The Partnership for a New American Economy brings together more than 500 mayors and business leaders united in making the economic case for streamlining, modernizing, and rationalizing our country’s immigration policies at the national, state, and local levels.

They argued for 7.1% of the total GDP in metro Des Moines.¹

$3.2 billion to the metro area’s GDP in 2014.

The foreign-born population of metro Des Moines contributed more than $100 million in state and local taxes.

Including property, income taxes, and excise taxes levied either the State of Iowa or by municipal governments in 2014.²

Foreign-born residents contributed

POPULATION GROWTH

BETWEEN 2009 AND 2014

The total population in the Des Moines metro area increased by 12%, from 545,643 to 611,291 people. During this period, the foreign-born population grew 25.1%, from 38,970 to 48,760 people.

POPULATION TRENDS

³

¹ We define the Des Moines metropolitan area using the Office of Management and Budget definition of the Des Moines-Mضل Moines Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Unless otherwise specified, data draws from one-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2009, 2011, and 2014, and figures refer to the Des Moines metro area.

² These figures derive from our calculations based on the foreign-born’s share of wage income and self-employment income in the one-year ACS sample and figures refer to the Des Moines metro area.

³ These figures are based on the tax rates from Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (2015) “Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States.”

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The share of the foreign-born within the working age population increased from 9.4% to 10.3%.

During this period, growth in the foreign-born population accounted for 14.9% of overall population growth, compared to the national rate of 3.1%.

The share of the population in metro Des Moines that was foreign-born increased from 7.1% to 8%.

These industries generally include professions that require a degree or a license such as legal services, accounting, scientific research, consulting services, etc.

These industries generally include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.

River county 2,462

Polk county 62,882

Dallas county 11,578

Winnebago county 1,029

Madison county 2,200

Linn county 911

Dallas county 11,578

Winnebago county 1,029

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Polk county 62,882

foreign-born population share for the Des Moines metropolitan area.

The foreign-born are overrepresented, relative to their share of the population, in several key industries in metro Des Moines.

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By 2020, Iowa will need to fill 61,500 STEM jobs. While the foreign-born make up 8% of the overall population of the Des Moines metro area, they make up 10% of all STEM workers.

The percentage of the employed labor force that is foreign-born also rose from 8.4% to 9.2%.

The foreign-owned enterprises create thousands of new jobs in the Des Moines metro area.

TOP FIVE COUNTRIES FOR FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN THE AREA

By number of jobs created in 2011

- United Kingdom 1,400
- Japan 900
- France 900
- Ireland 900
- Netherlands 700

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A SNAPSHOT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FOREIGN-BORN IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

EDUCATION AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACTS

64.2 percent of the foreign-born in Des Moines have at least a high school degree, and 20.8 percent have at least a bachelor’s degree.

In fall 2014, 4,976 students attending local higher-education institutions in the region that includes metro Des Moines, metro Ames, the city of Grinnell, and the city of Pella were on temporary visas. The total number of international students graduating with a bachelor's degree or higher from a four-year university in Iowa is 11,441. Attracting or retaining just half of these students in metro Des Moines would increase the workforce candidate pool and expand the consumer base, creating 3,449 local jobs in six years and boosting the metro area’s total GDP by at least $609 million within the next 30 years.

WHERE THE FOREIGN-BORN ARE COMING FROM

In 2009, a vast majority (88.4%) of the foreign-born had been in metro Des Moines for more than a year. Among the remaining 11.6% of foreign-born residents who had lived in metro Des Moines for less than a year — the so-called “recent arrivals” — 23.7% moved from other places in Iowa, while 22.7% came from other U.S. states and 53.6% came from abroad.

Recent arrivals were more likely to have come from other U.S. states in 2014 compared to 2009. In 2014, of the 16.2% of foreign-born residents who recently arrived in metro Des Moines, 11.3% moved from other parts of Iowa, while 54.1% came from other U.S. states and 34.6% came from abroad.

THE FOREIGN-BORN IN DES MOINES

A SNAPSHOT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FOREIGN-BORN IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

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4 Data on total student enrollment in the metro area is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics.

5 For definitions and data sources, see the glossary at newamericandevelopment.org/desmoines.