

Jobs, Talent, and People Recommendations

Recommendation Topic: Immigration and Welcoming Communities

Recommendation: Prioritize programs, policies, and regional supports to develop a stronger pipeline of international talent that is retained through a welcoming environment for international immigrants and diverse communities in Michigan.

Description:

1. Collaboratively address state and federal policies preventing immigrants from being able to call Michigan home:

Specific strategies may include:

- a. Establish a concerted effort to address federal and state policy barriers and develop more formal connections between employers and state universities to simplify the route by which H1-B visa holders can receive a green card and transition to permanent Michigan residency.
- b. Reduce barriers for international immigrants to obtain a driver's license in Michigan.
- c. Develop a dedicated office within the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs to address international certification reciprocity and align state resources to ensure licensed/credentialed professionals from outside the United States can have their relevant documentation translated and applied to Michigan's license or credential standards.

2. Strengthen the international immigrant talent pipeline and the immigration to workforce transition:

Specific strategies may include:

- a. Support the deployment of models for immigrant talent and entrepreneur attraction and retention regionally like Global Talent Attraction and Retention Program (GTARP) and Global Entrepreneur in Residence.
- b. Develop and support a clear pathway for migrant families to access education and skilled trades opportunities at community colleges and universities, including more

portable community college credits as migrant workers follow the job opportunities that brought them to Michigan.

- c. Provide meaningful language access at state agencies and entities that provide direct services to immigrants.
- d. Address the shortage of culturally sensitive, affordable elder care, including workforce training and wage disparities.

3. Support state and regional efforts to create more welcoming communities for immigrants:

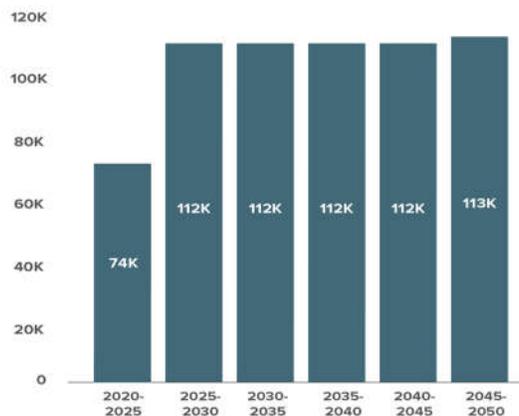
Specific strategies may include:

- a. Create a statewide welcoming community strategy that ensures regional planning entities drive the development of infrastructure to support local immigrant populations including the establishment of interregional communication protocols to ensure that successful strategies are shared.
- b. Offer opportunities for creative engagement and connection of state residents to diverse populations in their communities, including supporting a larger rollout of programs like City Institute/Detroit Experience Factory tours.

Rationale:

While Michigan is losing population overall, international immigration continues to be a source of population growth. The trend is expected to continue through 2050, with a projected growth total of 630,000 immigrants per the current trend (University of Michigan, Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics, The Economic and Demographic Outlook for Michigan Through 2050, July 29, 2022).

International Migration by Years Through 2050



There are over 678,000 immigrants in Michigan, comprising 7% of Michigan's total population, with over 423,000 immigrants in Metro-Detroit and 74,400 in the Grand Rapids metro area (American Immigration Council). Immigrants grow the Michigan economy with over 37,400 immigrant entrepreneurs contributing \$731.5 million in business income in 2018.

To support this opportunity for population and economic growth through international immigration, Michigan must overcome policy, program, and cultural barriers that prevent immigrants from calling Michigan home. From difficulties to obtaining a driver's license to not being able to fully transition to citizenship, immigrants are struggling to overcome policies that prevent employment and citizenship. In addition, they are often not made to feel welcome in Michigan culturally with many misperceptions about their effect on the job market and the economy. The policy options offered by the Jobs, Talent, and People workgroup address the barriers and offer a pipeline of talent from visa to green card that could maximize this population trend and create culturally vibrant, welcoming Michigan communities.