

# Developing a Regional Talent Strategy

Multi-Sector Plans to Attract and Welcome Newcomers

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## Background

Communities across the United States—from small towns to major metropolitan areas—are developing multi-sector plans to attract, welcome, and retain immigrants and other newcomers to grow the local economy. Such plans leverage the resources and expertise of local leaders from chambers of commerce, city agencies, civil society, cultural organizations, companies, and other important community institutions to remove barriers to success for all residents, including immigrants. They also enable communities to address multiple priorities at once, including population growth, economic development, labor market integration, public safety, and other key issues.

*“Immigrants have always been an important part of our strength as a state. As our economy continues to grow, it is absolutely critical that Utah businesses can hire both high-skilled and hourly employees to meet future workforce needs. Utah should always be a place that welcomes people of goodwill and **we want to make sure we are attracting the best and brightest to help our economy grow.**”*

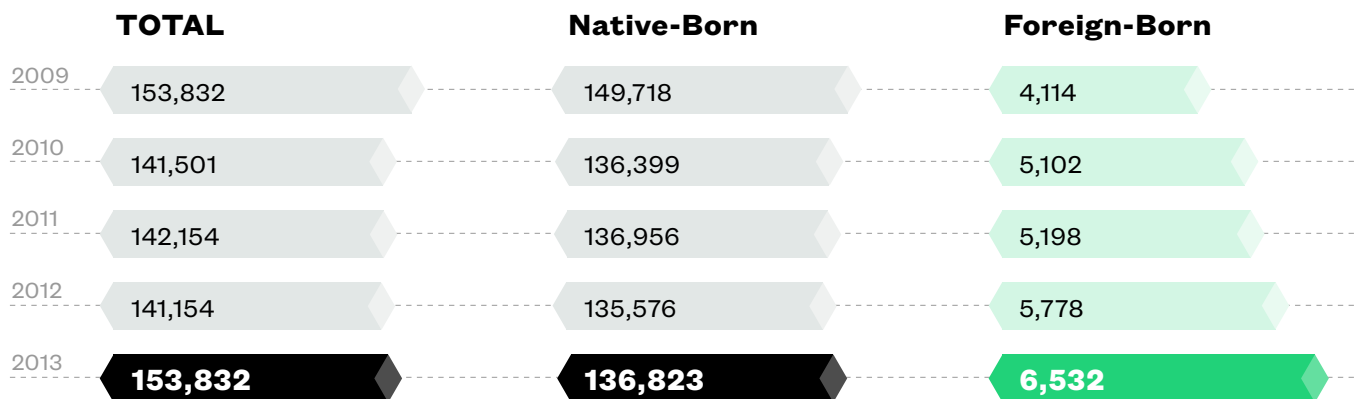
— Lane Beattie, President and CEO, Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce

## Why It Matters

Regions that most successfully promote diversity and inclusion are winning the global race for talent. According to data from New American Economy:

- Both low- and high-wage workers benefit when U.S. cities become more diverse. When a city experiences a diversity boost, the average person living in the metropolitan area sees their wages **rise by about 6%**.<sup>1</sup>
- For every 1,000 immigrants that arrive to a county, **270** U.S.-born residents move there in response, and the average immigrant who moves to a community raises the total value of housing wealth by **\$92,800**.<sup>2</sup>
- Increases in diversity among the highest earners in a city result in dramatic wage gains for all income groups. A diversity boost concentrated among the top 25% of earners in a metropolitan area results in an **18% wage jump** for other high-wage earners in the area—or an average increase in wages equivalent to **\$13,000** per year. Local workers in the bottom 25% of earners, meanwhile, see their annual **wages rise by 16.2%** on average, or by about **\$4,100**.<sup>3</sup>

### POPULATION OF DAYTON, 2009-2013



Communities that have put multi-sector plans in place are already reaping the return on investment:

- In 2014, after launching the Welcome Dayton initiative three years earlier, Dayton, Ohio reversed its decades-long population decline and added more than **\$100M** to home values county-wide.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2015, just three years into its regional talent attraction strategy, St. Louis became the region with the **fastest-growing foreign-born population** in the United States.
- More than two thirds** of the city of Atlanta's population growth in the last decade is attributable to the foreign-born.<sup>5</sup>

## What Communities Are Doing

In many regions, chambers of commerce convene or support local steering committees comprised of leaders from government, non-profit, and private sector organizations to develop multi-sector plans.

### Global Des Moines: International Talent Strategy

In the fall of 2015, the Greater Des Moines Partnership and New American Economy came together to develop a pilot program aimed at promoting a regional approach to immigration issues focused on economics, workforce, and the community. The purpose of the effort was to ensure that the region is attracting the best and the brightest, and that foreign-born residents have the education, preparation, and connections necessary for success in Central Iowa. Recommendations that came out of this effort include:

- Establishing a **Central Iowa Welcoming Center** to provide essential information and services—or links to existing services—for the foreign-born population
- Developing a **micro-loan program** specifically targeted to foreign-born entrepreneurs
- Exploring ways to process **re-certification for professional credentials** from foreign countries

For more information on  
Global Des Moines...

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*“The top issue currently facing central Iowa employers is the ability to attract and retain talent. To meet these needs, we must continue to double down on our collective efforts to attract and retain a workforce with the **right skill sets** to fuel the future growth of our region.”*

— Jay Byers, CEO,  
Greater Des Moines Partnership

### Welcoming Salt Lake New Americans Task Force

Co-chaired by Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams, Salt Lake Chamber CEO/President Lane Beattie, and Dr. Dinesh Patel, Welcoming Salt Lake’s New Americans Task Force is a multi-sector stakeholder taskforce charged with developing and implementing a welcoming strategy for the Salt Lake region. The taskforce includes approximately 100 community leaders representing the education, government, and business sectors, and the community. The Task Force will “build off

Utah’s proud tradition of welcoming newcomers, ensure that Salt Lake’s New Americans’ economic, social, and civic potential is maximized—making Salt Lake more vibrant, welcoming, and globally competitive.” The goals of Welcoming Salt Lake are to:

- Make Utah the **most welcoming state**
- Ensure all Salt Lake residents live in safe, healthy, and **connected communities**
- Maximize the **economic potential** of New Americans

## Global Louisville

In May 2015 Greater Louisville Inc. and the Louisville Mayor's Office of Globalization partnered to launch "Global Louisville," an effort to make the city more international by attracting and retaining immigrant talent and global business. The Global Louisville initiative was first announced in May 2015 and is designed to build a strategy for welcoming foreign-born residents.

The effort resulted in the Global Louisville Action Plan, a collaborative effort among the Mayor's Office, GLI, and hundreds of community members that outlines key strategies to attract, retain and grow Louisville's foreign-born population and workforce. It provides an overview of the region's

foreign-born population and a set of action steps to increase the number of immigrants in Louisville and their capacity to thrive. The plan is a culmination of more than a year's worth of research of best practices, local data, and community input.

For more information on Global Louisville...

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*"Greater Louisville Inc. is proud to partner with the Mayor's Office on this important initiative to retain, attract, and grow great international talent across Greater Louisville. The Global Louisville plan contains valuable strategies to make sure that foreign-born people who settle here are able to **fully participate in, and contribute to, the regional economy.**"*

— Kent Oyler, President and CEO, Global Louisville Inc.

## How Your Chamber Can Play a Role

### 1. Leverage

research capacity to identify key areas for improvement, target industries, and strategic opportunities in the region

### 2. Convene

community leaders from all sectors, including those that work directly with immigrant and refugee communities, to develop recommendations

### 3. Recruit

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

### 4. Advocate

for local, state, and federal policy change to remove barriers to successful integration for immigrants in your region

## National Organizations and Resources

- **New American Economy:**<sup>6</sup> Resources and technical assistance to support the development of multi-sector welcoming plans and regional talent attraction strategies
- **Welcoming America:**<sup>7</sup> Resources and technical assistance to support the development of multi-sector welcoming plans and regional talent attraction strategies
- **Gateways for Growth:**<sup>8</sup> Interactive map with tools and resources from multi-sector strategic plans around the country

1 New American Economy, *The Riches of the Melting Pot: How Diversity in Metropolitan Areas Helps Grow the Wages of Low- and High Wage Workers*, January 2017

2 New American Economy and Americas Society/Council of the Americas, *Immigration and the Revival of American Cities*, September 2013

3 Ibid

4 New American Economy, *Welcome to Dayton: How Immigrants are Helping to Grow Dayton's Economy and Reverse Population Decline*, July 2015

5 New American Economy, *New Americans in Atlanta*, August 2014

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

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

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