

A STRONG ECONOMIC FUTURE RELIES ON WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

As has always been the case, New Hampshire's economic future relies on recruiting and retaining a vibrant workforce. But we face particular challenges today that must be addressed if we are to have a stable and productive workforce for the future. First, our population of older adults leaving the workforce is growing. This trend will create gaps in critical workforce needs. And, over the past decade, fewer workers have moved into New Hampshire from other U.S. states. Immigrants have been a steady resource for filling gaps in our workforce.

New Hampshire benefits from diverse foreign-born workers that reflect both breadth in place of origin and range of experiences, skills and professions. Our immigrant workers come from around the globe, with the largest share coming from Asia. New Hampshire ranks among the top ten states in the U.S. for *the percent of foreign-born workers who have a bachelor's degree or better, at almost 39%*.

Foreign-born workers fill critical workforce gaps in both highly skilled and entry-level positions in New Hampshire's economy. Our specific challenge is ensuring we support the career advancement of entry-level workers – so that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Immigrant entrepreneurs are clearly helping to expand New Hampshire's economy. Immigrant-owned companies *generate more than \$250 million of the state's annual business income*.

Ensuring that we retain the lifeblood of immigrant workers into New Hampshire and advance the future success of their children requires working together to create *Welcoming Communities*. A *Welcoming Community* is one that engages all people in the social, educational, cultural and economic dimensions of community life.

Through the ***NH Immigrant Integration Initiative***, long-time residents and emerging immigrant leaders in four New Hampshire towns are working together to create Welcoming Communities. With your help, we can create stronger communities and a stronger economy for all.

- In Concord, contact Jim Snodgrass at Second Start (jsnodgrass@second-start.org)
- In Laconia, contact Kate Bruchacova at Lakes Region Partnership for Public Health (kbruchacova@lrpph.org)
- In Manchester, contact Mukhtar Idhow at Organization for Immigrant and Refugee Success (midhow@refugeesuccess.org)
- In Nashua, contact Liz Fitzgerald at the United Way of Greater Nashua (lfitzgerald@unitedwaynashua.org)