Photo Credits:
Lauren Cutshall
Visit Saint Paul

The Journey to Belonging in the Twin Cities

PROMOTING FULL PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN THE TWIN CITIES

Policymaker Statements

"Minneapolis' immigrant and refugee communities are irreplaceable in the vibrancy of our communities and economic competitiveness. The data shows our immigrant and refugee neighbors are central to true inclusive economic recovery and this plan maps out an opportunity to think differently and advance equitable and accessible solutions. The strength and vitality of our immigrant and refugee communities is a foundational element of our path forward – a path that must be focused on coming together to build out an economic ecosystem that is a more inclusive place to live and do business. We are grateful to the Twin Cities Gateways for Growth Leadership Team for developing this comprehensive report and bringing the importance of our immigrant and refugee communities into clearer focus."

MINNEAPOLIS MAYOR JACOB FREY

"Saint Paul's long history of welcoming new residents into our city is a proud tradition we carry forward today. As we work to create an even more safe, welcoming and inclusive community, keeping this promise means ensuring our city remains a place where every resident can thrive, and feel a sense of belonging. This plan will inform and assist our continued development of policies and programs that support our immigrant and refugee communities alongside our ongoing work to meet the housing, economic, neighborhood safety and workforce development needs in our community."

SAINT PAUL MAYOR MELVIN CARTER

Leadership Team Joint Statement

The Minneapolis Regional Chamber, City of Minneapolis, City of Saint Paul, and St. Paul Area Chamber are honored to have participated in the Gateways for Growth initiative. This strategic planning process has confirmed what many of us already knew – immigrants and refugees are essential to our economic competitiveness. We also know that immigrants and refugees face significant barriers when it comes to access to economic opportunity, affordable housing, culturally competent care, civic engagement, and much more. We are grateful for the opportunity to lend our expertise and networks to the development of a plan that aims to make the Twin Cities a more welcoming region for all residents. By creating an infrastructure that welcomes and celebrates the contributions of immigrants and refugees, we are making an important investment in the future of the Twin Cities.

THE GATEWAYS FOR GROWTH LEADERSHIP TEAMS

MINNEAPOLIS

- Grace Waltz, Vice President of Public Policy, Minneapolis Regional Chamber
- Michelle Rivero, Director, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, City of Minneapolis

SAINT PAUL

- Edmundo Lijo, Assistant City Attorney, City of Saint Paul
- B Kyle, President and CEO, St. Paul Area Chamber
- Rita Dibble, Vice President for University Advancement, Foundation Executive Director Metropolitan State University

We would also like to acknowledge Patrisha Deutsch who assisted with this initiative as part of her internship through North Hennepin Community College and thank her for her contributions.

Photo Credit:Paola Carlson-Sanchez/Meet Minneapolis

Table of Contents

5. Advisory Committee Acknowledgment

6. Introduction

8. Summary of the Engagement Process

10. Data Reports in Depth

14. Recommendations: Goals and Strategies

20. Conclusion

21. Bibliography and Appendix

Photo Credit:
Visit Saint Paul

Advisory Committee Acknowledgment

The Leadership Teams express our sincere gratitude to the following leaders and organizations for their commitment and contributions which resulted in the creation of this plan:

- Dr. Bruce Corrie
- Coalition of Asian American Leaders
- CAPI
- COPAL
- SEWA-AIFW
- Hmong 18 Council
- LatinoLEAD
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce
- UNIDOS MN
- YMCA
- Advocates for Human Rights
- CLUES
- Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans
- African Economic Development Services
- HACER
- Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
- International Institute of Minnesota
- Minneapolis Regional Chamber
- St Paul Area Chamber
- RealTime Talent
- Minnesota Council of Latino Affairs
- Youth Coordinating Board
- Minnesota Africans United
- MORE
- Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
- Hennepin County Office Multicultural Services
- Hennepin County Library
- Leo Lopez, Old National Bank
- Employees of the City of Saint Paul
- Employees of the City of Minneapolis
- Ramsey County
- University of Minnesota
- Metropolitan State University

Photo Credit: Meet Minneapolis

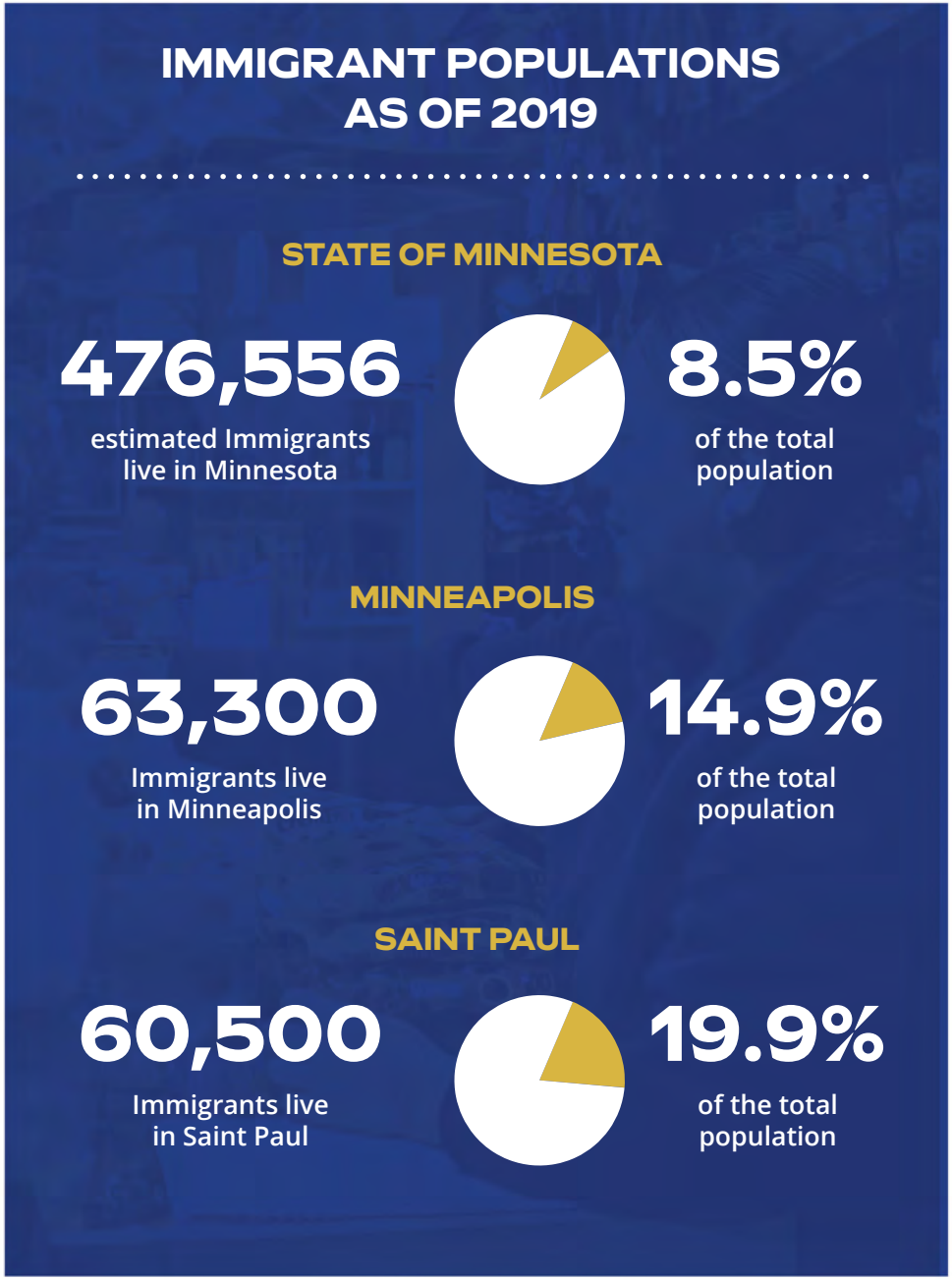
Photo Credit: Visit Saint Paul

Introduction

The impact of immigrant and refugee residents on the economic, social and civic life in the Twin Cities cannot be overstated. When immigrant and refugee residents are welcomed and find a sense of belonging in our cities, the positive impacts are experienced by all communities. Identifying how to foster that sense of belonging is the principal focus of this report.

In 2019, the immigrant and refugee population of the state of Minnesota was estimated at 476,556 people, making up 8.5% of the total population of the state[1]. This includes an estimated 60,500 people in St. Paul (19.9% of Saint Paul's residential population)[2], and an estimated 63,300 residents in Minneapolis (14.9% of Minneapolis residential population.)[3]

In the fall of 2020, Saint Paul (the City of Saint Paul, with its supporting partner the St. Paul Area Chamber), and Minneapolis (the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, with its supporting partner the City of Minneapolis) each received separate technical assistance grants from the Gateways for Growth Initiative (G4G). G4G is a partnership between the organizations Welcoming America and New American Economy (now American Immigration Council). The G4G awards included the preparation of two new data reports entitled "New Americans in Minneapolis," and "New Americans in St. Paul and the East Metro Area" (Page 20).



1 *New American Economy. 2021. "MapthelmpactMinnesota." https://www. newamericaneconomy.org/ locations/minnesota/*

2 *https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/06/NAE-Brief.New-Americans-in-Minneapolis.202.pdf citing data from 5-year samples of the American*

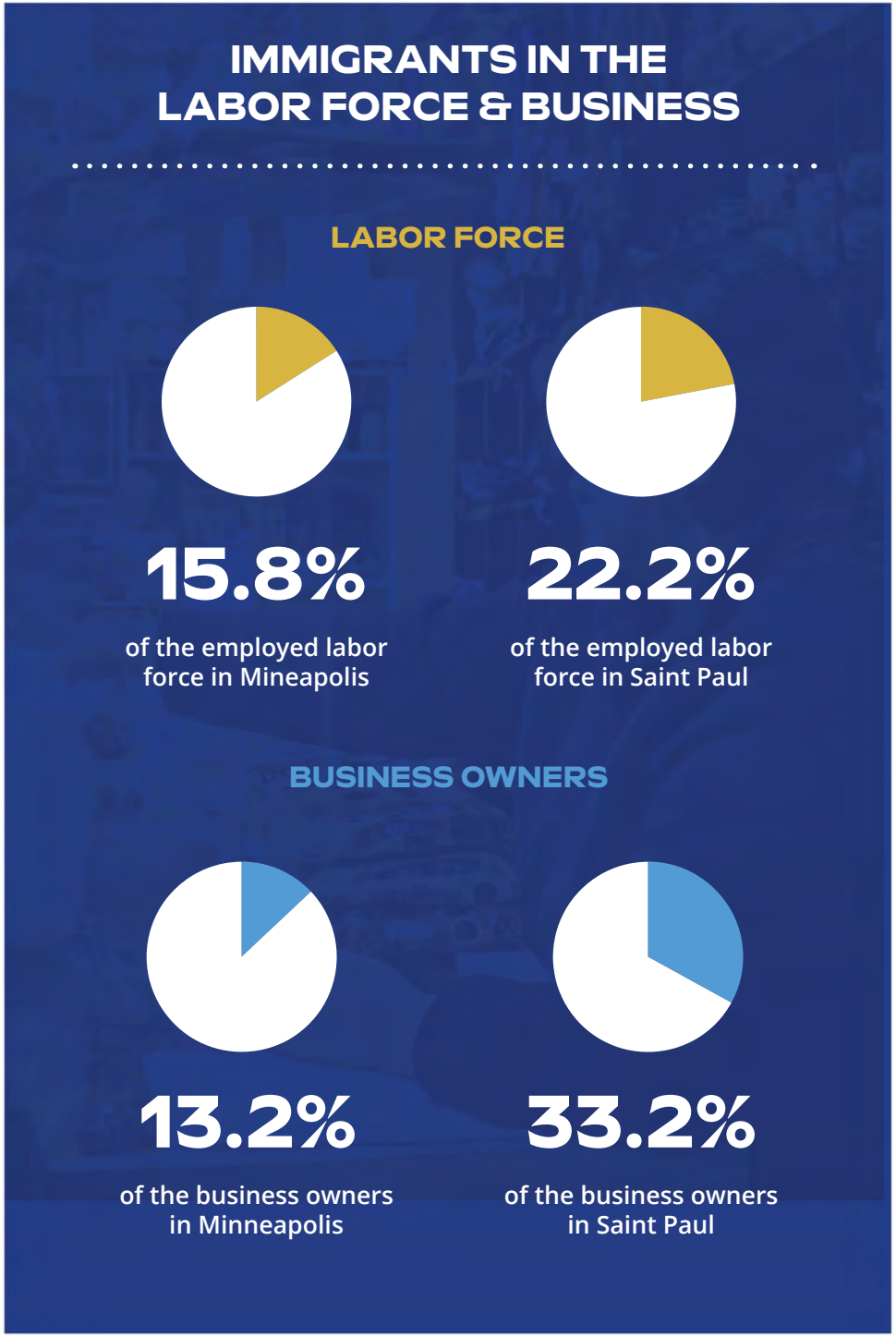
3 *Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to the area including the City Minneapolis and part of the City of St. Anthony, Minnesota) https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/09/G4G_St.-Paul_Report-9.2.21-2.pdf citing data from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019)*

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

Data from these reports show that immigrant and refugee populations in Minneapolis and Saint Paul have grown significantly in recent decades, and that immigrants and refugees make substantial contributions to the social, economic, and cultural life in the Twin Cities. In the economic area alone, immigrants and refugees represent 15.8 % of the employed labor force in Minneapolis and 22.2% of the employed workforce in Saint Paul as well as 13.2% of the business owners in Minneapolis and 33.2% of the business owners in Saint Paul. Workforce development is critical to the stability and growth of the Twin Cities' and the Minnesota economy, and will only be strengthened and fostered through a welcoming infrastructure that connects Minnesota employers with this growing immigrant and refugee workforce and supports immigrant and refugee businesses. More details from these data reports appear in the section entitled Data Reports in Depth. (The complete reports can be found in the Bibliography.)

The Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul are dedicated to fostering communities that are welcoming to all regardless of race, ethnicity or place of origin. Through the development of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs in Minneapolis and the Immigrant and Refugee Program in Saint Paul, both Cities have initiated programming that promotes community health and stability, public safety, economic vitality and growth.

The Twin Cities area is experiencing dynamic and transformational changes creating an incredible opportunity for healing and growth. This inclusion plan is a starting point for a more robust welcoming infrastructure that fosters a sense of belonging in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Additional voices and energy are invited, welcomed and encouraged to help make Minneapolis and Saint Paul cities where all residents can achieve success, thrive, and prosper.



Summary of Engagement Process

The engagement process began in the spring of 2021, set against the profound and ongoing societal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the many effects following the killing of George Floyd in May 2020. Each city's engagement began with initial meetings to introduce the Gateways for Growth opportunity and invite interested individuals and organizations to join an Advisory Committee. Twin Cities residents were in shock and exhausted and those emotions were reflected in preliminary conversations.

In addition to identifying the impacts of ongoing community trauma, participants expressed frustration at what was being described as "over-engagement" without ever seeing input reflected in a final product. There was an understandable skepticism regarding whether this initiative would result in tangible outcomes benefiting the Twin Cities immigrant and refugee community. An additional complication was that each municipality's initiative was inviting the same organizations and communities to join their initiative, doubling the time commitment for stakeholders who ultimately formed the Advisory Committee. Leaders of the Saint Paul and Minneapolis Gateways for Growth initiatives recognized that establishment of a joint Twin Cities Advisory Committee was a more efficient use of stakeholders' time and talents to develop recommendations in this report. In pursuing a joint engagement strategy, the leadership team held one on one conversations with representatives and leaders from community, community based organizations, academic institutions, business community, legal service providers, refugee resettlement organizations and governmental offices at the municipal, county, and state level (including libraries). These individual conversations led to the creation of the Twin Cities Gateways for Growth Advisory Committee.

Development of trust was an integral part of engagement. The scope of commitment for the Advisory Committee was three monthly meetings with a goal of developing a strategic plan while honoring that the final product would be a living document meant to be amended and changed in real time in response to current realities and community input.

Photo Credit:Paola Carlson-Sanchez/Meet Minneapolis

Engagement Timeline and Summary

Once a joint Saint Paul/Minneapolis Advisory Committee was established, the Leadership Team reviewed the Welcoming Standards and consolidated those standards into the following four thematic areas as a starting point for discussions with the Advisory Committee:

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

SAFE COMMUNITIES

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, HOUSING, AND HEALTHCARE

The Advisory Committee met monthly from August-November of 2021 to endorse the thematic areas selected, discuss the most significant topics impacting immigrant and refugee residents of the Twin Cities and develop recommendations that resonated with the Advisory Committee as being reflective of the unique situations in each city.

Photo Credit;
Paola Carlson-Sanchez/
Meet Minneapolis

SUMMARY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 2021

AUG

August Discussion Topics

- Endorsement of thematic areas
- Improvement of engagement strategies
- Increase of knowledge and awareness for residents
- The importance of two-way communication
- Increased funding to support immigrant and new American residents
- Worker protection
- Ensuring equitable access in consideration of technology
- Utilizing existing engagement opportunities to communicate information and empower people to action.

SEPT

September Discussion Topics

- What creates a sense of community belonging and how to create pathways and systems for new residents to find success
- Whether to create one joint report covering both cities or separate reports per city
- Consensus for developing concrete, actionable items with shorter-term implementation time frames
- Potential metrics and benchmarks of success

OCT

October Discussion Topics

- October's discussions consisted of 4 separate meetings, one per thematic area, to refine and focus the goals and strategies previously advanced in each thematic area.

NOV

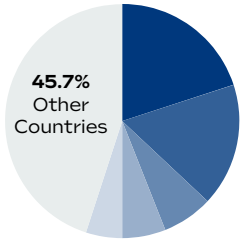
November Discussion Topics

- The final meeting was focused on reviewing the draft recommendations, identifying any last concerns and thoughts, and addressing how to move forward with publication of the plan.
- For more detailed information on discussion topics from each meeting, please visit the Gateways for Growth website, where meeting summaries can be found.

Data Reports in Depth: Demographics

Top Countries of Origin for Immigrants

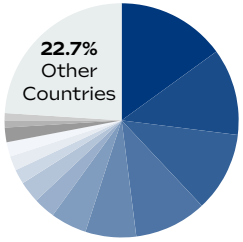
MINNEAPOLIS



- Somalia (**20.3%**)
- Mexico (**16.5%**)
- Ethiopia (**7.2%**)
- Ecuador (**5.5%**)
- India (**4.8%**)

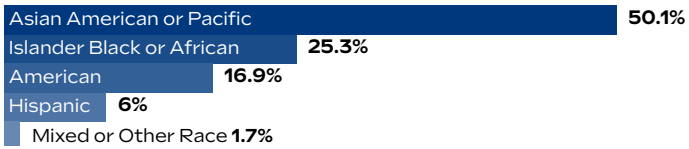
Other countries include China (**4.4%**), Laos (**3.6%**), Kenya (**3.1%**), Thailand (**2.9%**), Korea (**2.6%**), El Salvador (**1.6%**), Vietnam (**1.3%**), Canada (**1.3%**), Germany (**1.2%**), and Guatemala (**1.0%**).

SAINT PAUL



- Laos (**15%**)
- Thailand (**12.3%**)
- Mexico (**11.1%**)
- Burma (Myanmar) (**9.8%**)
- Ethiopia (**7%**)
- Somalia(**5.4%**)
- Eritrea (**3.4%**)
- China (**2.9%**)
- Vietnam (**2.4%**)
- Philippines (**2.2%**)
- Korea (**2%**)
- India (**1.6%**)
- Kenya (**1.3%**)
- Canada (**0.9%**)

The immigrant population by race and ethnicity in Saint Paul:



Languages Spoken at Home

MINNEAPOLIS

17,400
immigrants living in the city had limited English language proficiency

27.8%
of the immigrant population

Among them, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:[4]

Spanish **(44.0%)**
Somali, Oromo, Beja, and other Cushite language **(34.6%)**
Hmong **(10.3%)**

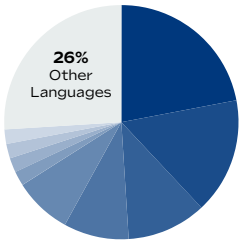
SAINT PAUL

17,900
immigrants living in the city had limited English language proficiency

30.1%
of the immigrant population

Among them, the top languages spoken at home other than English

Hmong **(27.9%)**
Spanish **(22.8%)**
Karen **(22.6%)**
Vietnamese **(4%)**



The top languages spoken for immigrants living in Saint Paul:

- Hmong **(22.2%)**
- Spanish **(16%)**
- Karen **(11.4%)**
- English **(11.1%)**
- Somali, Oromo, Beja, and other Cushite language **(8.5%)**
- Amharic and related **(7.5%)**
- Vietnamese **(2.2%)**
- Filipino, Tagalog **(2.2%)**
- Chinese **(2%)**
- French **(1.8%)**

Demographics and Population

MINNEAPOLIS

16.4%
of immigrants and refugees in the Minneapolis area are recent arrivals, with less than 5 years of residency in the United States.

83.6%
of immigrants and refugees in the Minneapolis area have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

6.3%
Immigrants and refugees made up of the total population in the area in 2019.

+2.4%
Increase in the immigrant and refugee population during the same time.

of total population growth in the area was attributable to immigrants and refugees.

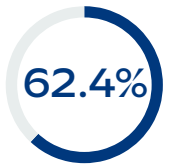
SAINT PAUL

17.1%
of immigrants and refugees in the Saint Paul area are recent arrivals, with less than 5 years of residency in the United States.

82.9%
of immigrants and refugees in the Saint Paul area have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

4.4%
Total population increase in Saint Paul between 2014 and 2019

+15.2%
Increase in the immigrant and refugee population during the same time.



of total population growth in the area was attributable to immigrants and refugees.

4 *Due to small sample size, we are unable to release estimates for other languages spoken at home by immigrants and refugees with limited English proficiency in the area, including Laotian, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, and Chinese.*

Data Reports in Depth: Economy

Spending Power and Tax Contributions

Given their income, immigrants and refugees contributed significantly to state and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes levied by state and local governments.

MINNEAPOLIS

11.2% Foreign-born households held of all spending power in Minneapolis.

In 2019, immigrant and refugee households in the Minneapolis area earned **$1.7 billion.**

$284.8 million went to federal taxes[5]

$159.0 million went to state & local taxes[6]

$1.2 billion left in spending power

SAINT PAUL

14.7% Foreign-born households held of all spending power in Saint Paul.

In 2019, immigrant and refugee households in the Saint Paul area earned **$1.3 billion.**

$182.7 million went to federal taxes[5]

$120.6 million went to state & local taxes[6]

$966.2 million left in spending power

Entrepreneurship

MINNEAPOLIS

2,700
immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs lived in the Minneapolis area in 2019.

$37.6 million
generated by Immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs in business income in 2019.

While **8.5%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, **6.9%** of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.

13.2%
of the business owners in the metro area despite making up **14.9%** of the population.

SAINT PAUL

4,000
immigrant entrepreneurs generated

$43.8 million
in business income for Saint Paul in 2019.

Immigrants account for **33.2%** of the city's business owners, and **13.5%** of the total business income in Saint Paul.

While **6.6%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs,

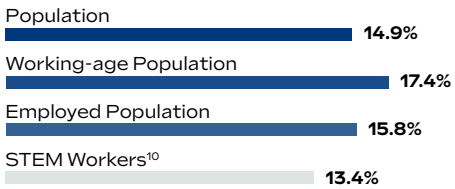
11.5%
of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.

Workforce

MINNEAPOLIS

Although the foreign-born population made up **14.9%** of the area's overall population, they represented **17.4%** of its working-age population[7], **15.8%** of its employed labor force, and **13.4%** of its STEM workers in 2019.[8]

Immigrant shares of the...



Immigrants in Saint Paul are...

28.8%
more likely to be working age than their U.S.-born counterparts.

Working-age immigrants in the labor force are more likely than their U.S.-born counterparts to be employed.

As of 2019,

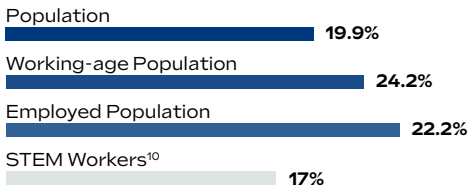
95.2% of immigrants in the labor force were employed

94.3% were U.S.-born residents.

SAINT PAUL

Although the foreign-born made up **19.9%** of the city's overall population, they represented **24.2%** of its working-age population,[7] **22.2%** of its employed labor force, and **17%** of its STEM workers in 2019.[8]

Immigrant shares of the...



5 *U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."*

6 *Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."*

7 *At the state level, immigrants make up 10.2 percent of the employed labor force*

8 *STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Math.*

Data Reports in Depth: Housing & Naturalization

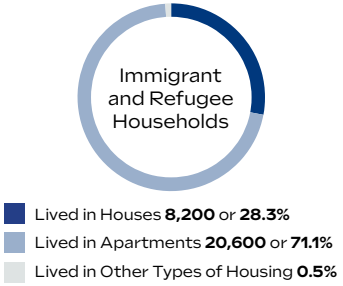
Housing

MINNEAPOLIS

In 2019, **24.8%** of immigrant and refugee households in the Minneapolis area owned their own homes, compared to **52.6%** of U.S.-born households.

The total property value of immigrant and refugee households

$1.9 billion



75.2% of immigrant and refugee households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was

$215.3 million

78.5%

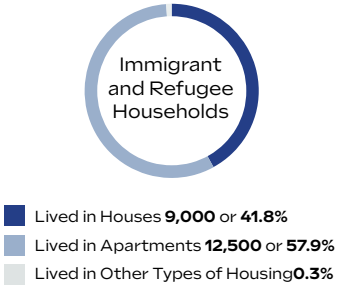
of immigrant and refugee households in the area had access to broadband connection in their place of residence as compared to **87.5%** of U.S.-born households in 2019.

SAINT PAUL

In 2019, **32.5%** of immigrant households in Saint Paul owned their own homes, compared to **54.4%** of U.S.-born households.

The total property value of immigrant households was

$1.5 billion



67.5% of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was

$152.1 million

71.4%

of immigrant households in the city had access to broadband connection in their place of residence as compared to **84.1%** of U.S.-born households in 2019.

Naturalization

MINNEAPOLIS

45.1% Naturalized U.S. Citizens (28,500)
16.6% Likely Eligible to Naturalize (10,500)
38.4% Not Eligible to Naturalize(24,300)

SAINT PAUL

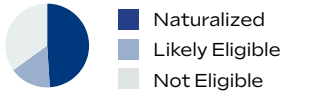
50.2% Naturalized Citizens (30,400, nationally 48.7%)
15.1% Likely Eligible to Naturalize (9,100, nationally 15.9%)
34.7% Not Eligible to Naturalize (21,00, nationally 35.4%)

If all immigrants nationally who are eligible to naturalize became U.S. citizens, their earning potential would increase by

+8.9%[9]

19.0%

of households in the Minneapolis area had at least one foreign-born resident in 2019.



Nationally, **48.7%** of immigrants are naturalized citizens, **15.9%** are likely eligible to naturalize, and **35.4%** are not yet eligible.

9 *Enchautegui, Maria E. and Linda Giannarelli. 2015. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute.*

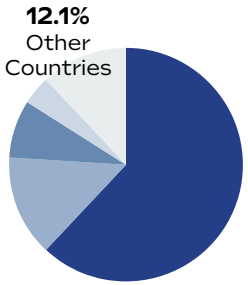
Data Reports in Depth: Refugees and DACA

Refugees

MINNEAPOLIS

20,200

refugees, or **31.9%** of the foreign-born population in the Minneapolis area, were likely refugees.[10]



The top countries of origin for the refugee population in the area were Somalia (**62.4%**), Ethiopia (**14.0%**), Laos (**7.7%**), and Thailand (**3.8%**).[11]

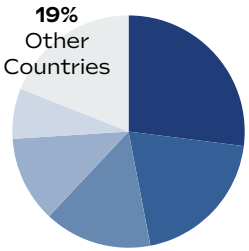
About **14.0%** of refugees held at least a bachelor's degree...

...and about **5.1%** held an advanced degree.

SAINT PAUL

26,700

refugees, or **44.1%** of the foreign-born population in the Saint Paul area, were likely refugees.[10]



Top countries of origin for the refugee population in Saint Paul were Laos **(26.5%),** Burma (Myanmar) **(20.1%)**, Thailand **(14.9%),** Somalia **(12.1%)**, and Ethiopia **(7.4%).**

DACA-Eligible Population

In 2019, DACA-eligible people made up

MINNEAPOLIS

1.7%

of the immigrant population in the Minneapolis area.

SAINT PAUL

1.5%

of the immigrant population in the Saint Paul area.

10 New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America."

11 Due to small sample size, we are unable to release estimates for other countries of origin for refugees in the area, including Vietnam, Kenya, Liberia, and Sudan.

Photo Credit: Paola Carlson-Sanchez/Meet Minneapolis

Recommendations

GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE INCLUSION

The New American Reports helped the Leadership Teams and the Advisory Committee to develop the following goals and strategies for immigrant and refugee inclusion in each of the four thematic areas: Connected Communities; Safe Communities; Equitable Access to Education Housing and Healthcare; and Economic and Workforce Development. Brief descriptions of each thematic area are contained below, followed by a set of goals and strategies within each.

1. CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Build connections between newcomers and long-term residents by strengthening relationships and communicating shared values.

GOAL 1

Foster a sense of belonging and increase awareness of immigrant and refugee cultures and contributions.

GOAL 2

Improve language access, cultural competence, and communication to better connect communities.

GOAL 3

Ensure all residents are fully able to participate in civic, economic, and social life.

STRATEGIES

1. **Promote Cultural Destination Areas (Saint Paul)/Cultural Districts (Minneapolis) as a driver of economic vitality and increased awareness of immigrant and refugee cultures and contributions.**
2. **Create, expand, and provide additional resources to trusted messenger, ambassador, and navigator programs within local government and community-based organizations to identify and communicate information and opportunities to share with immigrant and refugee communities.**
3. **Increase cultural community awareness within receiving community, specifically by increasing opportunities to:**
   - Share meals
   - See and interact with people who are different on positive and equitable grounds
   - Share current and timely information on immigration status so people have a better understanding of the different types of immigration status that immigrants and refugees hold.

STRATEGIES

1. **Hire and compensate individuals with cultural competency through lived experience, including multicultural awareness and multilingual skills.**
2. **Increase funding for accurate translation and interpretation support with the goal of centralizing in-house translation and interpretation services in city, county and state level offices.**

STRATEGIES

1. **Support acquisition of immigration status, including naturalization, by increasing awareness about the benefits of naturalization and creating greater access to financial, legal, and educational resources to overcome barriers to gaining immigration status.**
2. **Facilitate an understanding among all residents of civic rights and duties, how to participate in the electoral process, and how to engage with elected officials.**
3. **Establish municipal Immigrant and Refugee advisory councils/committees in Minneapolis and Saint Paul as a means for community voices to inform governmental decisions and policy making process.**
4. **Support access to drivers licenses/state identity documents for Minnesota residents, regardless of immigration status as a tool for promoting public safety and building trust with the community.**

Photo Credit:
Dusty Hoskovec/Meet Minneapolis

2. SAFE COMMUNITIES

Foster trust and build relationships between long time residents, newcomers and local law enforcement, and safety agencies, and additional first responders.

GOAL 1

Encourage strategies that address and combat hate crimes.

GOAL 2

Improve relationships between law enforcement and diverse communities.

GOAL 3

Incorporate lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to develop and strengthen inclusive emergency management and pathways to recovery.

STRATEGIES

1. **Provide opportunities for education and outreach on what a hate crime is, how it can be reported, and how local stakeholders can help in reporting a hate crime.**
2. **Engage with the community to address root causes of hate crimes while continuing and increasing support for victims.**
3. **Re-examine enforcement strategies in the criminal justice system**

Photo Credit;
Paola Carlson-Sanchez/
Meet Minneapolis

STRATEGIES

1. **Increase funding and training around cultural competency in police departments.**
2. **Provide general education about interactions with law enforcement via Safety Academies (crime prevention, visas, separation ordinances, ways to avoid negative interactions with law enforcement, etc.)**
3. **Educate the community and provide information about how interactions with law enforcement can and may result in immigration consequences.**
4. **Support access to drivers licenses/state identity documents for Minnesota residents, regardless of immigration status as a tool towards promoting public safety and building trust with the community.**

STRATEGIES

1. **Maximize available funding to:**
   - Invest in programs to help people experiencing behavioral health crises with a health-first approach instead of a law enforcement one.
   - Fund housing opportunities for people impacted by community violence.
   - Fund business opportunities for local/small businesses impacted by community violence.
2. **Ensure existing governmental Inclusive Emergency Management Plan includes immigrant, refugee, and New American communities.**
   - Conduct community assessment to identify unique needs and assets of different community groups in the context of an emergency.
   - Build trust and long-lasting relationships with all community members, including those who have historically been left out of the planning, response and recovery processes.
   - Use diverse and inclusive communication methods to reach and engage immigrant, refugee, and New American communities.
   - Encourage local governments to employ continuous evaluation to improve methods of emergency management and have local governments arrange opportunities for all community members to provide feedback on emergency management programs, policies, and procedures.

3. EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, HOUSING & HEALTHCARE

Ensure that community services and opportunities are available to all residents including newcomers.

GOAL 1

Work with St. Paul and Minneapolis Public School Districts to welcome newcomers and further develop recommendations regarding equitable access to education.

GOAL 2

Increase opportunities to obtain and experience safe and accessible housing.

GOAL 3

Promote access to culturally competent healthcare.

Photo Credit:
Paola Carlson-Sanchez/
Meet Minneapolis

STRATEGIES

1. Promote and fund education and cultural training for property owners and property management agencies.
2. Promote opportunities to create safe and affordable multi-generational housing.
3. Increase awareness of how to access resources to assist with the homeownership process and financing options.
4. Expand and tailor current social services to meet the specific needs of immigrant and refugee residents experiencing homelessness (e.g. language access, culturally competent providers)

STRATEGIES

1. Identify and share information about culturally and linguistically competent care providers and healthcare navigators
2. Promote trainings on trauma-informed care delivery and basic health information in multiple languages and formats

Photo Credit:
Rebecca Rabb/
Meet Minneapolis

4. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Empower residents to meet their full economic potential by recognizing their skills, talents, and abilities. Ensure economic systems are prepared to leverage new and existing talent so that all can prosper, thrive, and contribute to their local economy.

GOAL 1

Advance self-sufficiency and wealth-building among immigrants and refugees to generate economic growth.

STRATEGIES

1. **Promote greater access to financial resources via financial literacy, technical assistance, and better connections to banking institutions through community development financial institutions and existing platforms.**
2. **Create pathways for financial literacy and skills training opportunities through public institutions of higher education.**
3. **Elevate existing entrepreneurial toolkits, resource guides and entrepreneurship hubs, all of which should be accessible in multiple languages and non-internet-based formats.**

GOAL 2

Promote workforce pathways for individuals to access job and career advancement opportunities.

STRATEGIES

1. **Utilize existing resources and business mentoring for successful onboarding, training, development, and career advancement of the immigrant and refugee workforce.**
2. **Create culturally informed environments that lead to workforce retention such as:**
   - Offer access to transportation for employees
   - Include prayer and meditation spaces within offices and job sites
   - Offer no-interest microloans
   - Create or expand leadership development training opportunities
   - Hire managers and supervisors with cultural competency through lived experience, including multicultural awareness and multilingual skills
3. **Create pathways through public institutions of higher education for financial literacy and skills training opportunities.**

GOAL 3

Foster incorporation of high-skilled and advanced degreed immigrant and refugee residents into the workforce.

STRATEGIES

1. **Create short-term paid apprenticeships so that people with foreign experience and education can develop required skills.**
2. **Examine what other states have implemented to permit educated professionals from other countries to be licensed, including in the healthcare industry and create a pathway to equivalence for foreign earned credentials to allow a speedy pathway to employment.**
3. **Work with local organizations to connect residents with skills obtained abroad with employment opportunities in Minnesota.**
4. **Advocate to improve the H-1B visa and employment-based permanent residency program.**

Photo Credit: Visit Saint Paul

Next Steps: Implementation Plan

Twin Cities immigrant and refugee communities are not bound by jurisdictional lines. For this reason the recommendations above are regional in nature and not city-specific. The next phase of this initiative will require each City to review these recommendations and identify implementation priorities reflecting each City's current situation and resources.

In addition to city specific strategic planning, successful implementation will depend upon regular participation of a wide range of voices, from city residents to policy makers, business leaders and nonprofits, community based organizations, academia, members of faith based communities, immigration legal service providers, philanthropic community as well as other interested community members. Also paramount to successful implementation of these recommendations is the recognition that this inclusion plan is a living document that represents the first phase of a multiyear initiative to rally Twin Cities community members to take an ownership interest over the plan, develop metrics to track progress, set city specific priorities, and identify resources to support implementation of the goals and strategies identified in this document.

Regular opportunities for community members to convene for implementation focused events will ensure that progress can and will reflect the ongoing dynamics of each city's immigrant and refugee community.

The following priorities were identified as especially critical for immediate action:

- Increase the number of residents in Minneapolis and Saint Paul that obtain United States Citizenship through naturalization.
- Increase opportunities for immigrant and refugee communities to obtain competent legal advice on immigration legal issues.
- Support the creation of a statewide "Office of New Americans."
- Promote Cultural Destination Areas (Saint Paul) / Cultural Districts (Minneapolis) as a drivers of economic vitality and increased awareness of immigrant and refugee cultures and contributions.
- Create new and elevate existing entrepreneurial toolkits, resource guides and entrepreneurship hubs, all of which should be accessible in multiple languages and non-internet-based formats.
- Create, expand, and provide additional resources to trusted messenger, ambassador, and navigator programs within local government and community-based organizations to identify and communicate information and opportunities to immigrant and refugee residents.
- Develop infrastructure across sectors (business, philanthropy, academic, faith based, civic organizations, governmental) to support new large scale resettlement.
- Create pathways and remove barriers so that community voices can more effectively inform municipal policy impacting immigrant and refugee residents
- Develop additional short term, intermediate and long term implementation objectives and performance metrics for tracking progress.
- Development of mid and long term goals, strategies and metrics will require continued collaboration between the Cities, Chambers, and additional community stakeholders.

If you wish to connect with the G4G Leadership Team to share your thoughts and expertise, or if you wish to get involved, please email mspg4g@gmail.com.

Photo Credit: Lauren Cutshall/Visit Saint Paul

Conclusion

The engagement process that resulted in this plan brought people together for challenging conversations and created avenues and frameworks to develop trust and inspiration. The immigrant and refugee inclusion strategies advanced in this plan identify opportunities for change and healing that, if seized and embraced, will ensure that the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul move beyond welcoming and towards a future where all city residents, regardless of place of origin, feel a strong sense of home and belonging. The Leadership Teams are immensely grateful for the time, energy and commitment that the individuals and organizations involved in this process dedicated to creating this plan.

To learn more, become involved in the Gateways for Growth initiative and track updates regarding implementation, please visit the Gateways for Growth page on the Minneapolis Regional Chamber website, and the websites of the City of Saint Paul Immigrant and Refugee Program and the City of Minneapolis Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

Photo Credit: Lauren Cutshall
Visit Saint Paul

Bibliography and Appendix

In addition to each City's New Americans report, the Gateways for Growth leadership team compiled the following data resources, many produced by organizations which were part of the Advisory Committee. These resources offer additional and valuable insight about immigrant and refugee inclusion as well as Minnesota's immigrant and refugee communities.

New Americans in Minneapolis (https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/new-americans-in-minneapolis-2/)

New Americans in Saint Paul (https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/new-americans-in-saint-paul-and-east-metro-area-mn)

Moving from Exclusion to Belonging: Immigrant Rights in Minnesota Today (https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Publications/Index?id=6)

Latino Minnesotans in the time of Covid-19 (https://www.hhh.umn.edu/sites/hhh.umn.edu/files/2020-12/CWGPP_COVID_Work_Report_Full.pdf)

Distance Learning and its Impact on Latino Students (https://mn.gov/mcla/assets/Distance%20Learning%20Survey%202020_tcm1099-435183.pdf)

Latino Attitudes During the COVID-19 Crisis A Summary of the National Latino Decisions Survey (April 2020) (https://mn.gov/mcla/assets/Latino%20Decisions%20Perception%20Survey%20Information_tcm1099-429708.pdf)

A Rural Latino Vision to Strengthen Communities for a Thriving Minnesota (https://mn.gov/mcla/assets/English%20Revised%20Report%20PDF%2012.20.17_tcm1099-321641.pdf)

Building Community, Embracing Difference: Immigrants, Refugees, and Local Government Outreach in Rural Minnesota (https://www.ruralmn.org/building-community-embracing-difference-immigrants-refugees-and-local-government-outreach-in-rural-minnesota/)

COVID-19's Unequal Impacts on Minnesota Workers: A Race and Gender Lens (https://www.hhh.umn.edu/sites/hhh.umn.edu/files/2020-12/CWGPP_COVID_Work_Report_Full.pdf)
East African Community Design Group September, 2014 to May, 2015 (https://www.ymcanorth.org//sites/default/files/MIC-East%20African%20Community%20Design%20Group%20Summary.pdf?openyts=1631482185987)

Hmong Community Design Group January to May, 2015 (https://www.ymcanorth.org//sites/default/files/MIC-Hmong%20Community%20Design%20Group%20Summary.pdf?openyts=1631482688716)

Latino and Hispanic Community Design Group January to May, 2015 (https://www.ymcanorth.org//sites/default/files/MIC-Latino%20Hispanic%20Community%20Design%20Group%20Summary.pdf?openyts=1631483094621)

Degreed Immigrants – College-educated foreign-born adults in Minnesota – Summary Data Report – July 2020
Immigrant Workforce – Prepared for Prosperity Ready – August 14, 2020

The Minnesota Chamber Foundation "Growing Minnesota - The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Minnesota", March 2021 Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Minnesota – March 2021 (https://www.mnchamber.com/sites/default/files/The%20Economic%20Contributions%20of%20Immigrants%20in%20Minnesota%203.23.21.pdf)

Minnesota Chamber of Commerce - " the Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Minnesota: Conclusion and Recommendations". March 23, 2021 (https://www.mnchamber.com/blog/economic-contributions-immigrants-minnesota-conclusion-and-recommendations)

Developing Effective Supports for Immigrants and Refugees: Collaboration Across Institutions and Community – Sep 2017 (https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/DevelopingEffectiveSupportsImmigrantsAndRefugees-CollaborationAcrossInstitutionsCommunity_9-17.pdf)

Ideas at Work: Addressing Needs and Assets in Immigrant and Refugee Communities (https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/SpeakingForOurselves_IdeasAtWork_4-16.pdf)

Summary Report from Speaking for Ourselves: A Study with Immigrant and Refugee Communities in the Twin Cities (https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/SpeakingForOurselves_OverviewReport_12-15.pdf)

A Race to Close the Disproportionate COVID-19 Death Rates in Minnesota's Asian Community (https://caalmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CAAL-HPHA-Covid-Report-Fin-041921.pdf)

America is Home: How Individuals, Families, Cities & Counties Benefit by Investing in Citizenship (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3ce8865417fc2819a24bc2/t/5b9826d1cd8366126f70b0c2/1536698073553/C4C+Report+2018+FINAL.pdf)

Leaving Money on the Table The Persistence of Brain Waste among College-Educated Immigrants (https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-brain-waste-analysis-june2021-final.pdf)

Higher Ed Immigration Portal (https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/state/minnesota/)

NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool (https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2)

Belonging At Work Is Essential—Here Are 4 Ways To Foster It (https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebeccafraserthill/2019/09/16/belonging-at-work/?sh=62bc219b4ab8)

Beyond Diversity: How Firms Are Cultivating a Sense of Belonging (https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/belonging-at-work/)

Supporting and Co-Creating Meaningful Community Advisory Boards (https://nrcrim.umn.edu/sites/nrcrim.umn.edu/files/2021-02/Supporting%20and%20Co-Creating%20Meaningful%20Community%20Advisory%20Boards%20_01292021.pdf)

Voices from the Front Line: Workers in Janitorial and Hospitality Occupations offer Insights into Labor Challenges (https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2021/voices-from-the-front-line)

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQStFW_AyyI

Powerpoint: https://www.minneapolisfed.org/~/media/assets/events/2021/regional-economic-conditions-frontline-workers-perspectives/regional-economic-conditions-frontline-workers-perspectives-slides.pdf?la=en

The Journey to Belonging in the Twin Cities

PROMOTING FULL PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN THE TWIN CITIES

Minneapolis
City of Lakes

SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

MPLS
REGIONAL CHAMBER

ST PAUL
AREA CHAMBER

GATEWAYS for GROWTH