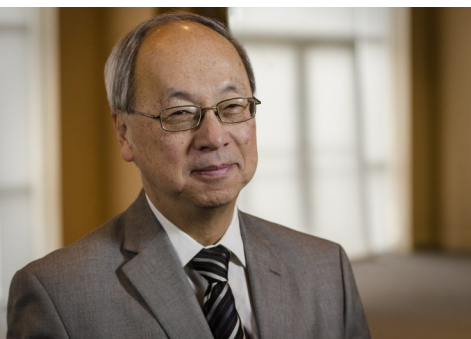


Director's Message



This month we are excited to launch the Michigan International Talent Solutions (MITS) program that will help skilled immigrants who are new to Michigan return to their careers. The MITS program

offers a variety of invaluable resources aimed at connecting immigrants in their professional job search with employers who are hiring, particularly in STEM fields.

Our talent pool is a critical factor in the health of our state's economy, now and in the future. With more than 100,000 current job openings in the state, there is great incentive to get our new immigrant job seekers into gainful employment, to restart their lives and contribute to Michigan's economy. As a welcoming state, we recognize that diversity and inclusion gives us a huge competitive advantage that is so important to our state's success in the global economy. We are committed to building an international workforce that includes people from all over the world.

We all have a stake in developing the full potential of every resident who is ready and eager to work. Immigrant integration of getting our new neighbors connected immediately to jobs and in our communities first involves knowing what resources our communities have to offer, cultivating partnerships with providers of those resources, the nonprofit organizations, workforce developers, schools, places of worship, health care agencies, and so many others, that will make those new to Michigan feel connected.

With the support of Governor Snyder, we have available an unlimited number of great resources and organizations that are eager to help those who now call Michigan home, making them feel most welcome in every community across Michigan.

Best regards,

Bing Goei

Inside This Issue:

- ⇒ **Partner Highlight (Cuban Chamber of Commerce)**
- ⇒ **State of Michigan Program Highlight (MITS)**
- ⇒ **Research Highlight**
- ⇒ **Gallery**



Michigan delegation at the White House "Building Welcoming Communities" Convening in Washington DC on October 7. Represented is MONA, Global Detroit, OneMacomb, Welcoming Michigan and the USCIS Detroit District Office.

Partner Highlight

Cuban Chamber of Commerce

(As of March 2016, the Cuban Chamber of Commerce office is closed.)

The Cuban Chamber of Commerce in Michigan was founded in May 2015 and opened its office in July with the goal of giving Michigan companies a competitive lead in doing business with Cuba when federal trade restrictions between the U.S. and Cuba are lifted.

The mission of the chamber is “To facilitate a working environment fostering a Cuban business community while respecting the culture and heritage of the Cuban people, the sovereignty of the country of Cuba and the business interests of Cuba Chamber of Commerce members.”

The chamber's Executive Director Dana McAllister says there are many diverse opportunities for Michigan companies in both importing and exporting, particularly agricultural products, medical equipment and supplies, and alternative energy. Once federal trade restrictions are lifted, Michigan has the potential to bring in an estimated \$5.9 billion worth of business annually through exports to Cuba.

With a bilingual Spanish/English staff providing assistance to Michigan companies, the chamber is busy doing the groundwork necessary to help pave the way for Michigan and Cuba to do business in the future. This includes conducting several export trade missions to Cuba as well as hosting trade seminars in the coming months.

The chamber offers consulting services to obtain Cuban market research information, Office of Foreign Assets Control licenses, and business introductions to facilitate successful Cuba-related business ventures. In addition, the chamber hosts various events to highlight Cuba's rich cultural heritage and provides networking opportunities for those interested in knowing more about future import/export opportunities and doing business with Cuba. In 2016, the chamber hopes to invite Cuban business officials to Michigan for them to see firsthand all that the state has to offer.

Entrepreneurs, sole proprietors, corporations, and non-profit organizations are welcome to join the chamber at various levels of membership and take full advantage of its many benefits. It is an all-inclusive chamber for companies that are Michigan, U.S. and internationally based.

The Cuban Chamber selected Troy, Michigan as its national headquarters and third location in the U.S. (in addition to Washington D.C. and Miami). Support from Oakland County and the city of Troy was key in the choice of selecting Michigan as its headquarters. This chamber of commerce is not an official Cuban government chamber of commerce and is not affiliated with the Cuban government.

Michigan is home to about 3,400 Cuban born residents and more than 9,400 Michiganders have Cuban ancestry.

For more information on the Cuban Chamber of Commerce please visit: <http://cubachamberofcommerce.com>

Research Highlight

America's Guide to Immigrant Economic Development

Welcoming America's *Guide to Immigrant Economic Development* is an important piece of work that highlights the positive impact that immigration has on cities and provides useful insight on how to utilize immigrant skills. The Guide was unveiled at WE Global Network's 3rd Annual Convening last July.

"...Cities that lead in the 21st century will be those that intentionally attract and incorporate diverse people and ideas, and create the means for talented people from around the world to not only come, but to put down roots." (Steve Tobocman) The vision of this guide is an inclusive nation in which native born Americans and immigrants alike are given the same opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to the community to enhance prosperity and well-being for all. Created in hopes that readers will develop a new understanding of what is possible when economic development and immigrant integration are bridged, the *Guide to Immigrant Economic Development* shows the programmatic opportunities, drive, entrepreneurial spirit, talent and diversity that immigrants bring to a city.

Chapters within the guide range from tips on how to employ highly-skilled immigrant talent and immigrant entrepreneurship, to traditional economic development initiatives such as attracting foreign direct investment capital and boosting regional export. The guide also discusses non-traditional programs including welcoming immigrant talent, retaining international students, urban agriculture, and rural development.

By providing detailed accounts of already functioning programs and strategies, this is a first-of-its-kind guide to inspire local action and give local economic developers, local government, immigrant welcoming partners, and others the tools and ideas necessary to implement and fine tune immigrant economic development programs that will further American cities through immigration.

For the entire guide go to: http://www.welcomingamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Guide-to-Immigrant-Economic-Development_Final.pdf

The Guide Interpreted Explores Each Chapter

Over the next few months, the WE Global Network will explore each chapter of Welcoming America's *Guide to Immigrant Economic Development* by featuring an inspiring story that shows the actual impact of economic development programs, and successful models implementing the work. In its first installation, *The Guide Interpreted* focuses on retaining international student talent. Michigan's Global Talent Retention Initiative (GTRI) is one of three models explored that are helping international students navigate legal and cultural barriers to staying to live and work in the U.S.

To read more, go to: <http://bit.ly/1IrrOwg>

State of Michigan Program Highlight

New Michigan International Talent Solutions (MITS) Program Connects Global Talent with Employers

The new Michigan International Talent Solutions (MITS) program is aimed at providing skilled immigrants with customized job search training and connecting employers with these foreign-born professionals particularly in STEM-related fields. The Michigan Office for New American (MONA) launched the MITS program to support skilled and permanently work-authorized immigrants' return to their professional careers in Michigan.

"We simply cannot afford to have foreign-born professionals, the engineers, doctors, dentists, accountants, lawyers, financial analysts, software developers, scientists, and others, be unemployed or underemployed, or have our employers who need their talent, going with thousands of unfilled jobs," said MONA Director Bing Goei. "MITS is simply designed to make the connection by supporting immigrants in their professional job search and the employers who hire them. We all have a stake in developing the full potential of every resident who is ready and eager to work."

Partnering with national nonprofit Upwardly Global, MITS will train international job seekers to succeed in the professional job search process in Michigan. Participants in the program will learn up-to-date skills regarding U.S. professional resume development; assistance completing job applications; networking and marketing skills; interview skills and preparation; and salary negotiation. Resources and services through MITS are provided at no charge to participants.

Employers benefit from the MITS program and there is never any placement fee for employers who use the program. As a pre-screening resource, it facilitates the hiring process in select professions and saves them money by validating skills and employability levels. On average, there is a 90 percent retention rate after one year of employment which reduces turnover and related costs associated with rehiring.

The MITS program supports employee retention rates by providing highly-customized job search training and coaching that helps to match the right talent with the right employer, reducing employee turnover. MITS supports Michigan employers with access to cultural awareness training. Matching unemployed or underemployed skilled immigrants with opportunity to return to their professional career in the U.S. and in Michigan, creates loyal employees and reduces the likelihood of high-cost turnover.

MITS applicants must possess a Green Card or have other permanent work authorization status; possess at least a bachelor's degree or higher from a foreign university; have a minimum of two years' professional work experience outside of the U.S.; have lived in the U.S. for less than five years; not worked in their professional field since moving to the U.S.; and be proficient in English.

Prospective MITS applicants and employers who are interested in accessing the MITS international talent pool can contact Annie Fenton, MITS program director, at fentona@michigan.gov or go to www.michigan.gov/mona for more information.

Gallery



Mission

To help grow Michigan's economy by attracting global talent to our state and promote the skills, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit of our immigrant communities.



2nd Annual Welcoming Convening hosted by Welcoming Michigan at Macomb County Community College.



Gov. Rick Snyder spoke at the inaugural meeting of the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs on September 29 in Lansing. The new 15-member Commission was created earlier this year to replace the Michigan Council on Arab and Chaldean Affairs. The Commission has begun working on establishing its priorities, review bylaws and schedule meetings all with the intent to enhance economic opportunity, prevent discrimination and spread awareness.



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We encourage you to submit articles, information, photos, and comments to us – your input is important. If you would like to submit articles for the MONA News *Connection*, you may submit them via e-mail to NewAmericans@michigan.gov.

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