

## Joe Cimperman

Joe Cimperman is the president of Global Cleveland, an economic development agency that works to enhance the competitiveness of local employers by giving them greater access to international talent. With a small but dedicated team, he leads efforts to attract and welcome immigrants and refugees to Greater Cleveland and to connect them to opportunities that will speed their success and enrich the community.

A highly regarded civic leader, Cimperman was a member of Cleveland City Council for 18 years, distinguishing himself as champion of diverse peoples and cultures.

While on council, Cimperman first envisioned and articulated the Dream Neighborhood, an idea to restore vacant homes around the city's primary English immersion school and repopulate the neighborhood with newcomers whose children attend Thomas Jefferson International Newcomers Academy. Global Cleveland supports the International Village project, which has become a national model for redevelopment.

Under Cimperman's leadership, Global Cleveland has also worked to increase rates of naturalization among the region's immigrants—as research shows citizenship leads to greater civic and economic engagement—and to help local employers connect with high-skill immigrants, refugees and international students with events like the Global Employer Summit.

Cimperman, an immigrant's son, grew up in a Slovenian-speaking household on East 74<sup>th</sup> Street in the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood. He attended St. Ignatius High School and was elected student body president at John Carroll University. After his graduation in 1992, he served two years with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps before returning to Cleveland and becoming an outreach worker for the West Side Catholic Center.

In 1997, he was elected to the first of seven terms on Cleveland City Council. His diverse ward included the businesses and corporate offices of downtown as well as the cultures of Asiatown, Tremont, the Flats and the old neighborhood. While on council, Cimperman successfully promoted urban agriculture; sought protections for gay, lesbian and transgender residents and workers, and was a strong proponent of making Cleveland an international city.

In 2003, he was selected as a Fellow for the German Marshall Memorial Fellowship, a program of the German Marshall Fund.

In 2016, his last year on city council, he introduced a resolution that declared Cleveland a welcoming city to refugees, making special mention of those fleeing Syria and Iraq. That same year, Equality Ohio named him its Ally of the Year.

Cimperman assumed leadership of Global Cleveland in April of 2016.

He and his wife, Nora, live in the Ohio City neighborhood of Cleveland with their two young children.