing Piece: Language Infrastructure

Every step in this guide requires one thing to work: communication in the worker's native language. TheLanguageGap.com, powered by UnDesked, is the platform that makes this possible at scale — instantly translating safety training, compliance documents, HR forms, SOPs, and production instructions into 50+ languages. Deployed on any web-based device — tablets, kiosks, digital signage, and mobile phones embedded via QR codes. No app download, no IT lift, no company email required. OSHA-defensible proof trails generated automatically.

55%

Drop in workers' comp costs

60%

Fewer safety incidents

30%

Faster onboarding

2 wks

Typical deployment timeline

Schedule a Free Discovery Call
TheLanguageGap.com

We'll help you identify your nearest service provider partners, calculate your state workforce incentive eligibility (WIOA OJT + training grants), and show you how quickly language infrastructure can be in place for your first New American hire.