



Immigration Knowledge and Understanding Questionnaire

Please return this form by \_\_\_\_\_ to the address at the bottom of the page

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Office/Office Seeking \_\_\_\_\_

If different specify here \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Party Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Background Information

Are you aware that neighbors across our community have businesses being started by people who were not born here? They take risk, they pool resources, they provide wonderful things like restaurants as well as important services. What would you do to increase immigrant entrepreneurship?

The city of Cleveland has a rich history of immigration dating back over 130 years. Over this period immigrants and their descendants helping to transform Cleveland into what it is today and shaping into the future. Immigration continues to play an important role in Cleveland and our surrounding communities. These immigrants are vibrant and diverse coming from every continent and bringing with them unique cultures and experience. Not only this, but they work in important fields, open businesses, and create jobs. They weren't born here but Cleveland becomes their home to. As an individual running for or holding an elected office it is key to understand the international community that calls Cleveland home. At Global Cleveland we work to make Cleveland a place that is open and welcoming to all. We hope that you found the following statements informative and the questions thought-provoking. Most of all we hope that you will join us in this mission to continue making Cleveland a better, greater city and home for all its residents.

In Partnership with

- ASIA Inc
Asiatown
Badondo Community of Greater Cleveland
British American Chamber of Commerce of Ohio
CCWA
CIP
Cleveland Cultural Gardens
Collaborative Chambers Alliance

- Connecting Cleveland
Global Shapers Cleveland
NAACP of Cleveland
OPAWL
Refugee Response
US Together
USCRI - Cleveland
Young Latino Network



### Personal Experience with the International Community

What is your experience serving and interacting with the international community in your own community and NEO at large? How has this shaped your understanding of your community and your role as a leader?

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### Transform Cleveland into an International Hub of Innovation

Annually, hundreds of international students graduate from Case Western, TRI-C, and CSU with in-demand skills who are not being retained in the area to contribute to population and economic growth. Can you share what policies you will support to address this?

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Cleveland has sister cities all around the world such as Ibadan, Nigeria; Lima, Peru; Gdansk, Poland; and Bangalore, India. What is your game plan for making Cleveland a more open and international-facing city to strengthen and grow these relationships?

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Our population loss from 2010-2018 would have been even worse if not for the 37,000 immigrants who moved into Cuyahoga County during that time. These new residents have offset the population loss by 45%. How can we attract more immigrants to move here to continue this important trend?

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On average, 500-700 refugees are resettled to Cleveland every year, from countries such as Nepal, Afghanistan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia. The Biden-Harris administration announced they will increase refugee admissions to 125,000 a year nationally, up from 15,000 this year. This means Cleveland's three refugee resettlement agencies will receive 3-4x as many families as they did this past year. How do you plan to open Cleveland for these new residents and provide refugees with the opportunity to contribute to Cleveland?

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### Set the Table for Internationalization and Economic Growth

There are over 1000 immigrant entrepreneurs in Cleveland, are 38% more likely to be entrepreneurs than U.S. born residents. What portion of the economic development office in the City of Cleveland would be devoted to supporting immigrant entrepreneurs under your leadership?

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As evidenced by this information, immigrants are a key part of building a successful and strong regional economy. With a spending power of over \$3B, how will you support integrating this powerful demographic into a regional growth plan?

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### Embrace and Cultivate a Culture of Inclusion and Shared Prosperity

The important and paramount 'diversity, equity and inclusion' conversation happening right now often does not include members of the international community living in Cleveland. Would you support policies in the private and public sectors that take into consideration the voices of this diverse and important constituency? Would you vote for and promote policies in government to achieve these goals?

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Midwest cities leading the way in city wide growth and development through the inclusion of immigrant communities, such as Detroit and Pittsburgh have created taskforces or commissions to analyze the effects of immigration on their city, examine the challenges facing immigrants and immigrant communities, and promote immigrant success and build strong relationships between native-born and immigrant communities. Would you support the creation of such a taskforce or commission in Cleveland made up of city representatives, immigrant community leaders, business leaders, and members of Cleveland's non-profit community?

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Would you support adding members and staff to the Community Relations Board that represent the changing immigrant population in Cleveland such as an African Immigrant Community Liaison and Arab Immigrant Community Liaison?

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Were you aware that in 2017 Cleveland created a [Language Access Plan](#) that outlines how to engage with ESL (English as a Second Language) and ELL (English as a Learning Language)? How would you ensure implementation of this plan, as such services are mandated by [Title VI](#) of the 1964 Civil Rights Act?

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Would you support expanded language training in public schools for English speaking students as well as contextualized ESL support for English language learners at all levels of education and workforce development?

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Do you support more immigrants, refugees, and international students moving to Cleveland/Cuyahoga County? If no, why not? If yes, how?

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Would you like to receive information and data on immigrants and refugee populations and communities in Greater Cleveland?  **YES**  **NO**

Would you be interested in receiving more information from Global Cleveland and our partners?

**YES**  **NO**

Thank you for participating in this survey. We hope you have found this informative and useful as a guide to local policy advancement.



# Rebecca Maurer

**For Cleveland City Council, Ward 12**

*Old Brooklyn, Slavic Village, Brooklyn Centre & Tremont*

Dear Global Cleveland & Partners,

Thank you for the invitation to participate in and support a discussion of Cleveland's international community. As a candidate for Cleveland City Council, I appreciate the opportunity to think big about ways to support and embrace our international, immigrant, and refugee communities.

When I was growing up, we didn't travel much. An exciting trip for me was going crossing the river and going to the West Side Market for a field trip. We rarely left northeast Ohio except to see family once a year. But in my 20s, I had the chance to live, work, and study in Cape Town, South Africa. That experienced changed the course of my life.

First, living in Cape Town made me want to become a lawyer. South Africa's constitution was written in 1994 after the fall of apartheid. It has social and economic rights -- such as the right to housing and the right to clean water. While in Cape Town, I worked with a group trying to put those constitutional provisions into practice. Through that work I realized the law wasn't dry and boring like I'd imagined as a kid -- it had very tangible impacts on the world around us. When I flew back from Cape Town to Chicago, I stopped at a bookstore on the way back from O'Hare and got my LSAT study book. Three months later I took the LSAT and 6 months later I received my acceptance letter to Stanford Law School.

Second, living in South Africa was the first time I saw immigrant experiences up close. South Africa has many migrants and economic refugees from the rest of the continent and xenophobic attacks were common. While I was working in one Cape Town's many townships, there was a string of attacks against Somalis who owned the "tuck shops" -- small corner stores in the poor and under-resourced shanty towns. I got to witness a lot of dialogue among residents about why the attacks were happening and what to do about them. Those conversations gave me a language about immigration issues that I brought with me back to my work here Ohio. In other words, these international experiences shaped the lawyer I've become.

After finishing law school and moving back to Cleveland, my work has intersected with our city's international community in a few ways. First, I'm proud to have participated in supporting many of our internationally-focused institutions such as the Refugee Response farm. I also attended the Stop Asian Hate march this past winter. Second, in my work as a Legal Aid attorney, I occasionally staffed events at Thomas

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**Rebecca**  
**MAURER**  
for Cleveland City Council WARD 12

Jefferson, the CMSD school that serves many people in our immigrant and refugee communities. Through that work I got to meet many of the teachers and parents at that school and saw the work they were doing.

And, perhaps most directly, I'm very proud to have organized one of Cleveland's only direct actions in response to the Trump immigration bans in 2017. Because I'd worked for the Federal Courts, I'd been able to attend the naturalization ceremonies that take place at the Federal Courthouse every few weeks. In fact, it was one of my favorite parts of the job. When the news of the immigration ban came down, I worked my judge and got approval for the Courthouse to allow in a group of supporters for the next naturalization ceremony. We had signs that said "Thank you -- you are welcome here" in French, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, and five other languages and lined the entranceway to the Ceremony space. It was wonderful.

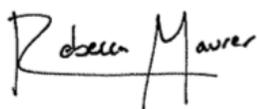
At a moment when anti-immigration rhetoric is used to at the national level to whip up anger and hatred, it's more important than ever to recognize that we are stronger together. That same us vs. them mentality I first saw used against Somali tuck shop owners is stronger now in America than it has been in a long time -- or, at least, more visible. That's why it's more important than ever to be explicit and clear in our solidarity and commitment to Cleveland's international community. We must be forceful and outspoken in this work, rather than shrinking from it.

With that in background in mind, I will turn to more of the substantive questions from the questionnaire.

- When it comes to highly-skilled immigrants and supporting their visa access, that work must be done in conjunction with business partners since they have the most control over sponsoring visas that can help us keep these workers. I'd be interested in hearing from the immigrant community on their experiences with local business and hearing whether there are opportunities for educating HR departments or business leadership through GCP or other business partners.
- When it comes to attracting more immigrants, the key question to ask ourselves is why people resettle in a particular city. Aside from those who move to Cleveland through refugee resettlement without much of a choice, probably the most significant reason why an immigrant family would choose Cleveland is because they already have family or community here. In other words, the best way to have more immigrants come is to make sure the immigrants already here are supported, safe, and prosperous.
- With the Biden administration increasing the number of refugees, Cleveland has the chance to welcome new neighbors. We have strong institutions around town such as Global Cleveland and Refugee Response that will be working with these increased arrivals. I look forward to working with these groups to hear what the current needs are the ways City Council can be supportive.

I'll end by saying that I welcome the opportunity to learn more about these issues. Many of the questions on the attached sheet showed gaps in my own knowledge that I look forward to filling. Nothing better embodies the spirit of a global view of Cleveland than the excitement to learn from each other. I hope the forum and continued conversations in the months ahead provide an opportunity to do exactly that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebeca Maurer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'R' and 'M'.