WELCOMING AMERICA

BUILDING A NATION OF NEIGHBORS

2022–2026 STRATEGY

Envisioning a just world in which
we each belong, prosper, and thrive
in the place we now call home,
no matter where we came from.

Our Mission

Welcoming America supports communities building a welcoming society where every person, including immigrants, can fully contribute and shape our shared prosperity.

Our Challenge

More people than ever are on the move, displaced by climate and conflict and seeking opportunity and mobility. As this migration reshapes communities, many places are unprepared and underinvested in the work needed to create welcoming infrastructure. By not preparing or investing in locally-led efforts, we risk having origin, status, race and other intersectional forms of identity determine participation and the ability to thrive — as individuals and as communities. This risk carries grave consequences, including discrimination across various facets of diversity and inequality and undemocratic norms becoming further entrenched in society.

WHAT IS A WELCOMING INFRASTRUCTURE?

The collaborative agenda setting, policies, and practices across government and the community that advance civic, social, economic participation, and belonging.
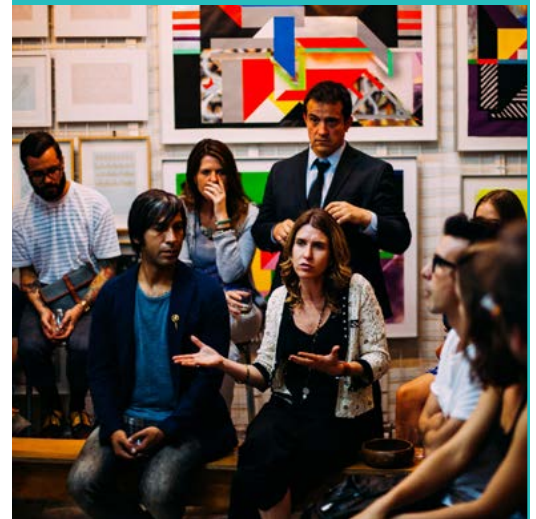
Our Solution

Welcoming America offers an approach to demographic shifts that bends toward equity and justice rather than inequality and nativist policies. Grounded in the leadership of communities, we connect, support, and amplify those leading the work of addressing systemic disparities and discrimination.

Over the next decade, we aim for 500 U.S. communities to have established a welcoming infrastructure; by 2026, 50 diverse communities will be designated as Certified Welcoming.

We know that in order to fully achieve these goals, Welcoming America must also invest in our people, strengthen our internal platforms and infrastructure, and explicitly center our diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging values in all we do.

Goal #1:

Certify a total of 50 diverse archetypal places as welcoming, demonstrating measurable progress in building public and multisector infrastructure for immigrant equity at the local level.

- Create and execute an organizational business plan.
- Develop programming to build coalitions and strengthen local multisector collaboratives.
- Build the capacity of the Welcoming Network and its leaders to ensure that more communities can meet the Welcoming Standard through resources, programming, and events.
- Ensure that programs are reinforcing and moving communities toward meeting the updated Welcoming Standard.
- Maintain a network of around 300 members that includes a strategic mix of places and types of institutions.

Goal #2:

Create a bigger and more organized field of practice that positions communities to achieve the Welcoming Standard.

- Create a strategic partnerships plan to define, measure, and support this goal.
- Produce an annual State of Welcoming report that analyzes and aggregates the current state of the field, its gaps, and opportunities.
- Learn from good welcoming practice outside the U.S. and support a global narrative of welcoming through Welcoming International.
- Revisit and refine the case for support for welcoming communities.
- Work with strategic partners to align efforts and grow public resources for immigrant equity infrastructure at all levels of government.
- Continue to enable learning and experimentation around areas with the potential to strengthen the movement, glean key insights, and animate the work.

Goal #3:

Create access points for new champions to offer their time, resources, and voices.

- Offer marketing and branding resources that are accessible to stakeholders.
- Build a robust individual donor program.
- Provide channels for individuals to demonstrate their commitment to welcoming values, including through Belonging Begins with Us and Welcoming Week.

OUR LONG-TERM IMPACT:

This four-year strategic plan will help address systemic discrimination and disparities encountered by immigrants and replace them with a strong foundation of welcoming as a durable social and policy norm, resulting in greater social cohesion, well-being, and prosperity for all.

Glossary

BELONGING

Belonging describes a shared sense of acceptance, participation, and psychological safety. In a community, belonging is more than a feeling — it means to be fully part of the "we," meaning each of us has our well-being considered and we're able to design and benefit from institutions and structures that affect our lives.

CERTIFIED WELCOMING

Certified Welcoming is a formal designation for cities and counties that have created policies and programs reflecting their values and commitment to immigrant inclusion. The evaluative process assesses city and county governments on their efforts to include and welcome immigrants in all areas of civic, social, and economic life in their communities.

INCLUSION

Inclusion refers to a set of deliberate actions taken by individuals, groups, or systems that create opportunities for people to be acknowledged as they are, and therefore participate with their whole selves. In organizations and systems, inclusion requires systematically reducing barriers to full participation, changing policies and structures to create full opportunity for all, such as in the Welcoming Standard for communities.

WELCOMING

Welcoming is a both a verb and an adjective — the "how" and the "what" of our work:

A welcoming **community** is one in which everyone thrives, belongs, and prospers. It has a necessary focus on people who migrate, and as defined by the Welcoming Standard, features policies and practices to achieve equity and inclusion for immigrants. It builds a positive culture that embraces diversity and fosters positive social and economic benefits that residents can count and feel. Welcoming communities depend on individuals, institutions, and systems that are welcoming.
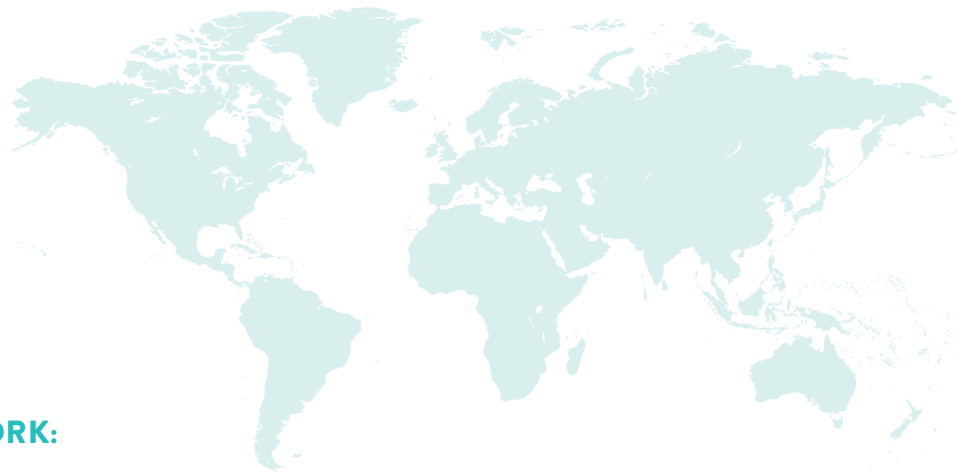
More than a fleeting humanitarian response, welcoming is the long-haul work of creating successful multiracial democracies in which each member belongs.

WELCOMING STANDARD

The Welcoming Standard is a set of seven framework categories that provides communities a comprehensive roadmap toward becoming more welcoming places. The seven framework categories are government and community leadership, equitable access, civic engagement, connected communities, education, economic development, and safe communities.

Reach & Impact
(as of May 2022)

THE WELCOMING NETWORK:

| Total members: **305** | Nonprofit organizations: **185** | Local governments: **120** |

U.S. states represented:
48

Countries represented:
8

Certified Welcoming communities:
15

Estimated number of people living in a Certified Welcoming community: 7.3 million

DIGITAL REACH:

| Total followers on social media: **23,000+** | Monthly average of unique website visitors: **4,000+** | Email subscriber list: **9,000+ contacts** |

WELCOMING
AMERICA

BUILDING A NATION OF NEIGHBORS

ABOUT US

Welcoming America is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that leads a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by ensuring everyone belongs. We believe that all people, including immigrants, are valued contributors and vital to the success of our communities and shared future.

Through the Welcoming Network, we work to help communities develop the roadmap they need to create welcoming policies and share new approaches to inclusion to create an environment where everyone can truly thrive. Learn more at WelcomingAmerica.org.