



ST. LOUIS MOSAIC PROJECT

For Immediate Release : April 13, 2015

Contact: Betsy Cohen

Executive Director

St. Louis Mosaic Project

World Trade Center-St. Louis

ecohen@worldtradecenter-stl.com

Missouri Short on Needed H-1B visas to meet the demand for high-skilled workers

St. Louis, MO- April 13, 2015 The St. Louis Mosaic Project works to retain and to attract foreign-born workers to our St. Louis region, to increase our population, workforce and community vitality. As the 2014 *"State of St. Louis STEM Workforce Report"* shows, the St. Louis region has a talent shortage for high-skilled positions. And, we have a rich talent source of international students and other foreign-born individuals who would like to work in St. Louis in our entrepreneurial and ongoing businesses. The challenge is to use the U.S. visa system to handle talent needs, which takes knowledge, resources and persistence. The most common visa for this is the H1-B visa, which is a visa sponsored by an organization for the talent needed. While certain non-profits can sponsor these visas anytime during the year and without any national limits, for businesses there is a national limit and a lottery system for getting the H1-B visa for desired workers. In fact, this year the program opened on April 1 and by April 7 it was oversubscribed and closed for any other visa submissions. **While there are not enough H1-B visas for the national demand, the St. Louis region and Missouri overall will benefit by applying and receiving more visas than currently occurs.**

A few facts: According to Brookings Institution analysis of US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) data, St. Louis ranks 42 out of the top 108 metros for H1-B approvals in 2013, getting 543 H1-B visas approved for a .41 intensity rating (# of H1-B visa approvals per 1,000 employed persons). For comparison, Kansas City regionally ranked 31st, with 800 approved for an intensity rating of .78. Baltimore, which is increasing its foreign born population at one of the fastest rates in the US, had 1,525 approvals (intensity of 1.12). The greater Chicago metro area had 14,453 approvals for an intensity rating of 3.22. As these results come from a lottery system, this indicates that the St. Louis region is not filing nearly as many applications as other regions, which results in many fewer talented people actually

approved through the lottery. As we see that other regions are applying and therefore getting more H1-B visas approved, **we need to step up our learning and H1-B application rates for top talent.**

On a state level, Missouri faces a large STEM shortage. While immigrants are approximately 4% of our state population, in 2009 they represented 43% of the students earning Masters or Ph.D degrees in STEM fields from Missouri research-intensive universities. In 2010, 9.9% of STEM workers with advanced degrees in Missouri were foreign-born. In addition, Missouri is falling behind on jobs for U.S. –born workers by losing on job creation by foreign-born workers. Each high-skilled visa holder creates jobs for U.S. born workers. Since Missouri has few visas applied for and received, meaning only 3,340 new H1-B visas awarded to Missouri between 2010 and 2013, this translates into 6,115 new jobs for U.S. born workers in the state by 2020. By contrast, Maryland will have 27,622 new jobs for U.S. born workers created in their state by 2020 due to their larger application rate for H1-B visas.(Partnership for a New American Economy)

To educate and assist employers in the St. Louis region, the St. Louis Mosaic Project has a one page called “[Hiring International Talent- It’s not that hard to do](#)”. One asset is that St. Louis Mosaic Project has five leading immigration attorneys willing to do a one-hour free consultation for companies looking to understand how to hire international talent. Please contact Betsy Cohen at ecohen@worldtradecenter-stl.com or 314-615-8107 to access this assistance.

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’s goal is to transform St. Louis into the fastest growing metropolitan area for immigration by 2020 and promote regional prosperity through immigration and innovation. This regional initiative is professionally managed by the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership., World Trade Center St. Louis and a 22- Member Committee. The St. Louis Mosaic Project is part of the Welcoming Economies Global Network, economic development groups throughout the Midwest working to tap into immigrant job creation. <http://www.weglobalnetwork.org/>

For more information about The St. Louis Mosaic Project, please visit www.StlMosaicProject.org