

# Hiring Global Talent

Strategies for Attracting and Retaining International Students

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## Background

**M**ore than half a million international students are currently enrolled in colleges and universities across the United States, with the vast majority—roughly 85 percent—attending schools in metropolitan areas.<sup>1</sup> A large share of these students will graduate with bachelor's degrees or higher in high-demand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields, making them an enormous potential source of talent for some of the fastest-growing U.S. firms.

Yet, due to difficulty navigating the hiring process—for employers and job candidates alike—and immigration laws that cap the number of visas for high-skilled workers, many of these promising graduates will leave the U.S., taking their American higher education and training with them to our competitors abroad.

The United States will face a shortage of

**230,000**  
**STEM workers**

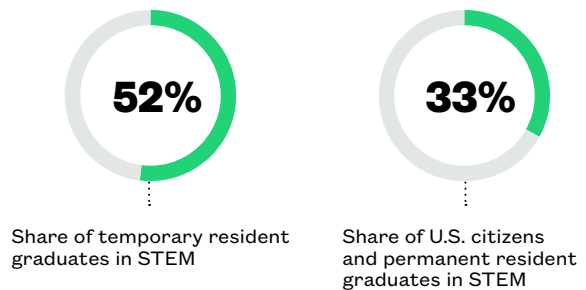
by 2018.<sup>1</sup>

## Why It Matters

International students, who combine U.S. education and training with knowledge of global markets, languages, and consumers, are a key source of talent for regions seeking to compete more effectively in the global economy.

According to data from New American Economy:<sup>2</sup>

- From 2008 to 2012, international students contributed roughly **\$21.8B** in tuition and **\$12.8B** in other spending to the metropolitan areas in which they were studying nationwide.
- More than half** of all international students studying in the U.S. come from large, fast-growing cities in emerging markets—like Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai, and Hyderabad.
- Over half** of international students hold degrees in STEM fields, compared with just 33% of U.S. citizens and permanent resident graduates.



The economic contributions and potential of international students is strongest at the state and local levels:

- In Pennsylvania, international students contributed more than **\$1.4B** to the state's economy in 2015, and supported **20,309 jobs** statewide
- In Ohio, a **2%** increase in the share of international students studying in the state is projected to boost the number of patents awarded at the state's universities by **28.3%**
- 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 **2,449 local jobs** in six years.

*"When 40 to 70 percent of graduate students studying in STEM fields at U.S. universities are international students, it is critical that local communities have a strategy to retain this talent pool. International students represent some of the most **ambitious, brilliant, and innovative minds on the planet.**"*

— Steve Tobocman, Director, Global Detroit

## What Communities Are Doing

Recognizing the economic potential of global talent and the opportunity that is lost when international graduates leave the metro areas where they studied, communities are implementing strategies to attract and retain more of the best and brightest from around the world.

### St. Louis Mosaic Global Talent Hiring Initiative

Through a partnership with the St. Louis Regional Business Council, the St. Louis Mosaic Project helps connect employers and international students and provides concrete help with the hiring process, including:

- Understanding the **importance of international talent**
- Hiring international students for **internships**
- Understanding **work visas and sponsorship**
- **Legal advice** for visa options

This program is designed to attract and retain more of the 9,000 international students who are studying in the St. Louis region's colleges and universities.

For more information on St. Louis Mosaic Global Talent Hiring Initiative...

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*“As a company committed to diversity and inclusion, Express Scripts relies on events like the Mosaic regional international student STEM career fair to meet and engage with talented professionals.*

*As we look at how best to put medicine within reach of the 85 million Americans we proudly serve, **programs like Mosaic help us to develop and retain a diverse workforce** that can address the unique needs of each person we help.”*

— Christine Way, Vice President, Technology, Express Scripts

## The Michigan Global Talent Retention Initiative (GTRI)

Launched in 2011, GTRI focuses on strengthening and diversifying Detroit's economy through the retention of top international talent, serving as a catalyst to lessen the skills gap in the STEM fields. GTRI provides international students and local employers with training and resources on relevant immigration law, information on finding a job in Michigan, and help with cross-cultural issues that both employers and international applicants may experience during the hiring process.

Working with seven research universities in Michigan, GTRI has engaged some 75 employers in Metro Detroit in the past year alone in job fairs, employer meet-and-greets, and other activities to connect international students with job opportunities. GTRI partners with the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Michigan Office for New Americans, the Michigan Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), Ann Arbor SPARK, and other public, private, and non-profit partners. GTRI is already moving the needle in Michigan:

- According to a 2016 report from Global Detroit, hiring of international students from GTRI universities through the OPT program by Michigan employers increased more than **80%** in the three years after GTRI's launch.
- GTRI has reached more than **3,000** employers and recruiters across the state and more than **3,000** international students seeking to remain in the state as workers after graduation.
- Over the past five years, the number of international students studying in Michigan **grew by 32.2%**.

For more information on GTRI...

### CONTACT

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*"Kyyba has been a proud partner of GTRI from its inception. GTRI helps growing companies like Kyyba find some of the world's most talented workers, right at the universities in our back yard. GTRI has helped our growing company meet the tremendous needs we have for recruiting skilled talent, giving us a **competitive advantage over our rivals** who are not considering international student talent."*

— Tel Ganesan, Founder, Chairman & Managing Partner, Kyyba Ventures in Detroit

## How Your Chamber Can Play a Role

### 1. Consult

existing data and local universities to understand the size and skills of the international student population in your region

### 2. Convene

employers, university staff, international students, and American Immigration Lawyers Association representatives to understand common challenges and opportunities for global talent hiring

### 3. Incentivize

successful local entrepreneurs to offer their expert advice to aspiring foreign-born entrepreneurs

### National Organizations and Resources

- **New American Economy:**<sup>6</sup> Data and state and local best practices on international student attraction and retention
- **WE Global Network:**<sup>7</sup> State and local best practices on international student attraction and retention
- **American Immigration Lawyers Association:**<sup>8</sup> State and local chapters of AILA that can offer expertise and guidance on immigration law matters

1 Brookings Institution, *The Geography of Foreign Students in U.S. Higher Education: Origins and Destinations*, August 2014

2 Derived from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System / Department of Education, 2009

3 Brookings Institution, *The Geography of Foreign Students in U.S. Higher Education: Origins and Destinations*, August 2014

4 New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in Pennsylvania*, August 2016

5 New American Economy, *Making the Grade: The Economic Impact of Attracting and Retaining International Students in Ohio*, August 2015

6 New American Economy, *The Foreign-Born in Des Moines*, August 2016

7 [www.NewAmericanEconomy.org](http://www.NewAmericanEconomy.org)

8 [www.WEGlobalNetwork.org](http://www.WEGlobalNetwork.org)

9 [www.AILA.org](http://www.AILA.org)