



Immigration Recommendations for St. Louis Region: How can we Jump-Start Growth?

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I. Introduction

St. Louis has less than 5% foreign-born living in our region, placing our region with one-quarter the immigrants of other major MSA.¹ The St. Louis MSA ranks in the top 20 in population, but 42nd in terms of immigrants. As recently as 1970, St. Louis ranked among the top ten largest cities, but a combination of negative net migration and lack of immigration has led to demographic stagnation. Midwestern MSAs including Indianapolis, Knoxville, Louisville and Nashville have doubled their immigrant populations over the past decade, and as a result are not suffering from demographic declines. Other MSAs such as Baltimore, Cincinnati, Columbus, Memphis and Richmond have also nearly doubled the number of foreign born from 2000 to 2010, while St. Louis has welcomed only 45,000 out of a metropolitan population of more than 2.8 million, the lowest of a top 20 city. At the same time, the region is not generating jobs; over the last decade, the St. Louis MSA lost 25,700 jobs compared to gains of 36,800 in Kansas City, 101,300 in Nashville, 63,000 in Indianapolis and 94,000 in Baltimore. Research by Jack Strauss shows that the region's job creation is intractably linked to our lack of immigration.² This paper identifies policies that the region can adopt to reverse our lack of immigration and jumpstart our economy.

A central goal embraced by our local government and business leaders is to reverse the greying of St. Louis and its population decline as a way to rejuvenate the region and expand the customer base. The focus on foreign born inflows is only part of the region's emphasis on improving the economic climate of the area. For instance, the St. Louis Regional Chamber is coordinating efforts among business leaders on increasing the educational profile of all our citizens; its goal is that the region will become the 10th most educated workforce as measured by college degrees. Immigration can help achieve this goal and at the same time improve home prices, wages, increase job growth and expand our tax base for local services. This report analyzes the steps needed for this to occur, and the challenges the region faces to achieve the goal of becoming a faster growing metropolitan area.

¹ The St. Louis region or MSA includes 8 counties and St. Louis City in Missouri as well as eight counties in Illinois.

² This paper can be found at the St. Louis World Trade Center website. <http://www.worldtradecenter-stl.com/immigration.asp>

We analyze the strengths and weaknesses of St. Louis' immigration programs and policies relative to ten benchmark MSAs that are comparable to St. Louis on a range of factors including population size, economic performance, and regional location. We examine immigration initiatives, resources and attractors (city characteristics including Education, Economy, Community, Support Services and Quality of Life that influence immigrants location decisions) in these cities. We also discuss our survey of St. Louis international university students that assessed their thoughts of possibly staying here and a second survey of St. Louis immigrants and organizations that serve immigrants to solicit their suggestions on the advantages and disadvantages of St. Louis as a gateway city.

This document comprises several parts. Section II presents the Methodology, followed up by Section III that considers St. Louis in Context. Section IV discusses Immigration resources, Section V summarizes the International Student Survey, and Section VI includes Best Practices of other MSAs. Lastly, we conclude with a List of Recommendations on pages 21-25. The Appendix includes maps and tables of the Ethnic concentration in our region of Asians, Hispanics and Bosnians. For brevity purposes, background material is available, which includes additional details of the Survey, organizations interviewed and immigration resources in other cities from the St. Louis Immigration Initiative office.

Methodology

Does St. Louis have what it takes to attract immigrants? We analyzed ten similar cities to St. Louis: Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, Nashville, and Pittsburgh. Chicago is also included as a



reference, although Chicago is not comparable to these cities due to its large size and status as a gateway city for immigration into the United States.

The data covered four primary areas. First, researchers collected demographic, economic, and other statistical data from the U.S. Department of Commerce. These data measure several variables that are significant in influencing immigrants' relocation decisions, according to existing academic literature on migration patterns. Second, researchers collected data about the efforts and resources available to attract and retain immigrants in each comparison city. Researchers used internet and media research to identify major immigrant resources in each city. They then followed up with telephone interviews to collect data that was not publicly available. For each city, researchers utilized a "snowball" selection approach, asking each respondent to identify other major actors or resources for immigrants in the city. Researchers then contacted the identified organizations and asked them the same questions, identifying new resources with each call until respondents began naming the same resources again. While the sample selection is by no means comprehensive, the collection method ensures that the research team identified the major actors active in the immigrants network in each city.

Third, researchers collected data about the resources available to attract and retain immigration to St. Louis. This research was conducted using the resources and contact lists of the International Institute. Because researchers had greater access to the immigrant community in St. Louis, they were able to make more successful contacts and gather more information about St. Louis than the comparison cities. On average, researchers made contact with 10 organizations in each of the comparison cities, while they were able to contact almost 30 organizations in St. Louis. However, even the St. Louis selection cannot be considered comprehensive. It is a representative snapshot of the organizations active in the immigration network in St. Louis that centers on the International Institute.

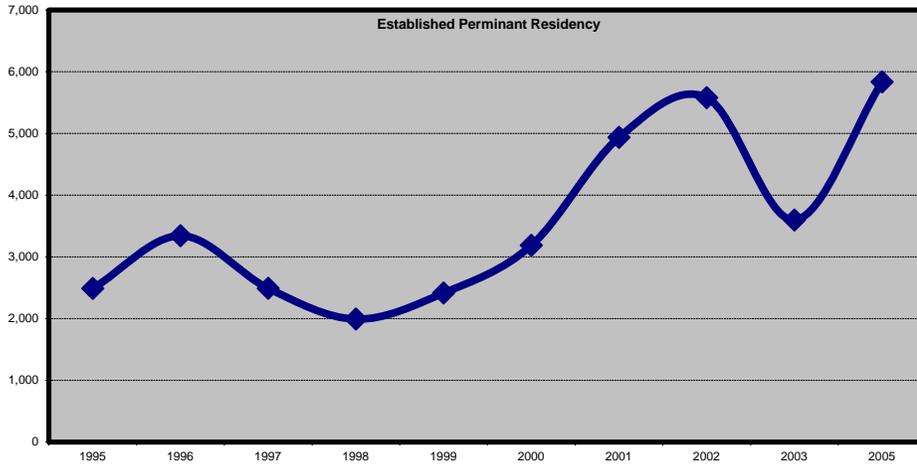
Fourth, researchers conducted surveys of foreign-born college students and non-student members of the foreign-born community. Students were surveyed electronically with the assistance of the international offices at St. Louis University, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, University of Missouri-St. Louis, and Washington University in St. Louis. There were 360 student respondents. Non-students were surveyed electronically and in person with the assistance of the International Institute. There were 106 non-student respondents.

II. St. Louis in Context

Figure 1 shows that over the course of the past decade, while there has been an upward trend in the number of immigrants arriving in St. Louis, the total each year is relatively modest for a metropolitan area of 2.8 million residents. While the number of immigrants and refugees moving to St. Louis in the

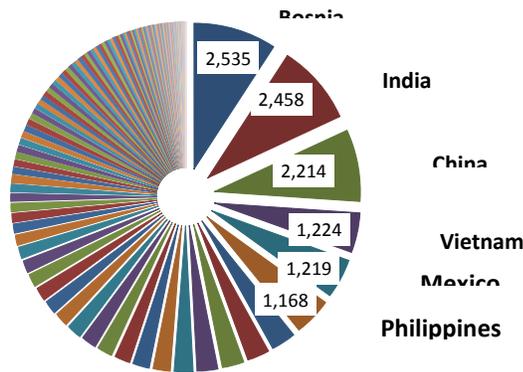
later portion of the 20th Century has been small, the pattern of extreme diversity persists. Figure 2 shows data for 2005 through 2011 for persons obtaining legal permanent resident status in the St. Louis metropolitan area. While about one quarter (25.8 percent) of these new residents came from the three countries of Bosnia, India, and the People’s Republic of China, more than half (50.8 percent) are groups of less than 600 persons from 128 different countries.

Figure 1



Source: East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Figure 2
Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Status
St. Louis Metropolitan Area
2005-2011



Source: Department of Homeland Security

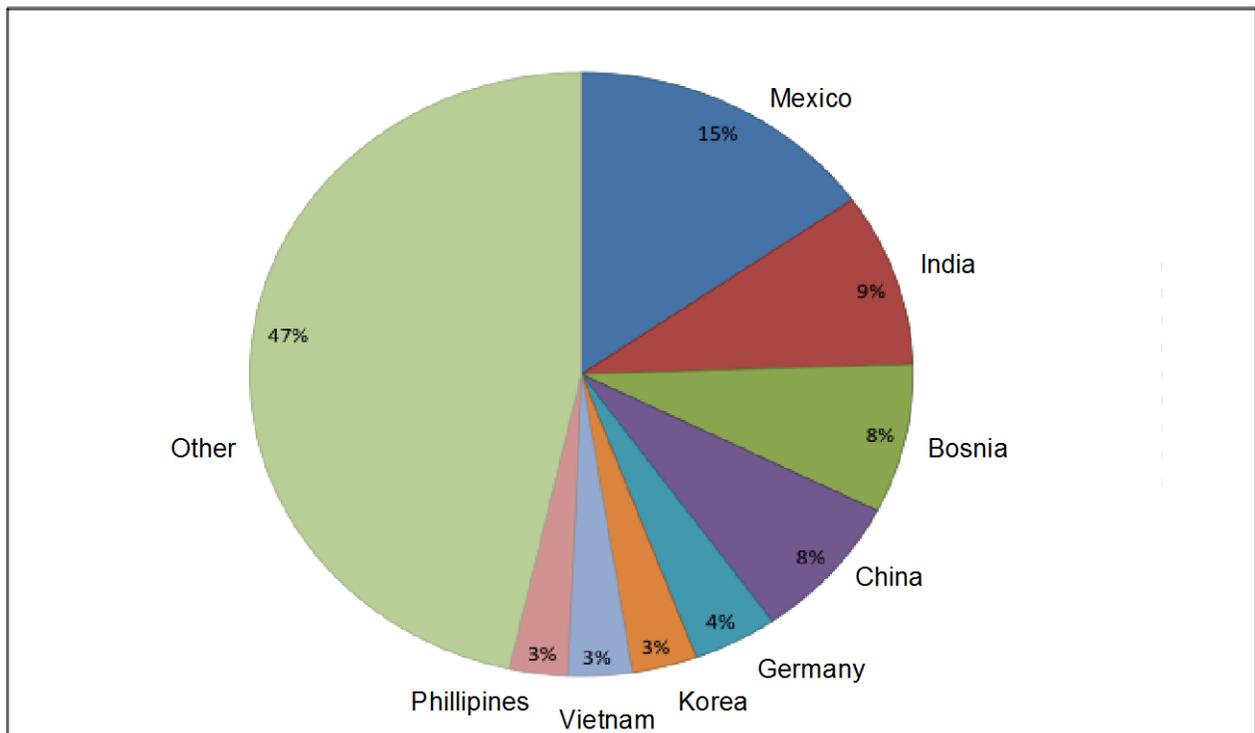
There are groups of less than 100 from 84 countries of origin. During this seven-year period 44.6 percent of the legal permanent residents locating in the St. Louis area were from Asia, 25.9 percent were from Europe, 14.1 percent were from Africa, and 8.5 percent were from Mexico/Central America.

Within this diversity there is a persistent cycle of various nationalities temporarily increasing and abating in numbers, largely due to changes in the federal government's allocation of refugee status by various national groups. In 2008, there was a notable increase in Russians, Turks, and Albanians. In the early 1990s there was an increase in refugees from India, then Bosnians in the mid- to late-1990s. In the 1980s, a substantial number of Southeast Asian refugees moved to St. Louis. Yet consistently the overall pattern is dominated by diversity and small numbers.

This diversity is important because research suggests that the presence of ethnic enclaves is one of the strongest determinants of foreign-born relocation. This is an important point. Most immigrants do not focus as much on the total foreign-born population, but on the number of people from their own country who live in a city. This effect is even more pronounced for low-education immigrants, many of whom relocate to be with their family.

Figure 3 Overall Foreign Born Composition (2010 Census)

U.S. census statistics show that St. Louis has a number of strong ethnic enclaves. It is well known



that St. Louis has a high number of Bosnian immigrants. Less well known is the fact that there are equally large communities from Mexico, India, and China in the St. Louis area. Soviet Union, Germany, Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines are well represented, as well. A pro-immigration strategy should focus on all of these communities, as they have strong potential for additional growth.

Table 1 Foreign Born in St. Louis MSA (2010 Census)

Country of Origin	Total Number of Individuals	% of Foreign-Born Population
Mexico	19,861	15.22%
India	12,106	9.27%
Bosnia	10,440	7.99%
China	10,168	7.78%
Germany	5,393	4.13%
Russian & CIS economies	4,909	3.87%
Vietnam	4,884	3.81%
Korea	4,145	3.17%
Germany	3,773	2.89%
Philippines	3,729	2.85%
Canada	2,470	1.72%
United Kingdom	2,114	1.51%

The foreign-born population in metropolitan St. Louis is not only diverse, but also dispersed. Even among the largest ethnic/national groups, there are few enclaves. For example, the Hispanic population in the five-county Missouri portion of the St. Louis area increased from 18,835 in 1990 to 28,455 in 2000 to 50,942 in 2010, a 170 percent increase over 20 years. But while the 443 Census tracts in that five-county area all show some Hispanic persons present, there are only 35 tracts where the Hispanic population is more than five percent. In 30 of those tracts the percent Hispanic is between 5.0 and 9.9 percent and of the five tracts greater than 10.0 percent, the largest percentage Hispanic is 13.4 percent. This dispersion is not just a characteristic of the Hispanic population. American Community Survey data document very few concentrations of foreign-born population. Data for St. Louis City and St. Louis County represent the overall character of the metropolitan area.

- 307 Census Tracts in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County
- 10 Census Tracts with more than 20 percent foreign born; 39 percent maximum; 8,268 foreign born in those tracts.

- 18 Census Tracts with more than 15 percent but less than 20 percent foreign born; 15,415 foreign born in those tracts.
- 40 Census Tracts with more than 10 percent but less than 15 percent foreign born; 25,209 foreign born in those tracts.
- 182 Census Tracts with more than 1 percent but less than 10 percent foreign born; 36,918 foreign born in those tracts.
- 21 Census Tracts with no foreign born

In Southern Illinois, although a few Census tracts have more than 1% foreign born, only one tract has more than 10% foreign born.

Other Foreign Born Characteristics

St. Louis has a relatively low foreign-born population as a percentage of the total population. This is driven in part by the relatively large overall population in the metropolitan area. Of the foreign-born population, 28% arrived prior to 1990 and 45 percent arrived after 2000. This is comparable to other cities in the analysis. St. Louis has slightly more immigrants (27 percent) who arrived between 1990-1999, likely driven by the resettlement of Bosnian refugees during that time period.

The St. Louis foreign-born population also matches up well against comparable cities on a number of economic factors. St. Louis is average in terms of non-fluent English speakers, immigrants receiving food stamps, and immigrants below the poverty line. St. Louis is above average in percentage of the foreign-born community with high school and college degrees.

Foreign Born Population Patterns

Among 11 comparable municipal areas, St. Louis ranks...

7th % population that is foreign born (FB)

1st: Baltimore, 9.0%

% FB population arrived after 2000

Characteristics of Foreign Born Community

Among 11 comparable municipal areas, St. Louis ranks...

6th % foreign born with fluent English

1st: Dayton, 67%

81%

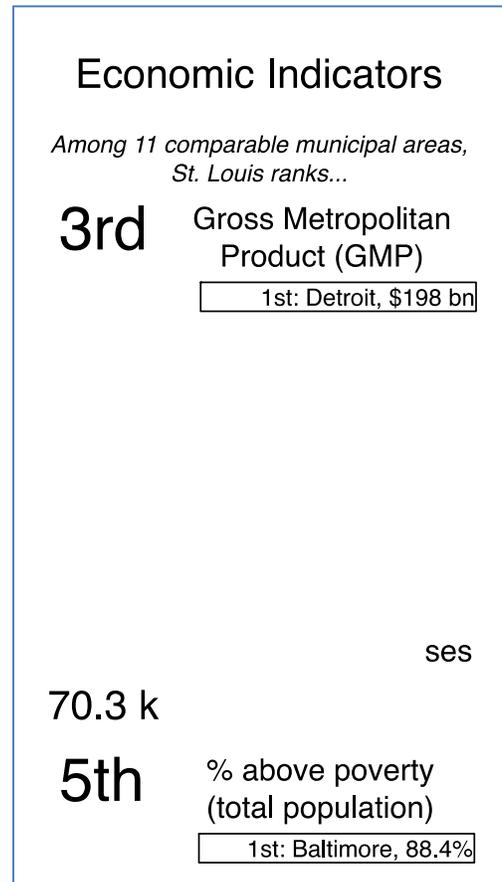
above
poverty line

A sizable academic literature has examined immigrants’ relocation choices in the US and other countries. The research shows that immigrants make decisions about where to relocate based on a number of factors, including economic conditions, quality of life, and the presence of population enclaves from the immigrant’s own ethnic group. St. Louis compares well to the ten cities in our sample on these variables. Although St. Louis ranks poorly in income and employment growth (-45,000 over the past decade), most of this mediocre performance is driven by demographic decline. On a per capita basis, our wages, housing and unemployment levels are relatively competitive and consistent with good educational performance. St. Louis does not compare well in two categories: violent crime rate³ and international access (good airport connects for business or personal travel). Nonetheless, there is no reason that St. Louis should not be able to compete with these other cities to attract immigration.

Economic Indicators

Research finds that economic conditions are an important determinant of immigrants’ decisions on where to relocate. This is particularly true for highly educated immigrants, who tend to relocate for jobs and business opportunities rather than for family or ethnic ties.

St. Louis compares well with the other 10 cities on a number of economic measures. The St. Louis area has an above average Gross Metropolitan Product and number of private business. St. Louis also compares well in average household salary, unemployment, and poverty rates. A pro-immigration strategy should seek to build on these strengths by ensuring that there are resources available to connect local business with the immigrant community and to assist immigrant entrepreneurs. A communications strategy also might highlight these local strengths.



³ The violent crime statistic is for St. Louis City; in contrast, to our other statistics that are for the MSA, crime statistics are reported by city, not metro area. As a result, there is a misperception concerning the degree of crime in the MSA.

Quality of Life

Immigrants also are likely to consider the quality of life in a potential relocation city. St. Louis compares favorably in many quality of life variables. Education levels are strong, with an above average percentage of the population holding a high school degree and comparable levels with a college diploma. St. Louis also has favorable access to public services, with an above average percentage of the population using public transportation and many local hospitals. A communications strategy could highlight these strengths to attract more immigrants.

However, St. Louis City also has an above average violent crime rate — a statistic that receives significant media coverage and is salient in both native-born and foreign-born communities. Any pro-immigration strategy will need to make efforts to mitigate the perception that St. Louis is a dangerous place to live. Resources devoted to making sure that immigrants feel more secure in the area might include sensitivity training for local law enforcement, ensuring that public safety information is available to non-English speakers, and working to build stronger community relations with immigrant communities. These efforts should be publicized as positive stories about safety in St. Louis to counteract negative public perception in the immigrant community.

Data for all comparisons are provided in the tables on the following page.

Quality of Life Indicators

*Among 11 comparable municipal areas,
St. Louis ranks...*

2nd Cost of Living Index

1st: Indianapolis, 87.2

Number of hospitals

Indianapolis, 15

Foreign Born Populations Data

MSA	FB Pop.	FB arrived by 1990	FB arrived 1990-1999	FB arrived after 2000	FB w/o English	FB w/ no high school diploma	FB w/ Bachelor's Degree	FB in workforce	FB on food stamps	FB below poverty line
St. Louis	4.6%	27.8%	27.0%	45.2%	41.4%	18.4%	20.1%	64.9%	11.2%	18.7%
Baltimore	9.0%	31.2%	23.4%	45.4%	34.7%	16.9%	23.1%	73.3%	10.2%	12.9%
Cincinnati	4.1%	27.4%	20.2%	52.4%	39.5%	16.7%	20.8%	67.1%	10.0%	21.6%
Cleveland	6.0%	41.2%	25.5%	33.3%	36.3%	19.1%	17.2%	61.6%	11.1%	13.8%
Dayton	3.4%	34.3%	22.5%	43.2%	32.6%	19.0%	21.7%	63.5%	11.7%	18.1%
Detroit	8.7%	36.1%	28.9%	34.9%	41.8%	24.4%	18.5%	59.8%	19.7%	21.8%
Indianapolis	6.3%	20.4%	25.6%	54.0%	48.6%	30.9%	16.1%	70.6%	16.3%	25.0%
Kansas City	6.7%	26.0%	26.9%	41.1%	45.6%	28.0%	16.4%	73.6%	14.5%	22.2%
Louisville	4.0%	22.6%	27.8%	49.7%	47.7%	24.4%	15.4%	74.9%	13.3%	18.7%
Nashville	7.9%	19.2%	31.7%	49.1%	49.4%	29.6%	13.0%	72.4%	23.3%	26.5%
Pittsburgh	3.3%	35.0%	20.4%	44.6%	32.8%	14.0%	20.3%	63.5%	7.5%	15.8%

MSA Comparisons Data

MSA	Gross Metro Product	Avg. Salary per HH	% Unempl.	Total # Businesses	% Poverty	Cost of Living	% w/ no HS	% w/ Bachelor's	% Publ. Tran.	Total # Hosp	Violent Crime Rate
St. Louis	129,734	69,925	6.5%	70,361	13.7%	90.4	9.9%	18.8%	6%	12	8.9
Baltimore	144,789	92,396	6.3%	65,169	11.6%	119.4	11%	20.7%	6.2%	14	6.87
Cincinnati	100,594	68,161	6.5%	46,143	14.3%	93.8	11.4%	18.7%	2.4%	11	4.9
Cleveland	105,625	63,472	6.9%	52,149	16%	101	11.4%	17.2%	3.8%	7	6.3
Dayton	33,371	59,475	6.8%	17,408	15.9%	91.4	11.6%	14.4%	NA	7	4.3
Detroit	197,773	66,562	9%	97,211	18%	99.4	12%	17%	1.6%	7	10.24
Indianapolis	105,163	68,575	6.5%	42,317	14.1%	87.2	11.1%	20.6%	1%	15	NA

Kansas City	105,968	71,141	6%	50,129	13.4%	97.8	9.6%	21.3%	1.2%	8	5.98
Louisville	58,572	64,643	7.1%	29,859	13.4%	87.7	12.8%	14.9%	2.4%	9	2.84
Nashville	80,898	69,801	5.8%	37,619	14.7%	88.9	12.6%	20.3%	1.2%	9	5.3
Pittsburgh	115,752	65,371	5.1%	59,240	12.6%	91.5	8.1%	18.2%	5.8%	11	3.7

III. St. Louis Immigration Resources

Overview

Researchers worked through the International Institute to interview a number of organizations that work on immigration in St. Louis. Researchers attempted to contact over 60 organizations and were able to conduct interviews with 28 organizations. While this by no means represents a comprehensive sample of available resources, it does provide a useful preliminary sketch of the organizations that are most accessible through the existing network that centers on the International Institute.

Overall, St. Louis has resources to address the major needs of the immigrant community. However, resources in St. Louis are highly fractionalized compared to other cities. St. Louis has many smaller organizations providing immigration services and many organizations that provide services to non-specific communities (i.e., both native and foreign born). St. Louis has the resources available to support increased immigration, but lacks the overall coordination and integration of these services under a cohesive strategy to increase immigration.

Targeted Communities

While all of the organizations interviewed targeted the foreign-born population, researchers found fewer resources directed at newly arrived immigrants. Half of the 28 organizations identified themselves as serving settled immigrants or the refugee community, while only 8 had programs specifically targeted to newly arrived immigrants. Greater emphasis on this community is needed to attract and retain new immigrants.

Researchers also found a lack of support for foreign-born college students. No doubt, there are a number of resources for these students available through their schools. However, these resources do not appear to be integrated with the larger network of immigration organizations. Efforts should be made to integrate these resources to capitalize on the strong reputation of our local colleges and universities and

to try to retain these students after graduation. We need to engage our local foreign born students with this initiative and the broader St. Louis community; early involvement with the immigration initiative will strength student’s interest to stay in the community because engagement leads to interest. Participation further can be a generator of new ideas.

Only 2 of the 28 organizations interviewed provided services targeted at the local business community. This included both services directed at helping local business hire immigrants and services to help immigrant entrepreneurs. This is a key area to attract and retain immigration. Efforts to increase services in this area could be tied to efforts to retain foreign-born college students by assisting local businesses in the process of sponsoring work visas and internships.

Finally, none of the organizations interviewed provided resources directed at local government, law enforcement, or other public officials. Other cities in our sample all had initiatives providing sensitivity training, language services, etc. to improve relations between immigrants and local government. This area of focus could be particularly important in St. Louis to help reassure foreign-born residents that they are welcome in the city and help them to feel safer in light of highly publicized crime rate statistics.

Services Provided

As stated previously, the level and mix of services provided by organizations in St. Louis is comparable to the other cities in our sample. St. Louis organizations are providing the necessary services to attract and retain new immigrants. However, these resources remain somewhat disconnected, with several small organizations and organizations that provide services to the community at large. A pro-immigration strategy should seek to coordinate these services through a single, well-publicized point of contact, so that immigrants and others in the community can be directed to the organizations that can best serve their needs.

Types of Services	#	Types of Organizations	
Legal/Immigration	7	National	7
ESL/Language	12	State/Regional	1
Training/Education	16	Local Only	21
Service Provision	13	Nonprofit	21

Community Outreach	13	Public	4
Policy Advocacy	8	Religious	2

Types of Organizations

St. Louis is comparable to other cities in that the majority of the organizations providing resources to immigrants are local nonprofits. However, researchers identified very few active organizations with statewide or regional affiliations. A pro-immigration strategy should attempt to increase linkages between St. Louis organizations and other groups active at the state and regional level to facilitate information sharing, identify additional resources, and strengthen efforts to advocate for pro-immigration policies at the state level.

In addition, researchers interviewed only 2 organizations that were explicitly affiliated with a religious organization. Other cities have found success in reaching out to the local religious community, particularly as a means to build support for immigration in the native-born population.

Number of Organizations Contacted that Provide Specific Services...

Legal Services	2	Directory of Resources	4
Documentation and Identification	0	Access to Healthcare	8
Citizenship/Visa Services	4	Spiritual Resources	2
Family Reunification	1	Public Services Access	2
Language Classes	9	Inclusivity Training	2
Translation Services	6	Community Engagement	9
Tutoring	2	Host Family	0
Opening a business	2	Cultural Celebrations (i.e., art exhibits, festival, etc.)	3
Financial services (i.e., taxes)	3	Youth Programs	6
Job Training	4	Recreational activities	3
Other Education (i.e., GED access)	8	Advocacy (Political, Human Rights, etc.)	8
Parent/Life skills Education Classes	2	Policy recommendations on immigration	1

Cultural Training	6	Research Institution (Immigration)	0
Health Education	2	Subsidiaries/Living Stipends	3
Relocation/Housing Services	3	Elderly Care	1
Childcare	3		

IV. Student Survey Overview

The Student survey does not represent a complete picture of the international student experience in St. Louis, and we also believe it should be followed up by a more comprehensive survey that also includes perceptions of St. Louis native-born residents of their fellow immigrants and work possibilities for students.

This section summarizes the responses. We find:

1. While the United States was the first choice as a place to study for 90.8 percent of the students, St. Louis was the first choice for 31.4 percent.
2. The quality/reputation of the University was very important for 83.9 percent in the selection of a University in St. Louis, followed by being given a scholarship to study in St. Louis very important for 65.5 percent of International Students, and by a specialized or unique study program very important for 61.9 percent
3. When asked how likely the student is to remain in St. Louis for at least six months after graduation, 15.8 percent responded very likely and 21.1 percent responded likely. When asked if the student was offered a 1-year internship in St. Louis, how likely they would be to accept the position, 43.61 percent responded very likely and 32.5 percent responded likely.
4. Asked about the importance of 10 factors on the student's likelihood to remain in St. Louis, 79.4 percent responded the employment opportunities is very important followed by good prospects for obtaining a work/residency visa very important to 63.3 percent.

As a result, it is clear, that international students are interested in pursuing local internships and potentially in working in the region if an opportunity arises. However, follow-up information shows that few foreign-born students are encouraged to pursue internships, and implies there is a clear gap of opportunity.

V. Best Practices from Comparable Cities

Researchers contacted organizations in the sample of ten comparable cities and Chicago to identify the major organizations involved in immigration and solicit their opinions on what has worked well or not worked well in their cities' efforts to attract new immigrants. Researchers were able to interview an average of ten organizations in each city. While not a comprehensive sample, this provides a good preliminary picture of what other cities are doing to attract immigration.

Welcoming initiatives in other cities were either focused on improving social services or attracting educated foreigners to fill highly skilled positions in business. The most effective initiatives were those led by a strong public leadership. Several of the initiatives have community engagement activities that were targeted at the native-born population. In terms of initiatives improving social services, cities such as Cincinnati and Nashville have engaged non-profit organizations, leaders of foreign-born communities and other individuals in crafting recommendations to the city to increase immigration. Many cities using business initiatives as a strategy were interested in attracting foreign talent to fill skilled jobs to help grow their industry. Global Detroit and Global Cleveland are both based on this premise.

Another factor that showed up several times was directives from local governments. Several cities have been creating departments in the Mayor's Office for Globalization to oversee immigration policy, providing a directive to resources and inclusivity initiatives. The City of Louisville has an Office for Globalization, which sponsors International Councils and offers a relocation guide with relevant information about moving there. The Mayor of Baltimore recently passed an anti-discrimination order. Nashville uses the strong leadership and influence of the Mayor and Chamber of Commerce to endorse immigration initiatives and push them forward. There is also a Refugee and Immigrant Task Force in Nashville. Such high-profile leadership provides additional advantages in increasing the publicity of the effort to attract immigration.

Baltimore

The Mayor's office produced an executive order to protect New Americans from discrimination in March of 2012. Although it was intended to reduce discrimination, it is considered "just a document" because there is no way to enforce it. The Hispanic Commission, along with other Latino community advocates, initiated this proposal because they were afraid of their population being deported under the

Secure Communities Act. The document was targeted towards law enforcement and government officials and has since been extended to all government agencies. The idea to attract and retain immigrants was not the original intention of this document; however, it has developed into this premise. The city government is working on ways to give this document some “teeth” by establishing a task force to attract and retain immigrants. In general, Baltimore is a place primarily of secondary migration. Currently, their primary resources include a refugee resettlement agency.

Cincinnati

There is not one driving force in improving immigration in Cincinnati. Fortune 500 companies are seeking multicultural resources to bring workers to fill jobs. Agenda 360 is working on diversity initiatives through the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati Immigration Reform Action Plan (MARCC) is approaching immigration from a moral perspective. They passed a resolution to help the services of immigrants. Cincinnati’s government will vote on the proposal from MARCC with the support of 40 different groups. The resolution is based on the “Utah Compact”, and it embodies both top down and bottom up immigration approaches. The Utah Compact focuses on five areas for improvement: Federal solutions, law enforcement, families, economy and a free society. Cincinnati wants to break away from its history of being viewed as the “least diverse city in the US”. There is currently limited government support with immigrant initiatives. There are pockets within Cincinnati that drive immigration forward, and they have many Fortune 500 companies that support international business and workers.

Indianapolis

The Indianapolis Immigrant Welcome Center is the main immigrant resource in the region, and it is on the verge of partnering with Welcoming America. The Welcome Center was founded in 2006 by the “First Lady” of Indianapolis. She worked with Myriam Monsalve-Serna in establishing their “National Helpers” Program. The program trains volunteers in inclusivity measures to help the native born population relate to and welcome immigrants. This program was the foundation of their Welcome Center and proved very successful in making the community of Indianapolis more receptive and welcoming to all. Before the Welcome Center, Indianapolis was not very receptive to immigrants. Networking is the Welcome Center’s greatest strength.

Recent policy changes and a change in the community’s culture to be more inclusive have created seemingly too many immigrant initiative organizations. This is starting to cause overlap on many services

being offered. The amount of repeat services is causing issues for many of the non-profits as they continue to compete for funding. Indianapolis also has a large Burmese refugee population and an international school.

Dayton

A few years ago, the director of Dayton's Human Relations Council, a department of the city government, noticed that people of Hispanic descent were not coming forward for human rights violations. He organized a committee to determine the reasons. They discovered that this was a problem among all immigrant and refugee groups. The director then invited people who would be receptive to four conversations to discuss immigration reform in the city. This led to a group of civic leaders who drafted the Welcome Dayton plan. The Human Rights council convinced the city manager to endorse the effort by marketing it as 10 percent city initiatives and a 90 percent community effort.

Since the plan was introduced, it has received a lot of media attention locally and nationally, which has driven the movement forward. The current director of Welcome Dayton mentioned Dayton might have been heading towards being more open to immigrants without the plan, and the initiatives coincide. They found that some of the original plans were not successfully implemented and that a feasibility study might have been helpful. The community of Dayton has been very receptive and the city itself is going through a process of rebranding. The Welcome Dayton plan looks at immigration from four main factors: business and economic development, local government injustice system, social and health services, and community culture arts and education.

They are measuring success in several different ways including the number of new citizens, community survey results, and the city manager has asked each department for measurable outcomes of how they are becoming more immigrant friendly. They want to change the conversation about undocumented immigrants from a drain on resources to productive members of society.

There is potential backlash for a variety of reasons. Dayton, for example, has a history of segregation similar to St. Louis. The African-American community has criticized Welcome Dayton's tagline of becoming an "immigrant friendly city," rather than just a friendly city. The original committee did not engage the African American community in drafting the original document and these leaders believe that not enough has been done to improve their marginalized population.

Detroit

Detroit was one of the cities that was most affected by the recession, and it is seeking to rebuild its population to spur economic growth in the process of recovery. The city is in the process of attracting immigrants, especially to fill technology jobs. In addition, the Governor's initiative in 2011 called "Global Michigan" has spurred immigration in the region. The general population within Michigan has been receptive and supportive of the initiative; however, Detroit lacks public leadership support for this initiative at a city level. Detroit has a high unemployment rate, and there is concern that that recruiting foreign talent will diminish the number of available jobs for the native born population.

The Alliance for Immigration Reform and the Michigan Immigrants Rights Coalition are key groups that are fighting for more welcoming legislation for immigrants. Welcoming Michigan is also working to change local attitudes towards immigrants. Furthermore, local businesses are being engaged in the conversation, and the city is seeking more initiatives to retain international students.

Kansas City

In comparison with many of the other cities that have been researched, Kansas City is not currently partaking in direct initiatives to attract and retain more immigrants. Most of Kansas City's services focus on Hispanic communities. They do have a few workforce development programs and offer many ESL classes for foreign-born people. Many of the larger resource centers for foreign-born people have been in existence for over 100 years. Their resources and services offered have adapted to meet the needs of their foreign-born population.

Louisville

The Americana Community Center is the primary resource for Immigrants in Louisville in that they provide many direct services to immigrants to help integrate them in American culture. History shows that the community has not always been receptive to immigrants and refugees. Louisville has recognized the advantages of growing its immigrant workforce, and the city now hosts the Office for Globalization. This office has been working to change the public perception on immigration through awareness campaigns. This department offers on the website a relocation guide for immigrants.

Nashville

Nashville's efforts to grow their population have come from hosting large refugee populations, especially the Kurdish population. Nashville has a strong manufacturing industry, particularly the meat packing industry, in which many of the refugees work. To address some of the concerns for refugees, a

refugee task force was formed in 1997 and still meets today. Nashville is using awareness and outreach campaigns as a way of becoming more welcoming towards immigrants. The Mayor of Nashville has been a leader and face of immigration initiatives in the city. Nashville has a very strong Chamber of Commerce, which has supported the Mayor in his efforts to make Nashville more welcoming for immigrants and refugees. Catholic Charities has been the primary provider of direct resources to immigrants and refugees in the region.

Pittsburgh

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services requested a listening session within the community. This listening session resulted in the Economic Development Agency (EDA), which is focused on promoting a message of economic growth. The EDA is working with international students and businesses to help promote immigration within the Pittsburgh region. The Mayor is supportive and has signed the “Partnership of New Americans”, which is a commitment to move forward with immigration reform. Of the different immigration initiatives in the region, Vibrant Pittsburgh is the leader. This initiative provides is a center to direct foreign-born people to different resources. Vibrant Pittsburgh has been pushing for a change in their perception of Pittsburgh as an “industrial city”.

Cleveland

Cleveland noticed a big drop in population from the 2010 census. They are attempting to grow their entire population, not just immigrants. Global Cleveland is the leader in attracting more educated immigrants to boost the economy. Several different groups are driving immigration change. Richard Herman, author of Immigrant Inc., is the leader of immigration in Cleveland. There has been huge press behind Herman, which has helped advance his immigration agenda. The Cleveland community has been receptive, however the State’s Legislation is not as supportive. The general public was sold on the economic argument for immigration, and they are more receptive to welcoming educated immigrants. Cleveland is a very collaborative city, sharing resources and best practices. Catholic Charities settles most refugees.

Chicago

A group of Northwestern graduate students put together MidwestImmigration.org. The website is full of data and research supporting Midwest Immigration statistics. Chicago is a gateway city that has many resources. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) is one of the main institutions working on immigration, though they also cover other topics that are related to international relations. Their

initiative on immigration is designed to be bipartisan. They are bringing in law enforcement officials, advocacy groups, Democrats, Republicans, Muslims, Christians, business, civic leaders and trying to have representation from all types of industries and communities. Meetings with these various individuals and groups began about 18 months ago. The CCGA is seeking to build a network of 500 Leaders, and they are currently up to 53. Chicago is working to change immigration at the policy level. The Illinois Coalition for Refugee Rights does a lot of advocacy for immigrants, particularly in regards to the Dream Act. The Chicago City Hall also has an office for New Americans.

Summary and Recommendations

Can St. Louis reverse its demographic decline through pro-immigration initiatives? After examining immigration policies in other MSAs, economic and social factors that attract immigrants and our region's advantages and disadvantages, we believe that St. Louis can significantly boost immigration through the following measures. The good news is that on many of the attractors including the economy (affordable housing, relatively high wages and low unemployment etc.) and education (rank competitively in degrees), the St. Louis MSA ranks reasonably well; hence, there is no gap in terms of our economic or social factors. Four clearly negative factors, or gaps, are the region's high crime rate, the region's lack of ethnic enclaves, the attitude of native-born people in the region towards immigrants and the lack of employment opportunities. We believe further the following initiatives can mitigate the last three gaps, and lead to a more vibrant MSA with increasing job growth. Hence, if we handle our immigration initiatives judiciously by learning from other cities successes and mistakes, and take advantage of our own region's advantages, we likely can increase the number of foreign-born arriving and staying in our region.

This report provides an overview of the characteristics of the immigrant population in the St. Louis metropolitan area and the services available to them; analyzes immigration programs and policies of ten metropolitan areas⁴ comparable to St. Louis on a range of factors including population size, economic performance, and regional location; and makes recommendations intended to make St. Louis a national leader in attracting, integrating and retaining immigrants in the coming years. The study on which this report is based did not investigate the responsiveness of the St. Louis community to the immigration initiative and did not developed detailed strategies for implementing the recommendations presented. This paper instead is a first step in a multi-year effort to improve the immigration climate in St.

⁴ Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, Nashville and Pittsburgh

Louis and increase the region's foreign born to reverse the region's demographic decline and improve the economic environment for all people in our region.

St. Louis Immigrant Population

St. Louis has less than 5 percent foreign-born living in our region, placing our region with one-quarter the immigrants of other major MSAs. The St. Louis MSA ranks in the top 20 in population, but 42nd in the size of the foreign born population. While St. Louis attracts 3,000 to 6,000 immigrants each year, they come from an extremely diverse range of countries of origin. Data for 2005 through 2011 show that while about one quarter of immigrants came from the three countries of Bosnia, India, and the People's Republic of China, more than half were groups of less than 600 persons from 128 different countries. The foreign-born population in metropolitan St. Louis is not only small and diverse, but also dispersed. Even among the largest ethnic/national groups, there are few enclaves.

The St. Louis foreign-born population matches up well against comparable cities on a number of economic factors. St. Louis is average in terms of non-fluent English speakers, immigrants receiving food stamps, and immigrants below the poverty line. St. Louis is above average in percentage of the foreign-born community with high school and college degrees. However, St. Louis is comparatively low in terms of employment for immigrants, with only 65% of the foreign-born community active in the labor force.

The rationale behind our efforts should be continually stressed. Increasing immigration can help St. Louis close our jobs gap. Over the past decade, St. Louis has lost 25,700 jobs compared to gains of 36,800 in Kansas City, 101,300 in Nashville, 63,000 in Indianapolis and 94,000 in Baltimore. These cities also have attracted substantially more immigrants. Immigrants lead to job creation for two reasons. The foreign-born tend to be more entrepreneurial; e.g., the Kauffman Foundation shows that immigrants are twice as likely to start small businesses as native-born. Small businesses lead to further job creation by direct hiring but also by increasing economic activity through local purchasing of services and supplies. Additionally, business location theory posits that an educated, skilled workforce is a critical factor in a firm's decision to locate in particular regions; firms require an array of different skills sets, and immigrants can be an important component of an increasingly specialized work-force. St. Louis' aging workforce and negative net migration of native born further imply the need for immigrations to slow the region's demographic decline. Lastly, note the focus on foreign born inflows is only part of the region's emphasis on improving the economic climate of the area. For instance, the St. Louis Regional Chamber has launched an effort to increase the educational attainment of all of our citizens; its goal is that the region will become by 2025 one of the nation's top 10 metro areas for share of adults with a college degree. The

Census shows that our region's immigrant population is already much more highly educated than the native born, making the success of our immigration initiative critical to achieving The Chamber's goal of educational attainment for the region.

St. Louis Immigration Resources

While St. Louis has resources to address the major needs of the immigrant community there are several characteristics that should be understood and addressed.

- The organizations that provide services to immigrants are highly fractionalized compared to other cities. St. Louis has many smaller organizations providing immigration services and many organizations that provide services to non-specific communities (i.e., both native and foreign born). St. Louis has the resources available to support increased immigration, but lacks the overall coordination and integration of these services under a cohesive strategy to increase immigration. And there are fewer resources directed at newly arrived immigrants compared to settled immigrants or the refugee community.
- There is a lack of support for foreign-born college students. No doubt, there are a number of resources for these students available through their schools. However, these resources do not appear to be integrated with the larger network of immigration organizations. Efforts should be made to integrate these resources to capitalize on the strong reputation of our local colleges and universities and to try to retain these students after graduation. A survey of international graduate students at universities in St. Louis documented they are interested in pursuing local internships and potentially in working in the region if an opportunity arises. However, follow-up information shows that few foreign-born students are encouraged to pursue internships.
- Few St. Louis organizations provide services targeted at the local business community. This includes both services directed at helping local business hire immigrants and services to help immigrant entrepreneurs. This is a key area to attract and retain immigration. Efforts to increase services in this area could be tied to efforts to retain foreign-born college students by assisting local businesses in the process of sponsoring work visas and internships.
- Very few active organizations have statewide or regional affiliations. A pro-immigration strategy should attempt to increase linkages between St. Louis organizations and other groups active at the state and regional level to facilitate information sharing, identify additional resources, and strengthen efforts to advocate for pro-immigration policies at the state level.

- Not many of the immigrant services organizations are affiliated with a religious organization. Other cities have found success in reaching out to the local religious community, particularly as a means to build support for immigration in the native-born population. Our religious community efforts so far including Catholic Charities have been low profile and their efforts need more engagement with the overall effort to raise their visibility in the community.

Best Practices from Comparable Metropolitan Areas

Welcoming initiatives in other cities were either focused on improving social services or attracting educated foreigners to fill highly skilled positions in business. The most effective initiatives were those led by a strong public leadership. Several of the initiatives have community engagement activities that were targeted at the native-born population. In terms of initiatives improving social services, cities such as Cincinnati and Nashville have engaged non-profit organizations, leaders of foreign-born communities and other individuals in crafting recommendations to the city to increase immigration. Many cities using business initiatives as a strategy were interested in attracting foreign talent to fill skilled jobs to help grow their industry. Global Detroit and Global Cleveland are both based on this premise.

Another factor that showed up several times was directives from local governments. Several cities have created departments in the Mayor's Office for Globalization to oversee immigration policy, providing a directive to resources and inclusivity initiatives. The City of Louisville has an Office for Globalization, which sponsors International Councils and offers a relocation guide with relevant information about moving there. The Mayor of Baltimore recently passed an anti-discrimination order. Nashville uses the strong leadership and influence of the Mayor and Chamber of Commerce to endorse immigration initiatives and push them forward. Such high-profile leadership provides additional advantages in increasing the publicity of the effort to attract immigration.

Recommendations

- (1) *Coordination, Communication and Assessment.* Many cities have a regional coordinator of immigration efforts who works on initiatives, organizes initiatives among different NGOs and government agencies as well as communicate these efforts to the public. Global Cincinnati and others push social media and branding; Pittsburgh has a program called Connecting Bridges, and like most cities coordinate through their World Affairs Council. Global Detroit is part of a "wide-range of activities that welcome and retain foreign-born residents and investment into the region, as well as help position the transformation of the economy in southeast Michigan." St. Louis has more than 400 fragmented organizations that provide services to immigrants; many are local chapters of national organizations, while others are home-grown. The number of organizations is not necessarily a weakness, as there are a wide range of diverse

organizations interested in helping immigrants, and likely implies the region has unused capacity in handling increased immigrants. Additionally, many cities involve religious organizations more than St. Louis in providing immigrant needs. It would be useful not only to assess these organizations' role and learn from their successful activities but also to coordinate and communicate with them to achieve a common goal of improving the immigrant experience in the region.

- (2) *Launch a Welcoming Center with local government involvement.* The region ranks well in accommodating refugee needs (due to the International Institute along with many smaller organizations); however, we do not service employment based immigrants and their families well. Other cities do a better job of connecting people with each other and companies including for instance cultural events, and educational events aimed at children of immigrants; e.g., Global Cincinnati has a variety of activities aimed at K-8 including cultural presentations.
- (3) *Create a Virtual Ethnic Enclave.* The research clearly shows that immigrants are attracted to cities with other immigrants. St. Louis has thousands of Bosnians, Chinese, Filipinos, Germans, Indians, Koreans, Mexicans, Russians and Vietnamese; further, we have hundreds of foreign born from more than two dozen other countries. We should try to leverage our numbers by connecting them together online and in person. The Welcoming Center can host events including speakers, potluck dinners and entertainment for our diverse population. Our universities and top BioTech research facilities often hire immigrants whose spouses and families are isolated from members of their own country. If we want to continue to hire top talent, we need to make St. Louis immigrants not feel isolated or overwhelmed; therefore, it is critical to engage and integrate the spouses with the community. Louisville has events for immigrant professionals; this program would target all immigrants. We need to set St. Louis apart, and create unique initiatives that connect our immigrants to each other and the community.
- (4) *Promote Policies through Political Leadership.* Dayton and other cities received considerable positive press through their leadership's announcements of a more welcoming city/region. Pittsburgh Mayor signed the Partnership of New Americans, which brings together mayors and corporate leaders. A St. Louis announcement could include welcoming immigrants, highlighting successful immigrants and their contributions, announce new initiatives such as a coordinating body, a Welcoming Center, business community interaction, police sensitivity training and more. A reoccurring theme of the Immigrant survey is that St. Louis needs to raise the profile of immigrants' contributions in the area and improve attitudes towards them. A central finding is that: "Successful initiatives, at least in the words of the organizations and news stories about them, have come from local government. This strong public leadership attracted media attention to the initiative which, in the case of Dayton, has pushed it forward and held the City accountable."
- (5) *Engage the Business Community.* The St. Louis Regional Chamber, the Regional Business Council, Civic Progress, Partnership for Downtown St. Louis and others have indicated their support for the immigration initiative as a method of creating both consumers and workers for their businesses. We need their

continued support and leadership in communicating to their members that increasing immigration is a goal that will make the region more business friendly. Additionally, the St. Louis Business Community needs to provide sponsorships for particular immigration programs and activities as a way of promoting St. Louis and rejuvenating the community.

- (6) *Connect to the Local Community.* We need to broadcast our efforts to the local Community and make them more aware of the necessity of encouraging more immigrants to our region as well as provide a more welcoming environment from the grassroots level. Behind the scenes work includes engaging important local constituencies including the African American community, regional chambers, local municipal governments and religious institutions. The Chicago Immigration Project is designed as a bipartisan project, and brings in law enforcement officials, advocacy groups, Democrats, Republications, Muslims, Christians, the Jewish Federation and students. Many cities cited a failure to engage with those opposed which then slowed down efforts.
- (7) *Include International Students.* Our survey of international students had several interesting findings. It shows that nearly 80 percent of international students want a local internship that may lead to a possible job. At the same time, very few international students were encouraged to obtain internships; there is a large perceived gap between actual and desired internships by international students. The survey also indicated international students were happy at our local institutions, and would consider staying in St. Louis if an opportunity arose.
- (8) *Communicate with MO Legislators.* Missouri lags behind other states in efforts to integrate immigrants including *professionally recertification* to make their degrees/education count. We should coordinate further with Kansas City and other large cities in MO.
- (9) *Open up to new ideas both big and small.* To be the fastest growing immigrant destination, we need to invite ideas from our community. The Welcoming Center and Coordination leader should solicit ideas from our foreign-born, our native-born, our businesses and universities. We need to broadcast our efforts to solicit people to come here. Immigrants create jobs, and we need to let our native-born know this, so they can aid in helping more immigrants come to this region. Recent discussions with members of the immigration panel have highlighted an entire range of ideas to increase immigration. For instance, suggestions include highlighting our efforts in the local ethnic newspapers and eliciting their support and suggestions as well; promote success stories of both our first and second generation immigrants – from a CEO to an excellent student who has won an award at a local school – as a way of generating local support; leverage what St. Louis excels at – Biotech and Healthcare and University Education as a way of generating support for encouraging immigrants in the STEM fields; at the same time, promote an environment of inclusiveness – solicit suggestions of how to welcome immigrants who engage in low skilled work – as they are needed in many growing fields including healthcare. Their children will grow-up as St. Louisans enjoying Cardinal’s baseball.

Immigration Initiatives for St. Louis Study Summary

Opportunity

Recommendation

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Promote Policies through Political Leadership

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Connect to the Local Community

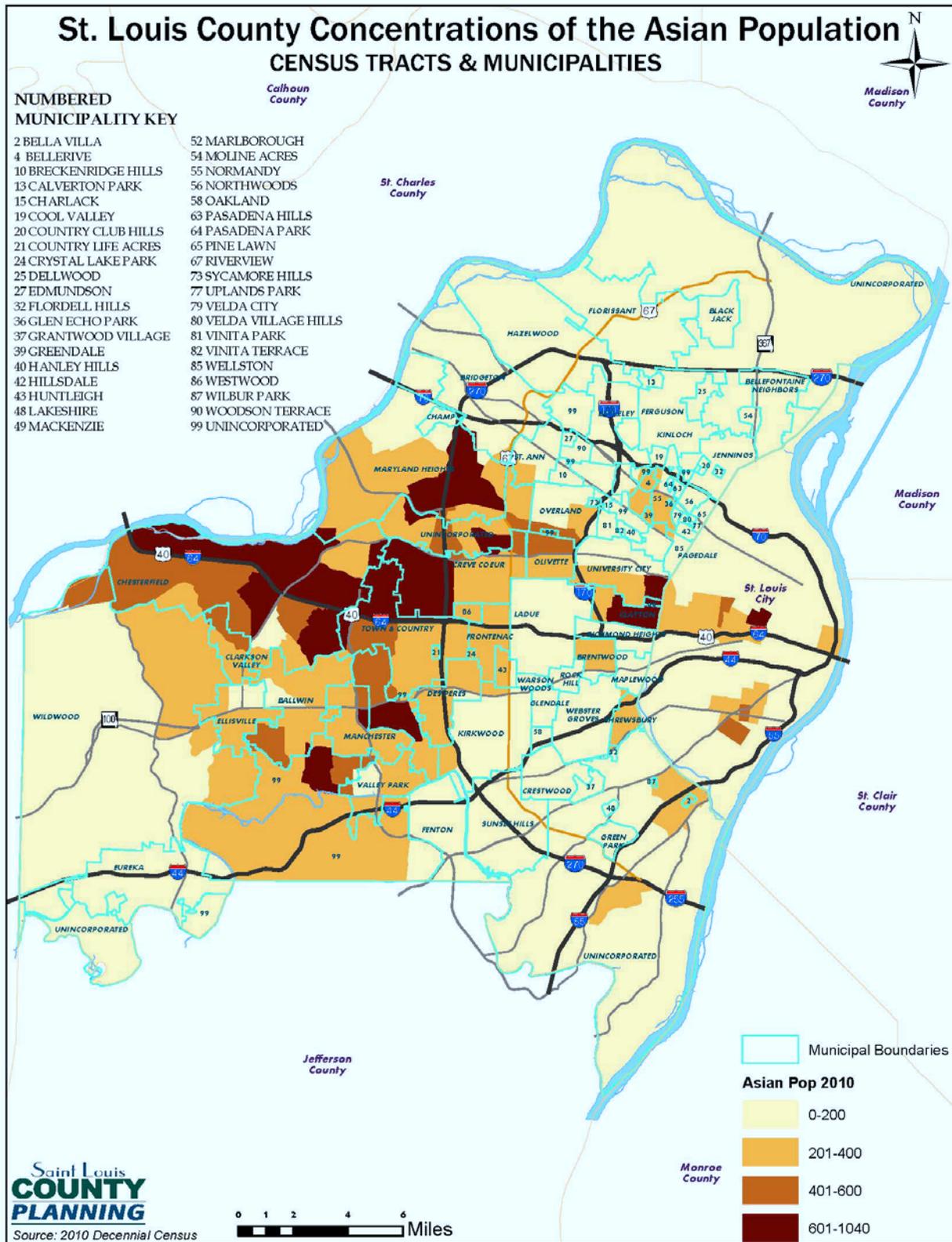
Missouri lags behind other states in efforts to integrate immigrants including professional recertification to make their degrees/education count. We should coordinate further with Kansas City, other large cities in MO and Southern Illinois near St. Louis. Additionally, we should continue to communicate to our legislators in D.C.

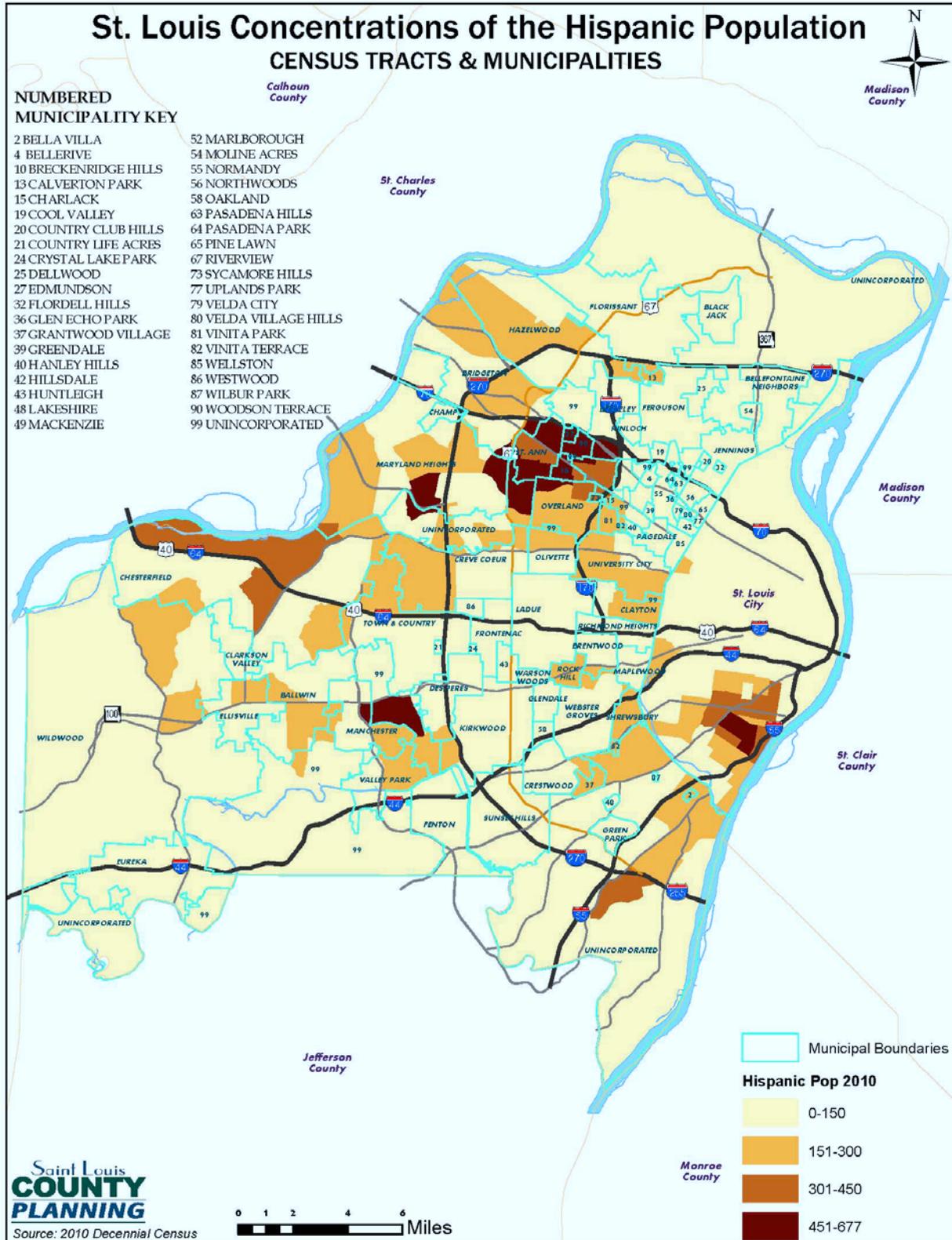
Communicate with MO, IL and DC Legislators

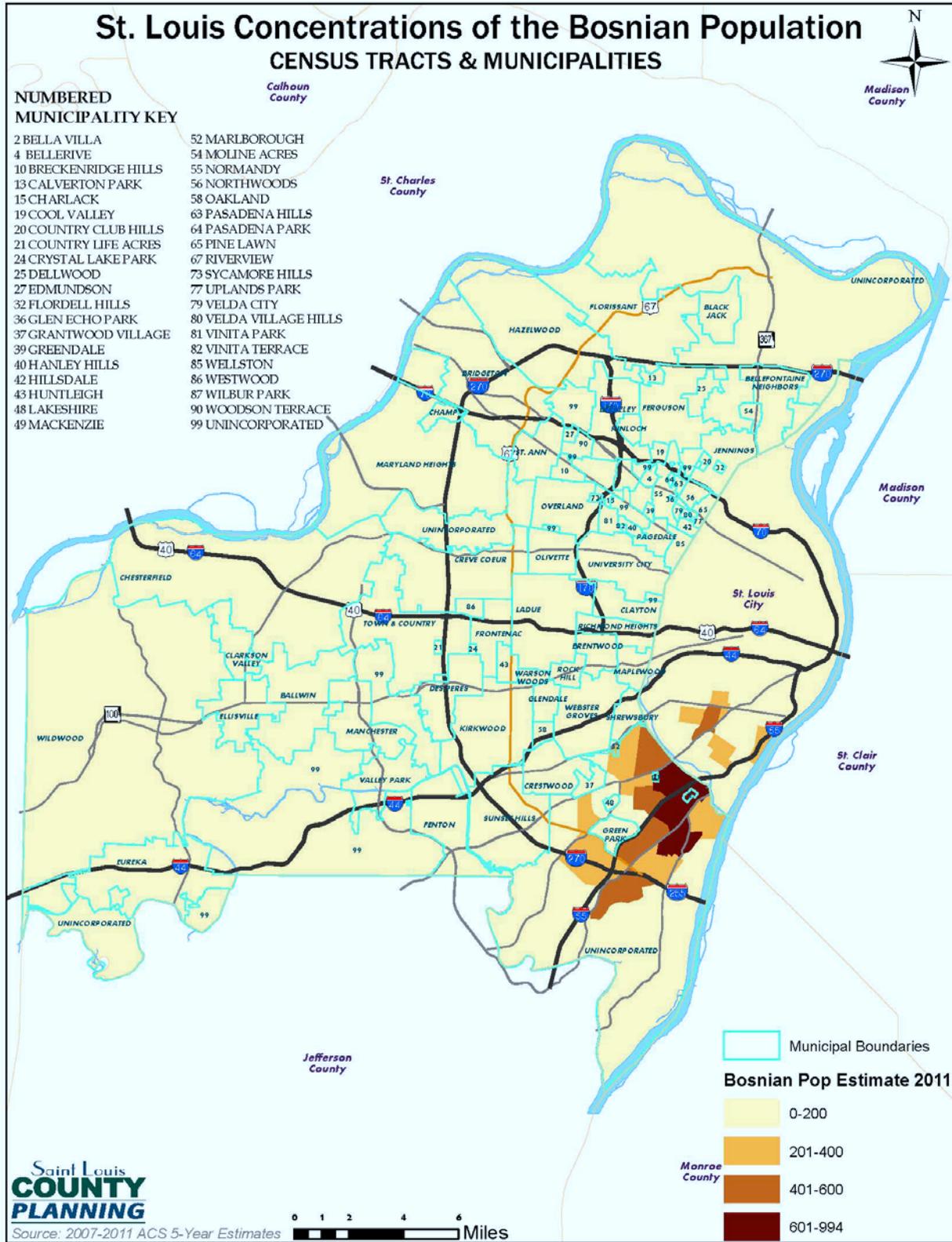
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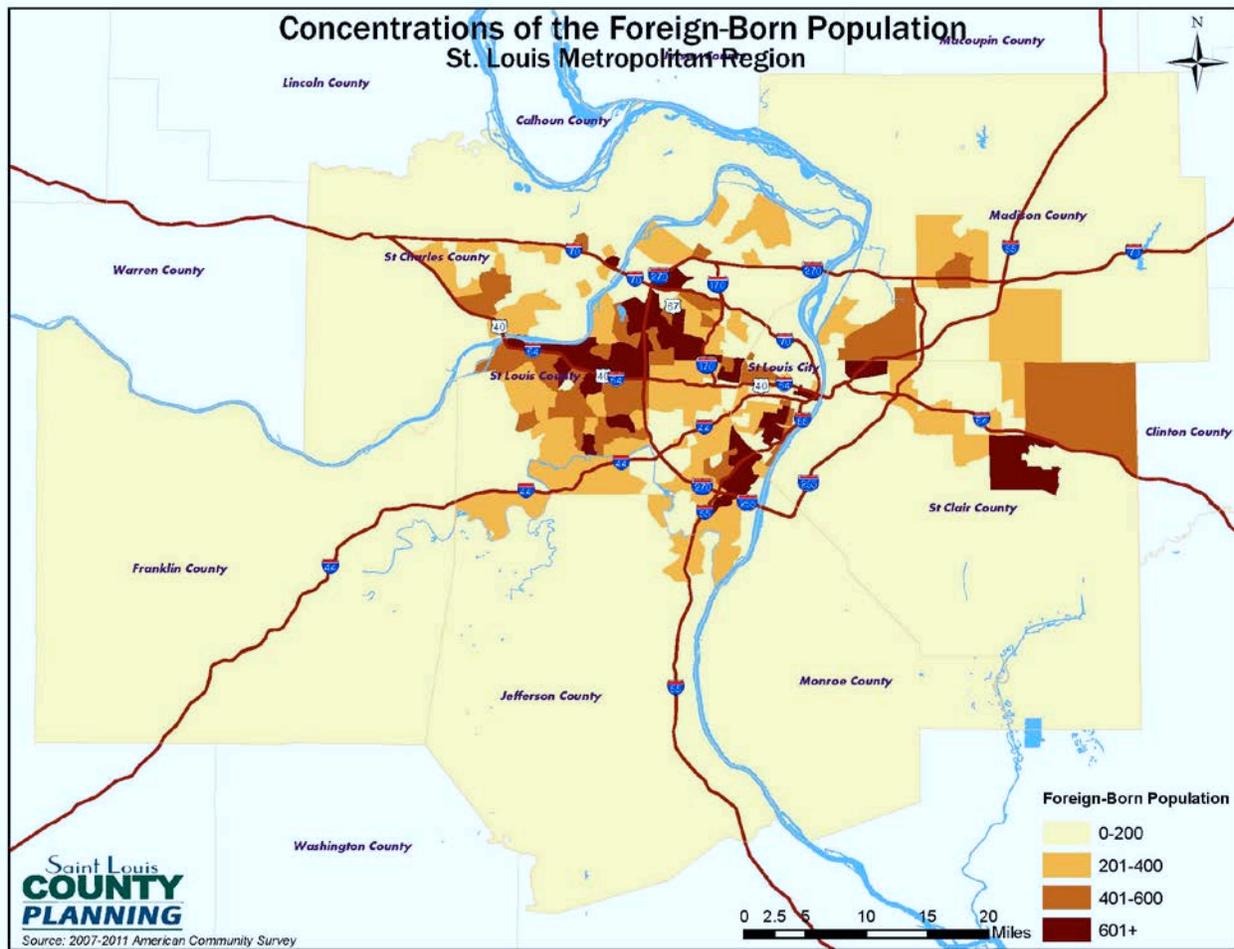
Communicate with MO, IL and DC Legislators

Appendix: St. Louis County and City Ethnic Concentration Maps









Ethnic Population Composition in the St. Louis MSA

Within County	% White	% Black	% Asian	% Hispanic	% Two or More Races
Madison County, Illinois	88.2	7.9	0.8	2.7	1.8
Monroe County, Illinois	98	0.2	0.4	1.4	0.8
St. Clair County, Illinois	64.6	30.5	1.2	3.3	2.2
Franklin County, Missouri	96.8	0.8	0.4	1.4	1.2
Jefferson County, Missouri	96.5	0.8	0.6	1.6	1.3
St. Charles County, Missouri	90.7	4.1	2.2	2.8	1.8
St. Louis County, Missouri	70.3	23.3	3.5	2.5	1.9
St. Louis city, Missouri	43.9	49.2	2.9	3.5	2.4
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	76.5	18.4	2.1	2.6	1.8

The table below should be read vertically, showing each county's share of the regional (East-West Gateway area) total.

Share of Regional Total	% White	% Black	% Asian	% Hispanic	% Two or More Races
Madison County, Illinois	12.4%	4.2%	3.8%	10.8%	10.4%
Monroe County, Illinois	1.7%	0.0%	0.2%	0.7%	0.6%
St. Clair County, Illinois	9.1%	16.1%	5.5%	13.0%	12.6%
IL Total	23.1%	20.3%	9.6%	24.5%	23.5%
Franklin County, Missouri	5.1%	0.2%	0.7%	2.1%	2.5%
Jefferson County, Missouri	11.0%	0.4%	2.4%	5.0%	6.2%
St. Charles County, Missouri	17.0%	2.9%	13.3%	14.8%	13%
St. Louis County, Missouri	36.5%	45.6%	58.4%	37.1%	38.9%
St. Louis city, Missouri	7.3%	30.7%	15.7%	16.5%	15.8%
City+County	43.8%	76.3%	74.1%	53.6%	54.7%
MO Total	76.9%	79.7%	90.4%	75.5%	76.5%
Total EWG 8-County Region	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%