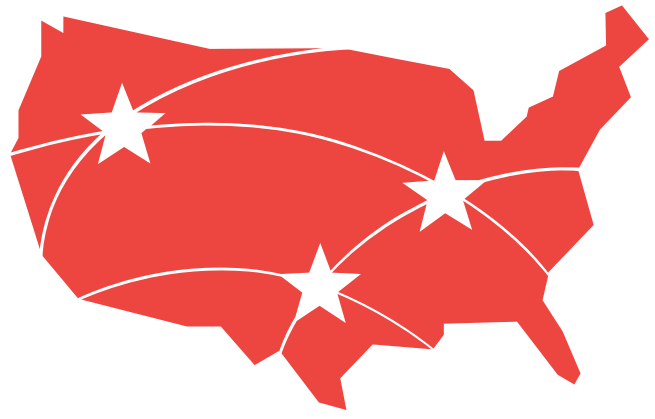


# GATEWAYS *for* GROWTH



## NKY Welcoming Plan



# Letter from Brent Cooper, Lee Crume & Leisa Mulcahy:

There is a lot to love about Northern Kentucky - the view, the vibrancy, and the strong sense of community. From urban living to bluegrass farmland, this place is special, and the people of Northern Kentucky are the most important ingredient to its unique charm.

Our region is experiencing a time of great prosperity, while concurrently our employers are experiencing hardships in their demand for workforce. In response, the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the partners of the Growing Regional Outcomes through Workforce (GROW) NKY collective impact strategy are using the community's full complement of assets to grow, attract, and retain a globally competitive workforce.

Supporting this mission through a continued heritage of hospitality, we must understand how our community is evolving and how we can best meet the needs of those who live, work and play here. As part of GROW NKY's broader focus of attracting and retaining the best and brightest talent to our region, the need for new talent is evident and being addressed through a variety of strategies ranging from young professional engagement to regional marketing. In the spirit of creating a welcoming community, we must promote and harness the capacity of all members of our community if we want to stay economically competitive and socially and politically relevant in the world today.

This plan reflects the work of the Gateways for Growth Taskforce that includes more than 50 key stakeholders across multiple sectors including industry, community organizations, education, and public service. With a year of planning, discovery, and hard work, the group has developed a comprehensive, yet realistic community plan for immigrant integration. It provides a clear outline of priorities and direction for how we can help all members of our community thrive. Their vision speaks volumes to the importance and momentum of this work today.

This plan will require all of us to come together as a community to bring these goals to fruition. We all have a role to play and our collective future depends on its success. Please join us in committing to make Northern Kentucky the most welcoming community in the country.



**Brent Cooper,**  
President & CEO  
NKY Chamber



**Lee Crume**  
President & CEO  
NKY Tri-ED



**Leisa Mulcahy**  
Vice President, Workforce  
NKY Chamber

# Letter from Grant Makers: New American Economy and Welcoming America

The Gateways for Growth Challenge was created in 2016 to provide communities with demonstrated leadership and commitment to developing an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming environment to all residents the opportunity to receive support for that endeavor. Now in its third round, New American Economy and Welcoming America have awarded more than 50 communities nationwide with tailored economic research on the contributions of immigrants; technical assistance in the development of a multisector strategic plan; and matching grants to bolster this work. Awardees have ranged from Anchorage, Alaska to Portland, Maine and include communities as small as Grand Forks, North Dakota and as large as Dallas, Texas. Each community receives this award because they have shown a deep commitment from local government, business and civil society to work collaboratively toward concrete, action-oriented recommendations to ensure that city is addressing both the challenges and opportunities facing the immigrant community and is creating pathways for all residents to succeed. Northern Kentucky is one of a select few communities to receive all three components of this competitive grant opportunity.

Northern Kentucky was one of only 14 communities selected nationally for the 2019 Gateways for Growth award to receive research from NAE and technical assistance from NAE and Welcoming America to support this work. The NKY Chamber Foundation also received a matching grant of \$12,500 from Duke Energy. Grant partners included Catholic Charities of Louisville - Kentucky Office for Refugees, Duke Energy, Gateway Community and Technical College, and the Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board.

Northern Kentucky's grant application stood out to our selection team due to the commitment to create a multi-sector plan focused on economics while recognizing the importance of communities feeling a sense of belonging in the region. The NKY Chamber and Gateway Community and Technical College, through the Growing Regional Outcomes through Workforce (GROW) NKY collective, identified well respected partners from many sectors who would contribute in meaningful ways.

**Kate Brick**, Director of State and Local Initiatives, **New American Economy**

**Mo Kantner**, Associate Director of State and Local Initiatives, **New American Economy**

**Jordyne Krumroy**, Regional Manager, **Welcoming America**



# Building Belonging Through Community Connections

 **\*ACTIVE\*** - Active Planning or Actual Implementation is Underway

 **\*IN PROGRESS\*** - Partners Identified; Programming and Timeline being determined in 2020

 **\*NEW\*** - Partners, Programs, and Timeline to be Determined




**Vehicle Organizations:** Boone County Public Library, Center for Great Neighborhoods, City of Ft. Mitchell, Esperanza Center, Kenton County Public Library, RefugeeConnect, and World Affairs Council.

## Celebrate and promote NKY's global diversity

### VISION

**All immigrant residents in NKY feel welcome, valued, integrated, and celebrated.**

### STRATEGIES

-  Share immigrant data/stories broadly
-  Collect and share best practices around cultural celebrations within companies
-  Promote active participation in NKY's International Festival
-  Drive engagement in existing cultural activities (tours, talks, genealogy work, etc.)
-  Maintain and share a calendar that highlights diverse events and celebrations across the region
-  Market multilingualism as beneficial and a desired skill
-  Highlight or profile local immigrant community leaders, elders, academic achievers (K-12, college), innovators, entrepreneurs, and/or business owners
-  Implement a strategic marketing campaign promoting the contributions of immigrants and the overall value of diversity



**75** different languages spoken in **16** school districts across NKY  
*(Source: NKY Cooperative for Educational Services)*

# Encourage and support strong immigrant leadership and civic engagement

## VISION

All immigrant residents in NKY have access to and feel empowered to pursue leadership opportunities within governmental, non-profit, and volunteer organizations

## STRATEGIES

- Create pathways for leadership development to enhance presence of immigrants on boards and committees
- Increase participation of immigrants in county citizen academies, then create a way for graduates of the program to assist with the planning and content development of future classes
- Establish study groups for those preparing for naturalization to build camaraderie and a support network for these individuals
- Foster naturalization of eligible immigrants and facilitate voter registration and civic participation of naturalized citizens
- Host naturalization ceremonies at various sites across the region to allow more people to experience this process
- Encourage naturalized citizens to teach citizenship classes or to tutor for the citizenship exam
- Ensure these strategies have shared ownership and leadership, and mutual benefit among immigrant communities and the broader community

# Facilitate meaningful cross-cultural connections

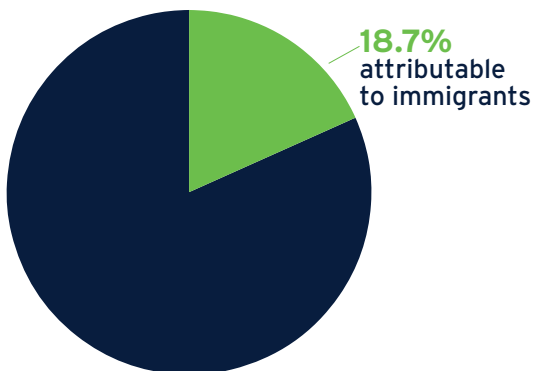
## VISION

All immigrants in NKY have strong networks across diverse groups based on multiple connections and affiliations in all sectors.

## STRATEGIES

- Incorporate training focusing on cultural diversity, racial bias, and micro-aggressions to eradicate misconceptions and discrimination into education, workforce, and the community
- Develop and implement programming to facilitate connections across cultures
- Convene partner organizations working with immigrant communities twice annually for a partner success forum
- Develop a formalized process pairing immigrant, refugee, and international students with local families to facilitate long-term relationships and network building

### Total Population Growth in the District (NKADD)



(Source: New American Economy Data Report)

Over the past decade

# 77%

of positive migration to the region is due to immigrants  
(source: NKU CEAD)



# Safety, Health and Equitable Access to Community Services

 **\*ACTIVE\*** - Active Planning or Actual Implementation is Underway

 **\*IN PROGRESS\*** - Partners Identified; Programming and Timeline being determined in 2020

 **\*NEW\*** - Partners, Programs, and Timeline to be Determined

**Vehicle Organizations:** Children's Inc., City/County Governments, Covington City Police Department, Esperanza Latino Center, HealthPoint Family Care, Local Libraries, Public School Systems in Boone, Kenton and Campbell Counties, NKY Chamber, NKY Health Department, NKY Education Cooperative, and TANK.

## Support healthier immigrant communities

### VISION

All immigrant residents in Northern Kentucky have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate and competent healthcare.

### STRATEGIES

-  Encourage trainings in culturally and linguistically appropriate services in healthcare (i.e. National CLAS Standards)
-  Pursue additional opportunities to assist people without access to health insurance
-  Ensure Language Access Plans are evaluated and updated on a consistent basis and that staff are adequately trained on policies and procedures
-  Establish outreach to immigrant communities on primary and preventative healthcare services
-  Leverage partnerships with local immigrant and ethnic organizations to identify and address barriers to accessing services
-  Increase immigrant representation among staff and boards
-  Develop outreach strategy to ensure appropriate, local providers are included in the implementation of the plan
-  Continually assess immigrant patient care through data analysis



The total household income for NKY immigrants is **\$428.7M**, attributing to **\$38.9M** in local and state taxes and **\$77.6M** in federal taxes.



In 2017, **51.9%** of immigrants in the region owned their homes, with a total property value of **\$690.8M**.

(Source: New American Economy Data Report)

# Build trust and awareness of public safety services and resources

## VISION

**All immigrant residents in NKY have support, information, and access to all resources and services in a safe, non-discriminatory, linguistically accessible and timely manner.**

## STRATEGIES

- 🌐 Develop outreach strategy to ensure appropriate, local partners are included in the implementation of the plan
- 🌐 Regularly update and educate organizations with clearinghouses of local information for immigrant residents
- 🌐 Improve collection, assessment, and utilization of data to enhance public and private services for immigrants
- 🌐 Increase interpretation and translation services provided by nonprofit, private, and public sectors
- 🌐 Help immigrants feel safe and secure in sharing information (e.g. census), applying for help, and accessing all public services.
- 🌐 Create partnerships among public and private agencies to enhance communication, educate the community, and build strong network connections with the immigrant community
- 🌐 Collaborate with local immigrant social and community networks to build trust, outreach, and increase access to information and resources
- 🌐 Increase immigrant representation in the public, non-profit and private sectors

# Promote equitable access to education

## VISION

**All immigrant residents in NKY have access to quality education and opportunities that propel them toward academic and professional success.**

## STRATEGIES

- 🌐 Gather and assess data of English Learners (EL) and their families to identify assets and challenges
- 🌐 Work to ensure all school districts foster a welcoming environment for families, ensuring that all information is linguistically and culturally accessible
- 🌐 Increase professional development opportunities for staff on working cross-culturally with students and families and in a way that is Trauma-informed
- 🌐 Educate families on their rights to language access and accessibility of resources in schools
- 🌐 All schools develop inclusive family engagement strategies to encourage family participation in student academic achievement and school activities
- 🌐 Partner with school districts to increase immigrant representation among teacher and administrative staff

**In 2017, immigrants in the region contributed...**

**\$11.5M to Medicare**



**\$45.5M to social security system**



*(Source: New American Economy Data Report)*

# Workforce Development

 **\*ACTIVE\*** - Active Planning or Actual Implementation is Underway

 **\*IN PROGRESS\*** - Partners Identified; Programming and Timeline being determined in 2020

 **\*NEW\*** - Partners, Programs, and Timeline to be Determined







**Vehicle Organizations:** Brighton Center, Boone County Public Schools, Cincinnati Compass, Children, Inc., Covington Independent Schools, GROW NKY, NKY Chamber, Staffmark, Verst Logistics, and University of Cincinnati.

## Support students to attain education required for success in the workforce

### VISION

**All immigrant residents in NKY have equitable access to quality career education, training, and workforce development opportunities that propel them toward professional success.**

### STRATEGIES

-  Conduct an assessment and mapping of current resources
-  Ensure workforce related pathways, programs, and events for K-12 students are accessible and visible to English Learners and their families
-  Ensure workforce related career and licensure pathways, programs, and events for adult learners are accessible and visible to English Learners and their families
-  Connect immigrants and refugees with foreign-earned credentials to state licensure and credentialing pathways
-  Develop training for workforce development system staff on licensure/credentialing pathways and how to integrate them into larger career pathway guidance
-  Promote Adult ESL classes and coordinate resources across region to meet each community's needs



# 52%

of organizations have sponsored an employment-based visa for at least one worker in the past 5 years

(Source: SHRM)

### Immigrants in the region comprise

## 3.5%

of the total labor force population

## 4.4%

of the working age population

## 7.7%

of all STEM workers in the Northern Kentucky labor force

(Source: New American Economy Data Report)



# Establish and support inclusive employer policies and practices

## VISION

All regional employers have inclusive recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement processes in place to harness the skillsets of the immigrant workforce and create clear career pathways and opportunities for all immigrants.

## STRATEGIES

- 🌐 Conduct an assessment and mapping of current resources
- 🌐 Promote, develop, and share employer best policies and practices for inclusive hiring and retaining international workforce
- 🌐 Expand existing opportunities to ensure immigrant economic inclusion is part of workforce development partner organization agendas
- 🌐 Establish regular meetings between workforce development organizations, employers and NKY Chamber, service providers, and education institutions to share and elevate best practices
- 🌐 Learn from companies that are celebrating diverse cultures well
- 🌐 Promote multilingualism as an asset in the hiring process
- 🌐 Train businesses on legal issues and documents related to hiring immigrants, refugees, and international talent
- 🌐 Support welcoming legislation that promotes diversity and inclusion in NKY which creates a diverse talent pool and talent pipeline

# Enhance access to career pathways and successful professional outcomes for immigrant workers

## VISION

Workforce development and career reintegration programs will be visible and accessible to all immigrants.

## STRATEGIES

- 🌐 Encourage and promote the development of language access policies and practices for institutions within workforce development system
- 🌐 Connect workforce partners to professional development opportunities and resources to assist front line staff with providing inclusive and culturally responsive services
- 🌐 Develop guides to help immigrants and refugees navigate workforce development resources and career/licensure pathways
- 🌐 Integrate foreign-credential and licensure pathways into career pathway guides
- 🌐 Establish a professional connector or ambassador/mentor program



In 2017, immigrants made up **4.2%** of the business owners in the region despite making up **3.5%** of the Northern Kentucky population.

*(Source: New American Economy Data Report)*



Among the region's population aged **25** and older, immigrants in the region had higher levels of education than their U.S.-born counterparts with **33.1%** holding a bachelor degree or higher, compared to **27.9%** of U.S. born citizens.

*(Source: New American Economy Data Report)*



**Fatou Souare**  
Operations Manager



Fatou Souare grew up in Senegal, West Africa, and never so much as thought of America. But then she fell in love, with an American. “My dream was to stay in Senegal and try to help the people there. That’s the heart that God gave me,” she says. “Then I went to my cousin’s wedding in the city.”

There she met a teacher from Louisiana. A year later, in 1998, they married, and she moved to the United States. Things went well, except he insisted she stay home. So when their fourth child entered preschool and she wanted to attend college, he objected. She moved out.

That, she explains, is how she ended up in Hebron, Kentucky, temporarily at a friend’s home. “I didn’t have a car, but I found a school right next to me—American National University.” Souare finished her associate’s and bachelor’s degrees in business administration and accounting, and landed a front desk job at the Comfort Inn in Florence. At the same time, she raised her children and reached out to assist other new arrivals from Africa.

“I would go to the African store and say, ‘If you know someone who is having trouble—an application for a job, for housing, or doesn’t know their way—I don’t know everything, but a lot of stuff I’ve already figured out how to do.’”

By 2016, only four years after moving to Kentucky, Souare landed her dream job. As an operations manager at Staffmark, she helps businesses and workers alike, and is particularly adept at guiding new arrivals, directing them to English classes and outlining how they must painstakingly work their way back up the career ladder. She also co-founded the Kentucky African Women’s Association, a nonprofit that helps people in need.

“You can see, people who had a big job in Africa, they’ll say, ‘I was a lawyer.’ I say, ‘It doesn’t count here. You’re starting all over.’ I know it’s hard for them, but they have to understand that it was their decision [to seek safety in the United States]. It was their life, or their job,” she says.



**Johannes "Hans"  
Frederik Philippo**  
Owner



It was 1977, and Johannes "Hans" Frederik Philippo was working on his civil engineering degree in Holland when his girlfriend's father asked him the question: "We are moving to the United States. Are you coming also?" His future father-in-law, a tulip-bulb exporter, wanted to get into the horse business. Kentucky was his destination.

"And in 1978 we moved," says Philippo. "August 24th, my birthday. I was 23 years old, I had no clue. I had \$1,500 in my pocket."

Philippo stayed, married the girl, and in 1986 launched his own business. Holland Roofing now has 30 offices across the Midwest and upwards of 450 employees, most of whom were born in the United States. He had learned about roofing after his father-in-law sold the tulip business in 1980 to breed horses, and a man seeking workers asked if he could read blueprints. "I can draw them for you," Philippo answered.

Philippo was born and raised in Lisse, Holland, the tulip capital of the world. He sold tulips briefly in the United States for his father-in-law, "on the road," he says, "talking only to Americans," thus mightily improving his English. And you might say that later he planted many more bulbs of his own.

In addition to Holland Roofing, Philippo leases real estate; owns Lisse Steakhouse restaurant and House of Orange sports bar; has an insurance company, antique shops, a banquet hall, and more; raises Angus cows for beef on his South Kentucky farm; and owns an amateur soccer team, the Dutch Lions.

The Lions sponsor events to promote soccer, and his businesses donate to causes throughout the region. In 2017, the Kingdom of the Netherlands appointed him an Honorary Consul in Cincinnati. His claim to fame, he says, is that both his adult children live in his zip code. He loves the Midwest.

"The American people accept people so easily and give them a big chance," he says. "And they're fine with people succeeding, and it's awesome. So all I want to say is thank you."

# Acknowledgements

The dedicated partners of the Northern Kentucky's Gateways for Growth Planning Team and Taskforce provided perspective, guidance, and insight throughout the plan development. We deeply appreciate the organizations and individuals for their participation in the process and contributions to the plan. We are also grateful for the numerous community members who shared their stories and ideas.

We especially thank the teams at New American Economy and Welcoming America. Their expertise, encouragement, and support have sparked a movement in our community. Many thanks to Duke Energy for valuing the importance of building a more welcoming community as well as the generous support of workforce development in our region.

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