

# New Report Details Metro Detroit's Hidden Immigrant Communities

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DETROIT — Two Detroit-based organizations, Global Detroit and Data Driven Detroit, have released a significant report regarding the geographic distribution and social characteristics of the foreign-born populations of the greater metro Detroit (Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties). Sponsored by Fragomen, an international law firm, and compiled by Global Detroit staff, the maps presented in the report provide a detailed look into the region's immigrant populations, chronicling them by continent, geographic region, and in some cases, the individual nation of origin, as well as providing a county-by-county snapshot.

"Much like the original Global Detroit study documenting the tremendous economic and job creation contributions of the immigrant population in metro Detroit, this demographic analysis sheds new light on our region's experience with immigration," said Global Detroit Director Steve Tobocman. "During this Fourth of July season, it is important to remember what made America great. Immigrants have helped the United States flourish and stay competitive in an ever-changing world of global competition."

The report sheds light on several revealing facts, including:

- Metro Detroit's foreign-born communities are diverse. Metro Detroit's immigrants come from a wide array of countries. In fact, India, the largest single nation of origin for the foreign-born in Metro Detroit, accounts for only 11.5 percent of all of the foreign-born. The top five countries of origin (India, Mexico, Iraq, Canada, and Lebanon) account for less than 40 percent of the total. The top ten countries make up less than 60 percent.
- The international community or foreign-born make up a sizable portion of the region. In fact, there are more foreign-born as the entire population of Washtenaw County and more than twice the population of any one city in the region, except Detroit.
- Immigrants are spread throughout the region, making every part of it diverse, to a limited extent. The vast spatial distribution of immigrant populations throughout the region creates fewer identifiable ethnic clusters and may contribute to immigrant and refugee group feelings of "invisibility." No one group or national identity dominates immigration to the region. Thus, the foreign-born are a diverse group made up of scores of nationalities.
- Detroit is home to a much less concentrated population of immigrants (around 4 percent) than the average for the metro region (over 8 percent). Given the nation's and region's rapid immigration growth, low immigrant attraction rates suggest that the city lacks one of the most important sources of American urban population stabilization—immigration.
- Immigrants are far from a drag on the regional economy and contain numerous groups and residents with tremendous economic, earning, and job creation power.

"Through this report, we are presenting an idea as to how the foreign-born populations live and work. Their strengths and weaknesses are highlighted in order to show what services are needed and how the region can best design economic, social, and other policies and programs to benefit local communities," said Kurt Metzger, director of Data Driven Detroit. "Given the importance of international migration to regional population growth, this is an issue that the city of Detroit must consider if they are serious about stabilizing population loss," Metzger added.

Global Detroit and Data Driven Detroit hope that nonprofit organizations, business groups, media, and government throughout the region will be able to use this data to better interact with the foreign-born communities in their areas, guide their policies, and aide in local economic development. The report can be found at [globaldetroit.com/resources/demographics-report/](http://globaldetroit.com/resources/demographics-report/) and the Global Detroit website contains more than 100 additional maps that lay out where immigrants from specific countries of origin live in the region.

Global Detroit also announced the launch of a Tumblr site that will enable Metro Detroiters to tell their own immigration and ethnic community stories. The Global Detroit Tumblr site can be found at [globaldetroit.tumblr.com](http://globaldetroit.tumblr.com).