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Reimagining the Midwest: Immigration Initiatives and the Capacity of Local Leadership

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Reimagining the Midwest: Immigration Initiatives and the Capacity of Local Leadership

By Juliana Kerr, Paul McDaniel, Melissa Guinan

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Summary

Elected and civic leaders throughout the Midwest are recognizing that they have a role to play in shaping immigration policy despite inaction at the federal level.[1] Whether by launching programs to infuse the local economy with new talent or adopting strategies to socially integrate immigrants, there is an unprecedented commitment from local leaders understanding the importance of immigrant integration in the region. This report puts the range of Midwestern initiatives into context, offering a concise overview of state, city, and metropolitan programs, as well as the robust non-governmental civic initiatives that sometimes operate alongside, or in place of, government-driven programs. By documenting the array of initiatives in the region, the report serves as a resource for others interested in replicating these models, highlights the extent of the momentum building in this part of the country, and encourages greater regional collaboration and engagement for individuals and organizations working on these issues.

1. The Midwest is defined in this report as the 12-state Midwest, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Louisville, Kentucky, have also been referenced in this report given their geographic proximity to the region and participation in regional collaborations.

Introduction

In the face of changing demographics, economic struggles and globalization, the future prosperity of states and cities throughout the Midwest turns on finding creative strategies for encouraging new growth and building community, including harnessing the power of immigrants. Elected and civic leaders are recognizing that their communities have a role to play in shaping immigration policy.[2] In fact, the longer Congress takes to act, the more impetus there is for communities to step in to fill gaps and provide new tools for recruiting, retaining, and welcoming immigrants into the fold.

These new initiatives are happening at every level of government, in public and private settings, with an understanding that integration is a dynamic, two-way process between the immigrant population and the receiving community. Leaders are adopting new strate-

2. Migration Policy Institute. *Cities and Regions: Reaping Migration's Local Dividends*, Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, 2014; Welcoming America. *Welcoming Cities: Framing the Conversation*, Decatur, GA: Welcoming America, 2013; Cities of Migration. *Good Ideas from Successful Cities: Municipal Leadership on Immigrant Integration*, Toronto: Maytree Foundation, 2012; Cities of Migration. *Practice to Policy: Lessons from Local Leadership on Immigrant Integration*, Toronto: Maytree Foundation, 2012; Gambetta, Ricardo and Zivile Gedrimaite. *Municipal Innovations in Immigrant Integration: 20 Cities, 20 Good Practices*, Washington, D.C.: National League of Cities, 2010.

gies to better leverage the contributions of immigrants and ensure their full participation in the local economy. Some cities see immigrants as vital to economic revitalization and global competitiveness and are launching programs aimed at attracting and welcoming immigrants, hoping to infuse the local economy with new talent and new businesses. Other cities have faced challenges presented by the arrival of new populations and are focused on increasing the social cohesion of all members of a community, thus helping shift attitudes toward immigrants. Although many community-based social service and economic development agencies have long been working toward similar goals, this unprecedented commitment and leadership from local governments reinforces the importance of immigrant integration to the whole community.

Immigrant integration efforts have long been at work in big cities across the nation and around the world, but are particularly remarkable in the heartland of America, a region with a reputation for being relatively homogenous and culturally resistant to change.[3] The loss of manufacturing jobs, slow population growth, and a crippled local economy have only added to the region's initial skepticism of the benefits of globalization. Increasingly, however, community leaders are recognizing the region's long history of serving as an immigrant gateway,[4] and have seen that the immigrants in their midst contribute to economic competitiveness, social diversity, and community renewal.[5]

The dividends of promoting immigrant integration extend far beyond the immigrants themselves, offering communities a relatively low-cost way to expand opportunities for everyone. The range of initiatives and programs adopted throughout the Midwest reflects the highly individualized nature of successful immigrant integration initiatives. Programs are tailored to the needs of particular communities. Some programs provide city-level economic growth opportunities through entrepreneur training, small business incubators, and multilingual business services.[6] Other programs focus on education, social integration, or civic participation. Across the region, local governments are allocating resources, funding, and staffing to ensure that a government body is equipped for structuring, monitoring, and implementing immigrant integration initiatives, often leveraging resources through collaborations with a variety of community-based organizations and broader networks, such as Welcoming America and the Global Great Lakes Network.

This report, a collaboration between The Chicago Council on Global Affairs and the American Immigration Council, puts the range of Midwestern initiatives into context, offering a concise overview of state, city, and metropolitan programs, as well as the robust non-governmental civic initiatives that sometimes operate alongside, or in place of, government-driven programs. Cataloging these initiatives serves three goals: First, by documenting the array of initiatives launched by various levels of local governments, the report serves as a resource for other elected officials and civic leaders in the region interested in replicating these models, identifying new strategies, or exchanging best practices. Second, the report also highlights for national policymakers the extent of the momentum building in this part of the country. Finally, researchers, economic developers, and other organizations working on these issues will be able to connect more easily with the variety of initiatives featured in the report, promoting greater regional collaboration and engagement.

3. Longworth, Richard C. *Caught in the Middle: America's Heartland in the Age of Globalism,* New York: Bloomsbury, 2008.
4. Singer, Audrey. "Contemporary Immigrant Gateways in Historical Perspective," Dædalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Summer 2013.
5. Jacoby, Tamar. *US Economic Competitiveness at Risk: A Midwest Call to Action on Immigration Reform*, Chicago: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2013; McDaniel, Paul. *Revitalization in the Heartland of America: Welcoming Immigrant Entrepreneurs for Economic Development,* Washington, D.C.: American Immigration Council, 2014; Paral, Rob. *Growing the Heartland: How Immigrants Offset Population Decline and an Aging Workforce in Midwest Metropolitan Areas*, Chicago: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2014; Tobocman, Steve. *Revitalizing Detroit: Is There a Role for Immigration?* Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, 2014; Wainer, Andrew. *A Tale of Two Cities (and a Town): Immigrants in the Rust Belt*, Washington, D.C.: Bread for the World Institute, 2013.
6. McDaniel, Paul. *Revitalization in the Heartland of America: Welcoming Immigrant Entrepreneurs for Economic Development,* Washington, D.C.: American Immigration Council, 2014; Maria Vincenza Desiderio. *Policies to Support Immigrant Entrepreneurs*, Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, 2014.

State Initiatives

Although major systemic overhauls to immigration policy, such as providing a permanent solution for unauthorized immigrants' status or an adjustment in visa quotas, require federal action, governors and state governments are acting more frequently to improve the climate for immigrants—both legal and undocumented—within their states.

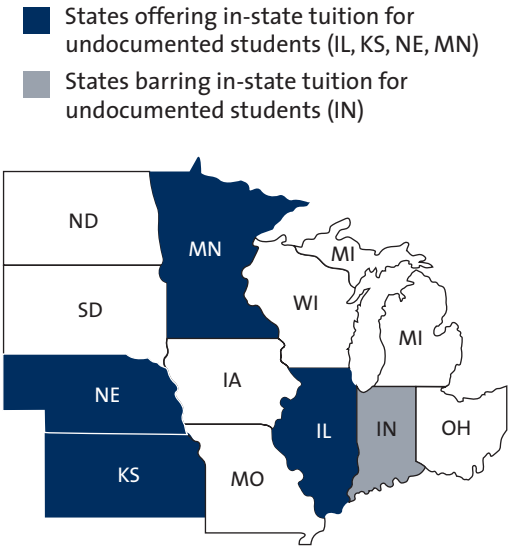
State-Level Legislation

While this report primarily addresses free-standing integration initiatives, it cannot be stressed enough that state-based legislation is a major driver in changing the climate and opportunities of immigrants. State initiatives are most likely to reflect a combination of legislative and policy decisions stemming from the commitment of elected leaders to influence immigration policy. State governments control the appropriation of funds for migrant services, health and education, and set residency requirements for educational institutions. They can recognize the cultural heritage of immigrants in a state through cultural events. Whether they accept foreign credentials, recognize professional licenses, issue driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants, permit in-state tuition, or choose to enforce federal laws, these issues are driven primarily by state, rather than federal legislation.

Two specific areas of state-level policy—the provision of driver's licenses and in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants—have received significant consideration in states across the Midwest. While Illinois is the only state in the region that has approved issuing driver's licenses for all unauthorized immigrants, other states are confirming that recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are eligible for licenses as well. Only Nebraska has passed laws denying access to driver's licenses even for DACA recipients.

Four Midwest states enacted laws to offer in-state tuition for certain undocumented students: Illinois in 2003, Kansas in 2004, Nebraska in 2006, and Minnesota in 2013. Some states, such as Michigan and Ohio, allow universities to establish their own policies regarding undocumented immigrants or permit DACA recipients to enroll at in-state tuition rates at certain institutions. Wisconsin had once passed the legislation but then reversed its decision. Indiana is the only state in the region that in 2011 passed legislation barring unauthorized immigrant students from in-state tuition benefits.[7] (See map.) Whether explicit laws have been passed or legislatures continue to debate the measures, state governments are opening doors for undocumented students across the Midwest and providing them with greater economic opportunities.

Legislative Landscape: In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students



Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

The Midwest is not alone in these developments, according to the annual reports published by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), which monitors state laws and proposed legislation on legal immigrants, migrant and seasonal workers, refugees, or unauthorized immigrants.[8] In the first half of 2014, NCSL reports that more states extended in-state tuition benefits to undocumented immigrant students and U.S. citizen children of undocumented parents. The report also found that more states established task forces to study and make recommendations around a variety of immigration issues, including motorist safety and insurance, community health, and licensing and credentialing of foreign-trained professionals.[9]

7. National Conference of State Legislatures. "Tuition Benefits for Immigrants," July 15, 2014.
8. National Conference of State Legislatures. "State Laws Related to Immigration and Immigrants" February, 24, 2014.
9. National Conference of State Legislatures. "2014 Report on State Immigration Laws, January-June" August, 12, 2014.

Offices of New Americans

Illinois and Michigan have each created an official Office for New Americans, operated, staffed, and funded by the state government. By doing so, they are cultivating a welcoming environment to immigrants and newcomers and encouraging more immigration to their states. They see immigrants as contributors to economic development and as net job creators. As Governor Rick Snyder of Michigan pointed out, "during the last decade, immigrants created nearly one-third of Michigan's high-tech businesses, at a rate six times the rest of the population."[10] The leadership of the governments of Illinois and Michigan demonstrate the level of commitment the state governments have to immigrant integration in their communities.

10. Michigan.gov. "Snyder creates Office for New Americans; names Grand Rapids entrepreneur Bing Goei director," January 31, 2014.

Illinois Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy



First opened in 2007, the Illinois Welcoming Center was founded to bring information and access to state programs and serve immigrants seeking to better assimilate into the state. In partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Governor's Office of New Americans worked with nine state agencies to bring direct access to services to qualified applicants. In 2010, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed the New American Executive Order to reestablish the office and demonstrate his commitment to making Illinois "the most welcoming state" in the nation. Welcoming Centers, now in six locations across the Chicago area, provide a wide range of services, including health screenings, job training, legal aid, and help in funding college. The Office also monitors the impact of immigration policy in Illinois. The Office promotes immigrant integration by:

- Consulting with immigrant leaders, state governmental leaders, and national policy experts, via a New Americans Immigrant Policy Council, to recommend strategic directions on key issues, including US citizenship, human services, healthcare, and education.
- Examining, via a public-private state task force, how state government can systematically address rapidly changing demographics and assist immigrant and refugee newcomers to quickly become integrated into Illinois society.
- Assembling a National Advisory Council, a group of prominent national academics, business leaders, advocates and governmental practitioners, to guide the work of the New Americans executive.

Michigan Office for New Americans



The Office for New Americans (ONA) in Michigan was launched by Governor Rick Snyder in January 2014 to help grow Michigan's economy by attracting global talent to the state, to promote the skills, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit of immigrantx communities, and to make Michigan a more welcoming state. The Michigan ONA supports the Governor's immigration initiatives; coordinates with state agencies providing programs related to services for immigrants; and makes recommendations to the governor on state and federal policies and programs relating to immigration. It does this by:

- Calling for the federal government to allocate 50,000 employment-based visas for skilled immigrants and entrepreneurs during the next five years to assist in the revitalization of Detroit.
- Spearheading the Global Michigan initiative, a collaborative, statewide effort to retain and attract international, entrepreneurial talent to the state through sustainable partnerships with foundation, nonprofit and private sector service providers already serving immigrant communities statewide.
- Creating a welcoming culture statewide by working with a variety of stakeholders to streamline and promote access to government processes.
- Encouraging foreign investment via the State of Michigan EB-5 Regional Center and the E-2 nonimmigrant visa for treaty investors.
- Helping foreign-educated or trained immigrants and refugees with licensing and credentialing by creating a series of skilled immigrant licensing guides in partnership with the Michigan Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs and Upwardly Global.

City Initiatives

Many mayors of Midwestern cities recognize shifting demographics and are leaders in promoting immigration as a component of social and economic development for their metropolitan regions. (See table.) Representing large, midsized, or small cities, they are looking at immigrant integration to bolster local economies and reignite community growth. These mayors are formalizing offices in city hall dedicated to improving services and engaging immigrant communities through enhanced collaboration with community organizations, academic institutions, and the private sector. In an effort to revitalize economically depressed regions, some mayors are pursuing strategies that strengthen relationships between immigrant communities and foreign trade opportunities. By fostering a welcoming atmosphere for all and building the capacity of immigrants, government, and the community as a whole, Midwestern cities are producing jobs, regional growth, and attracting new talent and skilled workers.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has made national headlines with his goal to make Chicago the most "immigrant-friendly city in the world." He created the Office of New Americans in July 2011, passed a Welcome City Ordinance in September 2012, and launched the Chicago New Americans Plan in December 2012, which outlines twenty-seven different initiatives designed to build a thriving and diverse city.[11] Chicago is just one of many Midwestern examples of mayors demonstrating leadership in immigration policymaking at the local level.

Percentage of Immigrant Population in Select Midwest Metro Areas in 2010

Metro area	Total Population	Foreign Born %
Chicago, IL	9,312,817	17.8
Cincinnati, OH	1,628,577	4.7
Cleveland, OH	2,079,333	5.8
Columbus, OH	1,804,504	7.0
Dayton, OH	694,123	3.7
Detroit, MI	4,297,970	8.7
Fargo, ND	150,039	5.1
Ft. Wayne, IN	355,172	6.1
Indianapolis, IN	1,594,960	6.8
Lansing, MI	464,829	6.4
Lincoln, NE	286,400	7.4
Minneapolis, MN	3,164,852	10.0
Omaha, NE	676,051	8.0
St. Louis, MO	2,718,985	4.6
Springfield, OH	133,050	2.6
Toledo, OH	608,941	3.5

Source: Rob Paral and Associates tabulations of data from US Census.

11. City of Chicago. "Mayor Emanuel Unveils First-Ever Chicago New Americans Plan," December 4, 2012.

Detroit Immigration Task Force – Detroit, Michigan

Launched in March 2014 by Detroit City Council members Raquel Castañeda-López and Andre Spivey, the Detroit Immigration Task Force convenes stakeholders to make Detroit a more immigrant-friendly, welcoming city. Subcommittees are exploring welcoming policies and practices in immigrant rights and naturalization, municipal services, education and social services, economic development and marketing and community engagement.



Grand Forks Immigrant Integration – Grand Forks, North Dakota



The Grand Forks Immigrant Integration (GFII) was established by the City of Grand Forks Mayor's Office and City Council with a steering committee of elected officials and representatives of the city government, social service organizations, banking institutions, and the Grand Forks Air Force Base. The initiative was a member of the National League of Cities Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration. The goal of GFII is to promote naturalization and civic engagement among immigrant populations in its communities, to assess and align community resources to best serve both the new American population and general community, and to assist new Americans in becoming engaged citizens.

Efforts include:

- Partnering and leveraging resources with community organizations, including Global Friends Coalition, New American Services of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota.
- Creating a Citizen's Academy to help promote informed and involved citizenship and launching a city-wide citizenship and naturalization campaign.
- Launching a speaker's bureau to enhance community awareness of immigrant- and refugee-related affairs.
- Designating a community resource officer from the Grand Forks Police Department to serve as a direct liaison with immigrant populations and to improve agency communication and coordination.
- Communicating and evaluating community capacities to achieve the initiative's goals.

Hello Neighbor – Minneapolis, Minnesota



Funded by a generous grant from the Bush Foundation, the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department of Minneapolis has developed an outreach initiative to welcome newly arriving immigrants and refugees. The Hello Neighbor initiative emanated from the city's core values of engaged residents and broader participation, with the goal of extending these treasured values to new arrivals. It does this by:

- Working with resettlement agencies and organizations serving the immigrant community.
- Engaging volunteers from the city's long-term residents to actively participate and extend a warm welcome to new arrivals.
- Greeting recent immigrants at their homes with one-on-one personal welcomes and providing them with a gift bag filled with information about city services and resources.

Mayor's Immigration Task Force – Cincinnati, Ohio



Initiated in 2014 by Mayor John Cranley, the Task Force on Immigration is working to make Cincinnati a great place for immigrants to call home, start a business and thrive. The task force has five primary focus areas:

- Supporting economic development and discovering ways that the city may open itself to greater economic potential through the adoption of new immigration policies.
- Fostering integration to support Cincinnati's immigrant community in realizing its greatest potential.
- Promoting education and talent retention to a support and incentivize individuals with sound potential for advancement and innovation.
- Building international relationships to make Cincinnati more attractive to new investments in business, industry and tourism.
- Protecting the rights and ensuring the safety of immigrants.

Mayor's Office of New Americans – Chicago, Illinois



Founded in July 2011 by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the Office of New Americans' key initiatives focus on economic growth, youth, and communities, including:

- Introducing the Welcoming City Ordinance, which bans agencies and police officers from inquiring into the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses, or anyone seeking city services to ensure that undocumented Chicagoans will only be detained if they are wanted on a criminal warrant or if they have been convicted of a serious crime.
- Launching Citizenship Corners at Chicago Public Libraries in partnership with US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Citizenship Corners, which host citizenship workshops and disseminate information on the naturalization process at select Chicago Public Library locations.
- Instituting Illinois DREAM (development, relief and education for alien minors) Act training for Chicago Public School counselors to provide Chicago's undocumented students and their families with tailored support and college application guidance.
- Starting the New Americans Small Business Series, a series of quarterly events that foster small business growth in immigrant communities throughout Chicago. The temporary one-stop shops provide advice on how to start a small business, navigate the licensing process, comply with tax laws, interact with chambers of commerce, and access capital.
- Launching an Immigration Fraud Enforcement Campaign to investigate immigration service providers not in compliance with city regulatory ordinances.
- Opening internship, volunteer, and job and fellowship opportunities to undocumented students through the One Summer Chicago program.

Multicultural Coalition of Grand Island – Grand Island, Nebraska



The Multicultural Coalition of Grand Island was founded by Grand Island Mayor Ken Gnadt and a community team after a September 2001 fact-finding visit to Garden City, Kansas, to study the city's immigrant services. It assists newcomers in becoming successful Grand Island residents, works to bring the community together on issues of diversity through education, and provides access to services. Initiatives include:

- Offering Citizenship Readiness Classes for legal permanent residents, four annual free health fairs, translation and interpreting services, and educational workshops.
- Providing referrals to supportive agencies to assist with housing, translation, employment, legal, and health issues.
- Organizing events that promote cultural awareness, unite the immigrant and native-born sectors of the community, and highlight the diversity in Grand Island.

Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration – Fort Wayne, Indiana



Fort Wayne was selected for the National League of Cities' pilot Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration program in 2009 under Mayor Tom Henry, who said, "We all have a responsibility, including immigrants and refugees themselves, to integrate some of Fort Wayne's newest residents into our collective civic life. We will all benefit when their heritage, culture and experiences become part of the fabric of Fort Wayne." City staff worked closely with NLC staff and local agencies to design a customized program specifically for immigrants in Fort Wayne. The primary components of the program are:

- Promoting a "CITYzenship" community initiative to help city officials strengthen working relationships with immigrant communities and organizations, with an action plan to manage immigrant integration challenges.
- Creating a "NewCITYzen" naturalization campaign toolkit that focuses on highlighting the many benefits of citizenship.
- Developing a webinar on local gateways to citizenship.

Office of Globalization – Louisville, Kentucky



The Louisville Office for Globalization was founded in February 2011 by Mayor Greg Fischer to focus on ways Louisville can compete in a multicultural world and to engage its civic, cultural and professional communities. The three-pronged mission of the office is to assist newcomers in achieving self-sufficiency and success, to enhance and encourage multiculturalism, and to engage in economic development through global economic outreach. Initiatives include:

- Coordinating RISE (Refugees & Immigrants Succeeding in Entrepreneurship), a collaborative effort between metropolitan government, nonprofits, and private partners to create a path for immigrants and refugees to establish or expand a business.
- Creating a relocation guide that includes information on identification, banking and finance, health care, transportation, education and childcare, international sports leagues, clubs and organizations, a shopping guide, and information on the Louisville Free Public Library.

New American Initiative – Columbus, Ohio



Founded in 2004 by Mayor Michael B. Coleman, the initiative aims to give equal opportunity to all refugees and immigrants and helps them to become responsible, productive residents of Columbus. Efforts include:

- Promoting linguistic accessibility with multilingual signage for city facilities and the provision of interpretation services.
- Training all new city employees on the immigrant and refugee community and providing additional language-training opportunities.
- Undertaking assessments with various immigrant communities to learn about obstacles to access and gaps in services, and providing reference materials to communities on available resources.
- Coordinating city, county, and state resources to maximize impact of City of Columbus and Franklin County services.
- Promoting existing educational and social activities such as cultural training programs, ESL classes, community festivals, capacity-building activities, and community-based events that foster greater appreciation of diverse cultures.
- Collaborating with City of Columbus executives, hiring managers, and Chamber of Commerce on Immigrant Community Awareness Program and skills leadership bank.
- Offering technical assistance for emergency situations in immigrants and refugee communities with key community contacts and voluntary interpreter database.
- Providing training and assistance to partners, including presentations to 15 Ohio cities and 7 states on the process for integration, community engagement, and cultural competency in support programs and services.

Welcome Dayton – Dayton, Ohio



The City of Dayton endorsed a community-driven immigrant initiative, which grew out of community conversations led by the Human Relations Council in 2011. The planning process recognized ongoing efforts to welcome immigrants and asked government and all public and private sectors to do more. Efforts include:

- Increasing language access in city government and increased attention to language access in private and public sectors.
- Building an inclusive community through collaborations with private and public community, culture, and arts organizations.
- Facilitating community conversations that strengthen relationships between immigrant-owned businesses and neighborhoods.
- Developing supportive communication and social media that honor the contributions of immigrants.
- Increasing awareness of law enforcement and the justice system of immigrant-friendly policies and resources to build trust.
- Programming to support English-language learners and their families.

Greater Metropolitan Area Initiatives

Large cities do not operate in isolation. They are economically and socially linked to a broader metropolitan area, even if their political boundaries stop at the city's border. In many cases, suburban municipalities or counties also promote immigrant integration initiatives—often working as part of a larger collaborative. For example, the Diversity Task Force of the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus in the Chicago area works with mayors in the suburbs on immigrant integration and holds bimonthly roundtable discussions with municipal staff. It helps suburban cities and villages—such as Skokie, Illinois—plan programs, outreach services, and community partnerships that seek to support its culturally diverse immigrant community.[12]

In Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, which includes Pittsburgh, county-level initiatives coordinate metro-wide activities and provide additional resources. A similar program exists in Lucas County, Ohio, which is largely made up of Toledo. In the Detroit metropolitan area, neighboring Hamtramck and Sterling Heights are affiliated with the greater Welcoming Michigan structure to promote cultural diversity and welcome immigrants to their cities. In Macomb County, north of the city of Detroit, OneMacomb's mission is to facilitate or support collaborative and community-based activities which celebrate cultural diversity and inclusion in the County.[13] These examples illustrate how cooperative leadership in larger metropolitan areas can have an impact in surrounding communities.[14]

12. Village of Skokie. "Human Services – Immigrant Services," 2014.

13. Macomb County. "OneMacomb," 2013.

14. For examples of other ways in which city and metropolitan leaders from different sectors of a community are developing innovative strategies to address a variety of issues, see: Katz, Bruce and Jennifer Bradley. *The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy*, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2013.

Diversity Task Force of Metropolitan Mayors Caucus – Chicago, Illinois



The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus of Chicago includes over 270 mayors in the seven-county region. The Diversity Issues Task Force, representing a subgroup of the mayors, produced the second edition of a guidebook, "Immigrant Integration in Chicago's Suburbs: A Survey of Current Activities and Efforts," in 2014. Prepared in partnership with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Latino Policy Forum, the guidebook:

- catalogues the various efforts throughout the metropolitan region to integrate immigrants,
- analyzes best practices in the region,
- profiles municipalities making efforts to address the needs of their immigrant populations,
- describes the different types of organizations providing information and resources to suburban immigrants in the Chicago metro area, and
- sparks a conversation about the common challenges municipalities face in addressing the needs of their changing populations and how municipal leaders can work collaboratively to identify creative solutions in order to best address the needs of all residents living the Chicago metro area.

Following this project, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus holds bimonthly roundtable discussions on immigrant integration for municipal staff.

Immigrants and Internationals Initiative – Allegheny County, Pennsylvania



The Immigrants and Internationals Initiative was established in 2007 to support the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) in providing high-quality services that are culturally competent, accessible, and demonstrate respect for individuals. Integral to the Initiative is the Immigrants and Internationals Advisory Council—a diverse group of immigrant leaders, immigrant-serving professionals, and others who inform DHS regarding the human service needs of immigrants and explore appropriate ways to meet them. Some projects and programs include:

- Forming working committees that focus on language access, youth development, cultural competency, workforce development, and behavioral health.
- Providing affordable interpretation for those with limited English proficiency via the Pittsburgh Language Access Network.
- Creating Immigrant Services and Connections, a DHS-funded collaborative to provide service coordination.
- Supporting a cohort of AmeriCorps members who work with local immigrant-serving agencies.
- Assisting refugees with advanced experience in establishing careers in the United States via the Refugee Career Mentoring Program.
- Promoting resource sharing and development via information, connections, and a comprehensive guide for immigrants, internationals, and those who serve them who are seeking information about available resources.
- Providing a public meeting space for immigrants through a policy allowing immigrants to utilize meeting spaces in DHS.

OneMacomb – Macomb County, Michigan



OneMacomb was founded in 2013 by Macomb County leaders following a comprehensive study, "The New Macomb County," prepared in partnership with Macomb Community College, Macomb County, and Data Driven Detroit. Its mission is to support collaborative and community-based activities which celebrate cultural diversity and inclusion in Macomb County. It does this by:

- Promoting multiculturalism and inclusiveness in Macomb County.
- Supporting the county's multicultural entrepreneurs and bringing internationally based businesses into the county.
- Identifying and implementing multiculturalism and inclusiveness "best practices" into all Macomb County government policies and practices, into how the county recruits, hires and trains its staff, and into how it delivers its services.

Welcome Toledo / Lucas County Core Committee – Toledo, Ohio



In 2014, the Board of Lucas County Commissioners, Lucas County Land Bank, and the Board of Community Relations of the City of Toledo formed a collaboration with other community organizations to transform the Toledo-Lucas County area into a welcoming community. In recognition of its growing and diverse community, city- and county-wide strategies were developed to promote and create a supportive environment for residents and immigrants focused on social justice, equal opportunity, and a harmonious environment. It does this by:

- Hosting extensive community conversations.
- Developing a local system of supporting organizations.
- Promoting neighborhood redevelopment opportunities for all.
- Supporting economic development strategies that empower and provide opportunities for new residents.
- Connecting refugees to services.

Civic Initiatives

Previous sections of this report have addressed efforts led by government officials, but in many cases, elected officials may lack political support, funding, or the resources needed to create a formal entity to address immigration within their government. In these instances, the nongovernmental civic leadership of the city or region may take action and express a strong commitment to immigrant integration. Though there are many civically led initiatives throughout the Midwest, the following initiatives have garnered significant attention for their abilities to cooperate across all levels of society, including the private sector, government, academia, and nonprofits. Some initiatives grew from grassroots level efforts and some from the efforts of powerful institutions, foundations, or universities. Some initiatives are created with the direct support of a mayor or city council, while others directly contradict a local or state government's less-welcoming policies.

Often civic programs stem from specific needs of a city or metropolitan area, particularly in areas that want to encourage economic development and business growth by the immigrant population. Perhaps most notable is the Detroit metro area, a region whose anchor, the city of Detroit, has suffered dramatic economic and population decline since 1950.[15] Many organizations have been launched in recent years aimed at revitalizing the local economy and leveraging immigrant contributions. Global Detroit, for example, coordinates numerous immigrant integration and economic development efforts in the region in an effort to revitalize southeast Michigan's economy.[16] The organization aims to strengthen Detroit's connections to the world and make the region more attractive and welcoming to immigrants and foreign trade and investment as a means to produce jobs and regional economic growth.[17] Additionally, the Detroit New Americans Campaign works to promote and assist naturalization for eligible lawful permanent residents throughout the metropolitan Detroit area.[18] Furthermore, efforts in Detroit stretch beyond the city proper to the metropolitan region, with Welcoming Cities Hamtramck and Sterling Heights working to promote cultural diversity.[19,20]

Other initiatives throughout the Midwest also focus on economic development. The St. Louis Mosaic Project, with support from the mayor, includes government, business, educational, and social service leaders committed to making St. Louis the fastest-growing major US metropolitan area for foreign-born residents by 2020. In Fargo, North Dakota, the Immigrant Development Center is intended to build capacity of businesses and economic skills within the immigrant population, ultimately leading to economic self-sufficiency.[21] The center runs programs in micro enterprise development, entrepreneurial training, and micro lending, among other activities. In Pennsylvania, Vibrant Pittsburgh and Global Pittsburgh aim to attract and retain a diverse workforce in order to ensure Pittsburgh's future growth[22]. They collaborate with Welcoming Pittsburgh, an effort launched in May

15. Tobocman, Steve. *Revitalizing Detroit: Is There a Role for Immigration?* Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, 2014; Wainer. Andrew. *A Tale of Two Cities (and a Town): Immigrants in the Rust Belt*. Washington, D.C.: Bread for the World Institute, 2013.
16. McDaniel, Paul. *Revitalization in the Heartland of America: Welcoming Immigrant Entrepreneurs for Economic Development*. Washington, D.C.: American Immigration Council, 2014.
17. Global Detroit. "Vision and History," 2014.
18. Detroit New Americans Campaign. "About," 2014.
19. Welcoming Michigan. "Hamtramck City Council Passes Welcoming Resolution," 2012.
20. Welcoming Michigan. "Sterling Heights Cultural Exchange," 2013.
21. Immigrant Development Center. "About IDC," Fargo, 2013.
22. Vibrant Pittsburgh. "About," 2014; Global Pittsburgh. "About Us," 2014.

Global Cleveland – Cleveland, Ohio



A project of Global Cleveland, Welcome Cleveland, in association with Welcoming America, works to promote mutual respect and cooperation between foreign-born and US-born residents. The ultimate goal is for all residents to feel welcome and together build stronger, more productive communities. Key initiatives include:

- Supporting international newcomers through personalized assistance, US citizenship and naturalization services, English as a Second Language classes, and Refugee Services Collaborative of Great Cleveland.
- Assisting international students with internships placement and company sponsorship.
- Providing "How To" tutorials, employment documents and visas, and tool kits for hiring international talent.

Global Detroit Initiative – Detroit, Michigan



The Global Detroit Initiative was founded in 2010 after the release of the Global Detroit study, funded by the New Economy Initiative of Southeast Michigan, the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Skillman Foundation. Global Detroit is an effort to revitalize southeast Michigan's economy by pursuing strategies that strengthen Detroit's connections to the world and make the region more attractive and welcoming to immigrants, internationals, and foreign trade and investment as a means to produce jobs and regional economic growth. It does this by working with partners to institute initiatives identified in the Global Detroit study and collectively has generated over $7 million of new investment in:

- Cultivating a network of immigrant integration, arts, culture, and social services (Welcome Mat Detroit.)
- Establishing an Office of Global Affairs within the Detroit Mayor's office and a Cultural Ambassadors program for volunteers and mentors.

Through partnerships, they support:

- Attracting international students to study in Detroit and retaining them to work in professional sectors after graduation (Michigan Global Talent Retention Initiative), as well as integrating skilled immigrant professionals (Upwardly Global Detroit office.)
- Coordinating a micro-enterprise training and lending program in urban neighborhoods (ProsperUS Detroit) and promoting EB-5 visa regional centers for foreign investors.
- Building more welcoming communities (Welcoming Michigan – the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center.)
- Promoting ethnic and minority media reporting on entrepreneurship (New Michigan Media.)

2014 by Mayor Peduto to improve quality of life and economic prosperity for immigrants and native-born residents alike.[23]

While some may associate Iowa with the 2006 and 2008 federal immigration raids of the meatpacking plants in Marshalltown and Postville, the state has actually long been a leader in attracting and integrating immigrants, dating as far back as 1870 when a State Board of Immigration published *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants.*[24] Marshalltown was once named a model city by then-Governor Tom Vilsack for its efforts in welcoming new Americans.[25] Community colleges expanded ESL programs and city leaders traveled to Mexico to learn about the origins of the majority of their immigrants. In Cedar Falls, the Iowa Center for Immigrant Leadership and Integration at the University of Northern Iowa provides tailored consultation, training programs, and resources to prepare local communities and businesses as they accommodate immigrant and refugee newcomers living and working in Iowa.[26]

Many regional economic development initiatives rely on important partnerships with business leaders to promote immigrant integration policies. As a recent Chicago Council survey found, 68 percent of Midwest business leaders say that immigration at current levels is good for their own companies and 60 percent say it is good for the Midwest.[27] In Illinois, the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition, for example, brought together over 55 business and civic leaders from diverse sectors, who together promote "sensible, comprehensive federal immigration reform to benefit the people and economy" of Illinois.[28] The group is identifying immigrant integration strategies that would benefit the state.

Many civic initiatives in the region focus on intercultural exchange, education, and celebration to forge relationships, eliminate hostility, build communities, and make new immigrants feel welcome in a new city. In Van Buren County, Michigan, the local Welcoming Leadership Committee of Welcoming Michigan coor-

23. Pittsburgh.gov. "Mayor William Peduto launches Welcoming Pittsburgh Initiative," May 28, 2014.
24. Iowa Board of Immigration. *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants,* Mills & Co., 1870. Digitized on the Des Moines Local History website.
25. Flora, Jan, Claudia Prado-Meza, Hannah Lewis. *After the Raid is Over: Marshalltown, Iowa and the Consequences of Workforce Enforcement Raids,* Washington, D.C.: American Immigration Council, 2011.
26. University of Northern Iowa. "Iowa Center for Immigrant Leadership and Integration," Cedar Falls, IA, 2005.
27. Smeltz, Dina, Juliana Kerr, Craig Kafura. *Business Leaders on Immigration: The View from the Midwest,* The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, February 2014.
28. Illinois Business Immigration Coalition. "About."

Global Lansing – Lansing, Michigan



The Global Lansing Initiative is the collaborative effort of Lansing Economic Area Partnership, Prima Civitas Foundation, Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, Michigan State University, Lansing Community College, and the communities Meridian Township, City of East Lansing, City of Lansing, as well as many other stakeholders, to welcome and retain the valuable international talent and resources throughout the greater Lansing area, including international students, businesses, investment, and international relationships. It does this by:

- Being a welcoming community for international students, businesses, families, investment, and visitors.
- Creating an international student internship program to connect students with local businesses for internships and mentorships.
- Developing programming and resources around business startups to allow for easy transition from concept to implementation stage.
- Working with supportive resources to welcome and resettle refugees.
- Developing programs and assist with international economic development projects, utilizing the EB-5 investor visa program locally and statewide.

dinates educational trainings and promotes positive messages towards immigrants in communities throughout the county. In July 2013, the committee posted a billboard alongside a heavily trafficked highway that read, "When Michigan welcomes immigrants, Michigan thrives," showing support for area immigrants and raising constructive debate among native-born residents.[29] In Dodge City, Kansas, the Cultural Relations Advisory Board advises the city commission on issues related to or affecting minority communities in the city.[30] The group monitors the policies and practices of the city of Dodge City to issue fair and equitable applications, acts as a resource for intercultural awareness and education, and recently became an affiliate of Welcoming America's Welcoming Cities and Counties initiative. And in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the main hub for refugee arrivals to the state, the Multi-Cultural Resource Center offers English classes, information on housing and legal services, youth programs, and a festival of cultures.[31]

In northeast Ohio, Global Cleveland is trying to reverse the trend of the decline in immigration the city has been experiencing. While Cleveland was 25 percent foreign-born back in 1930, today it is about 5 percent, and ranks far below the national average in the number of high-tech immigrant entrepreneurs.[32] The Welcome Cleveland initiative of Global Cleveland works to promote mutual respect and cooperation between foreign-born and US-born residents to

29. Michigan Live. "M-43 billboard near Bangor is part of a pro-immigrant media campaign by Welcoming Michigan," July11, 2013.
30. City of Dodge City. "Cultural Relations Advisory Board," 2014.
31. Multi-Cultural Center. "About Us," Sioux Falls, SD, 2014.
32. McGraw, Daniel. "Come to Cleveland? Maybe Not," *Belt Magazine,* March 31, 2014.

Immigrant Welcome Center of Indianapolis – Indianapolis, Indiana



The Immigrant Welcome Center was founded in 2006 by the former First Lady of Indianapolis, Amy Minick Peterson, and members of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee to connect immigrant newcomers to the resources, services, and opportunities they need to fully participate in the economic, civic, social, and cultural life of the community. It does this by:

- Connecting immigrant newcomers with Natural Helpers, volunteers who are established immigrants themselves who assist newcomers with transitioning to life in Indianapolis.
- Providing information and referral for employment, ESL/language needs, housing, transportation, legal services and more at neighborhood branches in areas where immigrants live and work.
- Partnering with social service agencies, health care centers, schools, faith communities, job training centers, and other organizations that can provide direct help.
- Creating a more welcoming city for immigrants through Welcoming Indianapolis, an initiative of Welcoming America.

St. Louis Mosaic Project – St. Louis, Missouri



The St. Louis Mosaic Project was created in 2012 by the St. Louis Regional Immigration and Innovation Steering Committee, following the release of an economic impact study by Professor Jack Strauss of St. Louis University. The project is funded by the Kemper Foundation. The Steering Committee, commissioned by the Mayor of St. Louis and the County Executive of St. Louis County, includes government, business, educational and social service leaders. The St. Louis Mosaic Project aims to make St. Louis the fastest growing major U.S. Metropolitan area for foreign-born residents by 2020. It will do this by:

- Creating a welcoming community through its Ambassador program involving over 350 community members, fostering online connections to immigrant service providers, and building online communities.
- Increasing economic development by linking skilled immigrants to career opportunities and networking through the Professional Connector program and the Engineering Fellowship Dinner program.
- Helping businesses who recruit international talent with family integration by linking spouses to the Woman's Club of Washington University and the St. Louis Transplants organization.
- Increasing international student retention and job opportunities through mentoring, and coordinating programs that coach hiring companies on the value of global talent.
- Connecting immigrants with the St. Louis entrepreneurial community with links online and in-person and providing materials for both neighborhood and high-tech startups.
- Engaging local and federal government leaders to reduce barriers for foreign-born workers and their families, and to increase service access, in partnership with the International Institute of St. Louis, which serves over 7,000 immigrants annually.

build a stronger and more productive community.[33] In particular, Welcome Cleveland focuses on culturally competent interactions with the region's growing immigrant and refugee population; coordinating information and resources for immigrant communities; maximizing the impact of existing city and county services; empowering newcomers toward self-sufficiency; and enhancing social and educational activities that build greater appreciation among the broader community for diverse cultures. Additionally, in western Ohio, Welcome Springfield is an initiative to welcome newcomers to Clark County and encourage integration through education, justice, economic empowerment, health and well being, and culture and the arts.[34]

Nebraska experienced the highest foreign-born population growth rate among Midwestern states from 1990 to 2000, and is a key destination for refugee resettlement, particularly for refugees from Bhutan, Burma, Somalia, and Sudan.[35] While some towns respond to this influx by trying to pass restrictive laws targeting undocumented immigrants, such as barring housing and jobs, many leaders and mayors in Nebraska recognize that it is increasingly a destination for the foreign-born seeking jobs. To frame Nebraska as a welcoming state, organizations such as Nebraska Appleseed have launched the Nebraska Is Home and You're Welcome in Omaha campaigns, bridging communities and raising awareness throughout the state on the importance of immigrants.[36] Cities such as Crete, Grand Island, Lincoln, Schuyler, and Omaha are featured in the Nebraska Is Home initiative.[37] In Lincoln, the New Americans Task Force represents the community's commitment to fostering an environment that welcomes people regardless of race, ethnicity or place of origin, and to upholding the state of Nebraska's motto of "equality before the law."

These initiatives are just a sample of the more recent activities being launched in response to the increase of immigrants throughout the region. Many other organizations, nonprofits, advocacy groups, social service organizations, and religious institutions have long been working toward similar goals in their communities, and are valuable partners and resources for the newly formed civic entities.

33. Global Cleveland. "Welcome Cleveland," 2014.
34. Welcome Springfield. "About," 2014.
35. Office of Latino/Latin American Studies, University of Nebraska-Omaha. "Nebraska's Foreign-Born and Hispanic/Latino Population," January 15, 2010.
36. Nebraska Appleseed. "Nebraska is Home," 2013.
37. Nebraska is Home. "You're Welcome in Omaha," 2013.

Immigrant Integration Initiative Networks

In an effort to strengthen communities, exchange best practices, share resources, and highlight the numerous initiatives in the region, partnerships and networks have also been formed. The Global Great Lakes Network came together in 2013 to answer the need to convene and collaborate with like-minded organizations throughout the region. The Welcoming America program is a nationwide effort, which includes a considerable number of Midwestern cities.

Global Great Lakes Network

The Global Great Lakes Network connects initiatives in the Great Lakes region working to "welcome, retain, and empower immigrant communities as valued contributors to local economic development initiatives." The Network believes that immigrant communities are assets that can be nurtured as a means of producing economic opportunity for the region, and that welcoming and integrating immigrants makes the region attractive and economically competitive. The regional economic development initiatives that make up the Global Great Lakes Network believe they can play a role in attracting and retaining immigrants. In order to encourage collaboration, the Network has convened two conferences, the most recent in Pittsburgh in June of 2014, to share best practices and maximize the impact of various local initiatives.[38]

38. Global Great Lakes. "About," 2014.

Welcoming America

Welcoming America helps communities across the country reach their full economic and social potential by becoming more welcoming toward immigrants. Welcoming America brings together a broad network of nonprofits and local governments from across the US and strengthens their work with the tools and incentives they need to transform their communities into vibrant, prosperous places where all residents can contribute.[39] In the past five years alone, Welcoming America has grown to 18 affiliate initiatives in 17 states, including Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, and Nebraska,[40] and 40 Welcoming cities and counties, including over a dozen in the Midwest.[41] (See list below.) Many of the initiatives mentioned in this report are partners of Welcoming America. They have passed mayoral proclamations or resolutions within their city councils and publicly demonstrated their commitment to immigrant integration. Welcoming America partners with the National Partnership for New Americans to host the Receiving Communities Track at the annual National Immigrant Integration Conference, which fosters peer-to-peer collaboration on topics in immigration and the ongoing work to make communities more welcoming.[42]

39. Welcoming America. "About Us," 2014.
40. Welcoming America. "Our Affiliates," 2014.
41. Welcoming America. "Welcoming Cities and Counties," 2014.
42. National Immigrant Integration Conference. "About," 2014.

Welcoming America "Welcoming Cities and Counties" in the Midwest

- Allegheny County, Pennsylvania
- Chicago, Illinois
- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Columbia, Missouri
- Columbus, Ohio
- Dayton, Ohio
- Detroit, Michigan
- Dodge City, Kansas
- East Lansing, Michigan
- Hamtramck, Michigan
- Iowa City, Iowa
- Lincoln, Nebraska
- Louisville, Kentucky
- Macomb County, Michigan
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- St. Louis, Missouri (city)
- St. Louis, Missouri (county)
- Sterling Heights, Michigan

Conclusion

The numerous initiatives listed in this report demonstrate the breadth and creativity of immigrant integration programs in the Midwest. While many have been launched relatively recently, some are now moving into their next decade, a strong endorsement of the impact of these programs. As long as Washington continues to delay passing immigration reforms, it will fall on regional, state and local entities to respond to the impact of globalization and make the best choices possible to help integrate and encourage immigrant participation in economic and social life. This report illustrates the range of possible ways to do this, and gives a taste of how much can be accomplished, even within a difficult political climate.

Governors, mayors, and municipal leaders seeking to improve immigrant integration in their areas and remain more globally competitive can look to the examples cited in this report as reference points for building new initiatives. Leaders can:

1. Take action at the local level despite inaction at the federal level, and think creatively about the challenges and opportunities presented in their communities.
2. Leverage the capacities of other institutions in their regions, including community organizations and the private sector, to stretch limited resources.
3. Collaborate with other regional entities and pursue broader, inclusive metro-wide initiatives, recognizing that communities and neighborhoods are interconnected as economic units and are comprised of immigrants and receiving community members representing different racial, ethnic, economic, social, and cultural backgrounds.

To be fair, the Midwest region is not a perfect model of inclusivity. For all the examples of leaders taking action to attract and integrate immigrants, there are also cases of restrictive policies and anti-immigration rhetoric. Nevertheless, the level of action on this issue in the region is unprecedented, and demonstrates a remarkable shift in tone from previous years.

Although reforming the federal immigration system has been a prominent topic among national policymakers in recent years—with calls for reform coming from across the United States, including from a variety of sectors throughout the Midwest[43]—often overlooked are longer-term issues around immigrant integration at the local level. Immigration policy is a decidedly federal affair with global implications, but the everyday reality and lived experiences of immigrant settlement and integration occur at the local level in towns, cities, and metropolitan regions. Whatever shape national immigration reform ultimately takes, municipalities and the local organizations within them will be involved in the implementation of any new policy, as well as in incorporating these changes into longer-term immigrant integration plans. From Detroit to Dayton to Dodge City, creative municipal and civic leaders in a growing number of places in the Midwest are poised to continue to plan and implement innovative welcoming and integration strategies for immigrants.

43. Jacoby, Tamar. *US Economic Competitiveness at Risk: A Midwest Call to Action on Immigration Reform,* The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, February 2013.

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The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, founded in 1922, is an independent, non-partisan organization committed to educating the public—and influencing the public discourse—on global issues of the day. The Council provides a forum in Chicago for world leaders, policymakers, and other experts to speak to its members and the public on these issues. Long known for its public opinion surveys of American views on foreign policy, The Chicago Council also brings together stakeholders to examine issues and offer policy insight into areas such as global agriculture, the global economy, global energy, global cities, global security, and global immigration. Learn more at thechicagocouncil.org and follow @ChicagoCouncil.

American Immigration Council is a non-profit, non-partisan, organization based in Washington D.C. Our legal, education, policy and exchange programs work to strengthen America by honoring our immigrant history and shaping how Americans think and act towards immigration now and in the future.

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