

The
**WELCOMING
STANDARD**
— & —
**CERTIFIED
WELCOMING**

PRODUCED BY

**WELCOMING
AMERICA**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	Introduction	03	IV	Certified Welcoming	28
II	The Welcoming Standard	06	V	Quick Guide	34
III	The Design & Requirements	10			
	Government Leadership	12			
	Equitable Access	14			
	Civic Engagement	17			
	Connected Communities	19			
	Education	21			
	Economic Development	23			
	Safe Communities	25			
	Definitions	27			

© WELCOMING AMERICA 2016

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

FRONT COVER: © ORACLE PHOTOS / DOMONIQUE NEUKOMM

|



INTRODUCTION



Strong communities in the 21st Century intentionally connect and actively include people of all backgrounds. Only through these conditions do local communities meet their highest civic and economic potential, unleashing the power of their greatest asset — their people. As places look to harness the wealth and vibrancy that comes from diverse talents and a more global workforce, places that are more welcoming will set themselves apart.

Welcoming America has created the **Welcoming Standard** to outline the core of what it means for a community to be welcoming and set out the smart local policies, programs, and partnerships that give communities the welcoming edge.

The Welcoming Standard serves as the backbone of the **Certified Welcoming** program — a formal recognition for city and county governments that meet the rigorous requirements of the Welcoming Standard.

SUSTAINING SUPPORT FOR A WELCOMING COMMUNITY

Broad community support is critical for creating truly inclusive policies and programs and ensuring efforts are sustained into the longer-term. Places effectively implementing the Welcoming Standard emphasize the importance of bringing together receiving community members and newer immigrants so that both have a seat at the table and a chance to find common ground. This creates the fertile soil for people to put down roots and work together as neighbors, and allows welcoming places to successfully navigate challenging times that have the potential to derail community cohesion like leadership transitions or economic events.

Moving beyond 'us' vs' 'them' thinking requires a proactive approach that builds meaningful contact between diverse community members, engages local leaders from all sectors in the work, and promotes positive messaging that connects to shared values.

Communities ready to implement the Welcoming Standard or working toward Certified Welcoming will find these themes woven through the requirements. Those places just getting started should also consider to what extent they are building sustained work.

Here are a few questions to get started:

- What are the common values shared across new and old residents of this community?
- What are the opportunities for real listening, sharing, and understanding across differences in perspective and background?
- As we make programs and services more accessible to those who have traditionally been underserved, can we make them more accessible to a greater number of communities and demonstrate the benefits for all?
- How do we not only provide excellent services, but also foster belonging and participation?
- What bridge building efforts already exist in this community that can be built off of — what are the existing assets and who are the trusted leaders?
- How can we best nurture existing networks and especially those with diverse, cross-sector partners that address inclusion?

II

THE

WELCOMING

STANDARD



PURPOSE

The Welcoming Standard provides a comprehensive roadmap for places building more cohesive and equitable communities and fostering connections between newer immigrants and long-time residents. It also sets benchmarks that community organizations, residents, and others can use to hold welcoming places accountable and inspire continued innovation.

DEVELOPMENT

Over 18 months, Welcoming America worked with the nation's leading experts — practitioners, academics, and business and civic leaders — and gathered public feedback to identify the policies and programs that constitute the Welcoming Standard. To ensure the Welcoming Standard was rigorous and relevant across diverse communities, requirements were field-tested in several cities and counties. This process follows best practice in standard system design set out by the ISEAL Alliance and other certification oversight bodies. A list of advisors can be found under Acknowledgements.

The Welcoming Standard will continue to evolve to include new policy and program innovations, and Welcoming America will formally review the Welcoming Standard every five years.

Comments on the Welcoming Standard can be emailed to certified@welcomingamerica.org.





CORE STRATEGIES

How communities design and implement the requirements in the Welcoming Standard is as critical as the content. The following core strategies increase the impact and sustainability of welcoming. All programs and partnerships should have these strategies in place.

1

Engage longer-term residents.

Just as fertile soil is needed for a seed to grow, receptive communities are critical if immigrants are to thrive. Engaging longer-term residents in immigrant inclusion programs and partnerships reshapes the boundaries of “us” and “them” building more unified and welcoming communities. Welcoming communities build connections, communicate shared values, and nurture leadership to create places where everyone belongs.

2

Set goals, monitor impact, and adjust strategies as needed.

Identifying priorities and allowing for course correction are critical to impact when limited resources are available. Monitoring and evaluation also help communities know if they are reaching immigrant residents with programs and meeting their stated goals.

3

Design for equity and inclusion.

Where, when, and how a person can access services can significantly impact participation and outcomes. Designing programs and partnerships to increase access to different religions, cultures, races, ethnicities, physical and mental abilities, ages, genders, and sexual orientations is essential to meeting the Welcoming Standard and to ensuring that a focus on immigrant inclusion is one that leads to greater access for all residents.

4

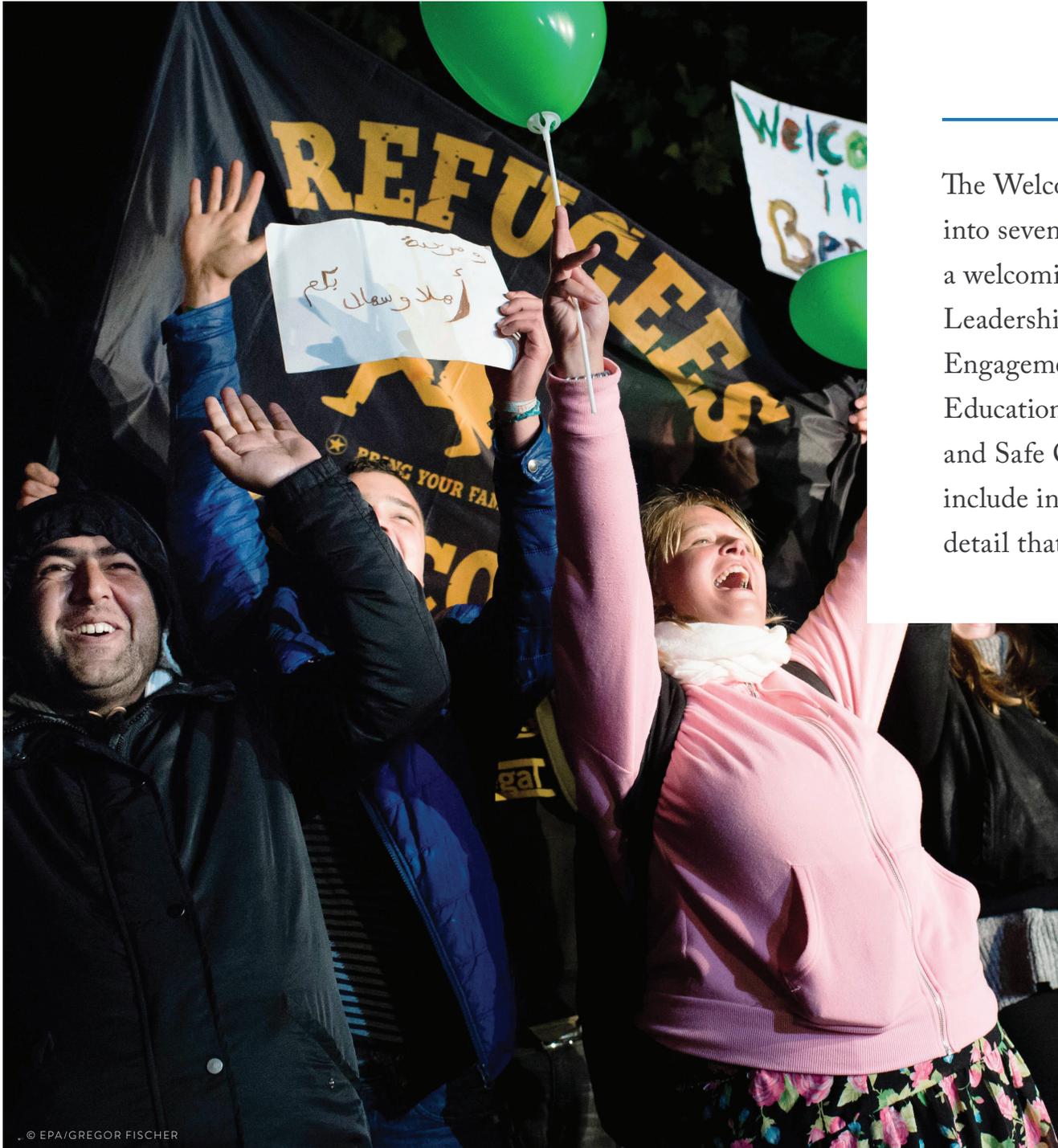
Implement in partnership.

Collaboration can leverage new resources and build program capacity. Collaboration across sectors that engages new partners can also strengthen community support for immigrant inclusion efforts. The Standard identifies some requirements that must be done in partnership, but building in collaboration can strengthen efforts across the board.

© BRAD MCCLENNY/THE GAINSVILLE SUN

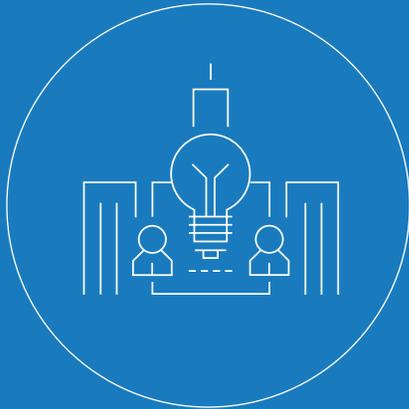
III

DESIGN & REQUIREMENTS



The Welcoming Standard is organized into seven categories critical to building a welcoming community: Government Leadership, Equitable Access, Civic Engagement, Connected Communities, Education, Economic Development, and Safe Communities. Some requirements include indicators that set out additional detail that the requirement should meet.

Requirements are either considered core or additional. Core requirements are central to the Welcoming Standard. Places that are Certified Welcoming meet all core requirements.



1

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

In welcoming places the local government implements systems and programs that strengthen community efforts and embed inclusion within government agencies.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

KEY:  CORE  ADDITIONAL

GL1	REQUIREMENT	A policy is in place that designates a unit focused on immigrant inclusion work.	
GL1.1	INDICATOR	The unit is formalized, active, and has dedicated staff.	
GL1.2	INDICATOR	The unit's governance includes multi-sector representation, and representatives reflect the diversity of the immigrant community and the receiving community.	

GL2	REQUIREMENT	The unit advances immigrant inclusion through partnership and collaboration across community sectors and government agencies.	
GL2.1	INDICATOR	The unit engages other jurisdictions on immigrant inclusion especially those jurisdictions that directly affect the requirements in this Standard.	
GL2.2	INDICATOR	The unit supports local government agencies in setting goals for immigrant inclusion and monitoring progress toward those goals.	

GL3	REQUIREMENT	A program(s) is in place to provide information on community services.	
GL3.1	INDICATOR	The program(s) provides information on government resources such as local government services and public benefits.	
GL3.2	INDICATOR	The program(s) provides information on English language learning opportunities.	
GL3.3	INDICATOR	The program(s) provides information on naturalization.	
GL3.4	INDICATOR	The program(s) provides information on professional licensing and starting a business.	

GL4	REQUIREMENT	A program is in place to manage a community-wide plan for immigrant inclusion.	
GL4.1	INDICATOR	The program includes processes to regularly assess the needs and priorities of the local immigrant community in each of the categories of this standard and use that feedback to strengthen the plan.	
GL4.2	INDICATOR	The program includes processes to engage cross-sector and diverse stakeholders in the maintenance and implementation of the plan, including stakeholders from the immigrant community and receiving community.	
GL4.3	INDICATOR	The program includes accountability and learning mechanisms to regularly assess the effectiveness of activities outlined in the plan.	

GL5	REQUIREMENT	A program(s) is in place to promote and strengthen the capacity of Community Based Organizations working on immigrant inclusion.	
------------	--------------------	---	---

GL6	REQUIREMENT	A program(s) is in place to promote employing a local government workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.	
GL6.1	INDICATOR	The program(s) identifies and addresses barriers to inclusive hiring and employee retention, including barriers to accessing information on open positions.	

GL7	REQUIREMENT	A program(s) is in place to advance local and minority, including immigrant, owned business sourcing and contracting.	
GL7.1	INDICATOR	The program(s) identifies and addresses barriers to sourcing and contracting.	



2

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Welcoming places work to ensure community services and opportunities are available to all residents, including immigrants.

EQUITABLE ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

KEY:  CORE  ADDITIONAL

EA1	REQUIREMENT	No locally-mandated government policies exist where the primary purpose of the policy is to exclude or disenfranchise immigrants.	
EA1.1	INDICATOR	No locally-mandated government codes exist where the primary purpose of the policy is to exclude or disenfranchise immigrants.	
EA1.2	INDICATOR	No locally-mandated government policies exist where the primary purpose of the policy is to increase the rate of immigrant detention or deportation.	
EA1.3	INDICATOR	No government policies exist where the primary purpose of the policy is to exclude or disenfranchise immigrants based on other facets of their identity including gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, age, or religion.	
EA1.4	INDICATOR	A process(es) is in place to regularly audit and improve local policies and codes to strengthen immigrant inclusion.	

EA2	REQUIREMENT	A program(s) is in place to ensure language access across government agencies with the goal of expanding equitable access to programs, services, and activities.	
EA2.1	INDICATOR	The program(s) assesses and addresses language needs for accessing important community information including safety services and emergency and alert systems.	
EA2.2	INDICATOR	The program(s) includes training for staff.	

EA3	REQUIREMENT	A process(es) is in place to identify barriers to equitable access to programs and services, and develop partnership programs to address those barriers.	
EA3.1	INDICATOR	Partnership programs to achieve equitable access provide services that are responsive to diverse cultural practices, languages, and literacy levels.	
EA3.2	INDICATOR	Partnership programs to achieve equitable access address fraudulent services and scams targeting the immigrant community.	

EA4	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to achieve equitable access to health services for immigrants.	
EA4.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) provides information on health insurance options and promotes access to health insurance.	
EA4.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) promotes access to health services including treatment, testing, preventative health services, and mental health services.	

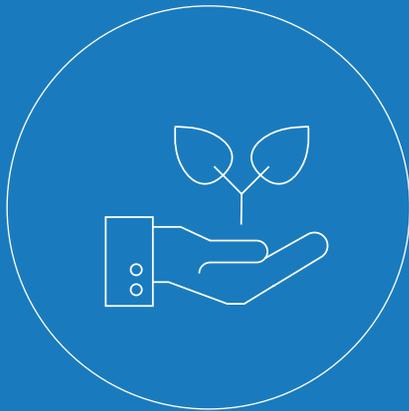
EA5	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to achieve equitable access to housing for immigrants.	
EA5.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) promotes non-discrimination in housing regulations and tenant protections.	

EA6	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to achieve equitable access to transportation for immigrants.	
EA6.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) promotes affordable transportation services and opportunities.	

EQUITABLE ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

KEY:  CORE  ADDITIONAL

EA7	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to achieve equitable access to justice for immigrants.	
EA7.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) promotes access to justice in local court proceedings including access to legal advice.	
EA7.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) promotes conflict resolution strategies such as mediation.	
EA8	REQUIREMENT	A comprehensive language access policy is in place that cuts across government agencies.	
EA8.1	INDICATOR	The policy establishes a process(es) to identify essential government services and programs and prioritize language access to those services and programs.	
EA8.2	INDICATOR	The policy includes training for staff on working with diverse populations.	



3

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Welcoming communities actively ensure that residents, including newcomers, fully participate in civic life by increasing access to leadership and democratic spaces.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

KEY:  CORE  ADDITIONAL

CE1	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to develop immigrant knowledge of local government workings and advance immigrant civic engagement.	
CE1.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) provides information on civic engagement opportunities along with general information on the responsibilities of local government.	
CE1.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) supports immigrant participation in democratic spaces (i.e. hearings, council meetings).	
CE1.3	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) supports immigrant participation on commissions and boards, and advances immigrant civic leadership.	
CE2	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to support naturalization.	
CE3	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to support eligible immigrants in voting.	
CE3.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) works with relevant local government and state agencies to identify and address barriers to voting for eligible immigrants.	
CE4	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to engage immigrants in community service activities.	
CE5	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to address the unauthorized practice of immigration law and related fraudulent services.	



4

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Welcoming communities build connections between newcomers and longer-term residents by strengthening relationships and communicating shared values.

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES REQUIREMENTS

KEY:  CORE  ADDITIONAL

CC1	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to nurture connections between the immigrant community and receiving community.	
CC1.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) brings the immigrant community and receiving community together to work on issues of common interest.	
CC1.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) promotes regular interaction and communication between leaders in the immigrant community and leaders in the receiving community.	
CC1.3	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) builds relationships between the receiving community and the immigrant community, and supports immigrants in building diverse personal networks.	
CC1.4	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) includes activities specifically targeted at connecting immigrant and receiving community youth.	
CC2	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to promote a welcoming culture through communications activities across diverse media and communications platforms.	
CC2.1	INDICATOR	The local government has a public proclamation or resolution declaring itself to be a welcoming community.	
CC2.2	INDICATOR	The local government does not make public statements discouraging immigration or immigrant inclusion.	
CC2.3	INDICATOR	The local government does not make public statements directly attacking any community on the basis of their religion, ethnicity, race, gender, orientation, or ability.	
CC2.4	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) prioritizes messaging that communicates the community-wide benefit of immigrant inclusion and a welcoming culture for all residents.	



5

EDUCATION

Welcoming communities strive for an educational system that ensures all students have the support they need to succeed in school and the education they need to succeed in the workforce.

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

KEY:  CORE  ADDITIONAL

ED1	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to work with the primary and secondary school system(s) to attain more equitable educational outcomes for immigrant students.	
ED1.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) advances immigrant parent engagement in schools and supports immigrant parents in navigating the education system (i.e. provides support with enrollment and information on local school options, resources available to students, and disciplinary procedures).	
ED1.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) facilitates immigrant student access to extracurricular or enrichment activities.	
ED1.3	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) provides information on services such as counseling, financial assistance, and in-state tuition that increase immigrant student access to higher education.	
ED1.4	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) provides career readiness support for immigrant students.	
ED1.5	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) addresses early learning and primary school readiness for immigrant children.	
ED1.6	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) includes training for educators and staff on teaching and supporting diverse student populations.	
ED2	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to advance educational and career opportunities for immigrant adults.	
ED2.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) facilitates access to professional development opportunities.	
ED2.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) supports immigrant access to higher education, technical degrees, certification programs and professional licensing.	
ED2.3	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) facilitates credentialing for immigrants.	



6

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Welcoming communities harness the full potential of all residents. Immigrants have the skills and assets to thrive, and economic development systems are prepared to leverage new and existing talent.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

KEY:  CORE  ADDITIONAL

EC1	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to support immigrant jobseekers.	
EC1.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) provides information and employment counseling to jobseekers such as information on job search resources.	
EC1.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) aims to prepare and place immigrants in jobs that pay a living wage and provide the potential for upward mobility.	
EC1.3	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) supports professional networking and mentorship opportunities.	
EC1.4	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) connects immigrants to work experience opportunities such as internships and apprenticeships.	

EC2	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to engage local employers, chambers of commerce, and other employer networks in immigrant inclusion work.	
EC1.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) promotes workplace language learning opportunities.	
EC1.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) works with employers to improve workplace conditions and culture.	
EC1.3	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) promotes the recognition of foreign work experience.	
EC1.4	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) works with businesses to identify and address discriminatory practices in hiring and employment.	

EC3	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to advance immigrants in starting, building, and growing businesses.	
EC3.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) provides information on enterprise development services.	
EC3.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) includes a process to regularly assess, identify, and address barriers for immigrant entrepreneurs and immigrant business-owners (i.e. access to contracting, financing, networking, and technical assistance opportunities).	

EC4	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to identify economic development needs and opportunities for immigrants.	
EC4.1	INDICATOR	A process(es) is in place to integrate findings of the partnership program(s) and immigrant inclusion best practice into the local government's formal economic development approach.	

EC5	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to strengthen immigrants' knowledge of the financial system and financial skills including avoiding predatory services and over-indebtedness.	
------------	--------------------	---	--

EC6	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to provide education on workers' rights and workplace safety, improve access to legal advice on employment and workplace issues, and address predatory practices targeting immigrant workers.	
------------	--------------------	---	---



7

SAFE COMMUNITIES

Welcoming communities foster trust and build relationships between residents, including newcomers, and local law enforcement and safety agencies.

SAFE COMMUNITIES REQUIREMENTS

KEY:  CORE  ADDITIONAL

SC1	REQUIREMENT	A program(s) exists to train public safety staff on working with diverse populations.	
SC1.1	INDICATOR	The program(s) includes training for staff operating emergency response systems under the jurisdiction of the local government.	
SC1.2	INDICATOR	The program(s) includes law enforcement staff under the jurisdiction of the local government.	
SC1.3	INDICATOR	The program(s) includes code enforcement staff under the jurisdiction of the local government.	
SC1.4	INDICATOR	The program(s) engages other jurisdictions whose public safety or emergency response systems impact local residents.	

SC2	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to strengthen relationships and promote regular communication between law and code enforcement agencies and the immigrant community.	
------------	--------------------	---	---

SC3	REQUIREMENT	A partnership program(s) is in place to educate immigrants about their rights and responsibilities under the law.	
SC3.1	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) includes information on immigration law and enforcement.	
SC3.2	INDICATOR	The partnership program(s) includes information on relevant local codes.	

SC4	REQUIREMENT	A policy(ies) is in place to provide safety services in a way that builds trust and relationships between the immigrant community and relevant agencies.	
SC4.1	INDICATOR	The policy addresses victim services.	
SC4.2	INDICATOR	The policy covers code enforcement.	

DEFINITIONS

To simplify the requirements, the Welcoming Standard uses some shorthand. The following key terms refer to larger concepts:

■ Programs:

The Welcoming Standard uses programs to refer to government-driven efforts. Programs do not need to be stand alone initiatives. The goal set by a program requirement will likely be achieved through coordinated activities of a number of different government agencies.

■ Partnership Programs:

The Welcoming Standard uses partnership programs to refer to efforts achieved through partnership with other organizations or governments. Like programs, partnership programs do not need to be stand alone initiatives, and will likely be achieved through coordinated activities of a number of different agencies and organizations. Local government may or may not be the lead on the work of partnership programs.

■ Immigrant Inclusion Work:

Immigrant inclusion work refers to the activities and goals outlined in the Welcoming Standard as a whole.

■ Immigrant, Immigrant Community, Immigration:

In the Welcoming Standard the term immigrant refers to all foreign-born individuals and their children. This includes individuals of any immigration status (including refugees) and those residing in the county on non-immigrant visas (such as H1-B) unless specifically noted otherwise. Immigrant community and immigration have similarly broad definitions.

■ Receiving Community:

Receiving community refers to all residents of a city or county not covered under the definition of immigrant including previous generations of immigrants and native communities.

■ Local Government:

Local government refers to the entity adopting the Welcoming Standard — currently the Standard is designed for city and county governments. In the context of communications requirements under the Connected Communities section, local government refers to the executive elected official in the government — for example the mayor or county executive — and the primary elected body as a whole — for example the city council as a whole or the full board of alderman.

IV

CERTIFIED

WELCOMING



© LESLIE KAPLAN/UNF

PURPOSE

Certified Welcoming is an innovative program that assesses city and county governments on their efforts to include and welcome immigrants. Communities that meet the Welcoming Standard earn the title of Certified Welcoming and showcase their 21st Century community to the world. Certified communities distinguish their local efforts, build competitive advantage, and gain access to opportunities to share their certified welcoming practices on a regional, national and global stage.

EARNING CERTIFICATION

The requirements in the Welcoming Standard are divided into two categories: Core and Additional. In order to be Certified Welcoming, a community must meet all core requirements.

Additional requirements are good practice for welcoming communities. Points are awarded for each additional requirement met. These points are added up to provide an overall score to each community. This score provides a guide for continued improvement and innovation.

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The certification process takes an in depth look into community efforts to provide an inclusive place for all. Candidates complete or participate in the following steps to become Certified Welcoming:

Application

To start the certification process, local governments must first complete a short application form. The eleven question form covers basic information including budget, structure, and oversight. Applicants and Welcoming America also sign into a confidentiality agreement and a certification contract during the application phase. Applications can be requested at certifiedwelcoming.org

Self-Assessment

Once their application is processed, local governments receive a detailed self-assessment form. This form guides applicants through the Welcoming Standard asking whether and how their community meets each requirement.

Audit

After the self-assessment is submitted, an in person audit is scheduled. The audit, which usually lasts two days, provides an opportunity for Certified Welcoming staff to answer questions about answers provided in the self-assessment and meet with local partners and residents. Generally, applicants learn the findings of the audit, including their certification score, during a closing meeting on the final day.

Report

A detailed report is shared with each local government after the audit. The report identifies areas of strength, including areas where the community is a national leader, and key areas of continued growth.

Certification

Communities that meet all core requirements based on the audit are issued a certificate. Local governments that don't meet core requirements based on the audit develop and submit a plan of action. If the plan is implemented and core requirements met during the agreed to timeframe, these applicants are issued a certificate.

Local governments, partners, or community members that strongly disagree with audit or certification decisions can appeal the findings.



© DEBORAH HAKES/WELCOMING AMERICA

TIMELINE

From start to finish, the certification process typically takes about six months, and takes not longer than a year.

Certificates of Certified Welcoming are valid for three years. Local governments will need to undergo at least one additional audit, continue to meet core requirements, and improve their score on additional requirements in order to maintain their Certified Welcoming designation after each three year period.

COSTS

\$100 – application fee (applied to certification fee, nonrefundable)

~~\$12,000~~ – certification fee

\$6,000 – discounted fee for 2018

FURTHER INFORMATION / CONTACT

For questions about the Welcoming Standard or Certified Welcoming, contact certified@welcomingamerica.org

Learn more at certifiedwelcoming.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

These field leaders supported Welcoming America in developing the initial draft of the Welcoming Standard. Their expertise and commitment to excellence was invaluable to the development of the Welcoming Standard and the Certified Welcoming program.

ADVISORY BOARD (2015–16)

Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, Senior Policy Analyst, National Skills Coalition

Melissa Bertolo, Welcome Dayton Program Coordinator, Human Relations Council, City of Dayton, OH

Sayu Bhojwani, Founder & President, New American Leaders Project

Hannah Carswell, Program Manager, Welcoming America

Steve Choi, Executive Director, New York Immigration Coalition

Susan Downs-Karkos, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Welcoming America

Monica Fuentes, Director, Washington D.C. Office, Welcoming America

Mahvash Hassan, Consultant, Institute for Local Government

Adolfo Hernandez, Deputy Director, Mayor's Office of Public Engagement, City of Chicago, IL

Shanna Hughey, Former Senior Advisor, Mayor's Office of New Americans, City of Nashville, TN

Suhas Kulkarni, Former Director, Mayor's Office of Globalization, City of Louisville

Kelly Laflamme, Program Director, Endowment for Health

Isha Lee, Chief Network Officer, Welcoming America

Diana Liachiondo, Director of Community Partnerships, Office of the Mayor, City of Boise, ID

Meg Shoemaker Little, Director of Special Projects, Welcoming America

Kica Matos, Director of Immigrant Rights and Racial Justice, Center for Community Change

Jme McLean, Associate Director, Policy Link

Tomas Mejia, Director, Office of Migrant Education, Department of Education, State of Colorado

Rachel Peric, Deputy Director, Welcoming America

Sarah Pharaon, Senior Director of Methodology and Practice, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

Christina Pope, Regional Manager, Rust Belt, Welcoming America

Jennifer Rodriguez, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Philadelphia, PA

Karla Silvestre, Director of Community Engagement, Montgomery College, Montgomery County, MD

Chief Warren Summers, Chief of Police, Police Department, City of Norcross, GA

Sisay Teklu, Executive Director, Community Enterprise Development Services

Steve Tobocman, Executive Director, Global Detroit

Darcy Tromanhauser, Program Director, Immigrants & Communities Program, Nebraska Appleseed

Daniel Valdez, Regional Manager, South East, Welcoming America

Mike Van Haelewyn, Senior Director, Global Initiatives, YMCA

CONTENT EXPERTS (2015–16)

Silvia Garcia Barnechea, Happiness Institute Global Director, Coca-Cola

Raul Gonzalez, Senior Program Officer, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

David Lubell, Executive Director, Welcoming America

Suzette Brooks Masters, Program Director, Migration, J.M. Kaplan Fund

Margie McHugh, Director, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, Migration Policy Institute

Ratna Omidvar, Executive Director and Adjunct Professor, Global Diversity Exchange, Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University

Dr. Manuel Pastor, Co-Director, USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration

Mary Stagaman, Executive Director, Agenda 360, Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce

Dane Stangler, Vice President of Research and Policy, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

Stephanie Teatro, Co-Executive Director, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition

Dan Wallace, Director, State and Local Initiatives, Partnership for a New American Economy

Welcoming America partnered with **Felipe Arango** and **Nidhi Krishen** of **BSD Consulting** on the technical development of the Welcoming Standard and Certified Welcoming program.

ABOUT WELCOMING AMERICA

Welcoming America leads a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by making everyone feel like they belong. We believe that all people, including immigrants, should be valued contributors and are vital to the success of both our communities and our shared future.

As a non-profit, non-partisan organization, Welcoming America is proud to support the diverse communities and partners who are leading efforts to make their communities more vibrant places for all.

welcomingamerica.org

V

QUICK GUIDE



THE WELCOMING STANDARD

*Defining the Core of
a Welcoming Community*

The Welcoming Standard captures what is essential to a welcoming community. Developed in collaboration with local governments, advocates, and diverse experts, and with input from the public at large, the Standard provides a comprehensive roadmap for immigrant inclusion.

THE FRAMEWORK



GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP



EQUITABLE ACCESS



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



EDUCATION



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SAFE COMMUNITIES

THE REQUIREMENTS

In each area of the Framework, the Standard sets out smart local policies, programs, processes, and partnerships that are the building blocks of welcoming communities.

The following summarize the requirements in the Welcoming Standard. The technical criteria for becoming Certified Welcoming can be found at certifiedwelcoming.org.

1 GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP



- Designate a unit and staff to coordinate immigrant inclusion. (CORE TO CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Partner across sectors, agencies, and jurisdictions. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Share information on community resources and government services with immigrant residents. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Plan for community-wide immigrant inclusion. Implement the plan in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, and maintain the plan in consultation with the immigrant community. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Build the capacity of community based organizations working with immigrants.
- Advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in hiring and employee retention.
- Advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in sourcing and contracting.

2 EQUITABLE ACCESS



- Prevent policies that discriminate against immigrants because they are immigrants. Prevent policies that discriminate against immigrants because of other aspects of their identity, like religion, race, or ability. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Pursue language access across programs and services and train staff on language access. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Regularly determine barriers to access for immigrants and work in partnership to address those barriers. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Advance equitable access to healthcare for immigrants.
- Advance equitable access to housing for immigrants.
- Advance equitable access to transportation for immigrants.
- Advance equitable access to the justice system, legal services, and mediation for immigrants.
- Adopt a comprehensive language access policy.

3

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



- Develop immigrant knowledge of local government workings and support immigrant participation in democratic spaces. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Support naturalization. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Advance access to voting for eligible immigrants.
- Engage immigrants in community service.
- Address fraudulent immigration services.

4

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



- Build relationships, support interactions, and promote communication between immigrants and longer-term residents. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Promote a welcoming culture through institutional communications. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)

5

EDUCATION



- Welcome and engage immigrant students and their parents in K-12 schools, and advance access to school programs and services. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Invest in adult education, career readiness, and access to technical and professional degree programs.

6

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



- Assist immigrant job seekers with information, training, and networking. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Support immigrant entrepreneurs and business owners in starting, building, and growing their companies. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Engage local employers and chambers of commerce to create welcoming, equitable and safe work environments.
- Plan for inclusive economic development and integrate welcoming into existing economic development efforts.
- Build financial knowledge and skills in the immigrant community.
- Support immigrant workers through education on workplace rights and legal advice on workplace issues.

7

SAFE COMMUNITIES



- Train public safety staff on working with diverse communities. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Build relationships and promote communication between law and code enforcement staff and the immigrant community. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Educate immigrants on their legal rights and responsibilities. (CORE FOR CERTIFIED WELCOMING)
- Set formal policies that build trust between immigrants and public safety services.

THE STRATEGIES

How communities design and implement the requirements in the Welcoming Standard is as critical as the content. Four core strategies increase the impact and sustainability of immigrant inclusion efforts. These strategies should be applied to each of the requirements of the Standard.

- 1 Build connections between immigrants and longer-term residents.
- 2 Set goals, monitor impact, and adjust strategies as needed.
- 3 Design for equitable access.
- 4 Implement in partnership.

CERTIFIED WELCOMING

The Welcoming Standard is the backbone of our new Certified Welcoming program. Certified Welcoming communities build a competitive advantage, and have opportunities to share their welcoming practices on regional, national, and global stages.

To earn the title of Certified Welcoming cities and counties must meet all the requirements designated as “Core for Certified Welcoming.” Once certified, cities and counties must demonstrate progress within a three year period on other requirements of the Welcoming Standard.

More on Certified Welcoming can be found at certifiedwelcoming.org.

WELCOMING
AMERICA

