GLOBAL FLUENCY IN CHARLESTON

The three-county Charleston region relies on international engagement to sustain our economy. Whether you are a teacher, truck driver, or business executive, you are influenced by global connections every day.

Charleston is evolving into a globally fluent metro, where we appreciate our connectivity to the global economy and we work together to ensure that everyone benefits from those connections. By welcoming new companies and new people, we help bring good jobs to our community, we improve our education and healthcare, we support new technology, we make new neighbors and friends.

Developed as part of Charleston’s Global Fluency Initiative, the 2020 Global Connectivity Snapshot illustrates how our global connections continue to help people and businesses in our three-county region thrive.

DID YOU KNOW:
With Charleston’s seasonal British Airways nonstop flights to Heathrow, you can travel to 119 countries in the world with only one layover?
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For more resources and information on the Global Fluency Initiative, visit CharlestonCommunityGuide.com/International-Community or email us at globalfluency@crda.org
OUR ECONOMY
International investment and trade are vital to the long-term health of Charleston’s economy. Our global connections support thousands of regional jobs at every skill level across many industries.

OUR PEOPLE
Charleston’s people have a global heritage. Whether they recently moved or are third-generation U.S. citizens, our international residents are dynamic members of our community. They create new businesses, bring skills to local employers, and share their arts and culture throughout the region.

OUR COMMUNITY
Charleston’s global connectivity brings arts festivals and tourism income, charitable giving and expanded employment opportunities. Through our companies, organizations, and people, our international community actively contributes to the vibrant life and economy of our region.

EMPLOYMENT
164 foreign-owned companies
Employ 19,900 people including 40% of manufacturing employees

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT
In 2019, foreign-owned companies announced:
538 new jobs
$108M in new investment in the Charleston region
Wages 40% above the regional average

TRADE
In 2019, SC Ports announced:
28,000 Lowcountry jobs
$10.9B in exports

RECORD YEAR FOR SC PORTS IN 2019
28,000 Lowcountry jobs
$10.9B in exports

Top 5 countries
Germany, UK, Sweden, Canada, France

Top 5 international birthplaces:
1. Mexico
2. Philippines
3. China
4. India
5. United Kingdom

Our community's international understanding through trade missions, and civic, cultural, educational and humanitarian engagement with partners abroad

Source: Charleston Sister Cities

STUDENTS
International students at local colleges contributed $15.7M to the economy in 2018-2019 and supported 85 jobs
Local college students study abroad in 60+ countries

Source: SCRA

GLOBAL TRAVEL
134,000 of CBS travelers are on international itineraries

Source: CRDA

International visitors to Charleston annually
700,000

Source: Charleston Area CVB

GLOBAL TRAVEL
18 international companies
HQ locations

1 in 5 companies participating in youth apprenticeships are multinational
They employ 22% of region’s youth apprentices

Source: Center for Business Research

PARTNERING GLOBALLY, THRIVING LOCALLY.
60+ international cultural and religions organizations
Source: Global Fluency Action Team

Charleston Sister Cities promotes the Charleston region and enhances our community’s international understanding through trade missions, and civic, cultural, educational and humanitarian engagement with partners abroad

Source: charleston-sister-cities.org

Panama City, Panama
Spoleto, Italy

85% of those residents are now U.S. citizens
5% population is international

37,600 local residents were born in another country
44% of these residents are now U.S. citizens

Source: 2018 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

5% of U.S. citizens born abroad
7% of new residents in 2017 moved from abroad

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HQ locations

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164 foreign-owned companies
Employ 19,900 people including 40% of manufacturing employees

Top 5 countries
- Germany
- UK
- Sweden
- Canada
- France
Source: Center for Business Research & CIRIA, 3/2020

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Source: Center for Business Research & CIRIA, 3/2020

TRADE
RECORD YEAR FOR SC PORTS IN 2019
- 28,000 Lowcountry jobs rely on trade via the Port of Charleston
- $10.9B in exports
- 1,052,000 containers handled

Source: SC Ports Authority

Top 5 Charleston export markets:
- Mexico
- United Arab Emirates
- Singapore
- Japan
- China

Source: CIRIA

STUDENTS
International students at local colleges contributed $15.7M to the economy in 2018-2019 and supported 85 jobs

Source: NAFSA, for SC Congressional District 1

Local college students study abroad in 60+ countries

Source: CIRIA

GLOBAL TRAVEL
134,000 CHS travelers are on international itineraries

Source: Global Fluency Action Team

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS TO CHARLESTON ANNUALLY
700,000
Source: Charleston Area CVB, U.S. Department of Transportation, 2017

7,600 local residents were born in another country
5% POPULATION IS INTERNATIONAL

Top 5 international birthplaces:
1. Mexico
2. Philippines
3. China
4. India
5. United Kingdom

Source: 2019 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Our people: 8% speak a language other than English at home, 1.5% of U.S. citizens in Charleston were born abroad, 7% of new residents in 2017 moved from abroad.

645 small and medium-sized businesses support their local operations through exports

Source: Center for Business Research, 1/2020

1 in 5 companies participating in youth apprenticeships are multinational

They employ 22% of region’s youth apprentices

18 international companies HQ locations

60+ international cultural and religions organizations

Source: Charleston Sister Cities International

Charleston Sister Cities promotes the Charleston region and enhances our community’s international understanding through trade missions, and civic, cultural, educational and humanitarian engagement with partners abroad.

Source: Charleston Sister Cities.org

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(Sources: SC Ports Authority, International Trade Administration)

TRADE
Top 5 Charleston export markets:
1. Mexico
2. United Arab Emirates
3. Singapore
4. Japan
5. China

29% Trade to Europe
31% Trade to Asia

GLOBAL TRAVEL
700,000 international visitors to Charleston annually
134,000 of CHS travelers are on international itineraries

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Source: International Trade Administration

CHARLESTON SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL
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PANAMA CITY, PANAMA
SPOLETO, ITALY

CHARLESTON SISTER CITIES
Spoleto, Italy
Panama City, Panama

SOURCE: charlestonsistercities.org

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Source: Center for Business Research & CRDA, 1/2020

Source: 2018 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

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Source: Charleston Area CVB, U.S. Department of Transportation, 2017

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GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY SNAPSHOT

The Global Fluency Initiative is an activation of the Charleston Metro FDI Plan and the One Region Global Competitiveness Strategy. It is led and implemented by Charleston Regional Development Alliance and a volunteer Action Team committed to continuing to grow the community’s global fluency.

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