



# Community Partnership Visas

How Immigration Can Boost Local Economies



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# A Letter from the President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

April 2025

In 1952, the Council of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences issued a statement “Concerning Visas and Immigration.”<sup>1</sup> Authored by protein scientist John Edsall, the statement focused on two recent pieces of federal legislation. While the bills offered modest liberalization of American immigration policy, in the Council’s opinion, they nonetheless made it too difficult for international scholars to enter the United States. The Council proposed changes to these laws, making the case for immigration as, among other things, “vital . . . to our national economy.” “We believe that immigrants, once they have been approved for admission, should be regarded as valuable members of our society, who have much to contribute to American life.”

Seven decades later, the Council’s words remain an important reminder. As of this writing in early 2025, a new presidential administration is making dramatic changes to American immigration policy in the form of deportations, turning away asylum seekers, and pausing immigration applications for certain migrants.

The United States has long benefited from its status as a desired destination for immigrants. Over the course of the nation’s history, new arrivals have shaped both the culture and economy of the nation overall and of specific communities.

This report makes the case for a new kind of immigration policy to continue the long tradition of immigration as an engine of economic revitalization: Community Partnership Visas (CPVs). The proposal originated as one of fifteen recommendations from the Academy’s Commission on Reimagining Our Economy, which argues for focusing national attention less on how *the economy* is doing and more on how *Americans* are doing. As a follow-up to the Commission, the Academy convened an ideologically diverse group of immigration policy experts to make the case for CPVs and to propose specific ideas about how the CPV program would work.

Community Partnership Visas would allow communities that meet certain criteria to apply to serve as hosts for new arrivals. Such a program would leverage America’s longtime status as an immigration hub to revitalize local economies across the country. While the Academy Council of the 1950s was concerned primarily about the entry of scholars, this program would be open to potential immigrants of varying skill levels.

In times of unproductive, polarized debate, the nation needs solutions that can cross partisan divides. CPVs are just such a program.

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1. John T. Edsall, “Statement by the Council Concerning Visas and Immigration,” *Bulletin* of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 6 (3) (1952).



## A Letter from the President

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My gratitude goes to the members of the working group who prepared this report, in particular working group chair Cristina Rodríguez, as well as the cochairs of the Commission on Reimagining Our Economy: Katherine Cramer, Ann Fudge, and Nicholas Lemann. This work would not have been possible without the generosity of the individuals and organizations that have supported the Commission: The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The C&P Battenwieser Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, Omidyar Network, David M. Rubenstein, and Patti Saris. Finally, I would like to thank my Academy colleagues, including those who staffed the working group: Jonathan Cohen, Victor Lopez, and Betsy Super; Zach Broeren and Elaine Tang Wei for their work on the data component of the report; our publications team: Phyllis Bendell, Key Bird, Peter Walton, and Scott Raymond; as well as Kelsey Ensign, Peter Robinson, and Tony Shivers. Finally, I am deeply grateful to President Emeritus David Oxtoby for his leadership of the Academy and the CORE project, as well as his participation in this working group.

The current debate over immigration policy plays out at the national level but it has always had deep implications for the local, namely the communities where the new arrivals settle. This report offers an important reminder of this fact, providing a roadmap to a new policy that would strengthen local economic and civic life.

Sincerely,

**Laurie L. Patton**

*President, American Academy of Arts and Sciences*



Williamsport, Pennsylvania

# Introduction

Over the course of American history, immigrants and their descendants have fostered economic dynamism and cultural ingenuity. The nation has reaped the benefits of immigration, as have local communities where new arrivals live, work, and participate in civic life. But not all communities have benefited to the same degree from America's status as an immigration hub. Though thriving immigrant communities exist across the United States, new arrivals continue to concentrate in large cities and traditional destination states. Nonetheless, immigration has the potential to inject dynamism and growth into communities that, with an infusion of new residents and workers, are well placed to thrive.

This report makes the case for a new immigration program that will provide economic opportunity for immigrants while also helping to revitalize the economies of communities across the country. We dub this program "Community Partnership Visas" (CPVs). Through CPVs, eligible communities would apply to the federal government to become destinations for immigrants settling in the country under a new employment-based visa stream. The program

would be open to workers of all types and skills, with communities determining the types of immigrants that would best suit their needs.

The idea for a CPV program emerged from the work of the Commission on Reimagining Our Economy (CORE), convened by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences with the goal of redirecting the national focus from how *the economy* is doing

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toward how *Americans* are doing. Released in November 2023, CORE's final report, *Advancing a People-First Economy*, offers fifteen recommendations that received unanimous agreement from the cross-partisan, interdisciplinary Commission. These recommendations were rooted in thirty-one listening sessions held across the country. A major theme of these conversations—and of the Commission's final report—is the observation that some parts of the country have not fully benefited from the waves of prosperity and technological progress of the last few decades. One of the Commission's key recommendations is a program to “allow states or municipalities to sponsor immigrants to boost their economies.” While the Commission offers some guiding principles for the design of CPVs, it concludes that “further analysis is needed to determine some elements of the program.”<sup>2</sup>

To that end, in 2024 the Academy assembled a working group of immigration policy experts to develop a comprehensive framework for CPVs under the leadership of Academy member Cristina Rodríguez, Leighton Homer Surbeck Professor of Law at Yale Law School (see [Appendix A](#) for a list of working group members). Drawing on a diverse set of perspectives across the immigration field, the working group considered previously unaddressed questions about CPV program design. This report makes the case for CPVs and offers a framework for their development and implementation. Not every member of the working group agrees with every element of the program as proposed in this report, but all were willing to endorse the totality of the proposal out of a recognition that CPVs would help address the challenges facing many American communities.

The Academy working group is not the first entity to propose the creation of a place-based visa program. This idea has received endorsements from scholars at organizations and think tanks that span the political spectrum, including the Bipartisan Policy Center, the Cato Institute, and FWD.us; the U.S. Conference of Mayors; and a diverse group of politicians on both sides of the aisle, including former Republican governors Asa Hutchinson (Arkansas) and Eric Holcomb (Indiana) and current Republican governor Spencer Cox (Utah), and former Democratic Secretary of the Department of Transportation Pete Buttigieg.<sup>3</sup> These endorsements indicate the broad appeal of such a program. Only one proposal, from the Economic Innovation Group (EIG), considers in detail how a program like CPVs would work in practice. EIG's proposal focuses exclusively on high-skilled immigration, however, while our report treats this as just one part of a more comprehensive program.<sup>4</sup>

Our report begins by identifying how immigration can serve as a source of revitalization for American communities facing economic challenges. The second part of the report lays out how CPVs would work, providing details developed by the working group on topics ranging from community eligibility to federal oversight to visa recipient mobility. The working group did not attempt to answer every conceivable question related to the design and implementation of CPVs. Many features of the visa program would necessarily be developed by the policymakers and administrators who would bring it to life, including through consultation with the public and with state and local officials. But this report offers a detailed blueprint for an innovative, data-driven policy that should be part of the future of American immigration.

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2. Commission on Reimagining Our Economy, *Advancing a People-First Economy* (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2024), 57.

3. See [Bipartisan Policy Center](#), [Cato Institute](#), [FWD.us](#), [U.S. Conference of Mayors](#), [Asa Hutchinson](#), [Spencer Cox](#), and [Pete Buttigieg](#).

4. John Lettieri, Connor O'Brien, and Adam Ozimek, *Heartland Visas: A Policy Primer* (Economic Innovation Group, May 2024).





# The Economic Benefits of Immigration

In the United States today, too many communities struggle to grow and ensure that their residents thrive. These places experience hardship along with the rest of the nation during difficult economic times but do not seem to benefit to the same degree when the economy rebounds. In common parlance, they have been “left behind.”

One of the major warning signs of economic stagnation is slow population growth or population decline. Such demographic trends mean a declining tax base, falling home prices, fewer workers and consumers, and so on. A major source of decline is net out-migration, or people choosing to move elsewhere without corresponding inflows. Most of those who move away are young, working-age people. Communities left with an aging population often lack sufficient people to fill the necessary jobs to sustain the local economy. According to the Economic Research Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, from 2010 to 2020, nonmetro counties experienced their first recorded decade of overall population decline, including a 5 percent decrease in the working-age population and a 6 percent

decrease in the population of children.<sup>5</sup> Even places with stable or growing populations sometimes face labor market challenges. Low rates of business formation, for example, may result from a lack of entrepreneurship or market opportunity. The skills of the local labor force may not align with the needs of local employers, and educational pipelines take many years to bear fruit.

One often overlooked solution to these problems lies beyond American shores: immigration. While national politics in the United States and around the world have turned sharply against immigration in recent years, its economic potential remains enormous. For individual communities, an infusion of immigrants can help address economic stagnation or decline. A

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5. James C. Davis, Anil Rupasingha, John Cromartie, and Austin Sanders, “[Share of Working-Age Population in Nonmetro Areas Declined from 2010 to 2020](#),” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, November 16, 2022.



# The Economic Benefits of Immigration

study of two Detroit neighborhoods that saw large influxes of immigration over a thirty-year period found resultant population growth in those neighborhoods, compared to population loss citywide. Residents of the neighborhoods rated quality of life and neighborhood safety more highly; tax delinquencies and foreclosures fell; and the communities entered cycles of economic revitalization.<sup>6</sup> Another study describes neighborhoods in Chicago and Dallas where immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries have, according to one historian, “saved the American city” and helped reverse the urban crises that plagued metro areas in the late twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Large cities like Detroit, Chicago, and Dallas are hardly alone. From St. James, Minnesota, to Franklin County, Alabama, communities that have welcomed immigrants have reaped economic rewards in the form of population growth, revitalized downtowns, new businesses, and the filling of empty jobs.<sup>8</sup>

Despite perennial fears that new arrivals will displace American workers and drive down their wages, research shows that immigrants typically complement native workers and, as a result, increase their wages.<sup>9</sup> Economists Alessandro Caiumi and Giovanni Peri illustrate that, from 2000 to 2019, immigration led to a roughly 2 percent increase in the wages of noncollege-educated workers and had

no effect on college-educated workers. Rising rates of immigrant employment, they found, contributed to small increases in nonimmigrant employment. Immigrants are also uniquely entrepreneurial. In 2019, immigrant entrepreneurs accounted for 22 percent of all business owners in the United States, even though they represented only about 14 percent of the overall population and 17 percent of the labor force.<sup>10</sup>

This report proposes designing CPVs to channel the benefits of immigration to those communities at risk of being left behind but that would stand to rebound economically through the infusion of a new population and new workers. As has been the case for centuries, immigrants to the United States tend to settle in places where other immigrants from the same country have already settled. Over half of the nation’s forty-six-million foreign-born people live in just four states: California, Texas, New York, and Florida.<sup>11</sup> From 2017 to 2022, 37 percent of all H-1B recipients lived in just four cities: New York, San Jose, San Francisco, and Dallas.<sup>12</sup> By authorizing communities to become special destinations for the immigrants they want and need, CPVs would create incentives for immigrants to move to less common destinations where their presence would introduce economic dynamism and growth.

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6. Global Detroit, “[Immigration a Powerful Force for Revitalizing Detroit’s Neighborhoods](#), Global Detroit Study Shows,” Global Detroit Blog, August 4, 2021.

7. A. K. Sandoval-Strausz, *Barrio America: How Latino Immigrants Saved the American City* (Basic Books, 2019).

8. FWD.us, [Immigration Can Reverse Rural Population Decline](#), FWD.us, August 2023; Silva Mathema, Nicole Prchal Svajlenka, and Anneliese Hermann, [Revival and Opportunity: Immigrants in Rural America](#) (Center for American Progress, September 2018), 18.

9. Alessandro Caiumi and Giovanni Peri, “[Immigration’s Effect on US Wages and Employment Redux](#),” NBER Working Paper Series, no. 32389, National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2024; and David Card, “[Is the New Immigration Really So Bad?](#)” January 2005.

10. Immigration also boosts the national economy. As a result of the wave of immigration that began in 2022, for example, the Congressional Budget Office projected a \$7 trillion increase in GDP from 2023 to 2034 and an additional \$1 trillion in federal government tax revenue. Philip L. Swagel, “[Director’s Statement on the Budget and Economic Outlook for 2024 to 2034](#),” Congressional Budget Office blog, February 7, 2024; and “[Entrepreneurship](#),” New American Economy.

11. These states account for 33 percent of the overall U.S. population. Shabnam Shenasi Azari, Virginia Jenkins, Joyce Hahn, and Lauren Medina, “[The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2022](#),” American Community Survey Briefs, ACS-BR-019, April 2024.

12. American Immigration Council, “[The H-1B Visa Program and Its Impact on the U.S. Economy](#),” January 2025.



Williamsport, Pennsylvania

## How CPVs Would Work

**T**his section lays out a policy framework for CPVs designed to facilitate the arrival of new immigrants in places where they do not currently choose to go in significant numbers. The working group presumed that legislation will be required to create CPVs but that no legislation can account for all the administrative decisions necessary to implement such a complicated program. Enabling legislation, therefore, ought to contain clear statements that Congress intends the supervising agency or agencies to adapt the visa program to changing circumstances, including the possibility that the program works differently in practice than anticipated. Throughout this report, we have identified questions that will need to be resolved by the agency or agencies charged with overseeing the program.

In developing the CPV framework, we sought at all points to promote two principles for both visa recipients and communities: *agency* and *flexibility*. We prioritized agency in recognition of autonomy, choice, and consent as central American values, concluding that the visa program should allow communities to opt in and respect the preferences and personal freedoms of visa recipients. We prioritized

flexibility in recognition of the likelihood that, once implemented, a program of this kind would need to evolve. Rigid rules would do a disservice to both visa recipients and their host communities. The rules and operational details we propose below should be seen as suggestions; other configurations may also work well, provided they retain the flexibility of the program and respect the agency of participants.



### Steps to Creating CPVs

#### *Community Eligibility*

The first step to setting up CPVs involves identifying the communities eligible to accept visa recipients. Eligibility should be determined based on the state of local economies. Traditional geographic units, such as counties or municipalities, will not adequately identify target communities. Some counties are extremely large. Some are sparsely populated. Crucially, county borders do not reflect economic borders in a meaningful way. Municipalities, meanwhile, do not include rural areas.

The working group proposes that the CPV program rely on the Commuting Zone (CZ), which represents the unit of geography that offers the best approximation of the shape and state of a local economy. CZs were developed by the federal government in the 1980s and are based on census data on individuals' travel to and from their jobs. Because CZs utilize people's movement in the course of their daily lives, they offer a better geographic reflection of local economies than traditional political boundaries.

CZs for 2020 were built by geographer Christopher S. Fowler, whose analysis divides the nation into 583 CZs. Most CZs are located entirely within a single state, though some cross state lines.<sup>13</sup>

We further propose relying on the following metrics to determine community eligibility:

- Population growth
- Prime age (25–54) labor force participation rate
- Median income growth
- Local cost of living

The first three metrics serve as proxies for economic performance. A community that is losing population will, almost by definition, struggle economically, either in the short or the long term. Population loss means that even if labor force participation and income growth remain strong—or *especially* if they remain strong—the community in question will face a dearth of eligible individuals to fill open jobs. Any community that is losing population *and* has low income growth for median-income earners is almost certainly struggling. Without outside intervention, this community

13. “Commuting Zones and Labor Market Areas,” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, last updated January 4, 2025; and Christopher S. Fowler, “New Community Zone Delineation for the U.S. Based on 2020 Data,” draft, January 29, 2024, last updated August 8, 2024.



## How CPVs Would Work

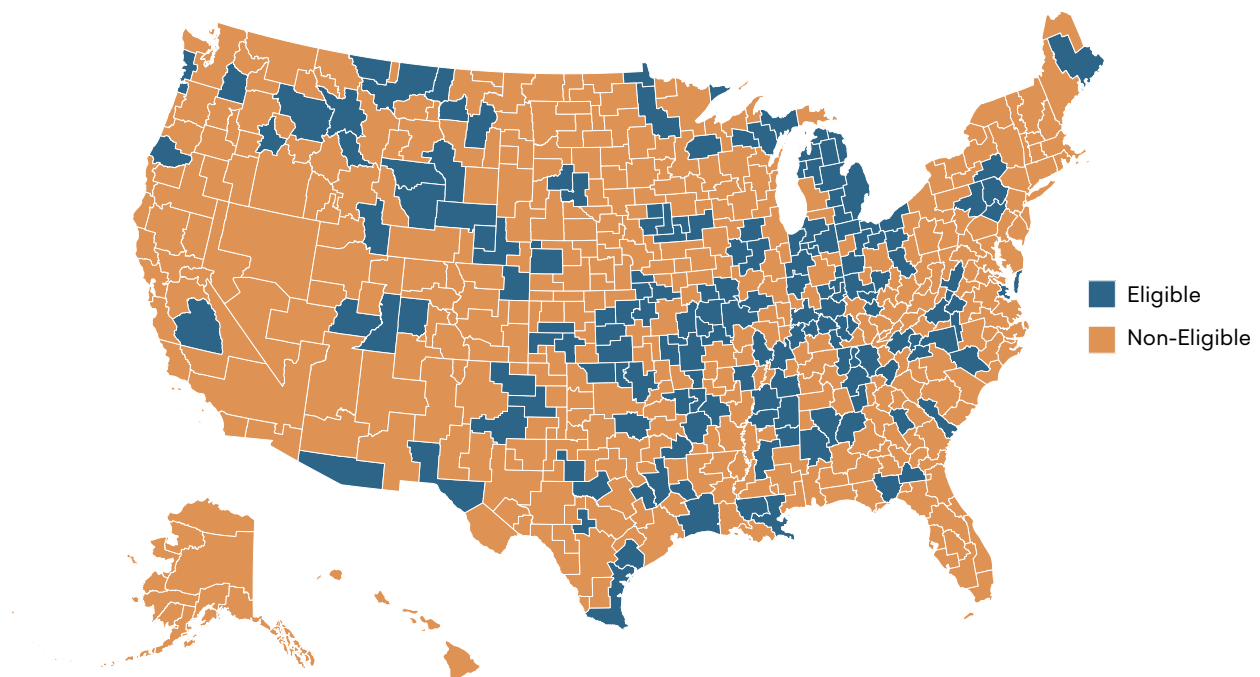
may be headed for a downward economic spiral, as the loss of population will further depress incomes, which will drive more people to leave, and so on.

We used the following formula to determine CZ eligibility (see [Appendix B](#) for a more detailed methodology). First, we tabulated the median income growth, prime age labor force participation rate, and population growth rate for each CZ using county-level data, which was weighted according to county population. The median income growth and labor force participation measures were combined into an aggregate measure. We then built a distribution of CZs along both the population growth measure and the combined labor force/income growth measure. Any CZ that scored above the eightieth percentile on both the population growth measure *and* the labor force/median income growth measure was labeled ineligible. By our metrics, these places are already thriving—many because they are already immigration hubs—and would not require place-based visas to attract new immigrants. On the other side of the distribution, any CZ that scored in the bottom twentieth percentile of both

measures was also made ineligible. Some of these CZs are so challenged economically that only a large infusion of immigration—one beyond the scope of the CPV program—would change their economic trajectory. Many of the other recommendations in the Academy’s CORE report, *Advancing a People-First Economy*, would aid these places, including proposals focused on banking, housing, healthcare, broadband access, social safety nets, workforce development, and place-based anti-poverty programs. It also would be contrary to the best interests of the visa recipients to be drawn to a sparsely populated community where they do not have a realistic chance for economic security or opportunity.

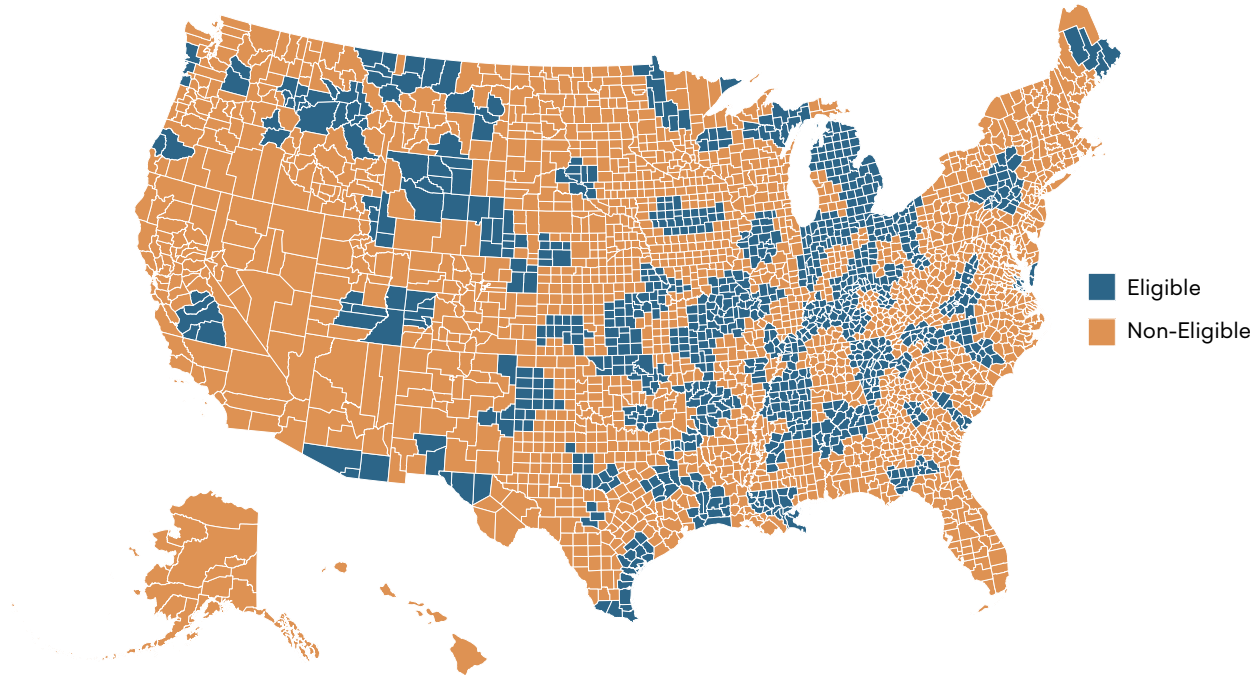
Finally, CZs with a high cost of living were labeled ineligible. Population loss in these counties is likely related to this cost of living, not stagnant economic growth. Using the Economic Policy Institute’s Family Budget Calculator, we used population-weighted county-level data to determine the cost of living in every CZ for a two-parent, two-child household. The top 20 percent of CZs by cost of living were made ineligible for CPVs.

### Commuting Zones by CPV Eligibility





### Counties by CPV Eligibility



Under our proposed criteria, 168 out of 583 CZs would be eligible to participate (28.8 percent of the total). Eligible CZs account for 30 percent of all counties and 19 percent of the American population (using 2020 population data). Thirty-nine states include at least one CZ.<sup>14</sup>

Overall, eligible counties had lower per capita GDP than ineligible counties (nearly 25 percent lower in 2020). They also had lower levels of overall well-being, as measured by the CORE Score, a product of the Academy's Commission on Reimagining Our Economy. The Score is a 1–10 measure of well-being in eleven annual county-level measures across four categories: economic security, economic opportunity, health, and political voice. In 2023, eligible CPV counties had an average CORE Score of 5.33, lower than the national average (5.61) as well as the average of noneligible counties (5.68). Eligible counties averaged lower scores than noneligible counties across all four categories.

Eligible communities include a range of places. Some have relatively robust labor participation rates or median income growth, but a lack of proportional population growth signifies a dearth of personnel to fill available positions and help the community continue to thrive. Eligible communities include both rural and urban areas, and the most populous places eligible by our formula are the CZs that include the cities of Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; Tucson, Arizona; Fresno, California; and St. Louis, Missouri. While some of these cities are already immigration hubs, in general the CZs eligible in our formula have a higher percentage of their population consisting of people born inside the United States compared to ineligible CZs (92 percent for eligible compared to 83 percent for ineligible). Places that would be qualified to host CPV recipients are, generally speaking, not places where immigrants are already choosing to live.

14. The states that do not include an eligible CZ are Alaska, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Vermont.



### *Community Opt-In*

No community will be required to participate in the CPV program. The program as a whole should be supervised and directed by a federal agency, as explained in more detail below. But local residents and leaders should determine for themselves that their community has the need and the capacity for the arrival of immigrants. Local leaders will have the best sense of the types of job openings available in their area and the types of workers who would best help their community thrive.

Though CZs, as measures of local labor markets, offer the best metric for defining areas of eligibility for CPVs, such zones are not political units. CZs have no mayor or governing commission and thus no institutional entity that could apply for the program. As a result, applications to participate in the visa program should be made by county, city, municipal, or tribal officials who represent an area

located within an eligible CZ. Ideally, these should be officials who answer to voters, to ensure that the decision to participate is subject to democratic accountability. Because multiple political units exist within any given CZ, more than one application from a CZ may be viable. For example, Wayne County and Oakland County, Michigan, fall within the same eligible CZ. Officials from each county would be able to apply to the program as they saw fit. Furthermore, within each county, multiple cities or towns could endeavor to apply. Efforts to coordinate applications across units should be given consideration as the program develops.

The entities that submit formal applications to the program will differ across locales. Some counties or municipalities have robust governmental systems that could apply directly. Others may want to designate this responsibility to a local governmental or nongovernmental body. A nonexhaustive list of possible organizations includes:



## How CPVs Would Work



Williamsport, Pennsylvania

- **Workforce Development Boards:** Regional entities focused on economic and educational development. There are 590 such boards across the country, varying widely in jurisdictional size.<sup>15</sup>
- **Regional community and economic development organizations:** Quasi-governmental organizations focused on economic planning and development. These bodies are variously known as Regional Development Organizations, Councils of Government, Planning and Development Districts, Regional Planning Councils, Area Development Districts, or Local Development Districts. The National Association of Development Organizations has a membership of more than five hundred such entities across the country.<sup>16</sup>
- **Tribal governments:** Though legally more analogous to states than cities or counties, Native American reservations represent major hubs of regional employment and economic development in certain parts of the country.

If a county or local government chooses to designate another entity to apply for CPVs on its behalf, local officials should select an entity whose primary mission is to advance the well-being of the people within their jurisdiction and is attuned to the state of the local labor market. Ideally, these entities should include a wide variety of community figures—rather than, for example, solely business leaders—and should not have a political affiliation. Applying entities should also strive to solicit input from the public as they draft the application. Wherever possible, they should consult with refugee resettlement organizations or other bodies that have experience with immigrant relocation to the relevant community to ensure they have a complete sense of the financial prospects of the new immigrants. Counties and municipalities should ensure that only one entity applies on their behalf, and the supervising federal agency should set up a certification process to designate an official applicant for each interested locale.

15. Some states have only one Workforce Development Board.

16. “About NADO,” National Association of Development Organizations.



### *The Community Application*

Only the federal government can issue visas. The CPV system, therefore, must be designed to enable communities to indicate the needs of their local labor market to the federal government. We recommend that CPVs be overseen by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), in consultation with the Department of State where relevant. USCIS would review applications from communities, direct the process of allocating and issuing visas, and then issue visas.

Many details about this application should be left up to USCIS. Important principles that should guide the drafting of the application forms include:

- The CPV program should be open to workers from a wide range of categories. The communities eligible to participate in the CPV program are heterogeneous. Some will seek people with advanced degrees or particular expertise. Others may need to fill positions that do not necessarily require any or much advanced training, including in fields such as agriculture and manufacturing. Applying entities should be able to note the type of workers they are seeking to invite or should be able to select from a supplied list of options.
- Some county or local governments may lack the bureaucratic capacity to prepare an application. They may not even have the ability to designate another organization to apply or may be the only eligible entity in their area. This lack of capacity should not be a barrier to participation. The enabling legislation for CPVs should delineate precisely how counties can designate local entities to apply to participate while also offering a shorter, simpler application for counties to apply to USCIS for help completing the fuller application. This would ensure all eligible counties are actually able to participate.
- The application should require communities to demonstrate that potential immigrants are not being brought in for the purposes of undermining incumbent workers or loosening tight, worker-friendly labor markets. The applying entity should provide evidence that the community is unable to satisfy the needs that would be served by the types of workers the community is seeking. Any such requirements could parallel, but





should be less strict than, those that apply to other temporary worker programs, such as H-2A (Temporary Agricultural Workers) and H-2B (Temporary Non-Agricultural Workers) visas.

- The application should include space to indicate how many visa recipients the community hopes to receive. The number of visas a community can apply for should be capped and proportional to the county's population and the total number of visas the enabling legislation authorizes USCIS to distribute.

### *The Individual Visa Applicant*

The federal government should place limits on who can apply for a CPV. Only those between the ages of eighteen and forty-nine should be eligible, to reflect the program's goal of boosting the local labor force. In addition to those outside the United States, individuals already in the country on a temporary visa—including Temporary Protected Status—should be eligible to apply, as should individuals

with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and parole statuses.

Applicants should *not* be required to have already received a job offer as part of their application. Such a requirement would reduce the flexibility of the program for both communities and visa recipients. Regardless of whether they are the entity that applies for CPVs, local political, business, and workforce development groups, as well as local refugee or immigrant resettlement organizations, should seek to identify job openings for visa recipients to ensure quick transitions into the local labor market.

Like the communities themselves, potential visa recipients would opt into the program by applying, either through the Bureau of Consular Affairs if they are abroad or USCIS if they are already located in the United States. The application should resemble typical work visa applications and should include relevant security screening. The agency can attach an application cost to the program, and the fee should remain in line with that for other

## How CPVs Would Work



Tulare County, California

immigration programs, such as H-1B or Conrad 30 J-1 visas. These fees can help defray the costs of administering the program at the federal level.

### *Matching Communities and Applicants*

A key part of the CPV process will involve matching the communities that opt into the program with applicants from around the globe (and within the country). By necessity, this process should be overseen by USCIS. The agency should develop its own process to match communities with applicants and to incorporate community input into the matching process.

### *Visa Portability*

Strict policing of the movement or residence of visa holders would be impractical, and doing so would run contrary to the principles of autonomy and flexibility. But because the CPV program is designed to spur economic revitalization in specific areas, visa holders should be required to live within the applying county or locale with which they were paired, and they should find employment within the relevant CZ. If the visa holder is unable to find suitable employment, they should be permitted to petition for relocation to a different CPV-eligible community, during which time their visa would remain valid.

### *Visa Duration and Family Eligibility*

CPVs should last for at least five years, long enough for the recipient to immerse themselves in their community. At the end of the initial five-year period, the visa holder should be able to renew their visa for five more years, for a total maximum duration of ten years. At the expiration of the second visa, the visa holder should be eligible to apply for permanent residency under a newly created post-CPV green card category. Receipt of a CPV would not preclude the recipient from obtaining permanent residency earlier through another stream, such as employer sponsorship or marriage.

After an individual arrives on a CPV, they should be eligible to apply for their spouse and any minor children living abroad to receive visas. The spouse could be eligible to work as well.

### *Program Size*

The program should be sufficiently large to have the intended effect of helping to economically revitalize host communities but not so large that it eclipses other streams of immigration in existing law. The precise number of visas should be determined by USCIS, though comparable programs such as H-1B or H-2B visas (65,000 and 66,000 per fiscal year, respectively) offer useful points of comparison.

# Conclusion

**T**he Community Partnership Visa program offers a promising tool to help revitalize local economies across the country. Many communities have seen populations shrink, businesses close, and labor forces evaporate. The CPV program offers a new way for interested places to bring in new residents eager to put down roots and contribute to community life. And the program would do more than invigorate local economies. Visa recipients would have the opportunity to become long-standing members of their new community, helping strengthen its social fabric and civic life. By welcoming people through this program, the nation can add a new chapter to its history as an immigration hub to ensure that parts of the country at risk of being left behind instead thrive for generations to come.

# Appendix A:

## Community Partnership Visa Working Group

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# Appendix B:

## Methodology for Determining CPV Community Eligibility

**T**his appendix details the working group’s proposed formula to determine the Commuting Zones (CZs) eligible to participate in the Community Partnership Visa (CPV) program. Eligibility was determined using the following criteria:

- **Population growth:** The 2010 county-level decennial population estimates were subtracted from the 2020 county-level decennial population estimates and divided by the 2010 county-level decennial population estimates.
- **Prime age (25–54) labor force participation rate:** Constructed with the 2011 ACS five-year estimates for all persons between the ages of 25 and 54 in a county. Those who were working were coded as 1 and those who were not working were coded as 0, such that a simple mean of a county would produce the prime age labor force participation.
- **Median income growth:** Median personal income for the 2011 ACS five-year estimates was subtracted from the 2021 ACS five-year estimates and divided by the median personal income for the 2011 ACS five-year estimates.
- **Local cost of living:** The Economic Policy Institute’s [cost of living data](#) were used to determine the cost of living for a two-parent, two-child household in each county.

All of these measures were calculated at the county level and then aggregated to the CZ level by taking the mean of the values in the counties in a CZ, weighted by each county’s 2020 population. The allocation of counties to CZs was determined using [calculations by geographer Christopher Fowler](#).

Eligibility was determined by a combined averaged labor force participation/median income growth cutoff, population growth cutoff, and cost of living cutoff. To create the averaged measure, the labor force participation and median income growth variables were scaled as a percentile rank from 0 to 100, added together and then divided by two. Percentile rank is calculated by taking an observation and counting how many more observations its value is greater than, dividing by the total amount of values minus one, and multiplying by 100. Any CZ that fell above the eightieth percentile or below the twentieth percentile of the scaled and averaged labor force participation/median income growth *and* fell outside the 20th–80th percentile boundaries for population growth was excluded. Finally, any CZ that had a cost of living in the eightieth percentile or higher was excluded.

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