



# CITY OF SOUTH BEND

## REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

### Redevelopment Commission Agenda Item

DATE: January 12, 2023

FROM: Caleb Bauer, DCI Executive Director

SUBJECT: High Skill Immigration Fund

\_\_\_\_\_ Pres/V-Pres

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED       Not Approved

*SOUTH BEND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION*

Funding Source\* (circle one) River West; River East; South Side; Douglas Road; West Washington; **RDC General**

\*Funds are subject to the City Controller's determination of availability; if funds are unavailable, as solely determined by the City Controller, then the authorization of the expenditure of such funds shall be void and of no effect.

**Specific request:** \$300,000 from Redevelopment-Controlled Pokagon Fund

**Purpose of Request:** Disbursement of funds for City of South Bend to pilot a High Skill Immigration Fund to encourage and facilitate businesses to hire high-skilled foreign talent.

The request for funding aims to attract talent to South Bend to accelerate expansion, spur population growth, and fill vital jobs in a time of record low unemployment.

The South Bend region has hundreds of unfilled positions in non-technical business, education, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and social services sector, with growth expected in nearly every sector within the next decade. High-skilled immigrants can spur growth in the region and fill these high-demand vacant positions.

For businesses looking to hire foreign talent, the cost of visa processing can be a deterrent to welcoming international employees to the company. To attract talent to South Bend and the wider region, the proposed High Skill Immigration Fund would provide matching grants to subsidize visa costs.

Additionally, the High Skill Immigration Fund would help to retain international talent from world-renowned local universities, attracting top global talent to South Bend. A model of this can already been seen at enFocus, which recruits recent college graduates and works to maintain diverse young professionals with a 70% retention rate. EnFocus has been engaged with the City in the exploratory work for this Fund and will continue to collaborate to implement the fund.

In addition to visa costs, the High Skill Immigration Fund would sponsor workshops and webinars to educate employers and help build capacity to hire and retain foreign talent.

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The proposed funding would subsidize the prohibitive costs of H1-B petitions filed by employers for high-skilled workers and would educate local businesses to build capacity surrounding the visa process to facilitate the hiring of foreign workers.

INTERNAL USE ONLY: Project ID: PROJ \_\_\_\_\_;

Total Amount – New Project Budget Appropriation \$ \_\_\_\_\_;

Total Amount – Existing Project Budget Change (increase or decrease) \$ \_\_\_\_\_;

Funding Limits: Engineering: \$ \_\_\_\_\_; Other Prof Serv Amt \$ \_\_\_\_\_;

Acquisition of Land/Bldg (circle one) Amt: \$ \_\_\_\_\_; Street Const Amt \$ \_\_\_\_\_;

Building Imp Amt \$ \_\_\_\_\_; Sewers Amt \$ \_\_\_\_\_; Other (specify) Amt \$ \_\_\_\_\_