

Northeast Ohio is facing a crucible moment. The region has felt the effects of the “Great Reshuffle” and a recent survey found that 80% of companies reported experiencing a talent shortage.¹ And of that 80%, almost all of them (94%) noted they are not getting enough qualified applicants for their hiring needs. For the first time in decades, job creation is not the issue and it is no surprise that the question of the year is, “Where are the workers?”

While there is no silver bullet to answering this question, there is a solution right in front of us that is being overlooked—the **international newcomer community**.

HERE ARE THE WORKERS

International Newcomers are immigrants, refugees, international students, and all other community members who are born outside of the USA.

CHALLENGES

The talent pool is shrinking. The population of Northeast Ohio has gradually declined for decades and this trend will only continue due to an aging population and the outmigration of Ohioan born young professionals.²

The existing talent pool is under qualified. Even when applicants are found, they do not have the right skillset or training—especially for the tens of thousands of STEM jobs that are currently unfilled in the region.⁴

Hiring non-US born talent is too complicated. Even if hiring practices were more open to international talent, many people believe the process of sponsoring a visa is too tedious and expensive.



SOLUTIONS

Despite decades of overall population decline, **the international newcomer community continues to grow in the region**—increasing 7.3% between 2014 and 2019 to bring the total to 5.7% of the total population in Northeast Ohio.³ Whether they are refugees, international students, or skilled professionals, international newcomers are moving to the region and will continue to do so in the future.

Northeast Ohio, with the help of Ohio G.R.E.A.T. passed in 2018, is home to **nearly 7,000 international higher education students, many of whom graduate with STEM degrees.**⁵ These candidates are qualified and eager to work in our region after graduation. Currently, less than 10% of these students are given the chance to stay and work in the region.

Not all international talent requires a sponsored visa. International students are temporarily authorized to work for up to 3 years in specific fields through two different federal visa programs. And refugees who are resettled in the region (approximately 1,900 refugees in 2022 alone) are qualified to work with their Employment Authorization Document (EAD).⁶



GLOBAL CLEVELAND
WE STRENGTHEN OUR CITY -
BY WELCOMING OUR WORLD.

 **rise together**

This Call to Action was commissioned by Global Cleveland, a nonprofit that attracts, welcomes, and connects international newcomers to economic, social, and educational opportunities in Northeast Ohio to help our region grow and thrive. It was written by Rise Together, an impact consulting firm that partners with the economic development, workforce and newcomer communities to create a future where everyone can thrive, not just survive.

Turn to learn how to take action



A PROVEN DRIVER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

If putting international newcomers at the forefront of the region's recovery plan feels too risky, we need look no further than across the lake at our neighbors in Detroit. Over a decade ago, Detroit had the "foresight to look at immigration as a driver" of the economic recovery they were desperately seeking.⁷ And, by focusing on removing barriers and empowering the mighty asset that is the international newcomer community, Detroit not only experienced positive economic effects but also saw improvement in community protection and safety, signs of real estate market vitality, significant business growth and many more positive attributes.⁸

In short, the international newcomer community is a natural—and powerful—asset for our communities and when cities are built to welcome and support them, everyone benefits.

CALL TO ACTION

While current efforts to upskill, improve training programs and encourage workers to move to our region are important, we are making an urgent call to action today to bring international newcomers who live in our region into our workforce without delay.

1. HIRE INTERNATIONAL TALENT

Commit to adjusting your hiring practices to no longer screen out candidates who do not hold a US passport, require visa sponsorship, and/or do not speak English as their first language. In order to unlock this source of high-quality workers, we have to allow them to apply.

- To access the international newcomer pipeline, visit www.globalcleveland.org/herearetheworkers/

2. SPREAD THE WORD

Commit to including international newcomers in your day to day meetings and communication plans. Immigration is an increasingly confusing term and we are all responsible for changing the public narrative to one in which international newcomers are seen as a natural asset to our community. This includes but is not limited to:

- Repost one of Global Cleveland's "Workforce Wednesday" social posts each month
- Feature the stories of international newcomers currently within your organization

3. INCLUDE IMMIGRANTS IN YOUR DEIB EFFORTS

Commit to explicitly including international newcomers in your diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) efforts to ensure they are not overlooked or excluded. This includes but is not limited to:

- Include the category "international newcomer" in company DEIB policies
- Create culturally responsive policies to support international newcomers

4. CONNECT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL NEWCOMER COMMUNITY

Stay connected to the international newcomer community and be the first to know about more ways to access the international talent pool by signing up at www.globalcleveland.org/herearetheworkers/

This Call to Action is endorsed by:

