

Cleveland Needs Immigrants
Why and How to Welcome More Foreign Born Residents

by Becky Gaylord, independent consultant
to the
Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland
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Author’s note

This report contains three sections. The first part explores why this region should act to increase immigration. The others discuss how. The second part proposes, describes and includes action steps for seven program areas designated as new Centers and Initiatives. The third part sketches details of 31 strategies, which are the components of the Centers and Initiatives.

The information presented is believed to be accurate. Considerable care was taken to fact check. But some omissions or inaccuracies are, regrettably, possible considering the depth of data examined and the two-month time frame under which the research was conducted and assembled.

Becky Gaylord, April 2010

“If I were giving a young man advice as to how he might succeed in life, I would say to him, ‘Pick out a good father and mother, and begin life in Ohio.’”

–Wilbur Wright, January 10, 1910

One hundred years ago, Wilbur Wright was probably right. A few years before that, he and his brother Orville invented the first successful powered airplane in Ohio. The state pulsed with innovation and growth – especially its largest city. People surged into Cleveland. By 1910, more than 560,000 people lived there. They shaped ideas into products and businesses. They worked. They built schools, stores and churches in the nation’s sixth largest city. They nurtured neighborhoods, formed civic clubs, raised families and encouraged more relatives and friends to come, too. Others followed. And by 1920, more than one-third of Cleveland residents had been born in another country.

Today, only five percent of the residents in Greater Cleveland are foreign born. As the proportion of locals claiming a foreign birth sits near the lowest mark in a century, the economy suffers. That’s not just coincidence.

Of the 25 largest Metropolitan areas, including Cleveland, the cities with the fastest economic growth since 1990 also had the fastest growing immigrant populations, according to analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data by the nonpartisan Fiscal Policy Institute. “There is no doubt that immigration and economic growth go hand in,” it found. The cities that experienced the slowest economic growth in those years – and Cleveland fell into that group – also had among the smallest increase in immigrants as a share of their labor forces, it concluded in a report released in December 2009.

What comes first – economic growth or immigration? The answer is they happen together. Migrants, from within this country or outside its borders, come to take skilled jobs and start new businesses. Word of opportunity spreads, and more people come. As the economy grows, less skilled migrants arrive. More investment occurs to meet new, expanding needs (just as it did in Cleveland at the turn of the 20th century.) And increasing population creates demand for less-skilled jobs, benefitting migrants as well as less-educated native residents.

In recent times, Cleveland hasn’t sparked much economic growth or immigration. The region must reverse disastrous economic trends. Most took shape over decades. But they, and their consequences, have grown unavoidable.

The Great Recession has damaged this nation’s workers and companies. Jobs have hemorrhaged from Cleveland and across the state. While economic growth is returning, it will take years to heal deeply inflicted wounds.

The injuries hurt Ohio more than many places. Ohio had never climbed back to its employment levels before the last recession struck in 2001. Consider this: Ohio's goods-producing sector, which includes manufacturing, mining and logging, lost almost 40 percent of all jobs since 2000, state data show.

Governments are stretched to the breaking point. The tax base has shrunk so much that, for the first time, Cuyahoga County Treasurer Jim Rokakis projects the county's tax revenue will drop. The same will happen with state tax revenue. Governments have slashed services and cut staff even as demands continue to grow. They face looming budget holes temporarily plugged with federal stimulus money that won't be available again. Ohio's budget gap could swell to \$7 billion in 2012 – a debt of about \$615 for every man, woman and child living in the state.

Demographic trends compound these employment and fiscal predicaments. People are leaving. They have been for generations, but the bleak exodus has become more urgent. Ohio lost 338,000 native-born residents just from 2000 to 2008, according to U.S. Census Bureau data analyzed by the Brookings Institution. That loss might be close to the total current population left in Cleveland when the results from the 2010 Census are counted. During the decade, Cleveland suffered the fastest pace of decline of any major U.S. city except one: New Orleans. Even if Cleveland stays above 400,000 – a size it bested about a century ago, while on the upswing – a significant drop will surely be confirmed.

What's more, the average age of remaining residents in Greater Cleveland is near 40, the oldest of all big U.S. metro areas. That means more people are no longer working or paying income taxes. The pressures of an aging population and staggering unemployment have stressed the public health care system that serves low income, disabled and older residents. Medicaid now covers about two million Ohioans – nearly one of every five adult residents in the state.

Together, these indicators point to calamity for this region's economy and future. Yet a clear response exists: Increasing immigration would not only combat, but also reverse these trends. Research and evidence prove it.

More immigrants would mean more people – people who would become desperately needed students, customers, homebuyers and taxpayers. But luring more immigrants to this region wouldn't simply stop the slide in population that's drained resources. It would also turbocharge the economy. If Greater Cleveland could get, and keep, more immigrants, it would boost brainpower, create businesses, revive neighborhoods and incite youthful innovators.

Greater Cleveland already gains from immigrants and the investment they bring. This region took in a big chunk of the \$500 million in economic impact that foreign students made in Ohio in 2008, according to the International Investment Institute. And economic development projects, including the retail, residential and commercial office complex that will rise on the East Bank of the Flats of the Cuyahoga River, benefit from foreign investors who *each* agree to spend \$500,000 and create at least ten jobs as part of applications for certain U.S. visas, which grant permanent residency here.

Consistently across metropolitan areas, immigrants contribute to economic output in proportion to their representation of the population. In some places, though, including Cleveland, the foreign-born contribute more to economic output than their share of the population, research of the 25 largest metropolitan areas from the non-partisan Fiscal Policy Institute found. Immigrants in Greater Cleveland make up about five percent of the population, but six percent of the work force and seven percent of the economic output. This is due to the mix of immigrants who've come – from programmers, surgeons and medical techs to tool and die workers.

Immigrants are more likely to be of working age than their U.S.-born counterparts. That's also true in Ohio, even though immigrants make up a much smaller share of the population than in the nation, overall. In Ohio in 2008, almost two-thirds of immigrants were of working age, which the U.S. Census Bureau characterizes as between the age of 18 and 54. Among the native-born residents, by comparison, just over half were of working age, Census data show.

Foreign-born workers are spread throughout the economy and are more likely to start businesses, as well. Immigrants draw less in public benefits than they pay in taxes (under federal law, most immigrants – including lawful, permanent residents – can't get social security insurance or food stamps.) If Ohio had more immigrants, the impact, inevitably, would lead to more workers, more business, more economic output and more tax revenue.

Immigrants aren't merely industrious, they're talented. Despite the misperceptions some hold, foreign-born residents in Greater Cleveland are more educated, make more money and are more likely to hold a management or professional job than the native-born population. Based on the Migration Policy Institute's analysis of the most recent data:

- About 40 percent of Ohio's foreign-born population age 25 and older had a bachelor's or higher degree. That compares with just over 23 percent of native-born Ohioans above age 25 who had a bachelor's or higher degree.
- More than 38 percent of Ohio's foreign-born population working full-time and year round earned \$50,000 or more. This compares with a little less than 35 percent of native-born Ohioans working full-time and year round earning \$50,000 or more.
- Of the foreign-born, civilian employed population age 16 and older in Ohio, almost 42 percent worked in management, professional and related occupations. In comparison, only one-third of the native-born civilian employed population age 16 and older worked in management, professional, and related occupations.

In addition to the strong work force and educational experience immigrants bring to their adopted homeland, they also bestow a diversity that supports innovation and entrepreneurialism. Foreign-born students and other immigrants start U.S. companies, and file patents for ideas they've developed here, in greater numbers than their native-born counterparts, research shows.

And businesses headed by immigrants create jobs in America for other Americans. “While many Americans might perceive immigrants as competition for a limited supply of jobs, many immigrants end up making, rather than taking, jobs,” the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation concluded in a March 2010 report. Fast-growing, young firms generate about 10 percent of new jobs in any given year, according to the foundation, which supports entrepreneurship. Among its policy suggestions? Target immigrants and universities because they help produce high-growth firms but too often suffer from policy bottlenecks restricting opportunities.

Examples abound that show international investment leads to employment and economic growth. In Ohio, one of the largest employers, and its most successful auto company, is Japan’s Honda. Direct employment tops 16,000. And a largely Ohio-centered supply chain supports 80,000 more jobs in 52 of the state’s 88 counties. The company buys \$7 billion in parts and materials from Ohio suppliers *each year*, state data show. Indirect spending fuels tens of thousands of more jobs that contribute to local economic growth.

The message is spreading: international investors and immigrants and the innovation they bring lead to vibrant economies and cities. Evidence is now deep and persuasive. And it’s prompted cities that haven’t attracted as many immigrants in recent decades – including rust belt towns such as Detroit and Pittsburgh – to unfurl new plans for luring and keeping foreign-born residents.

Greater Cleveland already has scores of groups providing services to immigrants. Some were formed by immigrants who moved here, stayed and then reached out to others. The assistance they offer has an enormous impact on newcomers and this community.

But this region needs more immigrants. And to do that, the region needs effective, cohesive strategies toward attracting and retaining foreign-born residents. It must:

- Create a broad, clever approach to welcome immigrants and their families;
- Ease immigrants’ transition into the economy and the community;
- Support those in the public, private and non-profit sectors who assist immigrants;
- Connect immigration programs so the work is more effective and informed;
- Lower the barriers employers perceive and confront when hiring immigrants; and,
- Infuse international awareness into all economic development programs.

It’s time for Greater Cleveland to remember its roots; long ago, immigrants weren’t on their own. They were received by a city that realized it needed to help newcomers adjust. The community created approaches that encouraged people to settle in, learn the language and customs and find work, shelter and a place to worship.

Here's just a sample of what happened:

In the late 1800s, the flood of immigrants was so steady, police met new arrivals at the railroad station to help them and protect them from swindlers.

Neighborhood leaders and philanthropists created settlement houses in ethnic communities that provided nurseries to care for children while their immigrant mothers worked. They also offered clubs, classes, recreation and community centers. More than a dozen sprang up. One of the oldest, the Alta House – named for John D. Rockefeller's daughter – on Mayfield Road on Murray Hill in Little Italy is still there today.

Those who weren't proficient in English received language classes in the city's public elementary schools and at factories and other employers. And a library built in 1904 in Broadway, a Czech area also known as Little Bohemia, offered books for immigrants in about 15 languages.

The Art Museum offered programs from ethnic groups in English on weekends, under a Homelands Exhibit, according to research from Annette B. Fromm, an assistant professor at Florida International University. "Historian Welling Fordyce in 1936 suggested that Cleveland 'might wear the title of The Foreign City as well as that of The Forest City, which it so proudly advertises,'" she wrote.

Back then, the programs and services sprang up after the immigrants arrived. Now, in trying to attract and retain more foreign-born residents, the region must create and connect, proactively. One thing that hasn't changed is that networks of friends and family already in place draw still more immigrants. Cleveland can seed and nurture those networks and the clusters that form as people from one place relocate and seek to live together.

To be sure, challenges exist. Some groups in this community will protest that efforts to help immigrants are misplaced. They fear that immigrants will be getting something that's being taken away elsewhere. And while economic research shows definitively that, over time, more immigrants mean more jobs and more growth, that turnaround won't occur quickly or smoothly enough for critics. We must build understanding within the community. Leaders and advocates must offer solutions that address the valid concerns. Economic inequities in this region have worsened divisions. And strategies aimed at restoring prosperity must be inclusive and comprehensive.

Still, the future of this region depends on repopulating Cleveland. And that includes attracting people from other countries. With thoughtful and well-executed strategies, it can be done. And it must be done. Cleveland needs immigrants to help it save itself.

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What follows sketches a wide range of strategies this region could take to welcome immigrants, to celebrate their contributions and to ease their transition into the community and the economy.

More than 30 strategies are grouped into seven program areas.

Three are major Centers that would require significant planning, coordination, resources and effort. They would serve distinct roles, yet their work would be interrelated. They could have a transformational impact on the economy.

The other four are Initiatives that would require fewer resources to carry out, but still would need crucial – and in some cases, controversial – support from political, civic, educational, arts and cultural communities and stakeholders.

Extensive interviews, survey results, research and information gleaned from visits to Detroit and Philadelphia formed the basis of the 31 strategies. They are bold and comprehensive. Some of the strategies are being pursued by other cities; some are being pursued in this region, already; and others don't have known models – they are simply good ideas.

The proposed Centers and Initiatives, and the strategies that form their foundations, are presented in detail and include descriptions, background and suggestions for implementation. The framework and action steps are not prescriptions; rather, they are intended to help guide progress. The Centers are outlined in greater detail because they would require entirely new infrastructure. The Initiatives, by comparison, would more likely be married to existing programs.

To make an impact, Greater Cleveland wouldn't need to tackle everything at once. Indeed, doing so is not likely even possible. Nonetheless, it's hoped these ideas will further conversations already occurring in this community around increasing immigration – and lead to swift action.

Strategic Immigration Proposals to Boost Northeast Ohio's Economy

What

- **Support** immigrants, their families and employers
- **Ease** immigrants' transition into the economy and community
- **Connect, accelerate and build** on what's already working in the region
- **Fill** existing gaps that hinder success
- **Link** public and private partners
- **Identify** targets and needs; design and promote programs to meet them

How

- Make transformational, sustained economic impact in Cleveland and across the region
- Need significant and new resources, infrastructure and support from partners
 1. Greater Cleveland Global Welcome Center
 2. Cleveland Plus International Economy Center
 3. Center for Population Research and Analysis
- Create critical contributions but can work mostly through existing efforts and partners
- Some need new resources; community consensus and political will are just as crucial
 1. International Higher Education Initiatives
 2. County Government Program Initiatives
 3. Urban Youth Knowledge Initiatives
 4. Arts and Culture Program Initiatives

Greater Cleveland Global Welcome Center

Convener

Board of Directors and Executive Director of a Global Welcome Center

Components

The Greater Cleveland Global Welcome Center incorporates nine strategies:

Menu of Services to Welcome and Connect Immigrants	pg. 45
Refugee Resettlement Programs	pg. 47
Neighborhood Revitalization and Stabilization Initiatives	pg. 49
Civic-Life Mentors for Immigrants, Refugees and Families	pg. 52
Translation Services for Government, Corporate and Nonprofit Clients	pg. 55
Cross-cultural Awareness/Education Programs	pg. 62
Ethnic Media, Business and Organization Directory	pg. 67
International Newcomers Welcoming Campaign	pg. 68
Cultural Ambassador Programs	pg. 73

Objective

The Greater Cleveland Global Welcome Center is a cornerstone of the region's comprehensive immigrant attraction and retention strategies. It recognizes the powerful economic and creative contributions that immigrants make. And it aims to seize those benefits for this region – indeed to reclaim them, considering that immigrants helped shape Cleveland's early strength, innovation, success and growth.

Through its activities and programs, the Center increases the number of immigrants who come to Cleveland and to encourage them to stay. It promotes economic development. And its goals include easing and quickening immigrants' transition into the community and the local economy and helping connect them to social, cultural and business networks.

The Center links existing programs aimed at reinvigorating urban neighborhoods to efforts that would help repopulate Cleveland by attracting, retaining and connecting foreign-born residents.

Overview

Bold and comprehensive, the Center would provide a full range of social, health and human services and job-related assistance for international residents new to Greater Cleveland, both on-site and through a well-developed Internet presence. These services could include help with resettlement; language training, translation and interpretation services and ESOL classes; health and behavioral care; cultural training and life skills classes; mentoring, transportation, childcare, housing and advocacy across many areas, such as dealing with bureaucracy and institutions.

Available services could also include employment screening, training and job placement. New arrivals with few skills and resources would need vocation-specific ESOL training, as well as help to start climbing a career ladder. Skilled immigrants would likely need re-training and help getting professional credentials recognized – often a slow and complicated process. They would also need help with acculturation, learning about the job market and seeking work.

The Greater Cleveland Global Welcome Center would help assemble databases of civic and professional people and resources. It would also be a clearinghouse of information, including businesses, organizations, media and ambassadors – or ethnic leaders in the community willing to guide others around town or to attend trade missions overseas.

It could also be the center of a campaign aimed at native-born residents in the region to encourage them to welcome immigrants within their communities and recognize their social and economic contributions.

Details

The Welcome Center would interact with immigrants and all groups that help them. It would include language teachers, job counselors, case managers or social workers, information-technology managers, among others. The Center could help manage the inventory of services being offered in the community. This might include information about who received the services, in which languages and where.

Partners, themselves, would continue to offer the many services they do already, but the Center could coordinate activity, track demands in capacity and also fill gaps in services that are determined to be crucial to the target population. Electronic information capture and flow by the Welcome Center – its virtual presence, in other words – would be a crucial part of that idea's success.

It would recruit ambassadors and manage a database of them – leaders in ethnic business or civic communities – who would welcome immigrants. In videos on the Welcome Center’s web site, they could tell stories about how they came to Cleveland, what their favorite places and things are about the area and the challenges they confronted. These ambassadors could also answer immigrants’ queries or pass them to a more appropriate source. A crucial role would also be to help connect immigrants who come to the region and need to find their way in the community. Many immigrants will have friends or family, but others would need to know where in the community to find the places, people and things that will make them more at home and that might encourage them to stay.

The Center could recruit and screen volunteers and train them in the best ways to assist immigrants. It could gather crucial information from volunteers, such as their gender, ethnicity, faith, age group, whether they can offer transportation and the languages they speak and write. Fingerprinting volunteers should be considered, in light of the vulnerability of this population and the position of trust the mentors take on.

Staff at the Center could coordinate and track how many immigrants get paired with mentors, from which countries or cultures they’ve arrived from, and where the new arrivals are living and working. Through setting up clever information technology systems, the Center could help immigration groups better coordinate and handle volunteer capacity, which ebbs and flows, especially for refugee resettlement groups, which handle assignments from the federal government with often little notice.

The Welcome Center would become a clearinghouse of information about ethnic groups, clubs, churches, businesses and media. It would also promote events through an online calendar and other means. Immigrants, prospective immigrants and anyone else could learn about cultural programs and events in Greater Cleveland by checking out one place. Clearly, social media would play a major role with event publicity and in keeping target populations connected and informed.

While its web-based set up would be crucial, its physical presence, and that of its staff would likely enable the Center make the biggest economic impact possible. Literally and symbolically, the Center should offer a beacon to newcomers. And the classes and events held at the center would pay dividends. Finding immigrants appropriate jobs and teaching them English would bring economic returns to them and their families, their employers and the entire region.

Evidence shows that intensive job counseling for immigrants and communication with employers improves placement success and time on the job. This interaction would include one-on-one screening for intake, preparing a resume and filling out job applications. It also would rely on staff visiting prospective job sites, giving briefings before immigrants go for interviews, seeking feedback when job offers are not extended and following up with employers after job placement.

The Center would have one main location, and perhaps several satellite offices that could be co-located with partnering service providers in neighborhoods where many residents use its services. At the main office, the Center could offer space for meetings and classes, staff assistance on project basis, a platform for coordinating events and a venue for appropriate gatherings or programs. It should be an inviting place, perhaps with an international cafeteria and ethnic newspapers to read, and staffed by people from various cultures.

A Global Welcome Center could support its partners with public advocacy, information technology and management and administration, among other things. That would benefit the entire region. For example, if services, such as links to early employment, were located more efficiently, the region could resettle more refugees. That would mean more federal funds to serve more immigrants authorized to work – immigrants who could persuade their relatives to move here. With support, resettlement agencies could do more. For instance, they could lobby more aggressively for grants and other federal funds to help resettle more refugees. These partners might benefit from more concentrated, coordinated outreach to public policymakers when seeking funds and negotiating in other areas.

Its public advocacy could include partnering with the group Welcoming America and creating a campaign focusing on three approaches – community organizing, communications and public engagement – to reduce anxiety and promote conversations in communities across the country about the social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration. David Lubell, who heads Welcoming America, helps local affiliates run public information campaigns – including bus and billboard ads, posters, Op-Ed pieces, earned media, resolutions by city councils. The group has conducted polling that shows opinions shifted in the communities with its affiliates.

Challenges

The most important challenge facing the Greater Cleveland Global Welcome Center might be its comprehensive and coordinated goals. As conceived, this Center would likely be among the broadest and most ambitious organization of its type in this country.

Many cities that have created centers akin to this have chosen to segment the services offered. Philadelphia, for example, offers extensive and successful workforce screening, job training and placement through its Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians. But other non-profit and faith-based groups handle most of the social services for immigrants and for refugee resettlement in that city. Other cities, including New York and Boston, have linked their Welcome offices for immigrants into the Mayor's office. This is symbolically important (and Cuyahoga County should create such an office that could work and partner with the Global Welcome Center). However, by definition, when a city locates its immigration welcome function in a public-sector agency it also limits the types and breadth of services that can be offered.

From the outset, framers of the Greater Cleveland Global Welcome Center would acknowledge its ambition. A staged rollout could be constructed, where phases would bring new outreach, services and goals and a broader scope. It's advisable to set bold goals but start with modest objectives. Thorough planning, sincere collaboration and extensive research would be crucial. Yet, with significant commitment from community leaders, funders and the board, in time, the Center could contribute mightily to the regional economy and population growth.

Clearly, accountability must be built into operations. Training programs would rely on industry projections to respond to demand. And a new academic center might help with data analysis to help with other projections and also with analysis of program performance. The Center would have to be able to show who has been assisted and how. The targets and measures built into workforce-related program would give evidence of what is working and what is not. Funders, including County programs providing federal funds, would insist on the data.

In this area, cutting edge information technology and management would be as crucial to its operations as communications and marketing. The Center would have to track the outcome of its social service and job training efforts. At least one full-time auditor would need to track down pay stubs and other documentation. (For its programs to be effective, the Center would also have to keep its databases of ambassadors and directories and groups and businesses and events current and accurate.)

Funding could come from business groups and foundations. Some of the Center's programs, such as translation and interpretation services, should generate enough revenue that they would help the Center to partially sustain itself. Most of the programs wouldn't likely pay for themselves. The Center should track the residents it helps attract and retain and be able to evaluate the economic impact on the region over years and decades.

Action Steps

The Greater Cleveland Global Welcome Center's framers and funders should next:

- Hire an executive director and administrative and consulting assistance
- Commit to adequate funding for initial phase to launch a Center with some functions
- Commit to a design and architecture phase to plan strategic growth in stages
- Identify resources, offerings and sites
- Work with partners and collaborators to avoid duplication and offer support
- Team with business and nonprofit partners to ensure services are helpful and responsive
- Meet and plan with government agencies with complementary and intersecting goals
- Solicit and consider feedback, advice or concerns from the community
- Set goals and ways to gauge progress, enable adjustments and support growth

The Cleveland Plus International Economy Center

Convener

Greater Cleveland Partnership

Components

The Cleveland Plus International Economy Center supports ten strategies:

Professional Panel for Immigrant Visa Coordination/Planning	pg. 48
Micro-Loan/Technical Help for Immigrant, Minority-Owned Businesses	pg. 50
Minority and Immigrant Regional Business Alliance	pg. 54
Foreign-Born Temp Agency of Talent to Supply Regional Start-Up Firms	pg. 56
Job Portal for Workers, Employers in Ohio, Accessible by Immigrants	pg. 57
Concierge Services for International Businesses	pg. 58
Mentor Program/Network for International Business People	pg. 63
Leveraging and Growing EB-5 Investor Visa Program	pg. 70
Coordinate Foreign Investment Attraction and Trade Missions	pg. 74
Market Region Internationally as a Tourist Destination	pg. 75

Objective

The Cleveland Plus International Economy Center helps Northeast Ohio to capture a significant increase in value – worth millions, and maybe billions of dollars – that foreign-born entrepreneurs and investors could create in this region, including jobs and businesses. It links international investors and foreign-born entrepreneurs efficiently into the region and creates opportunities by bridging gaps that foreign-born businesspeople face when trying to break into this market. The connections and support provided lower barriers and create networks that lead to more entrepreneurial and economic activity.

This Center works largely within existing public- and private-sector programs and groups. But it also creates some fresh and customized support services. It recognizes the unique needs international investors have as outsiders by introducing local market insights and connections. Tactics the center and its partners employ encourage foreign-born inventors and business people to plant their ideas and their lives in Northeast Ohio. Its goal is helping the regional economy to grow and diversify.

Connections that the Center creates drive the growth of Ohio businesses and business groups, as well. Minority business owners and groups are crucial to this equation and are incorporated in the center's conception and execution. Links to existing businesses and business groups are important. And one sign of the center's success is seeing local companies expanding their exports, networks and partnerships.

Overview

The Cleveland Plus International Economy Center would create opportunities and widen networks by bringing together businesspeople from local and international chambers of commerce and ethnic and minority business groups. Mentorship could smooth the acculturation process for foreign-born entrepreneurs, and this center could play a crucial role by matching candidates with mentors. The Center could also assemble a database of ambassadors, or business and civic leaders within local ethnic communities and encourage their inclusion on local and international investment pitches and other quests for business and trade with a multicultural component. The ambassadors could also act as guides and civic connectors when overseas clients and investors visit Greater Cleveland.

Many services would likely be offered online, or at least not at a fixed, specific location, and make use of the talents and experience of partners. Many support services would also promote clever programs that already exist. These include the State of Ohio's Job Portal. And they also include pathways to permanent residency visas for foreign investors (and their families) when they support projects that lead to new commercial ventures and create jobs.

Other strategies the Center might employ would be new programs. But these, too, would rely on existing partners and knowledge. And they might not require significant office space or staff because of relying on experts and providers in the community. The new ideas include:

1. A panel of professional service providers with extensive immigration experience that could vet visa-related issues that might delay or even prevent international investors and workers from settling in Greater Cleveland.
2. Micro-financing and technical assistance that could connect foreign-born investors with small, but vital capital and guidance.
3. Temporary, high-tech talent agency that would let employers to fill short-term labor gaps and enable immigrants to get a toehold into the local employment market.
4. Concierge services that could include lab and office space or other customized services that enable international businesses to save on capital and staff costs while breaking into a new market.

Details

Coordination among the various, inter-related programs offered by the Cleveland Plus International Economy Center would be crucial. Partners would, in fact, provide most of the support services. The Center's main function would be to recruit partners and build networks, to help compile and administer databases, to manage information technology and to make sure that personal and other data collected and provided to business owners and other partners are current and relevant.

It would also be a literal and figurative convener, such as gathering together participants as envisioned under the proposed strategy being called the Minority and Immigrant Regional Business Alliance. Opportunities for new markets, projects and investments, as well as new relationships, could happen through this proposed group.

The Cleveland Plus International Economy Center web site would need to be sophisticated and anticipate users' areas of interest and channel them to programs and to partners. This includes those that are entirely external to this Center, such as the state of Ohio's Jobs Portal, run through its web site: www.OhioMeansJobs.com. Users ought to be able to ask questions in real time or hear back promptly. Queries mustn't end up in a black hole, or users will lack confidence in the system.

For instance, the Professional Panel for Immigrant Visa Coordination/Planning strategy – which would rely on lawyers and accountants who would screen cases early in the process, answer questions and guide international professionals eager to immigrate – could return an investment of millions of dollars to the region if the program were structured well. But set up involves many steps and much coordination and communication.

Here's how this strategy might look: Questions could come in from potential investors and immigrants through a Global Welcome Center or through referrals on the phone or in person. Queries could be routed panel members electronically. The panel member would investigate whether the investor or immigrant might qualify for residency that could be quicker or easier to obtain or that would enable work or contribution to the economy without restrictions. Building in visa planning and coordination upfront, and helping more people stay here, would bring incredible value to Greater Cleveland that might not be captured, otherwise. And it has mutual benefits: Investors and immigrants would get a direct route into networks and a way to slot more easily into the area. And service providers on the professional panel would get new business and clients.

Other proposed strategies the Cleveland Plus International Economy Center could coordinate would also need sophisticated outreach and information technology. Notably, these would include the Concierge Services for International Businesses, the Foreign-Born Temp Agency of Talent and the Mentor Network for International Business People. Synergies exist among these three proposed strategies, in particular. They would all require a customized approach to be successful, but could fill crucial gaps that exist for foreign-born business owners and professionals in this region that no group is directly addressing in a formal, coordinated way. For fund-raising and promotion and marketing purposes, the Center ought to track the business people or the companies served (including their size and industry) and in what ways the services offered help or support. These three might be also bundled, administered, staffed and funded together, if that's warranted.

This Economy Center might offer the same clearinghouse role for businesses and professionals that the Welcome Center would play for immigrants, generally.

International investors could benefit from having one place to start their search for opportunities or support. For instance, it could help connect potential investors – even those currently living overseas – with coordinators of regional centers seeking to pool funds from immigrants who might qualify for a visa class known as EB-5. That requires an investment of at least \$500,000 (in Greater Cleveland, that is; in areas not considered distressed, at least \$1 million is required). But it creates a pathway to permanent residency for those investors. Three regional centers have been formed locally. And research conducted by the Geyer Group and presented to the Cleveland Foundation in October 2009 estimated that Northeast Ohio's centers could raise \$100 million and create 2000 jobs over five years. The EB-5 visa program has raised more than \$1 billion across the nation.

Another strategy the Center could link, and direct queries, to is a Micro-Loan and Technical Assistance Program for Immigrant and Minority-Owned Businesses. Lenders and the city of Cleveland ran micro-finance and technical assistance programs previously. But financial literacy and other support were insufficient. Strong interest remains, but funding would be crucial. And in addition to being prudently underwritten, loans granted under this program could fulfill criteria that revolve around neighborhood redevelopment and job creation. The technical assistance part of the program would need to be re-developed and strengthened if this promising strategy is executed. Mentors could be sought for successful loan applicants. Data could show which areas of the community, and what business sectors, benefited, how many jobs got created and which categories of borrowers got assistance. Data could also keep track of default rates to correct program weaknesses.

For other strategies – such as Coordinating Foreign Investment Attraction and Trade Missions and Marketing the Region Internationally as a Tourist Destination – the Center could provide support, as needed. The Cleveland Plus International Economy Center wouldn't be running these programs. But it would know the international business people who should be tapped for trade missions, investment pitches or other outreach efforts overseas, as well as to be ambassadors, connectors or guides within the region.

Challenges

The challenges of this center would be different than, yet similar to, those facing the Global Welcome Center. Different, in that the Cleveland Plus International Economy Center would support only business-related issues; similar, in that the goals are bold and broad. True transformational impact is sought.

Connecting the various investment and business programs involved would be an enormous undertaking. And, it might be prudent for architects of this center to begin with a narrow slice of the potential partners and strategies, building after experience – and, it is hoped, success – has been gained.

The business and welcome centers would need to work closely together, possibly through staff hired for that job. Web site design and information technology functions, including information management, would be essential to success. It's expected that business development and information technology would both be critical staff roles for supporting the Cleveland Plus International Economy Center's work and its connection to the business community.

Data collection would also be crucial to monitor the impact of this Center. Its effect on the economy – through business creation, financing, investment and other measures – would be essential to its continued funding. And, speaking of sustainability, this center would have to be designed to self-support its functions as quickly as possible. Proof of its impact in the region should help justify its efforts and continued role.

Action Steps

The Cleveland Plus International Economy Center supporters should next:

- Begin design; identify needs for staff and resources
- Prioritize services that support economic development and generate revenue
- Find funding sources to cover new services or staff
- Work with partners and collaborators to avoid duplication and offer relevant support
- Team with business and nonprofit partners to ensure services are helpful and responsive
- Solicit and consider feedback, advice or concerns from business community and partners
- Set goals and ways to gauge progress and enable adjustments

Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis

Convener

Ohio Board of Regents

Components

The Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis incorporates two strategies:

Academic Center on Immigration and Its Regional Impact	pg. 59
Immigrant Recruitment Networks; Second-Landing Program	pg. 69

Objective

This Center helps regional policymakers identify important demographic trends that support proactive strategies on immigration. Enables strategic planners in the public, non-profit and private sectors to assess population trends and formulate projections. Through research and analysis, offers guidance to frame policies and steer targeted decisions, especially as they relate to taking advantage of networks or existing clusters of immigrants. It plays an essential role to assist the work of the Global Welcome Center and the International Economy Center.

Overview

The region faces a significant obstacle to attracting and retaining immigrants: it doesn't have a solid handle on who's coming, from where and why. In essence, the region is flying blind when it comes to increasing immigration because it doesn't know what the baseline is or what strengths it should build on. Planners, public officials, companies and – even providers who assist immigrants on a daily basis – have mostly anecdotes.

Analysis is expensive. Under the current model, unless a client is paying for specific demographic research, it generally doesn't happen. And, if a corporate client seeks the information, it usually isn't shared within the region because the purpose is proprietary or for business purposes. That would be fine, if there were an existing mechanism for the region to gain population- and demographic insight on a wider, shared basis. But there isn't – not for lack of talent but because there are no dedicated resources.

This Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis would correct that lapse and improve the region's information blind spot. Its staff would conduct economic analysis and research to support strategies aimed at attracting and retaining immigrants. It would also examine the region's policies and programs and their impact on population, demographics, neighborhoods, institutions, economy, culture and quality of life. Except for client-driven work the Center would handle, a range of local institutions, organizations and policymakers could use its research and analysis freely.

The Center's work would be especially important considering the goals of using networks of immigrants to turn Greater Cleveland into a "second landing" destination – in other words, to attract to this region foreign-born residents who entered the United States, and initially lived, somewhere else. Retaining immigrants who are already living here is very important. But existing research shows that most immigrants follow networks of family and friends and settle where communities of their countrymen and women already live. The Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis could help policymakers target immigrants through a second landing and assess whether the strategy is working.

Details

We have the talent to do this. Cleveland State University's Maxine Levine College of Urban Affairs parses such data. But its resources are stretched, and it generally pursues that work when corporate or nonprofit clients underwrite it. Ohio State University also has population researchers as well as an Initiative in Population Research, established in 2000. The goal of multidisciplinary program, however, melds population, family and health research and puts it in the context of children's lives. Clearly, the goal of the multidisciplinary program would intersect with, but not provide the kind of data this new Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis would need to produce.

Instead, this center would be seen as providing the facts to drive the policies the region pursues, especially with respect to attracting immigrants as a second landing. Finding out why immigrants relocate within the United States after their arrival could offer critical insight to this region as it frames policies and approaches to attract immigrants.

This is so for at least three reasons:

1. The universe of potential migrants already in living in this nation is immense; therefore, it offers an almost unlimited source of new residents.
2. It's a population that's already navigated the U.S. immigration system and cleared the enormous hurdles facing aspiring immigrants, and so should be a more effective market for Greater Cleveland's outreach than, say, potential immigrants still living abroad.
3. Cleveland has a mix of assets, including a low cost of living and affordable available housing and land, which could put it in a competitive position against some other cities trying now to increase their population through immigration. Learning more about immigrants' decision-making process, however, would be important.

The research this Center could provide would be invaluable to increasing the flow of immigrants. Ohio has a foreign-born population of less than 4 percent, compared with more than 12 percent for the country overall, according to U.S. Census Bureau data analyzed by Professor Mark Salling, of Cleveland State University. The local population has been declining for decades. Still, conditions could be ripe to seize on this strategy of attracting immigrants – whether they come directly to Cleveland or re-settle after having first landed elsewhere in this country.

Here's why: Cleveland lost 126,719 domestic, or native-born, residents from 2000 to 2008. But it gained 25,432 international, or foreign-born, residents in those eight years, according to Census data analyzed by William H. Frey of the Brookings Institution. The same trend played out in the state. Ohio lost 338,667 domestic residents from 2000 to 2008. But the state gained 92,711 international residents in that time. Together, those newcomers would create a city that's larger than Ohio's seventh-largest city, Parma. If not for the offsetting effect of immigrants moving into Ohio during last decade, Ohio would've lost 100,000 more residents.

Research conducted by the Abell Foundation for Baltimore, which wanted to increase foreign-born newcomers annually by five-fold found that, “the attraction of existing populations of immigrants is the most important determinant of where newcomers will settle. Even refugees, who are resettled by government assignment rather than choice,” the report concluded, “tend to migrate after arrival to join groups of their countrymen where they have experienced success.” The Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis could delve into this theory and offer localized insights.

The Center should be located within an academic institution. However, it could be multi-disciplinary and have many researchers connected with it in conjunction with other academic affiliations and subject areas relevant to immigration. The center's experts could host workshops and forums for the public in addition to producing written reports and research.

Fee-paying clients could offset some of its budget, but public policy goals would likely lead to much work for the regional good that would not yield income. Separate funding, through foundations, could supplement revenue.

The Center's work would help inform policy decisions and explore what's working and what's not. It should enable immigration attraction and retention efforts to be more targeted and effective and to help mesh with efforts to revitalize and stabilize neighborhoods.

Challenges

The biggest challenge that might confront this Center is finding sufficient revenue to sustain the significant research and analytical capability it would require. That would likely drive its location, staffing and other decisions about how the work is disseminated. The Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis would be likely regarded by as cost center, not a revenue driver, despite the incredible value its work could bring to regional economic development. Proving the Center's worth at the outset would be essential, particularly in a time of incredible pressure on higher education budgets. One approach would be to seek private or non-profit support through a substantial endowment.

This Center would also need to stay mindful of its practical role in advancing policies and strategies for increasing immigration. It ought to stay connected to thought leaders, immigration-service providers others driving the strategies forward in this area and do research that is practically linked into the region's aims for re-population and increasing immigration. In this sense, the Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis would not be purely academic, but more of a hybrid whose goals include clear policy and economic applications. Clearly, to be as effective as possible, its work would need to be closely connected, as well, to the Global Welcome Center and the Cleveland Plus International Economy Center.

Action Steps

The Center for Repopulation Research and Analysis supporters should next:

- Find a sustainable source of revenue, such as an endowed position
- Identify the best academic home and name a leader
- Strategize about services that support economic development and generate revenue
- Target areas that support Global Welcome Center and International Economy Center
- Work with partners and collaborators to help fill crucial research gaps
- Team with business and nonprofit partners to ensure services are helpful and responsive
- Set goals and ways to gauge progress

International Higher Education Initiatives

Convener

Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education

Components

The International Higher Education Initiatives include, or link to, four strategies:

Connecting Foreign-Born Students, Faculty and Staff to the Community	pg. 53
Internship Programs Focused on International Students	pg. 64
Recruiting Foreign-Born Students, Faculty and Staff	pg. 71
University Partnerships and International Branch Campuses	pg. 72

Objective

Many positive economic outcomes correlate with higher rates of education. Regions with higher rates of residents with at least a bachelor's degree have higher levels of per capita income growth and employment growth. Ohio lags the national average of residents with a college degree – not even one quarter of the state's residents have graduated from an institution of higher education. Greater Cleveland's rate is only slightly higher, which ranks it near the bottom of the largest 25 U.S. metropolitan areas.

Policy makers, for good reason, want to add highly educated residents to Greater Cleveland. The benefits are clear. One way to increase that proportion, and help fuel economic growth, is to keep more of the international college students who come to Greater Cleveland for their degrees and research after they graduate. Other strategies include recruiting more international students, which encourages the flow of expertise and highly educated immigrants.

Overview

The Ohio Board of Regents, in 2008, released a 10-year plan for higher education strategies that aims to enroll nearly a quarter of a million more students in college while keeping more graduates in Ohio and attracting more talent to the state. The plan promises to raise the overall educational attainment of the state of Ohio. Ambitious targets are worthy. So is increasing educational attainment among native-born residents.

However, one clear strategy to help drive up educational attainment is to attract and hold onto more international students, faculty and staff. Among immigrants in Greater Cleveland, more than four in ten have at least a bachelor's degree. This compares with less than a quarter of the rest of the population that has a college degree. In fact, if the immigrants already living in Northeast Ohio made up one country, together they would have the highest level of education of any country, except Japan, the Regents data show.

Considering that increasing educational attainment is, by design, not a quick process, this base offers an incredible resource on which to build – as well as a rich lesson of what immigrants can bring to the region. This is especially so when foreign-born residents immigrate to pursue a graduate degree, after having finished their education in their home country. That's because they bestow to their adopted hometown incredible brain power and innovation without requiring it to bear most or all of the outlays associated with acquiring higher education.

Indeed, foreign students make a significant investment in the place where they seek their degrees and further their research. Ohio ranked 9th of all states for the number of foreign-born college students enrolled in 2009, according to the Institute of International Education. (Data on faculty aren't known.) These students brought investment of more than \$500 million to the state, according to the International Institute of Education, as they usually pay full tuition and are often financed by their families' savings or their home government.

Crucial to the success of these Initiatives would be connecting the international college students and faculty already in this region, as well as their spouses and families. Stories have circulated about faculty members who moved on from appointments in part because the rest of the family never felt at home in the region. These lost opportunities could be minimized with programs and approaches that helped them link into the community more smoothly. This might enable foreign-born students, teachers and their families, to deepen their ties to, and participation within, existing ethnic groups and the broader community. If the approaches helped convince more to stay, it would enable more immigrants to contribute to the region's social fabric and economy. All residents would gain.

One way to integrate foreign students into Greater Cleveland is through internships, which helps connect students into jobs and career ladders that could lead to longer-term residency. International students are over-represented in fields that yield the biggest return for the economy: technical, high-skill fields such as science and math.

Employers should get assistance by way of marketing materials and other methods to find ways to recruit among international students. Some employers think hiring, even for internships, among international students brings visa-related headaches. This is not true – especially for interns. That’s because foreign-born college and university graduates can stay in the United States on student visas up to a year after graduation (or, after having pursued their studies for at least nine months) while seeking training. In some technical fields, such as math, computer science and engineering, the federal government has proposed allowing international students to stay on their student visas more than two years while getting practical training that complements their study.

Recruiting more students and faculty would be an important part of this Initiative. Doing so could open up a critical pipeline of skilled immigrants and make significant economic impact.

Colleges might rely on partnerships to supplement the human resources, legal resources and limited budgets available for recruiting international students, faculty and staff. Northeast Ohio institutions of higher learning, for example, might use Internet-based marketing and collaborate to seek funding at the local, state and national levels for these efforts. NOCHE could offer assistance.

Programs could be useful only if the region’s policymakers and higher education professionals know the baseline on which they are building. Data would be crucial. At large four-year universities in Northeast Ohio, from about 1 percent to 2 percent of undergraduates are immigrants, according to U.S. Department of Education data. It’s not clear that federal or state data on foreign-born faculty exists.

Additionally, this International Higher Education Initiatives could include university partnerships overseas, such as international branch campuses. Typically, such campuses enroll residents of the country where they’re located. Those students receive access to similar services of the parent school, including teaching and research.

Study-abroad programs often also involve partnerships with universities overseas. These programs, of course, are already well established. Yet they should be encouraged and expanded, where possible, because of the international awareness they help create in participants, which is certainly conducive to making the region more welcoming to foreign-born residents.

Details

Clearly, programs to help advance these Initiatives should be orchestrated by institutions of higher learning and groups advocating for them, such as NOCHE. This report isn't offering prescriptions; rather, suggestions that could increase the college-educated population in Greater Cleveland and the number of highly educated immigrants.

Much of the work within these International Higher Education initiatives could be poured into connecting the international students, faculty and staff already in the Greater Cleveland region, to keep the brainpower that represents. International students should be connected to sources of scholarships and other academic support.

With respect to internships, policymakers might study the economic impact of having foreign-born college students stay in the region after graduation to train. Once that data were known, political and educational leaders could promote the benefits that accrue to the students, the companies that hire them for internships and the region. Efforts aimed at helping foreign-born students find internships could be layered onto existing programs that help all college students seeking such opportunities. Universities that are making strides in this area, such as Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State University, could share insights with peers. Collaboration and best-case models would be critical to success.

Collaborations might also be employed to help recruitment. Representatives of Northeast Ohio colleges and universities have opportunities to tout the region's educational assets when public officials and business executives undertake trade missions internationally. Those opportunities should be fully exploited. International branch campuses and related partnerships could be helpful, here, too. Data ought to be gathered in this area. For instance, Northeast Ohio colleges and universities ought to track the percentage of faculty and staff who are immigrants and aim to increase it. NOCHE, possibly, could support this effort.

Although getting more students and faculty to come to Greater Cleveland is vital, as is financial help, scholarships and internships; ultimately, the goals of these International Higher Education Initiatives are broader. They should include efforts to make foreign-born students and teachers feel at home. Anonymous surveys could be done to assess areas of concern among this population. Most of the efforts would not be costly but would require forethought and sensitivity. High-impact messages, such as billboards or bus shelter posters, could highlight contributions of foreign-born students, faculty and staff to their local universities and communities. Ethnic festivals and other arts and culture programs could specifically include foreign-born faculty and students.

Action Steps

The convener and supporters of International Higher Education Initiatives should next:

- Discuss what data would help advance initiatives' goals
- Set targets and brainstorm ways to increase international students and staff in region
- Identify resources and partners that will enable programs to be created and expanded
- Create marketing and communications plans to further initiatives' objectives and targets
- Team with business and nonprofit partners to ensure services are helpful and responsive
- Set goals and ways to gauge progress and enable adjustments

County Government Program Initiatives

Convener

Cuyahoga County Government (initially through the Economic Development workgroup)

Components

County Government Program Initiatives include, or link to, two strategies:

Cuyahoga County Office for International Newcomers	pg. 51
Regional Advisory Committee on New Arrivals	pg. 60

Objective

These Cuyahoga County Government initiatives create an official, symbolic gateway for immigrants and the community and enable key stakeholders to coordinate immigration programs and approaches. Cities with much faster rates of immigration growth than Cleveland, including New York, Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia, have found it pays dividends to have a government office whose functions include helping newcomers acculturate: It helps the region and the economy to help newcomers find their way amidst bureaucracy.

Overview

A Cuyahoga County Office for International Newcomers would interact with other offices in the public, private and non-profit sectors. In conjunction with a Global Welcome Center, it would offer a clearinghouse of information. Many of the functions of county government align with the goals of increasing and welcoming immigrants to the region. The reform of the county's political structure offers a unique and perfectly timed opportunity not just to create such an office, but to elevate it to one with a countywide presence. Importantly, as the region is only beginning its campaign to increase and welcome immigrants, the office would be established proactively.

However conceived, the office should present a formal, government connection for immigrants who make this region their home. Other government offices offer lessons that Greater Cleveland can borrow.

For instance, the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians puts its mission like this: "Our purpose is to strengthen the ability of immigrants and the diverse cultural and linguistic communities of which they are a part to fully participate in the economic, civic, social and cultural life of the City of Boston, and to promote the commemoration and public understanding of the contributions of immigrants."

These Initiatives would also create a Regional Advisory Committee on New Arrivals. For the sake of credibility, visibility and impact, the Committee ought to be administered by the new Cuyahoga County Office for International Newcomers.

The committee ought to include immigration service providers, leaders of ethnic communities and minority groups and relevant government and nonprofit organizations. The goal would be to improve communication about issues relating to immigration policies, programs and service delivery among the agencies and organizations that offer assistance to new arrivals. And it would help make programs aimed at this population more effective. Perhaps most important, the Advisory Committee could help convey relevant issues affecting immigrants and trends to local leaders and policymakers.

Details

Now is the time to tackle these initiatives, as work is unfolding daily on the new government's framework, which will be in place early in 2011, complete with a county executive and a legislative council. Many candidates have already announced their campaigns or interest in running. Candidates for these offices should be queried about their positions about increasing immigration, if their platforms don't specifically spell that out, as some candidates have already done.

The Economic Development Workgroup – chaired by former County Deputy Administrator Lee Trotter, former Shaker Heights Mayor Judy Rawson and the President of the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank Sandy Pianalto – is best placed to lay the groundwork for this office. Their work and meetings are underway. And many of the members of this committee, which is packed with leaders in areas that include economic development, work force development, business, economics and academia, represent groups the office would interact with, after its creation. The members have an interest in economic growth, repopulation and the innovation and other benefits that immigrants bring to Greater Cleveland.

Based on the charge of the charter, which voters approved in late 2009, the Committee on Economic Development would study and recommend ways to enable the County to enhance

economic development efforts. Its mission, as drafted, is to significantly improve the county's economic competitiveness, job creation and growth. The goal of the Economic Development Workgroup is to suggest ways to improve county prosperity; synchronize efforts across public, private and nonprofit sectors; use resources to target those opportunities with measurable benefits for the entire county; and, align departments with overlapping interests.

This mission and these goals intersect with initiatives to increase immigration. That's because the countywide office should build bridges. It should help new arrivals navigate bureaucracies and institutions within the county. Programs within this County office could promote and include Citizenship swearing-in ceremonies; cross-cultural festivals and events, legal clinics for visa issues; civic sessions about public services such as how to use mass transit, interact with City Hall or where and how to enroll a child in public school.

The office should highlight key partners in the community. The director could host events and promote messages that highlight economic, cultural and social contributions of immigrants. Staff should come from different cultures and speak different languages, which could be listed on the web site. The office would be a clearinghouse of information for immigrant entrepreneurs and those seeking government services.

The county office could also convene the Regional Advisory Committee on New Arrivals, which is being proposed. Its members should receive a formal appointment and have a commitment to the mission, their responsibility and to attending meetings. Selecting the County agency that would administer and coordinate this committee would be critical to its success and impact. By placing the committee within the new Cuyahoga County government structure, it should enable coordination among other public-sector agencies that also deal with immigrants and other new arrivals. The committee would need staff, a budget and other resources to enable it to conduct research, analysis and outreach.

Action Steps

Supporters of County Government Program Initiatives related to immigration should:

- Initiate discussions with the County Economic Development Workgroup
- Frame a concept paper about the office roles and responsibilities
- Circulate suggestions to the Workgroup, County political candidates and media
- Encourage County executive candidates to discuss their positions on immigration
- Lobby to get the issue into public forums, such as candidate debates
- Suggest site visits to cities with government welcoming offices for fact finding

Urban Youth Knowledge Initiatives

Convener

Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Components

Urban Youth Knowledge Initiatives include, or link to, two strategies:

Pre-K to 12 Initiatives for Immigrants/Underserved Communities	pg. 65
International Urban School	pg. 66

Objective

These Initiatives connect international and immigrant-focused programs to the community and its youngest residents and their caregivers. Conceived broadly, these programs serve immigrant children and a wide cross section of Greater Cleveland’s youth. They promote awareness, tolerance and personal and academic growth.

Programs pursued as part of these Initiatives reach immigrant and urban youth with school-based enrichment, support and mentoring. They also embed multicultural learning and awareness in classrooms and, it is hoped, across the community.

Overview

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District, under the leadership of CEO Eugene Sanders, has proposed – and begun executing – an academic transformation plan that would overhaul almost every aspect of the schools. Parts of the plan have drawn criticism, but many supporters applaud the sweeping, ambitious goals. And the George Gund Foundation and the Cleveland Foundation are both equally funding the school district’s transformation plan.

Many opportunities exist, as a result of the plan, to meld the district’s transformation with the programs these Urban Youth Knowledge Initiatives envision. For example, the document laying out the transformation plan says that, based on specific neighborhood needs, some schools will develop and strengthen special programs. For schools in so-called high need areas, a new “community wrap-around service model” would be created. It would involve support such as adult education, health services and after school programming. The CMSD’s plan also incorporates dual language programming.

Thus, natural synergies would exist between what's unfolding in Cleveland schools and what's envisioned within these Youth Knowledge Initiatives. They include offering a wide range of language, cultural and educational programs and tutoring to children from immigrant and urban, native-born families. Events such as afterschool enrichment, snack times with storytelling and homework help could help acculturate immigrant children (by extension, their families) and offer support to urban children attending the same schools. An inclusive approach would promote cross-cultural understanding and awareness.

These Initiatives include the idea of a separate urban, international school. It could create a unique environment for foreign-born and urban children where learning at school is intertwined with acculturation and transition into civic life. Ties between school and the community would be vital. This school would present incredible opportunities for learning across cultures.

Such a school could work well within CMDS's transformation plan. That's because the plan seeks to expand on the separate and innovative schools the district already includes, such as residential, single-gender and specialized schools. Philanthropies have supported the trend, which has shown encouraging results. Other partners and models could be sought, such as the breathtakingly impressive Harlem's Children Zone, which some leaders in Cleveland advocate. In the early 1990s, Harlem Children's Zone ran a pilot project that brought a range of support services to a single block, the organization explains on its Website. "The idea was to address all the problems that poor families were facing: from crumbling apartments to failing schools, from violent crime to chronic health problems." Led by visionary Geoffrey Canada, the program now serves more than 10,000 children and 7,400 adults across a 100-block area of Harlem. Its \$75 million budget includes health care, mentoring and college preparation, among other things.

Details

The ideas and possibilities for how these Urban Youth Knowledge Initiatives could be rolled out are plentiful, but specifics need to be crafted.

Enrichment programs could be tailored for special populations or goals. The range of support should be wide and coordinated with local community groups. The programs and activities located within the schools or at nearby community centers might be run in conjunction with the Global Welcome Center. Immigration-service providers familiar with the neighborhoods, target population and support most needed could also administer them.

In Philadelphia, a program the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians set up at a local school helps all children – not just immigrants – to do homework, study for tests, use computers, learn about and apply for college, find money for college, apply for jobs, learn about careers, learn about life in the United States, graduate from high school and plan for the future.

Locally, volunteers with appropriate training and screening could help conduct programs. This idea borrows from what works in the community and could be scaled up and expanded. Sponsors might adopt a school or center and recruit volunteers, like the Plain Dealer and other employers did informally with a reading program at the now-closed Kentucky Elementary School on Cleveland's near West side ten years ago. Each volunteer committed an hour or so a week. But together, they filled a roster over the school day and week with helpers and mentors.

Advocates of an international urban school could work with the CMSD and the foundations supporting its transformation plan. The school might be a magnet for immigrants from across the city that other children might also attend. This kind of school would offer rich opportunities for multicultural teaching and awareness but would also present unique challenges because of the low English language proficiency that would be likely among those enrolled. Flexibility and communication would be crucial to success. Other cities offer lessons here. New York State, for example, gave failing marks in February 2010 to an international school in Buffalo that served hundreds of children who started classes knowing little or no English even though their English proficiency jumped, on average, several grades within one school year.

The school district might also consider a language immersion school, such as Chinese or French, which other cities – notably New York City and Minneapolis – have also administered with successful results. (Even if a separate immersion school were not pursued, language classes could be part of the enrichment programs these Initiatives envision.)

Community input on the type and location of school would be important. Acculturation would be needed. And tutoring and mentoring should be offered. College tours and career counseling might be part of the curriculum, linking students to universities in Greater Cleveland. Customized programs, such as a longer school day and more classroom aides, could help address children's intensive language-based and cultural needs; dropout rates, higher in some immigrant communities, should be closely monitored. Community leaders from ethnic and minority groups should be consulted on after-school enrichment classes or other programs the children need.

In addition to the strong local philanthropic support already offered to the CMSD's plan, federal, corporate grants or other grants could provide extra resources required. A charter school or a public school could be considered.

Action Steps

Advocates of Urban Youth Knowledge Initiatives related to international issues should:

- Assess proposed ideas for compatibility with existing programs
- Probe the viability of an International school with special enrichment options for all
- Meet with community leaders to plan programs; get input and ideas
- Be inclusive: offer mentoring, enrichment to foreign and native-born children
- Invite community ethnic leaders to address classes and teach about culture and customs
- Borrow, even on a small scale, what's worked in New York, Philadelphia, elsewhere
- Promote international awareness in schools, such as foreign language classes

Arts and Culture Program Initiatives

Convener

Community Partnership for Arts and Culture

Components

Arts and Culture Program Initiatives include, or link to, three strategies:

Arts and Cultural Programs that Celebrate and Include Immigrants	pg. 61
Cross-cultural Awareness/Education Programs	pg. 62
Cultural Ambassador Programs	pg. 73

Objective

These Initiatives include programs aimed at attracting immigrants to the region and that also benefit community relations. The programs highlight the social and economic benefits that multicultural society offers and promote and deepen awareness about many cultures among the region's residents.

Events that bestow these benefits happen already in the community. Yet, perhaps they could be connected more formally or promoted more widely as part of these Initiatives.

Arts and culture programs fit naturally with strategies that increase immigration, welcome immigrants and promote economic development. As the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture says on its web site: "Northeast Ohio's arts and culture assets contribute significantly to the region's prosperity, through their impact on the economy, education and community development."

Overview

These Initiatives would raise cross-cultural awareness and assist and encourage immigrant artists. And they would strengthen the incredible arts and culture programming, traditions and history in the region.

Despite the artistic and cultural impact these initiatives would have, in doing so, they would also strengthen the economy. Arts and cultural organizations provide nearly 4,000 jobs in the region and generate \$1.3 billion in regional economic activity, according to the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture.

These Initiatives, which would include festivals and public art, would also help revitalize neighborhoods. Art anchors many good things for urban areas, such as retail districts, restaurants, small business owners, young and creative professionals and residents seeking densely populated and safe streets. Indeed, among Cleveland's reinvigorated neighborhoods, several, including Asia Town, near 30th Street and Payne Avenue, and Detroit-Shoreway, are also populated with immigrants.

The idea would be to mine Northeast Ohio's deep arts and culture programs and support for additional opportunities to highlight immigrant communities and artists. It would strengthen arts and culture programs by adding even more diversity.

Many of the cultural ambassadors who would be recruited formally through these Initiatives already serve in this capacity informally in their neighborhoods. They are called on to welcome refugees or visitors or to translate or make introductions. But organizing a program and linking it through the Global Welcome Center would make it easier to reach out to these ambassadors, give them a platform to tell the story of their immigration to Cleveland (perhaps in videos featured on the Welcome Center Website) and let the wider community know how to reach them. These cultural ambassadors might be business, civic, faith-based or student leaders within local ethnic communities.

These Initiatives would enable potential immigrants to this region – currently living overseas or elsewhere in the United States – to see that residents are already here from backgrounds or cultures similar to theirs. Additionally, ambassadors could escort or guide visitors from overseas when they spend time in Greater Cleveland.

The festivals and other multicultural events would bridge cultures and inform people from all backgrounds and places about each other. These events invite residents to learn more and sample cultural trends in welcoming environments. Many already occur. The forums range from small events – such as celebration nights at local ethnic restaurants – to major, well-coordinated festivals representing groups from an entire global region – such as all of Asia or Latin America. In fact, May 2010 brings the first pan-Asian festival staged in Cleveland.

Details

How these Initiatives would take shape will become clearer after the community brainstorms and identifies ideas that link well to existing programs. The goal is to create more collaboration, programs, awareness and exposure of immigrant and international artists to the community. These initiatives should try to raise the profile of existing programs whose goals include celebrating, recognizing and including immigrants. Here are some suggestions about programs that could be modeled and expanded and other ways this community could deepen its considerable involvement with, and connection to, immigrant artists and international artists.

1. Provide immigrant and international artists with workshops, advocacy, gallery and public art space;
2. Find ways to marry these Initiatives with other programs that might help increase immigration, such as helping artists-in-residence find loft or warehouse space for living and displaying their art;
3. Seek funding and other resources and performance opportunities;
4. Capture the economic impact of these Initiatives through research;
5. Plan and seek support for more multicultural events and festivals;
6. Promote events more aggressively to offer easier and wider access to information about them, whether the audience lives locally or overseas;
7. Use the Global Welcome Center to help coordinate and support efforts through options such as a comprehensive calendar of events and linking to the groups' Websites; and,
8. Build on the forums such as the Council on World Affairs' Young Professionals group program, which meets for EniCity to discuss international topics at ethnic restaurants; and,
9. Publicize more widely One World Day at the Cultural Gardens around University Circle, a 60-year-old tradition with parades, costumes, flags and usually a citizenship swearing-in ceremony

In a community with rich artistic, cultural and immigrant roots, options abound for finding new ways to make a bigger impact on the economy and public perception – especially with respect to public art, fellowships or sponsorships – through Initiatives that support and welcome immigrants and international artists.

Action Steps

Supporters of Arts and Culture Initiatives for immigrant and international issues should:

- Inventory existing events and create a public, online calendar
- Assess proposed Initiative ideas for compatibility with existing programs
- Brainstorm additional new ideas that support immigrant and international artists
- Find collaborators to expand programs or create ones
- Seek funding to help underwrite new or expanded programs
- Plan research to assess impact on public perception, the artists and the economy
- Work with the Global Welcome Center to further ideas

Descriptions of the 31 immigration strategies, which the proposed Centers and Initiatives draw upon, comprise the rest of the report. The components are detailed yet still each fit onto one page. More than half of these ideas exist in at least some form in the community currently. The rest have been assembled from other cities' ideas and from interviews with service providers and from the work that has been done in this community by people who want to see more done to encourage Greater Cleveland to welcome immigrants to move here and stay.

As with the Centers and the Initiatives, these strategies are not prescriptions, just suggestions. It is clear that, despite the incredible civic energy that has driven the momentum for finding ways to welcome immigrants into Greater Cleveland and to increase international awareness, the community can't pursue all of these strategies at the same time.

Still, the hope and the goal of this report are to show the widest range of strategies that might be employed and to explain them simply and briefly but clearly. By breaking the ideas for increasing and supporting immigration into components, it's possible to propose how they might be reassembled into program areas to make a significant impact on the community – to transform the region.

Menu of Services to Welcome and Connect Immigrants to Greater Cleveland

Why this matters: Forms a cornerstone of region's immigrant attraction/retention focus

What it does:

Provides a full range of social, health and human services relevant to new arrivals in Greater Cleveland, including immigrants, refugees and their families. These services include help with resettlement; language training and ESOL classes; health and behavioral care; cultural training, life skills classes and mentoring; transportation, childcare, housing, access to food; dealing with bureaucracy and institutions; and advocacy across many areas. Some services or assistance would be accessed online through a Global Welcome Center web site. Other things would happen at the Center, which would have staff, funding and at least one location. Classes, for instance, would be held onsite. Also, services would still be offered by partner organizations that have been helping immigrants and resettling refugees for decades.

Where it has worked:

Loosely organized, in many places, including Cleveland. Few places provide this range of services on a coordinated basis, although Philadelphia's model is close.

Status in this region:

Many groups here help newcomers settle in, meet neighbors, find schools and start contributing to the economy and the community. But these services are not offered on a basis that formally connects the groups and their work.

Partners or potential partners:

Organizations that help new arrivals, community groups, local governments including the city of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, hospitals, clinics and churches.

What success could look like:

A Global Welcome Center would interact with immigrants and all groups that help them. It could manage an inventory of services being offered, to which populations, in which languages and where. Analysis would enable partners to identify service gaps that the Center would help to fund, staff and fill. Partners would continue to offer many existing services themselves, but the Center could develop a system to coordinate activity and track capacity demands. It would offer a comprehensive clearinghouse of information. The Center could offer space for meetings and classes, staff assistance on project basis, a platform for coordinating events and a venue for appropriate gatherings or programs. It should be an inviting place, perhaps with an international cafeteria and ethnic newspapers to read, and staffed by people from various cultures. Accountability must be built into operations, making it clear who has been assisted and how. Clever information technology and management would be as crucial to its operations as communications and marketing. Many of these functions and services could produce revenue for the Center.

Job Placement and Training Programs, Services for Immigrants

Why this matters: Creates self-sufficiency for newcomers and has an economic impact

What this does:

Offers employment screening, training and placement to immigrants to Greater Cleveland. The idea is to ease the transition for new arrivals into the work force so they can begin as swiftly as possible to support themselves and their families, build or rebuild careers and start contributing to the regional economy. Most immigrants must find employment immediately. New arrivals with few skills and resources need job training and vocation-specific ESOL training, as well as other help. Skilled immigrants might need re-training and help getting professional credentials recognized. They must work while pursuing those longer-term goals.

Where it has worked:

Best-practice model is in Philadelphia. Data drive its operations. Pittsburgh and Minneapolis also provide job training and placement for immigrants.

Status in this region:

Some immigrant-service providers in Greater Cleveland, including ASIA Inc. and El Barrio offer job training and placement. Local job-related assistance for immigrants is not always linked into public-sector programs or financed by them. Additionally, few vocation-targeted ESOL classes are currently offered here.

Partners or potential partners:

Immigrant-service providers, state of Ohio (with some federal funds), Cuyahoga Community College, Cuyahoga County, city of Cleveland, labor unions, business groups, companies and foundations.

What success could look like:

A Global Welcome Center could administer and coordinate services and also staff and fill gaps that existing providers help identify.

Research shows English proficiency is critical for immigrants to find jobs that match their skill levels. Helping them achieve that proficiency brings economic returns to the immigrants, their employers and the entire region. It is too soon to know how many people would go through intake, vocational ESOL, job-training programs and placement or get workforce-related help. Accountability would be built into programs. Funders would demand them, and they would give evidence of what is working and what is not. Training programs would rely on industry projections to respond to demand. Evidence shows that intensive communication with immigrants and their employers improves placement success and time on the job. This includes staff screening and visits to job sites before immigrants interview and regular follow up with employers after job placement. Adequate funding must be sought for such programs.

Refugee Resettlement Programs

Why this matters: Brings work-authorized immigrants and federal funds to this region

What this does:

Offers services to refugees and their families that help them find their way into and around their new community. The assistance usually includes temporary housing, some clothing and modest house wares. Refugees and their families need help with learning how to grocery shop, enroll their children in school, use public transportation, open a bank account, balance a checkbook and carry out many other functions essential to civic life in their new communities.

Where it has worked:

Many cities, including Akron and Cleveland, have more than a century of experience in resettling refugees – often through churches. In Philadelphia, a well-respected nonprofit handles resettlement, working with faith-based groups.

Status in this region:

Greater Cleveland has some large, well-established refugee-resettlement agencies, such as Catholic Charities and Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society affiliate Us Together. Building Hope in the City also resettles refugees. Some groups received grants from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, recognizing Cleveland and Akron as preferred communities offering “ample opportunities for early employment and sustained economic independence,” and where special populations can receive intensive case management, culturally and linguistically appropriate links and other coordination improving access to services.

Partners or potential partners:

Those groups, already ably handling this work and familiar with challenges, could be supported by a Global Welcome Center. Volunteer groups, such as Friends of the Sudanese Lost Boys of Cleveland, could also be partners.

What success could look like:

By definition, refugees receive visas that allow them to work. The U.S. government also provides resettlement agencies up to \$1,100 for each immigrant to defray initial expenses. This means that the region receives a net influx of resources and people who can work. Agencies who place refugees in jobs report a high rate of success because of their work ethic and survival skills. The region could lobby more aggressively for grants. And if the funds, resources and other capacity – such as links to early employment – could be found, the region could resettle more refugees. Resettlement agencies might benefit from more concentrated, coordinated outreach to public policymakers when seeking funds and negotiating in other areas. While the Global Welcome Center would not likely be doing refugee resettlement work, perhaps it could support agencies that do by helping with advocacy, information technology and management and administration, among other things.

Professional Panel for Immigrant Visa Coordination/Planning

Why this matters: Links investors, workers efficiently into region; troubleshoots snags

What this does:

Takes proactive approach to immigration-related visa issues that delay, or even prevent, international investors and workers from settling in Greater Cleveland. Enables professionals with extensive immigration experience, including lawyers and accountants, to screen cases early in the process, answer questions and guide international professionals eager to immigrate. This helps ensure the investment and workers lured to the region are able to stay.

Where it has worked:

No known examples exist.

Status in this region:

Informal screening, troubleshooting and problem solving happen now, but not on a coordinated, intentional basis as envisioned by this strategy, conceived by immigration lawyer David Leopold.

Partners or potential partners:

Accountants and lawyers in the region and in Ohio who have experience with U.S. Immigration law and visa classifications and requirements. The idea should be publicized to potential partners, such as local professional associations, which could help recruit panel members.

What success could look like:

Questions might come in from potential investors and immigrants through a Global Welcome Center or through referrals on the phone or in person. Queries could be routed panel members electronically. Follow-up would happen by email or phone. And the panel member would investigate whether the investor or immigrant might qualify for residency that could be quicker or easier to obtain or that would enable work or contribution to the economy without restrictions. Sometimes, it's a matter of getting up-to-date information on U.S. immigration law or advice on visa classifications. For example, an immigrant might qualify for a temporary worker visa, an inter-company transfer visa, a trade visa, or professional visa or one based on extraordinary skill. Or, some potential immigrants might have family ties that enable their residency here.

The panel might start off working on a pro-bono basis until the flow of work is established and staff could be hired based on the value it brings the region.

Building in visa planning and coordination upfront – and helping more people stay here – could translate into millions of dollars more in value brought to Greater Cleveland than might be captured otherwise. This vetting process has mutual benefits: It gives investors and immigrants a direct route into networks and a way to slot more easily into the area. And it gives service providers on the professional panel a natural source for new business and clients.

Neighborhood Revitalization and Stabilization Initiatives

Why this matters: Joins immigration efforts with housing, other urban-renewal initiatives

What this does:

Whole blocks would be re-invigorated with new homes, retail, and green space – even schools – repopulated in part by new arrivals to Cleveland. Takes a holistic look at neighborhoods with assets worth restoring and refurbishing. Working with public and private partners, lures strategic, comprehensive investment. The urban planning is purposeful and includes aesthetic and lifestyle aspects, such as public art and playgrounds. Immigration initiatives could help shape projects as they are conceived and carried out. Many opportunities for urban renewal and housing rehabilitation fit naturally with immigration-related programs.

Where it has worked:

Immigration has helped various cities prosper, including Minneapolis, Chicago and Philadelphia. Research linked the rise in housing values in Washington, D.C., to its influx of immigrants. But it's not clear any place has a multifaceted urban renewal strategy that includes attracting and retaining immigrants.

Status in this region:

Catholic Charities has worked with the Detroit-Shoreway community development corporation and others to rehabilitate homes turned in from banks through foreclosures and house new arrivals on Cleveland's near West side.

Partners or potential partners:

County Land Bank, Neighborhood Progress Inc., LiveCleveland, lenders, community development corporations, City Council, city of Cleveland, immigration-service providers, foundations, businesses and other civic groups.

What success could look like:

A bold program pioneered in six small areas of Cleveland offers a wonderful anchor for this strategy. Neighborhood Progress Inc., working with a score of public and private partners, is remaking Cleveland, block by block. "Better housing alone cannot improve neighborhoods," NPI says in a report. "Success stems from a series of coordinated strategies that spur positive changes for residents – improved housing combined with a greater sense of safety, better retail choices, new public spaces, more employment opportunities and stronger schools." Resources are targeted in small areas to yield major, measurable impacts on data such as home values, home and occupancy rates and outside investment. Activities include foreclosure prevention, rehabilitation, demolition and aesthetics, such as landscaping and small parks.

Foreign-born new arrivals and repopulation through immigration could be added as a key marker of success. The program could be rolled out on a wider geographic scale. Millions of dollars in federal funding has recently been made available to the Land Bank; a portion might be accessed for this initiative.

Micro-Loan/Technical Help for Immigrant, Minority-Owned Businesses

Why this matters: Helps often-marginalized entrepreneurs create jobs, businesses

What this does:

Provides access to businesses with fewer than five employees, and launched with less than \$35,000 in capital, by women, minorities or immigrants. Research from the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank recognizes these businesses – or micro-enterprises – offer one of the most promising models of participation for people traditionally marginalized from the formal economy. This program should rely not just on loans but also on crucial technical assistance that offers recipients financial literacy and training that could improve the loan risk profile and rate of return. Program could require lending partners to have training in underwriting and assessing these loans. And it could offer applicants who were denied some analysis that would enable them, perhaps, to try again later after making improvements to their credit histories or business plans.

Where it has worked:

Aspects of a program like this exist in Philadelphia and Minneapolis.

Status in this region:

Lenders and the city of Cleveland ran micro-finance and technical assistance programs previously. But financial literacy and other support were insufficient. Strong interest remains: “There’s a tremendous opportunity to create wealth in our community through small business and micro-enterprise development,” the city of Cleveland wrote in a 2008 report.

Partners or potential partners:

The city of Cleveland, U.S. Small Business Administration, commercial and community banks committed to underwriting these loans and holding borrowers’ hands, the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank, ethnic merchants’ associations and business groups that represent immigrants and minority groups. Banks could also participate by pooling money into a loan fund and deriving investment returns.

What success could look like:

Obtaining funding for the loans would be crucial, but banks with track records of community investment would be likely to participate if this program were structured well. In addition to being prudently underwritten, loans granted under this program should be made to fulfill criteria that revolve around neighborhood redevelopment and job creation. Investment data ought to be gathered and analyzed about which areas of the community and what business sectors benefited, how many jobs got created and which categories of borrowers got assistance. Data should also keep track of default rates to enable program weaknesses to be identified and corrected. Success would include linking it to other, complementary initiatives, such as those aimed at helping immigrant entrepreneurs find mentors.

Cuyahoga County Office for International Newcomers

Why this matters: Creates official, symbolic gateway for immigrants and the community

What this does:

Offers a formal, government connection for immigrants who make this region their home. The Mayor's Office of New Bostonians puts its mission in this elegant way: "Our purpose is to strengthen the ability of immigrants and the diverse cultural and linguistic communities of which they are a part to fully participate in the economic, civic, social and cultural life of the City of Boston, and to promote the commemoration and public understanding of the contributions of immigrants."

The reform of Cuyahoga County's political structure offers a rich, unique and perfectly timed opportunity to not just create such an office, but also elevate it to one with a countywide presence.

Where it has worked:

Boston, New York, Chicago and elsewhere.

Status in this region:

No such initiative exists in Cleveland.

Partners or potential partners:

Clevelandpeople.com, ethnic community groups, immigration advocates, community development groups, city of Cleveland and City Council members, governments throughout the county, minority business owners and civic leaders.

What success could look like:

The office would build bridges. It should help new arrivals navigate bureaucracies and institutions within the county. It should also be a strong partner of a Global Welcome Center and convene the Regional Advisory Committee on New Arrivals proposed within these strategies. Programs within this County office could promote and include Citizenship swearing-in ceremonies; cross-cultural festivals and events, legal clinics for visa issues; civic sessions about public services such as how to use mass transit, interact with City Hall or where and how to enroll a child in public school. It should highlight key partnerships in the community. The director could host events and promote messages that highlight economic, cultural and social contributions of immigrants. Staff should have many different backgrounds and speak different languages, which could be listed on the web site.

Virtually and otherwise, the office would be a clearinghouse of information for immigrant entrepreneurs and those seeking government services.

It could also assist in reaching out to Cleveland's 21 "Sister Cities," relationships that have been largely ceremonial. Sister City International facilitates these relationships, and the director of this office could mine the existing couplings for opportunities for international trade, tourism and cultural exchanges.

Civic-Life Mentors for Immigrants, Refugees and Families

Why this matters: Provides vital help to new arrivals; quickens adjustment, contributions

What this does:

Immigration-service providers have long relied on mentors from the community to help immigrants find their way in and around their new hometown and to grasp its ways and customs. Catholic Charities created and runs a program for immigrants and their families where they are partnered with volunteers who commit to a months-long stint of assisting in the immigrants' acculturation. The help is customized, based on the questions, challenges and situations that the immigrants they are mentoring confront. Mentors, who are screened and trained beforehand, offer answers and friendship as they help the new arrivals adjust.

Where it has worked:

Many cities have used such programs.

Status in this region:

Catholic Charities' long-standing, innovative and effective program. Some other local groups also have mentor programs. To date, they haven't been coordinated.

Partners or potential partners:

Immigration-service providers, ethnic and other community groups, churches, libraries and philanthropic groups.

What success could look like:

A Global Welcome Center could support existing mentor programs run by local immigration service providers. The Center could offer help with processing and screening volunteers and maintaining a database of them. It could lend help with information technology and management. It could also widen outreach for volunteers and assist with training, so that orientation programs are consistent and uniform and can follow best practices. The Center could help gather crucial information from volunteers, such as their gender, ethnicity, faith, age group, whether they can offer transportation and the languages spoken and written. Fingerprinting might be facilitated, as well, considering the vulnerability of this population and the position of trust the mentors take on.

Other information technology the Center could help manage might include coordinating and tracking how many immigrants get paired with mentors, from which countries or cultures and where the new arrivals are living and working. The Center's role might enable groups to better manage volunteer capacity, which ebbs and flows with the demands of refugee assignments. If the Center takes on this prominent of a role in mentor programs, it could need a coordinator and an information technology specialist devoted to that and related work and sufficient resources.

Connecting Foreign-Born Students, Faculty and Staff to the Community

Why this matters: Encourages highly educated immigrants already here to stay

What this does:

Links the campus to the community for international students, faculty, staff and, where relevant, spouses and families. Purposeful programs and approaches would help them integrate more smoothly. This should enable foreign-born students, teachers and their families, to deepen their ties to, and participation within, existing ethnic groups and the broader community.

Ohio ranked 9th of all states for the number of foreign-born college students enrolled in 2009, according to the Institute of International Education. (Data on faculty aren't known.) These students brought investment of more than \$500 million to the state, according to the International Institute of Education, as they usually pay full tuition and are often financed by their families' savings or their home government. This strategy should help convince more to stay, which means they would contribute to the region's social fabric and economy. All residents gain.

Where it has worked:

Not clear there's a model elsewhere.

Status in this region:

Akron International Friendship helps link international university students with temporary housing until they can find more permanent quarters and hosts a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. Such wonderful efforts should be expanded. It's not clear any formal programs are aimed at faculty, staff, spouses and families.

Partners or potential partners:

The Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education, the city of Cleveland, libraries, international student associations, community development corporations, ethnic community groups, Cleveland Council on World Affairs and others

What success could look like:

The goal should be programs and efforts aimed at making foreign-born students and teachers feel at home. Anonymous surveys could be done to assess areas of concern and some of the greatest needs among this population. Most of the efforts would not be costly but would require forethought, sensitivity and inclusion.

Locally, high-impact events (such as billboards or bus shelter posters) could highlight the contributions of foreign-born students, faculty and staff to their local universities and to their communities. Ethnic festivals and other arts and culture-focused programs could specifically reach out to and invite foreign-born faculty and students. Universities making strides in this area, such as Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State University, could share insights with peers. Collaboration and best-case models would be crucial to success.

Minority and Immigrant Regional Business Alliance

Why this matters: Links businesspeople across cultures, markets; creates opportunities

What this does:

Brings together for meetings and events members from local chambers of commerce, international and minority business groups, foreign chambers of commerce and consulates with offices in Northeast Ohio. Officials from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Export Office could also attend.

Fosters communication among members and aims to lower barriers these groups face in reaching markets, finding customers and creating businesses here.

Where it has worked:

No known examples in the country formally coordinate and bring together this wide a range of minority, immigrant and local business groups to share information on international business opportunities

Status in this region:

A more narrowly framed group, known as the international business alliance, met occasionally. That collaboration was a big step in the right direction, but was not as inclusive as the group envisioned under this strategy.

Partners or potential partners:

Greater Cleveland Partnership, TiE Ohio, international Chambers of Commerce and consulates with local offices, the President's Council and business organizations representing minority groups, such as the Consortium of African American Organizations, Team NEO, Northeast Ohio International Business Network, the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Export Office.

What success could look like:

Developing a web-based and searchable directory of alliance members should make it easier for these groups to communicate with each other and to identify common interests or possible areas for collaboration. Regular meetings would also enable alliance members to learn about projects and opportunities for markets overseas and within Northeast Ohio and to get to know the people associated with them.

Projects, deals and partnerships resulting from this group's efforts should be tracked and touted on a web site the group runs that could be linked to other regional business groups.

A coordinating Center might be able to offer assistance with planning events, convening meetings and managing a database of members and other information, such as cross-market deals that arise.

Translation Services for Government, Corporate and Nonprofit Clients

Why this matters: Ease transactions across cultures and languages; yield income

What this does:

Provides translation and interpretation services in a timely, professional way to nonprofit, government, corporate and medical clients. Bilingual and multilingual speakers and writers would be engaged on a project basis. A database of translators and interpreters could be assembled and administered as part of a Global Welcome Center, through which these services could be marketed and coordinated. Services could also include proofreading and editing.

Where it has worked:

In Philadelphia, the Nationalities Services Center, which has assisted immigrants and refugees since 1921, has a bureau of native speakers and writers of over 50 languages.

Status in this region:

In Cleveland, the International Services Center has a language bank of translators and interpreters who also speak and write about 50 languages (other local groups offer a narrower selection). Asian Services in Action, Inc. provides those and other editorial services. Such services, perhaps, could be more widely marketed and coordinated in conjunction with a Global Welcome Center.

Partners or potential partners:

Staff at immigration service providers who already offer these services, as well as university students and faculty and other bi-lingual or multi-lingual professionals living locally. Contractors could include hundreds of local residents who are bilingual or multi-lingual and have passed rigorous translation and interpretation tests.

What success could look like:

A Global Welcome Center could help coordinate and market these services widely, especially to corporate and government agencies, including the courts. This strategy offers a steady source of fee income, especially as volunteers could supplement staff. Overhead is low because jobs would be contracted out.

Training sessions would help recruit interpreters and translators and educate volunteers or staff on procedures and policies to help ensure product quality, which would need to be verified regularly.

An important aspect of this strategy: offering translation and interpretation services to government agencies and schools that interact with immigrants with limited English extends support to the new arrivals and their families themselves.

Foreign-Born Temp Agency of Talent to Supply Regional Start-Up Firms

Why this matters: Meets needs of both high-growth firms and skilled, new arrivals

What this does:

Provides a searchable source of skilled, high-tech foreign-born talent. By linking these immigrants to jobs – even if only short-term placements – this program help new arrivals get a toehold into the regional job market and develop more quickly a professional network and culturally informed workforce skills. It also helps companies unsure of long-term employment needs to fill labor gaps and shortages in the meantime with skilled staff.

This helps local companies and the economy.

It also helps immigrants. Underemployment and unemployment among highly educated immigrant workers is common, according to a study released by the Migration Policy Institute. About one in five college-educated immigrants in the U.S. labor market is stuck in an unskilled job, such as parking attendant or dishwasher, or is unemployed.

Where it has worked:

Detroit is looking into this, and Pittsburgh devised a similar idea.

Status in this region:

No program currently exists.

Partners or potential partners:

A new International Economy Center could help manage and promote the database and intake process. Partners could also include Jump Start, BioEnterprise, TiE Ohio, Greater Cleveland Partnership, Tri-C, NEO411.biz, among others.

What success could look like:

System could generate revenue for an International Economy Center, which might play a role in administration. That would require significant information technology and management. A system must be devised so applicants' skills and talents are adequately assessed. Potential employers must have real-time, reliable data to search. Marketing to potential clients would be essential.

This system should create economic benefits for companies hiring temporary staff and for the immigrants who help fill those gaps. Data on placements should allow administrators to quantify benefits based on project length and pay. It could be useful to assess how long it took workers who found their way into the labor market this way to find a long-term assignment.

The goal would be not just to serve immigrants and employers but also enable the region to capture economic output that otherwise would go to waste from immigrants who are under- or unemployed. Economists in Canada and Australia quantifying this so-called brain waste have projected totals worth millions of dollars.

Job Portal for Workers, Employers in Ohio, Accessible by Immigrants

Why this matters: Matches employers with appropriate candidates, benefits economy

What this does:

Helps to plug talent gaps employers have with employees suited to fill them. Makes the process more efficient for both job seekers and job creators. Allows resumes to be posted online, enabling companies to search them easily, in one place. Without charging a fee, it also offers interesting analysis on labor market trends and the economy and links to other useful sites.

Where it has worked:

Not clear that other states, aside from Ohio, have developed a real-time search engine that trawls recruiters' and job posting web sites.

Status in this region:

The state of Ohio runs this job portal now through its web site: www.OhioMeansJobs.com

Through a partnership with Indeed.com and Monster.com the program gives employers free access to nearly 8.5 million resumes from within a 50-mile radius of the state. Job seekers can access more than 80,000 job openings, "from file clerks to CEOs," as the state put it in a press release that celebrated the portal's one-year anniversary in October 2008. Ohio developed – and became the first state in the nation to adopt – this model of public-private collaboration.

However, it's not clear there's any formal or intentional marketing to immigrants.

Partners or potential partners:

A new International Economy Center could promote the portal and link to it on its web site. State of Ohio, NorTech, JumpStart, BioEnterprise, TiE Ohio, employer groups, including MAGNET, COSE and NEOSA, minority business groups including the Consortium of African American Organizations, Community Colleges and immigrant service providers.

What success could look like:

Northeast Ohio had thousands of jobs, especially in high-growth and high-skill sectors, which employers struggle to fill. This portal, which is less than two years old, is a useful tool to combat that problem. The platform enables searching and filtering by users, and it allows the administrators to track who comes and what they're looking for.

A year into its life, 90,000 job seekers had registered (required for access) and 1,200 employers had. Marketing might help spread the word. And immigrants with visas enabling them to should be encouraged to use the site in their job search. Additionally, the research on the site contains no information of specific interest to foreign-born workers; perhaps future market analysis could include research targeted to that population – especially to foreign-born college students looking for opportunities.

Concierge Services for International Businesses

Why this matters: Let immigrant-run companies find services efficiently, economically

What this does:

Provides a full range of services to businesses run by foreign-born owners or supported by foreign investors to help them enter and excel in the local market. These services could include office and lab space, administrative support, market research and other customized business functions. It enables international businesses to save on capital and staff costs while establishing a foothold in a new market.

Where it has worked:

TechTown, a high-tech Wayne State University-affiliated business incubator, which rented space to a group of Mexican auto suppliers, and the Center for Innovation at the University of North Dakota

Status in this region:

No formal function currently exists in this region

Partners or potential partners:

TiE Ohio, the proposed International Economy Center, NEO411.biz and business groups and business incubators in the region.

What success could look like:

Like the centers at TechTown and in North Dakota, this program in Northeast Ohio could seek and receive distinction as a “certified soft-landing center” by the National Business Incubation Association, the trade association for business incubators. The distinction identifies incubators that provide smoother entry to international firms wishing to expand into new markets. For fund-raising and promotion and marketing purposes, the group offering these services ought to track the companies served, including their size and industry, and how it has helped them. It’s worth noting that this strategy has potential synergies with other strategies, in particular: the Foreign-Born “Temp Agency” of Talent to Supply Regional Start-Up Firms and the Mentor Program/Network for International Business People. All could be bundled, administered, staffed – and funded – together.

Academic Center on Immigration and Its Regional Impact

Why this matters: Guides local immigration strategy and work through research/analysis

What this does:

Conducts economic analysis and other research to support strategies aimed at attracting and retaining immigrants. Could examine the region's policies and programs and their impact on population, demographics, neighborhoods, institutions, economy, culture and quality of life. Many local institutions, organizations and policymakers could use its work.

Where it has worked:

Various universities in this county have programs whose focus includes immigration research – often located near metro areas with high rates of immigration. The University of Houston's is staffed by academics from that university as well as other schools.

Status in this region:

Ideas about immigration and re-population have received academic attention but a regional center devoted to researching challenges and opportunities related to, and stemming from, these issues does not exist.

Partners or potential partners:

State of Ohio, Cleveland State University, Case Western Reserve University, other universities and colleges, corporate and nonprofit clients, foundations, Team NEO, Greater Cleveland Partnership, Cuyahoga County, the city of Cleveland, Community Colleges, media outlets and other organizations who could use data it produces.

What success could look like:

The center could be multi-disciplinary and have many researchers connected with it in conjunction with other academic affiliations and subject areas that bear relevance to immigration. The center's experts could host workshops and forums for the public in addition to producing written reports and research. Fee-paying clients could offset some of its budget, but public policy goals would likely lead to much work for the regional good that would not yield income. Separate funding, through foundations, could supplement revenue. The center's work would help inform policy decisions and explore what's working and what's not. It should enable regional immigration attraction and retention efforts to be more targeted and effective and to help mesh with efforts to revitalize and stabilize neighborhoods.

Regional Advisory Committee on New Arrivals

Why this matters: Enables key stakeholders to coordinate immigration programs, action

What this does:

Includes immigration service providers, leaders of ethnic communities and minority groups, and relevant government and nonprofit organizations. Improves communication about issues relating to immigration policies, programs and service delivery among the agencies and organizations that offer assistance to new arrivals. Makes programs aimed at this population more effective. Helps convey relevant issues to local leaders and policymakers. Ought to be administered by the Cuyahoga County Office for International Newcomers for credibility, visibility and impact. A Global Welcome Center could offer coordination and other assistance.

Where it has worked:

Pittsburgh offers an interesting example: its Immigrant and International Advisory Council is run and coordinated through the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. Its purpose is to advise the director on “the human service needs of immigrant and international county residents.” Proactively framed, the Council also “identifies issues of concern, important changes in needs of the immigrant and international community and ideas for improving the Department’s mission to be culturally competent and inclusive.”

Status in this region:

Nothing like this exists.

Partners or potential partners:

Global Welcome Center, Cuyahoga County, city of Cleveland, immigration service providers, foundations, business groups, labor unions, the Academic Center on Immigration, among other groups.

What success could look like:

Committee members should receive a formal appointment and have a commitment to the mission, their responsibility and to attending meetings. (It might not require compensation – if members receive any pay, a small stipend should suffice.) Selecting the agency that would administer and coordinate this committee would be critical to its success and impact. By placing the Committee within the new Cuyahoga County government structure, it should enable coordination among other public-sector agencies whose responsibilities intersect with immigrants and other new arrivals.

The committee would need staff, a budget and other resources to enable it to conduct research, analysis and outreach.

Arts and Cultural Programs that Celebrate, Recognize and Include Immigrants

Why this matters: Captures social and economic benefits that multicultural society offers

What this does:

Mines Northeast Ohio's rich and deep arts and culture history, programs and support to find additional opportunities for tapping into immigrant communities and artists. Strengthens local arts and culture programs by adding even more diversity to them. A natural home for this strategy could be the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture.

Where it has worked:

Hamilton, in Ontario Canada, has a group, the Immigrant Culture and Art Association, which provides programs and services "to introduce, promote and preserve the cultural and artistic expressions, experiences and abilities of immigrants to enrich Canadian society."

Status in this region:

Many groups that promote and support the arts in Greater Cleveland already do so with an eye toward celebrating, recognizing and including immigrants and international artists. For instance, a wonderful Cleveland Foundation program, Creative Fusion, invites foreign artists to spend up to a year in Cleveland, embedding them within local nonprofit institutions and offering opportunities for deep engagement with audiences across the area. Cleveland State University and Cleveland Public Theatre were selected in February 2010 to host the first artist.

More leverage, opportunities, synergies are likely possible, especially if approaches and goals were strategically pursued and coordinated.

Partners or potential partners:

The Community Partnership for Arts and Culture, the Lit, foundations, city of Cleveland, City Council, Cuyahoga County, ethnic community groups, others.

What success could look like:

This strategy should lead to more collaboration, more programs, more awareness and wider exposure of immigrant and international artists into the community. It should try to raise the profile of existing programs in the community whose goals include celebrating, recognizing and including immigrants.

This strategy could include helping to provide immigrant and international artists with workshops, advocacy, gallery and public art space, access to funding and other resources and performance opportunities.

The benefits, including the economic impact of this strategy, could be captured through the timely and comprehensive research that the Community Partnership for the Arts and Culture conducts.

Cross-cultural Awareness/Education Programs

Why this matters: Promotes, deepens awareness about many cultures among residents

What this does:

Bridges cultures and informs people from all backgrounds and places about each other. Invites residents to learn more and sample cultural trends in welcoming environments. Forums could range from small events – such as celebration nights at local ethnic restaurants – to major, well-coordinated festivals representing groups from an entire global region – such as all of Asia or Latin America.

Where it has worked:

Many cities host cross-cultural programs, events and celebrations.

Status in this region:

Many examples, but nothing as broadly coordinated and supported as this strategy envisions. A few programs to build on: The Council on World Affairs' Young Professionals group meets for EniCity to discuss international topics at ethnic restaurants. Cleveland has One World Day at the Cultural Gardens around University Circle, a 60-year-old tradition with parades, costumes, flags and usually a citizenship swearing-in ceremony. More new events and ideas: ClevelandPeople.com is inducting the first class to the Cleveland International Hall of Fame on May 12, 2010 to recognize those who've made a valuable contribution to the region's multicultural society. And the inaugural Pan-Asian festival on May 22, 2010 in AsiaTown near Payne Avenue and East 30th Street will include food, music, costumes, traditional symbols and a health clinic and information about diseases that primarily afflict Asians.

Partners or potential partners:

A new Cuyahoga County Office for International Newcomers, ClevelandPeople.com, Positively Cleveland, ethnic groups, city of Cleveland and City Council, ethnic restaurants and merchants associations, government agencies, schools, health clinics and libraries.

What success could look like:

This region could host more events and offer more promotion and communication of them and provide easier access to information about them, whether the audience lives locally or overseas. A Global Welcome Center could help coordinate, promote, market and support other, similar efforts. It could host virtual calendars of events, and links to the groups organizing them. Tracking virtual traffic, such as how many visitors come, where they are located and any other data that can be collected would be crucial to keeping the information relevant, targeted and successful.

Mentor Program/Network for International Business People

Why this matters: Lets immigrant entrepreneurs get customized, local market insights

What this does:

Helps provide international business people, especially those who are new to Cleveland, with access to networks of executives in the business, public and nonprofit sectors. Links new international business people with mentors from the immigrant community who have already established themselves professionally in Northeast Ohio. This helps international newcomers in their acculturation process – especially with respect to local customs and practices in business and professional settings. Could include shadow programs or mentoring for immigrant high school and college students. Could also include advice for local business people who want to tap, or make a larger push, into overseas markets.

Where it has worked:

No known formal program elsewhere.

Status in this region:

Much networking and mentoring happens informally now. Programs include: Akron International Friendship, which offers some job shadowing and partnering. Several ethnic and community groups, including Esperanza and MotivAsians, also promote mentoring and relationship building. The Northeast Ohio International Business Network has innovative advisory program called “Been There, Done That,” which helps companies expand their international business.

Partners or potential partners:

Northeast Ohio International Business Network, immigrant groups, international chambers of commerce and consulates, the Minority and Immigrant Business Alliance (which these strategies suggest creating) and others. The proposed International Economy Center could offer support and coordination.

What success could look like:

Informal, organically originating mentoring and networking are important and will always be crucial for international professional newcomers. However, coordination and support might assist programs whose goals include mentoring and networking. Perhaps they could be linked into an International Economy Center’s international workforce programs. At the least, the Center could offer a clearinghouse of local groups offering mentoring and networking. Surveys might track who sought mentoring and how well it worked. Mentors could go through some training based on the feedback from the program’s participants. This could be, perhaps, a fee-generating service. The program might charge participants a registration fee, or charge fees to attend events. Program quality should be monitored, however, if people are to pay fees to participate.

Internship Programs Focused on International Students

Why this matters: Retain educated college students, meet employer needs, fuel growth

What this does:

Puts more emphasis on keeping international students here after graduation. Ohio has the 9th largest population of foreign students of all states, who contribute more than \$500 million to the state's economy. They are over-represented in fields that yield the biggest return for the economy: technical, high-skill fields such as science and math. Foreign-born college and university graduates can stay in the United States on a student visa up to a year after graduation (or, after having pursued their studies for at least nine months) while seeking training in their fields. The federal government has proposed allowing students in some technical fields, such as mathematics, computer science and engineering, to stay here more than two years while getting practical training that complements their study.

Where it has worked:

In a similar program, Ontario made a big push in 2006 to offer internships to international students, when it unveiled a \$300-million, six-year labor-market agreement aimed at helping new Canadians in the province find the right kind of work for their skills and education.

Status in this region:

No formal program exists here linking international college students, specifically, with internships.

Partners or potential partners:

(i) Cleveland, PlusCollege.com, NOCHE's program called NEOintern, the state of Ohio's job portal, which includes internships and first-rung jobs, colleges and universities and local ethnic and community groups that help students find internships, such as Esperanza.

What success could look like:

Promoting the benefits of a program allowing foreign-born college graduates to stay here and get more training for a year or more would benefit both the students and the companies that hire them for internships. Efforts aimed at helping foreign-born students find internships could be layered onto existing programs that help all college students seeking such opportunities. A Global Welcome Center or an International Economy Center could offer support to expand efforts in the region to include international students. For instance, marketing and other outreach might be helpful in ethnic media and languages other than English.

Also, the Professional Panel for Immigrant Visa Coordination/Planning (proposed within these strategies) might be able to help some students find ways to convert their visa to another classification while they pursued their internships.

Pre-K to 12 Education Initiatives for Immigrants/Underserved Communities

Why this matters: Reaches immigrant, urban youth with school-based enrichment, support

What this does:

Offers a wide range of language, cultural and educational programs and tutoring to children from immigrant and urban, native-born families. Events such as afterschool enrichment, snack times with story-telling and homework help could help acculturate immigrant children (by extension, their families) as well as offer support to urban children attending the same schools. An inclusive approach would promote cross-cultural understanding and awareness.

Where it has worked:

Detroit is looking into this. And Philadelphia started a program for students called Project Bridging Cultures at South Philadelphia High School. It offers tutoring and other help aimed, first, at immigrants. (Project is in conjunction with the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians). After backlash from students who weren't immigrants, the program was made available to all, successfully.

Status in this region:

Some programs aimed at children to improve reading and academic skills and the odds they will stay in school and graduate exist now in some places. They are not formally coordinated nor conducted broadly. Cleveland does, though, have a history of school-based programs framed with immigrants in mind.

Partners or potential partners:

Cleveland Metropolitan School District, service providers offering programs to children of immigrants, nonprofits that provide or support enrichment programs for at-risk youth, city of Cleveland, community development corporations, Cuyahoga County, philanthropies and churches, among others.

What success could look like:

Programs could be tailored for the population and needs at a given school. Range of support should be wide. In Philadelphia, the program helps kids do homework, research projects, study for tests, use computers, learn about and apply for college, find money for college, apply for jobs, learn about careers, learn about life in the United States, graduate from high school and plan for the future. Volunteers, with appropriate training and screening, could help conduct programs. This strategy could borrow from what already works in this community but could be scaled up and spread into more areas. Sponsors could adopt a school or center and recruit volunteers, like the Plain Dealer and other employers did informally with a reading program at the now closed Kentucky Elementary School on Cleveland's near West side almost ten years ago. Each volunteer committed just an hour or two a week. But together, they filled a roster sheet over the school day and week with helpers and mentors. Training was offered. The program was low cost, but high value.

International Urban School

Why this matters: Embeds multicultural learning, awareness in classrooms, community

What this does:

Creates a unique learning environment for foreign-born and urban children where the learning at school is intertwined with acculturation and transition into civic life. Ties between school and the community are acutely critical. This school presents incredible opportunities for learning across cultures.

Where it has worked:

More than dozen public international high schools exist in the country – the most recent one opened in the fall of 2009. International charter schools, some catering to students from just one or a few ethnic groups, are more common.

Status in this region:

No school in Greater Cleveland has been created to serve international students, although momentum is building around the idea of a local international school.

Partners or potential partners:

State of Ohio, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, city of Cleveland, Cleveland City Council, Cuyahoga County, philanthropies, ethnic and community groups, churches and immigrant-service providers

What success could look like:

Flexibility and communication would be crucial to success. This kind of school would offer rich opportunities for multicultural teaching and awareness but would also present unique challenges. New York state, for example, gave failing marks in February 2010 to an international school in Buffalo that served hundreds of children who started classes knowing little or no English even though their English proficiency jumped, on average, several grades within one school year. Best-practice models and lessons learned elsewhere would be helpful. Community input on location would be crucial, as would outreach to local residents to try to build in a culture of inclusion from the start.

Tutoring and mentoring should be offered. College tours and career and admissions counseling should be part of such a school's curriculum, helping to link students to universities and colleges in Greater Cleveland. Customized programs, such as a longer school day and more classroom aides, could help address children's intensive language-based and cultural needs; dropout rates, higher in some immigrant communities, should be closely monitored. Community leaders from ethnic and minority groups should be consulted on after-school enrichment classes or other programs the children need.

Federal, philanthropic or corporate grants might help provide the extra resources that would be inevitably required. A charter or public school could be weighed.

Ethnic Media, Business and Organization Directory

Why this matters: Offers people ways to find immigrant businesses, groups, churches

What this does:

Gathers a comprehensive database that can be searched on the Internet and filtered in numerous ways to enable customized retrieval of accurate information. System would be accessible on the web site of a Global Welcome Center. It must allow easy access to organizations' web sites and send users to external sites or links when appropriate. System must also allow questions and other follow-up queries should that can be cleverly routed to other staff or places within or external to a Global Welcome Center.

Where it has worked:

Not clear a model for this exists elsewhere.

Status in this region:

The International Institute in Akron has an electronic directory. Other, traditional paper-based directories also exist. No comprehensive regional and electronic database that can be filtered, as envisioned, currently exists.

Partners or potential partners:

Any international organization that wants to be included and located, Cleveland Ethnic Media Association, Cleveland.com, ClevelandPeople.com, city of Cleveland, community development corporations, Cuyahoga County and ethnic and minority groups.

What success could look like:

Accuracy would be crucial. Because data would be changing frequently, updating could be made easier by, perhaps, giving organizations included in the database a password that enables outside access to just the fields that capture their information. Information technology, management and planning would be crucial to this strategy's success.

Dan Hanson, who runs ClevelandPeople.com, has demonstrated that advertisers, sponsors or affiliates offer a potential revenue source to offset the cost of this strategy.

International Newcomers Welcoming Campaign

Why this matters: Educates community; helps awareness, relations; retains immigrants

What this does:

Helps immigrants find their way into American life by showing their American neighbors the many positive contributions newcomers bring to society and the economy. Public misinformation and fear about immigration are rising because of trends that the national group Welcoming America outlines on its web site <http://sites.google.com/site/welcomingamerica09/>

In 1990, one in twelve Americans was an immigrant; by 2005, it was one in eight.

“These demographic shifts have led to increased anxiety among native born U.S. residents, particularly in new immigrant destinations, such as Nashville, Boise and Omaha, not accustomed to the presence of immigrants. This anxiety has led to mistrust and fragmentation within communities, a record increase in hate crimes targeting foreign-born residents and reluctance among immigrants to interact with long-time residents. As a result, the integration of immigrants into mainstream American society is faltering.”

Welcoming America has made significant gains toward its goals by partnering with local affiliates and focusing on three approaches – community organizing, communications and public engagement – to reduce anxiety and promote conversations in communities across the country.

Where it has worked:

Welcoming affiliates exist in several states, including Tennessee and Texas, and many local communities.

Status in this region:

No formal program exists, although grassroots efforts do.

Partners or potential partners:

Individuals and almost any community group could partner with this effort

What success could look like:

Immigration lawyer, author and activist Richard Herman was seeking in spring 2010 to invite David Lubell, who heads Welcoming America, to come to Cleveland and discuss his tactics and success. Lubell’s visit should be encouraged (and financed) so locals can learn about the benefits and challenges of these campaigns. Welcoming America’s community organizing and public information campaigns – including bus and billboard ads, posters, Op-Ed pieces, earned media, resolutions by city councils – have made a difference in attitudes. The group has conducted polling showing opinions have shifted in the communities with its affiliates.

Resources could be sought for a comprehensive public campaign to welcome international newcomers in Greater Cleveland.

Immigrant Recruitment Networks; Second-Landing Program

Why this matters: Builds on existing relationships to attract immigrants to region

What this does:

Aims to attract to this region foreign-born residents who entered the United States, and initially lived, somewhere else. This is known as a second landing. Research shows most immigrants follow networks of family and friends and settle where communities of their countrymen and women already live.

Where it has worked:

Few places have intentionally recruited as a second landing. Detroit is looking into it. And as Richard Herman and Bob Smith's book, *Immigrant Inc.*, describes, Schenectady, N.Y. aggressively pursued Guyanese immigrants living in New York City and convinced thousands to move north, buy and rehab vacant homes.

Status in this region:

No formal program exists now. Informal networks do, however.

Partners or potential partners:

Immigration service providers, community development groups, the city of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, economic development organizations focused on neighborhood revitalization and stabilization, foundations and the Land Bank.

What success could look like:

This state has much work to do in attracting immigrants looking for a place to call home. Ohio has a foreign-born population of less than 4 percent, compared with more than 12 percent for the country overall, according to U.S. Census Bureau data analyzed by Professor Mark Salling, of Cleveland State University.

Local population decline has been decades in the making. But conditions could be ripe to seize this strategy. Here's why: Cleveland lost 126,719 domestic, or native-born, residents from 2000 to 2008. But it gained 25,432 international, or foreign-born, residents in those eight years, Census data show. The same trend played out in the state. Ohio lost 338,667 domestic residents from 2000 to 2008. But the state gained 92,711 international residents. Together, those newcomers would make Ohio's seventh largest city – bigger than Parma.

Cleveland has lower housing costs than many urban centers, an advantage when trying to attract immigrants. Job growth matters, of course. And the recession has battered the local economy harder than many cities. Yet, research conducted by the Abell Foundation for Baltimore, which wanted to increase foreign-born newcomers annually by five-fold found, "the attraction of existing populations of immigrants is the most important determinant of where newcomers will settle. Even refugees, who are resettled by government assignment rather than choice," the report concluded, "tend to migrate after arrival to join groups of their countrymen where they have experienced success." This offers real hope.

Leveraging and Growing EB-5 Investor Visa Program

Why this matters: Lures investment to Greater Cleveland that otherwise might not come

What this does:

Creates a pathway to permanent residency visas for foreign investors and their families who invest at least \$1 million in new commercial ventures and create 10 American jobs. For regional areas considered economically distressed, including Greater Cleveland, the investment required is \$500,000. The program allows the permanent residency visas, or green cards, to be sought by an individual investor or by a pool of investors who contribute together into one project. An intermediary, once it receives the designation of a regional center, can manage and administer investor pools and verify evidence the government requires regarding job creation and the validity of the investment project.

Across the nation, the EB-5 visa program has raised more than \$1 billion of investment and created tens of thousands of jobs.

Where it has worked:

Very successfully in various places, especially in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation established a regional center and started the “Welcome Fund,” which settled 23 loans totaling \$160 million in its first four years.

Status in this region:

Three regional centers already exist in Northeast Ohio. Cleveland International Investment Fund, LLC, run by Eddy Zai, is focused on investing in the Flats East Bank retail, office and hotel project.

CMB Summit LLC is focused on investments in Goodyear’s new global headquarters, and Northeast Ohio Regional Center is geared toward investments in Bioscience, energy, information technology and urban renewal.

Partners or potential partners:

Greater Cleveland Partnership, Team NEO, BioEnterprise, foundation and the philanthropic community, the city of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. Regional centers might also find additional investors through local business groups representing international professionals.

What success could look like:

Northeast Ohio’s centers could raise \$100 million and create 2000 jobs over five years, according to research conducted by the Geyer Group and presented to the Cleveland Foundation in October 2009. That would be about one-third the rate of success as Philadelphia, considered the best-in-class model.

The investments could be linked with neighborhood redevelopment and other urban renewal initiatives, which would serve the purpose of not only attracting more investment but also using the money to help rebuild Greater Cleveland’s urban core.

A new International Economy Center could help coordinate.

Recruiting Foreign-Born Students, Faculty and Staff

Why this matters: Adds highly educated international residents to Greater Cleveland

What this does:

Significantly supplements the human resources, legal resources and housing-related funding and other available, but limited, budgets that local colleges and universities have for recruiting international students, faculty and staff. Northeast Ohio institutions of higher learning could use Internet-based marketing and outreach and partner together to seek funding at the local, state and national levels for these efforts.

At large four-year universities in Northeast Ohio, from about 1 percent to 2 percent of undergraduates are immigrants, according to U.S. Department of Education data. It's not clear federal or state data on foreign-born faculty exists.

Recruiting could open up a critical pipeline of skilled immigrants and significant economic development and impact to this region.

Where it has worked:

Not clear there's a model elsewhere for recruiting across the academic spectrum as this strategy envisions. Philadelphia has created an impressive model for, and track record of, recruiting international university students.

Status in this region:

Case Western Reserve University has an Office of Foreign Faculty and Scholars, which is a liaison with federal agencies concerned with visa-related matters. Cleveland State University provides services and guidance to international students through an office called Center for International Services and Programs.

With regard to international recruitment, it appears that a formal or coordinated approach is not in place.

Partners or potential partners:

The Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education, all local colleges and universities, international student associations, Cleveland Council on World Affairs.

What success could look like:

Northeast Ohio colleges and universities ought to track the percentage of faculty and staff who are immigrants and set targets for increasing them. NOCHE could gather that data. Once a baseline has been established, perhaps targets could be established.

International students should be connected to sources of scholarships and other academic support.

Representatives of Northeast Ohio colleges and universities have opportunities to tout the educational assets in this region has when public officials and business executives make trade missions internationally. Those collaborations should be fully exploited.

University Partnerships and International Branch Campuses

Why this matters: Encourages flow of expertise and highly educated immigrants to region

What this does:

Delivers courses from U.S. institutions and faculty to students enrolled at campuses overseas, as an extension of the internationalization of higher education. Students at international branch campuses are usually residents of the country where they located and receive access to the similar services of the parent school, including teaching and research. This strategy also includes study abroad programs where the American universities overseeing the courses establish partnerships with universities overseas. Strategy also represents partnerships that are not as extensive but still enable exchange of research and learning internationally.

Where it has worked:

Increasingly, universities based in this country are opening campuses internationally, especially in Asia and the Middle East. Michigan State University opened a campus in August 2008 in the United Arab Emirates that confers undergraduate and graduate degrees. Carnegie Mellon, Cornell, Georgetown, Northwestern, Texas A&M also have international campuses.

Status in this region:

For decades, students attending colleges and universities in Northeast Ohio have studied abroad. Whether local institutions are planning full-blown international branch campuses isn't currently known.

Partners or potential partners:

Local colleges and universities, Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education and the State of Ohio.

What success could look like:

International branch campuses and related partnerships can help attract foreign students who bring not just skills and intellectual capacity but revenue, according to the Institute of International Education.

They also might help with recruiting international faculty or students or lead to spin-offs and technology transfer, among other benefits.

Cultural Ambassador Programs

Why this matters: Attracts immigrants to the region; also benefits community relations

What this does:

Recruits and features cultural ambassadors: business, civic, faith-based or student leaders within local ethnic communities. Ambassadors could also tell their stories in videos or other messages that would be accessible on a Global Welcome Center.

Efforts enable potential immigrants to this region – currently living overseas or elsewhere in the United States – to see that residents are already here from backgrounds or cultures similar to theirs.

Ambassadors could also help escort or guide visitors from overseas when they spend time in Greater Cleveland.

Where it has worked:

Many cities mine the benefits of cultural ambassador programs.

Status in this region:

Informally, this idea has already been working. Yet, so far no formal ambassador program exists to promote contributions of foreign-born residents within the community externally to communities where potential new immigrants to this region reside. Nor is there a program that formally links visitors to this area to ambassadors who can guide them and introduce them within the community.

Partners or potential partners:

ClevelandPeople.com, Positively Cleveland, Team NEO, the Ohio Department of Development, Greater Cleveland Partnership, other chambers of commerce, the U.S. Department of State and other government agencies and schools and universities. A Global Welcome Center might offer IT support and other assistance, support or coordination.

What success could look like:

A formal, coordinated program could increase the benefits and linkages that informal efforts have already made among international visitors, investors and newcomers.

A Global Welcome Center could host video stories of local immigrants in their own words under tabs featuring their native language and also translated into English. Queries from people interested in learning more about Greater Cleveland would be encouraged.

Information technology and management systems coordinated through the Center could track queries from people living overseas or in other states and funnel them to staff (or external partners) for timely replies and follow up.

Coordinate Foreign Investment Attraction and Trade Missions

Why this matters: Improves impact of tours to win international trade; lures investment

What this does:

Assembles a database of ambassadors, or business and civic leaders within local ethnic communities (as also proposed in the Cultural Ambassador Program strategy). Invites ambassadors on trade missions or business-pitch trips. Helps build relationships, opportunities with investors and partners overseas. Promotes coordination among government or business groups seeking international investment to take full advantage of timing and preparation. The ambassadors could also act as guides and civic connectors when overseas clients and investors visit Greater Cleveland.

Where it has worked:

Detroit is looking into this; not clear where else this strategy has been implemented.

Status in this region:

International trade missions from Ohio often include ethnic leaders from the country or part of the globe relevant to the trip. But the events could be more formally coordinated. And, by drawing on the database, the ambassadors could be tapped more often and more effectively to offer assistance, links, context and guidance for government or other efforts to attract foreign investment.

Partners or potential partners:

The State of Ohio, city of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, business and economic development groups and the U.S. Commercial Service, the trade promotion unit of the International Trade Administration. An International Economy Center could help coordinate and help administer the database of ambassadors, who would also be volunteer partners.

What success could look like:

Outreach programs where local ambassadors attend international trade missions could, perhaps, be followed by surveys and interviews to assess the impact they made on perceptions or on investment or business opportunities.

By having ambassadors formally linked into the trips and briefings for them, it should lead to more spontaneous networking and other synergies within immigrant communities.

Ambassadors could connect with consulates and business people or investments while on the trade missions or other visits to pitch for business. By linking them into the process, it could encourage more relationship building and follow-on investment.

The proposed Cleveland Plus International Economy Center could coordinate.

Market Region Internationally as a Tourist Destination

Why this matters: Creates cultural, economic impact when overseas travelers visit region

What this does:

Lures tourists and significant economic development for the region and its businesses and employees. Positively Cleveland, the region's convention and visitors' bureau, is the natural home for efforts to increase local exposure to international visitors.

Where it has worked:

Commonly, tourism is an international economic development tool

Status in this region:

Positively Cleveland, the region's convention and visitor's bureau, has a zippy, spunky web site, publications and social media marketing. It promotes the entire region to leisure tourists through public relations, online advertising and magazines.

Partners or potential partners:

Positively Cleveland has a network of partners, including the Greater Cleveland Partnership, government agencies including Cuyahoga County, major employers and tourist attractions.

What success could look like:

Positively Cleveland says that more than 14 million people who live at least 60 miles away visit Cuyahoga County each year. The hospitality industry is the fourth-largest employer in the region – behind medical, government and industry. 64,000 jobs in Cuyahoga County depend on maintaining a strong tourism industry. That number swells to 170,000 jobs throughout Northeast Ohio.

Cuyahoga County's tourism industry generated \$888 million in tax receipts and fees in 2009; \$456 million of which were state and local, according to the group.

Northeast Ohio (which includes 21 counties) claimed \$13.9 billion in tourism sales and accounted for 36 percent of tourism sales in Ohio – the highest of any region in the state – the group's web site says.

Positively Cleveland has been finding creative and new ways to sell the region to tourists, such as its new Cleveland Plus Pass, a multi-attraction discount pass that offers admission to 10 major attractions at a savings of 30 percent or more.

In light of federal legislation passed in February 2010, which creates a public-private partnership to promote the U.S. as a travel destination, there might be new ways to push for more international visitors. The travel industry will provide up to \$100 million for the new organization. Foreign travelers to the U.S., who will be charged a \$10 fee, will also will help pay for this travel-promotion tool.

As the region finds new ways to welcome international visitors, Positively Cleveland could help drive and connect ideas.