

Michigan Office for New Americans

Governor Rick Snyder created the Michigan Office for New Americans by Executive Order in January of 2014.

The Mission of the new office is to help grow Michigan's economy by attracting and retaining global talent; to promote the skills, energy and entrepreneurial spirit of our immigrant communities; and, to make Michigan a more welcoming state.

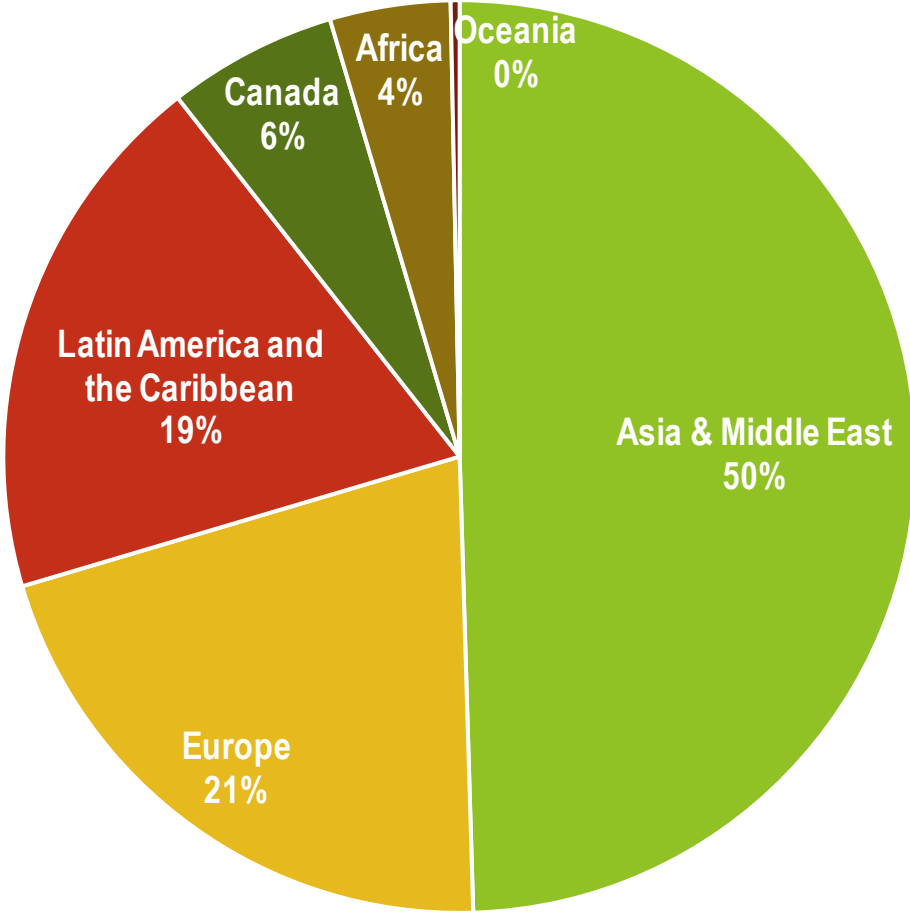
Michigan Office for New Americans

- ▶ Supports immigrant & refugee integration initiatives for the state
- ▶ Coordinates with state agencies providing programs related to services for immigrants
- ▶ Analyzes and makes recommendations to the Governor on state and federal policies and programs
- ▶ Oversees the state refugee services program and the MITS (Michigan International Talent Solutions) program
- ▶ Leads Global Michigan & Ethnic Cabinet initiatives
- ▶ Strives to make Michigan a more welcoming state
- ▶ www.michigan.gov/mona

Diversity in Michigan

- ▶ Approximately 6.7% foreign-born population (so about 664,000 Michiganders)
- ▶ Immigrants accounted for half the Great Lakes region population growth between 2000 - 2015. Offsetting overall population decline for Michigan and other Great Lakes states.
- ▶ 77% of the foreign-born population is between 16 - 64 yrs of age
- ▶ Over 40% have a bachelor or higher degree (compared to 27% of US-born)
- ▶ Top occupations with foreign-born
 - ▶ Agriculture, IT/software development, healthcare and post-secondary teachers

Immigrants in Michigan



■ Asia & Middle East ■ Europe ■ Latin America and the Caribbean ■ Canada ■ Africa ■ Oceania

MONA - the early years

- ▶ Budget
 - ▶ None for the first 1 ½ years
 - ▶ Importance of partnerships
- ▶ Focus of work
 - ▶ Economic and workforce development
 - ▶ Welcoming environment
- ▶ Establishing the Ethnic Cabinet
 - ▶ Assistance with licensing guide selection
- ▶ Creation of MITS
 - ▶ Connection to licensing guides
 - ▶ www.michigan.gov/mits

Skilled Immigrant Licensing Guides

- ▶ MI currently has 40+ skilled immigrant licensing guides
 - ▶ Examples: Accountant, Architect, Barber, Cosmetology, Electrician, Medical Doctor, Physical Therapist, Real Estate Appraiser
- ▶ One dedicated phone number to call for licensing assistance for skilled immigrants
- ▶ Average about 20,000 hits per year
- ▶ Guides can be found at:
https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-10573_68301---,00.html

Barber Bill

- ▶ Chaldean community identified need through our Ethnic Cabinet
- ▶ Licensing process in MI was burdensome for those with numbers of years of experience
- ▶ SB612 passed in June 2014
 - ▶ Reduces number of hours of study needed
 - ▶ Allows LARA Licensing Board to deem a country of conflict
 - ▶ <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/publicact/pdf/2014-PA-0137.pdf>
 - ▶ <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billanalysis/senate/pdf/2013-SFA-0612-N.pdf>
- ▶ Example of how Michigan can minimize a hurdle while maintaining integrity of the licensing process

Looking ahead to 2019

- ▶ Extend the idea of coming from countries of conflict into other occupations
- ▶ Identifying alternative career pathways
 - ▶ Currently doctors, nurses and dentists
- ▶ Refugee/Immigrant Navigator pilot year 2
- ▶ Exploring transitional licenses for healthcare occupations
- ▶ MITS
 - ▶ Reskilling and licensing assistance

Key takeaways, advice and lessons learned

- ▶ Important to have champions for the work within state government
- ▶ Almost all of state occupational licensing is within LARA
- ▶ Takes mainly personnel hours to create the guides
 - ▶ Yearly review/updates
- ▶ Develop and strengthen relationships with other states
- ▶ It's okay to try and fail!