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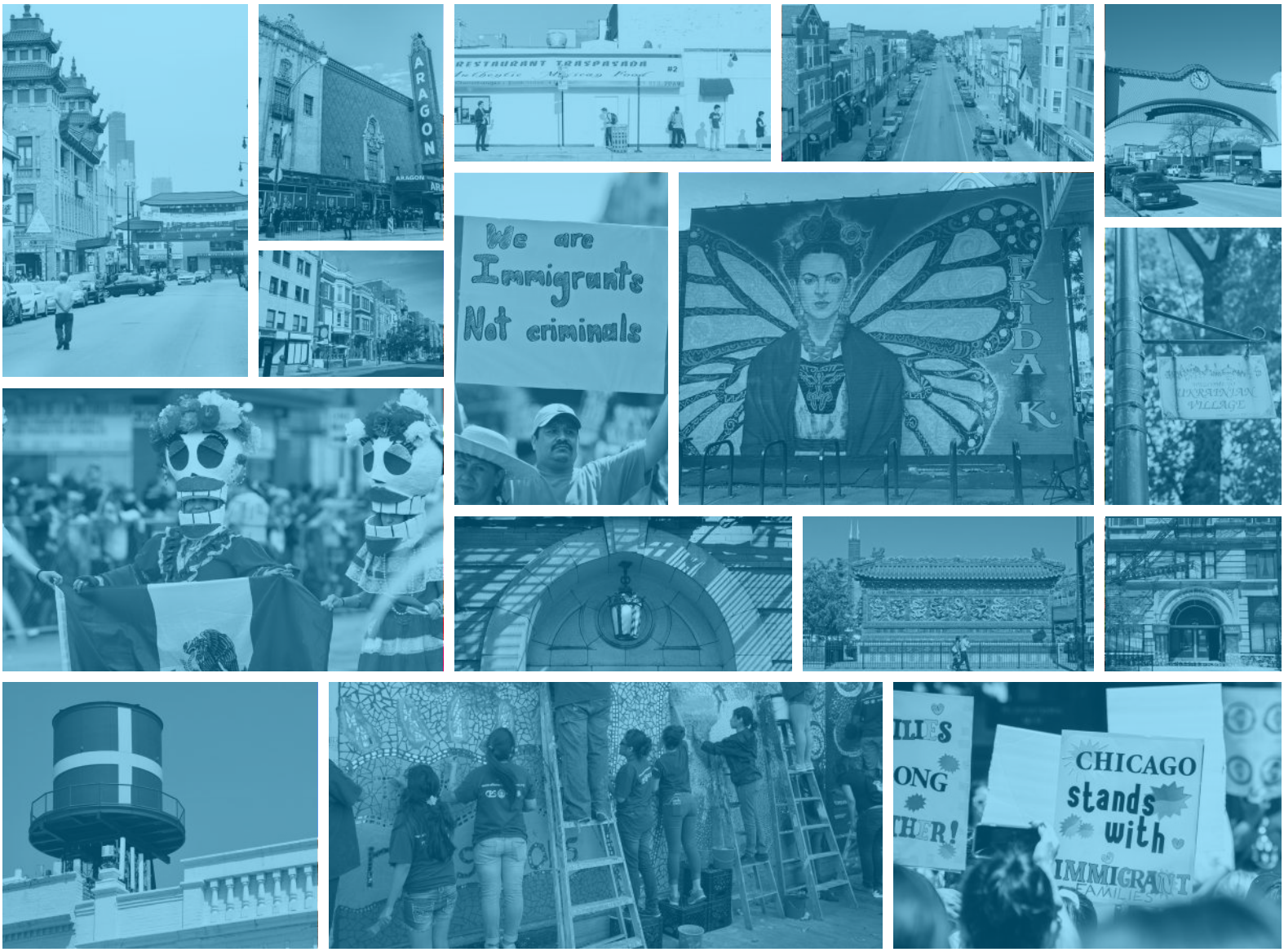
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A Global Welcome: Metro Chicago's Approach to Immigrant Inclusion

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A global welcome:

Metro Chicago's approach to immigrant inclusion

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SEPTEMBER 2020

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A global welcome:

Metro Chicago's approach to immigrant inclusion

SEPTEMBER 2020



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PREFACE

Global cities increasingly shape our world—not only the economy but its ideas, culture, and policies. Being on the front lines of the world's greatest challenges, they are also driving innovative and needed solutions across a range of topics, including migration. With most migrants settling in urban areas, cities face a pressing priority to create inclusive spaces for their residents, including those who are foreign-born.

Like many global cities, Chicago, long a city of immigrants, remains one to this day. But Chicago is somewhat unique. According to the New American Economy's City Index, it is the top-ranked city in the country for policies and outcomes promoting immigrant integration. Leadership by the City of Chicago and the Office of the Mayor has engendered an inclusive community and network of organizations and nonprofits that assist immigrant communities, and lift up local neighborhoods. This report highlights the city's many efforts and opportunities for greater impact.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs is uniquely positioned to write such a report. Alongside the broader Global Cities Center of Excellence, the Council has hosted the Pritzker Forum on Global Cities for the past six years—bringing together mayors, urbanists, thought leaders, and academics to debate the pressing global challenges that often manifest in cities.

Of equal importance: for nearly two decades, the Council has conducted work on immigration policy, publishing task force reports and sector-specific briefs on the benefits of immigration to the Midwest. This report stands as a testament to the ongoing focus and leadership that the Council brings to this space.

As enduring global challenges remain and new issues arise, it is paramount that city leadership share best practices, create networks to solve common challenges, and build a better future for all residents, regardless of immigration status. The following analysis provides an overview of greater Chicago's immigrant community and demonstrates how Chicago has taken unique steps to create a more inclusive city—serving as both an example for global cities worldwide and as a baseline for measuring its own global welcome.



Ivo Daalder
President
Chicago Council on Global Affairs

A LETTER FROM CHICAGO MAYOR LORI LIGHTFOOT

Chicago has undergone multiple transformations since its founding nearly two centuries ago. However, one thing has remained the same: we are a city built, in large part, by our brilliant immigrant communities. It is because of this history that Chicago has become a place unlike any other, with a culture and an economy known for their richness, diversity, and vibrancy. This history has also contributed to Chicago's designation by the New American Economy Cities Index as the country's most welcoming city to immigrants—a testament to our passionate, dedicated work to stand up and fight for immigrant rights, no matter the costs or barriers.

As Mayor of Chicago, I am incredibly proud of the open, receptive city we've become for both immigrants and refugees. It isn't enough to simply welcome them; it's our responsibility to make sure they can lead fulfilled lives. That means protecting them from deportation and intimidation by government agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement. It also means ensuring immigrants have the support and safety systems they need as they navigate their new lives in Chicago.

Committing ourselves to providing resources for our immigrant and refugee communities puts us on the fast track to becoming a better, more equitable Chicago—one where everyone has the tools they need to succeed, no matter where they were born or what identities they carry. This is a commitment that informs every initiative led by departments and organizations, such as our Office of New Americans and our city's Community Navigators, that continue to overcome barriers to a welcoming, progressive immigration policy.

While I'm proud of the work we've accomplished so far, there's still more to be done especially as we face the greatest public-health crisis of our time. The issues of discrimination and injustice that our immigrant and refugee communities face at a disproportionate level cannot be solved overnight. So, we must work even harder to make sure that they have what they need to successfully access life-changing opportunities. Moving forward, it is my hope and expectation that this robust report will be used to create and protect policies that improve the quality of life for the people who have built our city.

Sincerely,



Mayor
City of Chicago

INTRODUCTION

More than half the global population lives in metropolitan areas, and this proportion will likely increase throughout the 21st century. A significant contributor to this growth will be immigrants and other newcomers. The opportunities that metro areas offer, economic and otherwise, place cities on the front line of immigrant integration. Cities are the laboratories where solutions to the challenges related to migration are being tested.

Scholars argue that supporting and welcoming new immigrant arrivals help them to integrate more rapidly into their new society[1] (see sidebar "Terminology Used in this Report"). But while there is much excitement about the potential for cities to lead on immigrant integration, cities' powers are limited by their jurisdictions and the multiple levels of government within which they are situated. According to prominent immigration and urban researchers John Mollenkopf and Manuel Pastor, immigration policy is fundamentally asymmetrical: the federal government determines how many immigrants enter the country, but "it falls to local and regional jurisdictions to frame the living experience of immigrants [and to] mount the programs that integrate them."[2]

TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS REPORT

The definitions listed below are widely recognized in the immigrant integration policy arena and are based on those used by leaders in the field, such as the Migration Policy Institute.[1]

Asylee or asylum seeker: Persons who file an application for asylum in a country other than their own; they remain in asylum-seeker status until the government has adjudicated their application.

Foreign-born: Persons who reside long-term in one country, whether in legal or unauthorized status, but were born in a different country—often used interchangeably with "immigrants." The US Census Bureau defines foreign-born as persons who were not US citizens at birth, including naturalized US citizens; lawful permanent residents (or green-card holders); refugees and asylees; certain legal nonimmigrants (including those on student, work, or some other temporary visas); and the undocumented.

Immigrant: Typically, persons who have intended to permanently relocate and settle in a country different from their country of birth—often used interchangeably with "foreign-born." The US Department of Homeland Security

[1] Jeanne Batalova, Andriy Shymonyak, and Michelle Mittelstadt, "Immigration Data Matters," Migration Policy Institute, March 2018, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigration-data-matters.



This image was taken as part of documentary photographer Colin Boyd Shafer's project "Finding American: Stories of Immigration from all 50 States." Learn more about the project at findingamerican.com.

TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS REPORT (CONT'D)

defines "immigrant" as a foreign-born person who obtains legal permanent residence status in the United States.

Immigrant integration: The meaning of "immigrant integration" is not always consistent across the field. For the purposes of this report, we defer to the Migration Policy Institute, which defines immigrant integration as the "process of economic mobility and social inclusion for newcomers and their children. As such, integration touches upon the institutions and mechanisms that promote development and growth within society, including early childhood care; elementary, postsecondary, and adult education systems; workforce development; health care; provision of government services to communities with linguistic diversity; and more."[2]

Municipal, metropolitan, regional: "Municipal" refers to the geographic area over which a city or municipal government has jurisdiction, for example the City of Chicago. "Metropolitan" refers to a larger urban region with economic and social ties to a particular urban core, typically composed of many municipal governments—for example, the Chicagoland region or the Chicago metropolitan statistical area.

Receptivity: The context and actions the receiving or host society conveys toward immigrants and newcomers. Receptivity can be positive, negative, or mixed. Receptivity can also be exhibited by all sectors of a society at all levels, from local to national—and often in different ways that lead to mixed receptivity toward newcomer populations.

Refugee: According to the Immigration and Nationality Act, a person who, with a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion," lives outside the country of his or her nationality or legal residence and is unable or unwilling to return.

Undocumented immigrant: A foreign-born person who arrives or resides in a country without official government authorization.

[2] "Immigrant Integration," Migration Policy Institute, accessed July 21, 2020, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/topics/immigrant-integration.

In the United States, the 2016 presidential election marked a dramatic course change for federal immigration policy. After a campaign in which immigration was a central and hotly debated issue, President Donald Trump swiftly began restricting or terminating immigration programs implemented by previous administrations. Changes have included travel bans for persons from certain countries; intentional delays of the legal immigration system; attempted rescission of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program that prevents undocumented children brought to the United States from being deported; and "zero tolerance" policies that separate and detain children from parents seeking asylum in the United States.

Of course, the challenges facing immigrants have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As President Trump continues to announce policies intended to stem immigration, the need for cities to take on leadership roles has become more stark than ever.

The emergence of city leadership on migration agendas, including through global networks such as the Mayors Migration Council and the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, suggests there are new opportunities on the horizon. Through city diplomacy and sharing of best practices, cities are learning what other cities are doing and bringing home ideas to implement locally.[3] In Hamburg, Germany, for example, the mayor's office extends an invitation to immigrants when they have met all the qualifications necessary to apply for citizenship, explaining the process for application rather than leaving this responsibility to immigrants. In Spain, cities across the country came together to shape a new national policy for welcoming refugees.

As Simon Curtis, professor at the University of East Anglia, wrote, "the international system of the future is unlikely to look anything like those international systems of the past."[4] Cities are at the forefront of innovative approaches to solving global challenges, and Chicago is well positioned to collect new ideas from around the world and implement them locally. In turn, the city and region can elevate its leadership on the global stage as a bold city taking on cutting-edge policies and providing services and opportunities for all who choose Chicago as their home.

This report examines, through the lens of the city of Chicago, the complexity of the foreign-born community and the immigrant-related policies of a global city, situated within broader county, metropolitan, state, and federal contexts. The report begins with a discussion of Chicago's history as a gateway city. Chapter 2 offers a data-based profile of the immigrants of Chicago, a discussion of the importance of legal status in determining the programs and services most relevant to immigrants of each status as well as mixed-status families, and the effects of immigration on the Chicago region. Chapter 3 profiles Chicago through the lens of the initiatives and policies intended for immigrants, those intended for everyone that benefit immigrants, and the institutional partners that are crucial in Chicago's immigration integration ecosystem. Chapter 4 overviews the various jurisdictions involved in the metro region's immigration policy, highlights examples of best practices from around the world, and discusses opportunities for collective action. Finally, Chapter 5 takes a hard look at Chicago's current gaps in immigration policy and support and offers five recommendations for improvement. An appendix offers a list of coalitions, organizations, and initiatives working on pro-immigration policy in Chicago and around the country.



1 AN ORIGINAL GATEWAY CITY

Chicago has a long history of receiving immigrants. The Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution has called Chicago an "immigrant gateway" and one of the "quintessential immigrant destinations, having large and sustained immigrant populations over the course of the 20th century."[5] According to Brookings, the foreign-born proportion of Chicago's population has exceeded the national average for the past century, and nearly one-quarter of all immigrants in the United States live in one of the four metropolitan areas of Boston, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco.[6]

In this chapter: Chicago was built by immigrants, and modern political leaders have helped ensure that the city has remained a safe, prosperous destination for migrants from around the world. Recognition of the city's immigrant friendly reputation is justified, but it also must be understood in the context of Chicago's long history of racial segregation and discrimination.

A Brief History of Immigration to Chicago

Even before the founding of the city of Chicago in 1837, the region served as a trading nexus for European (mainly French) fur trappers and missionaries and Native Americans. In the meatpacking and industrial era, migrants from Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Eastern European countries such as Poland settled in the city in search of jobs and economic opportunities. Following a slowdown

after 1910, immigration to Chicago picked up again after the 1965 passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which prompted a rise in immigrants from China, India, Korea, Latin America, and the Philippines. As a result of this boom, Chicago's foreign-born population rose 53 percent from 1970 to 2011–15 (the five-year span in which American Community Survey data are reported).[7]

Immigration has proved central to Chicago's economic and cultural growth. A large immigrant workforce from Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and elsewhere provided labor for the industries that fueled Chicago's economic expansion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[8] These immigrants also contributed to the city's cosmopolitanism and ethnic diversity, including its varied, distinct neighborhoods; immigrant-oriented schools, churches, and newspapers; and the city's early enclaves. Some neighborhoods have evolved: immigrants from Eastern Europe expanded outward as the city grew, with Polish Americans especially moving northwest of the city, and Hispanic populations settled throughout parts of the southwest and northwest sections of the city. Meanwhile, new Asian immigrant populations are moving directly to suburban areas.[9] Today, communities such as Chinatown, the Devon Street corridor, and Pilsen have been marketed as "windows to the world."[10] And Little Village, a largely Mexican neighborhood, is home to 26th Street—Chicago's highest-grossing shopping district after the Magnificent Mile[11]—highlighting the continued local economic contributions of immigrants, especially entrepreneurs.

A History of Political Leadership

Relative to other parts of the United States, the Chicago metro area and the state of Illinois are known for their welcoming attitude toward immigrants. Indeed, Illinois has rarely been convulsed by the kind of anti-immigrant fervor that led California voters in the 1990s to pass Proposition 187, which sought to deny public and social services to the undocumented. The region's reputation as being immigrant friendly stems, on one hand, from public policies and, on the other, from the fact that anti-immigrant discourse is largely absent from public debate.

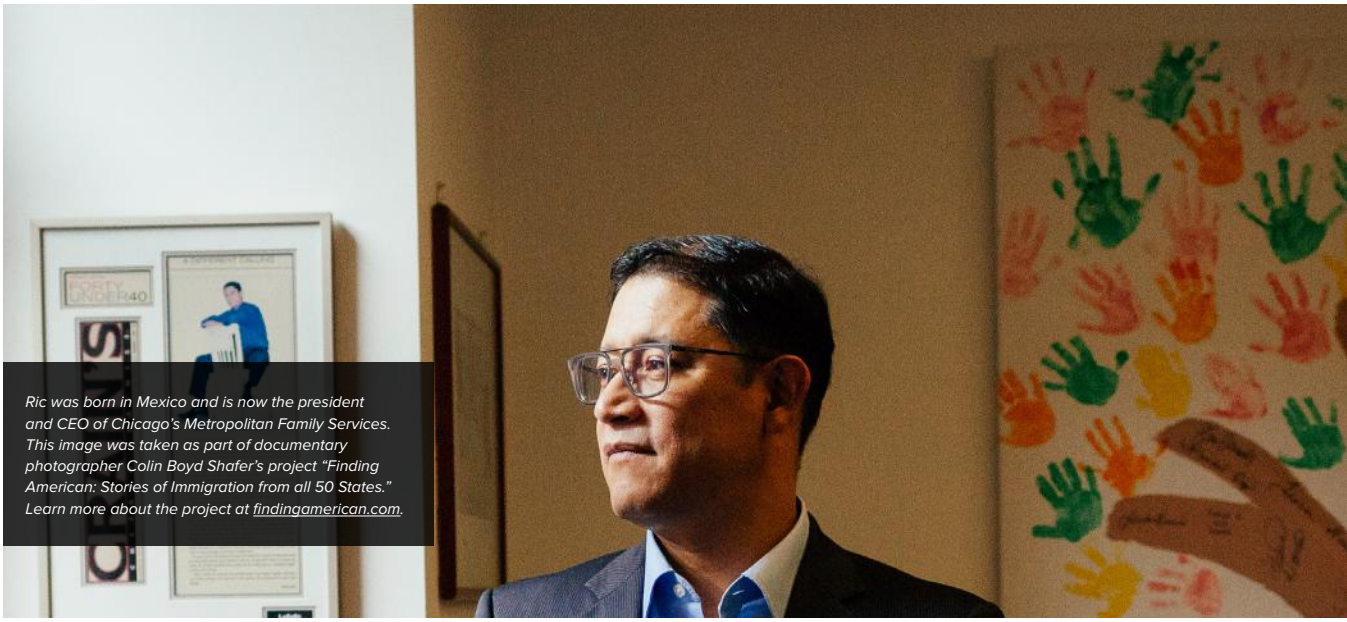
Chicago's mayors, in particular, have established a legacy of supporting immigrants. In 1985, then mayor Harold Washington issued an executive order that prohibited city employees from enforcing federal immigration laws. The order was, in part, a protest of the federal government's random searches of city records and questioning of people seeking city services. In 1989, then mayor Richard M. Daley affirmed the executive order, and in 2006, the Chicago City Council transcribed the order into law.[12]

More recently, former mayor Rahm Emanuel often said that he wanted Chicago to be the most immigrant friendly city in the world and opened the city's first Office of New Americans.[13] Notably, the city's director of the Office of New Americans represented Chicago in UN meetings around the Global Compact for Migration in New York and at the Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration, and Development during the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Marrakesh, Morocco. Emanuel's administration made history when it sued the US Department of Justice over

threats to withhold funds because of the city's sanctuary ordinances.[14] And under his leadership, Chicago joined several pro-immigrant coalitions and initiatives, including Cities for Action, Cities for Citizenship, and Welcoming America (see "Voices on immigration: Melineh Kano, executive director of RefugeeOne").

Present-day Mayor Lori Lightfoot has continued to voice support for immigrants and refugees, speaking out against federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and endorsing the city's sanctuary ordinances.[15] Lightfoot proclaimed June 20, 2019, to be World Refugee Day in Chicago and urged "all Chicagoans to recognize the enduring contributions of refugee communities within our city and the ongoing challenges facing refugees around the globe."[16] In November 2019, she was among 88 bipartisan mayors who signed a letter urging the Trump administration "to rescind the executive order reducing refugee admissions."[17] As the mayor has written, "one of the things I'm most proud of is our unequivocal support of Chicago's immigrant and refugee communities. It's a position directly drawn from our belief that our nation's strength lies in our diversity, and that the values which have made us a beacon of hope are sacred and need to be protected."[18]

At the state level, both Democrat and Republican Illinois governors have continued to fund initiatives that facilitate naturalization and help immigrants understand which public programs they may be eligible for. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) is one of the most active immigrant-serving groups in the country and one of the state's leading human-services organizations. More locally, suburban mayors have convened to discuss integrating Mexican immigrants,[19] the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus has surveyed municipalities to understand their inclusion of immigrants,[20] and the region's federally designated planning agency has developed an immigrant integration tool kit.[21]



Ric was born in Mexico and is now the president and CEO of Chicago's Metropolitan Family Services. This image was taken as part of documentary photographer Colin Boyd Shafer's project "Finding American: Stories of Immigration from all 50 States." Learn more about the project at findingamerican.com.



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VOICES ON IMMIGRATION: MELINEH KANO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REFUGEEONE

Since the early 1980s, RefugeeOne has worked with the US Department of State to resettle more than 17,000 refugees of conflicts around the world—from Bosnia and Herzegovina, to Myanmar, to Syria—in Chicago. The independent nonprofit offers comprehensive services including English language training, workforce development, mental health services, and a youth program.

When it comes to refugees and immigrants, Chicago's collaborative heart shines.

Chicago was voted the friendliest, most welcoming city. And I think that sentiment is present across the many organizations that serve refugees and immigrants. There is a sense of partnership and collaboration that I have seen here in Chicago that I don't hear about from my counterparts from different parts of the country. We're in this because we want the communities we serve to thrive. We want them to know their rights. We want them to be protected. We want them to have access. And we work together to help people. It happens all the time in Chicago, where you reach out to another agency and you say I need your help to serve my clients, and vice versa. I think this spirit of collaboration among service providers is very unique to Chicago.

The godfather of collaboration in Illinois was a man named Ed.

A lot of the credit for this robust, collaborative community goes to Ed Silverman, who served as the state refugee coordinator and led the Illinois Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services within Illinois Department of Human Services for almost 40 years. He was great at bringing people together and creating harmony between refugees and immigrant service providers in Illinois. His legacy still lives on.

Indicators of Immigrant Inclusion in Chicago

With all this immigration history and activity, it is not surprising that the New American Economy (NAE), a bipartisan research and advocacy organization, recently ranked Chicago the "most immigrant friendly city in America" in its second annual Cities Index[22] (see sidebar "What is the New American Economy Cities Index?").

According to the 2019 NAE Cities Index, Chicago's high rank stems from its policies in five areas—government leadership, economic empowerment, inclusivity, community, and legal support:[23]

- ***Government leadership*** includes having a local office for immigrant services and issuing proclamations or resolutions in support of immigrants.

- ***Economic empowerment*** includes providing support for vocational training programs or entrepreneurship programs that target immigrants.
- ***Inclusivity*** includes offering language assistance when providing city services and issuing municipal IDs.
- ***Community*** includes partnering with local organizations to provide services or information to immigrants and hosting events to celebrate immigrant contributions or facilitate interactions between immigrant and nonimmigrant residents.
- ***Legal support*** includes indicators such as accepting consular identification cards and providing immigrants with legal defense funds.

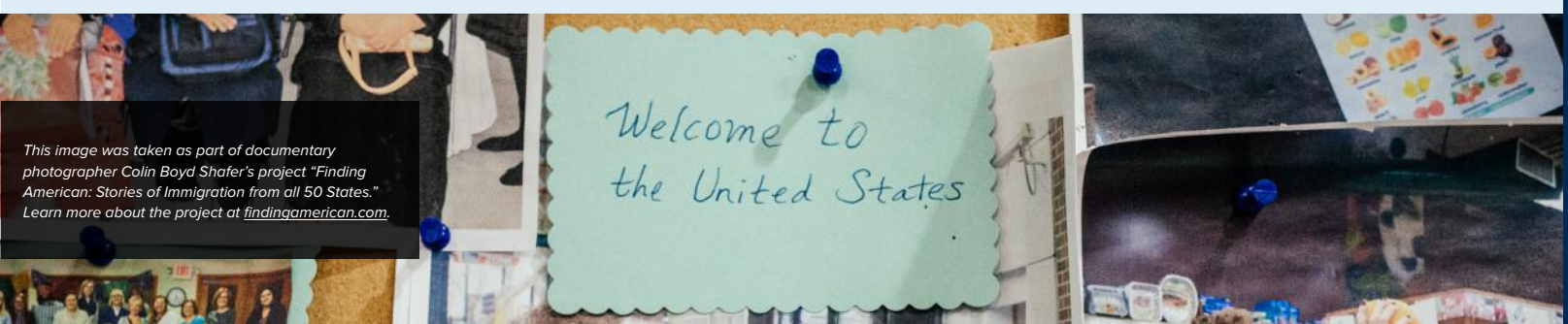
WHAT IS THE NEW AMERICAN ECONOMY CITIES INDEX?

According to Kate Brick, former director of state and local initiatives at New American Economy, "The New American Economy (NAE) Cities Index is the first-ever comprehensive, national assessment of immigrant integration policy and disparities in socioeconomic outcomes between immigrants and the US-born in the 100 largest US cities. Ultimately, it attempts to answer two critical questions in the immigration policy conversation: How well are immigrants integrating, and what role do cities play in that process? The index scores each city based on 51 unique measures, including 31 policy indicators within five categories, as well as 20 socioeconomic outcome indicators within four categories. The index tracks where each city stands in its integration efforts to highlight its progress and identify where there remains room for growth."[1]

The index considers a range of policy areas, including how law enforcement agencies treat immigrants, whether immigrants have equal access to services, and whether local policies are inclusive of immigrants. Socioeconomic indicators include workforce and civic participation, a comparison of immigrants' and US-born residents' socioeconomic outcomes, economic prosperity, and livability factors such as housing, health care, and education.

Chicago's high score in the 2019 index was based on its excellent performance in all policy categories. "By raising up cities like Chicago that fare well," Brick notes, "the index features their policy initiatives as best practices for other community leaders to consider as they seek ways to help immigrants establish roots and maximize their potential."

[1] Kate Brick, former director of state and local initiatives, New American Economy, email communication with Paul McDaniel, March 19, 2020.



This image was taken as part of documentary photographer Colin Boyd Shafer's project "Finding American: Stories of Immigration from all 50 States." Learn more about the project at findingamerican.com.

Yet the NAE Cities Index measures only whether the policies exist, not how well they are implemented.[24] This means that Chicago's score does not reflect its policies' effectiveness—and evidence suggests room for improvement. For example, while foreign-born residents (both documented and undocumented) can run for local school boards, they may not have the right to vote in municipal elections.

A Note on the Effect of Racial Segregation on Immigrant Inclusion

Chicago's mixed record on immigrant integration includes the city's historical struggle to extend equal opportunity to all residents. More than 800,000 Black individuals live in Chicago and experience one of the highest rates of segregation among large cities.[25] Violence and poverty beset neighborhoods of both native- and foreign-born residents, whose experiences with homeownership, labor-force participation, education attainment, and other socioeconomic indicators vary widely (see "Voices on immigration: Suzanne and Zaher Sahloul, cofounders of Muslim Civic Coalition").

Research into why immigrants are leaving the city has suggested that the city "just hasn't invested in neighborhoods of color—which lack good public schools, jobs, public safety, and affordable housing—with the same gusto as it has in the downtown area," according to US Rep. Jesús García.[26] The congressman, who represents Illinois' predominantly Hispanic fourth district, has noted that "development patterns continue to perpetuate [racial] segregation now combined with income segregation."

Achieving world-class immigrant integration requires no less than a full overhaul of this long-term racial segregation. Indeed, immigrant integration is but one of many components for a place to strengthen its inclusion of all residents. To truly be a leader in inclusion, cities must address and be inclusive of all aspects of equity and intersectionality—embracing race, ethnicity, sexuality, and socioeconomic class, among other expressions of identity.



Nasir was born in Myanmar and is now the director of Chicago's Rohingya Cultural Center. This image was taken as part of documentary photographer Colin Boyd Shafer's project "Finding American: Stories of Immigration from all 50 States." Learn more about the project at findingamerican.com.


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VOICES ON IMMIGRATION: SUZANNE AND ZAHER SAHLOUL, COFOUNDERS OF MUSLIM CIVIC COALITION

Suzanne Sahloul is the founder and executive director of the Syrian Community Network, a social service organization that works primarily with resettled Syrian refugees. Dr. Zaher Sahloul is a physician, former chairman of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, current vice chairman of the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition, and cofounder of MedGlobal, a nongovernmental organization that provides health care in disaster regions. Together, this wife-and-husband team helped found the Muslim Civic Coalition, a group of Muslim influencers in the Chicago area who encourage civic engagement among the Muslim community.

We are organizers and we get the job done.

Suzanne: Whether it is organizing for the union or for voting or labor rights or increasing wages, everything has roots in Chicago because we're an organizing city. We have great community organizing institutions, including the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition and DuPage United. These organizations made those of us in the Muslim community more civically engaged and taught us how to connect with other groups, how to build coalitions. And we have very important coalitions in Chicago that make sure every member's opinions are taken seriously. All of these ingredients have made Chicago what it is to me and many other immigrants.

Even though we're a smaller city than New York or Los Angeles and have less wealth per capita, we are one of the most philanthropic cities in the United States. And I think that has a lot to do with the culture of the city—nothing seems to stop Chicagoans. In 2015, when people were paying attention to the refugee crisis, especially coming out of Syria, some governors (including Governor Rauner) started saying they didn't want to welcome Syrian refugees into their state. But Mayor Emanuel hosted a Thanksgiving dinner in November 2015 to welcome the 25 refugee families we had, and he went from plate to plate, serving turkey and stuffing. It's so important that these messages come from leaders. That they set this precedent—that we are Chicagoans and we're going to be welcoming to all.

The Syrian Community Network has chapters in San Diego and Phoenix, but they're not as engaged as they are in Chicago. When the travel ban happened and President Trump started slashing the refugee program, a lot of people who were engaged in those cities


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VOICES ON IMMIGRATION: SUZANNE AND ZAHER SAHLOUL, COFOUNDERS OF MUSLIM CIVIC COALITION (CONT'D)

dropped off, thinking they weren't needed because refugees weren't coming anymore. In Chicago, there is still an outpouring of support; people want to help those who are already here. And that's a clear distinction between us and a lot of other cities. We have an organizing attitude.

People feel at home in Chicago no matter where they come from, but there are still opportunities to do better.

Zaher: I came to Chicago 30 years ago, and I've never left. It's beautiful and welcoming, thanks to a lot of great people who worked to welcome immigrants and refugees—including Ed Silverman, the father of the refugee movement in the United States. Of course, there's still work to be done.

During my tenure at the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, we started what we call Illinois Muslim ACTION Day, encouraging the diverse Muslim community to care more about local issues that are not Muslim-centric. We would choose a legislation every year—one year it was about food deserts, one year about clean environment—and advocate for them in Springfield to get the Muslim community more engaged in civic structure and the public sphere.

There's also an opportunity to build more coalitions. Chicago is a very segregated city. I believe that the African American community in particular is not well connected to the immigrant community, and building coalitions around unifying issues could help.

Embracing immigrants isn't just consistent with our values; it's also saving millions of lives. I was asked not long ago to respond to the media about one of Trump's controversial tweets, and what I mentioned was the contribution of immigrant nurses and physicians that many times are ignored in the mainstream media. A large and disproportionate share of doctors in Chicago are immigrants. Many of our nurses are immigrants, and we have a huge shortage of nurses—which is especially critical during a pandemic, when every doctor and nurse is much needed. We can't blame immigrants for economic ills and fail to highlight their contribution to the welfare of our society.

The history and challenges of immigrant integration in Chicago are an important foundation for how the city has approached immigration policy and what the future holds. In the next chapter, we profile the individuals who are the focus of these efforts—Chicago's immigrants themselves.



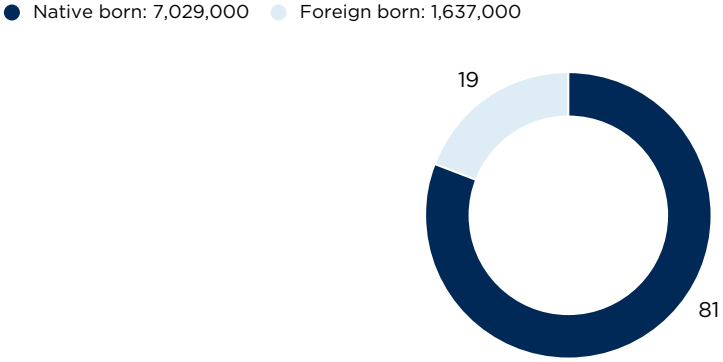
2 THE IMMIGRANTS OF METRO CHICAGO

The counties that constitute metropolitan Chicago—Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will—have been major destinations for immigrants since the 19th century.[27] Immigrants made up more than one-third of the total population in the area from 1870 to 1900. Today, 1.6 million immigrants (19 percent of the total population) live in metro Chicago (Figure 1). For perspective, as a group, metro Chicago immigrants would rank as the sixth-largest city in the United States and the ninth-largest city in North America.

In this chapter: An understanding of Chicago's immigration community starts with the facts: who they are, where they come from, and what stage of naturalization they are in. Legal status is vital to determine the support and services immigrants need, and considering the effects of immigration on the Chicago region can bolster arguments for investment in those initiatives.

Figure 1: **Immigrants in metropolitan Chicago**

2014–2018, % of immigrants



Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Chicago Has Long Been a Destination for Immigrants of Diverse Origins

In the mid-19th century, most immigrant populations arrived from northern and western Europe. By 1880, the five largest immigrant groups in the city of Chicago were from Germany, Ireland, England, Sweden, and present-day Czech Republic and Slovakia (Figure 2). Immigration to metro Chicago shifted by that point, with many more migrants coming from eastern and southern Europe. By 1930, the largest migrant ethnic groups in Chicago still included those from Germany and Sweden but also Poland, Russia, and Italy.

The large numbers of immigrants arriving in the late 19th and early 20th centuries led to a backlash against both immigration and its diversity of languages, cultures, and religions. Whereas the Protestant arrivals of earlier decades were met with a more indifferent acceptance, the Catholics and Jews who followed were greeted with intolerance.[28]

Anti-immigrant sentiment led to the 1920s' Quota Acts, which effectively ended most immigration to the United States. These acts, in tandem with the Great Depression and the Second World War, led to a half-century decline in foreign arrivals, so that by 1970, only 8 percent of the metro Chicago regional population was born outside the United States.

Modern Immigration Policies Have Fostered a Global Population

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 raised immigration limits and distributed visas more equitably to immigrants from countries worldwide. Other major changes in federal law and policy

Figure 2: **Top five countries where Chicago's immigrants originated**

1880		1930		2014–2018	
All immigrants	188,421	All Immigrants	864,127	All immigrants	538,864
Germany	73,696	Poland	148,323	Mexico	232,912
Ireland	44,670	Germany	110,788	China	33,999
England	13,099	Russia	80,054	Poland	30,922
Sweden	12,450	Italy	75,210	Philippines	21,421
Czechoslovakia	10,813	Sweden	65,020	India	20,699

Note: This chart is for the city of Chicago only. Subsequent charts and tables refer to the metropolitan area; figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding.

Source: Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 10.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2020. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V10.0

included the Refugee Act of 1980, which standardized admission of refugees and asylees, and the Immigration Act of 1990, which increased immigrant visas awarded to workers with specialized training and education.

These policies are largely responsible for the composition of today's diverse immigrant population in metro Chicago. Currently, the city of Chicago's largest immigrant group (with a population of 230,000) is from Mexico—yet this population is falling in number within the city, even as it grows in the surrounding suburban area. Considering that the needs of Chicago's growing Asian population, for example, are different than those of Latinx immigrants, shifts such as these will affect policy priorities.

Taking all of metropolitan Chicago into account, more than half of immigrants come from three distinct regions: 37 percent from Mexico, 9 percent from India, and 8 percent from Poland. Nearly two dozen countries have more than 10,000 migrants living in the Chicago area (Figure 3). In all, some 160 countries are represented among the current immigrant population.

As was true of immigration a century ago, the multitude of nationalities defining metro Chicago's immigrant population bring diversity to the area. For the most part, the immigrants adapt to the local culture by learning English, becoming citizens, and integrating economically, socially, and civically. At the same time, the native-born population—to some extent—alters its own language use, perspectives, and awareness of other cultures as it interacts with newcomers.

Figure 3: **Countries with 10,000+ immigrants in metro Chicago**

2014–2018

	#	% of Total
Total	1,636,796	100.00
Mexico	609,331	37.23
India	138,451	8.46
Poland	130,499	7.97
Philippines	79,742	4.87
China	63,097	3.85
South Korea	36,196	2.21
Pakistan	29,149	1.78
Ukraine	24,315	1.49
Guatemala	23,892	1.46
Vietnam	19,338	1.18
Italy	17,443	1.07
Germany	16,633	1.02
Other USSR/Russia	15,450	0.94
Nigeria	15,010	0.92
Ecuador	14,954	0.91
Romania	14,629	0.89
Canada	14,589	0.89
Greece	13,107	0.80
Colombia	12,326	0.75
Iraq	11,988	0.73
Bulgaria	11,787	0.72
Lithuania	11,194	0.68
Other	313,676	19.16

Note: Figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding.

Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

The modern immigration wave lasted until approximately 2007. That year, overall immigration levels began to decline nationally, due in large part to declining arrivals of undocumented immigrants. This means that even many of the newer arrivals have been in the United States for many decades. In metro Chicago, about 46 percent of immigrants have been in the area for more than 20 years (Figure 4). More than half of the immigrants from six of the ten largest immigrant groups have been in the United States for at least two decades. In contrast, well over a quarter of new arrivals (having come to the United States in the past five years) are from China, India, and Pakistan. These different periods of arrivals have implications for immigrant integration. Newer groups, particularly of individuals with less financial means, tend to speak less English and have more need for language and other basic assistance. More established groups, however, have more need for services such as naturalization assistance and voter registration.

Figure 4: **Immigrants in metro Chicago by period of arrival in the United States**

2014–2018, %

Country of origin	0–5 years	6–10 years	11–15 years	16–20 years	21+ years	Total
All Immigrants	12	10	14	18	46	100
Mexico	4	6	14	20	55	100
Guatemala	5	6	20	13	55	100
Poland	5	7	20	17	52	100
Ukraine	20	14	29	19	18	100
China	30	19	12	12	27	100
Korea	12	14	9	7	58	100
Philippines	12	13	13	10	52	100
Vietnam	8	20	6	12	53	100
India	28	16	14	17	25	100
Pakistan	29	8	10	15	37	100
Other	19	13	13	18	36	100

Note: Figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding.

Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Effects of Chicago's Diversity

Chicago's immigration legacy and high diversity raise important issues for the area. The fact that the region has been a destination for international and internal migration indicates a certain degree of support for newcomers. Indeed, Chicago recognizes its key role in the Great Migration with the annual Bud Billiken Parade, celebrating the contributions of African Americans. Likewise, the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, considered a must-attend event for the political leadership of Illinois, and Casimir Pulaski Day, a state holiday recognizing the Polish hero of the American War of Independence, symbolize a respect for newcomers.

Yet newcomers have not achieved acceptance without struggle. Nineteenth-century Irish immigrants and twentieth-century Black migrants endured acts of hostility and violence. Today's immigrants face racial and national-origin discrimination in hiring, unequal access to public services including education, and underrepresentation among elected and appointed government officials.

The breadth and depth of Chicago's immigration diversity also present practical challenges to existing institutions and populations. Education, public-safety, and public-health systems and infrastructure have to continually strive—with varying levels of success—to ensure that they can overcome cultural barriers to integrate and communicate with immigrants, some tens of thousands of whom arrive to the area each year.

Different Legal Statuses Affect the Incorporation of Immigrants in the Region

Large numbers of immigrants in metro Chicago fall into one of three major categories of legal status: naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, and undocumented immigrants (Figure 5). In addition, there is a significant fourth category of persons with a temporary right to work or learn in the region.

The different legal rights held by immigrant groups in metro Chicago affect the opportunities of both the people and the societies they live in. Furthermore, mixing of legal status within households means that policies targeting one group can still affect another.

Naturalized Citizens

The approximately 800,000 naturalized immigrants in the Chicago area have identical rights to those of native-born US citizens (with the exception that they are unable to hold the office of US president). For most immigrants, becoming a US citizen involves paying an application fee and passing a test on the English language, US history, and US governance structure. Upon completion, the applicants take an oath of allegiance to the United States.

Rates of acquiring US citizenship vary greatly among different immigrant groups (Figure 6). Generally, the highest rates of naturalization in the region are found among groups with higher levels of English ability, such as Filipinos, many of whom complete education in English before coming to the United States; groups with higher average income and education, such as Indians; and groups that include a high percentage of refugees, such as Cubans and Vietnamese. Although access to US citizenship is the same for refugees as for other legal immigrants, refugees have historically been highly likely to apply for naturalization. Meanwhile, a low percentage of Mexicans in the United States have been naturalized. This is in part because many individuals lack legal status, but a variety of reasons contributes to relatively low rates of naturalization for Mexican legal immigrants as well, including relatively low English proficiency.[29]

Figure 5: **Legal status of metro Chicago immigrants**

2014–2018

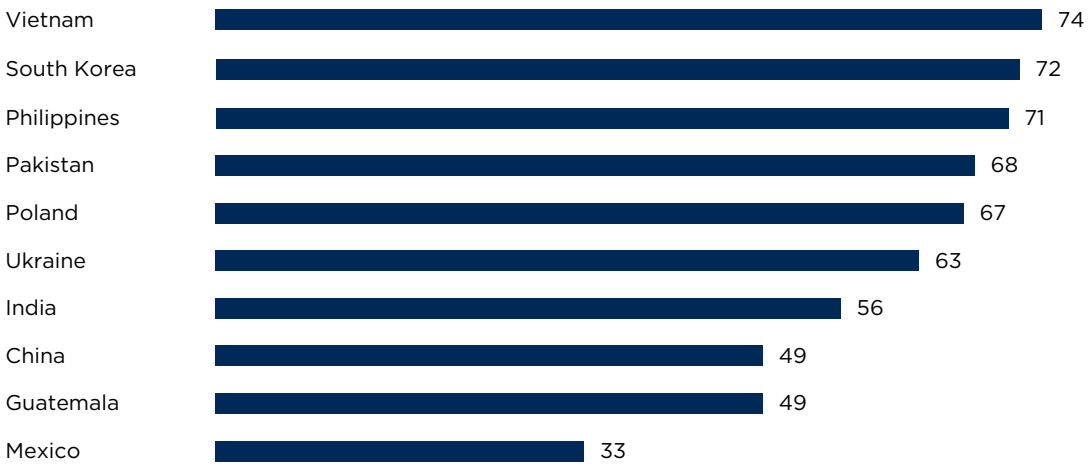


Note: Numbers are rounded and approximate to account for estimates of undocumented and LPR populations and will differ from data from US Census Bureau.

Sources: Center for Migration Studies New York; authors' estimates

Figure 6: **Percentage of immigrants who have naturalized varies across immigrant groups**

Metro Chicago, 2014–2018, %



Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Legal Permanent Residents

The 480,000 legal permanent residents (LPRs) in the region have the right to live and work almost indefinitely in the United States, and most of them can apply to become a US citizen after five years of residence. Still, LPRs' integration into local society is somewhat restricted. For example, they can be ineligible for some social-support programs, such as Medicaid (government-funded medical care); they are ineligible for jobs that require citizenship, such as most federal jobs; and they cannot vote in elections. In 2018, Illinois was the destination for about 38,000 immigrants receiving permanent resident status, and the great majority settled in the metro Chicago region (Figure 7). (Refugees and asylees generally adjust their immigration status to that of LPR after about a year of residence in the United States.)

Undocumented Immigrants

Undocumented immigrants lack a formal permanent-resident status. About half of undocumented immigrants enter the United States without border-authority inspection, while the rest overstay their immigrant-visa terms.[30] These immigrants cannot work legally, are ineligible for all social- and medical-support programs but certain kinds of emergency care, and are subject to detention and deportation. Undocumented children in the United States are eligible for public education through high school.

Figure 7: **Persons obtaining lawful permanent resident status in Illinois**

2018

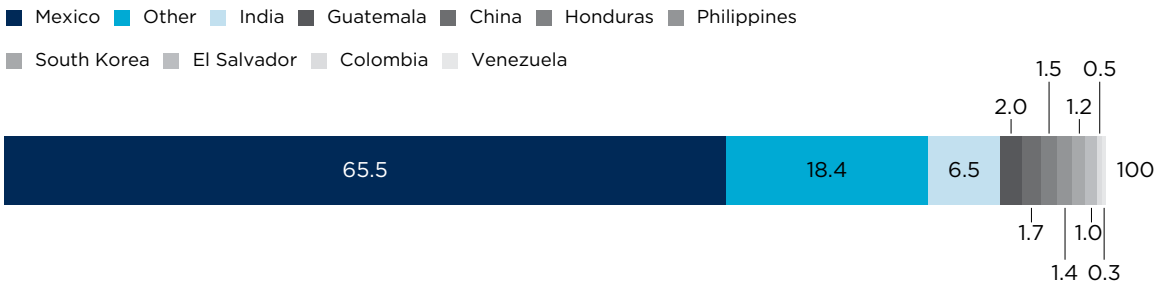
Total	38,287
Mexico	9,411
India	3,946
Philippines	1,848
China, People's Republic	1,835
Poland	1,404
Ukraine	1,174
Pakistan	962
Syria	886
Congo, Democratic Republic	726
Vietnam	692
Other	15,403

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

About two-thirds of the undocumented population in Illinois comes from Mexico (Figure 8). The reasons for the high rate of undocumented immigration from Mexico are complex; key among them is that few legal immigrant visas are available for workers from Mexico, who fill a large number of low-skilled jobs in the United States.[31] Migrants from other nations in Latin America and Asia also account for a large share of the state's undocumented immigrants.

Figure 8: **Countries of origin of undocumented immigrants in Illinois**

2017, %



Source: Center for Migration Studies New York

Temporary Statuses

Other foreign-born persons reside in metro Chicago with a variety of temporary or special statuses. Some temporary statuses allow foreign visitors to live in the United States for limited time periods while they work, receive training, or study. The major categories of visas set aside for temporary workers are the H-1B, for workers with college education; the H-2A, for agricultural workers; and the H2-B, for seasonal workers. J visas are generally for persons such as medical professionals who come to the United States for advanced training. Foreign students use an F visa to enroll in a US university or college.

Persons with temporary visas for work, training, and study are found across the Chicago area. Local corporations use temporary visas for high-demand fields, such as information technology, and sponsored about 13,000 H-1B petitions in 2017.[32] Immigrant medical trainees, many of whom eventually adjust to permanent status, make up large portions of physicians at hospitals and medical centers, helping to explain why more than one-third of local doctors are foreign-born.

Metro Chicago is also home to many large and small universities and colleges, including the respected Northwestern University and the University of Chicago, which attract foreign students. About 35,000 foreign students were studying higher education in the area in the 2008–12 period. The tuition and living costs paid by these students and their families exceed $1.4 billion annually.[33] Experts have expressed concern that local economies suffer economically by not retaining foreign students, whose visa status generally requires them to leave the United States after their education is completed. The inability of foreign students to remain in Illinois may have cost the state $29 million in reduced tax payments in 2014.[34]

Shifting Policies Related to Immigration Status

It is crucial to note that immigrants' ability to obtain or maintain legal status—or, in the case of the undocumented, to remain—in the United States has changed or, indeed, been threatened under the Trump administration. Some transformations began in earlier administrations, but the most significant changes have occurred in the past few years.

Naturalization, for example, has become costly.[35] In the mid-1980s, the cost of filing the basic naturalization application (form N-400) was about $86 in 2020 dollars.[36] As of 2020, the federal government is proposing to charge $1,170 for the same application. The administration has also taken steps to revoke US citizenship, creating a new "Denaturalization Section" in the Justice Department in February 2020.[37]

Approximately 1 million immigrants obtain permanent legal residence each year in the United States. President Trump supports a proposal to slash legal immigration in half over a 10-year period.[38] In February 2020, the Departments of Homeland Security and of State began to assess these potential immigrants under new, so-called public charge rules.[39] "Public charge" refers to persons who are deemed likely to depend on government-support programs such as Medicaid or food stamps. These new rules could make most recent applicants for legal status ineligible to live in the United States.[40]

Undocumented immigrants have always been liable to be deported; the Chicago office of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested more than 8,400 persons in 2019. And in the spring of 2020, specialized teams of immigration enforcement agents were newly deployed by President Trump to the Chicago area.[41] Furthermore, about 34,000 young adults in metro Chicago who were brought to the United States (most by their parents) as minors without legal status are also facing potential changes. A federal policy known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) has allowed them to remain temporarily in the United States with authorization to work. In June 2020, the US Supreme Court ruled against the Trump administration's case to dismantle the program.[42]

The shifting access to a permanent right to live in the Chicago metro area can have various implications. Loss of naturalized status, while unlikely to affect large numbers of persons, reduces the voting population and can dissuade legal immigrants from applying for citizenship. A decrease in the number of legal immigrants may reduce the area's workforce and lead to growth in the undocumented immigrant population. Increased enforcement aimed at removing undocumented immigrants can also strike fear into families and communities and damage social cohesion.

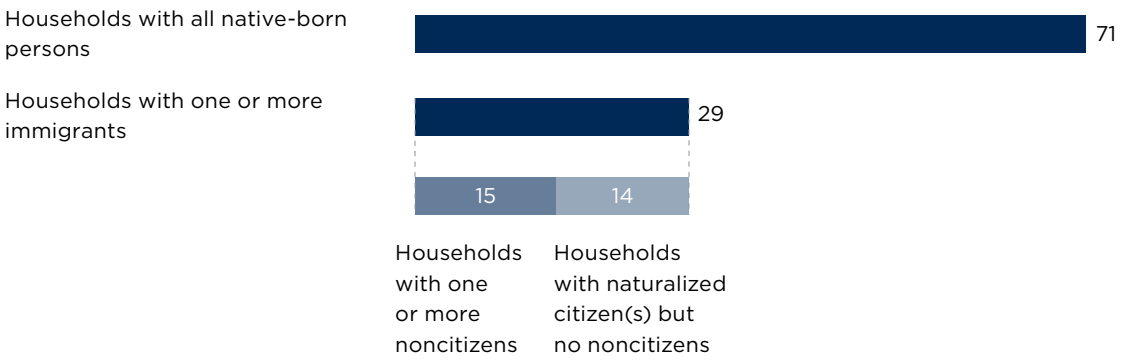
Mixed-Status Families

The socioeconomic status of immigrants is interwoven with that of their family members, ultimately affecting integration of those immigrants into the larger society.

Immigrant families are often "mixed status," meaning that they include both immigrants—who may have different immigration statuses among themselves—and native-born spouses or children (Figure 9). Public policies aimed at immigrants can affect their larger families. A case in point has played out in 2020 as the Trump administration has begun to scrutinize the use of public benefits by legal immigrants and declare some of them a public charge.[43] In reaction, some immigrants have chosen to avoid using programs, such as Medicaid, that could improve the health and well-being of their households.[44]

Figure 9: **Immigration status of households in Cook County, Illinois**

2013–2017, %



Source: 2013–2017 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

A look at households in Cook County helps to illustrate the nature of mixed-status immigrant families. About 21 percent of that population is foreign born, but because immigrants often live with native-born individuals, 29 percent of total households include at least one immigrant (Figure 10). The variety of immigration statuses is seen in the fact that of Cook County households with at least one immigrant, about half include at least one naturalized US citizen and half include at least one noncitizen, whether legal or undocumented (Figure 11). And the share of households that have at least one immigrant member exceeds 40 percent in many parts of Cook County (Figure 12).

Figure 10: **Many families have mixed statuses**

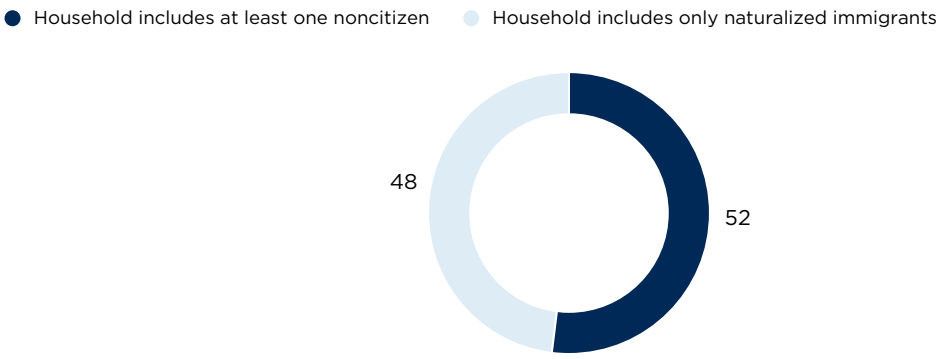
A random selection of households from the Irving Park, Albany Park, Forest Glen, North Park Area of Chicago, 2013-2017

Household 1	US-born householder				
Household 2	**Noncitizen** householder	US-born child			
Household 3	**Noncitizen** householder	**Noncitizen** parent	**Noncitizen** sibling		
Household 4	US-born householder	US-born spouse			
Household 5	**Noncitizen** householder	**Noncitizen** spouse	US-born child	US-born child	US-born child
Household 6	**Naturalized** householder	**Noncitizen** spouse	**Noncitizen** child	**Noncitizen** child	

Source: 2013–2017 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Figure 11: **Cook County households with at least one immigrant**

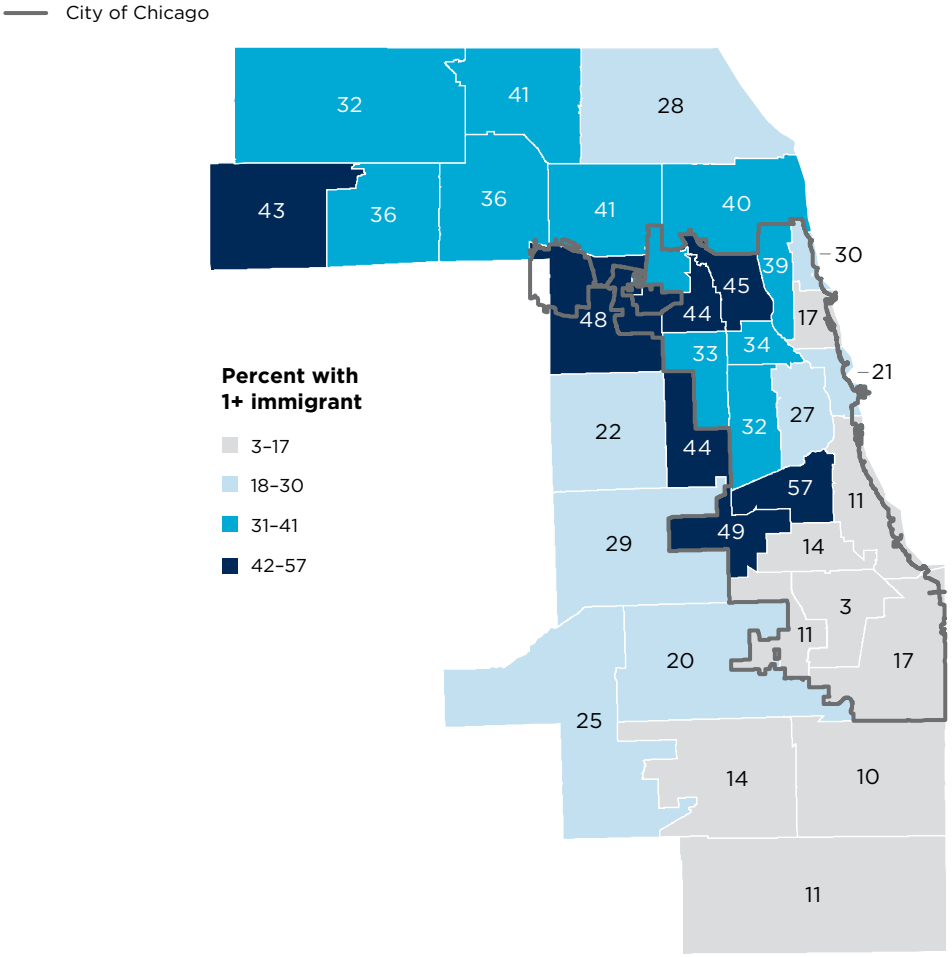
2013–2017, %



Source: 2013–2017 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Figure 12: **Percent of households with at least one immigrant in Cook County**

2013–2015, %



Note: Map units are public use microdata areas.

Source: 2013–2017 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

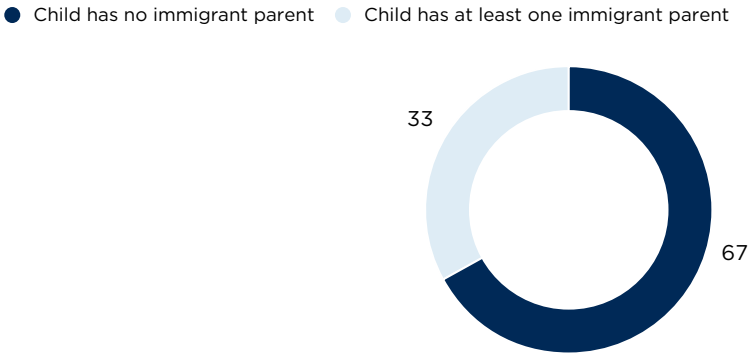
Often, the US citizens in immigrant households are the native-born children of immigrants. In fact, one-third of all children in metro Chicago have at least one immigrant parent (Figure 13), and most of these children have grown up in a bilingual/bicultural environment.

The Importance of Legal Statuses

Arguably no other characteristic of immigrants hinders their or the metropolitan Chicago region's economic prospects as much as the large numbers of immigrants who lack citizenship status. These categories are integral to the fate of hundreds of thousands of people living in the Chicago area.

Figure 13: **One third of metro children have an immigrant parent**

2013–2017, %



Source: 2013–2017 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Naturalized immigrants may be the most integrated into local society by some measures. They have the right to vote and hold jobs reserved for citizens, and except for recent moves by the Trump administration to facilitate denaturalization, their right to remain in the United States has rarely been challenged.

LPRs face more complicated restrictions, many of which are imposed by the federal government. For one, they cannot vote in elections, affecting democratic ideals and contributing to low rates of political participation; in Illinois in 2018, only 46 percent of all adults voted in the general election. The federal government also provides little assistance to help immigrants integrate—for instance, it does not tell legal immigrants when, how, and where to apply for citizenship. Few federal funds support language classes to help immigrants learn English. And the latest federal public-charge policies can lead LPRs to seek medical and human services less often in order to stabilize their families in an economic downturn, such as that perpetuated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Undocumented immigrants are subject to detention and deportation, which leaves their families (often including children who are US citizens) afraid of the sudden loss of a loved one. Since 1986, it has been illegal to employ undocumented workers in the United States, and all job seekers in the nation must prove their work eligibility. This forces undocumented workers to accept the few jobs available to them, either by working for employers who knowingly break the law or by using fraudulent identification documents.

Arguably no other characteristic of immigrants hinders their or the metropolitan Chicago region's economic prospects as much as the large numbers of immigrants who lack citizenship status.

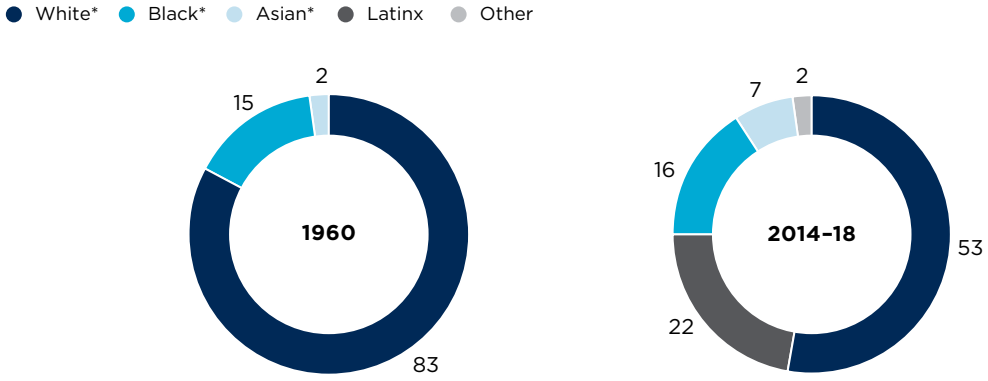
Immigrants with temporary status as workers, trainees, or students tend to display the least potential need for government programs. By definition, they must demonstrate economic independence to acquire their status. Countless employers and institutions depend on them. Yet the Trump administration has sought to reduce the use of H-1B workers, while the numbers of foreign students in the United States has recently grown at the slowest rate in a decade due in part to bureaucratic delays and harmful rhetoric.[45] In July 2020, the Trump administration briefly attempted, and then rescinded, an effort to force foreign higher-education students to leave the country if their school was using exclusively online instruction.

The Effects of Immigration on the Chicago Region

Immigration affects Chicago in myriad demographic and socioeconomic ways. To start, immigrants increase and deepen racial and ethnic diversity. They stabilize the population, both in the city and in the suburbs. And they have a deeply significant role in metro Chicago's workforce and economy.

Figure 14: **Race and ethnicity of metro Chicago**

2014–2018, %



Note: Figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding.

*Non-Latinx

Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Racial Diversification

As one-fifth of the region's population, immigrants have a strong impact on the racial identity of metro Chicago. From 1960 to 2014–18, white populations in the region declined by more than 450,000 persons, going from a vast majority to a slight majority (Figure 14). In the same time period, Latinx populations rose by 1.9 million and Asian by 600,000.

As the urban core of the region, the city itself is more diverse: among 2.6 million people, Chicago has approximately equal white (32 percent), Black (30 percent), and Latinx (29 percent) populations, with another 6 percent of the population identifying as Asian.

Population Stabilization

A declining population can cause tax revenues and consumer spending to fall, real estate assets to lose value, business models to become less profitable, and governments to have less revenue—all of which can diminish a local economy. In this context, immigration plays a critical role in maintaining the region's population stability.

From 2010 to 2018, four of the five largest US metro areas (Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York) grew in population by more than 3 percent each; Chicago, the last of the five, grew by less than 1 percent. During that period, 560,000 residents departed the region, but the arrival of nearly 200,000 immigrants kept the regional population stable (Figure 15).

As large numbers of native-born white and Black individuals have departed for other parts of the Midwest and the United States, immigration has proved critical in maintaining even this low level of growth. During the 1990s, for example, after suffering declines over the previous 40 years, mass immigration grew the city of Chicago population. The city's leaders were rightly proud of this population growth, but little attention was paid to the fact that the increase was due to immigration.[46]

Figure 15: **Change in metro Chicago population**

2010–2018

Total population change	+37,177
Net change from births and deaths	+402,723
International migration	**+198,688**
Domestic out-migration	-564,597
Other	+363

Source: US Census Bureau

Suburbanization of Immigration

In Chicago's suburbs, diversity and the number of immigrants are steadily increasing. One-third of the region's immigrants are concentrated in the city of Chicago, another one-third are in the suburbs of Cook County, and one-third are spread out among the remaining collar counties of metropolitan Chicago (Figure 16).

Certain suburban municipalities have relatively concentrated foreign-born populations (Figure 17). Some of these municipalities are close to the City of Chicago, such as the bordering town of Cicero (33 percent). Other communities include Round Lake Beach (24 percent), which lies 50 miles northwest of downtown Chicago, and Aurora (25 percent), 40 miles southwest of Chicago.

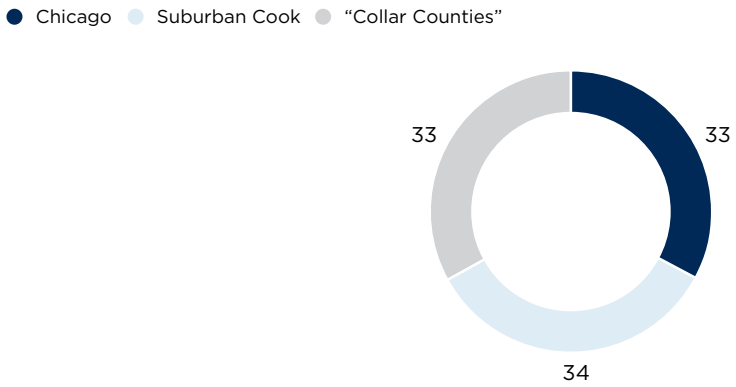
As immigrants move to the suburbs, suburban areas must take steps to incorporate them and their needs. Such integration takes many forms. For municipal governments, it can involve providing information to immigrants in their native languages about public systems of education, health, and police protection; creating local task forces; holding public listening sessions; and conducting research on the impact of immigration.

Economic Contributions

Immigrants are 19 percent of the regional population but 24 percent of the labor force, meaning they supply a disproportionate share of workers to the economy. While foreign-born workers hold jobs across all sectors, some industries rely heavily on immigration as a source of employees. In fact, foreign-born residents make up 31 percent of service workers in metro Chicago, 34 percent of construction and related workers, and 37 percent of production (manufacturing) workers (Figure 18).

Figure 16: **Immigrants are found across the region**

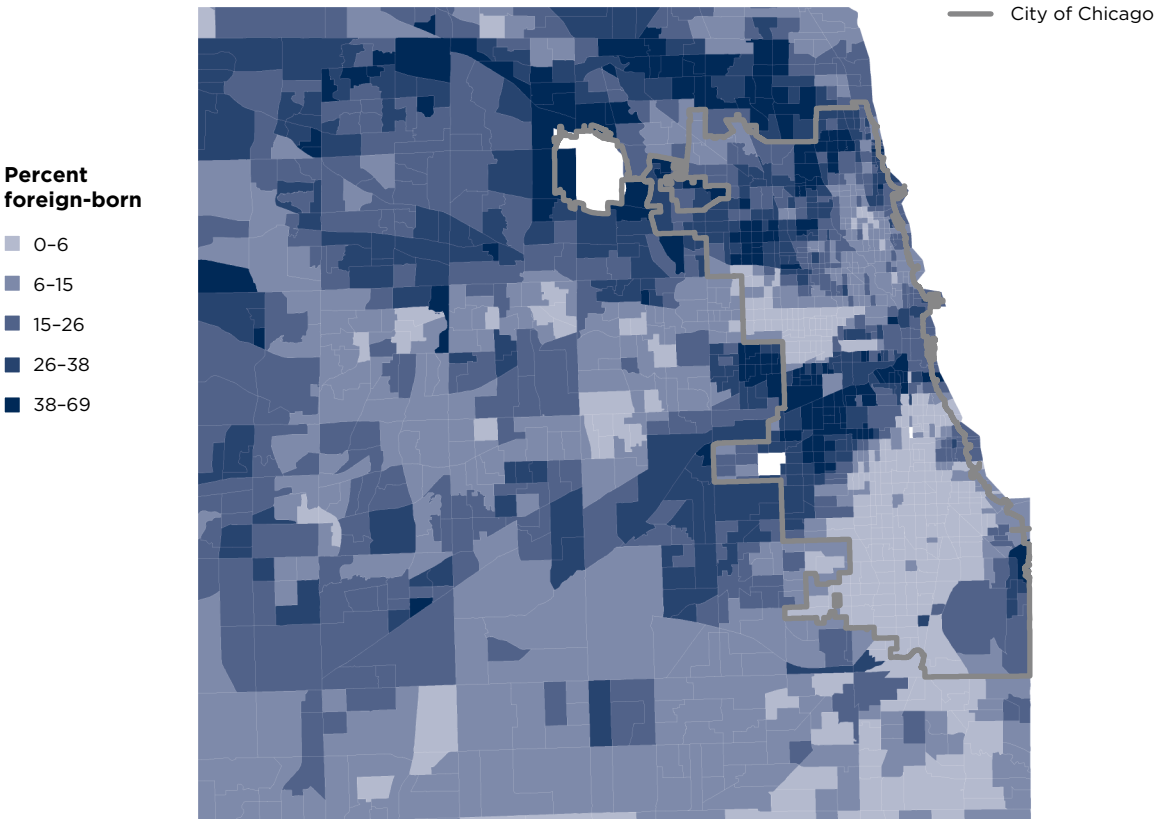
Share of region's immigrants, 2014–2018, %



Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Figure 17: **Immigrants are a large share of many local communities**

2014–2018



Note: Boundaries in this map are based on census tracts.

Source: 2014-2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Figure 18: **Immigrant share of job categories in metro Chicago**

Foreign born, 2014–2018, %



Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

A look at individual jobs in the metro Chicago area shows that immigrants are disproportionately found in jobs that require either high or low degrees of skill and training, with little in the middle. The foreign born, for example, make up more than two-fifths of software developers, a third of physicians, and more than a quarter of nurses and university-level instructors, as well as about two-thirds of housekeeping cleaners and metal or plastic workers (Figure 19). It may be seen that a large number of immigrants fit the description of "essential worker" employed in health care, food preparation, and education.

The Chicago and US job markets are creating many positions for workers with the relatively low or high levels of training and education. Fewer jobs are being createdfor workers with "in the middle" qualifications, such as a high school diploma or an associate degree. Of jobs that are projected to be created in the United States from 2018 to 2028, about 25 percent require no formal education, while about 40 percent require at least a bachelor's degree, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.[47]

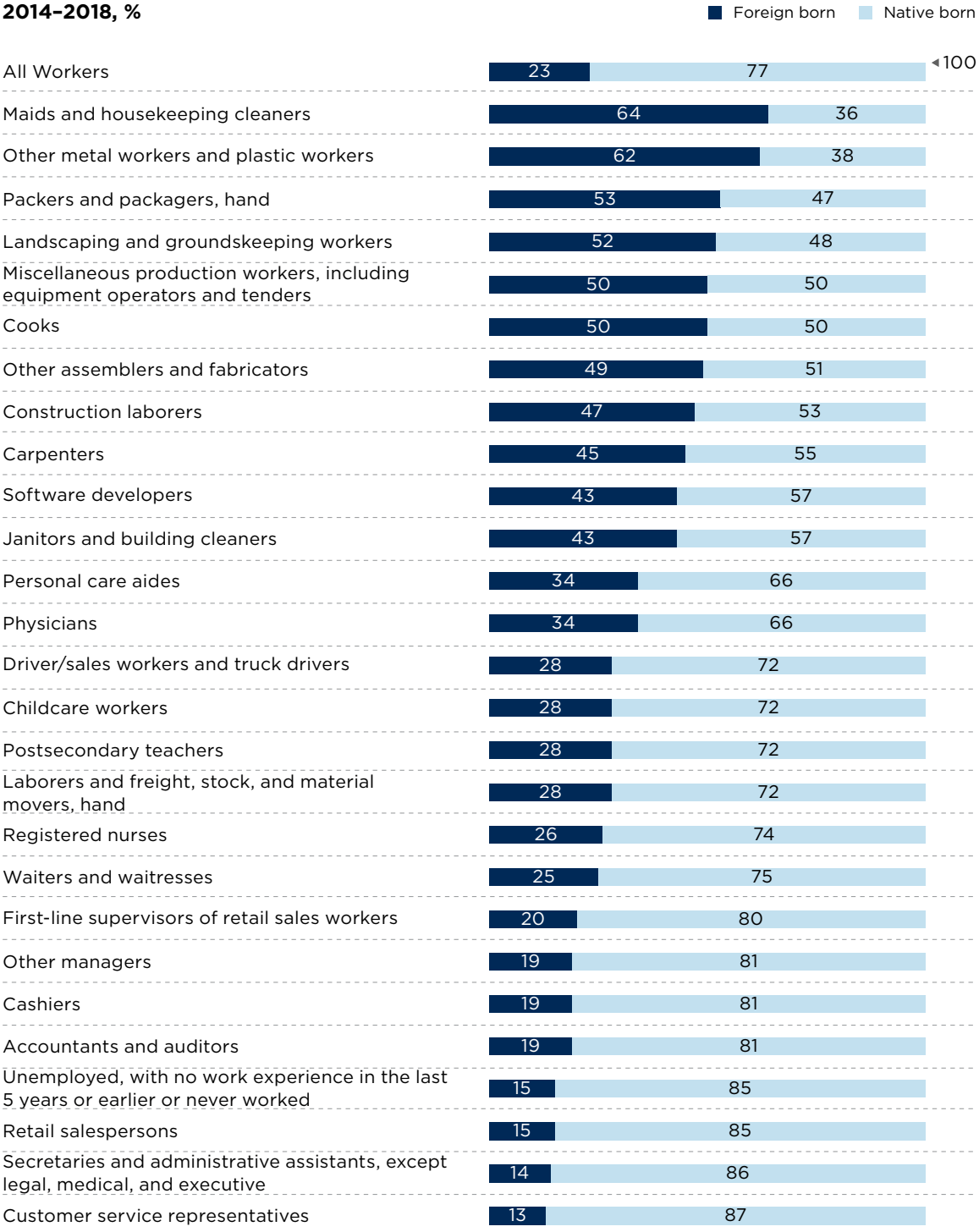
Educational attainment among the major immigrant groups in the Chicago area varies widely: 73 percent of Indian immigrants have a college degree, compared with just 6 percent of Mexican immigrants (Figure 20). In general, Mexican immigrants have relatively low levels of formal education: 50 percent lack a high school education. Meanwhile, only 7 percent of native-born persons lack a high school degree, and 40 percent have a college degree—a lower proportion than immigrants from the Philippines, Ukraine, Pakistan, South Korea, and China.

In 2016, the National Academy of Sciences assessed the economic impact of immigration on national, state, and local governments.[48] The academy found that first-generation, foreign-born immigrants create some important costs for local and state governments, due in part to the cost of educating the children of immigrants. At the same time, however, the academy reported that the children of immigrants grow up to contribute more in taxes than either their immigrant parents or the remainder of the native-born population.

However, the researchers also found that while the federal government receives net tax benefits from immigration, local and state governments can expend more in services for immigrants than they receive in taxes—largely related to the costs of public education. This mismatch between federal and local impact calls for support from the federal government to balance the effects of immigration across different levels of government. And it's important to remember that the burdens of such adjustments pale in comparison to the other significant benefits that immigrants can bring to the region.

Figure 19: **Metro Chicago jobs with 10,000+ immigrant workers**

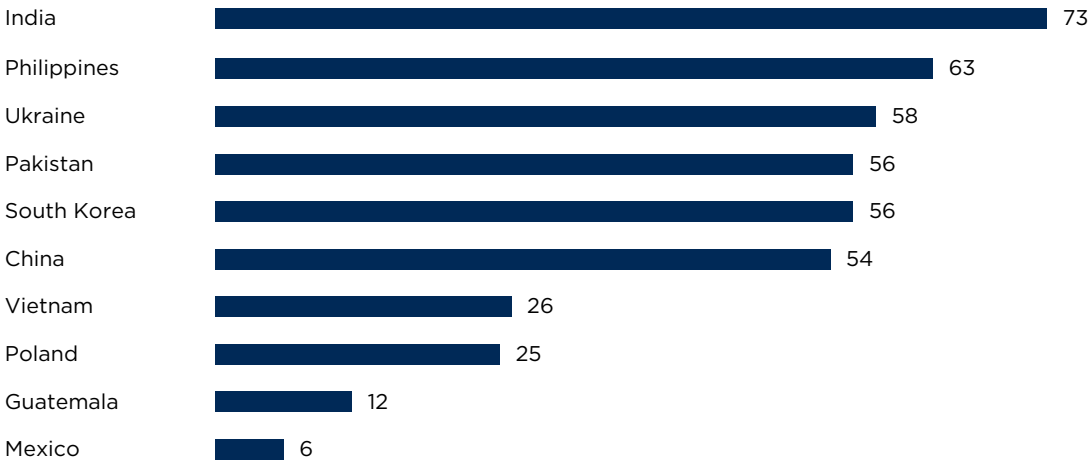
2014–2018, %



Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Figure 20: **The percentage of immigrants with a bachelor's degree in metro Chicago**

Top 10 immigrant groups in metro Chicago, 2014–2018, %



Source: 2014–2018 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Key Data Takeaways

The broad outlines of this report's underlying analysis are helpful for understanding what is needed for the successful integration of immigrants in the Chicago area, and the data suggest lessons for other metropolitan areas in the United States and abroad.

Immigration Is Largely Beneficial to the Chicago Area

The Chicago area has a long history of relatively large-scale immigration, which has become integral to the local economy and society.

There is no immigrant prototype: cultural backgrounds, types of jobs, areas of residence, and periods of arrival vary widely across groups. The diversity of languages, cultures, and religions brought by immigrants contribute to a rich community fabric.

Some metro areas in the United States have growing numbers of both foreign- and native-born populations, and immigration is merely additive to their ongoing growth. By contrast, the Chicago area has a troublesome trend of native-born-population loss, with immigrants stabilizing the population change.

Immigrants also meaningfully contribute to the workforce. Metro Chicago is home to renowned medical facilities and universities and is a major provider of goods and services. Immigrant workers are a critical part of these sectors.

Immigrant Status Affects Immigrant Integration

The different types of legal immigration statuses have profound effects on immigrants' ability to integrate. Undocumented immigrants cannot vote and may be reluctant to interact with government-supported services, including schools and health care. Immigrants with temporary status may decide not to invest in goods such as housing or other consumer items.

A portion of undocumented immigrants are able to legalize their status each year but many have no pathway to legal residence. Rates of naturalization vary by group and fluctuate, rising for reasons (such as efforts to promote applications for citizenship) and falling for others (such as the high cost of applying for citizenship).

Finally, any understanding of immigration entails grappling with the nature of current and future generations of immigrant families. Mixed-status families mean that policies directed at immigrants often involve US citizens, who may be children.

Local Governments Must Lead Immigrant Integration

US immigration policy has a fundamental federal–local split. Although the federal government has complete power to regulate admission to the United States, local and state governments deal with the day-to-day impact of immigration. School districts need to update their curricula and programming to adapt to cultural nuances. Police departments need to communicate local law and services with newcomers. Medical clinics need to explain to patients how their immigration status affects their eligibility for health care. The federal investment—in the form of support to school districts to offset integration-related costs, for example—is currently inadequate, and the task of managing immigration falls to local communities.

Illinois is notorious for having more government units than any other state: municipalities, townships, school districts, state legislative districts, federal congressional districts, and other special taxing and management authorities.[49] Residents often fall into overlapping sets of jurisdictions, perhaps living in one county and being employed in another. A suburban municipality may oversee public-safety and emergency services, but a school district would oversee and respond to student needs—and these two units likely have a completely different leadership structure, tax base, and geographic jurisdiction.

Despite the lack of a centralized regional government or authority, regional and local leaders are still the experts best positioned to manage immigrant integration. The remainder of this report details local- and state-government responses to challenges associated with immigrant integration, as well as opportunities for improvement. These local initiatives are a bright spot in the field of immigrant integration in the United States.

Regional and local leaders are still the experts best positioned to manage immigrant integration.



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3 THE "MOST IMMIGRANT FRIENDLY CITY"

On July 19, 2011, then mayor Rahm Emanuel announced the launch of the Chicago Mayor's Office of New Americans in City Hall, proclaiming that he wanted to "make Chicago the most immigrant friendly city in the world."[50] Then in 2019, Chicago was ranked at the top of the list as the "most immigrant friendly city in America" by the New American Economy's second annual Cities Index.[51]

Like similar city departments across the country, Chicago's Office of New Americans, has served to aggregate and advance citywide work on welcoming and inclusion. Adolfo Hernandez, its first director and the current director of Pritzker Community Health Initiative at the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation, cites two foundational measures of how the City of Chicago has encouraged immigrant integration and receptivity.[52] One was establishing a senior-level adviser role focusing on immigration in the mayor's administration. The other was establishing an advisory board comprising a diverse group of immigrants and others from across different city sectors. According to Hernandez, these two measures help ensure that every city initiative is viewed through the immigrant lens.

Chicago's Proactive Policies for Immigrants

Chicago's leaders have positioned the city as diverse, inclusive, and welcoming through their public official statements, policy proposals, ordinances, and branding strategies. Two initiatives in particular are noteworthy: the Chicago Mayor's Office of New Americans and Chicago's Welcoming City Ordinance.

In this chapter: The City of Chicago has proactively positioned and branded itself as an immigrant friendly city through policies to specifically support the immigrant population, including the establishment of the Office of New Americans as well as the Welcoming City Ordinance. The city also has a variety of broader policies for the general population that benefit immigrants, spanning municipal identification, business, and education. Finally, we review some of the major strategic partnerships with organizations outside city government that work on advocacy and legal aid, policy development and advocacy, workforce and entrepreneurship development, and minority and cultural heritage representation. We end the chapter with a discussion of Chicago's best practices to model for other cities.

Chicago Office of New Americans

The Office of New Americans has implemented numerous initiatives to further enhance immigrant integration and receptivity in the city. In addition to introducing the Welcoming City Ordinance, according to a 2014 Chicago Council on Global Affairs report, the office's early accomplishments include the following: [53]

- "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 training for Chicago Public School counselors on the Illinois DREAM (development, relief and education for alien minors) Act 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, job, and fellowship opportunities to undocumented students through the One Summer Chicago program."

Today, the Office of New Americans catalogs various efforts to support and protect opportunities for Chicago's immigrants, including those related to citizenship acquisition, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), legal aid, higher education admissions, language support, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). These activities represent practices similar to other comparable municipal offices of immigrant affairs in major immigrant gateway cities.

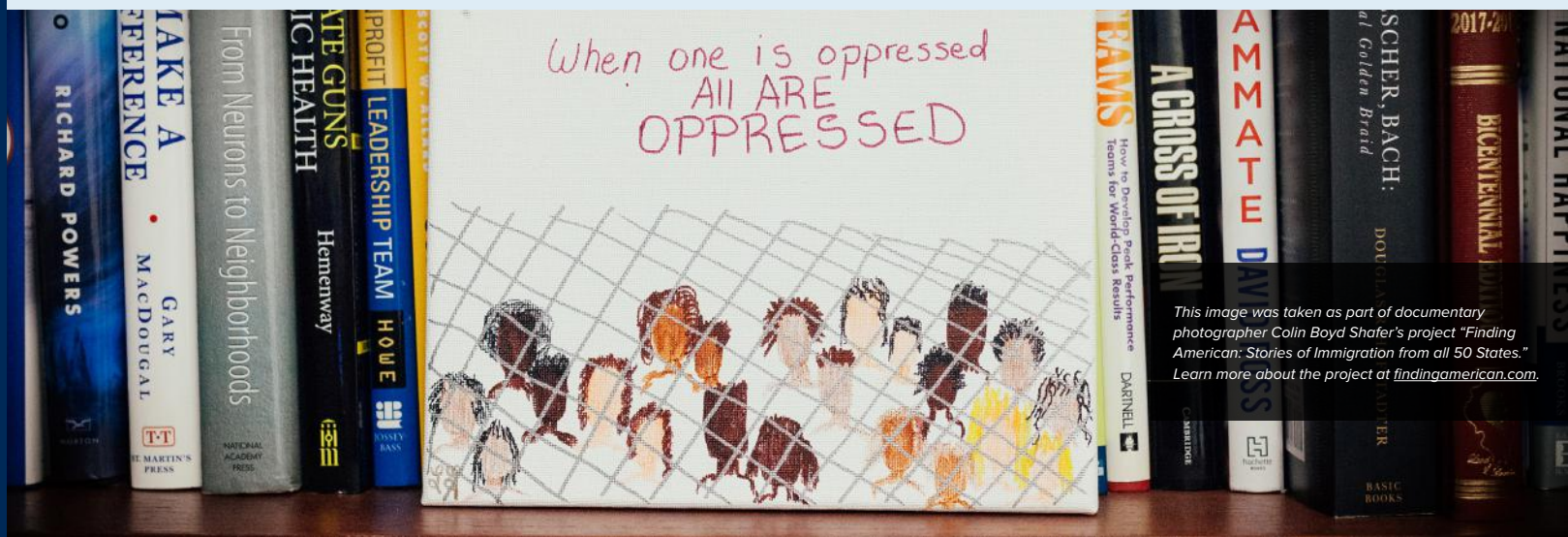
Citizenship. Chicago is a founding member of Cities for Citizenship, a coalition working to naturalize the 8.8 million legal permanent residents (LPRs) in the United States who are eligible for citizenship.[54] As such, the office provides information and education about the benefits of citizenship and application requirements. It also offers resources for navigating the citizenship process, including local workshops through the Chicago Public Library Citizenship Corners program, in partnership with nonprofit organizations (see sidebar "Citizenship resources at Chicago Public Libraries").

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. In 2012, the Obama administration established DACA to provide work authorization and temporary relief from deportation for undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children. These individuals must meet specific criteria, such as having continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, and having not been convicted of a felony or significant misdemeanor.[55]

Legal aid. Various executive actions by Chicago's mayors have intended to invest additional funds for legal aid and legal protection. These include partially rescinding ICE's access to Chicago Police Department databases and increasing investment in Chicago's Legal Protection Fund, which partners with the National Immigrant Justice Center and The Resurrection Project to provide outreach, legal consultations, education, and courtroom representation to thousands of immigrants of all statuses each year.

CITIZENSHIP RESOURCES AT CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Immigrants can find resources and information about how to become a US citizen at all Chicago Public Library locations. In partnership with US Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Office of New Americans' Citizenship Corners program offers legal permanent residents access to English as a Second Language classes, citizenship workshops, and naturalization test study materials at select library locations around the city.



This image was taken as part of documentary photographer Colin Boyd Shafer's project "Finding American: Stories of Immigration from all 50 States." Learn more about the project at findingamerican.com.

Higher education admissions. To date, more than 400 counselors and career coaches in Chicago Public Schools have been trained to provide options for undocumented students. The city also partners with other organizations to assist with information provision and training for a variety of resources for immigrant students, including information about job, volunteer, internship, and scholarship opportunities.

Relevant scholarships intended for or available to undocumented immigrant students, who are ineligible for federal financial aid, include the following:[56]

- ***The Illinois DREAM Fund.*** Launched in 2011, the Illinois DREAM Fund provides college scholarships to qualified undocumented immigrants who graduate from an Illinois high school. The act that established the fund also made Illinois' 529 college savings and prepaid tuition plans accessible to residents with individual taxpayer identification numbers, regardless of whether they have a social security number, to help undocumented students save for college.
- ***The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Dream Fund scholarship.*** Also launched in 2011, the CPS Dream Fund provides scholarships to qualified undocumented immigrants who graduate from CPS.
- ***Chicago Star Scholarship.*** Launched in 2014, the Chicago Star Scholarship provides scholarships to graduates of Chicago Public Schools, including undocumented students, to cover tuition, fees, and books at the City Colleges of Chicago. In recent years, one in five scholarship recipients were ineligible for federal aid.[57] According to Adolfo Hernandez, the scholarship program is an example of how cities can be testing grounds for innovative policies with the potential to be replicated elsewhere. "This [scholarship] is another example of inclusive programming," he said. "The program itself was not designed solely for immigrants, but was designed around the concept of what is best for youth. And undocumented youth are part of the population and should therefore be included in that consideration."[58]

Language support. English is not the primary language of 15.7 percent of Chicago's residents, about 400,000 people.[59] In July 2014, then-mayor Emanuel appointed an advisory committee of community, legal, and civic leaders to create a language-access policy for all residents to ensure unfettered access to city services. In partnership with a wide array of government and civic organizations, the task force released a plan outlining the current services provided to those with limited English proficiency as well as recommendations for improvements across city departments.[60]

Based on those recommendations, the Chicago City Council passed the Language Access ordinance in May 2015.[61] One outcome included the introduction of a national service called Smart911—which immediately connects enrolled residents who call 911 to a language interpreter—in Chicago.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement. For those whose loved ones have been detained by ICE, the Office of New Americans provides resources and answers to frequently asked questions, such as, "I want to know if someone is detained by ICE," and, "I am worried about what will happen to my family if I am detained, what can I do to prepare?"[62]

Chicago's Welcoming City Ordinance

On September 12, 2012, the City Council approved the Welcoming City Ordinance[63] (see sidebar "What's the difference between a welcoming city and a sanctuary city?"). The ordinance, which builds on previous ordinances by Mayors Harold Washington and Richard M. Daley, aims to protect undocumented Chicagoans who are not wanted on a criminal warrant. According to Nubia Willman, the director of the Office of New Americans, the ordinance protects law-abiding immigrants from unfair detention and deportation.[64] It also provides for a variety of initiatives to combat racial profiling, including training for the Chicago Police Department, and public marketing materials outlining city services available to immigrants. The ordinance garnered much support from other levels of government and leaders from the nonprofit community, including then–US Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez, and the heads of the Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center and Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR).

In 2016, then-mayor Emanuel amended the ordinance to clarify that both documented and undocumented immigrants be protected and "not be subjected to physical abuse, threats, or intimidation."[65] Shortly thereafter, he reaffirmed Chicago's status as a sanctuary city, established by the previous ordinance, ensuring the city continue to be a home to individuals regardless of their place of origin. As far as the city is concerned, the sanctuary city protection prohibits, for instance, local law enforcement from arresting immigrants based solely on their legal status.[66]

On December 18, 2019, Mayor Lori Lightfoot introduced the Accountability on Communication and Transparency (ACT) ordinance, a profound expansion of Chicago's immigration protections. The ACT ordinance focuses on protecting immigrant families from raids and deportation by limiting city entities' and employees' cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It also calls for the development of policies to ensure city facilities and services are safe and accessible to all Chicago residents, regardless of immigration status, and expansion of 311 services to include information on immigration resources for all residents, regardless of English proficiency.[67]

Best Practices to Model for Other Cities

The City of Chicago and organizations within it illustrate a variety of welcoming and inclusive policies and initiatives that can be examined, replicated, and modified as best practices for other places.

Chicago's Welcoming City Ordinance is a cornerstone of its commitment to immigrant integration. ICIRR notes that municipal welcoming policies are important for several reasons: they acknowledge immigrants' contributions to the entire community; they increase understanding of the disruptive nature of deportation on families, especially children, as well as on businesses and



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WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A WELCOMING CITY AND A SANCTUARY CITY?

A welcoming city or county is one that joins the Welcoming America network and aims to build a community in which everyone, including immigrants and refugees, feels welcome. These cities work across sectors to establish inclusive policies and practices—for instance, easing the path for entrepreneurs to start a business or providing government documents in multiple languages. And they "foster a culture and policy environment that makes it possible for newcomers of all backgrounds to feel valued and to fully participate alongside their neighbors in the social, civic, and economic fabric of their adopted hometowns."[1]

There is no legal definition for a sanctuary city. Nevertheless, a commonality among cities that have adopted sanctuary-type policies is a desire to resist changes in the law that would require local criminal law enforcement agencies to do the federal government's job of enforcing immigration laws.[2]

Jurisdictions adopt sanctuary policies for many reasons, including strengthening relationships between residents and police and ensuring that all people feel comfortable reporting crimes.[3] A 2017 study by the Center for American Progress also found that "crime is statistically significantly lower in sanctuary counties compared to non-sanctuary counties. Moreover, economies are stronger in sanctuary counties—from higher median household income, less poverty, and less reliance on public assistance to higher labor force participation, higher employment-to-population ratios, and lower unemployment."[4] Indeed, there is no scientific evidence available indicating that sanctuary cities are less safe than other cities in the United States.[5]

[1] "FAQs," Welcoming America, accessed August 11, 2020, https://www.welcomingamerica.org/about/faq.

[2] "What's the Difference Between a Welcoming City and Sanctuary City?," Welcoming America, accessed August 11, 2020, https://www.welcomingamerica.org/difference-between-welcoming-city-sanctuary-city; Darlene Xiomara Rodriguez, Paul N. McDaniel, and Marie-Dominique Ahebee, "Welcoming America: A Case Study of Municipal Immigrant Integration, Receptivity, and Community Practice," *Journal of Community Practice 26,* no. 3 (2018): 348–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2018.1477081.

[3] "Sanctuary Policies: An Overview," American Immigration Council, February 23, 2017, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/sanctuary-policies-overview.

[4] Tom K. Wong, "The Effects of Sanctuary Policies on Crime and the Economy," Center for American Progress, January 26, 2017, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2017/01/26/297366/the-effects-of-sanctuary-policies-on-crime-and-the-economy/.

[5] Daniel E. Martínez, Ricardo D. Martínez-Schuldt, and Guillermo Cantor, "Providing Sanctuary or Fostering Crime? A Review of the Research on 'Sanctuary Cities' and Crime," *Sociology Compass 12,* no. 1 (January 2018), https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12547.

industries that rely on immigrant workers; and they highlight the need to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and immigrant communities. For example, fear of deportation leads to reticence among immigrant communities for reporting crimes; law enforcement organizations need to rebuild trust in order to safeguard larger community safety.[68]

According to Fred Tsao, senior policy counsel with ICIRR, the legislation "is one of the strongest ordinances of any municipality in separating city police and government from immigration enforcement." Despite apparent room for improvement, Tsao suggests that it "can serve as a model for other communities."[69]

The Chicago New Americans plan, which established the Office of New Americans, has also been praised for its efforts to improve life for immigrants. "This plan has been among the models for successful plans over the past 10 years," says Molly Hilligoss, regional manager at Welcoming America.[70] Indeed, the plan inspired the Gateways for Growth Program—a program that is built around the idea that all communities can work to ensure immigrants are integrated, feel welcome, and belong—launched in partnership with New American Economy. Fifty more such plans have been launched across the country.

"The City of Chicago was an early adopter in the now-growing trend of municipal leadership on immigrant inclusion," said Rachel Peric, executive director of Welcoming America. "The creation of an office, development of a broad agenda informed by community leaders, and a constant focus on communicating the benefits of inclusion have been important elements of Chicago's work that other cities can adopt."[71] Furthermore, as Nubia Willman states, "What has really worked has been having the touchpoints with local organizations to tell you when you're not doing well" and "having access to knowledge sharing through some of these national networks."[72]

Chicago's Policies for Everyone, Including Immigrants

An important step in crafting inclusive policies is viewing all initiatives through a set of inclusive lenses and seeking input from diverse communities. Chicago's Black population has experienced deeply segregationist policies and practices. Many Black residents are trapped in cycles of poverty, are concentrated in underfunded school districts, and experience far more violence than white residents.

Including immigrants in policies that can improve all residents' livelihoods is vital for Chicago's future as a leading welcoming city. And the city has a long way to go to lift all boats. As such, in addition to targeting Chicago's immigrant population (coordinated via the Office of New Americans), many City of Chicago departments have policies and procedures intended to benefit all Chicagoans, inclusive of Chicago's immigrant population. These initiatives span municipal identification, business support and economic development, and education, among other areas. The city has also mounted a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with specific consideration for Black and Latinx communities and immigrants (see sidebar "Chicago's response to COVID-19").



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CHICAGO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread worldwide, cities have had to respond to diverse contexts. One commonality is that persons of vulnerable or marginalized population groups have been particularly affected by the pandemic. Black and Latinx communities have had higher rates of cases, combined with challenges of not always having adequate access to health care and often working in front-line or "essential" jobs. In response, Chicago launched the innovative Racial Equity Rapid Response Team to collect data on disproportionate virus spread in certain communities and provide support. According to Bloomberg Cities initiative, "City leaders across the country have been watching the effort closely as they move to address racial and ethnic disparities with COVID-19 in their own communities."[1]

Regarding Chicago's immigrant population specifically, "Mayor Lightfoot made an executive order related to welcoming city, immigrants, and the city's COVID-19 response," said Nubia Willman, director of the Office of New Americans. "It reflects our statement of values. It's important because there is such a fear within immigrant communities about accessing benefits, because of a fear of becoming a public charge, but that fear also reflects confusion about federal, state, and local government levels. So we want to reiterate that in the city of Chicago, here are the things available to all residents, including our responses and resources related to the pandemic."[2] The Office of New Americans provides COVID-19 information in multiple languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Polish, Spanish, and Urdu.[3]

In March 2020, mixed-status families in which a member doesn't have a social security number were denied the federal government stimulus.[4] The City of Chicago partnered with Open Society Foundations and The Resurrection Project to establish the Chicago Resiliency Fund to provide $1,000 in cash assistance to eligible Chicagoans who were ineligible for the federal stimulus checks—a group that includes undocumented immigrants, mixed-status families, dependent adults, and ex-offenders.[5]

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[1] "Lessons from Chicago's COVID-19 Racial Equity Rapid Response Team," Bloomberg Cities, May 27, 2020, https://medium.com/@BloombergCities/lessons-from-chicagos-covid-19-racial-equity-rapid-response-team-6d47414567bd.

[2] Nubia Willman, director of the Office of New Americans, City of Chicago, phone communication with Paul McDaniel, April 13, 2020.

[3] "COVID-19 Information," Office of New Americans, City of Chicago, accessed August 11, 2020, https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/supp_info/office-of-new-americans/covid-19information.html.

[4] Siobhan Hughes and Lindsay Wise, "For Citizens Denied Stimulus Checks, Immigration Fight Clouds Hope," Wall Street Journal, updated May 20, 2020, https://www.wsj.com/articles/for-citizens-denied-stimulus-checks-immigration-fight-clouds-hopes-11589987702.

[5] Fran Spielman, "$5 Million Fund Will Help Chicagoans Ineligible for Federal Stimulus Assistance during Pandemic," *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 10, 2020, https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2020/6/10/21286563/coronavirus-undocumented-assistance-cares-act-chicago-lightfoot-resurrection-project.



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CHICAGO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 (CONT'D)

In April 2020, Mayor Lightfoot convened a task force to advise on economic recovery following COVID-19. The task force's report, released in July, goes beyond responding to the pandemic and attempts to address long-standing wealth and racial inequities in Chicago.[6] The report's 17 wide-ranging and ambitious goals aim to dismantle systemic racism and foster inclusion as well as prosperity.

[6] "Recovery Task Force," City of Chicago, accessed July 12, 2020, https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/covid-19-recovery-taskforce.html; Talib Visram, "Chicago's COVID-19 Recovery Plan Aims to Go Beyond the Crisis to Correct Historical Inequities," *Fast Company,* July 9, 2020, https://www.fastcompany.com/90525637/chicagos-covid-recovery-plan-aims-to-go-beyond-the-crisis-to-correct-historical-inequities.

Municipal Identification

Chicago's CityKey program offers all city residents an optional, multipurpose ID card that can be used as a library card, transit card, and discount card for cultural institutions, sporting events, local businesses, and city services.[73] The program emerged after a 2015 task force composed of city officials and community groups examined the barriers that many Chicago residents faced when attempting to obtain a government-issued ID, and the Chicago City Council gave the Office of the City Clerk authority to implement and administer the program in April 2017. "The Chicago CityKey municipal ID program has also proven successful in providing identification documents for individuals who have difficulty obtaining other appropriate documents, including not only immigrants but also transgender individuals, homeless individuals, and those reentering society from incarceration," said Fred Tsao of ICIRR.[74]

Business Support and Economic Development

Immigrant-owned businesses contribute significantly to Chicago's local economy. "Folks can't forget the economic impact immigrants have at all levels," observes Adolfo Hernandez. "When we were considering redoing the entire business licensing process for the city, for example, when we looked at data, close to half of all small businesses being started in the city were being started by immigrants. We showed the data to key people, and now the business office views immigrants as one of their core clients they need to serve rather than a peripheral group. They engaged the immigrant community in the business license redesign process that streamlined the process for everyone in the city."[75]

Chicago's Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection works to ensure a fair marketplace for both businesses and consumers, regardless of nativity or immigration status. In addition to licensing businesses and providing information and resources, BACP has a Small

Business Advocacy division that works with small business entrepreneurs, including immigrant entrepreneurs, on initiatives to promote economic development. The Small Business Advisory division also runs the Neighborhood Business Development Centers program, which offers grants to chambers of commerce and business-support organizations to work with and support neighborhood businesses. These services are particularly important to potential and current immigrant small-business owners, as immigrants are twice as likely as native-born persons to become entrepreneurs;[76] they may also have more difficulties securing start-up resources due to barriers related to language or a lack of understanding of the local business culture and available resources.

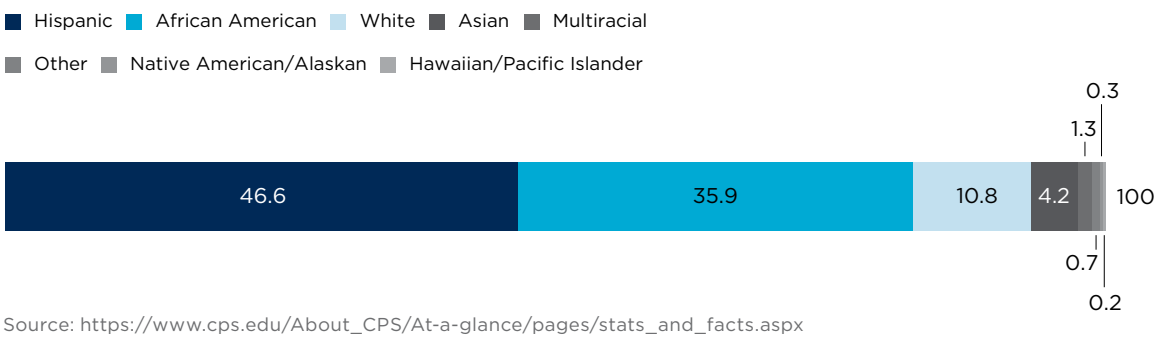
Education

To help ensure that all students receive a high-quality language education regardless of their native language, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Language and Cultural Education oversees a variety of language-education programs and community outreach. (See "Voices on immigration: Andy Kang, Executive Director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice.) And it seems to be working: a December 2019 report by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research found that 80 percent of CPS students who were not proficient in English when they started kindergarten achieved proficiency by eighth grade. "As opposed to other states like California, where they are (or were until very recently) using English-only classrooms, Illinois uses the approach of using students' native language as a way to build up their learning in English when possible," said Marisa de la Torre, managing director of the consortium.[77] Such efforts ease the transition and integration for immigrant students whose first language is not English. Indeed, in the 2019–20 academic year, CPS enrolled a total of 355,156 students of diverse makeup (Figure 21).

In addition to endowing the Star Scholarship to qualifying CPS students, including undocumented immigrants, City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) also welcome and provide international and other foreign-born students with information about ICE, DACA, and financing college. CCC also works among its network and with immigrant-serving allies to stay abreast of and respond to new immigration policies that could affect students.

Figure 21: **Makeup of Chicago Public Schools students**

2019–2020, %



Source: https://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/At-a-glance/pages/stats_and_facts.aspx



VOICES ON IMMIGRATION: ANDY KANG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE | CHICAGO

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago has been organizing diverse Asian communities around civic engagement issues for more than 25 years. Originally founded as the Asian American Institute, today the organization has expanded its focus to advocating for and supporting all marginalized communities at the city, state, and federal levels.

We cannot separate racial oppression from immigrant issues.

For a "northern" city, we have a very long, unaddressed history of racial oppression of our Black communities, in particular, on the West and South Sides. And policy issues to address that have historically been talked about in isolation, separate from immigrant community issues. Political leaders view resources as a zero-sum game. But when you talk about those two challenges separately, you're creating tension. It's as if we're paying attention to one issue, then we're not paying attention to the other, and that's held up real progress. But they don't necessarily have to be viewed or approached that way.

What does it mean to be "welcoming"?

For some, being welcoming means integration into the predominant culture. For others, it's about creating a space that, from day one, makes immigrants feel just as much a member of that society as everybody else. A big piece of that is language access—providing information in multiple languages and front-line staff with language abilities, and so forth. Those things should be normal if creating a multilingual society is a key part of what we mean by "welcoming."

We need to create a new industry: interpretation and translation.

When COVID-19 hit, nonprofits and other vendors saw a huge spike in translation requests from city agencies. It highlights the opportunity for Chicago to create its own interpretation and translation industry that can feed back into the local economy. We'd not only be improving peoples' everyday lives by providing these language services but also by making sure that the money is recirculating and benefiting local families and businesses. It will require a conversation with community colleges and local universities, because translation is a skill and right now there's not enough training available for it. In some cases, you can paraphrase words with no formal interpreter training, as has been done for decades. But when it comes to critical services, such as hospitals, courtrooms, or even schools, you need a higher level of precision.

This interview has been summarized and condensed for editorial purposes.

Chicago's Institutional Partners for Immigrant Integration and Inclusion

As in most metropolitan areas, a robust ecosystem of civil society organizations, nonprofits, and nongovernmental organizations adds to the vibrancy of Chicago by addressing immigration challenges and opportunities on a wide variety of issues beyond the scope of the city government. This work intersects with immigrant integration and receptivity, including such areas as advocacy and legal aid, policy development and advocacy, workforce and entrepreneurship development, and cultural heritage representation. In some cases, the City of Chicago partners with community organizations on various issues.

Advocacy and Legal Aid

Chicago is rich in organizations advancing access to justice and providing legal services to immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Groups at the forefront include the Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC), Latinos Progresando, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), CAIR-Chicago, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago. (See "Voices on immigration: Sufyan Sohel, Deputy Director and Counsel for CAIR-Chicago.")

Policy Development and Advocacy

Other organizations in the Chicago metro area, such as the South Asian American Policy and Research Institute (SAAPRI) and the Latino Policy Forum, are focused on advocacy. Such organizations use research to formulate equitable and socially responsible policy recommendations. Through research and data analysis, issues of concern and policy proposals may be brought to public officials at the local, state, and national levels. Policy-research organizations also work to improve education outcomes, advocate for affordable housing, promote just immigration policies, and strengthen community leadership (see "Voices on immigration: Illinois State Senator Ram Villivalam").



Serghei who was born in Moldova and now resides in Springfield, where he works as a truck driver. It was taken as part of documentary photographer Colin Boyd Shafer's project "Finding American: Stories of Immigration from all 50 States." Learn more about the project at findingamerican.com.



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VOICES ON IMMIGRATION: SUFYAN SOHEL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND COUNSEL FOR CAIR-CHICAGO

CAIR-Chicago, a civil rights organization, primarily focuses on advocacy and litigation on behalf of the American Muslim community residing in the Greater Chicagoland area. Sufyan Sohel has been the deputy director and counsel for the Chicago chapter since 2011.

A thousand lawyers rushed to O'Hare.

During the 2016 presidential cycle, it became normalized for people, including presidential candidates, to say Muslims do not belong in the United States. When Donald Trump was elected, one of his first acts—as president—was to sign an executive order banning Muslims from entering the country. There were people in the air at the time it was signed, as well as mass confusion over its implementation.

We saw thousands of protesters of all faiths and backgrounds rush to the airport; about a thousand attorneys, of all professional disciplines, came those first couple of days to O'Hare International Airport to offer legal assistance to travelers and their families. It was very organic and grassroots. CAIR-Chicago stepped in to provide administrative resources, infrastructure, and support. It also created a website, an online portal where travelers could get information about the Muslim ban and register upcoming travel. Today, Chicago has the only airport in the country with a dedicated 24-hour hotline for people affected by the travel ban.

We're all in this together.

A common misconception is that Muslim equals Arab or Middle Eastern. In fact, Muslims are very culturally, ethnically, and nationally diverse. We can't just speak about our rights as Muslims. We have to care about access to quality education and health care for all and advocate for equity and justice for all of our communities.

Right after President Trump was elected, the City of Chicago assembled the Chicago Is With You Task Force. This task force includes government agencies and offices, educational institutions, business organizations, and a wide range of community-based organizations. We meet monthly, discussing issues facing Chicago's diverse immigrant populations, and sharing our respective work and initiatives, offering support and feedback to one another, and creating joint projects that we can collaborate on together to serve our immigrant communities.

It has helped us organize and be efficient with the limited resources we each have. For example, CAIR focuses on the Muslim ban, the National Immigrant Justice Center does great asylum work, and the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights leads policy advocacy. We are able to support each other's work, while staying in our own lanes to do the most good.

This interview has been summarized and condensed for editorial purposes.

VOICES ON IMMIGRATION: ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR RAM VILLIVALAM

State Senator Villivalam, the first South Asian American elected to the Illinois General Assembly, grew up on the northwest side of Chicago, the son of Indian immigrants. He has served as the board president for the Indo-American Democratic Organization, which aims to increase civic engagement within the South Asian American community.

If you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

There is a struggle taking place among immigrant communities—economically, socially. If these communities don't have someone advocating for them and prioritizing their needs, they're likely to get left out or be overlooked. Those with a seat at the table need to be asking questions about how initiatives and decisions are affecting the entire Asian American community, which is so complex. It includes Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, among others. There are different religions and languages within these subsets—22 official languages in India alone.

Our diversity is our strength but also our challenge. We can't pit one community against another. We must advocate in a way that we're working with other communities and strive for equitable resources.

Leaders need to both recognize the struggles of various communities and actually step foot in them.

The Asian American community in Chicago is not a "model minority." We are a minority community, we have challenges, we have people who are suffering. To address these needs, leaders must first recognize these struggles exist.

Then they need to show up, to go to the communities where immigrants live. Take a walk down Devon Avenue—a vibrant place where cultures and religions merge. These businesses and working families need support from the government, but their voices haven't been heard the way they should be.

Language access is also important; documents from the city and state should be in multiple languages. But it's one aspect to translate documents and another to make sure immigrants feel supported and can understand the opportunities. Such technical assistance is critical.

This interview has been summarized and condensed for editorial purposes.

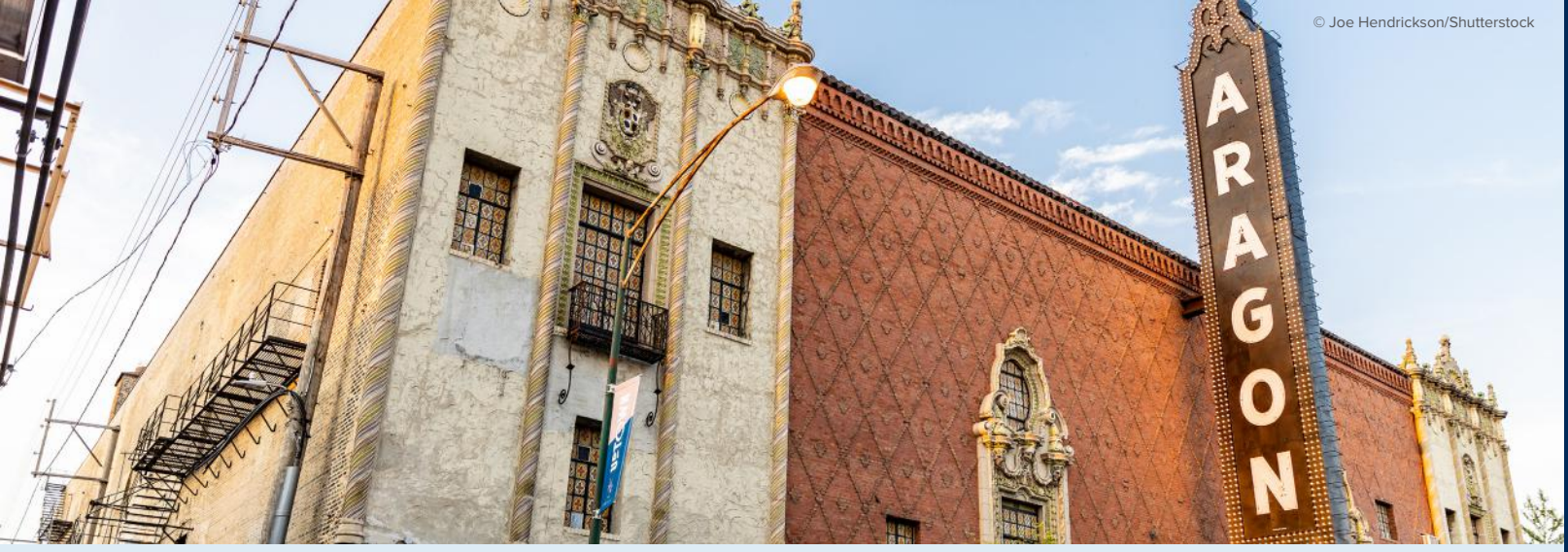

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Workforce and Entrepreneurship Development

Some organizations focus on applying the skills sets immigrants and refugees bring with them, as well as strengthening entrepreneurship and small-business development. Examples include Upwardly Global; neighborhood- and state-level immigrant and ethnic chambers of commerce, such as the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Little Village Chamber of Commerce; and immigrant and ethnic business coalitions. Other organizations, such as RefugeeOne, include workforce development among a broader set of initiatives and illustrate the collaborative nature of immigrant-serving organizations in Chicago (see "Voices on immigration: Rebecca Shi, executive director of the American Business Immigration Coalition").

Upwardly Global launched nationally in 2001 and opened its Chicago office in 2009. Since then, according to Sara McElmurry, director of communications, policy & research, it "has coached more than 1,500 foreign-born professionals back into careers with local employers. It has provided another 3,200 with training in valuable 'soft' skills necessary to navigate the US job search. This cohort of skilled global talent went from being unemployed or underemployed to earning a total of $70 million in annual salary, contributing valuable skills and tax revenues to Chicago's economy." The organization also provides technical assistance to employers looking to hire from this talent pool. "More than 50 Chicago-area employers have partnered with Upwardly Global not only on hiring but also on building equitable hiring practices that center on diversity and inclusion, addressing hiring bias, and tackling misconceptions about foreign-born professionals' credentials, experience, and skills," said McElmurry.[78]

Several organizations focus on small-business development and entrepreneurship. One example is the Little Village Chamber of Commerce, which has represented the interests of local businesses for more than 30 years and works closely with groups including business and community leaders and elected officials. Not only does Little Village have more than 1,000 businesses, creating jobs for even more residents, but it is also home to the largest Mexican community in the Midwest, a fact reflected by the many Mexican specialty products available from local merchants. The financial success of the shopping district reinforces the importance of immigrant-owned small businesses to the city of Chicago.[79]



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VOICES ON IMMIGRATION: REBECCA SHI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESS IMMIGRATION COALITION

The American Business Immigration Coalition (ABIC) works to integrate immigrants into the economy and give their businesses a voice in the national conversation on immigration. Rebecca Shi serves as the executive director of both ABIC and its Illinois chapter, the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition.

Chicago is a leader in the nation for welcoming and integrating immigrants.

Chicago continues to be a port of entry to first-generation immigrants. We have places that attract those with high-tech skills: tech hubs and incubators such as 1871 and TechNexus invest in and aggressively try to find angel investors for our entrepreneurs, many of whom are immigrants. We have the headquarters for Caterpillar, Motorola, and United Airlines. We have top universities, from Northwestern University to the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the University of Chicago, both of which have done a really good job of pursuing immigrants to cultivate ideas, perform research, and develop patents. We also have one of the most—if not *the* most—robust restaurant industries in the country. And immigrants make up more than 20 percent of Illinois' food sector workforce. These diverse jobs and industries make Chicago very attractive for immigrants.

The business community is essential to advancing immigration policy.

Forty-five percent of recently arrived immigrants have at least a bachelor's degree, yet nearly two million college-educated immigrants and refugees are unemployed or underemployed. In the United States, immigrants who are not literate in English are less likely to have continuous employment or earn as much as those who are. Offering English Language Learner classes on the job is a way for businesses to help these workers; learning in the context of work can also improve work skills.

The majority of immigration policy advocacy is carried out by social-justice organizations that effectively share immigrants' stories and highlight the need for immigration reform from a family-unity focus. As unique players in this field, ABIC and its state chapters in Florida, Illinois, and Texas work to engage the business community in sharing stories of immigrant entrepreneurs and business owners while also highlighting the economic arguments for improving immigration-related policies.

This interview has been summarized and condensed for editorial purposes.

The private sector also plays an important role in immigrant workforce development and integration. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Chicago companies sponsored around 13,000 H-1B worker visa petitions in 2017.[80] In addition to proactively hiring immigrants and refugees, companies also provide the on-the-job training that can pave the way for a career in the United States. Companies can also participate in public–private partnerships on immigrant integration and receptivity initiatives.

Private-sector efforts and partnerships to make immigrant inclusion central in activities such as hiring practices and promotions are likely to be powerful catalysts for change going forward. Such inclusive practices further advance access, equity, inclusion, opportunity, and trust for all residents of Chicago, in addition to advancing an inclusive business and economic climate for the city overall.

Cultural Heritage Representation

A variety of organizations and cultural institutions in Chicago focus on specific immigrant or ethnic groups and populations, such as the Polish American Association, the Korean American Association of Chicago, and the National Museum for Mexican Art, among others (see "Voices on immigration: Carlos Tortolero, Founder and President of the National Museum of Mexican Art").

The Polish American Association (PAA), a human-service agency founded in 1922, serves the Chicago metro area's large Polish community, with emphasis on programs that enable immigrants to fully participate in Chicago's educational, economic, social, and cultural life. The PAA's Immigration Services Department has been helping immigrants attain citizenship since 1985. The department serves approximately 400 clients a month with information and outreach, assistance in completing citizenship applications, translation of documents, and guidance on all other social and legal immigration matters.[81]

Established in 1962, the Korean American Association of Chicago is the official representing body and voice of Chicago's Korean American community. The association provides information regarding US culture, economy, education systems, social services, and politics and bridges this community to the mainstream US society and businesses, promotes the Chicago region to South Korea, and contributes to public relations between the United States and South Korea.



Monica who was born in Brazil and now resides in Naperville, where she works as a fitness instructor. This image was taken as part of documentary photographer Colin Boyd Shafer's project "Finding American: Stories of Immigration from all 50 States." Learn more about the project at findingamerican.com.



© Howard Schneider/Reuters

VOICES ON IMMIGRATION: CARLOS TORTOLERO, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICAN ART

Since 1987, Carlos Tortolero has headed the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood, known for its rich Mexican heritage. The museum is the only Latinx institution accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and has become an example for others across the country.

Chicago's a good place to live if you're an immigrant.

I love Chicago. It's a town where we respect working-class values, where people roll up their sleeves and get things done. It is a city that believes you can do anything. That's the Chicago I believe in.

We're also better than a lot of cities and states in terms of welcoming immigrants. At the city, county, and state levels, the government has always been pro-immigrant. This has always been the environment. I can't think of a single high-up Democrat that isn't for it.

There's more work to do.

On the national stage, immigrants are the bad guys right now. The Trump administration has created a hostile environment for Latinos, specifically Mexicans. He has been attacking Mexicans based solely on the country they're from.

Chicago also suffers from a long history of segregation and racism. There's a clear racial divide. Chicagoans travel all over the world, but North Siders don't go to the South Side. We have the greatest downtown, but we forget about the neighborhoods.

Cities like Chicago have to lead the way to show how we live together as one—especially given what's going on nationally.

Museums are an important ally for immigrants.

From producing films like *A Day Without a Mexican,* to hosting plays and exhibitions that celebrate immigrant contributions to society, to providing a space for meetings and events, the National Museum of Mexican Art unapologetically supports immigrants and pro-immigrant policies. When Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker signed two bills to protect undocumented youths and children of immigrants, he did it at the museum.

We've actually been accused of having an agenda. All museums have an agenda. We're just honest about it.

This interview has been summarized and condensed for editorial purposes.



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4 WHY CHICAGO CAN'T AND SHOULDN'T ACT ALONE

Understanding the integration of immigrants in Chicago also requires recognition that the city is not an isolated entity. Located in Cook County, the city is situated within a larger metropolitan region that comprises eight other surrounding counties. And the overarching jurisdiction of state and national governments limits cities' abilities to support immigrants.

As we have written before, metropolitan areas are "assemblages of multiple municipalities and jurisdictions [that] form complex, and in many cases powerful economic, social, and cultural regions. But as a unit of analysis, metropolitan areas have been largely absent from policy-making conversations concerning immigration. In part, this is likely due to the nature of political geography and policy making within different jurisdictions: municipal (city/county), congressional district, state, and federal."[82] Still, as the Brookings Institution's Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley argue, metropolitan regions, and the residents and leaders within them, traverse multiple sectors and represent the potential to be powerful change agents on issues, including immigration, integration, and receptivity.[83]

Yet, as Adolfo Hernandez, former director of the Office of New Americans points out, "Cities are hamstrung by federal policy. There's only so much they can do."[84] So what is the role of different levels of government leadership on immigrant integration and receptivity, and how are these different policy levels helping or hindering processes of immigrant integration in Chicago?

As a unit of analysis, metropolitan areas have been largely absent from policy-making conversations concerning immigration.

Kate Brick, formerly of the New American Economy, stresses the importance of leaders at all levels of government working collaboratively to develop immigration policies that foster prosperity. "This is especially true within a given region," she says, "where several layers of municipal and county governments can often provide incongruous laws or policies governing immigration." [85]

Indeed, Illinois certainly has opportunities to better align its policies. While many municipalities across that state have embraced welcoming policies, others have not; the situation is similar in many states and regions across the country. Part of the issue is "a lack of vision on what does a good environment on immigration look like at all levels," Hernandez observes. While many agree that we need comprehensive immigration reform, few agree on what that looks like. And the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the crisis immigrant communities have faced since 2017, the start of the Trump administration.[86]

Whatever the resolution, cities are a critical part of the conversation. "In a lot of ways, a city like Chicago has far more daily interactions with immigrants than the federal government," says Hernandez. "Think about parents taking their kid to school, riding the transit system, calling the police, going to the library, and on and on. Cities will continue to innovate. I do hope the work that's happening in both large and small cities around the country, doing lots of smart immigrant-welcoming work, will make it the norm, normalize welcoming immigrants and refugees, not only as part of their values but also because it makes economic sense for their communities."[87]

In this chapter: Chicago exists within multiple layers of government: the many local municipal governments that are found throughout the Chicagoland region, Cook County, the metropolitan statistical area, the State of Illinois, and the United States. Each layer presents both opportunities and challenges for immigrant integration and receptivity in Chicago.

Cook County: The Role of County-Level Policy

In the United States' federalist government, counties occupy an administrative-political subdivision in between the local level of city or municipal government and state-level government. Most counties in the United States yield a functioning level of governmental authority and include a county seat—a primary city or town where most county government functions are based. Cook County is the most-populous county in the United States after Los Angeles County in California. The City of Chicago is Cook County's seat and more than 40 percent of all Illinois residents live in Cook County, according to population data from the US Census Bureau. Cook County comprises 135 incorporated municipalities: 23 cities, one town, and 111 villages. County land outside the city of Chicago is divided into 29 townships, most of which are charged with providing general assistance, assessment of property taxation, and maintenance of all roads and bridges outside federal, state, and other local jurisdiction. The president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners oversees the county's various departments, known as the Offices Under the President (OUP), and the county budget.

Cook County also engages with and facilitates initiatives that directly affect the region's foreign-born population, whether directly or indirectly. The *Cook County Policy Roadmap: Five-Year Strategic Plan for Offices Under the President,* released in 2018, includes particular emphasis on racial equity, including for immigrant populations—noting that governments have played a role in creating and perpetuating racial inequities, but today they can also play a role in alleviating such inequities.[88] The five-year plan notes the importance of equity in improving outcomes for all Cook County residents, including by adopting a racial-equity framework and conducting implicit-bias training for county employees. The plan suggests that the OUP's work will strengthen the county's institutional ability to address past and present structural inequities. To help achieve progress, Cook County is a member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity—a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity—to help build capacity, connect with peer organizations, and receive support in advancing equity work.

The county's inaugural "Racial Equity Week" was held September 16–20, 2019. During this week of learning, listening, and engagement, Cook County held a series of events to hear from residents and community partners, and educate the public on why racial equity matters and how the county and county residents can work together to close the inequity gap.[89] These efforts signal the position and perspective that the county is working to portray to the broader community.

The Cook County government also makes available a Legal Research Guide, featuring resources on US immigration law, including asylee and refugee law.[90] The guide includes self-service resources for immigration as well as information on federal agencies and legislation, administrative decisions and statistics, and nongovernmental organizations.

The Office of the Cook County State's Attorney outlines a variety of immigration services in addition to services offered regardless of immigration status. In particular, the office acknowledges that there are individuals who may target the vulnerabilities of the county's large and diverse immigrant population. Meanwhile, immigrant victims may be reluctant to report such crimes due

to their immigration status. In February 2017, in a demonstration of its commitment to all residents regardless of immigration status, the Cook County State's Attorney announced the creation of an anonymous and confidential hotline for victims of fraud resulting from their immigration status.[91] And in June 2019, the office issued a statement expressing its concern over the Trump administration's proposed immigration raids, citing the distrust they could exacerbate between immigrant communities and law enforcement, and restating the office's commitment to ensuring public safety.[92]

Chicago Metropolitan Area: Challenges and Opportunities for Metropolitan Governance on Migration

Local leaders working together to craft and implement immigrant-integration and receptivity policies for immigrants at the city and metropolitan level are viewed as one component of what Brookings' Katz and Bradley describe as the "metropolitan revolution."[93] This idea emerged on the heels of the Great Recession: despite federal efforts to address the recession's fallout, Katz and Bradley observe that the processes and plans led by local leaders better reflect local needs. These leaders have built a robust network of elected and appointed government officials, business executives, organizational and community leaders, and anchor institutions throughout their communities. Leadership increasingly has sought to ensure that this network reflects the diverse constituencies and community groups that inform a new economic growth model.

Immigrant integration can be folded into this larger narrative about metropolitan revolution. As Katz and Bradley note, "Over the next forty years, immigrants and their descendants will be responsible for virtually all of the growth in the U.S. labor pool." As such, diversity is one of the greatest strengths of the United States: "Immigrants are part of America's innovation and entrepreneur economy."[94]

With this context in mind, there is potential for a robust system of collaboration on immigrant and refugee integration within the Chicago metropolitan region. However, the many jurisdictions that transcend the metropolitan area's geography create inherent difficulties. "While cities are being heralded as an 'antidote' to the economically precarious hardline immigration policies . . . they may face resistance in implementing pro-immigration policies from their closest neighbors: the suburbs," notes Sara McElmurry. "Cities should leverage their greater metropolitan regions to stand united in being welcoming and inclusive."[95]

While the many jurisdictions of the metropolitan region and various degrees of policies and programs—or lack thereof—are huge challenges, they also present a huge opportunity. For instance, just north of the city of Chicago limits, the Village of Skokie, with a municipal population of more than 64,000 that is around 40 percent foreign-born,[96] provides an Immigrant Services Directory with information about services and programs in the area for the international community. Skokie also works with community organizations on programs for the immigrant community, such as the annual Skokie Festival of Cultures, and supports an English Language Learner Parent Center. These are examples of good practices in the suburbs that could be replicated across other jurisdictions throughout the metropolitan region.

A primary vehicle for collaboration across the metro region is the Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. Founded in 1997 by then-mayor Richard M. Daley and other mayors from the region, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is a membership organization of the 275 cities, towns, and villages within the Chicago metropolitan region. The Mayors Caucus is a forum of dialogue for regional chief elected officials to overcome boundaries and obstacles, and identify and work on common problems and goals—including immigrant integration. In September 2014, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus released an immigration integration toolkit, developed in partnership with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Latino Policy Forum, to guide member municipalities as they engage on immigrant-integration activities.[97] The toolkit was a follow-up to the Caucus's February 2011 guidebook, "Immigrant Integration in Chicago's Suburbs: A Survey of Current Activities and Efforts."[98]

Such regional groups understand that "integration is not just about helping isolated communities simply cope with new immigrant influxes," observes McElmurry. "Instead, it is about helping regions thrive by proactively embracing the economic dynamism and energy of new immigrant arrivals for the benefit of all residents, new and long-standing alike."[99]

Illinois: The Role of State-Level Policy

State laws and policies are important within US federalism because they play a major role not only at the state level, but also the local level; municipalities are affected and influenced by the state law and policy context within which they are located. "The federal government determines how many immigrants are permitted to enter the United States and the conditions for their stay," observes Ann Morse, director of the Immigrant Policy Project at the National Conference of State Legislatures. "But, in general, immigration policy has evolved into a shared responsibility among local, state and federal governments. In recent years, states and localities have taken on additional responsibilities in both immigration enforcement and immigrant integration."[100] According to the National Conference of State Legislators, among these responsibilities have been developing policies that affect immigrants, aiding federal refugee resettlement efforts, and helping immigrants integrate with the country economically, politically, and socially. Indeed, "state legislatures consider more than 1,200 bills each year related to immigrants, and on average enact 200 laws relating to budgets, education, employment, driver's licenses, health and human services, human trafficking, and law enforcement."[101]

Vacillations in national rhetoric on immigration policy over time also influence the types of state-level policies proposed and implemented. Morse has noted that changes in national rhetoric can affect how states portray themselves as welcoming or not welcoming for certain immigrant populations.[102] Furthermore, Morse observes that regardless of federal-level rhetoric and decisions—such as Supreme Court decisions on immigration policy and executive orders and actions, congressional legislation, or other administrative action—"state policymakers continue to seek bipartisan, pragmatic solutions to immigration challenges, recognizing the contributions of immigrants and working together to ensure safe communities."[103]

There are a variety of state and municipal immigrant-integration initiatives throughout the Midwest, including for Chicago and Illinois.[104] In Illinois, there are six Welcoming Centers, at which the Illinois Office of New Americans coordinates services from a range of state agencies. There is also a mobile unit that delivers services around Illinois, helping to reach immigrants who live too far from one of the Welcoming Centers. The state offers a number of additional services and benefits for immigrants, which came about in part due to the work of organizations such as the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR).

DREAM Fund. The Illinois Office of New Americans worked with then-governor Pat Quinn to create the Illinois DREAM Fund in 2011 to enable more children of immigrants to attend college. In its first year, 33 Illinois students received more than $100,000 in scholarships.[105]

Drivers Licenses. In 2012, the Illinois Office of New Americans supported the passage of Senate Bill 957, which enabled undocumented immigrants to apply for temporary driver's licenses so they can drive to work or school without fear of detention. The bill made Illinois the fourth state to allow undocumented immigrants to secure driver's licenses.[106]

In 2020, however, because of the national context on immigration policy, states may be more judicious in their encouragement of driver's licenses. Ann Morse notes officials around the country "are trying to weigh encouraging people to sign up for driver's licenses and become insured versus the concern that ICE is now coming into state databases and hijacking that information." Some states have passed laws that require federal officials to have a court order or warrant before allowing access to DMV records, but Illinois is not yet among those.[107]

In-State Tuition. Passed in 2003, HB 60 opened the door for students who are not citizens or permanent residents to receive in-state tuition.[108] According to the National Immigration Law Center, in-state tuition policies for immigrants are intended to primarily aid young people brought to the United States as children and who have lived and graduated high school in the same state as the college to which they are applying. "Experience in the states that have adopted tuition equity laws or policies suggests that such policies help U.S. citizens and immigrants of all statuses, by reducing the high school drop-out rates, increasing the number of graduates who pursue a college degree, raising student incomes and tax contributions, and yielding an array of other economic and social benefits," according to the National Immigration Law Center.[109]

VOICES Act. Immigrants who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking may fear that reporting the crime to law enforcement could put them in jeopardy of deportation. To help and protect these immigrants, the VOICES Act, which took effect on January 1, 2019, compels law enforcement agencies to assist these immigrants and facilitate their efforts to apply for certification for U or T visas, which are designated for survivors who cooperate with law enforcement.

TRUST Act. The Illinois TRUST Act bans law enforcement from stopping, searching, or arresting immigrants based on their legal status. It also sets "reasonable, constitutional limits" on local police interaction with ICE enforcement and is intended to "[foster] trust between local police and immigrant communities."[110]

Healthy Illinois Campaign. The mission of the Healthy Illinois Campaign is to "make quality, affordable health coverage accessible to all people in Illinois," regardless of immigration or citizenship status.[111] For example, in 2016, the campaign advocated for the renewal of the Covering All Kids Health Insurance Act, which builds on the state's Medicaid program and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to offer coverage to all uninsured children, regardless of income, health status, or citizenship.[112] In 2019, the campaign led work on HB 72: "Medicaid Expansion for DACA Recipients and Legal Permanent Residents under 5 Years."[113] In response to COVID-19, Healthy Illinois also advocated for the Illinois General Assembly's 2021 fiscal year budget to include funding for health coverage for low-income seniors regardless of their legal immigration status. According to Healthy Illinois, "In doing so, Illinois took a monumental and critical first step towards expanding health care coverage to all undocumented uninsured Illinoisans—starting with our seniors first. This approach will continue Illinois' leadership by being the first state in the nation to provide Medicaid-like coverage to undocumented seniors."[114]

Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services. Illinois' Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services, within the Illinois Department of Human Services, "funds, manages, and monitors contracts designed to help newly arriving refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency in the United States and provide outreach and interpretation services to low-income and limited English-proficient individuals."[115] The Illinois Department of Human Services also provides a list of community service agencies serving immigrants.[116]

National Level: The Domain of the Federal Government

Ultimately, immigration law—specifically concerning the right to legally enter and stay in the United States—is the domain of the federal government, and a variety of agencies and departments throughout the executive branch are charged with implementing federal immigration law. As a result, interpretation, enforcement, and implementation of immigration law may vary from one presidential administration to another.

This reality certainly affects individuals, families, and local communities. It also impacts municipal- and state-level policies and initiatives, especially around policies for which local government would like more purview—for example, quotas and policies regarding visas. Businesses in cities may want to expand visa quotas, but they and city governments are unable to. Cities may want to give visas to immigrant entrepreneurs who are reviving retail districts with restaurants and shops, but they are unable to. Cities may want to let immigrants who are on temporary protected status and have lived in their communities for decades stay in those communities, but they are unable to. Cities may be unable to keep foreign students who study in their universities, despite wanting to. Although mayors of cities may count the undocumented population as their own residents, they are unable to give them legal status due to federal government restrictions. And cities do not

control how border screenings are operated at ports of entry, such as Chicago O'Hare International Airport, which was the third-busiest airport in the United States and the sixth-busiest airport in the world by number of passengers in 2018.[117]

What does the Trump administration's trajectory on immigration law and policy mean for cities and metropolitan regions such as Chicago? "The current restrictive federal policy environment on immigration presents challenges and opportunities for Chicago," says Rachel Peric of Welcoming America. "Leaders are being called into a crisis moment to reduce harm, with so many residents at risk. Many cities are finding it challenging in this environment to focus on longer-term investments that could help many of their residents succeed when so much of the focus is on mitigation and defense." This certainly impacts actions in many cities, including Chicago.

"Cities like Chicago, and others in the growing suburbs who are increasingly engaging," Peric observes, "are doing so with the knowledge that their work is a strong counterpoint to dangerous narrative and policy." As such, Peric notes that there is growing interest in the region reflecting such actions. "First, that there are communities large and small, rural and urban, that want to proactively invest in welcoming community efforts in Illinois and Chicagoland because they see these efforts as being in the self-interest of the community as a whole. Second, that these places reflect a growing diversity of partners, from local governments to universities to YMCAs, all of which have a role to play in fostering a culture of belonging and policies that reduce barriers to participation."[118]

"We know that changing lives and culture for the better in communities starts in those communities," says Molly Hilligoss, regional manager with Welcoming America. "Counties and municipalities can and must enact policies that keep communities safe, provide access to services, and promote connection across the differences of race, national origin, and even language." This reinforces the point that local places must modify their actions for their residents amid shifting federal-level policy perspectives from one administration to another. "While we are all impacted by the negative rhetoric and appalling policies federally," Hilligoss continues, "counties and municipalities like Chicago are leading the way with policies that support universal representation and deportation deference, as well as a number of other policies. … Chicago's commitments here are moving the needle."[119]

Given the vastly different perspectives and rhetoric on immigration federally and locally, some perceive the traditional relationships between these levels of government as broken. According to Theresa Cardinal Brown, director of immigration and cross-border policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, "While immigration has been a federal responsibility, and generally states are preempted from acting, the lack of Congressional legislative reforms to our immigration system; the continued, long-term presence of millions of unauthorized immigrants in the country; and the increasingly large shifts in federal executive branch policy across administrations has pushed states and localities to engage more firmly in immigration policy and regulation within their purview and to influence federal policy."[120] Therefore, immigration advocacy groups on both sides of the issues, frustrated with the lack of federal legislation, have become active on the state level—for instance, restrictive state laws such as SB 1070 in Arizona; state-generated litigation against federal actions (such as state attorneys general who sued the Obama administration over DACA); and

countervailing pressure on states such as California, Connecticut, and New Jersey to enact state sanctuary laws.

Within this vein, Brown observes that many localities have been pressured to pass broader "noncooperation" policies with federal immigration enforcement, reject ICE detention facilities in their jurisdictions, or cancel county jail contracts with ICE to house detainees. Furthermore, she notes that other localities have been pressured to reject settlement of refugees or to enter into 287(g) agreements with the Department of Homeland Security, which empower local law enforcement to arrest and detain immigrants. Brown notes that "all of these actions are being fought over in the courts. States are suing the federal government, the federal government is suing states, localities are joining lawsuits against their state, and states are passing laws to overturn local ordinances, all over immigration policies. This is upending the traditional relationship of federalism in the United States where different levels of government have authority over different issues or negotiate agreements on areas of jurisdiction. But that negotiation is being pushed into aggression and an 'all or nothing' stance by various parties, that ignores local conditions and priorities."[121]

Despite these varied activities at multiple levels of government, none of these piecemeal actions are a substitute for comprehensive federal immigration reform to upgrade the country's immigration system for the 21st century. "Regardless of state or local laws or policies," Brown says, "only the federal legislature can address the lawful status of immigrants in the country or change how future immigrants are admitted. … Various state or local policies, or even federal executive branch policies, can make immigrants feel more or less welcome in the United States and make their lives more 'normal'—for example, by allowing them to have driver's licenses or providing state- or locality-based services that are the same as their neighbors' who are citizens or lawful residents. But none of this can actually provide them legal immigration status or prevent their deportation if they are arrested by immigration authorities."[122]

Despite all the action at the state and local levels to act on comprehensive immigration reform, the US Congress still does not feel the pressure to act. "Since many of these actions are tied up in the courts, or because the pressure from advocates is trained on lower levels of government,"

Despite these varied activities at multiple levels of government, none of these piecemeal actions are a substitute for comprehensive federal immigration reform to upgrade the country's immigration system for the 21st century.

Brown states, “federal legislators have not felt extreme action to reach compromise or consensus and pass legislation. In fact, they have instead been pressured to take harder-line positions that prevent compromise.”[123]

With the current state of the federal immigration system in mind, cities feel compelled to act in ways that benefit their residents, including immigrants. “The actions of cities like Chicago can, at best, provide a tenuous sense of normalcy for the immigrants residing there,” notes Brown, “and, at worst, could provide a false sense of security, when the reality is that immigrants are subject to the vagaries of executive branch actions unless or until Congress decisively sets the rules in legislation. Only then can cities return to their traditional focus on helping immigrants build lives, integrate into their societies, and live the American Dream, with full legal status and rights.”[124]

Innovative Examples from Cities Around the World

Chicago is one of the world’s leading global cities.[125] To this point, this report has focused on examples from the city of Chicago, its metro area, and the state of Illinois. However, other cities and metropolitan regions—from global cities, to midsize regional centers, to small towns—around the United States and in other immigrant- and refugee-receiving countries have launched and implemented a variety of innovative strategies and policies. Chicago and other cities could learn from these and replicate or modify for their own localities.

Municipal Offices of Immigrant Affairs

Like Chicago’s Office of New Americans, many cities have established offices within city administration, often found within the mayor’s office, that specifically focus on immigrant integration and receptivity. Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco are three additional US examples. While such offices within city governments may often appear similar or some issues may overlap, each addresses issues and situations for its residents based on its own unique context. In all cases, municipal offices of immigrant affairs are well positioned to address locally contextualized issues on the ground in their own cities. And they can each learn from one another about challenges, opportunities, and best practices.

Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, reestablished in 2013 by Mayor Eric Garcetti, has served more than 150,000 Angelenos in its efforts to coordinate city services and develop programs and initiatives that "promote citizenship and civic engagement, and advocate on local, state, and national legislation and policy.”[126] One specific initiative was Mayor Garcetti’s Executive Directive #20, “Standing with Immigrants: A City of Safety, Refuge, and Opportunity for All,” signed in March 2017. The directive, which builds on longstanding Los Angeles Police Department policies, aims to “ensure that L.A.’s public servants stay focused on protecting people, serving communities, and saving lives—not inquiring about immigration status or engaging in federal civil immigration enforcement.” It also protects all residents’ personal information and ensures all city facilities, programs, and services are equally accessible to all residents—regardless of citizenship or immigration status.[127]

New York. The New York Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs promotes the well-being of immigrant communities. The de Blasio administration spotlights three broad integration goals: "enhance the economic, civic, and social integration of immigrant New Yorkers; facilitate access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers; and advocate for continued immigration reforms at all levels of government in order to eliminate inequities that impact New York's immigrant communities."[128] According to Commissioner Bitta Mostofi, "New York City is home to over 8.6 million people, including more than 3.1 million immigrants. Immigrant New Yorkers speak over 200 languages, own over half of our small businesses, and are integral to our ability to thrive as a city."[129]

The office has implemented a range of programs and policies to support immigrants, including introducing IDNYC (New York City's version of a municipal ID card); strengthening language access; investing in immigration legal-service programs; and promoting citizenship for eligible permanent residents. "These efforts complement the work of our sister agencies," Mostofi observes, "ensuring that City services are available to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status. And with our office's focus on advocacy for inclusive immigration policies at all levels of government, we take collective action with partners and cities across the nation to fight for policies and programs that allow our communities to live in safety and dignity. New York City's economic, cultural, and civic vitality depends on our immigrant communities."[130]

San Francisco. The San Francisco Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs promotes inclusive policies and immigrant-assistance programs with the goal of integrating immigrants civically, economically, and linguistically and creating a safe, engaged, and inclusive city in which everyone contributes and thrives. The office provides information about, for instance, obtaining immigration legal help, reporting ICE activity, and getting help paying for an immigration application. The office also provides information about language rights—such as how to report a city department for not providing translation or interpretation—and community safety.[131]

Invitations to Apply for Citizenship

Some municipalities are intentional about inviting their immigrant residents to apply for citizenship when they become eligible to do so. In Hamburg, Germany, immigrant residents receive a letter inviting them to apply for citizenship once they are eligible, with instructions on how to complete the application process. The city also conducted a survey of its foreign-born population asking for input on integration strategies and then published a comprehensive report and master plan.[132]

Local Municipal Election Voting Rights for Immigrant Residents

Some municipal governments allow their immigrant residents to vote in local elections, facilitating broader participation in the functioning of the city in which they live. In the Netherlands, for instance, individuals without Dutch citizenship are permitted to vote in municipal elections; these individuals must register with the municipality, and non–European Union citizens must have resided in the Netherlands for at least five consecutive years.[133]

Newcomer Service Kiosks

In some cities, city government provides consolidated information in the form of newcomer service kiosks or information stations. A noteworthy example is Toronto, one of the most multicultural, diverse cities in the world; thousands of people move to Toronto from around the world every year. In response, the City of Toronto provides a variety of information and resources for immigrants and others moving to the city, including information before arrival and after arrival, and a post-arrival checklist. Newcomer Services Kiosks are available to all residents, regardless of immigration status. The kiosks are located across the city and allow individuals to meet with a settlement worker and access information on (among other things) community services and programs, education, employment, healthcare, and housing.[134]

Programs for Recently Resettled Refugee Populations

Because cities are so attractive, they also host migrant and refugee populations, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity for a city's leadership to proactively address. For example, Amman, Jordan, was the second-largest host of refugees per capita in the world in 2018, primarily because of the refugee crisis in adjacent Syria. Amman also has a very young population, with more than 70 percent under 25 years old, and a relatively high rate of unemployment. Amid these challenges, Amman has devised a resilience strategy to address youth disenfranchisement by expanding youth-employment programs to include migrants and young refugees. The strategy also incentivizes the creation of incubators and startups to harness the energy of Amman's young population to encourage innovation hubs in the metro region.[135]

City-to-City Cooperation

Cities working in concert on particular policy issues have led to changes at higher levels of government. For example, Barcelona Mayor Ada Colau took the lead in organizing city-to-city networks to successfully pressure the Spanish government to change national law regarding refugee resettlement, offering refuge to migrants.[136] Researchers have noted that Barcelona is an example of a city in which local leaders intentionally declared the city to be a "city of refuge" and aimed to change refugee reception into a less centralized, bottom-up system in which cities play a major role in refugee settlement. The city led by example by developing an innovative local policy and the necessary political arguments for change in partnership with other cities in Spain and the European Union, and the city transformed those arguments into workable discussions about funding for such initiatives.[137]

Metropolitan-Regional Cooperation

In some places, municipalities and other public, private, and nonprofit organizations are partnering to design more intentional metropolitan-regional immigrant-integration strategies. Since 2018, the Atlanta metropolitan region, for instance, has been a pilot case for considering a metropolitan-regional approach to immigrant integration and receptivity through the Atlanta One Region Initiative, one of Welcoming America's programs.[138]

Opportunities for Collective Action

As a major city and metropolitan region, Chicago engages with many other cities around the country and the world on a variety of issues, including immigration and immigrant and refugee integration and receptivity. Cities large and small, near and far, are building bridges with one another, learning from one another, and sharing information about challenges, opportunities, and best practices through transnational city networks to accomplish goals related to climate change, migration, and economic development. The following are several examples of the primary goals of such city network partnerships.

Improve Integration and Welcoming Standards by Coordinating with Other Cities

Integration is a key element in the success of immigrants in a city and in allowing cities to thrive and likewise benefit from all their immigrants have to offer. Cities with similar goals in this area can work with and learn from each other.

For example, Welcoming America, founded in 2009 and headquartered in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, is a nonprofit that connects a network of more than 200 nonprofit and local government members. Welcoming America has clearly outlined what makes a community "welcoming"—a definition that includes all sectors collaborating to create a climate that supports long-term integration and implement sustainable policies and practices that encourage interactions between new and established residents.[139] The organization hosts an annual member conference to allow attendees to learn about other communities' innovations. It also runs a program called Welcoming International, which supports and connects institutions that are advancing inclusion around the world.

Cities of Migration is another key organization that works with cities around the world to improve immigrant integration. In addition to providing an online library of resources on related research, practice, and policy, Cities of Migration's learning exchange activities and tools are designed to give city-level practitioners development opportunities and to help urban networks develop stronger ties.

In Europe, the Charter on Integrating Cities offers a forum for cities to work with and learn from each other to integrate migrants and embrace diversity. As of January 2020, the charter has been signed by 39 cities and lists specific commitments for "policy-makers, service providers, employers, and buyers of goods and services."[140]

Influence National and Global Policy Makers

There is only so much cities can do without coordination at higher levels of government. By joining together, city mayors can raise the profile of their needs and goals and hold higher authorities responsible.

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Cities for Action, a coalition of more than 175 US mayors and county executives, representing nearly 70 million people and more than 17 million foreign-born residents across the United States, is one avenue through which to do this. Another avenue is the United States Conference of Mayors, which is the official national nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more—of which there are 1,400 today. Mayors from these cities convene to tackle various issues, including immigration; they have written letters to the President and to Congress on immigration issues, participated in "Mayors Days of Action," and issued official position statements. And the Mayors Migration Council, launched in December 2018, aims to equip cities with the knowledge, connections, and technical assistance needed to contribute to and be heard in regional and international deliberations and policies concerning refugees and migrants.

Work on a Regional Economic Approach

Many regions share experiences related to population growth, immigration rates, and economic realities that make their leaders excellent partners for tapping into economic development opportunities created by immigrants. The Rust Belt–focused Welcoming Economies Global Network (WE Network), for example, is a program of Welcoming America in partnership with Global Detroit and has more than 20 immigrant-focused economic development initiatives across the Rust Belt—the lower Great Lakes region, from Iowa to New York, that was once the major industrial region of the country. These initiatives can serve as examples of new ideas and best practices to other coalitions and organizations seeking to ensure economic development efforts are inclusive of immigrants.

Increase Naturalization Rates

Of the 8.8 million legal permanent residents in the United States who are eligible for citizenship, 52 percent are low income.[141] For these individuals, US citizenship can offer access to better-paying jobs and a path to financial security, as well as the right to vote and access to social-support programs, such as Medicaid. Chaired by current and former mayors Bill de Blasio (New York City), Rahm Emanuel (Chicago), and Eric Garcetti (Los Angeles), Cities for Citizenship is focused on increasing naturalization rates among eligible immigrants and encouraging communities to invest in citizenship programs.


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5 CHALLENGES FACING CHICAGO AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Chicago has done much to support and integrate its many and diverse immigrants—but there are clear-cut opportunities to do more.

In this chapter: Gaps remain for efficient and effective immigrant integration and receptivity in Chicago, and a number of recommendations for city leadership based on these gaps can strengthen the city's global leadership on immigrant integration. Several voices from local, regional, and national organizations help to describe these gaps and what can be done about them.

Where Are the Gaps?

Despite metro Chicago's vast and vibrant ecosystem of governments and civil organizations working together on many aspects of immigrant and refugee integration and receptivity, observers have noted areas that need to be addressed.

Lack of a Comprehensive Program Assessment and Impact

While the municipal government is funding and advancing a wide range of immigrant-integration programs, the city still needs a detailed road map for engaging immigrants, tracking participation and outcomes, and evaluating which programs are yielding intended results. Beyond just making the programs available, the city needs to ensure that the opportunities are actually leading to livable wages and improved quality of life. One way to achieve these improvements is for the city and leading immigration organizations to partner with local researchers to design a community-based participatory research project that would comprehensively assess programs and their overall impacts, identify strategic gaps that need additional attention, suggest further interventions, and subsequently assess the impact of those interventions over time.[142]

Loopholes in the Welcoming City Ordinance

Observers and leaders outside the City of Chicago government have observed that Chicago's Welcoming City Ordinance contains a number of "carve outs" and loopholes that ultimately weaken the ordinance's intent.[143] Marlen Garcia of the *Chicago Sun-Times* notes, "The exceptions give cops the OK to hold or arrest an immigrant for ICE if the person is a defendant in a criminal case with a felony charge pending, or has an outstanding criminal warrant, or is… a gang member, or has been convicted of a felony. Almost all those exceptions rob people of due process.

"I wouldn't have a problem with expelling gang members from the country, for example, except that Chicago has no good way of identifying them. It relies on a gang database riddled with errors, and community organizers want it abolished for good reason. Among the listed exceptions, I think that only in instances where a person has been convicted of a felony should there be cooperation between cops and ICE."[144]

A coalition of community partners and several Chicago aldermen have supported an amendment to the ordinance, which was introduced on July 24, 2019, to eliminate such exceptions. "We want to change that law to remove those exceptions to ensure that we have a clear and direct ordinance that says that in no case ICE can work with the City of Chicago to deport a resident in our city," said Chicago Alderman Carlos Ramírez-Rosa.[145]

Nubia Willman, the director of the Chicago Mayor's Office of New Americans, acknowledges the limitations of the Welcoming City Ordinance, noting that "there are carve-outs to it that people don't necessarily love, and that's [the cause of] some of the contention with the community organizations. … Those were there before the current mayoral administration. I think if it were up to us, we would have removed them, but in taking into account the ongoing litigation, we made the judgment that it was not the right time to make those changes."[146]

It was amid this broader context that Mayor Lightfoot introduced the Accountability on Communication and Transparency (ACT) ordinance at a City Council meeting on December 18, 2019, which was approved on January 15, 2020. While it does not close the loopholes of the ordinance, ACT does strengthen protections for immigrants against raids and deportation by limiting city agencies' and employees' cooperation with ICE.

"There is more work to be done, but this is a real step forward with important information measures to ensure compliance," says Mary Meg McCarthy, executive director of the National Immigrant Justice Center.[147] In a joint statement, ICIRR and other organizations belonging to the Chicago Immigration Working Group praised the ACT ordinance but also reaffirmed that there remains a need to abolish the exceptions in the Welcoming City Ordinance. "As the Mayor herself has stated previously, we must remove exceptions from the City's protections that continue to make immigrants from criminalized black and brown communities vulnerable to federal immigration operations," says Glo Harn Choi, a community organizer at HANA Center, a Korean-American civic group.

Failure to Harness Skill Sets of Newcomers

Immigrants, refugees, and asylees bring a variety of skill sets from their home countries—Chicago's workforce has yet to take full strategic advantage. According to Sara McElmurry, "Chicago's efforts to build business and economic opportunity need not just focus on attracting external talent. They must also champion the talent of its current workforce, especially immigrants, as one in five working-age Chicagoans is foreign born. Research suggests that much of this foreign-born talent is not able to fully contribute their skills to Chicago's economy. Across the country, 2 million college-educated, work-authorized immigrant professionals are either unemployed or underemployed in jobs that don't make full use of their talents. As this global talent pool offers the skills needed to compete in a global economy (language skills, diverse worldviews, life experiences that foster resilience and innovation, outsized expertise in STEM fields, etc.), Chicago and other global cities can't afford to leave this talent on the table."[148]

Adolfo Hernandez observes that many immigrants "come with an incredible set of experiences, expertise, and degrees. We don't really have a system to help them get back to the kind of careers that they had back home with their skills and expertise. The COVID crisis is an example. What is a way to meaningfully engage them in the workforce and leverage their skills within this health crisis? Upwardly Global, which has a Chicago office, is fantastic, but they have also been stifled by city, county, state, and federal licensing and credentialing guidelines. They have also been stifled by scale and bandwidth. Wouldn't it be great to immediately connect a newcomer to Upwardly Global to be screened for their skill set and then make appropriate connections? What is a local trigger to connect those individuals to a range of support services for better workforce connectivity? There is a mismatch of needs for employers and skills."[149]

Lack of Legal Representation for All

While Chicago is fortunate to host a number of legal services and advocacy organizations, a need for more legal representation for individuals facing detention and deportation proceedings remains. "Given the change in the federal attitude toward immigrants, in many ways some cities have gone as far as they can go on immigrant integration," says Hernandez. "One of the biggest considerations is how to integrate legal-service supports for immigrants in detention and deportation proceedings." He points to the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, which works

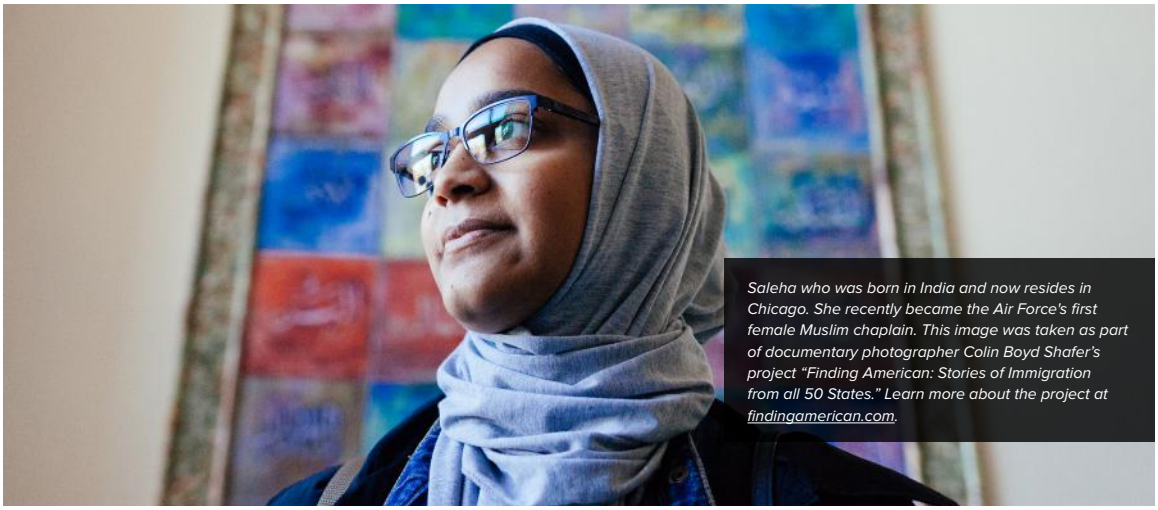
to expand representation for people in detention and deportation proceedings. “Legal representation is such an American tenet—that everyone should have access to legal counsel,” Hernandez maintains.[150]

Holes in Multilevel Alignment and Cooperation

Despite the relative alignment among Chicago, Cook County, and Illinois on immigration, “there’s still opportunity for better alignment,” says Hernandez. Related to the point above, more-efficient and inclusive legal representation is “one opportunity here in Chicago and in Cook County to partner and align and better provide legal counsel and legal services to folks in detention and deportation proceedings,” he continues.[151]

From a Midwest perspective, Molly Hilligoss, Midwest regional manager with Welcoming America, observes, “Chicago has the unique opportunity to lead both regionally and nationally in welcoming and immigrant integration. There are very few communities in the country where policies and programs resonate with both smaller and more rural communities and large metros. Chicago’s work can scale and inspire more communities throughout the country and the Midwest by taking the lead regionally and showcasing the work. We know they are inspiring others in Illinois like Champaign-Urbana where a welcoming planning process is underway, and their focus on supporting workers and workforce development is a key value that resonates all over Illinois and could be shared even more widely.”[152]

From a national perspective, Rachel Peric, executive director of Welcoming America, says, “As a city that has seen migration through many waves, including the Great Migration, Chicago benefits from a racially and ethnically diverse population, but faces challenges ensuring that all its residents can access opportunity and feel like they belong. An opportunity exists under Mayor Lightfoot's leadership to further situate the city's immigrant-inclusion work in a broader context of work around race and equity, and perhaps incubate new efforts that could benefit other similarly situated cities.”[153]



Saleha who was born in India and now resides in Chicago. She recently became the Air Force's first female Muslim chaplain. This image was taken as part of documentary photographer Colin Boyd Shafer's project “Finding American: Stories of Immigration from all 50 States.” Learn more about the project at findingamerican.com.

Despite Chicago's accolades at the number one slot on the 2019 NAE Cities Index, there is always room for continued improvement overall. ICIRR's Fred Tsao observes that "any municipality can improve its responsiveness to the needs and interests of immigrant communities (and others) by more proactively engaging these communities in policy making. The most useful and successful policies are those that address the needs expressed by community members and that involve community members in their development, enactment, and implementation."[154]

Recommendations for Chicago

With these gaps in mind, along with the global context of a variety of innovative municipal and metropolitan immigrant integration examples, Chicago leaders have a menu of recommendations to not only strengthen the city's processes of immigrant integration and receptivity but also balance programs for immigrants to thrive—while also ensuring broader inclusion and advancing justice for all, especially for Chicago's Black population.

According to Kate Brick, formerly of New American Economy, the areas from the NAE Cities Index where scores could be improved include livability, job opportunities, and civic participation. Livability indicators include access to healthcare and share of immigrant households living in overcrowded housing conditions. Job opportunities involve the rate at which high-skilled immigrants participate in the labor force. And civic participation indicates naturalization rate and share of immigrant workers in public or social sectors.[155]

Assess Program Use, Effectiveness, and Impact

The city offers a variety of integration services and programs, but it is unclear how many people are using them. A concerted, unified effort to collect information on the frequency, quantity, and quality of services used is necessary to evaluate their effectiveness and impact. To supplement internal bandwidth, Chicago could partner with researchers at local universities to build evaluation programs that are mutually beneficial to both the providers (by addressing outcomes and effectiveness, and tweaking programs based on data and analysis) and the researchers (by publishing peer-reviewed pieces about the research and evaluation program).[156] One successful model for this is the collaboration among local practitioners and university-based faculty researchers in the Atlanta One Region program.[157]

Engage Local Residents

Cities and municipalities need to create more opportunities for immigrants to learn about the rules and customs of their adopted society: for example, the US court systems, methods of voting and other political participation, and holidays. The State of Illinois supports "welcoming centers" for new immigrants, centers that could be expanded upon by municipal governments.

And newcomers are not the only residents who could stand to learn from their neighbors. Established residents, including both the native born and long-term immigrants, can benefit by getting to know other immigrants and their histories. More events, materials, and opportunities to learn about newer neighbors would benefit society overall.

Support Targeted Integration Strategies

The City of Chicago, other municipalities, and the State of Illinois have made great strides in developing immigrant-integration policies. These efforts need to expand to include programs that are tailored to diverse immigrant groups including refugees, temporary legal immigrants, persons with DACA status, and individuals with other statuses. Naturalized immigrants, for example, could benefit from preemptive outreach to help them register to vote or learn about the voting process. While programs such as Citizenship Corners help the LPR population through preparation for naturalization, that and similar programs could be expanded to also provide education on issues that can endanger their status, such as public charge. By contrast, unauthorized persons may best be served with information on their legal status so that they fully understand any opportunities to adjust it—and so that they understand the current state of law and policy, (such as the right to emergency medical care) and the significance of the Illinois Trust Act (which prohibits law enforcement agencies from detaining an immigrant solely on the basis of an immigration detainer).[158] Moreover, the needs of temporary workers in the region are largely unresearched.

Further Strengthen Community Partnerships

The city would do well to listen to its community members and partners, particularly regarding the need to further strengthen the Welcoming City Ordinance and to minimize exceptions. Breaking down barriers between and among communities and organizations will also be crucial. For instance, workforce-development and immigrant-integration organizations in Chicago and other global cities have often worked in silos—but moving forward, they must work in tandem to champion the talents and potential of foreign-born professionals.[159]

Such a shared agenda could contribute to high-demand sectors such as healthcare, engineering, and other professional fields. It should include, for example, transparent and streamlined processes for relicensing and recredentialing in Chicago and Illinois. Furthermore, it could include sharing information with the broader community about the skill sets foreign-born professionals bring and the credentialing issues they face; securing immigrants' access to vocation-specific, English-language-learner training and industry-specific trainings; partnering with employers to rework recruitment; and promoting hiring processes and systems that advance goals of equity, inclusion, and diversity in the workforce.[160]

Strengthen Metropolitan-Regional Collaborations

Another recommendation—potentially achieved through vehicles such as the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus—is for the city to be more intentional in working across municipal boundaries on common issues. The city can look to examples of regional welcoming programs such as Atlanta's One Region Initiative and that of Engage Northwest Arkansas. A contemporary steering committee comprising stakeholders from different sectors, communities, and municipalities can help shape metropolitan-regional collaboration for the coming decade.

"Not every city is in the same place politically, and the starting point is different in rural communities compared to urban places, but that doesn't mean they can't work towards more inclusive policies," says Adolfo Hernandez. "There is plenty of space for more coordination regionally, and there are steps for suburban and exurban communities to take."[161]

According to a 2016 Chicago Council on Global Affairs report by Sara McElmurry and Sam Tabory, "While metropolitan areas may be economically integrated, they are highly fractured politically and administratively, spanning dozens of local governments. Maximizing the regional economic returns of immigration requires regional integration efforts. And active cooperation on a metropolitan scale needs advocates. The leaders of major cities are well positioned to act as conveners of this type of effort. … If suburbs across America feel left behind by globalization or threatened by demographic change, cities must turn outward, not inward, and work to detoxify immigration as a political flashpoint for their suburban counterparts. … Major cities and smaller surrounding communities can share best practices around community integration, dialogue, and bridge-building. They can engage in job-training and transportation collaborations with the focus of connecting immigrant workers and employers, wherever they might be in a metropolitan region. Big-city mayors should be looking for every opportunity to bring their suburban partners into the fold."[162]

As Rachel Peric, executive director of Welcoming America, observes, "We are seeing a number of cities in other parts of the country play a leadership role regionally in bolstering the efforts of surrounding suburbs, cities, and towns in other parts of the state to engage." Chicago can do the same, encouraging and inspiring peers in the state and nationally to prioritize immigrant inclusion. "With new leadership," she goes on, "we believe Chicago is well positioned to advance its own efforts, particularly through renewed dialogue with residents, both immigrant and non-immigrant, about what a truly welcoming Chicago can look like."[163]

CONCLUSION

This report describes many facets of immigration in metropolitan Chicago, including the characteristics of the immigrants who live there, the numerous ways in which public and civic organizations support and encourage their integration, and some of the challenges that still face this region in its efforts to integrate immigrants. It also demonstrates the importance of city-level leadership on immigration policy, regardless of the federal context. A set of truths are evident from this information.

To begin, Chicago is a major global city with an extensive history of receiving and integrating diverse immigrant populations. The city's proactivity in its policies and initiatives related to immigrant integration and receptivity is a major reason Chicago was ranked first on the 2019 New American Economy Cities Index for immigrant integration.

Immigrants—in their population size, history, and contributions—are deeply embedded in the fabric of this region and have been for most of metro Chicago's history. Today, more than 1.6 million residents of this enormous metro area of more than 9 million people came to Chicago from another country, and the area's ability to integrate that migration successfully is a testimony to both the determination of the migrants and the capacity of a functional democratic system of local and state government. And it is functional precisely because these governments act to accept and even encourage the arrival of tens of thousands of new immigrant community members each year.

As this report illustrates, Chicago has many policies and initiatives for other cities to learn from, modify, and potentially replicate depending on local contexts and needs. However, there is always room for improvement to address gaps and further strengthen policies, procedures, and practices for more efficient immigrant integration and receptivity—work that would benefit all residents.

Our review of the steps that local and state governments have taken to support the contributions of immigrants shows that immigrant integration operates on levels both great and small. On the one hand, the ponderous levers of the legislative process have moved to grant immigrants access to state-managed systems of health care and education. On the other, many of the steps taken to support immigrants are as low visibility and incremental as they are vital. These involve hundreds of public agencies, nonprofit institutions, and private-sector actors exercising values of inclusion, ranging from steps as small as multilingual signage to community meetings between immigrants and native residents, and intentionally reaching out to immigrants to provide services for which they are eligible.

With this in mind, this report identifies several gaps and highlights several recommendations for Chicago and other cities to take, including assessing program use, effectiveness, and impact; engaging local residents; supporting targeted integration strategies; further strengthening community partnerships; and strengthening metropolitan-regional collaborations.

Still, enormous gaps exist between the ideals of full inclusion of immigrants and the reality of the society we actually have. Undocumented immigrants (who are one in four of all immigrants) have access to certain services, but they still cannot legally work. Legal immigrants (another quarter of all immigrants) have the right to live here indefinitely, but many have not been able to take advantage of the naturalization process and become US citizens. Naturalized immigrants have nearly all the rights of native-born residents, but many have yet to be successfully encouraged to register to vote. All of this occurs within the broader context of systemic racial inequities among the overall native- and foreign-born populations that routinely come to light, including most recently amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide uprisings in response to police killings.

Looming over the fact that the Chicago region exemplifies mixed receptivity and has had varied success with immigrant integration—as have many cities and metropolitan areas—is a presidential administration that is openly hostile to all immigrants. This report would be remiss not to acknowledge that current federal policies promote separation, expulsion, and exclusion of immigrants, including separating minors from parents and locking children in cages. Xenophobic and racist policies on a nationwide scale that were unimaginable only a few years ago are in danger of becoming normalized in the country that once venerated its Statue of Liberty and "nation of immigrants" history.

It is increasingly clear that the efforts and voices of cities will be crucial in incubating creative approaches and taking the lead on immigrant integration. The political leaders, advocates, immigrants, and their native-born neighbors who take pride in this metropolitan Chicago region—and in metropolitan regions around the world—are charged as never before to show that, where there is the ability and the opportunity, they will maintain the region's international reputation for welcoming immigrants. The task at hand is to take this legacy and raise it to even higher levels.

APPENDIX: RESOURCES

The organizations, initiatives, programs, and agencies discussed in this report are not exhaustive. However, we have assembled a directional list of resources to help our readers navigate the wide-ranging ecosystem of immigrant integration and support relevant to metro Chicago and its residents.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice, advancingjustice-chicago.org

Chicago Public Schools, Academic Works tool, cps.academicworks.com

Chicago Star Scholarship, pages.ccc.edu/apply/star

Cities for Action, citiesforaction.us

Cities for Citizenship, citiesforcitizenship.com

Cities of Migration, citiesofmigration.ca

EngageNWA, engagenwa.org

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, gcir.org

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, icirr.org

Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, ihccbusiness.net

Integrating Cities, integratingcities.eu

Latino Policy Forum, latinopolicyforum.org

Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, mayorscaucus.org

Migration Policy Institute, migrationpolicy.org

National Immigrant Justice Center, immigrantjustice.org

New American Economy, newamericaneconomy.org/cities-index

Office of the City Clerk, chicityclerk.com/chicagocitykey

South Asian American Policy & Research Institute, saapri.org

Upwardly Global, upwardlyglobal.org

WE Global Network, weglobalnetwork.org

Welcoming America, welcomingamerica.org

Welcoming America, One Region Initiative, welcomingamerica.org/one-region

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Methodology

Paul McDaniel conducted content analysis of primary documents, media, public statements, press releases, policies, reports, and the scholarly literature related to the multiple levels of analysis presented in this report, including the City of Chicago, Cook County, the Chicago metropolitan region, the state of Illinois, the national level, and examples from places beyond Chicago. He also gathered qualitative comments from key informants from multiple organizations and sectors from the local to the national level. Rob Paral conducted quantitative data analysis, including analysis of data from the US Census Bureau and other sources, to present immigration statistics about the City of Chicago and the Chicago metropolitan region within the state and national context and also contributed to the writing of this report.

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