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New website offers 'Welcome Mat' to immigrants in metro Detroit

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Writer

A new website was launched Tuesday that offers immigrants information about services and non-immigrants helpful details about metro Detroit's diverse communities.

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Called "Welcome Mat," the online, searchable database is part of several programs by Global Detroit to try to make metro Detroit more open to immigrants. It's funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The website is the first of its kind in metro Detroit, said Mary Lane, the project director of Welcome Mat. "It's to help immigrants integrate into the community."

Immigrants can find links to a whole range of services, including English-language classes, citizenship classes, counseling, education, healthcare, and legal assistance. It allows users to search for services depending on their language and ethnicity. For example, an Arabic-speaking immigrant from Lebanon could be directed to an Arab-American center in Dearborn.

The website also allows non-immigrants to look up information on cultural programs in various communities and topics they might be interested, such as Polish-American arts.

There are about 365,000 immigrants in metro Detroit, the second largest in the Great Lakes region after metro Chicago. Nationally, metro Detroit's immigrant population is smaller, with only 8% of the region's residents born abroad, compared to 13% nationally. [The largest group of immigrants in metro Detroit is from India, followed by Mexico.](#)

"We want to welcome immigrants and tap into their strength that they bring to the regional economy," said Steve Tobocman, director of Global Detroit and a former state lawmaker who represented southwest Detroit, which has a significant percentage of immigrants. "It's part of our economic strategy to create jobs."

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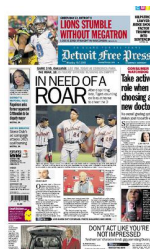


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