

how new citizens spur economic growth

IMMIGRATION & INNOVATION

Goal: St. Louis 2020 – Fastest Growing U.S. Metropolitan Area for Immigration

Our principles are that ...

1. **Abundance Mentality: Significantly growing our population of foreign-born residents is an economic imperative for the St. Louis Region.** Encouraging an inflow of foreign-born to match other major metropolitan areas would increase job growth, new business startups, and economic development resulting in shared economic prosperity for all.

We need rapid growth in immigrants to boost our economy. Immigrants are 60% more likely than native-born Americans to start new businesses, -- vital to St. Louis' continuing economic recovery. And we need new residents with multicultural perspectives, so our regional enterprises can compete effectively in the widening global market.

2. **Streamlined Immigration System: America's legal immigration system must be streamlined and visa availability expanded for all categories.** We support an abundance approach to the issuance of visas, since America and our region are facing long-term labor shortages at both ends of the skills spectrum – from STEM to Guest Workers. We are also faced with stagnating population in our region, and increased immigration is one of the few means by which we can grow our population again. The process must look to the future needs while simultaneously protecting all workers.

In addition, we support fair and effective common sense approaches that address family reunification priorities including clearing out the present visa backlog.

3. **Rule of Law: Border and visa security are also national, state and regional imperatives.** We are a nation of immigrants AND a nation of laws. The rule of law is paramount; people - workers, employers - must obey the law and our legislators must pass laws that are fair and just. We also appreciate in St. Louis that our economy depends on trade across borders. Like all Americans, we have a stake in frontiers that work to keep us safe, but also connect us to our friends, allies and trading partners. All immigrants add value, so there is need for a comprehensive approach to immigration reform at the national, state and regional levels.

4. **Welcoming St. Louis: Special initiatives are needed to welcome and to integrate newcomer immigrants.** For immigrant newcomers to take their place in the broad mosaic of America and the St. Louis region in specific, inclusive initiatives must be identified and funded. And supporters must step up their efforts to incorporate foreign-born into our local communities, drawing on local government, business, labor, faith-based groups, educational institutions, and civil society.

Ultimately our St. Louis community needs to engage and blend all our increasingly diverse talent into a new and better regional culture, in which immigrants become co-workers, neighbors, PTO members, volunteers – and Cardinals fans. Now is the time for action!

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