



Business Advocacy and Narrative Change Campaigns

Immigration in Focus

May 2025



E Pluribus is a program of Global Detroit





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Introduction

Immigration and America's immigrants are under attack. Donald Trump ran for president on a campaign that promised the largest mass deportation effort America has ever experienced. His campaign focused on securing America's borders from fentanyl, drug trafficking and narco-terrorist gangs, while securing America's interior from undocumented violent criminals roaming the streets. Trump and his running mate J.D. Vance went so far as to fabricate stories about immigrants eating their neighbors' pets in their quest to stoke xenophobia and fear.

This guide was created as we pass **Day 78** of the second Trump administration and have witnessed some **221 executive actions around immigration policy**, none of which are encouraging.

Absent from Trump's rhetoric (and frankly from the presidential debates of 2024 and even the Democratic campaign) has been a consideration of the critical role that immigration and immigrants play in the American economy and economic future

of our regional and local economies.

E Pluribus, Global Detroit's initiative to strengthen and maximize the impact of local immigrant-inclusive economic development initiatives across America, was launched in early 2024. Chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, state, and local government, as well as business and community leaders are increasingly coming together and launching new programs and advocacy initiatives based on the realization that immigration and immigrants enhance the quality of life, spur economic growth, and expand our shared prosperity.

Local immigrant-inclusive economic development initiatives share a belief that the intentional inclusion of immigrants and immigration in our economic development strategies, policies, and practices will produce superior outcomes. These initiatives include non-traditional actors in the immigration space—chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, businesses, state and local government, and more.

National organizations like the American Immigration Council (and New American

Economy organization with which it merged) and National Immigration Forum have used economic arguments for years in their calls for common sense immigration reform. These efforts have been extremely important but need active and sustained local partners and champions to be sustained and amplified.

Lasting support for the economic power of robust immigration will only take root when local business leaders and institutions see their own futures as directly tied to federal immigration policy—and the full inclusion of immigrants in their state, regional, and local economic strategies.

Immigration advocates are understandably consumed with on-the-ground planning to respond to the Trump administration’s mass deportation campaign, drastic change in refugee resettlement and Temporary Protective Status (TPS) policies and various other policies. These on-the-ground emergency responses must be given priority. Yet, at the same time, the conditions that enabled Trump to win the election will persist if left unaddressed.

The current crisis has alarmed business and economic development leaders who recognize immigration’s role in our economic future. The recent release of 2024 Census numbers reveals that net growth in foreign-born residents is the sole cause of America’s population growth between 2023 and 2024. The current immigration crisis presents opportunities to forge new alliances, engage the media, and raise awareness of the existence and value of local immigrant-inclusive economic development initiatives.

This guide is written to inspire and assist local immigrant-inclusive economic development practitioners, as well as immigration advocates, in developing and launching their own business and economic development-focused immigration narrative change campaigns.

Why Build a Business Advocacy and Narrative Change Campaign Focused on Immigration?

Local immigrant-inclusive economic development initiatives and business groups should identify their own reasons for launching a business advocacy and narrative change campaign focused on immigration, grounded in their unique goals and priorities. Below are some opportunities to consider.

Creating Better, More Robust and More Welcoming Immigration Policy

At its core, an advocacy and narrative change campaign is designed to foster better immigration policies that embrace more robust and welcoming immigration policies. These campaigns recognize the fundamental reality that while humanitarian, civil rights, and foreign policy all help shape immigration policies, **immigration policy is economic policy.**

The voice of business and those focused on state and local economic development is often absent from federal, state and local immigration policy debates. Whether it’s a mass deportation force, penalizing sanctuary cities or state’s driver’s license issues, the economic contributions of immigrants or the importance of immigration to the economic well-being and future of our local communities is often not reflected in the debate and consideration of these policy issues.

The good news is that more and more business and economic leaders across the country are doing the work to invest in immigrant economic inclusion programs, policies and practices. Advocacy and narrative



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A Bold Vision for Immigration Policy

An America in which immigration is embraced and celebrated rather than exploited as the third rail of American politics will reflect a nation that not only honors its history as a nation of immigrants but one that recognizes its self-interest in supporting and protecting robust immigration policy and infrastructure. We envision a nation in which community leaders—state and local elected officials, chambers of commerce, business leaders, faith communities, and educators—not only call for pro-immigration federal policies but these community leaders are investing in local economic integration and economic welcoming policies.

Imagine if immigration moved from being a political albatross to an issue embraced by a solid majority of Americans as central to our cultural heritage, our national identity, and our economic future. Imagine an America where the concept of the American Dream lives strong and is deeply connected to our perceptions of immigration. Many of our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents came to America seeking freedom and economic opportunity. Many of us can trace our family histories in America to that same yearning for freedom and opportunity that motivates today's refugees, asylum seekers, international students, and startup founders, or families seeking to access the American Dream.

To build a broad and shared vision that our communities and the nation benefit from and embrace the diversity and growth that robust immigration brings, we need to emphasize the critical importance of immigration to our economic well-being and prosperity as central to creating that kind of America.

Without the economic opportunity message, we will never create a strongly pro-immigration national ethos. And we can't build support and legitimacy for that economic messaging without local business, industry and economic leaders across the country who see, are actively working on, and promote what immigration means for their own local economies, communities, and corporations.

change campaigns seek to capture that energy and leverage that collective voice in this moment and to do it on the local level.

Creating a Sustained State and Local Voice

Several national groups are making economic arguments in favor of immigration and are seeking to influence federal immigration policy. The American Business Immigration Council, American Immigration Council, National Immigration Forum, and other organizations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are excellent partners in making these arguments. But real narrative change and effective advocacy must engage and be led by local leaders.

In **Chapter 7 of the Wilderness Podcast**, former National Immigration Forum Executive Director Ali Noorani reflected on the imperative of developing an immigration narrative that connects with Americans across the spectrum:

December 2010 was a lame duck session where two things [we/re (sic) going to happen on that day: in the morning, the DREAM Act was going to be taken up by the Senate, in the afternoon Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

And I remember kind of going through that debate and we had done everything according to the book, the playbook in 2010: we had turned out voters, we had protested.

But the Don't Ask, Don't Tell community, they never talked about politics, they never talked about policy—they made a case to the American public of what it means to serve our country openly and freely. They won. We lost.

Americans need to see more than national organizations or policy position statements to develop a more robust understanding of immigrants and immigration and their central role in our economic success. They need to see local business leaders and institutions, and local businesses make these arguments. They need to see local data on how these issues impact their local economy. And they need to



see a steady stream of local news stories, presentations, events, opinion pieces, and interviews that spread this message consistently over time. Business advocacy and narrative change campaigns are designed to support that level of engagement and to create a steady stream of local content to make such efforts more robust and impactful.

Strengthening and Building Relationships with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, Business and Industry

While many local immigrant-inclusive economic development organizations originated within and from chambers of commerce or local economic development organizations, others have roots as independent endeavors or are led by state or municipal government or nonprofit organizations with roots in refugee resettlement or integration-related services. Virtually all these efforts are eager to expand their relationships with the business community and business leadership or deepen their engagement level with such partners.

Many businesses, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and industry groups are feeling nervous and/or frustrated by the current anti-immigrant strains of Trump's immigration policies (in addition to the administration's tariff policies). Yet, they don't see themselves in the efforts led by immigrant rights groups to resist and oppose enhanced immigration enforcement. They fear speaking



Using Data

Two recent examples highlight how economic data can help messaging at this moment. The pause in refugee resettlement issued in President Trump's first days of his second term suggests that Michigan would lose out on the opportunity to receive more than 2,000 new refugees slated to be rescheduled during the 2025 fiscal year ending September 30, 2025. Working with Public Policy Associates, a trusted data analysis firm located in Lansing, Michigan's state capitol city, Global Detroit released a research study on the lost economic opportunity for Michigan, projecting that the spending of these refugees would have added some \$400 million in economic activity over the next decade, including as much as \$72 million in state and local taxes.

Trump policies have recently targeted international students for either exercising their First Amendment rights to free speech or for any number of minor, non-violent criminal offenses. Global Detroit intends to respond to these policies by messaging about the \$1.45 billion that Michigan's 38,000+ international students add to the Michigan economy annually through their tuition, rent, food, entertainment, goods, and services purchases. To put that spending in perspective, Detroit's hosting of the NFL Draft in 2024 brought \$213 million in spending and was much heralded as a huge economic boost. International students contribute more than six times that amount of spending every year. That's an NFL Draft every other month, year upon year.



Whether engaging longtime funders or new donors motivated by urgent need, organizations should seize this moment to expand financial support.

out about their support for immigrants and immigration in a political environment where so many Americans want to demonize undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, and immigrants of color.

An advocacy and narrative change campaign where the business and economic impacts of immigration policy are the focus creates a safe space for business and industry to offer their voice. As such, it can create an opportunity for local immigrant-inclusive economic development initiatives to form new relationships with chambers, economic development organizations, businesses and business leaders or to deepen existing relationships with such organizations.

Building the Profile of Your Immigrant-Inclusive Economic Development Initiative

Local immigrant-inclusive economic development initiatives can use business advocacy and narrative change campaigns to raise their own profile. With immigration a top media issue, reporters and the public are eager for fresh, economically focused stories.

A well-crafted campaign can build brand and program awareness within a positive message frame. This increased visibility can help reach employers unfamiliar with talent programs, small business providers looking to support immigrant entrepreneurs, immigrants seeking upskilling resources, and potential volunteers drawn to the cause.

Fundraising

Immigration policy and immigrant communities are in crisis. Immigrant-inclusive economic development initiatives should support overwhelmed partners like immigration legal service providers, refugee resettlement programs, and immigrant rights groups. At the same time, the current crisis may inspire new or increased giving from foundations and individual donors. Whether engaging longtime funders or new donors motivated by urgent need, organizations should seize this moment to expand financial support.

Business advocacy and narrative change campaigns naturally engage hundreds of individuals and business leaders—creating

strong opportunities for individual giving. Some funders may not support direct service but are interested in policy or narrative work, while others may view narrative change as a critical complement to existing investments. Initiatives launching such campaigns should thoughtfully integrate fundraising strategies from the start.

Steps to Build a Business Advocacy and Narrative Change Campaign Focused on Immigration

Ultimately, any local advocacy and narrative change campaign should be designed and implemented for the local context. Some campaigns will emphasize data and research, while others may involve local events. A successful local campaign will leverage the strengths and capacities of the local immigrant-inclusive economic development initiative and organization, as well as the issues, attitudes and concerns of local partners and communities.

1. Developing a Campaign Statement

At the center of an advocacy and narrative change campaign is the campaign statement to which supporters will be asked to ascribe. Such statements may need to consider whether they call for specific federal immigration policies—such as a call for creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who have paid taxes, legal status for Dreamers, expanding high-skilled immigration or creating a startup visa—or are limited to a broad and generic statement for welcoming immigration policies. The statement should consider if it wants to mention state and local policies and/or local immigrant-inclusive strategies,

programs and practices—such as having signatories pledge to work with the local immigrant-inclusive economic development entity to build a more immigrant-inclusive regional economy. Depending on how the statement is to be used, it might consider using some basic facts that make the advocacy case.

2. Developing Messaging Specific to Your Community and Audience

Before launching your campaign, consider which messages will resonate most with your target audiences. Is your goal to build



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Selecting the Right Communication Tools

A successful campaign can leverage various communication tools and resources to amplify its message. Consider incorporating the following:

- **Dedicated Website** – A central hub for campaign messaging, resources, and engagement.
- **Branding and Visual Identity** – Graphics, a unique logo, and cohesive design elements to establish recognition.
- **Photo and Image Library** – A collection of locally relevant images for social media, presentations, reports, and other materials.
- **Social Media Content** – Shareable posts, infographics, and videos to reach a broader audience.
- **PowerPoint and Presentation Templates** – Slides to support outreach and advocacy efforts.
- **Research & Data Reports** – Reports with clear visuals to communicate key findings and impact.



Navigating Questions or Concerns about Undocumented Immigrants

Campaigns that focus on immigration inevitably face questions about undocumented immigrants—especially from more conservative business and political audiences. It's important to plan for how your coalition will handle this topic in a way that aligns with your values, stays grounded in facts, and supports your overarching goals.

Here's how Global Detroit approaches the issue:

Global Detroit's messaging refers to "immigrants" broadly, without distinguishing by immigration status. That has always been our approach. The data we use to explain the economic impact of immigration—like those from the U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey—includes immigrants of all statuses. In Michigan, an estimated 90,000 to 110,000 undocumented residents contribute significantly to the state's economy, with their households adding over \$3 billion to Michigan's GDP.¹

At the same time, we are not an immigrant rights coalition, and we don't make statements opposing all forms of immigration enforcement. Global Detroit is not calling for the abolition of all federal immigration laws

or enforcement agencies. Instead, the campaign speaks to the majority of Michigan voters and residents who support common sense immigration policies. Our focus is on:

- Raising awareness of immigrants' economic contributions;
- Promoting immigration pathways that meet the needs of our workforce and communities; and
- Supporting policies that create meaningful opportunities for undocumented residents who work hard and try to play by the rules to obtain legal status.

We welcome all signatories who support our pledge, regardless of their opinions on undocumented residents. Our goal is to create the conditions—through narrative change and awareness of economic impacts—where robust and welcoming immigration policies can flourish and be widely accepted.

¹ Contributions of New Americans in Michigan (May 2024) found at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/contributions-new-americans-michigan>, pp. 20-21"



Potential Data Sources to Consider

- **The American Immigration Council's Map the Impact**
(www.maptheimpact.org)
Provides Census data on foreign-born populations, their share of population growth, economic contributions, and workforce representation by industry.
- **Migration Policy Institute's Data Hub**
(www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-data-hub)
Offers state immigration profiles and data on specific topics.
- **American Business Immigration Council Resource Page**
(www.abic.us/resources)
Provides information on economic costs of mass deportation, breakdown of immigrant spending, list of industries with high percentages of immigrant workers and more.
- **Institute of International Education (IIE) Open Doors**
(www.opendoorsdata.org/download-state-fact-sheets)
Reports on international students by state, including economic impact estimates.
- **Immigration Research Initiative**
(www.immresearch.org)
Provides research and data on immigrant economic contributions.
- **Institute for Immigration Research at George Mason University**
(www.iir.gmu.edu)
Conducts studies on immigration's role in the economy and workforce.

alliances with chambers and economic development organizations? To persuade the public of immigration's benefits? Which local industries rely most on immigrant talent?

In Michigan, for example, where state leaders prioritize population growth, a message might begin with: "Noting that all of Michigan's population growth over the past five and 25 years is due to net foreign-born growth..." Similarly, the state's automotive sector urgently needs talent to maintain its electric and autonomous vehicle design leadership. Emphasizing that nearly 50% of recent immigrant arrivals to Michigan are college-educated and 70% of U.S. graduate students in electrical engineering and computer science are international students can strongly resonate with economic and talent development leaders.

Other communities may focus on how immigrants help inner cities or rural areas by offsetting population decline and the economic challenges that come with aging and shrinking demographics. Understanding how immigration intersects with your region's economic and policy landscape can help shape more thoughtful, persuasive messaging and action.

3. Determine the Data Most Relevant to Your Narrative

The facts are on our side. Immigrants are strong contributors to the American economy. Over the last 15 years the supply of data available to help tell that story has expanded. The sophistication of local immigrant inclusive economic development initiatives to utilize the data also has matured. Ultimately data that aligns with the economic priorities of one's region will best tell the positive story of immigrant communities. Rural agricultural communities that struggle to find the necessary labor to harvest crops or work food production facilities should prepare to access data about the prevalence of immigrant labor in the



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workforces of those industries. Communities, where economic development and business leaders prioritize the attraction and retention of high-skilled STEM talent, should look for data on international students in those fields as well as the education levels of recent migrants.

4. Engaging Key Allies and Stakeholders Early and Often

The most effective campaigns build on existing relationships while strategically expanding to engage new stakeholders. Key allies within your network can build credibility, expand influence, and drive meaningful policy change. A good key ally can take various forms, each bringing unique value to the campaign:

- **Influential Business and Public Sector Leaders** – High-profile executives, entrepreneurs, and policymakers who can lend credibility, attract attention, and influence decision-makers.
- **Well-Connected Networkers** – Individuals with deep ties to business associations, chambers of commerce,

industry groups, or civic organizations who can introduce new supporters and expand outreach. This often includes community leaders in immigrant and ethnic communities, in addition to business and economic development leaders.

- **Subject Matter Experts** – Economists, immigration researchers, workforce development professionals, and industry leaders who can provide data-driven insights and thought leadership.
- **Political and Policy Insiders** – Advisors, legislative staff, or government officials who understand the policy landscape and can guide strategic advocacy efforts.

Take a moment to identify the influential individuals in your community and actively engage with them. Personalized outreach—through emails, phone calls, texts, and face-to-face meetings—can significantly enhance buy-in and ensure that key stakeholders feel valued and personally invested in the success of the campaign.

5. Tracking Supporters and Engaging Volunteers

To effectively manage your campaign, you'll need a system to track supporters and their level of engagement. Record whether they are signing on as individuals, on behalf of a business or organization, or both. Collect email addresses to keep supporters informed with campaign updates.

Consider offering supporters a variety of ways to get involved, such as:

- Hosting an Event
- Writing an Op-Ed
- Speaking at Public Events or Being Quoted in Press Releases
- Speaking at Private Events
- Attending Campaign Events and Webinars
- Hiring Immigrants or Creating Welcoming Workplaces and Communities
- Making a Donation to Support the Campaign
- Providing Support to the Campaign Itself (e.g., writing, editing, staffing events, etc.)
- Receiving Regular Campaign Updates

6. Preparing for the Launch

There is no one way to launch a campaign. If you have access to prominent leaders who you know support your efforts, you may wish to begin with a press conference and/or press release quoting these leaders or having them speak. You may also consider a “soft launch” in which you solicit signatories to your campaign through existing email lists and personal contacts, followed by a more public launch (via press conference or press release) once you reach a milestone number of signatories. Another launch idea could be an event in which you invite partners to sign onto the campaign at the event. The event could feature several speakers, including one to review the economic data demonstrating immigrant’s economic contributions and others to provide testimonials on the value of

immigrants to the community, to business, etc. Including an immigrant business owner and immigrant workers also can help provide narrative to the launch.

7. Defining Success and Measuring Impact

Defining success and measuring impact is critical to ensuring your campaign remains focused and effective. Even if this is your first campaign and your goals feel fluid, establishing clear success metrics from the outset will provide direction and accountability. Consider measurable benchmarks such as the number of business and individual signatories, the formation of new partnerships, volunteer engagement, and overall participation levels. These metrics



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not only help track progress and build credibility but also serve as motivation for your team and allies. This information allows you to communicate impact effectively to stakeholders, donors, and funders through regular updates and reports.

Sustaining the Campaign – Potential Campaign Activities

1. Hosting Events and Gathering in Person

Business leaders, by nature, are apprehensive about engaging in political debates, especially ones where they perceive there could be backlash. In-person events well populated by other business leaders and owners can play an important role in building confidence and comfort with your campaign. They also can sustain enthusiasm among core supporters. Below is a list of potential events that a campaign could consider hosting:

- Campaign Kickoff Event
- Summit or Teach-In on Immigration and the Economy
- Celebrations around Immigrant Heritage Month², World Refugee Day (June 20,

2025), Welcoming Week³ or other cultural heritage events.

- Fundraising Events for Your Campaign and/or Immigrant-Serving Organizations
- “Friendraising” Events Designed to Gather More Supporters of Your Campaign
- Social Events around the Campaign, such as a Bar Night or Cocktail Party to Celebrate a Campaign Milestone

2. Opinion Pieces

A common activity for any campaign of this type is to spread the positive narrative around immigration through a series of opinion pieces. You can identify campaign supporters willing to publish op-eds when you ask folks to sign onto the campaign. You can consider an array of topics for opinion pieces that touch upon the economic contributions that immigrants make, including opinion pieces that focus on:

- Immigrant contributions to population growth
- Immigrant contributions to stabilizing urban neighborhoods or rural communities
- Contributions of immigrant entrepreneurs and Main Street businesses



- Importance of immigrants as startup founders and high-skilled STEM workers important to the STEM economy
- Importance of immigrants to specific industries, including but not limited to:
 - Health care including doctors, nurses and specialty positions, as well as home health care
 - Construction and expanding the supply of housing
 - Retail and service industry jobs, as well as lodging and tourism industries
 - Agriculture, natural resources and food production
 - STEM fields including engineering, software development, etc.
 - Manufacturing both in terms of

engineering and management, but also manufacturing workers

- Economic contributions of refugee resettlement and families granted admission under Temporary Protected Status or humanitarian parole
- Importance of international students to the economy and to future supply of STEM students

3. Research and Data Reports

Media and business leaders like research and data and are drawn to the release of new research data reports. Such reports do not need to be long and involved. They can be short issue briefs. Such reports are strengthened when they also tell narrative stories about immigrants



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Leveraging Data and Reports for Case Making

Global Detroit has written a number of original research reports that utilize either easily attainable data sources or through collaboration with partner research organizations. These have included reports on international student retention using data obtained from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on the use of the optional practical training (OPT) portion of international student visas to work in Michigan⁴; the breakdown of the number of Michigan high school students who come from immigrant families (written with the Immigration Research Initiative and Michigan League for Public Policy)⁵; and the economic contributions of immigrants in Michigan⁶ (as told through the American Immigration Council's Map the Impact data reports). Global Detroit also has issued original research on the economic contributions of refugee resettlement to the regional economy⁷ and a study looking at the impacts of relatively rapid immigration growth on Detroit neighborhoods and long-term residents⁸. In addition, over the coming year, E Pluribus hopes to have updated localized data to share with local immigrant-inclusive economic development initiatives around international retention as well as immigrant Main Street business ownership.

² Immigrant Heritage Month is held every June. The celebration is led by fwd.us and the event is utilized by scores of immigrant advocates across America. To learn more visit www.iamanimmigrant.com.

³ Welcoming Week is an annual campaign of Welcoming America scheduled this year for September 12-21, 2025. Welcoming America provides materials to local organizations eager to celebrate the week. To learn more visit www.welcomingweek.org/home.

⁴ International Student Talent in the Michigan Workforce: A Growing Solutions to the STEM Talent Gap (September 2022) found at <https://globaldetroitmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/OPT-Report-2022-Draft-9.pdf>

⁵ High School Kids in Immigrant Families: A Call to Action for Michigan's Higher Ed and Workforce Development Strategies (August 2023) found at <https://globaldetroitmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HS-Kids-in-Immigrant-Families-Report-PDF-FINAL-8-24-23.pdf>

⁶ Contributions of New Americans in Michigan (May 2024) found at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/contributions-new-americans-michigan>

⁷ The Economic Impact of Refugees in Southeast Michigan (2017) found at <https://globaldetroitmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/GlobalDetroit-TheEconomicImpactofRefugeesinSEMich.pdf>

⁸ Building Inclusive Cities: Immigration and Neighborhood Change in Detroit (Summer 2021) found at www.buildinginclusivocities.org



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Each data report enables an immigrant-inclusive economic development organization to reach out to partners with data, convene a release of the report to talk about the issue in person with supportive and interested organizations, issue press releases on the data, and submit op-eds around the research.

and businesses that demonstrate the research findings. There are a number of third-party data sources that get updated annually around which you could design an issue brief to be released without doing any original research. These include things like the annual American Community Survey (ACS) Census data, the annual Open Doors international student report, or even reporting on the number of H-1B applications from your community.

Each data report enables an immigrant-inclusive economic development organization to reach out to partners with data, convene a release of the report to talk about the issue in person with supportive and interested organizations, issue press releases on the data, and submit op-eds around the research. In most cases, we assemble immigrant and business stories to discuss the issue and to put a personal narrative with the data. Some of these reports require funding for deeper research or engaging a research partner. Most benefit greatly from in-house design capacity or money to pay a designer.

4. Social Media, Podcasts and Email Updates

Let's face it: modern culture, connection and information occur through social media, podcasts and other forms of media. It is important that for a campaign to be effective, it should build in regular social media content and outreach. Ideally, the campaign would designate someone or several people to maintain a social media presence for the campaign. An alternative strategy is for individuals committed to the campaign to regularly post data, news observations, and stories on their own personal social media accounts.

5. Email Updates

Regular email updates keep your audience engaged and informed throughout the campaign. These updates serve multiple purposes: they maintain momentum, build a sense of community, and, most importantly, activate supporters to take meaningful action.

Think of each email as an invitation to join

the movement. Use it to share compelling information about why the campaign matters, how it's progressing, and what actions businesses and advocates can take right now. In a fast-moving policy environment, timely updates help your audience stay on top of relevant developments, especially those that impact the business community.

Highlight policy wins, urgent calls to action, upcoming events, and spotlights on business leaders who are stepping up. Include brief summaries of legislative changes or proposals framed in clear, business-relevant terms. By consistently feeding your network with valuable, actionable content, you keep them informed and build a stronger, more connected coalition.

6. Public Speaking and Marketing the Campaign

Another effective way to build support and spread the campaign's message about immigrants' economic contributions is to speak at conferences and meetings of local chambers of commerce, business groups, industry associations, rotary clubs, as well as churches, mosques and temples.

If a chamber or industry group signs on, ask to present the campaign, its goals, and supporting data at their employer or business leader meetings. Prepare a standard stump speech, slide deck, and marketing materials—including sign-up cards or postcards with QR codes linking to your website. Even without a formal speaking slot, you can often share the message through networking or during open announcement times at business events.

7. Deeper Policy Advocacy Engagement

Tracking immigration policies of the current Trump presidency is more than a full-

time job. The Trump administration took more than 200 distinct immigration policy actions in the first 60 days of office.⁹ Most immigrant business advocacy and narrative change campaigns won't have the capacity to respond to every policy issue, but targeted engagement can be impactful. For example, during the first Trump administration, Global Detroit launched the Champions for Growth campaign, transitioning from its previous avoidance of policy advocacy to emphasize the economic contributions of immigrants to Michigan. Global Detroit was concerned about the negative economic impacts of the proposed public charge rule. It had come across strong economic analyses about the negative impacts of uncompensated medical care and food stamp utilization in poor communities. The campaign identified draft comments that healthcare systems, hospitals, and grocery stores could use. It contacted their Michigan-based trade associations to encourage them to file comments in the Federal Register highlighting the portions of the proposed rule that would most hurt their businesses. *(See the Appendix for more information on the Champions for Growth campaign).*



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⁹ As reported by the online Immigration Policy Tracking Project, a joint project of Stanford and Yale law students found at <https://immpolicytracking.org/>

CASE STUDY

Global Detroit's Businesses and People for Immigration (BPFI) Campaign

Campaign Statement

Immigrants are essential contributors to job creation, economic growth, and prosperity in every part of Michigan.

We support smart immigration policy — a strong, effective and welcoming federal and state immigration system that offers freedom, opportunity and security to immigrants whose talent, hard work, and entrepreneurship help us build a more prosperous America, and stronger Michigan.

Building Momentum: Creating Space for Business Leaders

Global Detroit launched *Businesses and People for Immigration* (BPFI) in January 2025, recognizing the need for a unified response to the intensifying political discourse around immigration. The campaign was initiated just before President Trump took office for his second term. Its continued growth shows that it's never too late to take a stand or start a similar effort.

The campaign creates a clear, credible pathway for business leaders, economic development groups, and individuals to publicly (or privately) support immigrants and advocate for smart immigration policy. From day one, it has invited new allies to join and continues to welcome signers and partners who are just now mobilizing in response to shifting policies or narratives.

The key takeaway for others is that you don't need to have started early; you simply need a strong message, a thoughtful strategy, and a platform for businesses, leaders, and others to engage. BPFI demonstrates that campaigns can create real momentum by providing tangible ways for people to speak up, sign on, and take meaningful action.

Strategic Platform Decisions

Global Detroit made a key choice early on: build the campaign on a **standalone website** — forimmigration.biz — to ensure message clarity and visual distinction. The site was designed to resonate with a **corporate and professional audience** — distinct from the nonprofit's primary branding — and featured:

- A concise pledge anyone could sign
- Options for signers to remain private
- Data, talking points, and shareable content
- A centralized hub for campaign resources

Growing the Base: From Allies to Action

Within 60 days, the campaign garnered 393 signers:

- More than a dozen chambers, economic development groups, and trade organizations from across Michigan
- Nearly 50 businesses
- Hundreds of individuals, some of whom volunteered to write op-eds, design graphics, and refine messaging

BPFI also opened participation beyond Michigan and gave supporters the choice to remain anonymous—broadening appeal without compromising safety or comfort.

The campaign offers individuals a clear way to take action, from signing the pledge to leveraging their network and reaching a broad audience by publishing op-eds and contributing skills like writing and messaging - expanding capacity while building a deep sense of community within the movement.

Immigration's Impact in Michigan

\$2.6 billion

Immigrants' contributions to state and local taxes in 2022

\$67.8 billion

Immigrants' contributions to Michigan's GDP in 2022

8.4%

Share of Michigan's working-age population who are immigrants

18.6%

Share of Michigan's STEM workforce who are immigrants

Narrative Framing: Data Relevant to Michigan and the Moment

BPFI's messaging drew on real-time political relevance and irrefutable economic data:

- **Population growth:** Michigan's entire net population growth since 2000 (and since 2020) is due to immigration.
- **Workforce data:** Immigrants make up more than 18% of Michigan's STEM workforce despite being just 7% of the population.
- **Economic urgency:** State leaders—from chambers

to the Governor—have identified population decline as a top threat to Michigan's economy.

By connecting immigrant contributions directly to the state's top economic concerns, BPFI positioned immigration as a **core solution**, not a sideline issue.

Tactics and Outreach

- **LinkedIn** was used to amplify pledge-related content and directly follow up with engaged users.
- **Email and Facebook updates** spotlighted signers, shared stories, and offered tangible next steps (e.g., "10 Things You Can Do" listicle).
- **Volunteer attorneys** partnered with the campaign to offer **free trainings** to Michigan employers on hiring across several visa pathways amid policy uncertainty.
- Content emphasized that **hiring work-authorized immigrants—refugees, international students, etc.—remains fully legal**, even if enforcement intensifies.

Lessons and Leverage

BPFI built on prior campaigns (like Champions for Growth and the Michigan Compact) but introduced new flexibility, broader participation, and free legal trainings for Michigan employers. It demonstrated that narrative change is most effective when it's built around real, immediate concerns that matter to local economies — and when it offers clear, low-barrier actions for supporters to take. ▶

The image shows a LinkedIn post from the account 'Global Detroit' (2,514 followers, 1mo · 🌐). The post text reads: 'Want to stand up for immigrants AND help strengthen Michigan's business community but not sure where to start? Our latest blogpost shares 10 actionable ways you can make a difference right now through the Businesses and ...more'. Below the text is a graphic titled '10 WAYS TO STAND WITH IMMIGRANTS IN MICHIGAN'. The graphic is dark blue with white and orange text. It features a large orange arrow pointing left towards the title. On the right side of the graphic, there are three numbered sections: '01 SIGN THE PLEDGE' (with a link to forimmigration.biz), '03 WRITE AN OP-ED' (encouraging unique perspectives on immigration), and '06 PROVIDE A TESTIMONIAL' (encouraging voices of Michigan residents and business leaders). The bottom left of the graphic has the logo for 'Businesses and People for Immigration' and the bottom right has the URL 'FORIMMIGRATION.BIZ'.



APPENDIX

Global Detroit – A History of Business Advocacy Campaigns

Global Detroit is an immigrant-inclusive economic development initiative launched in 2010 with support from Southeast Michigan’s philanthropic community (through the New Economy Initiative collaborative) and the Detroit Regional Chamber. Global Detroit believes that intentionally including immigrants in our regional and state economic development strategies, policies, practices, and programs will spark economic growth and shared prosperity.

For its first seven years, Global Detroit avoided policy advocacy, focusing instead on practical steps local actors could take to promote immigrant inclusion and economic growth under existing federal immigration laws. In January 2017, during President Trump’s first week in office, an industry partner urged Global Detroit to launch an advocacy campaign highlighting the economic risks of anti-immigrant policies, particularly their impact on talent supply and Michigan’s economy.

Champions for Growth (2017-2020)

In 2017, Global Detroit launched the four-year Champions for Growth campaign, transitioning from its previous avoidance of policy advocacy to emphasize the economic contributions of immigrants to Michigan. The campaign attracted 360 signatories to a pledge that stated:

Immigrants are powerful contributors to our job creation, economic growth, and regional prosperity.

I support a strong, open, inclusive, and welcoming federal immigration system,

Conclusion



Whether you aim to influence policy, raise awareness, or strengthen partnerships, your efforts can contribute to a more inclusive, prosperous, and forward-thinking economy.

Creating a business advocacy and narrative change campaign centered on immigration is both timely and essential. As immigration continues to shape our economy and communities, local business leaders, chambers, and economic development organizations have a significant role in shifting the conversation—prioritizing facts over fear and opportunity over division.

By grounding your campaign in the local context, aligning with the values of your stakeholders, and amplifying the voices of business and community leaders, you can help reframe immigration as a catalyst for growth and innovation. Whether you aim to influence policy, raise awareness, or strengthen partnerships, your efforts can contribute to a more inclusive, prosperous, and forward-thinking economy.

Pursuing a campaign should forward both the long-term goals of creating a more immigrant-inclusive local economy and expanding the team of supporters and advocates for this work, as well as building the reputation and relationships for the local immigrant-inclusive economic development program itself.

anchored by the American Dream, that offers freedom, opportunity, and security to immigrants whose talent, hard work, and entrepreneurship can help build a more prosperous nation.

I pledge to work with Global Detroit to develop and implement local policies, practices, infrastructure, and innovative programs that will mobilize Metro Detroit's immigrant potential.

The Champions for Growth campaign expanded Global Detroit's partnerships with businesses, chambers, and institutions, providing a platform to engage new allies. Its 360 signatories created a contact list for policy updates during the Trump presidency. The campaign hosted events—from summits to social gatherings—promoted research on the economic impact of refugee resettlement and supported opinion pieces. It also mobilized policy research and positioned supporters to comment on proposed federal rule changes affecting the economy.

Michigan Compact on Immigration (2020)

In 2019, three Michigan chambers—Detroit Regional Chamber, Grand Rapids Chamber, and Traverse Connect (the chamber for the Traverse City region in northern Michigan)—attended the American Immigration Council's annual chambers meeting and, with AIC's support, decided to create a statewide business compact to advocate for common sense immigration reform. Aware of Global Detroit's Champions for Growth campaign, the groups partnered with Global Detroit to create the Michigan Compact. The Compact (www.micompact.org) included 16 chambers, economic development organizations, and business groups representing more than 20,000 companies and more than one million employees across the state. The compact was launched in February 2020, just a few weeks

before the COVID shutdown. While the initial launch was covered in statewide media there was never any ongoing engagement after the compact was created.

Businesses and People for Immigration (2025 and beyond)

Launched in January 2025, Businesses and People for Immigration is Global Detroit's latest initiative aimed at incorporating business perspectives into the national conversation on immigration. This campaign builds on nearly a decade of partnerships with chambers of commerce, economic developers, and employers throughout Michigan to emphasize the vital role immigrants play in economic growth and widespread prosperity.

Recognizing the likelihood of renewed federal immigration crackdowns and a growing gap in public narratives about immigrants' contributions versus the economic realities, Global Detroit created an action-oriented pledge campaign designed to reach business and industry leaders across the political spectrum. Individuals and organizations can choose to make their support public or private and do not need to be based in Michigan to participate.

Beyond pledge-signing, BPFI serves as a platform for data, messaging, storytelling, and broader coalition building. With an eye toward potential federal enforcement changes, the campaign connects businesses to practical guidance on immigration compliance, emphasizing that hiring work-authorized immigrants is both legal and essential for Michigan's economy.

See *Case Study: Businesses and People for Immigration Campaign* on page 16 for more information.



Immigrants are powerful contributors to our job creation, economic growth, and regional prosperity.



E Pluribus, a national initiative led by Global Detroit, is broadening and deepening the state and local immigrant-inclusive economic development field. This new initiative establishes dedicated programming within the Global Detroit portfolio to provide specialized technical assistance, develop national programs, coordinate and execute advocacy priorities, and facilitate peer learning. Its work draws upon Global Detroit's success over the past 15 years in establishing networks, chronicling best practices, and advancing the growing movement of immigrant-inclusive economic development.

This initiative has a range of goals. E Pluribus strengthens and maximizes the impact of local immigrant-inclusive development projects while raising these local programs' collective voice and perspective. E Pluribus is sparking a movement that promotes the growth, revitalization, and sustained prosperity of communities across America. It recognizes that economic development efforts prioritizing immigrant inclusion are profoundly a local endeavor.

www.globaldetroitmi.org/e-pluribus

For more information contact us at
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E Pluribus is a program of Global Detroit