



World Education Services Endorses the Establishment of Minnesota Office for New Americans

World Education Services (WES) strongly supports the establishment of the Minnesota Office for New Americans, which will promote inclusion and more equitable access to programs and services for the more than 472,849 immigrants and refugees who live in Minnesota.¹

WES is a non-profit social enterprise dedicated to helping international students, immigrants, and refugees achieve their educational and career goals in the United States and Canada. For more than 45 years, WES has set the standard of excellence in the field of international academic credential evaluation. Through WES Global Talent Bridge, the organization joins with institutional partners, community-based organizations, and policymakers to help immigrants and refugees who hold international credentials fully utilize their talents and education to achieve their academic and professional goals. Its philanthropic arm, the WES Mariam Assefa Fund, supports catalytic leaders and organizations working to build inclusive economies and to ensure that immigrants and refugees can achieve their aspirations and thrive.

Together with New American Economy (NAE), WES convenes the Office of New Americans (ONA) network. The ONA network provides a forum for state policy leaders across the U.S. to drive transformative policies and programs to ensure immigrants and refugees are welcomed in their communities and have meaningful access to programs and services.

The need is clear. Immigrants and refugees make up one out of twelve Minnesota residents,² and more than one in ten workers in the state is an immigrant or refugee.³ According to the Migration Policy Institute, 23 percent of immigrants and refugees in Minnesota who have a health-related bachelor's degree or higher are either underemployed or unemployed.⁴ An ONA tasked with ensuring access to economic opportunities and identifying strategies to reduce licensing and other employment barriers for immigrants and refugees will help to address this urgent need.

WES strongly supports the establishment of an ONA in Minnesota and is ready to support its implementation and ongoing efforts.

¹ Minnesota Chamber Foundation and The McKnight Foundation, The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Minnesota: Demographic analysis | Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, (Mar. 2021), available at: <https://www.mnchamber.com/blog/economic-contributions-immigrants-minnesota-demographic-analysis>.

² Ibid.

³ American Immigration Council, Immigrants in Minnesota Fact Sheet, (Aug. 6, 2020), available at: <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-minnesota>.

⁴ Batalova, J., Fix, M. and Pierce, S., 2020. *Brain Waste among U.S. Immigrants with Health Degrees: A Multi-State Profile*. [online] migrationpolicy.org. Available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/brain-waste-immigrants-health-degrees-multi-state-profile>.