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GLOBAL FLUENCY IN CHARLESTON

Through companies, organizations, and people, Charleston’s international community actively contributes to our region’s vibrant lifestyle and economy. This global connectivity brings world-class arts, cultural festivals, tourism income, charitable giving, and expanded employment opportunities.

60+ International Cultural and Religious Organizations

Spoleto Festival USA | International African American Museum | Piccolo Spoleto
MOJA Arts Festival | Charleston Greek Festival | Charleston Caribbean Festival
Latin American Festival | International Film Festival | and more!

Partnering Globally, Thriving Locally.
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.

For more resources and information on the Global Fluency Initiative, visit CharlestonCommunityGuide.com/International-Community or email us at globalfluency@crda.org
OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

International investments 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 are recent arrivals or 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 STATE

South Carolina is home to more than 1,200 foreign-owned businesses. These companies are major contributors to our state and regional economies.

EMPLOYMENT

165 foreign-owned companies

Employ 20,000 people including 40% of manufacturing employees

Top 5 countries

Charleston has 54,350 foreign-born residents

6.8% POPULATION IS INTERNATIONAL

From 2010 to 2019, Charleston’s born-abroad population grew by nearly 10,000 residents – the fastest growing foreign-born population of all U.S. metro areas.

Top 10 international birthplaces:

1. Mexico
2. Philippines
3. China
4. India
5. Brazil
6. United Kingdom
7. Germany
8. Guatemala
9. Honduras
10. Canada

Top 3 Since 2011

South Carolina has ranked among the top three states in the nation for attracting jobs through foreign investment on a per capita basis.

40 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED ACROSS SOUTH CAROLINA

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

In 2021, foreign-owned companies announced:

2,261 new jobs

$303M in new investment in the Charleston region

$27.47/hr average wage

26% Trade with N. Europe

29% Trade with NE Asia

71% labor force participation rate (compared to 69% total residents)

37% have bachelor’s degree or higher (compared to 37.5% total residents)

STUDENTS

“Study South Carolina is a not-for-profit consortium of accredited public and private universities, colleges, and secondary schools focused on connecting students from around the world with opportunities and resources for studying abroad in South Carolina.”

www.studysouthcarolina.org

Photo: CSU International Studies

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RECORD YEAR FOR SC PORTS IN 2021

$73B in goods traded at SC Ports
28,000+ local jobs

TRADE

Top 5 Charleston-made exports:
1. Transportation Equipment: $3.5B
2. Chemicals: $668M
3. Electrical Equipment: $535M
5. Machinery: $245M

Top 5 countries

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2. UK
3. Switzerland
4. Canada
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MOJA ARTS FESTIVAL | CHARLESTON GREEK FESTIVAL | CHARLESTON CARIBBEAN FESTIVAL

LATIN AMERICAN FESTIVAL | INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL | AND MORE!

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