

# US ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AT RISK

A Midwest Call to Action on Immigration Reform



## Report of an Independent Task Force

Chet Culver, Richard M. Daley, Joe Loughrey, Doris Meissner, Clare Muñana, Mike Rounds, John W. Rowe, Samuel C. Scott III, Carole Segal, *Cochairs*

Tamar Jacoby, President and CEO, ImmigrationWorks USA, *Lead Writer/Project Director*



**THE CHICAGO COUNCIL**  
ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- TASK FORCE MEMBERS . . . . . 2
- FOREWORD . . . . . 4
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY . . . . . 6
- CHAPTER 1: IMMIGRATION REFORM FOR AMERICA’S FUTURE . . . . . 10
- CHAPTER 2: KEY TO COMPETITIVENESS: A WORKFORCE THAT MEETS OUR NEEDS . . . . . 14
- CHAPTER 3: THE MIDWEST—SUCCESSFUL PAST, MICROCOSM OF THE FUTURE . . . . . 18
- CHAPTER 4: WHAT THE MIDWEST NEEDS FROM IMMIGRATION REFORM . . . . . 34
- CHAPTER 5: THE MIDWEST NEEDS A SOLUTION . . . . . 40
- APPENDIX . . . . . 42
- PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES . . . . . 45
- RESOURCES . . . . . 52
- SIDEBARS
  - The Impact of Immigration: Economists Weigh In . . . . . 15
  - Midwest Survey Finds Support for Reform among Those with Accurate Information on Immigration . . . . . 31
  - What Line?. . . . . 32
  - The Moral Case for Immigration Reform . . . . . 39
- SPOTLIGHT STORIES
  - Small Town Willmar Creates Microloan Program for Immigrant Entrepreneurs . . . . . 12
  - Indian Graduate Student Helps Fargo Company Expand Globally . . . . . 19
  - Bosnians Help Repopulate Shrinking St. Louis. . . . . 21
  - Research Universities Work with State of Michigan to Keep Foreign Students in the United States after Graduation. . . . . 24
  - Iowa Pork Plant Draws New Population That Transforms Town . . . . . 27
  - Shifts within the Evangelical Community . . . . . 29
  - Cummins Leads Public-Private Integration Program in Public Schools. . . . . 35
  - State of Illinois Works with Nonprofit Groups to Naturalize 56,000 Citizens . . . . . 37

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For too long the Midwest has waited for Washington to produce meaningful reform of the nation's immigration laws. Bills have come and gone through the years, but often end in political gridlock. The Midwestern economy needs high-skilled, educated workers with long-term visas to create the companies and innovations that will power it in the future. Midwestern businesses need low-skilled immigrants with visas to sustain their industries. Midwestern schools insist that their students get the legal status that will lead to higher education and jobs. Midwestern farms seek a legal way to hire the seasonal help they need. Throughout the Midwest, cities and towns cope imaginatively with the social and economic challenges of immigration. Yet there is only so much the region can do until the federal government acts.

That time has come. As economic recovery proceeds and political alignments shift, our region's leaders are thinking strategically about long-term economic competitiveness and the role played by immigrants at all levels. Midwest leaders want to ensure sustainable growth, jobs, population stability, and quality of life. Immigrants are an essential ingredient for this future. America's heartland can wait no longer.

A diverse and bipartisan group of civic and business leaders, aware of the urgency of immigration reform and frustrated with delays, began convening in December 2011 to produce this report. Their priority was to state what the region needs from immigration reform to ensure its economic competitiveness. If 53 Republican and Democratic leaders—drawn from companies, law enforcement, schools, hospitals, nonprofits, foundations, advocacy groups, and communities of faith—from the 12-state Midwest can support these recommendations, then surely our representatives in Washington can act on them.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs is a nongovernmental, nonadvocacy, and nonpartisan organization—a neutral convener that brings new voices to this debate. The Council, which exam-

ines topics of global importance to the nation, has looked at immigration before. It published *Mexican Immigration in the Midwest: Meaning and Implications* (2009), *Strengthening America: The Civic and Political Integration of Muslim Americans* (2007), *A Shared Future: The Economic Engagement of Greater Chicago and Its Mexican Community* (2006), and *Keeping the Promise: Immigration Proposals from the Heartland* (2004). None of our previous reports have been of this scale. We hope this report resonates with leaders nationwide because as it makes clear, the Midwest needs answers now.

## Task Force Activities

Task force members have used many tools to present and illustrate their work, including:

### Spotlight Stories

The task force commissioned eight spotlight stories, scattered through the report, to show how the Midwest has been creatively integrating immigrants despite policy paralysis at the national level. These stories were chosen for their regional diversity, their relevance to both high- and low-skilled labor, and the way they highlight key aspects of the immigration debate in the Midwest.

### MidwestImmigration.org

MidwestImmigration.org presents the task force's work and is an educational tool to raise public awareness of immigration's importance to the region's economic future. The site features immigration-related news articles, summaries of major issues, expert commentaries, reports published by other organizations, and state-by-state immigration data.

### Regional Forums

To ensure its findings represent the region, the task force hosted forums in seven Midwestern cities in the summer of 2012: Chicago, Des Moines, Detroit, Fargo, Minneapolis, St. Louis, and West Lafayette.



The goal was to gather feedback on the report from local business and community leaders. Quotes from these forums appear throughout the report.

### **Midwest Survey**

Building on its 38 years of surveying American and foreign public opinion, the Council commissioned a survey for this report on Midwestern views on immigration. The survey, carried out from August 16 to 27, 2012, included a representative sample of 1,062 adults living in the 12-state Midwest. It has a margin of error of  $\pm 4$  percentage points.

### **The Group of 500**

The Group of 500 (G500) is a growing list of Midwestern business, political, and civic leaders who have broadly endorsed the work of the task force. The G500 is a key component of the task force's effort to present the Midwestern perspective on immigration reform. Signatories can be viewed on [MidwestImmigration.org](http://MidwestImmigration.org).

## **Acknowledgments**

The Chicago Council is immensely grateful to the nine task force cochairs for their leadership and dedication. I cannot thank enough Chet Culver, Richard M. Daley, Joe Loughrey, Doris Meissner, Clare Muñana, Mike Rounds, John W. Rowe, Samuel C. Scott III, and Carole Segal for driving this important project and ensuring that it reflects the views of the bipartisan task force.

The other 44 members of the task force were critical to producing this report and contributed their experiences from the multiple sectors represented and from their own states and localities. We know their time is valuable and thank them for committing to this effort.

The Council is fortunate to have worked with Tamar Jacoby, president and CEO of ImmigrationWorks USA, who served as lead writer and project director. Her expertise on immigration and masterful writing shines throughout the entire report.

Many others played an important role in enriching this report. I would like to thank Rekha Basu of the *Des Moines Register* for conducting interviews and writing the illustrative spotlight stories featured throughout the document. Rob Paral of Rob Paral & Associates collected new and

important data on immigrants in the Midwest. Katherine Fennelly of the Humphrey School of Public Policy at the University of Minnesota and her students compiled the state-by-state information featured on the website and in the report. Rick Mattoon of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, Pia Orrenius of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Jeff Passel of the Pew Hispanic Center, Todd Thorpe of Bockorny Group, and Jack Strauss of the Simon Center for Regional Forecasting at Saint Louis University informed the task force with substantive presentations.

The Council deeply appreciates the collaboration of the many Midwestern organizations, speakers, and attendees at the regional forums in the summer of 2012.

I also thank all signatories of the Group of 500 who have put their names to the report. The Group of 500 is a network of leaders committed to moving the immigration debate forward.

Projects of this scale require teamwork, vision, and management. The Chicago Council's exceptional staff brought all the parts together. I thank Rachel Bronson, vice president of studies; Juliana Kerr Viohl, director of studies special initiatives; Dina Smeltz, senior fellow of public opinion and foreign policy; Richard Longworth, senior fellow; Craig Kafura, senior program officer in studies; Jill Ridderbos, studies consultant; and Elisa Miller, director of grants and foundation relations. A reliable team of interns supported the staff, including Magdalena Lasota-Morales, Cassady Rosenblum, Janice Shon, and Bemnet Yigzaw. I also thank Catherine Hug and Ellen Hunt for editing and Chicago Creative Group for designing the report.

Finally, none of this would have taken shape without the generous support of the Exelon Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Robert R. McCormick Foundation, Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust, Lumina Foundation, and Chicago Council Board member Clare Muñana. The Council and the task force are grateful for their contributions and faith in the effort.

Marshall M. Bouton  
President  
The Chicago Council on Global Affairs  
February 2013

## Immigration reform for America's future

The future of the United States depends on far more than economic recovery: the holy grail for the long term is economic competitiveness. Can US firms compete with companies in other countries? Are our industries and our workers as productive as others? Is productivity growing as fast in America as it is elsewhere in the world? Many ingredients go into a nation's competitiveness. Yet when America or any region of America starts to fall short on too many criteria, companies making decisions about where to build plants, open laboratories, and create jobs go elsewhere.

At the top of the skill ladder and at the bottom, immigrants are an essential piece of America's global competitiveness. We as a nation must work harder to attract and retain immigrant talent and avoid wasting the potential of the immigrants already here.

Our problem: the nation's broken immigration system is holding back the region's economic growth and clouding its future. Worst of all, there is little we Midwesterners can do about the failings of federal immigration law. As the stories throughout this report illustrate, states, municipalities, educators, employers, faith leaders, and others across the Midwest are stepping up with local solutions to help newcomers thrive in our communities. But only Congress can do what needs to be done: create an immigration system that works for the Midwest—for our businesses and our communities.

## Key to competitiveness: A workforce that meets our needs

Despite increasing educational attainment across all levels of society, the US workforce alone is not educated enough to sustain a globally competitive knowledge economy. Sixty to 70 percent of the students in American computer science and electrical engineering graduate programs are foreigners on temporary visas. Twenty-five percent of US patents are held by innovators born abroad.

One-quarter of the high-tech firms launched in the United States between 1995 and 2005 were founded by immigrants. These newcomers don't supplant US workers. They enhance American productivity and create jobs. We need their talent to sustain our economic edge—and will need it increasingly in years ahead.

America also needs less-skilled immigrants. Long-term demographic and educational trends are changing the size and makeup of the native-born workforce. US families are having fewer children. Baby boomers are retiring. Perhaps most significant, Americans are increasingly educated. In 1960 half of the native-born men in the US workforce had dropped out of high school and were doing unskilled work. Today, the figure is around 10 percent. Much of the economy, particularly in the Midwest, is undergoing an industrial restructuring that makes less-skilled workers in specific industries even more essential than they were in the past.

The economic downturn has done nothing to change the fundamental educational and demographic trends that make foreign workers essential for American prosperity. Even with today's high unemployment, employers in many sectors—high-tech, agriculture, the seasonal economy—need immigrants to keep their businesses open and contributing to the economy. As the economy improves, this need will only grow. Global talent and the less-skilled workforce alike will play an essential role in the nation's economic recovery.

We must make the right choices about immigrants at both ends of the job ladder. We need innovators and investors, and we need a legal way for low-skilled immigrants to come to the United States to work.

## The Midwest—Successful past, microcosm of the future

When Americans boast that they are a nation of immigrants, the claim rests in large part on the experience of the Midwest. But the Midwest is also a microcosm of the three principal challenges fac-

ing the United States today as the nation grapples with a new wave of immigration: the need for labor at both the top and bottom of the economy, the need for better enforcement of immigration law, and the dilemmas posed by millions of unauthorized immigrants already living and working in the United States.

In the 21st century, as in the past, parts of the Midwest—major cities, meatpacking towns, some rural areas—are among the most diverse parts of America. Lao and Vietnamese refugees are spread across the region. Dearborn is the established capital of Arab America. Minneapolis-St. Paul is emerging as the capital of US Hmong and US Somalis. The wave of Bosnian refugees that arrived in the 1990s joined older Bosnian communities in St. Louis, Chicago, and Grand Rapids. And many traditional Midwest sectors would be at a loss without foreign workers. Some 40 percent of the dairy workers in Wisconsin are Mexican, as is much of the labor force in meat and other food processing plants across the region. Twenty-five percent of all physicians and surgeons in the Midwest are foreign born.

As recently as 1980, most of the towns now transformed by foreign workers were settled, homogeneous communities, 80 to 100 percent white. In some places, tensions flared when the newcomers arrived. But there have also been other types of responses, strongest in the communities where the influx has been most dramatic—a quintessentially Midwestern reaction that could hold the seeds of a new American response to immigration. It has come from many quarters, some of them surprising: local ministers, concerned neighbors, the town librarian, the mayor, a local bank, sometimes the company that owns the processing plant.

Whatever the source, the impulse is the same—to find a way to deal pragmatically with the newcomers transforming the region. Across the Midwest, settled residents have recognized the way newcomers are revitalizing their communities, demographically but also in other ways. And for all their initial suspicion, after a while many seem to recognize a spirit not unlike their own—hard-working, church-going, family-oriented people who make the region a better place.

Like the rest of America, the Midwest is hostage to federal immigration policy, and states are left to cope—or not cope—the best they can.

But that doesn't mean the Midwest must remain silent. On the contrary, the region's growing need for immigrant workers and its deepening appreciation of the talent and vitality they bring give Midwesterners a unique role—and unique responsibility—in spearheading the call for better answers from Washington.

## What the Midwest needs from immigration reform

- **A world-class skilled workforce.** Economists, business leaders, and other experts agree: the most important ingredient of competitiveness is innovation, and the key to innovation is a skilled workforce. Issues to be addressed include the H-1B visa process, the L-1 visa process, work authorization for the spouses of temporary high-skilled workers, per-country caps for employment-based green cards, and the severe bottleneck—one million people waiting in a queue—for high-skilled workers applying for permanent residence.
- **Foreign-born and home-grown entrepreneurs.** The Midwest cannot hope to keep up with other regions or international competitors without a vital entrepreneurial sector, but historically the region has had some trouble attracting and retaining this talent. Business incubators in immigrant communities, microloan programs, and other initiatives to make credit available can make a difference. But the heartland needs Congress and the immigration service to do their part, increasing visas for foreign-born entrepreneurs and streamlining the process.
- **STEM students.** Many of the skilled immigrants who achieve the most success in the United States enter the country at an early age. They arrive as students, graduate to temporary visas, and then, eventually, receive permanent visas or green cards. If the Midwest is to remain competitive, it needs to facilitate this trajectory. But without help from the federal government, there is only so much the Midwest can do to ease the path for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) students who want to stay and work in the United States. As of 2009 some 260,000 foreign students, graduate and undergraduate, were working toward STEM degrees at US universities.

How many will stay to make careers in the United States? The Midwest's future depends on retaining a robust share of them.

- **Legal entry for less-skilled workers.** Critical as high-skilled immigrants are to the economic future of the Midwest, the region also needs less-skilled immigrants to fill jobs when no willing and able US workers are available—especially in communities with stagnant or declining populations. We must bring the number of visas available more into line with US labor needs. This is not just critical for our economic future. It's also the key to effective enforcement. The best antidote to illegal immigration is a legal immigration system that works. And without a legal immigration system that works, we are all but sure to find ourselves with another huge unauthorized population in our midst 10 or 15 years from now.
- **A seasonal workforce.** Midwest seasonal employers who can't find enough US workers need to be able to hire foreign workers quickly, easily, and legally, while workers seeking to enter the United States on a temporary or seasonal basis need to be able to do so without fear of exploitation or abuse from employers or recruiters in their home countries. Only Congress can craft what's needed: new or improved, workable, streamlined visa programs that are user-friendly for employers and reliable and appealing to workers.
- **Better tools for employers.** The overwhelming majority of employers want to be on the right side of the law. It's their obligation as citizens and it makes good business sense. Midwest employers understand their responsibility to verify the work eligibility of new employees and will support a federal mandate that all employers enroll in E-Verify if it is introduced in the context of a broader immigration overhaul—combined with legalization and fixes to the legal immigration system that bring our annual intake of workers into line with our labor needs.
- **Border and visa security.** Gaining control of our borders is not just a cornerstone of immigration reform. In an age of global terrorism and international drug violence, it's a national imperative. Much has been done in recent years to secure the southwest frontier, but there is still work to be done, including better technology, better com-

munication among law enforcement agencies, more cooperation with neighboring countries, and more efficient processing of people and goods. We in the Midwest know first-hand that much of our economy depends on trade across the northern border. Like all Americans, we have a stake in frontiers that work to keep us safe, but also connected to our friends and allies and trading partners.

- **A permanent answer for children brought to the United States illegally.** According to the Migration Policy Institute, the Midwest is home to 200,000 to 275,000 young people brought to the country illegally as children. Known as "Dreamers," they are waiting in limbo for an answer from Washington that would allow them to get on with their lives, finish their education, and find work not in the underground economy but in their chosen career fields. In mid-2012 President Obama and Republican Senator Marco Rubio of Florida floated similar proposals for a temporary reprieve—no deportation but no automatic citizenship either—and the administration implemented the idea. These are promising first steps. But the Midwest needs a permanent solution passed by a bipartisan majority in Congress. Without clear, unequivocal policy, the region risks a colossal waste of some of our best, brightest, and most motivated young people, squandering their potential and diminishing ours.
- **A path to citizenship.** According to the Pew Research Center, some 1.3 million unauthorized immigrants live and work in the Midwest. That's as many people as in all of Dallas, San Diego, or the state of Hawaii living on the margins of society. Most are otherwise law-abiding people, doing critical jobs that need to be done—work that bolsters Midwest prosperity and creates jobs for Americans throughout the local economy. No one realistically believes we can deport these workers and their families. The only other alternative—driving them out of the United States by depriving them of work and making it difficult for them to drive, go to school, get healthcare, and otherwise go about their lives—would be a Pyrrhic victory and a disaster for the Midwest economy. The heartland needs a better answer—one consistent with our labor needs and our Midwestern values.

- **Innovative integration efforts.** The flow of immigration from Mexico has ebbed with the economic downturn and may never again reach the level of the boom years. But this slowdown will have little or no effect on the most important immigration challenge facing America in the decades ahead: integrating the newcomers already here. A broad array of Midwesterners in local government, business, labor, faith-based groups, educational institutions, and civil society is stepping up to promote immigrant integration across the heartland. The federal government can help and should be helping more with programs and resources. But ultimately we in the Midwest must shoulder the responsibility—it's our duty as citizens and neighbors and one of the best investments we can make in our future competitiveness.

### **The Midwest needs a solution**

The time is now—it's time to get this done. Midwesterners understand political reality, and we see how hard it has become for Republicans and

Democrats in Congress to come together to produce solutions on any issue, let alone an issue as complex and polarizing as immigration. But that can't be an excuse. We can't afford an excuse. We need answers—now—for our economy and our communities.

We in the Midwest need better solutions on our borders. We need solutions in the workplace. We need visas for high- and low-skilled workers. We need a legal immigration system that works for entrepreneurs, inventors, investors, STEM students, nurses, home healthcare aides, busboys, farmhands, and seasonal hotel help. We need employment-based immigration that meets the needs of employers and employees. We need a family-based system that reunites relatives in a timely way. We need solutions that serve immigrants without shortchanging US workers. And we need a path to citizenship for Dreamers and their parents.

The region's competitiveness—our livelihoods, our future, our children's future—hangs in the balance. We need Congress to act. It's time to step up and get the job done. We in the Midwest need answers on immigration, and we need them now.

# IMMIGRATION REFORM FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

**F**ocused as Americans are today on economic recovery, the nation's most far-sighted economists and other thinkers agree: our future depends on far more than recovery. The holy grail for the long term is economic competitiveness. Can US firms compete with companies in other countries? Are our industries and our workers as productive as others? Is productivity growing as fast in America as it is elsewhere in the world? Will there be jobs for the workers who want them, and will there be the right workers for the jobs available in the new economy? If the answer to any of these questions is no, it spells deep trouble for us and for the rest of the world—after all, the United States has long been the leading engine of global economic growth. The bad news: many economists are worried. As a recent report from the

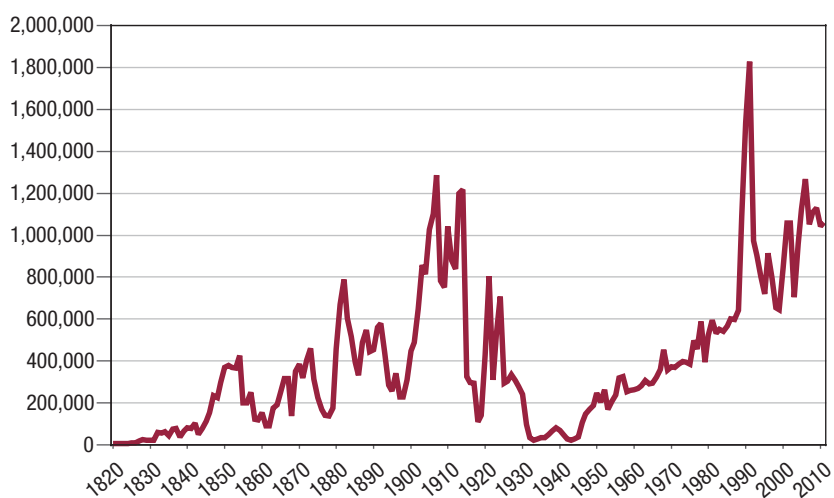
Harvard Business School put it: “Ample evidence now points to a series of structural changes that began well before the Great Recession and threaten to undermine the long-term competitiveness of the United States.”

Many ingredients go into a nation's competitiveness. Quality preK-12 education, world-class universities, state-of-the-art infrastructure, an effective political system, efficient capital markets, government investment in research, strong intellectual property laws, a transparent tax code, flexibility of hiring and firing, and a plentiful supply of skilled labor are just a few of the critical factors. The problem: when America or any region of America starts to fall short on too many criteria, companies making decisions about where to build plants, open laboratories, and create jobs go elsewhere. And

alarmingly, that is exactly what has been happening in recent years. A 2011 Harvard Business School survey of 1,700 business executives personally involved in making choices about where to locate or relocate business activity found that the United States lost in two-thirds of their decisions. Another recent study by the National Science Board found that between 1999 and 2009 the US share of global research and development shrank from 38 percent to 31 percent—while Asia overtook us, growing its share to 34 percent.

Immigration is a critical component of competitiveness. Many Americans see immigra-

**Number of Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Resident Status in the United States**



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2011 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

tion first and foremost as a problem—a breach of law, a security risk, a burden on the community and its services. Some Midwesterners agree: the 2010 Chicago Council Survey shows that, compared to other Americans,

Midwesterners feel more threatened by high levels of immigration. But many others see immigration as part of the solution and, if properly handled, a key ingredient of continued Midwest and American prosperity.

Demographic and educational changes at home and abroad have been driving immigration upward since the middle of the last century, and newcomers have been filling jobs at both the high and low ends of the skill ladder.

How exactly do immigrants contribute to US competitiveness? Immigrant scientists help keep American research and development on the cutting edge. Foreign-born inventors and engineers pioneer new technologies, sometimes generating entire new industries and millions of high-paying jobs. Foreign-born entrepreneurs and investors make the US economy more dynamic. Foreign-born scholars and teachers help make our universities the envy of the world. Foreign-born doctors and nurses keep our hospitals and clinics in the top rank.

Less-skilled workers too are critical. Immigrant workers build our houses, produce our food, run our hotels and restaurants, staff our hospitals, look after our children, and care for our elderly. They sustain US agriculture, picking berries and pruning trees in warmer months, milking cows and tending livestock all year long. Many different types of service workers enhance our quality of life and augment the productivity of more educated Americans, including millions of working women who might not otherwise be able to participate in the labor force.

America's global advantage rests in significant part on the value these and other immigrants add. If fewer foreigners come to the United States in coming years—if fewer are allowed to enter the country or fewer stay—our competitiveness will suffer dramatically.

But arguably just as dangerous—just as damaging to our competitiveness—would be a failure to leverage the foreign-born talent already here without valid documentation. Children afraid to

go to school because their parents can't afford an encounter with law enforcement, young people who see no point in trying for good grades because they know they'll never be able to work legally, high-school valedictorians who can't go

to college, top-of-their-class college graduates who can work only in the underground economy—all are huge and growing drains on our national and regional competitiveness. Not just highly skilled immigrants, but the less skilled too are critical variables in the equation, and our failure to come to grips with unauthorized immigration could cost us dearly in years ahead.

At the top of the skill ladder and at the bottom, immigrants are an essential piece of America's global competitiveness. We as a nation must work harder to attract and retain immigrant talent and avoid wasting the potential of the immigrants already here.

## The heartland needs a better answer

We in the Midwest have a unique perspective on immigration. The heartland's positive experiences with newcomers are as varied as the states—from the immigrant entrepreneurs opening high-tech startups in Greater Detroit to the Vietnamese refugees revitalizing neighborhoods like Uptown in Chicago, from established ethnic capitals like the Arab American community in Dearborn to the influx of less-skilled Mexican workers now sustaining industries, new and old, across the Midwest. The stagnant, even declining population of many Midwest communities only sharpens our appreciation of what immigrants bring.

The Midwest needs immigrants. Not only do our industries, hospitals, universities, and research centers rely on foreign-born talent to maintain their competitive edge, but many of our communities would be dying if it weren't for newcomers and the youth and energy they bring. Newcomers

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*"It used to be that the United States was the destination of choice for skilled immigrants. Now we have competition."*

—Samuel C. Scott III, Former CEO, Corn Products International, Inc.; Chairman, Chicago Sister Cities International Program

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# SPOTLIGHT ON

# MINNESOTA

## Small Town Willmar Creates Microloan Program for Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Leaders in Willmar, Minnesota, were stunned last year when 30 Somalis bought grave sites in the city's public cemetery. It was a turning point for a refugee community embracing the city 100 miles west of Minneapolis as home. "They are living and dying in our community," observes Les Heitke, who served as Willmar's mayor for 16 years until 2010. "They are here to stay."

And that, says the former mayor, is a win for the city. For more than a decade, Somalis and other immigrant and refugee groups have been opening small businesses, filling empty storefronts, paying rent, hiring local people, buying locally, and contributing to the city's tax base.

Willmar hosts 44 ethnic communities within a population of 19,582. Somalis, who began arriving as refugees in 2000, account for 3,000. Hispanics make up another 4,500. The newcomers have moved in gradually over time, beginning with Mexicans arriving to do seasonal field work in the 1920s, then staying year-round when meatpacking operations expanded in the 1990s. The Somalis came in the next decade. At first up to 20 men would share a two-bedroom apartment and sleep in shifts on the floor, while working at the Jennie-O Foods turkey processing plant in town, Heitke says. As they got established, they brought families.

As of 2010, foreign-born residents owned 54 businesses in the small Midwest city. They include auto-body shops; ethnic bakeries; clothing, tea, and grocery stores; and restaurants as well as services such as attorneys' offices and insurance agencies. Some are husband-and-wife teams, while others have up to four employees, Heitke says. About half are Hispanic-owned, and eleven are owned by Somalis.

Several organizations in the area offer microfinancing to small businesses. The Southwest Initiative Foundation, established in 2001, lends up to \$50,000 at interest rates of 8.5 percent. An average loan is \$11,500. The foundation reports that as a result of its southwest Minnesota loans, 545 jobs have been created and retained. Only 4.86 percent of loans

have had to be written off, and 63 percent of the businesses are still operating, according to Berny Berger, the foundation's microenterprise program coordinator.

The Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center, opened in 2011, has lent \$40,000 to small businesses in five counties. About 90 percent of clients are Latino, and 5 percent Somali. Heitke notes that such programs work well with immigrant entrepreneurs hampered by a lack of credit history or start-up capital, and—in some cases—limited English.

Mohamed Bihi moved to Willmar in 2000 as a Somali refugee, saved money working at the Jennie-O plant, and in 2003 borrowed about \$7,000 from the Southwest Initiative to open Bihi's Shop, a grocery store. In 2007 he added Bihi's Restaurant. He has been successful in part because of his diligent record-keeping, says Berger, noting some immigrant business owners come from countries that have no clear business rules. "They might come with skills in their country but they have no concept of what's required here," she says. The loan programs offer coaching in business management, planning, and recordkeeping.

Bihi, who continues to work part-time at the processing plant to obtain health insurance, says he learned business from his father, who traded in sheep and goats back home. He says the loan program trained him in accounting and "how to make the cash flow."

A recently retired state demographer for Minnesota suggests that anyone who wants to know the future of that state should look at Willmar and the role its immigrants are playing.

The most vivid illustration of the city's changing complexion may be during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan. It used to be observed in a small mosque, but when that became too small, the immigrant community rented a vacant department store, then a Holiday Inn. Now up to 7,000 people flock to Willmar from other towns to celebrate with its Muslims, whose observances are held at the Civic Center.



are supplementing a shrinking Midwestern workforce. They are injecting talent and vitality. They are generating hope and optimism in heartland communities, where both have recently been in short supply. The Midwest's modest overall population growth in recent decades is due in no small part to immigration.

Of course, in the Midwest too, immigration has costs. But more than many regions, the Midwest knows the value of the newcomers now arriving in the United States. Both skilled and unskilled immigrants are essential for the region's future prosperity. The challenge is to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs, keeping the door open to all legal immigrants.

Our problem: the nation's broken immigration system is holding back the region's economic growth and clouding its future. Skilled workers needed to sustain a globally competitive knowledge economy earn degrees at Midwestern universities but then return to their home countries to build careers. Both urban and rural employers unable to recruit enough Americans or enough legal immigrants hesitate to invest in expanding their operations. And children of unauthorized parents—a small but rapidly growing part of the workforce of tomorrow—don't get the schooling or opportunities they need to maximize their potential. President Obama's order, protecting these young "Dreamers" from deportation but not moving them toward citizenship, is a step forward but not a solution.

Worst of all, there is little we Midwesterners can do about the failings of federal immigration law. States, municipalities, educators, employers, faith leaders, and others across the Midwest are stepping up with local solutions to help newcomers thrive in our communities, as the stories throughout this report illustrate. But only Congress can help Midwestern industries looking into the future and wondering where to find essential brainpower. Only

when Congress acts can we stop squandering the talent and energy of some of the most promising young people in our communities. Only the federal government can do what needs to be done. But Washington has been paralyzed.

The presidential election may have ended this paralysis, opening the door to reform. The election dramatized the importance of the immigrant and Latino vote and put immigration reform on the agenda of Republicans as well as Democrats. Suddenly, it seems, reform is possible, and the Midwest, with its many swing states, can play a crucial role in driving this reform. As the *Economist* magazine said, the Midwest is "America's most beleaguered and politically volatile region," and what happens here matters "not just to the states themselves but the rest of the country, too."

But change must start in Washington. Lyndon Johnson, first in Congress and then as president, used to ask fellow lawmakers, "Do you want a bill or an issue?" By "bill" he meant compromise—a piece of legislation with a little something for everyone

that solved the problem at hand and could attract enough votes to pass. By "issue" he meant wedge issue—a partisan matter that could be used on the campaign trail to raise money, win votes, and in other ways disadvantage

the other party. Immigration reform, once a subject of compromise and bipartisan backing, has today become a wedge issue—a weapon wielded cynically by candidates of every political stripe.

This political impasse must end. Democrats and Republicans must resume a genuinely bipartisan effort to craft a compromise that works for America.

We in the Midwest can't take no for an answer. Our future depends on a solution.

We need better answers from Washington. We need our elected leaders to act. We need an immigration system that works for us—for our businesses and our communities.

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*"Don't forget the everyday people. Even immigrants that arrive without an acceptance letter to a top research university often carry with them the drive to start something new."*

—Irma Elder, CEO, Elder Automotive Group

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# KEY TO COMPETITIVENESS: A WORKFORCE THAT MEETS OUR NEEDS

**I**n the Midwest as across the United States, immigration is driven by economics.

Advances in information and communication technology are rippling through the economy and transforming businesses in every industry, including traditional companies from banks to manufacturers. Innovation is the key to business success and national economic dynamism. And as in the 19th century, when powerful nations fought one another for territory and natural resources, today countries compete to attract international brainpower: scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, and high-end business managers.

No nation in the world produces enough of this talent to meet its needs. The Internet, cell phones, cheap air travel, and easy money transfers are shrinking the planet and eroding the walls that

once defined national labor markets. Knowledge workers can learn about job openings a continent away, and increasing numbers are willing to move to find work or advance their careers. The result is a globally integrated labor market, with countries around the globe scrambling to attract and retain high-end talent.

The bottom line for America is that despite increasing educational attainment across all levels of society, the US workforce alone is not educated enough to sustain a globally competitive knowledge economy. Sixty to 70 percent of the students in American computer science and electrical engineering graduate programs are foreigners on temporary visas. Twenty-five percent of US patents

are held by innovators born abroad. One-quarter of the high-tech firms launched in the United States between 1995 and 2005 were founded by immigrants. These newcomers don't supplant US workers. They enhance American productivity and create jobs. We need their talent to sustain our economic edge—and will need it increasingly in years ahead.

America also needs less-skilled immigrants. Long-term demographic and educational trends are changing the size and makeup of the native-born workforce. US families are having fewer children. US families are having fewer children. Baby boomers are retiring. Perhaps most significant, Americans are increasingly educated. In 1960 half of the native-born men in the US workforce had dropped out of high school and were doing unskilled work. Today, the figure

is around 10 percent. But we still need workers to staff American farms, provide home healthcare for the elderly, and staff an ever-burgeoning low-skilled service sector. The restaurant industry exemplifies the trend: the country's less-skilled workforce is shrinking, but restaurant labor needs are growing. In 1955, 25 cents of every dollar spent on food was spent in a restaurant—today it's nearly 50 cents on every dollar. And much of the economy, particularly in the Midwest, is undergoing an industrial restructuring that makes less-skilled workers in specific industries even more essential than they were in the past.

The economic downturn has done nothing to change the fundamental educational and demo-

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*“St. Louis employers tell us the same thing we’re hearing across the nation—there are skill gaps across the entire spectrum of jobs. . . . It’s hard to find people ready to contribute. Certainly people follow jobs, but jobs also follow people.”*

—Joe Reagan, President and CEO, St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association

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# THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION: ECONOMISTS WEIGH IN

## IMPACT OF LOW-SKILLED IMMIGRATION

Much of the work on immigration has focused on the impact of low-skilled immigration on the wages of natives. A standard theoretical result is that when the supply of labor increases and technology and capital are held constant, wages fall (e.g., Borjas 2003). But technology and capital rarely, if ever, remain constant. In the long run capital adjusts to keep the capital-labor ratio in balance. Ottavaiana and Peri (2008) have shown that if immigration increases aggregate labor supply by 10 percent and capital stays fixed, average wages will fall by about 3 percent, similar to what Borjas finds. But when capital adjusts, the effect is smaller, perhaps close to zero.

The more general point is that an economy will respond to immigration in various ways. Firms may increase capital per worker, natives may specialize in particular jobs, and technologies may adapt (Peri 2012). For example, Lewis (2011) shows firms adopt new production techniques when faced with increases in less-educated immigrant workers. Others have shown that low-skill immigrants tend to concentrate in certain occupations, allowing similarly educated natives to specialize in jobs requiring communication and interaction skills. By stratifying into different job tasks, natives are able to preserve their wages in the face of immigrant competition. These types of firm and worker responses attenuate the standard negative wage effect that results from increased labor supply and may explain why many empirical studies over the last 30 years find that immigration in the United States has small effects on native wages. However, the size of these effects remains a contentious issue (e.g., Borjas, Grogger, and Hanson 2010; Card 2012). (There is more evidence of a negative effect on current immigrants.)

Moreover, low-skill immigration can have a positive influence on the opportunities of some native workers. For example, Cortes (2008) finds that low-skilled immigration reduces the cost of household production services. The availability of less-expensive household services led women to work about half an hour per week more outside the home during the 80s and 90s, according to Cortes and Tessada (2011).

## IMPACT OF HIGH-SKILLED IMMIGRATION

High-skilled immigration leads to a significant increase in patents issued by US residents (Kerr and Lincoln 2010), in PhDs, and in the founding of new high-tech companies (Gauthier-Louielle and Hunt 2008). Card (2011) argues that high-skilled immigration has helped to fill the increase in

demand for skilled workers over the last few decades rather than put downward pressure on native wages.

## OTHER EFFECTS OF IMMIGRATION

### POPULATION

Immigrants increase the size of the local population rather than simply displacing natives or discouraging natives from moving in.

### EDUCATION

Immigrants are less skilled than natives so they tend to reduce the average skills of the local population. The differences, however, are not large. By some calculations the education levels of the immigrant population is virtually the same as that of natives.

### EQUALITY

Even allowing for a skewed composition of immigration on local labor markets, there is a small effect on wage inequality (Card 2009). There is also little impact on native poverty (Raphael and Smolensky 2009).

### HOUSING

Rents go up in local housing markets with larger immigrant flows (Saiz 2007). The effect on average rent burden is small, however (Card 2009).

### CONSUMPTION CHOICES

Mazzolari and Neumark (2012) show that immigrant inflows boost diversity in consumption choices among restaurants but not among other nontradable goods.

### FISCAL BURDEN

Immigrants pay about \$100 per capita less in state and federal taxes but receive about \$600 less in federal transfers. However, the big fiscal impact comes at the local level (schools) and less is well known. Card (2009) argues that the local fiscal effects appear to be small. But neighborhood and school externalities may be larger and therefore a factor in understanding public reactions to immigration.

graphic trends that make foreign workers essential for American prosperity. Even with today's high unemployment, employers in many sectors—high-tech, agriculture, the seasonal economy—need immigrants to keep their businesses open and contributing to the economy. As the economy improves, this need will only grow—global talent and the less-skilled workforce alike will play an essential role in the nation's economic recovery.

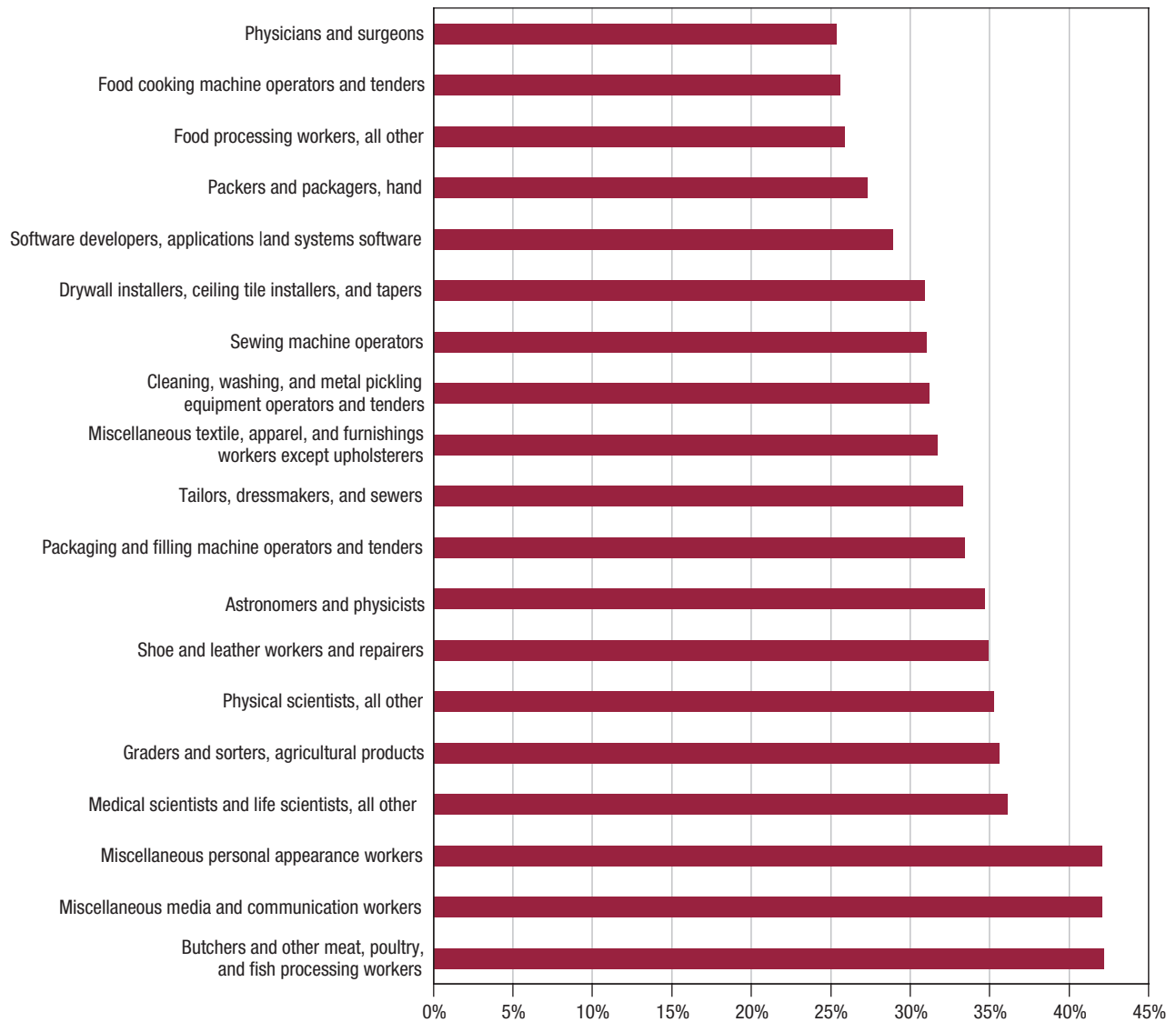
Consider just a few recent estimates of the nation's future high- and low-skilled labor needs:

- According to the Indiana-based Lumina Foundation, the United States will not remain

globally competitive unless 60 percent of Americans have postsecondary degrees by 2025. Today, only 38.3 percent of Americans hold an associate's degree or higher.

- A 2011 survey conducted by Deloitte and the National Association of Manufacturers' Manufacturing Institute found that even with unemployment hovering close to 9 percent, US manufacturing companies could not fill 600,000 open positions for skilled workers. More than half the executives who participated in the survey expected the shortage to grow over the next three to five years.

### Percent of Jobs Filled by Foreign-Born Workers in the United States



Source: Rob Paral and Associates tabulations of data from American Community Survey (2010-2011).

- According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, the nation will face a shortage of 150,000 doctors by 2025. At the same time, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that growth of the health-care sector combined with retirements will create 1.2 million openings for nurses between now and 2020—and according to the medical journal *Health Affairs*, this could mean a shortage of 260,000 registered nurses by 2025.
- According to the National Restaurant Association, restaurant and food-service employment will grow by 11 percent in the next decade, while the 16-to-24-year-old workforce that fills most restaurant jobs is expected to grow by only 4 percent.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the occupations that will grow fastest between 2010 and 2020 are home health aides and personal care aides. In both fields, the need is projected to grow by close to 70 percent.
- The Midwest’s shrinking population will make it all but impossible to sustain current levels of economic activity in the years to come. According to the US Census, more than 400,000 people left the region between April 2010 and July 2012 alone. The Southwest, in contrast, gained 765,000 people in that period. Natural increases to the local population just barely replaced population loss. Immigration was key to population growth.
- According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, the global agriculture industry must double food production by 2050 if it is to meet projected global demand, and this in turn will mean a growing demand for agricultural labor. Currently, 75 percent of hired agricultural workers in the United States are foreign born, and according to the USDA Economic Research Service, over the long haul a decrease in available immigrant labor could reduce US agricultural output and exports even as the demand for food is growing.

How will we fill these vital openings and maintain our global competitiveness? US workers alone cannot meet our labor needs—especially for highly skilled and low-skilled workers. We must make the right choices about immigrants at both ends of the job ladder. We need innovators and investors, and

we need a legal way for low-skilled immigrants to come to the United States to work.

Perhaps most important, essential as it is to attract brain power from abroad, we must nurture and develop the talent emerging in our communities. Regardless of how many newcomers are admitted in coming years, most of the workforce of tomorrow is here already, and our success in the decades ahead will depend on how well we educate and integrate the next generation.

The stakes—and risks—for America go beyond economics. Immigration also puts the nation’s values to the test. What kind of country do we want to be? Open, hopeful, optimistic, welcoming, and respectful of those who choose to make America their home and put their skills to work to make our nation stronger? Or pessimistic and hunkered down, fearful of difference, and walling ourselves off from talent and vitality?

The Midwest made its choice long ago. We are a region built by generations of immigrants reinventing themselves as Americans. The choice shows in our names and faces. It’s etched across the neighborhoods of our cities and the patterns of settlement in every state. Most important, the region’s history of tolerance and inclusion has shaped Midwestern values—values we believe can guide us and perhaps other Americans to make the right choices about immigration today.

#### **IMMIGRANT DOCTORS NEEDED IN MIDWESTERN HOSPITALS**

High-skilled immigrants are critical to meeting the healthcare needs of the Midwest. Over 25 percent of all physicians and surgeons in the Midwest are foreign born, according to the 2010/2011 American Community Survey. In fact, 1.7 percent of all foreign-born workers in the Midwest are physicians and surgeons, compared to 0.4 percent of native-born workers. Mercy Medical Center—Des Moines, the largest hospital in Iowa, employs 564 doctors of which 145 are foreign born. This nationally recognized center has found “the immigration process to be expensive, time-consuming, and difficult to navigate,” and that “the barriers presented by the current immigration system prevents us from recruiting and retaining much-needed physicians in Iowa.” This is one example in a state with 117 hospitals.

# THE MIDWEST—SUCCESSFUL PAST, MICROCOSM OF THE FUTURE

A walk around Chicago makes the point: Chinatown, Greektown, Little Italy, the Polish Triangle, the Mexican neighborhoods of Pilsen and Little Village, Little Saigon, and the South Asian enclave on Devon Avenue. Today, it's mostly a food tour, but each neighborhood tells its own, long story. The Midwest was built by immigrants and, until recent decades, saw more newcomers from more countries over a longer period than almost any other region in America.

After the original settlers moved west from the eastern seacoast, the first wave of immigrants was British, German, and Scandinavian. They settled initially in the cities, then scattered out across the land. Germans, Norwegians, and Swedes changed the face of Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and the Dakotas, among other states. The next group was Irish, arriving in big numbers first in the 1840s.

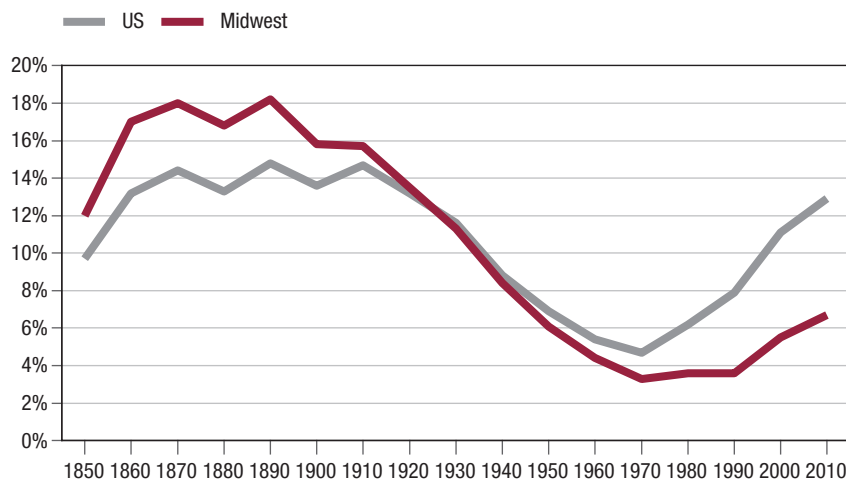
Then, at the turn of the 20th century, came the Ellis Island wave of Southern and Eastern Europeans—Italians, Poles, Jews, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, and a host of smaller groups (see Appendix for greater detail).

These new immigrants moved into neighborhoods just vacated by previous immigrants. They built their own communities—cities within cities—usually using the language they brought from their home countries. Each enclave had its own churches or synagogues, its own fraternal associations, medical services, schools, newspapers, and political parties. The newcomers and then their children went to work in the factories that defined the region—factories that transformed America and the world.

In 1860 more than 40 percent of the population of Chicago was foreign born—mostly German and Irish. By 1890 more than 40 percent of northern Minnesota and Wisconsin had been settled by

immigrants, and most of the rest of both states—as well as a good deal of Iowa and South Dakota—were 20 to 40 percent foreign born. In 1896 voting instructions in Minnesota were issued in nine languages: English, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, French, Czech, Italian, and Polish. As late as 1920, seven in ten residents in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Cleveland were immigrants or the children of immigrants. In the 1920s and 30s Poles alone made up half the workforce on the floors of the Detroit auto plants.

Foreign-Born Share of the US and Midwestern Population, 1850-2010



Source: Rob Paral and Associates tabulations of data from decennial census (1860-2000) and American Community Survey (2010).



# SPOTLIGHT ON

# FARGO

## Indian Graduate Student Helps Fargo Company Expand Globally

Six years ago the future of Tom Shorma's half-century-old family business was in doubt. WCCO Belting in the small North Dakota city of Wahpeton produces conveyor belts, but was having trouble getting the industrial-grade fabric needed to attach to the rubber. The lone remaining US supplier, with which the company had done business for decades, had changed hands many times, and its standards had fallen, according to Shorma, president and CEO of WCCO.

So he decided to look abroad and sought the help of Fargo's US Commercial Service, a federal government wing that helps states with exports. Through a stroke of luck, he was directed to an Indian graduate student at North Dakota State University (NDSU), who was working with the agency. It turned out Vineet Saxena had not only bought and sold industrial textiles for manufacturers in Indonesia, Nigeria, and India, but had actually written his master's thesis on supply chain management for industrial textiles. That made him, in Shorma's view, one of only about nine people in the world with the qualifications he needed.

Saxena contacted suppliers in India and China, and armed with quotes and research, they traveled abroad to meet some. That led to a partnership with a Chinese company Shorma calls the world's most advanced in industrial textiles. Besides using its products, WCCO now distributes them in the United States.

When Saxena graduated in spring 2007, Shorma hired him as executive vice president. He credits the 44-year-old with the firm's expansion from 60 employees to 200 in two states and into a globally competitive company with 60 percent of its sales abroad. Saxena also recently obtained a patent on a new fabric. He has implemented quality controls and negotiated prices to save the company nearly 40 percent, Shorma says.

It would be a win-win situation except for one obstacle: Saxena's visa. He came to the United States on a student visa in 2004 after getting a scholarship to NDSU, where he earned

master's degrees in business administration and industrial engineering. Then WCCO helped him obtain an H-1B visa, for foreign workers in occupations requiring specialized skills. The visa is valid for three years and can be extended another three. Saxena's renewed visa expires next year, but since he is awaiting his permanent resident visa (green card), he can receive annual renewals.

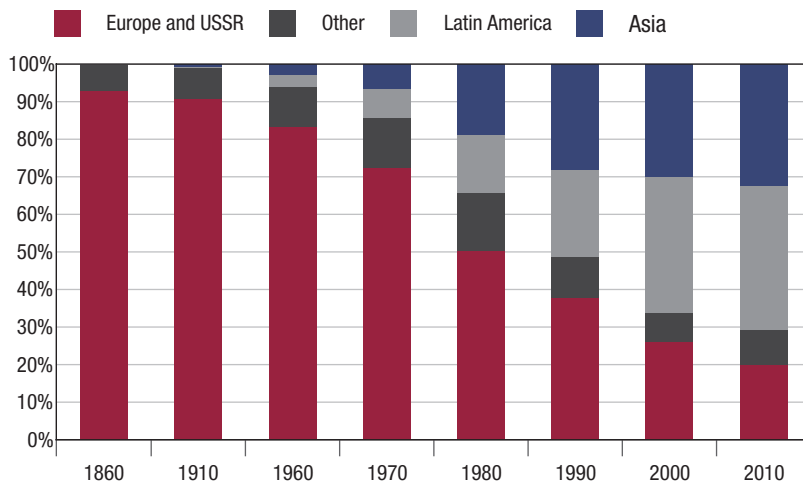
The problem is not for him or his wife who, with three master's degrees, is also exceptionally skilled. It is for their two children, who cannot live here on his visa when they turn 18. One of them graduates from high school next year and will have to apply for college as a foreign student and, according to Saxena, pay double what Americans would. Admission and financial aid are also much harder to get, although she's gifted in mathematics and was on a team last year that won a NASA research prize.

The wait time for employee green cards is determined in part by skills classifications. Only about 140,000 cards are issued by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services per year, and each country has a cap of 25,000. Indian workers can wait eight years or more if they have advanced degrees or exceptional abilities, and up to 70 years if they are merely professional and skilled, according to an analysis by the National Foundation for American Policy. Saxena applied in 2008. People who applied in 2004 are still waiting.

Employers are helpless to expedite the process even for employees who save their companies. "The complexity of trying to find and hire foreign employees that have intellectual and/or physical skills we don't have is difficult to impossible," says a frustrated Shorma.

For Saxena, his good fortune in finding the perfect job is tempered by the bind his family is in because of his visa status. "This is the country of opportunity," he says. "I cannot do this anywhere else." Nor can he pack his daughter off to another country. In his words, "I came to this country for my kids' education, so if I'm not able to do that, my whole exercise is futile."

## Origin of Foreign Born in the Midwest



Source: Rob Paral and Associates tabulations of data from decennial census (1860-2000) and American Community Survey (2009-2011).

The picture grew more complex as the 20th century wore on. The first Asian migrants to the Midwest came just before 1900; the first sizeable group of Mexicans arrived shortly after. Like earlier waves of newcomers, they started at the bottom, doing the hardest, dirtiest work. But soon they too were also building enclaves—neighborhoods that still exist today. The immigrant influx to the United

States and the Midwest slowed to a trickle between 1925 and 1965. (The Great Migration of southern African Americans that began in 1910 and continued through the 1960s transformed the region in those years.) Then, toward the end of the century, the foreign inflow picked up again, with Mexicans, Southeast Asians, Africans, and Arabs as well as new waves of Irish and Eastern Europeans arriving in the Midwest.

In the 21st century, as in the past, parts of the Midwest—major cities, meatpacking towns, some rural areas—are among the most diverse parts of

America. Lao and Vietnamese refugees are spread across the region. In 2010 there were nearly 140,000 Vietnamese living in the 12 Midwestern states, most of them moving up the social ladder and already owning their own homes. Dearborn is the established capital of Arab America. Minneapolis-St. Paul is emerging as the capital of US Hmong and US Somalis. The wave of Bosnian refugees that arrived

## Number of Naturalizations Processed in the Midwest from 2002 to 2011

State or territory of residence	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Illinois	32,585	23,401	29,432	27,739	30,156	38,735	45,224	28,112	26,180	29,133
Indiana	2,774	2,725	2,455	2,650	3,885	3,652	5,104	4,261	3,866	4,085
Iowa	1,465	1,123	1,314	234	805	2,093	3,503	2,198	1,858	1,840
Kansas	1,367	1,897	2,093	1,814	2,509	2,406	4,072	3,129	2,492	2,687
Michigan	11,113	5,191	14,615	11,418	11,675	10,678	14,634	10,703	11,162	10,414
Minnesota	5,443	6,226	7,713	7,383	9,137	9,124	9,220	9,089	9,020	11,044
Missouri	2,311	3,255	3,999	2,733	3,711	4,237	5,849	4,526	4,388	4,175
Nebraska	1,644	789	1,537	1,365	1,797	2,188	2,866	1,644	1,590	1,876
North Dakota	210	146	267	203	329	415	336	273	286	369
Ohio	6,053	2,764	8,590	9,415	8,796	9,250	11,142	8,072	8,617	9,326
South Dakota	209	177	257	354	342	460	572	415	399	420
Wisconsin	3,623	2,775	3,570	4,040	3,247	4,485	5,200	3,845	3,864	4,434
<b>Midwest total</b>	<b>68,797</b>	<b>50,469</b>	<b>75,842</b>	<b>69,348</b>	<b>76,389</b>	<b>87,723</b>	<b>107,722</b>	<b>76,267</b>	<b>73,722</b>	<b>79,803</b>
<b>National total</b>	<b>572,646</b>	<b>462,435</b>	<b>537,151</b>	<b>604,280</b>	<b>702,589</b>	<b>660,477</b>	<b>1,046,539</b>	<b>743,715</b>	<b>619,913</b>	<b>694,193</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2011 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.





# SPOTLIGHT ON

## ST. LOUIS

### Bosnians Help Repopulate Shrinking St. Louis

**T**wo decades ago when St. Louis answered a US State Department call to accept Bosnian refugees, its leaders could not have predicted the ripple effect that would have on the local economy. Today, St. Louis is thought to be home to more Bosnians than any other city in the country, and the newcomers are credited with helping to reverse the negative economic impact of a declining native-born population.

Over the past decade, 31,000 immigrants arrived in St. Louis, while 44,000 native-born Americans left. The refugee relocation program brought 7,000 Bosnians to the city between 1993 and 2001. Today, the International Institute of St. Louis, which sponsored the Bosnians, estimates they number nearly 70,000 (which includes American-born family members). As Anna Crosslin, president of the institute, explains, “Bosnians who were settled in other cities began to hear about a place where someone’s cousin was living, and they reorganized themselves.” They came from places like Philadelphia, Boston, and San Francisco, where even a studio apartment was costly. In St. Louis they could buy a home, and soon they were rehabilitating older neighborhoods.

“They had substantial skill sets, so they could shore up the manufacturing that was being done at the time,” says Crosslin, whose institute helps new populations find jobs and housing, learn English, apply for citizenship, and negotiate the school system.

The Bosnians had math and science aptitudes that American high school graduates lacked, says Crosslin. She says one motor-parts manufacturer credited its Bosnian employees with its ability to stay in business.

As manufacturing jobs began to move overseas, the Bosnians opened their own businesses with help from microloans of up to \$35,000 from Crosslin’s institute. Some Bosnians drove trucks for large retailers and eventually launched trucking businesses. Some drove cabs or opened cleaning or car detailing services. Among the successful Bosnian businesses today are bakeries, butcher shops, coffee shops, construction, and heating and cooling companies, according to a report by the Simon Center for Regional Forecasting at Saint Louis University.

In the 18 years since he arrived from Bosnia, Ibrahim Vajzovic has learned English, earned his master’s and PhD degrees, and gone from an entry-level printing job to owning three companies. The companies—in real estate, insurance, and trucking—bring in combined revenues of \$10 million a year and employ 50 people, mostly non-Bosnians. “The help from the International Institute was very beneficial,” says Vajzovic, noting in particular the English classes, job placement help, and help building connections.

“This is how our major urban areas got built,” observes Bob Holden, who was Missouri’s governor from 2001 to 2005. “Immigrants add tremendous economic value to the community.”

Immigrants tend to be younger than the native born and are more likely to be working, so they help a city’s tax base, according to a June 2012 report by Jack Strauss, director of the Simon Center. He predicts St. Louis will lose more than a quarter of its workforce to retirement in the next two decades.

The city’s population has shrunk from a high of 850,000 in 1950 to 320,000. If St. Louis had received as many immigrants as other cities of its size, the center estimates, income growth would have been 4 to 7 percent greater, and the region’s income would be 7 to 11 percent higher.

Bosnians are probably St. Louis’ largest foreign-born population, says Holden. However, their children are growing up American. He calls the Bosnians’ presence a “great opportunity for St. Louis and other Midwestern cities” and says, “If the political leadership would understand their importance and value to the economy, [immigrants] could accelerate the economic growth.”

Still, even though the Midwest has much to offer newcomers, Holden cautions it is not usually the first place immigrants think of going. That makes it all the more important, he said, for political leaders to “put out the welcome mat.”

Bosnians like Vajzovic, who have prospered in St. Louis, say they appreciate the friendly city with its good values, good architecture, promising job market, and business ethics and want to reciprocate its investment in them. “We try to be ethical and give back to the community by creating good-paying jobs and developing more properties,” says Vajzovic of his company. “We reinvest everything we have.”

in the 1990s joined older Bosnian communities in St. Louis, Chicago, and Grand Rapids. And many traditional Midwest sectors would be at a loss without foreign workers. Some 40 percent of the dairy workers in Wisconsin are Mexican, as is much of the labor force in meat and other food processing plants across the Midwest. Twenty-five percent of all physicians and surgeons in the Midwest are foreign born.

In the Midwest, as in the United States as a whole, the foreign-born population falls into three roughly equal groups: one-third unauthorized, one-third citizens, one-third legal permanent residents eligible to become citizens.

Many towns in the region have virtually no immigrants, but some are again as much as 30 to 40 percent foreign born. Newcomers live in cities and suburbs and increasingly, once again, in rural areas. To say the more things change, the more they remain the same is to oversimplify 200 years of history and ignore the challenges facing the region today. But it would also be foolish not to be encouraged by history: the Midwest has a long, successful tradition to draw on when it comes to integrating immigrants—absorbing them into the fabric of society in ways that work for them and for the region.

Bottom line: today as in the past, when Americans boast that they are a nation of immigrants, the claim rests in large part on the experience of the Midwest. But the Midwest is also a

microcosm of the three principal challenges facing the United States today as the nation grapples with a new wave of immigration: the need for labor at both the top and

bottom of the economy, the need for better enforcement of immigration law, and the dilemmas posed by millions of unauthorized immigrants already living and working in the United States.

## Help wanted at the top and bottom of the job ladder

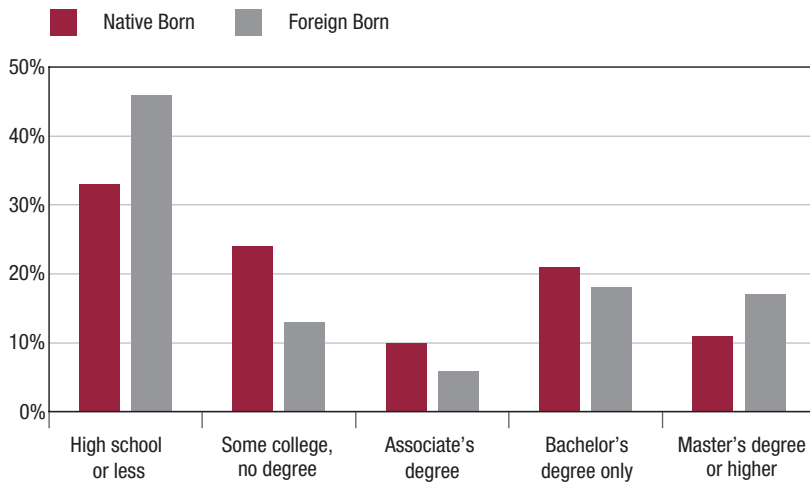
From the beginning of the republic through the last century—what Henry Luce called “the American century”—and into our own, US economic dynamism has depended on the country’s gift for innovation, with the Midwest often leading the way in new technology and its applications. Today, that prowess cannot be sustained without foreign brainpower—and like the rest of the country, the Midwest is in the market for foreigners with university degrees. With fewer information technology (IT) and communications clusters than some

other states, the region lags in its share of qualified foreign-born workers. Although the 12 Midwestern states comprise some 22 percent of the US population, in 2009 they accounted for only 14 percent of foreigners admitted on H-1B, high-skilled temporary visas. Still, the need is urgent—and growing. Employers that rely on highly skilled immigrants include the region’s great universities, medical centers, and traditional manufacturers now branching into digital or computerized products as well as IT, biomed, and

*“Demographics present a huge challenge to the state’s economy.”*

—Ed Wolking, Executive Vice President, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce

### Education Level of Midwestern Natives and Immigrants



Source: Rob Paral and Associates tabulations of data from American Community Survey (2010-2011).

communications start-ups blossoming in Chicago, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Akron, and other cities.

Greater Detroit tells the story as well as any of these new economy clusters. Immigrants account for some 6 percent of the Michigan population, but they are responsible for a full one-third of the high-tech firms launched in the state between 1995 and 2005—six times the high-tech start-up rate for native-born Michiganders. Newcomers hold nearly a quarter of the state’s international patents. They are 56 percent more likely than the native born to have earned college diplomas. They account for 44 percent of all the engineering master’s degrees and 62 percent of the engineering PhDs. Today as in the past, many highly skilled newcomers come to Michigan first as university students—most of the Arab Americans who arrived in the Midwest in the 1970s and 80s came initially to study and stayed to make professional careers near the universities they attended. And today as in the past, foreigners who have studied in the United States are among the most productive and successful high-end immigrants.

Today’s new arrivals will be a key ingredient in the regional economy of tomorrow, starting new businesses, fueling research, forging links to businesses and customers in other parts of the globe. But this won’t happen by itself. The Midwest must maintain its world-class universities. Government and business must collaborate to make it appealing for foreign students to stay in the region when they have finished their

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*“We can import the talent or we can export the jobs. That’s our choice—one or the other.”*

—Tej Dhawan, Principal and Mentor-in-Residence, StartUp City Des Moines

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### Number of Student Visa Admittances in the Midwest in 2011

Illinois	41,871
Indiana	24,511
Iowa	10,841
Kansas	8,882
Michigan	181,615
Minnesota	16,702
Missouri	16,202
Nebraska	4,216
North Dakota	8,026
Ohio	29,922
South Dakota	1,203
Wisconsin	12,478
<b>Midwest total</b>	<b>356,469</b>
<b>National total</b>	<b>1,702,730</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2011 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

studies, a particularly difficult but important task, as Midwestern universities are losing their graduates to other parts of the country. And the federal government must cooperate, making it easy and attractive for skilled foreigners to enter the country and stay—something authorities are doing less and less well with every passing year.

The same imperatives apply to the lower reaches of the economy. Although the Midwest’s demand for unskilled labor has tapered off during the downturn, even now many industries are still experiencing worker shortages. As the economy

#### MIDWESTERN STATES LOSING GRADUATES

Most Midwestern states are net exporters of educated people. Eight out of twelve Midwestern states are producing students with a postsecondary education, defined as 22- to 29-year-olds with an associate’s degree or higher, but are not retaining them as long-term residents. Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin are investing in students but then exporting the talent elsewhere.

Only two Midwestern states, Illinois and Minnesota, are comfortably producing, attracting, and retaining educated capital. Missouri is on the cusp of joining that group. Ohio has the furthest to go in producing, attracting, and retaining.

*This analysis was presented by Rick Mattoon, senior economist and economic advisor at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, at a meeting of the task force on February 10, 2012. The data was collected from the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, the National Center for Education Statistics, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, and the US Census.*



SPOTLIGHT ON

**MICHIGAN**

## Research Universities Work with State of Michigan to Keep Foreign Students in the United States after Graduation

A couple of years ago, Detroit business leaders spotted a significant economic development opportunity. Though only 6 percent of Michigan's population is foreign born, immigrants had launched nearly a third of the high-tech firms created in the state in the past decade. Indeed, as the leaders of an economic development collaboration called Global Detroit discovered, Michigan's immigrants start high-tech firms at six times the rate of the native-born population in that state. Global Detroit's goal is to spur regional economic growth by strengthening Detroit's global connections.

Imagine, the group reasoned, how many more firms might be started or staffed through a coordinated strategy to harness the talents of foreign-born people educated in Michigan's universities. The outcome was the Global Talent Retention Initiative ([www.migtri.org](http://www.migtri.org)), launched in 2011. It is the first effort of its kind in the country to keep international students in the United States after they graduate. The program is run as a partnership with seven area universities. Its full-time coordinator, Athena Trentin, says her goal is to market the Detroit region to international students and make employers aware of their potential.

Detroit badly needs economic development. Unemployment hovered at 14.4 percent in 2010, nearly 150 percent of the national average. At 57 percent, Detroit's child poverty rate is the highest of any large city in the nation. Foreign graduate students could help turn things around. In 2010 some 60 percent of foreign students in the United States were enrolled in science and engineering, compared to only 14 percent of Americans, according to the National Science Foundation. In Michigan 44 percent of all engineering master's degrees and 62 percent of engineering PhDs go to foreign nationals, according to the American Association of Engineering Societies. An estimated 44 percent of international patent applications coming out of Michigan originated with immigrants.

Detroit's Global Talent Retention Initiative highlights a high-skilled labor pool already available to US employers—talent that can help their businesses stay solvent and grow—as policymakers consider ways to increase Americans' presence in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines.

"Employers have heard a lot of myths," says Trentin, who brings international students and prospective employers together, and these false fears can create daunting obstacles for foreign students.

Employers worry that it's difficult or even illegal to hire foreign students. In fact, their visas allow them to work while in school and for a year afterwards. Those in the STEM fields can stay an additional 17 months, for a total of 29 months—not much less than the three years the average US-born STEM worker spends in a first job, observes Steve Tobocman, the director of Global Detroit. Employers who choose can later sponsor these employees for H-1B temporary visas.

Some employers fear they will be seen as displacing US workers. In fact, the opposite is true. For every 100 H-1B visas granted, 183 American jobs are created, according to a study by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research and the Partnership for a New American Economy.

Trentin reminds employers that their companies are operating in a global marketplace and need linguistically and culturally competent employees. "The most prosperous cities in the United States rely on immigrants," she says.

But her first goal is to "help the international students see themselves here." She has organized three daylong career development conferences whose panelists include young professionals and social entrepreneurs highlighting the community's appeal, employers discussing common mistakes international students make, and immigration attorneys. In evaluations, some 60 percent of the foreign students said they are more likely to stay in Michigan because of what they heard, Trentin says.

Among the program's beneficiaries are people like Avinash Konkani, 33, an Indian native working toward his doctorate in systems engineering at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. He was one of two students in the country to be awarded a scholarship this year from the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation. Konkani's goal is improving the safe use of medical devices.

Yet Trentin says international students have been frustrated—after waiting to meet hiring agents at career fairs—to be turned away over false fears. Now she helps allay those concerns. Since she began this job, top universities around the country have sought her guidance.

Trentin is now developing a website with a database to match employer needs with students' skills. Because this is the first such initiative of its kind, as word of it gets out she is asked for advice from other universities, including the Ivy League's Columbia and Cornell universities.

recovers—as more Americans go back to work, start to eat out, travel, and improve their homes again—demand for workers will only grow. And without changes, both in the region and in Washington, the Midwest will be ill-prepared to cope with its new labor needs.

## Industrial restructuring pays off in unexpected ways

The dynamic that drives the Midwest’s need for low-skilled workers has been playing itself out for several decades, most vividly in small, rural communities once sustained by manufacturing or by a small, locally owned meat processing plant—towns like Marshalltown, Iowa; Beardstown, Illinois; Garden City, Kansas; and Grand Island, Nebraska. The story begins more than a century ago, when manufacturing replaced the family farm as the region’s economic engine, ushering in a prosperous new era of capital-intensive industry—high-paying, mid-skilled jobs; job security; upward mobility; and middle-class wealth creation. This golden era lasted into the 1970s, but then things changed again, as lower operating costs began luring manufacturing out of the United States—to Mexico, Asia, and elsewhere where labor and production costs were cheaper.

As recently as 1956, 42 percent of the nonfarm workforce in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio was employed in manufacturing. Today, that share has shrunk to 12 percent. Between 1990 and 2006 alone, the region lost more than a half million manufacturing jobs, with some but not all of the loss due to increased productivity in the manufacturing sector. But the Midwestern labor force was also changing in this period. Educational and demographic trends reinforced the imperatives of the new postindustrial economy. Young people were getting better educations and moving away from the region, drawn by better career opportunities in other parts of the United States. In the 1980s some counties lost as much as 50 percent of the young people poised to enter the local workforce. And

the small rural towns once sustained by traditional Midwestern factories began to wither on the vine.

What happened next wasn’t planned or sought—it wasn’t anyone’s idea of the solution for deindustrialization. But in some towns and cities, as the old factories shut down, they were replaced by meat and food processing plants, many of them more labor intensive, mostly owned by national and multinational corporations.

These companies were driven by a different logic than the small manufacturers shutting down or moving away from the Midwest. In the 1970s Americans were eating differently and looking for the convenience of more precut, preprocessed food. Mechanization and competition from abroad were forcing a new kind of less-skilled, more labor-intensive food production, particularly in meat processing. Companies eager to cut costs

wanted to be nearer to inputs such as feed grain and cattle and to escape union wage floors that made it impossible to keep up with international competitors. Small Midwestern towns like Garden City, Kansas, and Grand Island, Nebraska, were the perfect answer

to these companies’ needs—except for one thing. The populations of the towns where the new plants were opening were shrinking, aging, and increasingly educated. So the companies had to look elsewhere for workers.

The first to arrive in many towns were refugees: Vietnamese, Lao, and later Bosnians fleeing war-torn countries a continent away. Then in the early 1990s, as the fast-paced work in the plants wore out this first wave of immigrants, these workers were replaced by Mexicans and Central Americans. A few companies recruited actively south of the border. Most didn’t have to—men in the plants sent word back to brothers and cousins in their home villages, and fresh waves of workers showed up as if on cue. The jobs were physically demanding and dangerous, the turnover unrelenting. The typical plant was replacing between 50 to 150 percent of its workforce every year. But as the years wore on, the workers poured in—first mainly single men, then families.

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*“Ninety percent of our company’s future growth is going to take place outside the United States. We need to bring in knowledgeable workers who can service those customers, people who speak multiple languages and understand foreign cultures.”*

—Julie Sorci, Vice President for Human Resources, Compressor Controls Corporation

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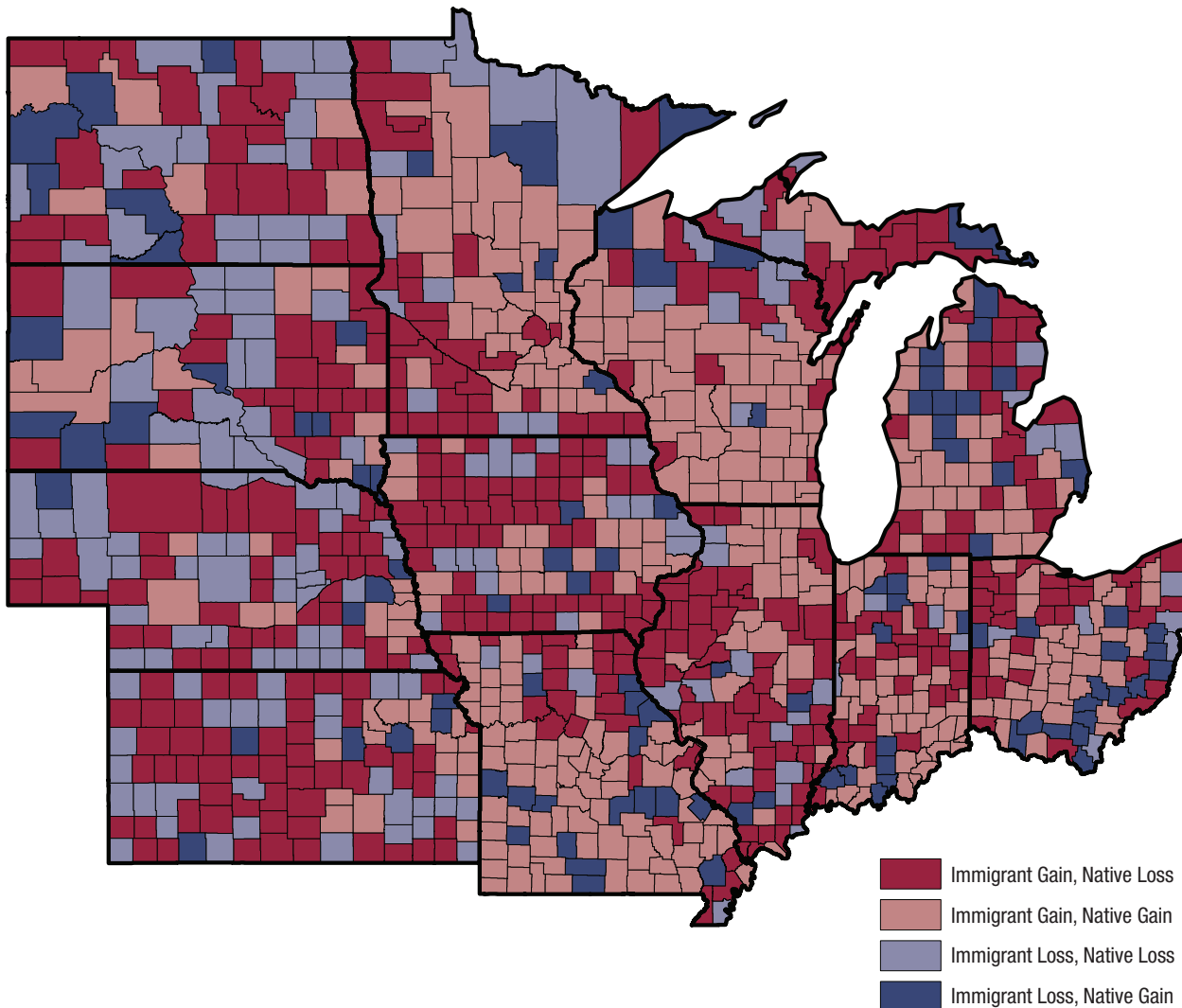
By the end of the decade, many communities had grown by a third or more.

Virtually none of the transformed towns were accustomed to dealing with foreigners, and tensions often ran high in the early years. Housing stock was quickly depleted. Schools were overcrowded, services overwhelmed. And many townspeople were baffled by manners and mores they didn't understand—Spanish signs, Spanish chatter, cars parked on the front lawn, goats roasting in the open air, single men loitering downtown or drinking and driving. Still, something was different in the Midwest. Unlike in other regions, the strains rarely erupted in conflict—in part because of the way

the immigrant influx was reversing the fortunes of many towns.

Communities that had been shrinking were suddenly growing again. Businesses that had been on the verge of closing were deluged with customers. Churches were full on Sunday. Restaurants were busy. Even the overcrowding in the schools had an upside: state funding pegged to the number of students started flowing again, and many communities were able to build new schools. Most native-born Midwesterners understood early on that they and the immigrants were not competing for jobs. Though the work in the plants paid \$12 to \$13 an hour, very few US workers applied. And disruptive

### Native and Immigrant Population Change 2000-2008



Source: Rob Paral and Associates tabulations of data from American Community Survey (2006-2010) Statistics.



SPOTLIGHT ON

IOWA

## Iowa Pork Plant Draws New Population That Transforms Town

In the late 1990s the pork processing plant in Ottumwa, Iowa, was set to expand operations and add 200 new production jobs. The problem for Cargill Meat Solutions—or Excel Pork, as it was then called—was that a relatively strong local economy had resulted in a few large employers competing for the same pool of workers.

Iowa's population was aging, young people were leaving after graduation, and those who stayed were not generally interested in the physically taxing, repetitive-motion work of processing a 275-pound hog into bacon, pork chops, and spare ribs.

So the company turned south and west, to Texas and California, to recruit. Those who answered its call were primarily foreign-born transient laborers. They came, brought families, and sank roots into the city of 25,000.

Today, Cesar De Paz, who was the eighth Latino to arrive at the Ottumwa plant in 1995, estimates Hispanics now account for about 1,000 of the facility's 2,250 employees. Some 27 countries are represented, making 40 percent of the workforce foreign born.

The Latino population of Wapello County, where Ottumwa is situated, jumped from 2 percent in 2000 to around 10 percent in 2010. One in five Ottumwa schoolchildren is Latino. Ethnic grocery stores and restaurants have sprung up to cater to the new population. The high school, with support from Cargill, has added soccer teams. Managers at the plant work to accommodate an array of cultural traditions. On the Muslim holiday of Ramadan, for example, a company-wide broadcast alerts managers it is prayer time for Bosnian and East African employees.

The company and community are working to ease interactions between the newcomers and the natives of mostly European extraction. From the outset, the former mayor, Dale Uehling, referred to the workers as "New Iowans" and set up

a diversity network that included representatives from the school district, churches, police, business, and government agencies to help them adjust.

Community colleges and churches got involved as well. Local leaders organized English as a Second Language classes for newcomers who needed them, and Spanish language classes for plant supervisors, managers, and production workers who wanted to communicate better with the Hispanic workers. "Pretty soon you've got supervisors speaking fluent Spanish," says Cargill Meat Solutions general manager and vice president Randy Zorn.

It wasn't all smooth sailing. Some native-born Ottumwans did not understand why Mexicans needed to publicly celebrate their own holidays such as Cinco de Mayo. Rumors spread that the newcomers paid no taxes. In those early days, Zorn says he spent a lot of time talking to groups to replace fiction with facts.

In the long run, however, the New Iowans have helped Ottumwa stem a population decline and keep plants producing. "Somebody just bought the mall because they see money in this town," says De Paz. A native of Guatemala, he moved to Iowa from Los Angeles and started at Cargill deboning hams, but today works as an interpreter and translating for Spanish-speaking employees. He has worked his way up to the eighth of ten pay grades, earning \$15.65 an hour.

De Paz now has three children, and likes Ottumwa because it is quiet, safe, and family friendly. "I don't like to go dancing, smoking, and drinking," he says. "This town is good for me." A teacher hired by the plant is helping him prepare his citizenship application.

Iowa's population grew only 4.1 percent between 2000 and 2010, but Hispanics saw 84 percent growth, to 5 percent of Iowa's 3 million residents. As for Ottumwa, Uehling says it would not be where it is today if not for the New Iowans.

as the influx might be for settled residents, the plant was invariably an economic boon for the town. It meant more business for local people who raised animals, more work for farmers who grew grain to feed the animals, more work for contractors building the new schools and housing—a ripple effect up and downstream in the local economy. Both the immigrants and the companies that employed them were often mistrusted, even disliked, by locals. But the logic was inescapable: without the workers, there would be no plants, and without the plants, no revitalization.

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*“The bottom line is that we need human capital that is more than laborers to build our community. People living in the shadows cannot live up to their full potential as contributing members of our communities.”*

—Susan Tharp, County Extension Director,  
Purdue University

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## Still, an uncertain future

By 2009 there were 1.2 million Mexican immigrants living in the 12 states of the Midwest—just 2 percent of the population overall, but up to one-third of the residents in some communities and 50 percent of the children in some elementary schools. Of course, for all the economic benefits they bring, these newcomers also pose significant challenges for the region. Half do not speak English; more than half lack a high school diploma. They are twice as likely as other Midwesterners to be working in unskilled jobs. And the recession hit them considerably harder than the native born, throwing more of them out of work and reducing their incomes more dramatically. According to one estimate, one in five Mexicans in the Midwest is now living below the poverty line.

This isn't new. Throughout American history, most new immigrants have arrived poor and unskilled. What's different today is that so many lack legal status. In 2009 as many as two out of three recent arrivals in the Midwest were in the United States illegally. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Illinois alone may be home to more than a half million unauthorized immigrants. For the 12 states of the region, the figure could be more than 1.3 million. Many of these unauthorized newcomers are doing well in the United States—participating in the labor force, often moving up the ladder, learning English, buying homes, and starting small businesses.

But what kinds of results can we expect over the long haul if they remain blocked by law from full participation in society? The turnover in the meatpacking plants doesn't help. Many workers move from job to job once every two years or more, taking their children with them from town to town and school to school. Each of these factors alone

is cause for concern, and the combination could be a perfect storm, particularly for the next generation.

Poor, unskilled, uneducated parents; families afraid to meet with teachers and principals and other local authorities; children who never

stay long enough in any town to get comfortable in school; young people who cannot attend college legally or get a job except in the underground economy—it's hardly a recipe for successful integration. How can these young people hope to get the kind of education that would equip them to succeed in the 21st-century knowledge economy? It's an urgent question for them—but also for the future of the Midwest.

## A pragmatic response to reality

It's hardly surprising, given this mixed picture, to find Midwesterners reacting to the new immigrants with some ambivalence. As recently as 1980, most of the towns now transformed by foreign workers were settled, homogeneous communities, 80 to 100 percent white, where residents had seen few immigrants since the 1920s or before. Few of these communities were thrilled by the arrival of the plants or the foreigners they attracted, and in some places tensions flared. There were protests and counter protests, lawsuits and inflammatory rhetoric. In other towns the problem was indifference and neglect, with local agencies failing to recognize that the new arrivals' needs were different and making no changes in the schools, at the hospital, or in the local police department. Polling shows that the unease lingers, particularly in places with no direct experience of the ways in which newcomers are revitalizing the region. According to a 2010 poll by The Chicago Council on Global





SPOTLIGHT ON

## EVANGELICALS

### Shifts within the Evangelical Community

Each week, Spanish-language services draw about 1,100 worshippers to the 20,000-member Willow Creek Church in the Chicagoland area. Many are undocumented immigrants, a group also credited with helping grow the church's care center—which provides everything from basic needs such as groceries, shelter, and education to employment guidance and legal consultation—into a full-service enterprise serving 17,000.

New immigrants are the fastest-growing segment of evangelical church membership nationally, according to Chicago-based Matthew Soerens, coauthor of the 2009 book *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion & Truth in the Immigration Debate*. “National church leaders are realizing this is the best hope for the growth of our churches,” he says. For some, welcoming immigrants is also an issue of faith. Soerens compares immigrants to other vulnerable populations that the Bible treats with compassion and concern.

In the past decade there has been growing interest in human rights and other social justice issues among evangelical communities, a shift which large evangelical organizations have both influenced and supported. In 2004 the National Association of Evangelicals publicly called its constituents to greater civic engagement. Hispanic evangelical groups spoke out for immigration reform in 2006. In 2007 two Christian evangelical organizations—Sojourners and Evangelicals for Social Action— collaborated to create Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. In 2009 the National Association of Evangelicals wrote a formal resolution for reform.

Ministering to undocumented immigrants can be complicated. Some church members “have found it very challenging to think about having any compassion for someone who came here illegally,” says Heather Larson, director of Willow Creek's Compassion and Justice Ministries. When pastors have addressed immigration from the pulpit, the message has been mostly negative, according to research by Ruth Melkonian-Hoover at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. Hoover also found that more than half of white evangelicals surveyed feel immigrants are a drain on the nation's resources and a threat to its customs and values.

Willow Creek, like a growing number of evangelical churches, has begun to educate members, staff, and elders on the church's changing demographics, the growing number of immigrants attending, and the challenges they face in be-

coming citizens. It enlisted Soerens, a church trainer for World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals. In 2010 he addressed roughly 3,000 people, explaining why it is next to impossible for the undocumented to obtain legal status and drew a standing ovation. In his speech he included facts such as 44 of 46 economists surveyed by the *Wall Street Journal* believe immigrants are good for the US economy, and one-third of undocumented immigrants have a US citizen in their households.

Soerens reassures people they are not legally prohibited from providing services to the undocumented or required to report them to immigration authorities. In September *Christianity Today* ran a cover story entitled “Meanwhile, Love the Sojourner,” highlighting how Christians in Phoenix are helping illegal immigrants.

In June of 2012 an association of more than 170 influential Christian leaders from across the political spectrum launched the Evangelical Immigration Table to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. The week after President Barack Obama's reelection it called on him to keep a promise from his first campaign to reform the nation's broken immigration system.

The current immigration system, wrote the leaders, “doesn't reflect our commitment to the values of human dignity, family unity, and respect for the rule of law that define us as Americans.” It is signed by the presidents of most significant evangelical denominations and of key Christian colleges and seminaries.

In January 2013 the Evangelical Immigration Table launched the “I Was a Stranger Challenge,” calling on evangelical faith leaders and more than 100,000 churches across the nation to read 40 passages in the Bible about immigrants and immigration during the first 92 days of President Obama's second term. Participants are also being asked to pray that these passages will evoke the political will to create a just immigration system that better reflects Christian values.

As political leaders grapple with a political solution to immigration, churches have recognized their role in highlighting the human side of the issue. And while there is still some lingering uncertainty in the church, Soerens has seen a shift in five years and believes most white evangelicals who aren't actively pursuing change already are now open to “taking a positive approach to immigrants.”

Affairs, Midwesterners feel more threatened than other Americans (45 percent versus 39 percent) by today's historically high levels of immigration. Like many Americans they are particularly troubled by illegal immigration: 58 percent put a priority on controlling and reducing the unauthorized flow, compared to 51 percent nationwide. And legislators in several Midwestern states—Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska—have taken a lead in pressing for tougher state immigration enforcement laws.

But there have also been other types of responses, strongest in the communities where the influx has been most dramatic—a quintessentially Midwestern reaction that could hold the seeds of a new American response to immigration. It has come from many quarters, some of them surprising: local ministers, concerned neighbors, the town librarian, the mayor, a local bank, sometimes the company that owns the processing plant.

Whatever the source, the impulse is the same—to find a way to deal pragmatically with the newcomers transforming the town. Many communities start by trying to bridge the language gap—with English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, bilingual school programs, charter schools, scholarships, and bilingual staff at government agencies. Others focus on ad hoc services to help newcomers adjust to life in the new community—to find health care, open a bank account, get a driver's license, and deal with legal documents. Still other proactive community initiatives are giving immigrants the tools not just to survive but to thrive in the Midwest. Public and private-sector groups across the region have launched business incubators for immigrant entrepreneurs, sponsored networking opportunities with local employers, and helped skilled immigrants translate their foreign credentials to maximize their economic potential in the United States.

Meanwhile, other polling shows Midwesterners growing gradually more comfortable with the immigrant influx. One survey of Minnesotans conducted by the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota found two-thirds of native-born whites agreeing that immigrants make a positive contribution to the economy, while another two-thirds reported that they liked having Hispanics as coworkers, friends, neighbors, and even family members. A 2012 Chicago Council survey shows that the more Midwesterners know about

immigration trends, the more likely they are to support immigration reform that would benefit the economy. Across the region, settled residents have recognized the way newcomers are revitalizing their communities, demographically but also in other ways. And for all their initial suspicion, after awhile

many seem to recognize a spirit not unlike their own—hard-working, church-going, family-oriented people who make the town a better place. “We used to build houses and barns together,” one resident of Walnut Grove, Minnesota, told a researcher. “We used to take care of our elderly instead of sending them to the old folks’ home. We used to bring the whole family together for meals. We don’t do any of those things any more. But the Hmong do.”

What does this Midwestern experience teach us? Are there lessons that can be applied more broadly? Like the rest of America, the Midwest is hostage to federal immigration policy. For better or worse, Washington makes most of the rules on immigration, and states are left to cope—or not cope—the best they can. But that doesn't mean the Midwest must remain silent. On the contrary, the region's growing need for immigrant workers and its deepening appreciation of the talent and vitality they bring give Midwesterners a unique role—and unique responsibility—in spearheading the call for better answers from Washington.

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*“As sponsors of charter schools, we work every day with young people brought to this country as small children. The thought that the United States would waste these talents, ruin these lives, and destroy these families appalls us. The United States must welcome these people.”*

—John and Jeanne Rowe, Founders, Rowe Family Charitable Trust and Rowe-Clark Math and Science Academy

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# MIDWEST SURVEY FINDS SUPPORT FOR REFORM AMONG THOSE WITH ACCURATE INFORMATION ON IMMIGRATION

According to a Chicago Council survey, Midwesterners overall are divided over expanding foreign worker visas and how to deal with unauthorized immigrants working in the United States. But the poll reveals that many people are misinformed about immigration, and when Midwesterners have the correct information, they express more openness to increasing immigration. This demonstrates a clear need for a public information effort to better educate the public about the benefits of—and the need for—immigration in the Midwest.

Survey results demonstrate that Midwesterners as a whole are unaware of some key facts about immigration, particularly that:

- illegal immigration has decreased over the past few years;
- most immigrants in the Midwest are here legally; and
- Midwestern employers are having trouble finding enough qualified US citizens to fill open jobs, particularly agricultural and seasonal work.

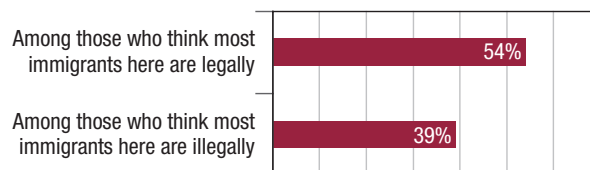
These figures highlight attitudes of informed versus misinformed Midwesterners. Among those who are misinformed, majorities oppose immigration reforms such as expanding visas to high-skilled and low-skilled foreign workers. Support for reforms rises to majority level, however, among those who understand that most immigrants are in the United States legally, are aware that illegal immigration has declined, and believe Midwestern businesses do not have enough job applicants with US citizenship. For example, six in ten Midwesterners who think that most immigrants in the Midwest are here legally favor increasing the number of visas for both high-skilled (54%) and low-skilled (61%) workers, compared to just four in ten among those who think they are here illegally (Figures 1 and 2).

The same pattern is evident when other facts are known. Analysis shows that those Midwesterners who are aware that illegal immigration has decreased over the past few years are much more likely (65%) than those who think it has increased (34%) to express willingness to allow unauthorized workers to keep their jobs, either with job permits or with a pathway to citizenship (Figure 3).

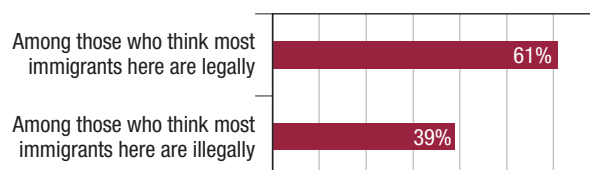
Awareness of Midwestern businesses' difficulties in finding enough US citizens to fill open jobs is another key factor influencing views. At least six in ten among those who say that there is a shortage of US citizens for both high- and low-skilled jobs support proposals to increase the number of visas granted to foreign workers (59% for high-skilled, 64% for low-skilled workers), higher than for those who think there is a sufficient number of native-born job applicants (Figures 4 and 5).

The results suggest that a public education campaign about the facts of immigration will be necessary to build public support for any new immigration reform legislation put forward by Congress.

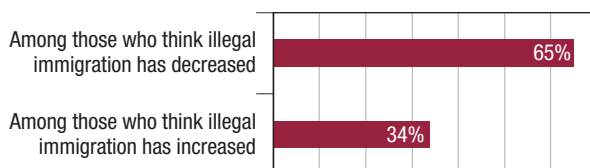
**Figure 1**  
Support for expanding visas to high-skilled workers



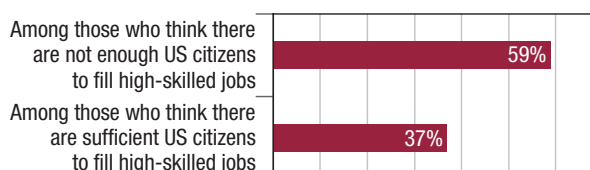
**Figure 2**  
Support for expanding visas to low-skilled workers



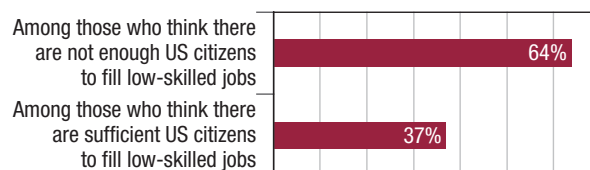
**Figure 3**  
Support for allowing unauthorized workers to stay in the US (% combined with or without pathway to citizenship)



**Figure 4**  
Support for expanding visas to high-skilled workers



**Figure 5**  
Support for expanding visas to low-skilled workers



## WHAT LINE?

**A**s poll after poll shows, Americans distinguish sharply—and rightly so—between legal and illegal immigration. Mindful of our history as a nation of immigrants, most voters believe that we should welcome those who come lawfully. As for those who enter the country unlawfully, most Americans would like to see them “do it the right way”—“getting in line” and “waiting their turn.” What most voters don’t understand is that this is often difficult, if not impossible. Many of the programs employers count on to admit foreign workers are too bureaucratic and burdensome to be useful. Many of our legal quotas are absurdly low—too low to meet our labor needs or accommodate separated families. In some cases there is no line at all—no legal way for needed workers to enter the United States lawfully.

- A low-skilled Mexican worker with no family in the United States who wants to enter the country to fill a year-round job has virtually no legal option even if an employer who wants to hire him can prove there is no willing and able US worker available for the opening. There is no temporary visa program for nonseasonal, low-skilled workers. And most of the permanent visas, or green cards, issued every year go to skilled workers and relatives of immigrants already here. Only 5,000 are reserved for unskilled workers. In the boom years, 1995 to 2005, supply and demand drew hundreds of thousands of less-skilled workers to the United States every year to fill vacant jobs. Most would have chosen to come lawfully if that were possible, but there is no legal avenue.
- For decades the United States was the destination of choice for foreign students who wanted to attend world-class universities, and most stayed on after their studies to build careers. That has changed dramatically in recent years, as more and more foreign students opt to return home after graduation. A 2009 survey of US university graduates found that only 6 percent of Indian students and 10 percent of those born in China planned to stay permanently in the United States. There are many reasons for this shift, but the bureaucratic obstacles to staying play a critical role. Foreign students may work in the United States for up to a year after they graduate and in some cases two-and-a-half years. But then it can be difficult to get a visa, temporary or permanent, and many students decide that it’s just easier to go home.
- American competitiveness depends on attracting the world’s top knowledge workers—scientists, researchers, engineers, financial analysts, high-end business managers, and others. Many enter the country initially on H-1B temporary visas. Compared to other US visa programs, H-1B works fairly well. It’s streamlined, efficient, and relatively user-friendly for both employers and employees. But demand for visas significantly outpaces supply. In 2007 and 2008 applications outnumbered visas on the first day visas became available, and employers who hadn’t submitted applications were out of luck. In 2012, despite the weak economy, it took just two months to exhaust the yearly quota.
- Even more of a problem is what happens to H-1B visa holders when their temporary visas expire. After six years in the country, many of these highly skilled workers—by now often critical assets for their employers and for the US economy—want to settle permanently. In order to do so they need permanent visas, but the supply of green cards falls far short of demand. According to some estimates, there are more than a million people waiting in the queue to make this transition from temporary to permanent. Some wait five to ten years. Others, from countries like India and China that have thousands of able engineers and scientists looking to immigrate, face wait times of several decades. And these waits deter many skilled immigrants from choosing to settle in the United States, aiding and abetting our competitors while undermining our productivity.
- Unskilled workers seeking to enter the country to fill seasonal jobs can apply for temporary visas. The H-2A program admits farm workers; the H-2B program is for nonfarm temporary and seasonal workers at summer and winter resorts, seafood processing plants, and landscaping companies, among others. Yet both programs are bureaucratic, burdensome, and expensive for employers. The H-2A program is so cumbersome that many agricultural employers choose not to use it, risking the survival of their businesses by turning instead to the black market. Three-quarters of the 1.2 million farm workers in the United States are foreign born. But fewer than 4 percent of all agricultural workers have entered the country on H-2A visas.
- The H-2B program is more popular. It too is overregulated and burdensome for employers, but not so much that it is unworkable. Yet it is also too small to meet demand. In economic good times applications significantly outnumber visas. In 2009 employers submitted requests for more than 214,000 H-2B workers, yet the program is capped at 66,000 visas. And while demand for visas has fallen somewhat in recent years, it will surely rebound when the economy recovers.
- More than two-thirds of the immigrants who enter the United States every year come on family visas—slots reserved for spouses, children, parents, and other close relatives of US citizens and green-card holders. Many more relatives qualify for entry than there are visas available, so even people who meet the criteria and have been approved to enter the country wait years before their number comes up and they can actually join their families. More than 4.5 million relatives of US citizens and permanent residents are waiting in the queue today. A Mexican woman with a green card can expect to wait three years before her child can join her in the United States. An American citizen from the Philippines who requests a visa for her sister can expect to wait more than two decades.

## Number of Employment-Based Visa Admittances in the Midwest in 2011

	E2 Visas	H1B Visas	H2A Visas	H2B Visas	L1 Visas	TN Visas
Illinois	5,787	17,523	477	1,056	17,325	5,926
Indiana	2,779	3,337	172	466	4,267	2,038
Iowa	255	1,480	930	40	1,303	577
Kansas	268	1,537	687	524	983	631
Michigan	16,494	42,508	220	1,285	58,035	587,924*
Minnesota	888	4,837	376	407	5,773	3,033
Missouri	425	3,095	174	1,554	3,032	753
Nebraska	217	721	177	248	592	293
North Dakota	1,070	311	542	376	1,669	868
Ohio	6,409	8,246	655	919	11,439	6,196
South Dakota	57	152	243	346	152	83
Wisconsin	540	3,610	117	141	3,397	1,943
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>35,189</b>	<b>87,357</b>	<b>4,770</b>	<b>7,362</b>	<b>107,967</b>	<b>610,265</b>
<b>National Total</b>	<b>329,230</b>	<b>494,565</b>	<b>188,411</b>	<b>79,794</b>	<b>562,776</b>	<b>899,455</b>

\*Michigan's large proportion of TN-issued visas is due to its proximity to Canada. Canadians can apply for TN status either at a preflight or port-of-entry inspection facility while entering the United States.

Source: US Department of Homeland Security, 2011 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

### Definitions of Visa Categories

There are over 180 different visa types issued by the US government to either nonimmigrants seeking to temporarily work, visit, or study in the United States or to immigrants seeking permanent residency. The following visas are mentioned in this report.

**E-2 Visa:** A visa for those who have made or are in the process of making a substantial investment in a US business. E-2 visa holders must be nationals of countries with which the United States has a treaty of commerce and navigation (not including Brazil, China, India, or Russia). The maximum duration of stay is two years, but there is no limit to the number of extensions.

**F-1 Visa:** A visa for nonimmigrants admitted to the United States temporarily to pursue full-time academic studies in colleges, universities, seminaries, conservatories, academic high schools, other academic institutions, and in language training.

**H-1B Visa:** A nonimmigrant visa for high-skilled workers in specialty occupations in the United States. H-1B workers may only work for their sponsoring employer and are frequently utilized in the STEM fields. The duration of stay for H-1B holders is three years, extendable to six years.

**H-2A Visa:** A temporary visa for seasonal agricultural workers. The H-2A visa is only valid for jobs that last 10 months or less. The employer may choose to use the worker for subsequent seasons, but only up to a total of three years.

**H-2B Visa:** A visa for temporary, nonagricultural workers coming to the United States for a recurring seasonal need, intermittent need, peak-load need, or for a one-time occurrence. The H-2B visa is only valid for jobs that last 10 months or less.

**J-1 Visa:** A visa issued to promote culture exchange, most often issued to those seeking business or medical training in the United States. The duration of the stay depends on which category of J-1 visa they are granted.

**K Visa:** Visa for a fiancé(e), who must marry his or her US citizen sponsor within 90 days of arrival.

**L-1 Visa:** A visa for intracompany transfers. Transfers must be seeking to enter the United States to work in an executive or managerial capacity. Those entering to establish a new office are allowed a maximum stay of one year, and all other qualified individuals will be allowed three. Two-year extensions may be granted, up to seven years.

**TN Visa:** A visa for citizens of Canada and Mexico resulting from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994, allowing citizens to work in each other's countries in specific professions. It is similar to the H-1B, however, there is no cap and it is largely adjudicated at the border. Once obtained, the maximum duration is three years. While there is no limit on extensions, the individual border official can deny renewal if he suspects it is being used in place of a green card.

# WHAT THE MIDWEST NEEDS FROM IMMIGRATION REFORM

## A world-class skilled workforce

Economists, business leaders, and other experts agree: the most important ingredient of competitiveness is innovation, and the key to innovation is a skilled workforce. The Midwest cannot afford to fall behind in cutting-edge IT and biotechnology or in the latest developments in manufacturing, value-added “advanced manufacturing.” Once the nation’s industrial heartland, the Midwest has been shedding factory jobs for decades and in recent years has been losing even high-tech manufacturing jobs. Essential to stanching this loss will be to attract highly skilled workers—the innovators of tomorrow. The Midwest must do its part, with industry and local government working together to make the region competitive and appealing to foreign talent. But they will not succeed if the US immigration system does not work for high-skilled workers—if unrealistically low quotas, endless waits, and burdensome red tape prevent the best and brightest from reaching the region and settling. Issues to be addressed include the H-1B visa process, the L-1 visa process, work authorization for the spouses of temporary high-skilled workers, per-country caps for employment-based green cards, and the severe bottleneck—one million people waiting in a queue—for high-skilled workers applying for permanent residence.

## Foreign-born and home-grown entrepreneurs

The Midwest cannot hope to keep up with other regions or international competitors without a vital entrepreneurial sector. High-tech start-ups, spin-offs, and the high-wire cycle from seed money to going public are all essential pieces of 21st-century competitiveness. Immigrants, risk takers by nature,

are unusually successful entrepreneurs, more than twice as likely as native-born Americans to start their own firms. According to a 2011 report by the National Foundation for American Policy, immigrants started close to half the nation’s top 50 venture-funded companies—most commonly software, semiconductor, and biotechnology firms. According to Duke University researcher Vivek Wadhwa, 25 percent of all engineering firms formed between 1995 and 2005 were founded by immigrants. The Midwest needs this kind of entrepreneurial energy, but historically has had some trouble attracting and retaining it. Business incubators in immigrant communities, microloan programs, and other initiatives to make credit available can make a difference. But the heartland needs Congress to do its part, increasing visas for foreign-born entrepreneurs and streamlining the process.

## STEM students

Many of the skilled immigrants who achieve the most success in the United States enter the country at an early age. They arrive as students, graduate to temporary visas, and then, eventually, receive permanent visas or green cards. If the Midwest is to remain competitive, it needs to facilitate this trajectory. Instead, institutions of higher learning throughout the region complain that the skilled workers the heartland needs to stay on the cutting edge earn degrees at Midwest universities and then return to their home countries to build careers. This accelerating trend is leeching talent from companies across the United States. It is particularly devastating in the Midwest, a region that does relatively well attracting students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), but lags behind other parts of the country in hiring high-skilled, H-1B temporary visa holders. Heartland universi-



# SPOTLIGHT ON

# INDIANA

## Cummins Leads Public-Private Integration Program in Public Schools

**G**abriela Vasquez was a high school senior in Columbus, Indiana, last year, approaching graduation and unsure of what would come next. Her factory-worker parents, who had emigrated from Mexico when she was young, wanted her to have opportunities they did not have. Her older brothers had gone to college, but many of her friends thought earning money was more important. The prospect of applying and finding the means to pay for college was overwhelming.

Then Vasquez attended a meeting at her school, where qualified Latino high school students were paired with bilingual adults who could help them navigate the college process. She was assigned to Jesus Escobar, an employee at Cummins Inc., who discussed her career goals—she wants to be a pediatrician—helped her apply for college and obtain scholarships and even helped her with math assignments. “He told me he was going to be there for me,” she says.

The pilot mentoring program for students in grades eight through twelve grew out of a business-community partnership in Southern Indiana called the Community Education Coalition. It is chaired by Cummins vice president Mark Gerstle. A global company that manufactures engines, power generation equipment, and filtration systems for diesel engines and natural gas extraction, Cummins raised \$500,000 to support the Latino Education and Outreach Initiative that sponsors the mentoring program.

About 12 to 15 percent of Bartholomew County, where Cummins has its research headquarters, is Latino. According to Gerstle, half of the county’s Hispanic residents are unauthorized. He says the Latino high school dropout rate is close to one in two. “The only way out of the cycle of poverty is education,” he says.

The Latino Education and Outreach Initiative is a large umbrella that sponsors a broad array of programs. The other initiatives include an educational workshop for parents con-

ducted by a nationally known bilingual educator; a four-week English language learner summer school for students in pre-kindergarten through high school; and a Saturday program on Spanish language and culture for preschoolers through sixth graders. As of fall 2012 there is a two-year Latino Family Connection pilot program for educational outreach in Latino neighborhoods.

An estimated 30 percent of Bartholomew County children are not ready for kindergarten when they enter. So in 2010 the Community Education Coalition, the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, Cummins, and the state of Indiana partnered to open the Busy Bees Academy (Cummins contributed an additional \$700,000). Housed in the public school system, the academy is a nine-month kindergarten readiness program for four-year-olds. Last year students saw 26 months’ worth of advances in math, language arts, and other skills.

Admission to the academy is through a lottery system, and about one-tenth of the 200 students are in English as a Second Language classes. At the end of 2012, the academy’s second year of operation, 75 percent of them met or exceeded expectations on kindergarten readiness exams.

As for the mentoring program, Gabriela was one of five of last year’s eight participating high school seniors to be accepted to college. The 17-year-old is now a freshman at Ivy Tech College in Columbus. She credits her mentor with helping her organize a schedule and stick to it when the pressures of senior year nearly overwhelmed her. “He said, ‘You’re a senior. You really have to do well,’” Gabriela recalls. He also explained what to expect from college and helped her pick out classes.

“For us, it’s a recruiting issue,” says Gerstle of the company’s community involvement. “You’re only as healthy a company as your community is healthy.”

ties and governments struggle to make the region appealing and make foreign students feel welcome, connect them with potential employers, and help them navigate the immigration system. But without help from the federal government, easing the path for STEM students who want to stay and work in the United States, there is only so much the Midwest can do. As of 2009 some 260,000 foreign students, graduate and undergraduate, were working toward STEM degrees at US universities. How many will stay to make careers here? The Midwest's future depends on retaining a robust share of them.

### **Legal entry for less-skilled workers**

Critical as high-skilled immigrants are to the economic future of the Midwest, the region also needs less-skilled immigrants to fill jobs when no willing and able US workers are available—especially in communities with stagnant or declining populations. Wisconsin dairy farms, Plains States meatpacking plants, hotels, restaurants, janitorial services, and construction companies across the region have had trouble filling jobs even in the downturn and will have increasing difficulty as the economy rebounds. Immigration skeptics like to say that foreigners who want to come to the United States should “get in line” and “do it the right way.” In fact, there is no line for unskilled workers with no family in the United States, just 5,000 permanent resident visas a year for less-skilled workers. Yet for much of the past 20 years, the economy absorbed—US businesses needed—hundreds of thousands of less-skilled immigrants. Demand for these foreign workers slowed in the downturn. But the numbers crossing the border began rising again in early 2012 in response to growing labor needs in the United States, and those needs will only expand with economic recovery. Immigration reform that does not acknowledge and meet this demand will not succeed. We must bring the number of visas available more into line with US labor needs. This is not just critical for our economic future. It's also the key to effective enforcement. The best antidote to illegal immigration is a legal immigration system that works. And without a legal immigration system that works, we are all but sure to find ourselves with another huge unauthorized population in our midst 10 or 15 years from now.

### **A seasonal workforce**

In the Midwest as across the country, seasonal employers have the hardest time filling jobs. Even in the depth of the recession, few US workers wanted to leave their homes and travel to another part of the country to work for a few months on a farm or at a seasonal resort in low-skilled, physically demanding, dead-end jobs. Michigan asparagus farmers, Michigan wineries, Great Lakes resorts, nursery and lawn-care operations across the region—all rely heavily on the H-2A and H-2B seasonal temporary worker programs. The problem is that both programs are cumbersome and unpredictable, bound up in red tape and burdensome regulation. Midwest seasonal employers who can't find enough US workers need to be able to hire foreign workers quickly, easily, and legally, while workers seeking to enter the United States on a temporary or seasonal basis need to be able to do so without fear of exploitation or abuse from employers or recruiters in their home countries. Only Congress can craft what's needed: new or improved, workable, streamlined visa programs that are user-friendly for employers and reliable and appealing to workers.

### **Better tools for employers**

The overwhelming majority of employers want to be on the right side of the law. It's their obligation as citizens and it makes good business sense. But those who rely on foreign workers need help from the federal government. They need a process that allows them to hire foreign workers legally and an accurate, timely, fraud-proof system for verifying that applicants are who they say they are and are eligible to work. State governments across the Midwest have begun requiring employers to enroll in the federal E-Verify program, an online tool to validate the status of employees. Employment verification is a critical pillar of immigration reform. But Midwest employers, public and private, need a uniform federal mandate, and it should be introduced in the context of a broader immigration overhaul—combined with legalization and fixes to the legal immigration system that bring our annual intake of workers into line with our labor needs.





SPOTLIGHT ON

ILLINOIS

## State of Illinois Works with Nonprofit Groups to Naturalize 56,000 Citizens

**T**ania Zuniga was ecstatic. A day earlier the 20-year-old had taken the oath of citizenship in Chicago, eight years after arriving in the United States from Mexico. She became eligible to apply for citizenship three years ago, but much as she wanted to, the college student could not afford it. “It was going to be a lot of money, and I didn’t have the resources,” she says.

She also needed guidance completing the application form. There were, in her words, some “delicate” questions to answer. Zuniga’s parents had crossed the border illegally before she arrived. Her mother is a factory worker.

Then, this spring, Zuniga heard about a program that helps qualified people apply for citizenship. The New Americans Initiative is a joint effort by the state of Illinois, the nonprofit Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and 33 community partners. The state has budgeted \$2.5 million for the program. The service is aimed at people of lower income and limited English skills. It obtains federal government waivers of the application fees for those who qualify. Some banks also offer small loans to help defray costs.

Through it, Zuniga was able to get a waiver of the \$685 citizenship application fee. She applied in May, was interviewed for citizenship in mid-August and sworn in a week later. “I feel this pride of being an American, of being in this awesome country!” she exclaims.

Since the program was launched in 2007, it has helped 58,000 people complete their citizenship applications. An additional 20,000 children under age 18 were eligible to become “derivative citizens” when their parents did. It is estimated that 95 percent of people nationally who take the citizenship test pass it.

“Most Americans don’t understand how difficult and expensive the process is,” says Joshua Hoyt, chief strategy executive of the Illinois Coalition, “especially for immigrants with less education or who are poor.”

There are 350,000 foreign-born people in Illinois—and 8.5 million nationally—who are eligible to become US citizens but have not yet chosen to do it. To be eligible, they

must have green cards and have lived in the United States for at least five years, fewer if they are married to US citizens or have served in the armed forces. Zuniga was with the ROTC in college and is committed to taking up arms for her new country if asked.

Research shows that naturalized Americans earn more money, have lower rates of poverty and attend college or graduate school at higher rates than foreign-born residents who have not become citizens. Census Bureau figures show that among men, the difference in median income is \$47,000 for citizens compared to \$28,000 for noncitizens. For women, the difference is \$37,500 for citizens and \$24,000 for noncitizens.

Denise Martinez runs the Illinois governor’s Office of New Americans, which cosponsors the naturalization initiative and a number of other programs to help immigrants adjust to the city. “It is an appropriate [state] response at a time when immigration policy at the federal level has significant gaps to be filled,” she says. Martinez says that cost is the primary disincentive to applying for citizenship, especially when multiple family members are eligible.

At the heart of the initiative are the naturalization workshops run by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. At a typical weekend workshop, up to 300 people move from table to table, accessing services in multiple languages, from preapplication screenings—where potential problems are identified—to fingerprinting. Partner organizations offer free citizenship and English classes. The program also sponsors a media campaign that highlights the benefits of citizenship.

From the government’s perspective, the advantage of helping people become citizens is that they also become stakeholders who feel a long-term commitment to the United States. “Citizenship is a proxy in many concrete ways,” says Hoyt.

Zuniga’s very first act after being sworn in was to apply for a voter registration card. She couldn’t wait to cast her ballot in November 2012.

## Border and visa security

Gaining control of our borders is not just a cornerstone of immigration reform. In an age of global terrorism and international drug violence, it's a national imperative. Much has been done in recent years to secure the southwest frontier, as the Migration Policy Institute demonstrates in its January 2013 report. We now have more than five times as much manpower stationed there as we had in the early 1990s. We've built 650 miles of fence and other barriers, and the number of unauthorized migrants entering the country every year is now smaller than the number leaving the United States. But this doesn't mean we can ignore border issues or the need for better monitoring of immigrants who overstay their visas. There is still work to be done, including better technology, better communication among law enforcement agencies, more cooperation with neighboring countries, and more efficient processing of people and goods. We in the Midwest know firsthand that much of our economy depends on trade across the northern border. Like all Americans, we have a stake in frontiers that work to keep us safe, but also connected to our friends and allies and trading partners.

## A permanent answer for children brought to the United States illegally

According to the Migration Policy Institute, the Midwest is home to 200,000 to 275,000 young people brought to the country illegally as children. They are waiting in limbo for an answer from Washington that would allow them to get on with their lives, finish their educations, and find work not in the underground economy but in their chosen career fields. Congress has repeatedly tried and failed to find a compromise solution for these young people, often called "Dreamers," after the bipartisan DREAM Act that was first introduced in August 2001. In mid-2012 President Obama and Republican Senator Marco Rubio of Florida floated similar proposals for a temporary reprieve—no deportation but no automatic citizenship either—and the administration implemented the idea. These are promising first steps. But the Midwest needs a permanent solution passed by a bipartisan majority in Congress. Without clear, unequivocal policy, the region risks a colossal waste of some of our best, brightest, and

most motivated young people, squandering their potential and diminishing ours.

## A path to citizenship

According to the Pew Research Center, some 1.3 million unauthorized immigrants live and work in the Midwest. That's as many people as in all of Dallas, San Diego, or the state of Hawaii living on the margins of society. Most are otherwise law-abiding people, doing critical jobs that need to be done—work that bolsters Midwest prosperity and creates jobs for Americans throughout the local economy. No one realistically believes we can deport these workers and their families. The only other alternative—driving them out of the United States by depriving them of work and making it difficult for them to drive, go to school, get healthcare, and otherwise go about their lives—would be a Pyrrhic victory, a disaster for the Midwest economy. The heartland needs a better answer—one consistent with our labor needs and our Midwestern values.

## Innovative integration efforts

The flow of immigration from Mexico has ebbed with the economic downturn. But this slowdown will have little or no effect on the most important immigration challenge facing America in the decades ahead: integrating the newcomers already here. The stakes could hardly be higher. The nation's social cohesion and global competitiveness hang in the balance as the next generation of Latinos, Asian Americans, and others struggle to find their place and achieve their full potential in America. A broad array of Midwesterners in local government, business, labor, faith-based groups, educational institutions, and civil society is stepping up to promote immigrant integration across the heartland. Programs include welcoming initiatives, cultural exchanges, helping newcomers learn English and become citizens, tutoring and other school booster programs, business incubators, microloans, and an array of interventions for at-risk youth. But, impressive as all this is, it's not nearly enough. The federal government can help and should be helping more with programs and resources. But ultimately we in the Midwest must step up and shoulder the responsibility—it's our duty as citizens and neighbors and one of the best investments we can make in our future competitiveness.

# THE MORAL CASE FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

**T**he thrust of this report is the economic case for immigration reform—why a fix is essential for America’s global competitiveness. But economics are hardly the only reason the nation needs to fix the broken immigration system. Equally compelling, more so for some people, is the moral case for immigration reform.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Rights are rights, and in a decent society there can be no exceptions or exclusions. It may be an illegal act to enter the country without papers or overstay a visa, but there is no such thing as an illegal human being. There is no excuse for depriving anyone living among us of fundamental civil liberties or civil rights.

## THE GOLDEN RULE

Do we need our communities of faith to remind us that all people should be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect? The Bible makes the point as eloquently as any advocate today: “The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

## NO CLEAN HANDS

Who and what is responsible for the millions of unauthorized immigrants living in the United States today? The immigrants themselves are only one piece of the puzzle. Congress failed to provide sufficient visas to hire them legally. US employers hired them. A feckless US immigration service looked the other way as they entered or remained in the country unlawfully. American consumers ate the food they grew, packed, processed, and served in our homes and restaurants. American families moved into the houses they built. US workers and families enjoy the spaces they keep clean for us. And Americans rest easy when immigrants take care of our families—raising our children or nursing our elderly parents. No one’s hands are clean, and it’s not right that only the newcomers should pay for the sins of the past.

## THE DIGNITY OF WORK

The overwhelming majority of unauthorized immigrants come to the United States to work. Immigrant men have higher labor force participation rates than native-born men. Except in the downturn, newcomers are less likely to be unemployed. Most work not just one but several jobs, and they sustain critical sectors of the US economy. That they are working without papers doesn’t change the fact that they built the homes many of us live in and feed us daily. Surely we owe them more than a deportation order or, worse, state-sponsored harassment designed to drive them out of the country—the policy known as “attrition through enforcement” in effect in Arizona and other states.

## THE SANCTITY OF FAMILIES

To be an immigrant is by definition to leave those you love—to separate from your family and head off to a new land. Most immigrants live far from most of their kin and take it as a given—the price they pay for opportunity. But US law should not make this hardship worse, tearing parents from children and destroying marriages. The capricious deportations and enforced absences that create a generation of orphans among us today have no place in American policy.

## A TWO-TIER SOCIETY

Equality of opportunity is one of America’s core ideals. A society divided by caste violates everything we believe in. No American wants to revisit our darkest hour: a two-tier society divided by a line that could not be crossed, one-half of the nation free to take advantage of opportunity, the other half deprived of the most basic rights. But that is exactly what we are recreating. The only difference is that immigration status is now the dividing line, along with color.

We need a better answer. We as a society can do better. The status quo is not the kind of country we want to be and is not consistent with Midwestern values or American ideals.

# THE MIDWEST NEEDS A SOLUTION

**T**he time is now—it's time to get this done. Policymakers in Washington have been trying to fix the broken immigration system for more than a decade. President George W. Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox tried and failed to negotiate a bilateral overhaul in 2001. Congress tried and failed to pass bipartisan legislation—comprehensive immigration reform. President Barack Obama promised to deliver comprehensive change, but he too failed in his first term. His administration issued a series of executive orders that granted some relief to some immigrants but stopped short of a full answer and alienated Republicans whose help is needed to pass a permanent solution in Congress. Meanwhile, with Washington unable to fix the system or gain control, state lawmakers rushed in to fill the vacuum, and they failed. Most state immigration laws have ended up causing more harm than good, driving needed labor and investment out of the states that tried to take matters into their own hands.

Where does this leave the Midwest and other regions whose future competitiveness depends on a rational, functioning immigration system? It leaves us high and dry—economically hamstrung, wasting invaluable human capital and increasingly frustrated by a political impasse that violates our values and ideals.

The good news is that the November 2012 election and the ferment that followed appear to

have broken the logjam, opening the door to a new, more productive debate. Prodded by Latino voters who came out in unprecedented numbers and voted overwhelmingly in favor of candidates promising progress on immigration, Democrats and Republicans alike now seem to grasp the urgency of reform. A parade of prominent Republicans and past opponents of an immigration overhaul have stood up to urge the GOP forward on a new course. President George W. Bush, talk show host Sean Hannity, House Speaker John Boehner, tea party leader Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky, influential conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer, and

former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, among others, have spoken out in favor of reform—even, in some cases, endorsing a path to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are reexamining the issues and forming new alliances. The climate in

Washington is as partisan as ever, and the way forward will not be easy. But this ferment has the makings of a new chapter, and we in the Midwest need Congress to act. We need lawmakers to seize this opportunity.

Midwesterners understand political reality, and we see how hard it has become for Republicans and Democrats in Congress to come together to produce solutions on any issue, let alone an issue as complex and polarizing as immigration. But that can't be an excuse. We can't afford an excuse. We

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*“Immigrants aren’t just an asset because they numerically increase the workforce. They are also playing a key role as entrepreneurs in Minnesota and have transformed neighborhoods in both Minneapolis and St. Paul while helping revitalize downtowns in several regional centers around our state.”*

—Bill Blazar, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Business Development, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

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need answers—now—for our economy and our communities.

Only Democrats and Republicans working together can deliver the change that’s needed—permanent, multidimensional, legislative change. Executive orders and administrative fiat may produce relief in the short term, but they are not long-term answers. Only legislation can provide that.

We in the Midwest need better solutions on our borders. We need solutions in the workplace. We need visas for high- and low-skilled workers. We need a legal immigration

system that works for entrepreneurs, inventors, investors, STEM students, nurses, home healthcare aides, busboys, farm-hands, and seasonal hotel help. We need employ-

ment-based immigration that meets the needs of employers and employees. We need a family-based system that reunites relatives in a timely way. We need solutions that serve immigrants without shortchanging US workers. And we need a path to citizenship for Dreamers and their parents.

We need answers on all these fronts. None can be ignored or avoided. And only Democrats and Republicans working together can craft a package that delivers across the board.

Will reform require compromise? Of course it will. Midwesterners are pragmatic, and we can live with compromise if that’s what it takes to get the job done. Ultimately, we need solutions consistent with our values and our ideals. The immigrants living among us but outside the political system and beyond the rule of law need full legal rights—the sooner the better.

This is not a problem that can be put off. We as a nation have been doing that for far too long now. If we don’t create ways for more foreign knowledge

workers to enter the country and stay, we will fall behind our global competitors, and the technological change of the next decades will occur elsewhere. If we don’t find a solution for

agriculture—a usable visa program for agricultural workers—we will end up offshoring our food supply chain. If we don’t come up with an answer for Dreamers, we will squander the talent of a generation.

The region’s competitiveness—our livelihoods, our future, our children’s future—hangs in the balance. We need Congress to act. It’s time to step up and get the job done. We in the Midwest need answers on immigration, and we need them now.

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*“If we send the message that immigrants are not welcome, then decline will follow.”*

—Bob Holden, Founder, Holden Public Policy Forum at Webster University; Former Governor of Missouri

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# APPENDIX

## Number of Immigrants to the 12-State Midwest by Country of Origin (1860-2010)

	1860	1910	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
<b>EUROPE AND USSR</b>	1,433,476	4,262,957	1,900,287	1,359,174	1,064,204	807,076	916,088	897,885
Albania			2,197	2,290		1,101		21,163
Austria	18,314	433,756	73,806	51,132	32,299	18,448	12,313	9,194
Belgium	6,951	29,071	22,414	15,595	10,653	7,038		4,317
Bulgaria		5,350	3,294	2,728		1,433		16,682
Czechoslovakia (former)			93,424	58,404	33,383	20,435	17,522	12,000
Denmark	3,842	106,785	31,945	19,633	10,628	6,038		4,062
Estonia			2,960	2,297		1,515		
Finland		73,034	25,037	14,417	6,880	3,729		
France	42,904	28,700	18,150	16,092	15,955	13,515	17,761	15,597
Germany	661,586	1,347,982	305,531	225,221	194,961	145,163	131,393	109,587
Greece	22	31,905	44,050	47,318	50,305	38,843	33,847	26,151
Hungary		186,533	82,741	54,122	36,615	23,156	16,184	11,111
Iceland			622	460		790		
Ireland	358,632	257,880	48,322	35,214	27,825	21,537	19,145	15,511
Italy	2,180	185,066	190,686	150,873	120,212	82,609	64,333	49,200
Latvia			18,750	15,277	12,599	8,990		5,633
Lithuania			47,249	29,945	18,440	11,906		14,926
Luxembourg		2,564	2,245	1,516		641		
Netherlands	18,710	80,671	45,081	34,317	25,355	20,603	16,765	14,671
Norway	41,544	297,978	58,930	30,889	16,380	7,861		3,206
Poland	1,935		235,335	163,781	124,119	123,308	175,323	172,694
Portugal	459	597	706	1,190	1,784	1,377	1,433	2,007
Romania		15,346	27,952	19,610	16,966	22,204	31,799	41,302
Spain	179	1,294	3,752	4,983	5,471	5,154	6,669	7,236
Sweden	12,929	391,671	90,479	47,708	23,529	11,690	7,214	5,262
Switzerland	35,308	52,401	14,049	9,152	6,733	5,313		4,203
United Kingdom	226,262	335,873	178,378	131,815	113,422	91,632	87,253	81,258
USSR (former)	1,056	393,676	137,276	88,479	74,245	48,498	102,771	135,391
Yugoslavia (former)		4,143	89,710	77,880	70,674	58,617	78,186	96,229
All other Europe	663	681	5,216	6,836	14,771	3,932	96,177	19,292
<b>ASIA</b>	239	28,406	63,623	120,807	396,347	599,029	1,053,190	1,450,922
Afghanistan						1,364	2,322	3,689
Bangladesh						2,162	9,368	16,910
Cambodia						9,971	13,367	13,940
China	15	3,514	9,713	18,715	24,367	67,618	127,287	216,377
Hong Kong					7,051	10,431	13,882	13,520
India		506	3,258	14,286	51,097	85,245	193,768	318,669
Indonesia						4,758	8,273	6,997
Iran					16,122	15,861	18,660	20,876

	1860	1910	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Iraq						22,808	45,978	68,220
Israel			2,593	5,516	10,621	8,830	12,300	12,864
Japan		1,465	10,533	12,889	24,974	37,155	44,319	39,225
Jordan						8,324	13,163	16,429
Korea			2,450	8,164	52,915	66,696	110,727	129,568
Kuwait						2,098		4,451
Laos						43,950	63,127	58,934
Lebanon			6,261	5,794	13,412	18,744	26,876	30,897
Malaysia						6,386	7,819	8,084
Myanmar						1,819		19,642
Nepal						301		9,115
Pakistan			487	1,615		16,496	35,526	45,435
Philippines			6,427	19,334	60,198	81,995	117,637	159,760
Saudi Arabia						2,818		11,411
Singapore						1,774		2,838
Sri Lanka						2,226		6,365
Syria			3,426	2,677		5,681	9,693	12,006
Thailand					9,524	17,137	32,359	43,547
Turkey	12	22,227	9,925	8,361	7,422	6,325	8,884	11,675
Vietnam					30,945	40,151	89,934	102,725
Yemen						1,751		15,502
All other Asia	212	694	8,550	23,456	87,699	8,154	47,921	31,251
CANADA	107,040	376,613	214,453	164,485	156,185	121,652	131,801	116,759
OTHER NORTHERN AMERICA	X	X	X	X	X	808	847	559
MEXICO	221	11,756	50,880	76,660	215,247	352,695	1,000,394	1,332,996
CENTRAL AMERICA	26	131	2,952	8,311	23,587	39,222	99,195	170,929
Belize			242	1,815		3,159		5,420
Costa Rica			453	927		2,195	3,633	5,240
El Salvador			238	277	2,229	6,922	23,767	45,727
Guatemala			463	2,437	7,281	14,622	37,986	70,100
Honduras			395	1,070		4,379	16,205	27,840
Nicaragua			293	471		2,472	5,113	8,989
Panama			868	1,314		4,991	6,574	6,936
All other Central America	26	131			14,077	482	5,917	677
CARRIBEAN	603	1,689	8,243	33,867	44,655	46,203	66,335	82,952
Bahamas						929		1,593
Barbados					588	775	1,186	1,267
British West Indies Federation			1,487	487	X	X	X	X
Cuba		485	3,447	24,126	21,995	19,248	21,335	22,025
Dominica						128		848
Dominican Republic			349	1,257	1,967	2,882	8,213	14,419
Grenada						131		667
Haiti			322	1,737	3,369	3,980	7,472	11,099
Jamaica			1,856	4,199	10,048	12,779	18,914	21,843
St. Vincent and the Grenadines						218		276
Trinidad and Tobago				785	2,159	2,769	4,607	5,735
All other Caribbean		1,204	782	1,276	4,529	2,364	4,608	3,180

	1860	1910	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
<b>SOUTH AMERICA</b>	116	1,350	10,708	25,716	42,683	52,115	96,462	144,418
Argentina			2,114	4,642	5,213	6,415	8,148	11,426
Bolivia			402	824		2,046	2,633	3,590
Brazil			1,983	3,371	5,249	5,933	12,328	17,883
Chile			681	1,720		3,550	5,243	6,417
Colombia			1,149	5,858	9,843	11,865	22,011	32,528
Ecuador			687	3,119	5,567	7,541	18,077	30,987
Guyana					2,029	3,531	5,198	6,813
Paraguay			109			633		
Peru			859	2,220	3,988	6,439	11,668	19,268
Uruguay			80	314		843		2,116
Venezuela			884	1,539		2,624	7,116	9,860
All other South America	116	1,350	1,760	2,109	10,794	695	4,040	3,530
<b>AFRICA</b>	101	781	4,221	9,870	32,803	41,538	132,542	280,342
Egypt			1,249	3,076	5,669	6,350	11,646	15,762
Morocco						1,292		6,135
Sudan						637		12,379
All other Northern Africa			1,000	1,354	4,109	1,818	10,757	5,220
Cameroon						428		5,443
Eritrea								4,628
Ethiopia						4,072	11,319	28,113
Ghana						2,497	8,241	15,150
Kenya						2,106		20,148
Liberia						1,491		17,769
Nigeria						8,053	19,068	31,976
Sierra Leone						567	1,814	3,643
South Africa (Republic)			843	1,288		3,664	7,903	10,178
All other Africa	101	781	1,129	4,152		8,563	61,794	103,798
<b>OCEANIA</b>	273	1,798	5,223	5,676	8,194	8,096	13,041	17,379
Australia	231	1,545	3,976	4,145		5,326	7,876	8,254
New Zealand			737	1,209		1,431	2,484	3,752
Trust Territories of Pacific Islands			315	44	X	X	X	X
All other Pacific Islands	42	253	195	278		1,339	2,681	5,373
<b>ATLANTIC ISLANDS</b>	524	315	473	1,066		X	X	X
<b>COUNTRY NOT SPECIFIED</b>	739	1,370	15,883	67,929	130,285	62,859	X	X

X = US Census data was not calculated for that country at that time.

European countries in 1860 and 1910 refer to countries as they existed in those years. Data for 1860 were separately tabulated for Poland.

Portugal includes Azores 1960 to 2010.

USSR (former) is Russia in 1860 and 1910; Armenia, Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine in 2000; and Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan in 2010.

Yugoslavia (former) is Serbia and Montenegro only in 1910; in 2000 includes Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Yugoslavia only; in 2010 excludes Slovenia only.

China includes mainland China and Taiwan 1970 and 1990 to 2010; China is mainland China in 1980 only. Data for Taiwan for 1980 included in all other Asia. No documentation is available showing where Taiwan was tabulated in 1960.

Turkey added to Asia in 1860; and Turkey in Europe added with Turkey in Asia in 1910.

British West Indies Federation includes Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago in 1960; includes Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1970.

Atlantic Islands in 1860 and 1910 includes Azores; 1960 and 1970 excludes Azores, added to Portugal; reported with Oceania in 1980, Azores added to Portugal; reported by continent/region 1990 and later



# PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

## Task Force Cochairs

### Chet Culver

*Former Governor, Iowa*

In 1998 Culver was elected as Iowa's 29<sup>th</sup> secretary of state and the youngest secretary of state in the nation. He was reelected in 2002. In 2006 he was elected governor of Iowa, and his administration's primary focus was making Iowa the renewable energy capital of the United States. In 2011 Culver was appointed by President Obama and later confirmed by the US Senate to serve on the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation board of directors. In addition, Governor Culver is founder and CEO of the Culver Group, a renewable energy and energy efficiency consulting firm based in Des Moines.

### Richard M. Daley

*Former Mayor, City of Chicago*

The longest-serving mayor in Chicago's history, Richard M. Daley has earned an international reputation as a leading innovator in urban development, fiscal policy, and government stewardship. Prior to his 22-year tenure as mayor, he served as a state senator and county prosecutor. He was elected mayor in 1989 and reelected five times before deciding in May 2011 to retire from government. He now serves as a distinguished senior fellow at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy and is of counsel to Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, an international law firm based in Chicago.

### Joe Loughrey

*Former President and COO, Cummins Inc.*

Joe Loughrey was with Cummins Inc., the world's largest independent diesel engine manufacturer, for over 35 years until he retired on April 1, 2009. He served as vice chairman and as president and chief operating officer. He is chairman of Hillenbrand, Inc. and serves on the boards of Vanguard, AB SKF, Lumina Foundation, Oxfam America, and Notre Dame's Kellogg Institute for International Studies.

### Doris Meissner

*Senior Fellow, Migration Policy Institute; former Commissioner, US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)*

Doris Meissner, former commissioner of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), is a senior fellow at the Migration Policy Institute, where she directs the institute's US immigration policy work. From 1993 to 2000 she served in the Clinton administration as commissioner of the INS. Her accomplishments included reforming the nation's asylum system; creating new strategies for managing US borders; improving naturalization and other services for immigrants; and strengthening cooperation with Mexico, Canada, and other countries.

### Clare Muñana

*President, Ancora Associates, Inc.*

Clare Muñana is a public-sector, not-for-profit, and international management consultant operating her own firm. Ms. Muñana previously served as the executive director of a public-sector financial management consulting group in Chicago. Mayor Richard M. Daley appointed her as a member of the Chicago Board of Education in 1999 and reappointed her in 2002. The board members elected her vice president of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago in 2004. She also serves on the Board of Directors of The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

### Mike Rounds

*Former Governor, South Dakota*

M. Michael "Mike" Rounds served five terms in the South Dakota State Senate. In 1995 he was chosen by his peers to serve as Senate majority leader, a post he held for six years. Rounds was sworn in as South Dakota's 31st governor in 2003 and reelected in 2006. As governor, Rounds was committed to growing South Dakota's economy, improving the daily lives of South Dakota citizens, and providing opportunities for young people to stay in South

Dakota. Since completing his second term in office, he has returned to his insurance and real estate business.

### **John W. Rowe**

*Chairman Emeritus, Exelon Corporation*

John W. Rowe is chairman emeritus and former CEO of Chicago-based Exelon Corporation, one of the nation's largest electric utilities. Rowe previously held CEO positions at the New England Electric System and Central Maine Power Company, served as general counsel of Consolidated Rail Corporation, and was a partner in the law firm of Isham, Lincoln & Beale. In both 2008 and 2009, *Institutional Investor* named Rowe the best electric utility CEO in America. Rowe is committed to a wide variety of civic activities with a focus on education and diversity and serves on the Board of Directors of The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

### **Samuel C. Scott III**

*Former Chief Executive Officer, Corn Products International, Inc.; Chairman, Chicago Sister Cities International Program*

Samuel C. Scott III is the retired chairman, president, and CEO of Corn Products International, Inc. He was appointed chairman of the Chicago Sister Cities International Program by Mayor Richard M. Daley in 2009. Scott serves on the board of Motorola Solutions, Inc., The Bank of New York Mellon Corporation, Abbott Laboratories, Northwestern Memorial HealthCare, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the Chicago Urban League, and World Business Chicago.

### **Carole Segal**

*Cofounder, Crate & Barrel*

Carole Segal is the cofounder of Crate and Barrel, the founder and former CEO of Foodstuffs, and the president of the Segal Family Foundation. Ms. Segal is a trustee of Rush University Medical Center and chairman of the board of overseers at Rush University. She is a trustee emeritus of Bates College, a life trustee of the Illinois Institute of Technology, and a member of the board of directors of WBEZ-Chicago Public Media. A graduate of Northwestern University, Segal chairs and cochairs multiple university organizations.

## **Members**

### **Ismael Ahmed**

*Associate Provost, University of Michigan-Dearborn*

Ismael Ahmed previously served as the director of the Michigan Department of Human Services. He was appointed to that position by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, and held it from 2007 to 2010. He also cofounded the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS).

### **Lizabeth Ardisana**

*CEO, ASG Renaissance*

Lizabeth Ardisana has been recognized as one of "Metro Detroit's Most Influential Women" by *Crain's Detroit Business*, as a "Michiganiaan of the Year" by the *Detroit News*, and the "Hispanic Businesswoman of the Year for the Midwest Region" by the National Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Before becoming the CEO of ASG Renaissance, she worked at Ford Motor Company for 14 years.

### **Dave Bender**

*Executive Director, ACEC-Illinois*

Dave Bender has 14 years of experience directing business and agriculture associations. He has also served as chief of staff and special assistant to the Illinois lieutenant governor in two different administrations. In 1995 he was appointed assistant director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture by Governor Jim Edgar.

### **Allert Brown-Gort**

*Faculty Fellow, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame*

A citizen of both the United States and Mexico, Allert Brown-Gort has served as an advisor to the Fox administration in Mexico and to the US Senate Hispanic Task Force. Brown-Gort regularly lectures and provides media commentary on issues related to Latinos, immigration, and US-Mexico bilateral relations at the regional, national, and international levels.

### **Ellen Carmell**

*Director, Bridging America Project, American Jewish Committee*

Ellen Carmell leads a national AJC/Ford Foundation initiative to strengthen Latino-Jewish relations

and broaden the base of support for immigration reform. She has more than two decades of non-profit leadership experience in arts, education, and Jewish organizations.

### **Frank L. Douglas**

*President and CEO, Austen BioInnovation Institute*

In addition to being president and CEO of Austen BioInnovation Institute, Frank Douglas is also a university professor in the College of Polymer Science and Engineering at the University of Akron, a professor of integrated medical sciences at Northeast Ohio Medical University, and senior partner emeritus of PureTech Ventures. Douglas is the recipient of the 2007 Black History Makers Award.

### **Jim Edgar**

*Former Governor, Illinois*

Governor Jim Edgar serves as a distinguished fellow at the University of Illinois' Institute of Government and Public Affairs. He was first elected governor of Illinois in 1990 and was reelected in 1994. He served for 20 years in the executive branch of government and for 10 years in the legislative branch.

### **Ricardo 'Ric' Estrada**

*President and CEO, Metropolitan Family Services*

Before joining Metropolitan Family Services in March 2011, Ric Estrada served as first deputy commissioner of the City of Chicago's Department of Family and Support Services and as executive director of Erie Neighborhood House. He also serves on the board of trustees of the University of Illinois.

### **José C. Feliciano**

*Partner, Baker & Hostetler; Chairman, Hispanic Roundtable*

José C. Feliciano is an active trial lawyer and has more than 36 years of experience in complex commercial litigation. He was the former Chief Prosecuting Attorney for the City of Cleveland. He is the founder and chairman of the Hispanic Roundtable, founder and past chairman of the Hispanic Community Forum, founder and former chairman of the Hispanic Leadership Development Program, past president of the Cleveland Bar Association. Formerly, he was a White House Fellow under President Reagan.

### **Katherine Fennelly**

*Professor of Public Affairs, Humphrey School, University of Minnesota*

Katherine Fennelly is professor of public affairs at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. She has been dean of the University of Minnesota Extension Service, a faculty member and department head at the Pennsylvania State University, and a faculty member at Columbia University School of Public Health.

### **Mike Fernandez**

*Corporate Vice President, Cargill, Inc.*

Mike Fernandez leads Cargill's global brand and corporate affairs activities. Before joining Cargill, he served as chief communications officer for four Fortune 500 companies and was a senior aide to a US Senator. He's served on several national and regional boards in support of economic development, education, and Latino advancement.

### **Enrique E. Figueroa, PhD**

*Associate Professor and Director, Roberto Hernandez Center, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

Professor Enrique Figueroa created and leads the Latino Nonprofit Leadership Program. He previously worked for the House Committee on Agriculture in the US Congress. Professor Figueroa was appointed administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service by the Clinton administration and subsequently promoted to deputy undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs, both at the US Department of Agriculture.

### **Paul H. Fitzgerald**

*Story County Iowa Sheriff; Former President, National Sheriffs Association*

Prior to being elected sheriff, Paul Fitzgerald served as a member of the Waterloo, Iowa, Police Department for 15 years in a variety of positions. During his years of service with the Waterloo Police Department, he also taught for 11 years in the Police Science Program at Hawkeye Institute of Technology. Sheriff Fitzgerald represents the NSA on several boards and committees and is a board member of the FirstNet Board of Directors.

**Tim Flakoll**

*State Senator, North Dakota*

State Senator Tim Flakoll is a Republican from North Dakota's 44<sup>th</sup> District. First elected in 1998, he serves as chair of the Senate Education committee and previously served for 10 years as the chair of the Senate Agriculture committee. Flakoll is the provost of Tri-College University. He previously served as general manager of the Fargo Moorhead RedHawks minor league baseball team.

**Bob Fox**

*Founder and CEO, NewSpace Inc.; Founder and Board Chair, Casa de Salud*

Established in 1984 NewSpace was the first closet remodeling company in the St. Louis region. Today they also sell contract furniture and retail store fixtures worldwide. In 2009 Fox founded Casa de Salud, a health and wellness center for new immigrants, which in 2012 served over 10,000 patient visits. He was instrumental in forming the St. Louis Regional Taskforce on Immigration and Innovation in 2012 and that year received the prestigious St. Louis Award for his leadership work in the community.

**Suresh V. Garimella**

*Associate Vice President for Engagement, Purdue University*

Suresh Garimella is associate vice president for engagement and R. Eugene and Susie E. Goodson Distinguished Professor in the School of Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University. He is also director of the National Science Foundation Cooling Technologies Research Center. Garimella has served as Jefferson Science Fellow at the US Department of State since August 2010. Most recently, he was appointed senior fellow of the State Department's Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas.

**Mark Gerstle**

*Vice President, Cummins Inc.*

Mark R. Gerstle joined Cummins Inc. in 1988. He previously worked at IBM. A lifelong Indiana resident, Gerstle sits on over nine area boards, working to improve education through roles with the Indiana Commission on Higher Education and Columbus Education Coalition.

**Susan Gzesh**

*Senior Lecturer and Executive Director, Human Rights Program, The University of Chicago*

Susan Gzesh has been Executive Director of the Human Rights Program and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Chicago since 2001. She is an attorney, of counsel to Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym.

**Lisa Sharon Harper**

*Director of Mobilizing, Sojourners*

Lisa Sharon Harper was the founding executive director of New York Faith & Justice. She has written extensively on the role of government, tax reform, comprehensive immigration reform, healthcare reform, poverty, racial justice, and transformational civic engagement. Her faith-rooted approach to advocacy and organizing has activated people of faith across the United States and around the world to address structural and political injustice as an outward demonstration of their personal faith.

**Larry Hartwig**

*Mayor, Village of Addison, Illinois; Chairman, Board of Directors, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus*

Lawrence Hartwig started his career in Papua New Guinea, where he served as a teacher with the New Guinea Lutheran Mission. Upon returning to the United States, Mayor Hartwig sought further education alongside a long career of teaching and serving as a junior high principal. He has served four terms as mayor of Addison in Chicago's suburbs, serves as chairman of the diversity task force of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, and has served as chairman of the board of directors of the caucus.

**Lester Heitke**

*Former Mayor, Willmar, Minnesota*

Lester Heitke served as the mayor of Willmar, Minnesota, for 16 years. He is a licensed psychologist and is currently working full time for Project Turnabout in West Central Minnesota with adults who have alcohol and chemical addiction problems and gambling addiction problems.

**Bob Holden**

*Former Governor, Missouri*

From 2001 until 2005 Governor Bob Holden served as governor of Missouri. He is now chairman of the

Midwest US-China Association, a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that encourages commerce between 12 states in the Midwestern United States and China. He also founded the Holden Public Policy Forum at Webster University, where he lectures as a visiting professor.

**Reverend Dennis H. Holtschneider, CM**

*President, DePaul University*

Father Dennis Holtschneider is president of DePaul University. A Vincentian priest ordained in 1989, he holds degrees in mathematics and theology and a doctoral degree in higher education policy from Harvard University. He is a director of the Ascension Health Alliance and the Chicago History Museum.

**Joshua Hoyt**

*Chief Strategy Executive, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights*

Joshua Hoyt works with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, which has helped to make Illinois one of the most immigrant-friendly states in the United States. Hoyt has testified before Congress and published opinion pieces and articles in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Washington Post*, and *The Huffington Post*, among others.

**Kareem M. Irfan, Esq.**

*President, Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago*

Kareem Irfan served as the first Muslim president of the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago and chairman of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago. Currently the chief strategy officer and general counsel for a global IT company, he has led and advised the US State Department on leadership and interfaith delegations for community bridge-building and counterextremism initiatives across the world.

**Gopal Khanna**

*Senior Fellow, Technological Leadership Institute, University of Minnesota*

Gopal Khanna is founder and CEO of Winsarr, Inc., a Minneapolis based hi-tech start-up. He previously served as a member of Governor Tim Pawlenty's cabinet and in President George W. Bush's administration. Khanna is currently chair of Minnesota's first Summit on Cyber Security. He

serves as a member of the board of advisors of For My Children, a Minneapolis based start-up venture, and member of the board of directors of Pathways to Children.

**Biju Kulathakal**

*Chairman and Founder, Trading Block*

Biju Kulathakal is an entrepreneur and venture investor. He is currently chairman of Trading Block Holdings Inc. TradingBlock is an online trading and investing company that focuses on investors who trade options. He is also a venture partner at OCA Ventures. OCA is a venture capital firm that focuses on technology investing. Biju was also one of the early partners at GetAMovie, which was later sold to McDonalds and is now RedBox. He is also the founder and president of Vidya Foundation, which gives scholarships to children in developing countries to attend high school.

**Ngoan Le**

*Vice President, Program, The Chicago Community Trust*

As vice president of program, Ngoan Le oversees grant-making strategies. Immigrant integration is an integral component of funding support at the Trust for all program areas, including education, workforce development, health, human services and the arts. Ngoan Le served in leadership positions in state and local government prior to her work at the Trust. She was a presidential appointee on President Clinton's Advisory Commission for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and is a refugee from Vietnam.

**Joseph LeValley**

*Senior Vice President, Planning and Advocacy, Mercy Medical Center*

Joseph LeValley has been a part of the Mercy system for 28 years. He is a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives. He also serves on the Iowa Business Council Deputy Committee and the Iowa Hospital Association Council on Representation & Advocacy.

**Jamie Merisotis**

*President and CEO, Lumina Foundation*

Jamie P. Merisotis is president and CEO of the Lumina Foundation. Before joining Lumina in 2008,

Merisotis was founding president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Merisotis' work has been published extensively in the higher education field. Merisotis serves on the board of numerous institutions around the globe, including the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and Anatolia College in Thessaloniki, Greece. He also serves as president of the Economic Club of Indiana.

### **Darryl D. Morin**

*President and CEO, Advanced Wireless, Inc.*

Darryl Morin is the president and CEO of Advanced Wireless, Inc., providing unified enterprise mobility solutions to corporations, schools, and healthcare providers. Morin is the immediate past state director for the League of United Latin American Citizens.

### **Don Morton**

*Site Leader, Microsoft Campus in Fargo*

After serving as head coach at North Dakota State University, the University of Tulsa, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Don Morton returned to North Dakota State as the assistant to the president and director of university relations. He later joined Great Plains Software as chief of staff for CEO Doug Burgum before joining Microsoft.

### **Maria Nevai**

*Manager, Global Michigan Initiative*

Maria Nevai has spent the past two years developing and implementing statewide "talent enhancement" programs for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, including Global Michigan. She serves on the Global Michigan leadership team and Global Talent Retention advisory board and is a member of the Global Detroit partner network and the Michigan Economic Developers Association. Nevai is first-generation Hungarian.

### **Juan A. Ochoa**

*President and CEO, Miramar International Group*

Juan Ochoa was previously CEO of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority, which owns and operates McCormick Place and historic Navy Pier in Chicago. Ochoa also served for 10 years as the president and CEO of the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

### **Jeanette Hernandez Prenger**

*Founder and CEO, ECCO Select*

Under Prenger's leadership, ECCO Select has survived and thrived through a variety of economic and industry climates. ECCO has been recognized as a Kansas City Top 25 MBE/WBE IT staffing company, a Kansas City Top 10 small business, and as one of the nation's top 500 Hispanic Businesses. Recently, Prenger was appointed to the Latino Coalition Board. She serves on a variety of paid and not-for-profit organizations that deal with business, education, and the arts.

### **Sylvia Puente**

*Executive Director, Latino Policy Forum*

Sylvia Puente has served as executive director of the Latino Policy Forum since 2009. She has been recognized as one of the "100 Most Influential Hispanics" in America by *Hispanic Business* magazine. She has studied immigrant integration in Spain, Israel, and Mexico. In 2009 she was awarded a fellowship by the Chicago Community Trust to continue her global work in this field.

### **John Rosenow**

*CEO and Co-Owner, Rosenholm-Wolfe Dairy and Cowsmo Inc.*

John Rosenow also helped found Puentes/Bridges, a nonprofit that takes farmers to Mexico to learn the language and to visit the villages where their employees come from. In addition, he offers entrepreneurship classes to his Mexican employees so that if and when they return to Mexico, they can start their own businesses.

### **Elena Segura**

*Director, Office for Immigrant Affairs, Archdiocese of Chicago*

Elena Segura is the founding director of the archdiocesan Office for Immigrant Affairs and Immigration Education, the first US diocesan office dedicated to immigrant issues. In 2010 the new Office for Immigrant Affairs launched an Immigrant-to-Immigrant Ministry, which empowers immigrants to engage in service and justice actions, grooming them as leaders for their parish communities.

### **Alejandro Silva**

*Chairman and CEO, Evans Food Group*

Alejandro Silva is the chairman of Evans Food Group, Ltd., a Chicago company founded in 1947. Under Silva's leadership, Evans Food Group has become the largest private label pork rind manufacturer in the world, with plants in Ohio, California, Texas, and Mexico. Silva serves on the board of directors of Chicago's PrivateBancorp, Inc. (PVTB Nasdaq), Walgreen Co., Museum of Science Industry in Chicago, The Field Museum, Chicago Symphony, and the Commercial Club of Chicago. He is also chairman of the finance, audit, and budgeting committee for the Chicago Transit Authority.

### **Steve Tobocman**

*Director, Global Detroit*

Steve Tobocman has spent the past two years spearheading Global Detroit, a regional economic revitalization strategy for the Detroit area focused on immigration and global connections. From 2003 to 2008 he served as the state representative from Michigan's 12<sup>th</sup> State House District in southwestern Detroit, one of the state's largest immigrant communities.

### **Sandra Vargas**

*President and CEO, The Minneapolis Foundation*

Sandra Vargas oversees one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the country. She previously served as Hennepin County administrator and worked with the Minnesota Department of Economic Development. She was profiled in the book *Heroes Among Us*, was awarded the Medal of Honor from St. Catherine's University in 2010, and received the Caux Roundtable's Outstanding Citizenship Award in 2012.

### **David Vásquez-Levy**

*Campus Pastor, Luther College*

Pastor David Vásquez is one of the campus pastors at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Following the devastating May 12, 2008, immigration raid in Postville, Iowa, he served as part of the Postville Relief Effort core team, working in areas of coordination, advocacy, and legal support. He is an author and has spoken at various regional and national events on issues of immigration, exploring the connection between migration narratives in the Bible and in people's lives.

### **Baldemar Velasquez**

*President, Farm Labor Organizing Committee*

Baldemar Velasquez has dedicated his life to improving the working and living conditions of countless migrant farmworkers and their families. His efforts led to the formation of independent commissions in the United States and Mexico to negotiate and oversee collective bargaining rights for farmworkers. He has published several articles and collaborated on books that address the plight of migrant farmworkers.

### **Reverend Norman G. Wilson**

*Coordinator, Intercultural Studies Department, Indiana Wesleyan University, The Wesleyan Church*

Dr. Norman Wilson is an ordained minister of The Wesleyan Church. He has served as pastor of Free Methodist churches in Indianapolis, as a Wesleyan missionary in Peru and Puerto Rico, as director of PACE (Program for Accelerating College Education) at Houghton College, and as director of International Ministries for Global Partners of The Wesleyan Church overseeing ministries in over 60 countries.

## **Lead Writer/Project Director**

### **Tamar Jacoby**

*President and CEO, ImmigrationWorks USA*

Tamar Jacoby is president and CEO of ImmigrationWorks USA, a national federation of small business owners working to advance better immigration law. She is a nationally known journalist and author. Her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Weekly Standard* and *Foreign Affairs*, among other publications, and she is a regular guest on national television and radio. She is author of *Someone Else's House: America's Unfinished Struggle for Integration*, and editor of *Reinventing the Melting Pot: The New Immigrants and What It Means To Be American*, a collection of essays about immigrant integration. From 1989 to 2007, she was a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. Before that, she was a senior writer and justice editor for Newsweek. From 1981 to 1987, she was the deputy editor of *The New York Times* op-ed page. She is currently a Schwartz Fellow at the New America Foundation.

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