

Revitalization in the Heartland of America

A potent combination of declining population growth and economic stagnation has led many cities and metropolitan regions to rethink how to reinvigorate their communities. The Midwest is a prime example of this trend. According to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, “the Midwest cannot hope to keep up with other regions or international competitors without a vital entrepreneurial sector.”



[1]The Council notes that “immigrants, risk takers by nature, are unusually successful entrepreneurs, more than twice as likely as native-born Americans to start their own firms.” As a result, immigration is one of the strategies to which communities are repeatedly turning to fuel economic growth.

A budding place-based awareness of the important contributions that new and existing immigrants make to neighborhood revitalization is seen in the increasing number of cities pursuing a nexus of immigrant welcoming, integration, and economic development initiatives. In this report, we focus on the journeys of three places—two cities and one state—in their efforts to implement strategies for future economic success that depend on immigration. The initiatives are taking place against a backdrop of tepid progress toward comprehensive federal reform of the U.S. immigration system.

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