

Economic & Workforce Development

At its core, the St. Louis Regional Chamber is a business advocacy and economic development organization. The Chamber advocates for governmental policies that support high employment, low costs, and sustainable growth. These efforts include monetary and fiscal policies, regulation of financial institutions, trade, and tax policies. In addition, ensuring our region has a diverse, educated, and skilled workforce able to accommodate employers' needs while embracing continuous growth and development is critical to our success as a region. Workforce development is part of economic development, and it's about enhancing our region's economic stability and prosperity by investing in the people, organizations, and processes that comprise our workforce.

Transportation & Infrastructure

The development of our region's infrastructure will always be a top priority of the St. Louis Regional Chamber at all levels of government. Continued investment in our roads, highways, bridges, airports, railways, waterways, and intermodal links is integral to our region's prosperity. Furthermore, improvements to our water supply, sewers, electrical grids, and quality broadband internet will improve the lives of our citizens. All these structures support the movement of goods and services to customers, companies, and marketplaces.

*The American Society of Civil Engineers ranked both Missouri and Illinois's roads and bridges with **D's** and **C's**, respectively.*

The St. Louis Regional Chamber advocates for the maintenance, improvement, and creation of

infrastructure and transportation assets that further develop our region's position as a premier transportation and distribution hub.



H-1 B Visas

In order to maintain a healthy innovation economy, the St. Louis region and the U.S. must be able to access top talent pools from around the world. The chamber supports federal legislation to expand the statutory limit on H-1B visas to ensure the supply of highly skilled foreign professionals meets the demand of regional employers.

*Immigrants are **30%** more likely to start a business and twice as likely to have doctoral degrees.*

Employers in our region struggle to meet the market demand for such workers, and the current limits in place have a negative impact on our economy. The expansion of this limit would allow for an increased number of highly skilled foreign professionals to work in our region,

improving our workforce and injecting the local economy with additional capital via increased volumes of workers living here.

Export-Import Bank Reauthorization

The Chamber strongly advocates for the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank of the United States as an integral institution that empowers key regional employers to export their sales abroad, allowing our business community to remain globally competitive. The U.S. Export-Import Bank supports billions of dollars of U.S. exports and hundreds of thousands of export-related U.S. jobs each year. It does so by providing credit guarantees and other financial services that help foreign customers of U.S. companies secure the financing they need from commercial lenders to buy American products.

*In 2015, **more than half** of the goods manufactured in our bi-state region were sold overseas - made possible by Ex-Im bank.*

Ex-Im charges those foreign customers for its services so the Bank not only covers all its operating expenses but earns a profit for American taxpayers and reduces the annual deficit. Ex-Im has an excellent track record for risk assessment. The bank's default rate since its founding is less than 2 percent. The chamber supports reauthorization to unhinge many of the shackles currently restricting our bi-state region's economic reach.

Support, Preserve, Enhance Key Military Installations

The Chamber supports Scott Air Force Base's growth and status as a transportation and cyber

security center of excellence and will continue advocacy efforts to ensure this critical regional employer remains competitive to attract new squadrons and missions. Scott Air Force base is a critical economic driver for the St. Louis bi-state region, generating more than \$3 billion in direct and indirect economic activity each year. The base employs over 13,000 civilian and military personnel, with an annual payroll in excess of \$1.3 billion, making it the fifth-largest employer in the region. Scott contributes an additional 25,000 jobs through local businesses supporting base operations. Two-thirds of the employees reside in Illinois, while one-third reside in Missouri. Scott's total economic impact increased significantly from \$2.1 billion in 2001 to \$3.2 billion in 2011, as the base has taken on new missions and expanded its workforce.

