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Contact: Michelle Mittelstadt
202-266-1910
Burke Speaker
202-266-1920

Marriott International Honored with Corporate Leadership Award for its Extensive Language Development Programs for Staff at All Levels

WASHINGTON – The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) on Wednesday announced the winners of its third annual [E Pluribus Unum](#) Prizes for exceptional immigrant integration initiatives, honoring Marriott International with a first-ever Corporate Leadership Award for its exemplary efforts in offering language development training across its staffing ranks.

Marriott and the other *E Pluribus Unum* Prizes winners will be honored tonight at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., featuring U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and other national policymakers.

The *E Pluribus Unum* Prizes program, established in 2008 by MPI's [National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy](#) with generous support from the [J.M. Kaplan Fund](#), seeks to encourage the adoption of effective integration practices and inspire others to take on the important work of integrating immigrants and their children so they can join the mainstream of U.S. society.

More than 10 percent of Marriott International's 106,000 associates in the United States (who hail from dozens of nations and speak more than 50 languages) have taken advantage of company-sponsored language programs – from immigrant employees who learn the English skills that help them in the workplace and their daily lives to Marriott managers who need to communicate with foreign-language speaking staff and hotel guests alike.

Marriott's Global Language Learning initiative leverages proven language learning technologies that allow its associates to learn at their own pace.

For example, since 2006 it has provided its Spanish-speaking associates access to portable electronic learning devices that allow them to learn and practice English whenever and wherever is convenient for them. At each hotel, Marriott also provides coaches who encourage employees to take advantage of the learning programs and increase their language proficiency.

Marriott also began offering opportunities for supervisors and coaches to take courses in more than 30 other languages, in order to better serve the needs of Marriott's global clientele and work more closely with other staff.

“Language skills are becoming increasingly important to the success of many businesses, and Marriott International has proven itself a trailblazer in the field of employer-supported language learning,” said Margie McHugh, co-director of MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy. “Marriott's large-scale and easily replicable model is a win-win approach for its workers and for the company's success in an increasingly global and multilingual marketplace.”

The company has seen completion rates of 85 percent across its language learning programs, indicating that its workers find the self-paced, technology-based approach to language learning a fit for their busy adult lives. Beyond its instruction programs, Marriott also offers translation pocket guides and posters with phonetic translations throughout its hotel properties.

MPI Senior Vice President Michael Fix, co-director of the National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, said, “Marriott’s language development training is important on a number of levels. With adult English classes in many communities overtaxed, this initiative creates new capacity and supports integration of the immigrant workforce that is the bedrock of the hospitality industry. And, by helping immigrants strengthen their English skills, it allows them to become more active participants in the American community.”

“Marriott International has one of the most diverse workforces in corporate America, and we are deeply committed to developing strategies that equip our employees with the skills and confidence they need to be successful,” said Andy Chaves, Corporate Senior Manager for Marriott. “In this internationally connected world, language skills are obviously a critical component of that success. We are honored to be recognized by the *E Pluribus Unum* Prizes program and are very proud of the thousands of Marriott employees who take advantage of the opportunities our company provides them to improve their language skills.”

The winners of the 2011 *E Pluribus Unum* Prize, accompanied by a \$50,000 award, are: the Hispanic Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City, the International Rescue Committee in San Diego, Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders) at Temple University and the San Francisco-based Welcome Back Initiative.

Additional winner highlights for Marriott can be found at www.integrationawards.org/winners-marriott.cfm. For more information or to set up interviews, contact Michelle Mittelstadt at 202-266-1910, mmittelstadt@migrationpolicy.org; or Burke Speaker at 202-266-1920, bspeaker@migrationpolicy.org.

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The Migration Policy Institute is an independent, non-partisan think tank in Washington, D.C. dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. MPI provides analysis, development and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national and international levels.