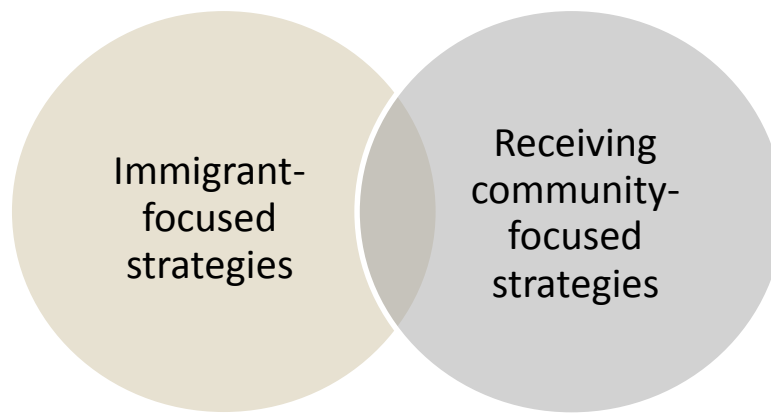

Welcoming Cities and Counties Framework

This framework gives an outline of the different policies and programs that a community's welcoming plan could include. Plans should include both immigrant-focused and receiving community-focused strategies.



Welcoming plans include programs and policies that advance immigrant integration and inclusion under the following categories:

Leadership and
Communications

Equitable Access

Economic Opportunity and
Education

Civic Engagement

Safe and Connected
Communities

1. Leadership and Communications

Welcoming Cities and Counties uplift positive communications about immigrants in order to gain buy-in from the community and celebrate immigrants' contributions. Local leaders from diverse sectors also work together to spearhead efforts to build comprehensive welcoming plans that advance immigrant-friendly policies, programs, and practices and institutionalize these efforts within institutions.

Welcoming plans could include:

- ✓ Launching a communications campaign to promote the city/county as a welcoming destination for businesses, residents, and visitors
- ✓ Establishing a position to coordinate and facilitate immigrant inclusion across departments and in the community
- ✓ Leading a community planning process to identify programs and policies that will increase immigrant inclusion
- ✓ Participating in National Welcoming Week
- ✓ Implementing inclusionary hiring practices and leveraging diverse government employees to support a welcoming workforce

EXAMPLES WITHIN WELCOMING AMERICA'S NETWORK

St. Louis seeks to become the fastest-growing U.S. metropolitan area for immigration by 2020, bolstered by a business case developed by a local economist with Saint Louis University who showed how immigrants were key to the city's future prosperity and economic growth. The report led to the formation of a regional task-force and ultimately the creation of the [St. Louis Mosaic Project](#), which works toward "regional prosperity through immigration and innovation."

A planning process often underpins sustainable efforts, such as **Dayton**, Ohio's [Welcome Dayton Plan](#). Government, non-profit, and business sectors engaged in a series of extensive community conversations regarding immigration in the region. As a result of the conversations, the Welcome Dayton Plan was created and adopted unanimously by the City of Dayton Commission. The Plan and its ongoing implementation rely on commitments and engagement by the broader community and is not just the work of government.

A number of cities have sustained their efforts both through the creation of an office that enables better coordination of services and the ability to leverage private resources in support of immigrant welcome. For example, in 2014, **Atlanta** established the Office of Multicultural Affairs and **Nashville** created the Mayor's Office of New Americans. In another example, the [Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs \(OCEIA\)](#) in **San Francisco** promotes civic participation and inclusive policies that improve the lives of San Francisco's residents, particularly immigrants, newcomers, and underserved and vulnerable communities. OCEIA seeks to bridge linguistic and cultural barriers to ensure that San Francisco's diverse residents have equal access to city services and opportunities to participate and contribute in meaningful ways to the success of the community. The office also provides funding to nonprofit organizations serving immigrant communities, thereby building the capacity of community partners as crucial service providers as well as advocates.

A number of communities has focused on the important role of communications through concerted media and public outreach to present a positive and inclusive vision for immigrant welcome – ranging from the [Immigrants Contribute campaign](#), which featured posters throughout the Metro system in

Washington, DC, to programs bringing community members together through volunteerism and the arts during [National Welcoming Week](#). For example, the City of **Philadelphia** hosted a citywide celebration of immigrant heritage and bridge-building programs during 2014 National Welcoming Week through its X Cultural Passport to PHL week featuring over 40 events throughout the city.

2. Equitable Access

Welcoming communities ensure that immigrant residents have access to city and county services and cultural assets by actively removing barriers to participation and inclusion.

Welcoming plans could include:

- ✓ Implementing a language access policy and education process within local government
- ✓ Building the cultural competency of government employees and community providers so that they have the skills to effectively provide services to people from diverse backgrounds
- ✓ Working with all agencies to design programs that serve all residents more effectively
- ✓ Ensuring program performance measures incorporate immigrant access as a key metric

EXAMPLES WITHIN WELCOMING AMERICA'S NETWORK

Montgomery County, Maryland's [Language Access Policy](#) is one example of a policy that furthers access to services for limited English proficient residents, with implementation of the policy focused on broad education and training, hiring of bilingual staff, supporting agencies with more accessible interpretation services, and ongoing monitoring. The county also makes substantial investments in English language learning programs.

Allegheny County's Department of Human Services provides basic services for immigrants in **Pittsburgh** and has worked through an [Immigrant and International Advisory Committee](#) to ensure that services are culturally competent and accessible. Over time, the committee has established foundational relationships between government, community-based organizations, and local residents, giving participant communities a voice while also implementing a host of innovative projects that no member agency could do on its own – ranging from ensuring greater language access through translation and interpretation, to deploying a cadre of AmeriCorps members to help agencies better manage caseloads, to supporting international youth mentoring programs.

3. Economic Opportunity and Education

Welcoming Cities and Counties must place a particular emphasis on ensuring that immigrant residents have the skills, assets, and education they need to succeed in school and in the workforce.

Welcoming plans could include:

- ✓ Supporting English language and workforce development initiatives to build skills and ensure access to high-quality programs
- ✓ Creating new or adapting current economic development initiatives to support immigrant entrepreneurship and small business development
- ✓ Partnering with local community organizations and financial institutions to support financial literacy and inclusion and support asset development

- ✓ Creating robust parent involvement programs that fully engage parents of all backgrounds in local schools in order to enhance academic performance

EXAMPLES WITHIN WELCOMING AMERICA'S NETWORK

Chicago has [opened city-funded internship, volunteer, and job opportunities to undocumented students](#), providing young DREAMers with experience and opportunities that can enrich their educational and career pathways. Through Chicago's broad-reaching [New Americans Plan](#), the City is also working with Chicago Public Schools to increase access to other summer enrichment programs and ensure that early childhood sites are well-placed and well-equipped to serve immigrant children across the city.

The NYC Economic Development Corporation launched the [Immigrant Bridge Program](#) to help move unemployed and underemployed skilled immigrants in **New York City** into gateway jobs earning \$30,000-40,000 annually in high-demand fields where employers are having difficulty hiring. A similar program on **Long Island**, funded by Citi Community Development, provides skilled immigrants access to microloans to cover the costs of credential evaluations, recertification, and relicensing.

Philadelphia has taken a number of steps to support immigrant entrepreneurs, including adapting existing services and tools to ensure they are accessible for immigrant entrepreneurs, including manuals on starting specific types of businesses and licensing and permitting. Using federal Community Development Block Grant funding and AmeriCorps volunteers, the city has also provided substantial support to organizations that provide technical assistance and small business loans to immigrant entrepreneurs through an [existing Business Technical Assistance Program \(BTAP\)](#). In addition, the city's Department of Commerce launched a lending circle model that connects immigrant entrepreneurs to the financial mainstream, linking the micro loan process to credit building.

Oakley, California's [You, Me, We = Oakley!](#) initiative partnered with its local school district to help immigrant parents become more involved in their children's schools. For example, the partnership hosted dialogue dinners that brought together immigrant and U.S.-born parents and community members for a meal and discussion about the changing community. The parents spoke about their common values and goals for helping their children succeed in school, and English-speaking parents gained a newfound appreciation for the challenges that immigrant parents face and were motivated to lessen these barriers. As a result, the Parent Teacher Student Association has begun translating more materials and working to become more language-inclusive.

In **Boise**, Idaho, the City has worked closely with the Department of Parks and Recreation to establish the [International Summer Youth](#) program, a summer enrichment program which pairs refugee students with U.S.-born peers.

4. Civic Engagement

Welcoming Cities and Counties actively ensure that newcomers can fully participate in civic life, including increasing access to leadership, citizenship, and democratic opportunities.

Welcoming plans could include:

- ✓ Encouraging citizenship through community partnerships and inviting civic leaders to participate in citizenship classes and ceremonies

- ✓ Implementing citizen and leadership academies that help immigrants be successful in participating in and influencing decision-making in the community
- ✓ Implementing strategies that ensure local boards, commissions, and civic organizations have leadership that is representative of local demographics and working with these groups to create a welcoming culture
- ✓ Creating outreach mechanisms that help immigrant community members participate in planning and inform the work of government

EXAMPLES WITHIN WELCOMING AMERICA'S NETWORK

“Your Path to Citizenship Starts at the Los Angeles Public Library” is a joint effort by the **Los Angeles** Public Library (LAPL) and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service to help eligible Los Angeles residents start their own personal journey to become citizens. The establishment of “Citizenship Corners” in all 73 library locations that provide information and resources, meeting room space, and access to study materials and a robust and information-rich website has established LAPL as the starting point on a person’s personal path to citizenship, while also helping local libraries reach a new market of library users.

The MyCity Academy in **Nashville** empowers New Americans to understand and participate in Nashville’s government. Over the course of six months, MyCity participants meet with leaders from Metro departments and tour Metro facilities. In doing so, they gain a better understanding of how their government works and learn how to resolve issues and obtain information. Upon graduation, MyCity participants are able to help their communities understand and access government services. MyCity graduates also have the opportunity to interact with New Americans from other communities through their participation in the MyCity alumni network.

5. Safe and Connected Communities

Welcoming Cities and Counties foster trust and build relationships between immigrants and local law enforcement. These communities also actively create programs that build relationships between immigrant and U.S.-born residents, fostering trust and mutual respect.

Welcoming plans could include:

- ✓ Creating a Welcoming Ambassadors program that brings together receiving community members and immigrants to help people become connected to each other and build greater knowledge of immigrants in the community
- ✓ Encouraging volunteerism and mentorship among receiving community members to help build resources, capacity, and knowledge of integration services
- ✓ Supporting community dialogues to help all community members voice their concerns, find common ground, and set the stage for a more inclusive community
- ✓ Working with local law enforcement to build trust with the immigrant community
- ✓ Convening cross-sectoral collaborations to build and strengthen networks that promote immigrant inclusion and welcome

EXAMPLES WITHIN WELCOMING AMERICA'S NETWORK

In **Norcross**, Georgia, the city expanded a Citizens Police Academy to engage Spanish-speaking residents and build trust and knowledge between residents and police. At a larger scale, **New York** has focused on a number of ways to [enhance police community relations and public safety](#). The city has passed an

executive order that prohibits local law enforcement from inquiring into an individual's immigration status unless a serious crime has been committed. NYPD also recruits in immigrant communities in efforts to diversify the police force in order to become more representative of the community they are patrolling. A New Immigrant Outreach Unit of the police has also created youth sports leagues to reach immigrant youth and their families, including soccer leagues with Middle Eastern and African immigrant communities and cricket leagues with South Asian communities.

In **St. Louis**, the [Mosaic Ambassadors Program](#) brings together immigrants with U.S.-born St. Louisans. Ambassadors are residents of St. Louis who make a simple commitment to share information, visit at least three immigrant restaurants or businesses in the area, and, importantly, make that vital message of welcome real by inviting a new immigrant home for dinner. Other ambassadors operate "pop-up" sites at local corporations with large numbers of immigrant employees where they promote St. Louis' welcoming and integration services and distribute helpful information. Mosaic surpassed its initial goal of recruiting 50 Ambassadors with over 200 applications in the first three weeks.

Principles

- It is essential to engage the receiving community in ways that build greater understanding, particularly among people who may have concerns about or are unaware of the changing demographics of their community
- People of all backgrounds – socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, religious, etc. – have unique talents that can be brought to bear to make our communities vibrant, and welcoming should be as inclusive as possible to all groups
- Programs intended to help immigrants navigate the community and learn about local norms should also be respectful of and leverage the cultural and leadership assets and knowledge that immigrants bring
- Leaders can play a catalytic role by recognizing, rewarding, and investing in community partners who are essential to building a community's capacity for this work
- The voice of both immigrants and the broader community are critical to defining a welcoming agenda

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W E L C O M I N G
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▲ *Building a Nation of Neighbors*
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