

Regional Prosperity Through Immigration and Innovation



Background: In 2012, the William T. Kemper Foundation funded the report, “The Economic Impact of Immigration on St. Louis,” by Jack Strauss PhD, Director of the Simon Center for Regional Forecasting at Saint Louis University. The study was an urgent call to action for the St. Louis region. While St. Louis has considerable strengths, the region lacks several ingredients that are contributing to its economic stagnation. One such ingredient is the low representation of immigrants, compared to similarly-sized metropolitan areas in the United States. The study indicated St. Louis’ economy already has benefitted from immigrants as entrepreneurs, a talented workforce, and sources of new population. For the region to grow, St. Louis must attract and retain new residents, including immigrants.

St. Louis Mosaic Project In June 2013, Dr. Strauss completed a second study titled “Immigration Recommendations for St. Louis Region: How can we Jumpstart Growth?” which benchmarked St. Louis to 10 similar Midwestern regions. The study suggested better coordination between immigrant and business communities as well as better access to St. Louis resources. The study resulted in nine recommendations for St. Louis to attract immigrants. The Steering Committee is moving forward in five action areas.

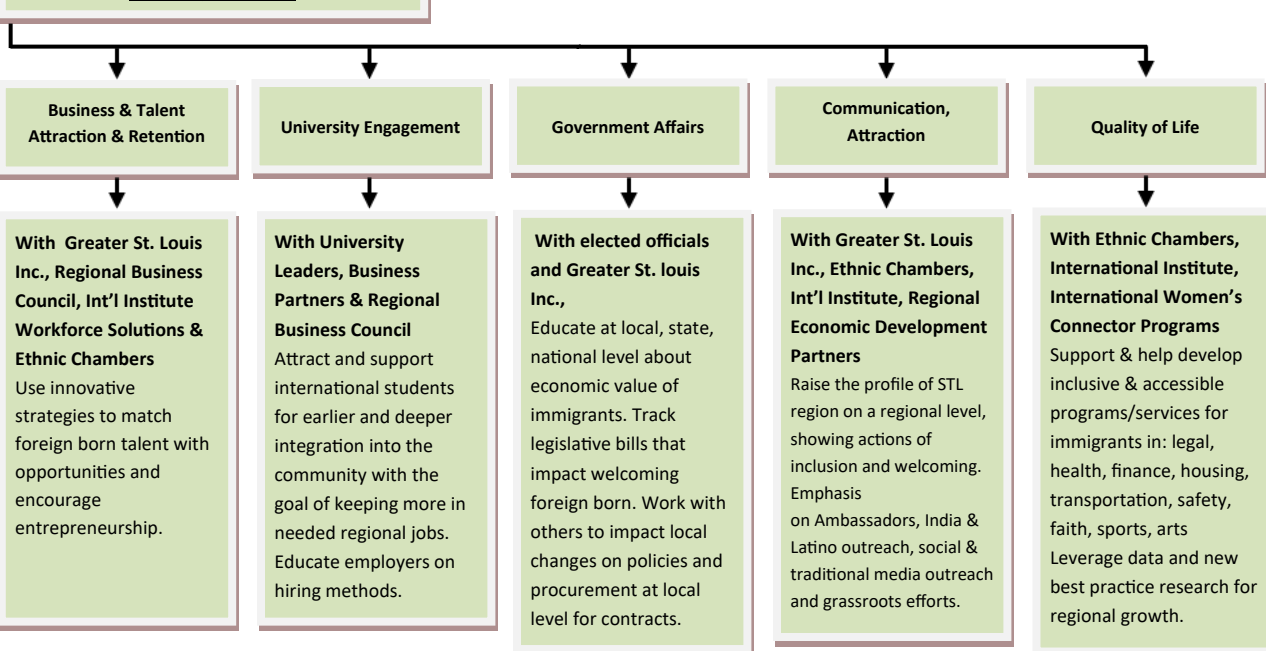
Results/Impact: In 2024 the data was released that the STL Metro is the #1 Fastest Growing Metro for foreign-born in the USA, growing 23% for 2023 over 2022.

Steering Committee

Steering committee: The Strauss study was unveiled publicly in June 2012 and the St. Louis Regional Immigration & Innovation Steering Committee was formed. The 32-member steering committee is a diverse mix of regional business, civic, economic development, faith, agency and academic leaders. The committee analyzes the effects of immigration on the St. Louis region and builds support for local recommendations to attract, support and ultimately retain new citizens to spur growth and secure the economic future of St. Louis.

Goal: To transform St. Louis into one of the fastest growing major metropolitan areas for immigration by 2025 –and continue the momentum forward.

Strategic Areas



Betsy Cohen—Executive Director
Suzanne Sierra—Assistant Director
Annie Mbale—Project Manager

Steering Committee Chair

Rodney Crim – President, & CEO St. Louis Economic Development Partnership

Steering Committee Members

Dr. Michael Brown — Strategic Planning, Urban League STL
Liane Constantine — Executive Director, UMSL Global, University of Missouri St. Louis
Anna Crosslin — Co-Founder of Mosaic Project
Nisha Dharna — HR Partner Lead, NA Crop Science, Bayer
Trezette Dixon — Sr. Director, Fellows Experience Greater St. Louis Inc
Meghan Feole — Manager, HR Business Partners Life Sciences Mid to West Region, MilliporeSigma
Bob Fox —Founder and Recent Past Chair, Casa de Salud
Renee Franklin —Director of Audience Development, St. Louis Art Museum, President of St. Louis Sister Cities
Abdullatif Hamad —Professor of Physics, Int’l Student liaison at SIUE
Molly Hyland —Senior Vice President, Commerce Bank
Luchen Li — Assoc. VP Global Engagement, International Enrollment.SLU
Edward S. Macias — Casa de Salud, Board Chair
Julia Macias — Asst. Dean, Office of Scholar Programs, Director, Annika Rodriguez Scholars Program, Washington University
Debbie Monterrey —News Anchor/Reporter, KMOX AM1120
Kenny Murdock —Director of the County Executive’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Dan Nielsen — VP Global Talent Acquisition, RGA
Arrey Obenson — President & CEO, International Institute of St. Louis
F. Javier Orozco —Executive Director, Human Dignity & Intercultural Affairs, Archdiocese of St. Louis
Gilberto Pinela —Director. Office of New Americans, City of St. Louis
Sekhar Prabhakar —Chief Executive Officer, CEdge
Deborah Price —VP Bus. Recruitment, Gen. Counsel Missouri Partnership
Kathleen “Kitty” Ratcliffe – President, St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission
Kathy Reeves — Assistant Vice President, Corporate Community Relations, Enterprise Holdings
Stephanie Regagnon — Executive Director, Innovation Partnership, Donald Danforth Plant Science Center
Julian Schuster — Provost and Senior Vice President, Webster University
Aarti Sharma —Vice President, Tech Ops and Service Delivery, Mastercard
Jack Sisk — Board President, Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis
Ed Skapinok — Chief Commercial Officer, Explore St. Louis
Crystal Smith —Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Ameren
Mike Tang — Sr. Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, Emerson
Peter Tao – Co-founder, TAO + LEE
Ted M. Zimmerman — VP, Bi-State Development

Advisors to the Steering Committee

Kathy Osborn – President & CEO, The Regional Business Council (RBC)
Tim Nowak – Executive Director, World Trade Center St. Louis