

## Proposal: Center for New Cincinnatians

The MTFOI proposes the creation of a Center that would link immigrant, refugee, international, and receiving communities to services, to other immigrant communities, and to the larger community within Cincinnati. The Center would serve as the central node or one-stop shop within a developing welcoming infrastructure in the city and region to improve access to resources and to help capacity build among businesses, organizations, schools, and government. The Center would promote place-based community and economic development and inclusion by working with key community leaders. It would enable and support effective communication channels, including technology platforms for information sharing and presentations. The intent of the Center is not to take over the work that is already being done among organizations, chambers, or educational institutions, but to help capacity build among these organizations. **The main purpose of the center is twofold:** to create a welcoming environment to promote inclusive community engagement for immigrants, refugees, international students and employees, and receiving communities; and to promote economic inclusion and development for immigrant, refugee, international, and receiving communities.

The Center would initially be an online website, but we strongly encourage the creation of a physical space to serve Cincinnati's newest community members. Other cities such as Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Chicago have created a physical space for this same purpose, and we are inspired by their success. We would like to strongly encourage community collaboration and participation, as they are keys to the success of the center. Community needs assessments are necessary to ensure that the programs and functions of the center are in line with community needs. The communities of the city need to feel and have ownership of the center. Additionally, having such research and data can help make the case for the various programs of the center. Global Detroit, Welcome Dayton, WE Global Network and Welcoming America do a great job of utilizing research to drive their initiatives.

The proposed Center can either directly develop and implement, or facilitate and contribute to, many of the recommendations submitted by the five subcommittees of the Mayor's Task Force on Immigration. The proposed Center offers opportunities, both short- and long-term, to coordinate efforts stemming from the sub-committees' recommendations, while also becoming a central location for newly arrived and long-term Cincinnatians to learn about and access resources.

### **Goals of the Center:**

1. Create an environment to foster inclusive community engagement with immigrants, refugees, international students and employees, and receiving communities. This will be accomplished through direct engagement and partnerships with community organizations
2. Promote economic inclusion and development for immigrant, refugee, international, and receiving communities.

### **To these ends, the Center will:**

- welcome** new immigrants, support the current immigrant community, attract and retain international talent, and work with receiving communities to promote diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency.
- cultivate** an inclusive, welcoming, and economically vibrant city in order to 'become the most immigrant friendly city in the country'.
- connect** new Cincinnatians to resources that will help reduce barriers to educational, economic, social, and cultural opportunities.

### **Areas of focus:**

- 1. Promote economic development** by lowering barriers to entry through small business and entrepreneurship training and support; job and language training; improving access to capital; reducing barriers to education for certificates and degree programs; credentialing referrals and support; collaboration with businesses in attraction and retention efforts of international talent; attracting and retaining international students and employees; and promoting inclusion and intercultural competency training.
- 2. Promote a welcoming environment** through the promotion of community dialogues; fostering inclusive engagement and collaboration among immigrants, refugees, receiving communities, and international students/employees; recognition of contributions made by immigrant, refugee, and international communities; support of cultural events; creation of materials to highlight the diversity of the city; promote cultural competency and inclusion training and programs.
- 3. Engage and connect leadership** in the areas of government, business, faith-based organizations, health care, public safety, education, and community.
- 4. Advocate for immigrant-friendly policies and law** at the local and national level.
- 5. Empower immigrant and international communities** through collaboration, coordination of ESL and citizenship classes, and the dissemination of information related to community resources and workshops.
- 6. Serve as a connector/navigator/one-stop shop** for recent arrivals, immigrant and refugee serving organizations, businesses, and receiving communities.

### **Proposed Center can Contribute to these Subcommittee Recommendations:**

#### **Creation of Center for New Cincinnatians**

The MTFIOI proposes the creation of a center that would enable and support effective communication channels, including technology platforms for information sharing and presentations. This center would not only link immigrants to services, but would also connect the larger community within Cincinnati and beyond. The center would initially be an online website or portal, but we strongly encourage the creation of a physical space to serve Cincinnati's newest community members. Other cities such as Pittsburgh and Chicago have created a physical space for this same purpose, and we are inspired by their success.

#### **Creation of Online Immigrant Center**

The Task Force proposes launching a one-stop, online immigration center that would connect the region's local immigration service providers. This website would be supported by the City and/or the Cincinnati USA Chamber to give it the official stamp of approval and authority.

#### **Creation of Mayor's Advisory Council**

The MTFIOI recommends identifying and convening leaders from immigrant communities, along with local leaders, to work as a mayoral advisory group toward the common goal of making our City more welcoming.

#### **Produce Marketing and Informative Materials to Highlight the Inclusive Community Engagement Activities in the City for an International Audience**

The MTFIOI recommends the City of Cincinnati, in partnership with local media firms, produce digital and print media to inform Cincinnati's international audience about what the City is doing to engage immigrants. Content generated by these community engagement activities, with special

emphasis on social enterprises component, can be formatted in a variety of ways to capture the attention of the City's international audience.

### **The New Cincinnatian of the Year Awards**

The purpose of this proposed award is to recognize the contributions immigrants make to the City of Cincinnati. Immigrants are vital to the economic growth, cultural fabric and creative vision of the City. To recognize these contributions, the Center would like to confer annual New Cincinnatian of the Year Awards on individuals who have made outstanding and sustained contributions in fields vital to the City's interests such as the sciences, arts, sports, business, philanthropy, health, technology, community and law.

### **English As A Second Language (ESL) Opportunities**

The MTFOI recommends the City's Center for New Immigrants host ESL training/classes, as a robust ESL system will assist in eliminating language barriers for new immigrants. ESL services geared toward immigrant families will foster a welcoming effort through education and acculturation, and removing language barriers between immigrants and community members promotes greater understanding and tolerance of differences. Additionally, language classes allow individuals to become self-sufficient at a more rapid rate.

### **Financial Literacy**

Financial literacy education helps immigrant populations reach financial independence. The MTFOI recommends the Center for New Immigrants provide Cincinnati's immigrant population with training regarding money management and savings, ultimately leading to families buying homes, investing in the community, and inspiring more families to migrate to the City and contribute to the overall economy.

### **Build Immigrant Community Data**

The MTFOI recommends community engagement activities be paired with a content collection effort to spotlight our immigrants and/or build immigrant community data. The Committee recommends that information generated be used to promote the City's commitment to its immigrant population, empowering them to become community leaders and problem solvers.

### **Build Acceleration for Immigrant Owned Businesses**

The MTFOI recommends active partnerships with existing accelerators to enable and support more immigrant entrepreneurs. It is further recommended that the City explore the creation of acceleration services that concentrate on immigrant-owned businesses.

### **Improve Identified Service Gaps**

The MTFOI recommends that the City work on improving service gaps in community awareness and advocacy, employment and job readiness, housing, transportation and education in ways that are specific to the City's immigrant population

### **Increase Retention of International Graduates**

International students are currently completing STEM degrees at a much higher pace than native students. The MTFOI recommends the City of Cincinnati collaborate with the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber's Diverse by Design program to increase hiring international students in the City. The MTFOI recommends leveraging local business networks to attract more skilled immigrant talent already in the U.S.

### **Build the City's Brand by Engaging an International Audience**

The MTFOI recommends hosting social enterprise conferences (TEDx or incubators) and sharing content through multiple channels to actively engage the international community. It is recommended that the City work with the tourism industry to promote these efforts.

### **Market Cincinnati as Preferred Location for Manufacturing**

The MTFOI recommends leveraging the presence of global logistics companies to attract new businesses to the region. Working with the aforementioned businesses, REDI and international chambers, a marketing plan for this proposal can be created. The MTFOI recommends extending City incentive programs to foreign companies to attract investment to the region.

## **DATA: City and Regional<sup>1</sup>**

### **Population Growth**

- Between 2007 and 2012, the Cincinnati's population decreased, going from 301,843 to 297,360—a decrease of 1.5 percent. Despite this decrease in overall population, the foreign-born population of Cincinnati actually grew, increasing modestly from 13,659 to 13,686.

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<sup>1</sup> Thank you to Dan Wallace and Partnership for a New American Economy for providing us with this data. Unless otherwise cited, the data was provided by Partnership for a New American Economy. Please note that the information provided here is for informational purposes only and to be only privately shared at the meeting held August 19, 2015. It is not intended for public release.

- The share of Cincinnati's population that is foreign-born increased slightly from 4.5 in 2007 to 4.6 in 2012. This is compared to an average of 8% for Cincinnati's peer regions, like Denver, Austin, Cleveland, Charlotte, and St. Louis, among others.<sup>2</sup>

### **Migration**

The foreign-born population remained relatively stable between 2007 and 2012, both in terms of number and their migration patterns.

- In 2012, the share of the foreign-born population that had been living in Cincinnati for more than a year was at 71 percent, compared to 72 percent in 2007.
- Recent arrivals were more likely to have come from other parts of the United States in 2012 compared to 2007. In 2012, 49.4 percent of recent arrivals had come from other parts of Ohio, while 21.6 percent had come from other parts of the United States. Immigrants from abroad made up the remaining 29 percent of recent arrivals.
- The most common regions and countries of origin for recent arrivals from abroad are Western Europe, East Africa, Central and Western Asia, and India.
- There is an increase in secondary migration from other parts of the United States, while the percentage of immigrant from abroad remained about the same.

### **Tax Contribution and Spending Power**

- Although the foreign-born population of Cincinnati made up only 4.6 percent of the population in 2012, they held more than 5.4 percent of the total spending power of Cincinnati, or more than \$589 million.
- Given their income, we estimate that the foreign-born population of Cincinnati also contributed more than \$71 million in state and local tax dollars. This represents more than 3.9 percent of all state and local taxes collected in Cincinnati and includes all income, property, sales, and excise taxes paid to the Ohio and local government.

### **Labor Market and Entrepreneurship**

- While the total number of employed people in Cincinnati declined by 2.3 percent, or 3,181 people, between 2007 and 2012, the number of foreign-born employed individuals increased by 5.4 percent, or 434 workers.
- In 2012, nearly 10 percent (9.98) of all employed foreign-born workers were entrepreneurs or self-employed. Only about 6.8 percent of all U.S.-born workers were self-employed.
- In the Cincinnati-Middletown MSA, immigrants only make up 4.1% of the overall population, but make up 21% share of Main Street Business Owners and 7.9% share of business owners.
- According to a recent report by the Fiscal Policy Institute, Cincinnati was one of 31 of the country's 50 largest metro areas between 2000 and 2013, in which immigrants accounted for all of the growth in Main Street businesses.<sup>3</sup>
- Immigrants often boost local economies because they are more likely to be working-age than the US population as a whole. In Cincinnati, while foreign-born individuals make up 4.6% of the total population, they account for 6.1% of all workers.

### **High-Skilled Residents, High-Tech Industries, and STEM Jobs**

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<sup>2</sup> Diverse by Design. 2012. "Diverse by Design: Meeting the Talent Challenge in a Global Economy. A 2012 Regional Indicators Report".

<sup>3</sup> Fiscal Policy Institute. 2015. "Bringing Vitality to Main Street: How Immigrant Small Business Help Local Economies Grow"

- As of 2012, the foreign-born population has much higher levels of educational attainment than the native-born population:
  - Over 19 percent of foreign-born people held bachelor's degree, compared to just 12.8 percent of native-born people.
  - Meanwhile, while 23.8 percent of foreign-born people hold advanced degrees (master's, professional, or doctorates), only 7 percent of native-born people are similarly qualified.
- Cincinnati was recently designated by a Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings report as a low-immigrant, high skilled immigrant destination.<sup>4</sup>
- While immigrants make up only 4.6 percent of Cincinnati's population, they make up nearly 11 percent of STEM workers.
- Foreign-born workers are also disproportionately represented in high-tech industries, defined as industries devoting a substantial portion of their operation to research & development, making up 5.3 percent of the workforce.
- In some industries, the foreign-born make up an even more significant share of the workforce. For example, 12.1 percent of all aerospace workers, 8.9 percent of all biotech workers, and 6.6 percent of all information technology workers in Cincinnati are foreign-born.

### **Naturalization**

In 2012, it is estimated that as many as 4,159 foreign-born residents, or about 30 percent of Cincinnati's total foreign-born population, are eligible for naturalization but have yet to take that step.

- Numerous studies have also documented that naturalized citizens out-earn non-citizens by as much as 16 percent, according to some estimates—giving them more income to patronize local businesses.<sup>5</sup>
- Naturalized citizens are also eligible to work in a number of occupations that require citizenship—most notably, government-service positions or scientific research posts requiring a security clearance. And due to the increased ease with which they can apply for licenses and insurance, naturalized citizens are also more likely to establish U.S.-based businesses, creating U.S. jobs in the process.<sup>6</sup>

### **Proposed Center Structure (long-term)**

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<sup>4</sup> Hall, Matthew; Singer, Audrey; De Jong, Gordon F.; and Graefe, Deborah Roempke. 2011. "The Geography of Immigrant Skills: Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Areas". Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings.

<sup>5</sup> Lynch, Robert and Oakford, Patrick. 2013. "The Economic Effects of Granting Legal Status and Citizenship to Undocumented Immigrants," Center for American Progress, March 20.

<sup>6</sup> Pastor, M. and Scoggins, J. 2012. "Citizen Gain: The Economic Benefits of Naturalization for Immigrants and the Economy," Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, University of Southern California.



- **Advisory Board:** Key donors of the center; hires and fires the Executive Director
- **Advisory Council:** Key stakeholders and leaders from immigrant communities and immigrant serving organizations; reports and makes recommendations to the Executive Director; engages in and supports the programs of the center
- **Executive Director:** reports to Advisory Board; responsible for fundraising for the center; ensure the Center’s programs are enacted and implemented according to Task Force recommendations and to the needs of the city; support all programs and services of the center; ensure growing support of the center and its mission
- **Program Director, Online Presence and Connector Services:** Online portal of center; online community resources and information; promotion of city and events; online marketing; social media and networking; volunteer and social service provider database
- **Program Director, Economic Inclusion and Development:** ESL for entrepreneurs; practical ESL courses for workforce entry and targeted industries; coaching and mentoring for professional development and career placement; host and connect to professional networking opportunities; Place-based, neighborhood economic development; small business development for immigrant and refugee communities through technical training and support; host job skills training in collaboration with other agencies; foster partnerships with area businesses, Chambers, colleges and universities; start-up and incubator organizations
- **Program Director, Community Engagement and Outreach:** Ambassador/Mentor Program; annual awards ceremony; Education- Citizenship, ESL courses; cultural competency for receiving communities; community dialogues
- **Administrative Assistant:** daily functions of the office; monitor all grants and center funding; navigator of community services; direct report for interns

## Proposed Initiatives

**These will be offered in coordination with other agencies so as not to duplicate services, but to capacity build with other agencies and improve connections with the communities served.**

- Conduct community needs assessments with the immigrant, refugee, and international population of the city to properly develop Center programs and initiatives in line with the needs of the communities and with the community's support. The research would be in collaboration with area community-based organizations and university faculty. The data/information will serve multiple functions: 1.) The process of collecting data will promote collaboration and buy-in with the immigrant, refugee, immigrant, and receiving communities so that the communities feel a sense of ownership of the Center; 2.) data will be used in marketing materials to make the case for attraction and retention initiatives; 3.) Data will also be used for benchmarking outcomes and successes of the center; 4.) it will be used in grant-writing efforts and serve as a resource for the community.
- Create a New Arrival Guide (in conjunction with the website and newcomer orientations): buying a home, renting apartments, utilities, grocery stores, health services, halal and kosher stores, phone service, schools, ELL programs, Jobs and Family Services, social service agencies, cultural organizations, entertainment;
- Newcomer Orientations and follow up workshops: utilizing the New Arrival Guide, offer workshops around life and culture in the US/Cincinnati, housing and tenant rights, police, and community resources/services;
- Citizenship classes: in partnership with USCIS (like Atlanta and other cities), local schools and libraries, and social service agencies, the center will promote classes in preparation for the naturalization process;
- Create a Community Conversations program to promote cross-cultural interaction; support efforts to promote and offer Cultural Competency and Inclusion training;
- Host and promote small business development, entrepreneurship, micro-enterprise workshops and trainings; in collaboration with other agencies, create a resource guide to help immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs interested in small business/micro-enterprise development;
- Create, develop, improve connections with national and regional organizations like Welcoming America, Welcoming Refugees, Partnership for a New American Economy, WE Global Network, and the Small Business Administration;
- Work to ensure city/regional agencies (chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, small business administrations, etc.) incorporate/include immigrants, refugees, international students/employees, and underrepresented races/ethnic groups into their strategic plans, practices, and initiatives.