

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2016

Contact: Vin Ko

Program Manager, St. Louis Mosaic Project

[vko@worldtradecenter-stl.com](mailto:vko@worldtradecenter-stl.com)



ST. LOUIS MOSAIC PROJECT

## **St. Louis Mosaic Project Releases New Research on STEM International Student Retention**

In conjunction with Welcoming Economies Global Network (WE Global Network), St. Louis Mosaic Project is proud to release a research study done by St. Louis University on international student retention in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields in St. Louis. WE Global Network is unveiling this research study for our region as well as Global Detroit's new report on international student retention data in Michigan.

St. Louis Mosaic Project is launching an effort to bring together employers in the St. Louis region to learn about the importance of retaining STEM international students for economic development in our region. Together, WE Global Network and St. Louis Mosaic Project will highlight how regional employers can engage and hire international students to address the STEM talent gap.

The study released by St. Louis Mosaic Project was done by researchers at St. Louis University and consists of identifying the gap of unfulfilled STEM jobs in the St. Louis region, looking at the number of STEM international students in the St. Louis Metropolitan area and Missouri S&T and making recommendations of action items in order to close the STEM gap. Many studies have described how immigration helps cities improve economically, socially, and culturally. The recent study shows that international students are 3 times as likely to obtain a degree in a STEM field. The study also describes how most job openings are in Math and Computer related fields, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering.

St. Louis Mosaic Project aims to narrow the gap of unfulfilled STEM jobs in the St. Louis region as approximately 3,000 international STEM students are enrolled in universities in the St. Louis Metropolitan area. One of the key recommendations from the research study to close the STEM gap is focusing on early intervention with international students to provide them with information on Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT) and OPT

STEM extension. Research indicates that organizations should narrow their focus to STEM international students as they have more opportunities to participate in the H-1B visa lottery which may result in a higher rate of retention by filling more job openings in the respective fields. Through OPT, companies can build connections with international students and fill unmet talent needs and OPT is one solution for employers struggling to fill STEM employee shortages.

WE Global Network members and the St. Louis Mosaic Project are joining forces to shed light on this group of international students as an increasing number of communities realize the enormous contributions that foreign born make to local economic growth and prosperity.

Click [Here](#) to read the research study executive summary and recommendations.

### **About the St. Louis Mosaic Project**

The St. Louis Mosaic Project was launched in 2012 in response to an economic impact report, outlining St. Louis to be lagging in immigrant growth as well as highlighting the economic benefits of increasing its foreign-born population. The Mosaic Project is a regional initiative that is professionally managed by St. Louis Economic Development Partnership, World Trade Center, and a 27-member community. Its goal is to transform St. Louis into the fastest growing major metropolitan area for immigration by 2020 and promote regional prosperity through immigration and innovation. Learn more at [www.stlmosaicproject.org](http://www.stlmosaicproject.org)

### **About Welcoming Economies Global Network**

Welcoming Economies Global Network is an organization comprised of more than twenty regional economic development initiatives from across the Midwest working to tap into the economic development opportunities created by immigrants. The mission of the Welcoming Economies (WE) Global Network is to strengthen the work, maximize the impact, and sustain the efforts of local economic and community development initiatives across the region that welcome, retain, and empower immigrant communities as valued contributors to the region's shared prosperity. Learn more at <http://www.weglobalnetwork.org/>