

New Americans and a New Direction

The Role of Immigrants in Reviving the Great Lakes Region

The fate of U.S. workers in the Great Lakes region has become a centerpiece of the national conversation on the economy. Politicians have capitalized on economic frustrations, arguing that immigrants are to blame for the region’s woes.

The reality, however, is that far from being the cause of its economic struggles, immigration may in fact provide one of the most promising solutions to it. The findings of a new report by New American Economy and the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition shows how immigrants are revitalizing and strengthening industries like manufacturing and healthcare; offsetting decades of population decline; and reinvigorating local economies with new businesses, an increased tax base, and consumer spending that drives local growth.

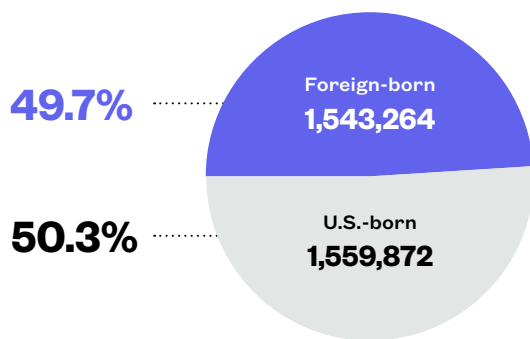
Immigration fuels population growth in the Great Lakes region.

- Immigrants accounted for **half of regional population growth** between 2000 and 2015, offsetting population decline altogether in **nine of the top 25** metros.

Immigrants are keeping the region’s workforce viable.

- More than **70%** of the region’s immigrants were working-age in 2015, compared to only **51%** of the U.S.-born.
- Immigrants drove almost **two-thirds of regional growth** of the working-age population between 2000 and 2015.

NEW RESIDENTS



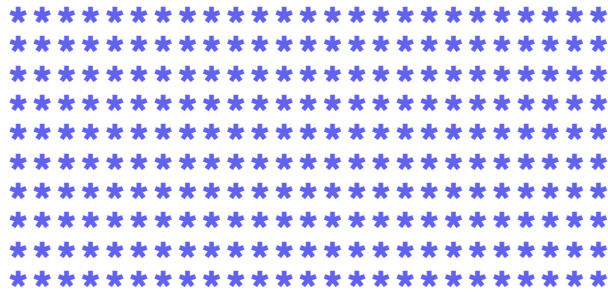
Immigrants are bringing much-needed talent to the region.

- 35% of immigrants ages 25 and above has at least a **bachelor’s degree**, compared to just 29% of the U.S.-born.
- Between 2010 and 2015, **more than half of the net growth** in the working-age immigrant population came from those with a bachelor’s degree or higher.

► **Immigrants have helped revive the manufacturing industry.**

- The Great Lakes economy added more than **250,000 working-class jobs** between 2010 and 2015, the majority of which were filled by U.S.-born workers.

WORKING CLASS JOBS CREATED



* = 1,000 jobs

- This is possible, in part, because immigrants fill the **higher skilled jobs** that allow companies to stay local.
- Foreign-born workers made up **one of every seven** manufacturing engineers in 2015.

► **Immigrants have played a critical role powering the region’s booming healthcare sector.**

- By filling the high-skilled jobs that allow doctors’ offices and hospitals to thrive and expand, immigrants helped drive **supersized growth** in the region’s healthcare industry.
- Despite representing just **7.3%** of the region’s population, immigrants made up **27%** of physicians and surgeons in 2015.

► **Immigrants are helping the Great Lakes region meet its rising labor demand in agriculture.**

- By taking on some of the **labor-intensive farm jobs** that are less attractive to U.S.-born workers, immigrants help the agriculture sector thrive.
- Immigrants made up **one out of every four** miscellaneous farmworkers in the region in 2015—workers that include those harvesting crops by hand in the fields.

► **Immigrants play a particularly large role in the region as entrepreneurs.**

- Main Street businesses owned by immigrants created nearly **240,000 working-class jobs** for U.S.-born workers between 2000 and 2015.
- Immigrants made up more than **one of every 10 entrepreneurs** in the region in 2015.



► **Immigrants’ spending power has helped revitalize local businesses.**

- In 2015, immigrants held close to **\$130B** in spending power.
- That made up **8.2%** of the region’s total spending power, even though immigrants represented just **7.3%** of the region’s overall population.

ABOUT NEW AMERICAN ECONOMY

New American Economy (NAE) is a coalition of more than 500 Republican, Democratic, and Independent mayors and business leaders who support sensible immigration reforms that will help create jobs for Americans. Coalition members include mayors of more than 35 million people nationwide and business leaders of companies that generate more than \$1.5 trillion and employ more than 4 million people across all sectors of the economy.

Visit www.NewAmericanEconomy.org to learn more.

