

WELCOMING AMERICA



BUILDING A NATION OF NEIGHBORS

Rural Welcoming Initiative 2023 Program Overview

Welcoming America is continuing its commitment to rural communities in 2023. Through a competitive initiative, we will engage 10 rural communities in strengthening welcoming.

Participation in the Rural Welcoming Initiative (RWI) 2023 provides access to technical assistance and coaching, free Welcoming America membership, and ongoing learning opportunities. Communities will be tasked with cultivating relationships, examining their current policies and programs, and aligning their local immigrant inclusion efforts to the Welcoming Standard.

Background

Immigrants and refugees come to this country searching for safety and opportunities for education, employment, and ultimately, to be part of a thriving community. While some make the large cities of the U.S. their new homes, many follow the opportunities that present themselves in smaller cities and more rural parts of the country.

Rural communities often have quite a bit to offer these newcomers: steady employment, a reasonable cost of living, social cohesion, and for many, the chance to live in a place that is similar in size to where they come from. While newcomers may initially be drawn to rural places out of economic necessity, they stay when these smaller and more rural places start to become home. Immigrants and refugees feel welcomed when communities have created programs, partnerships, policies, and opportunities that engage them.

Rural areas often thrive in return in part because their U.S.-born population is typically older, and newcomers often help revitalize and add vibrancy to rural communities.

The Opportunity

Welcoming America solicits applications from rural communities that have an interest in deepening their welcoming practices. Communities with populations less than 50,000 that are not considered suburbs of a metropolitan area are encouraged to apply.

Support Offered for 2023

Ten rural communities new to the Welcoming Network will receive the following support:

- **Free Welcoming Network membership.** Each rural community will receive a free core-level membership in the [Welcoming Network](#). Membership benefits include access to training, technical assistance, and peer exchange opportunities.

- **Coaching and Technical Assistance.** Each community will be eligible to receive 7 hours of individualized coaching and technical assistance to support their local work. Each will have a coach to help ensure their technical assistance needs are fully met. A coach from Welcoming America will provide regular telephone consultations to help rural communities establish welcoming goals, address challenges, and connect to helpful resources, as appropriate.
- **Peer Learning.** Rural communities will be provided the opportunity to connect with and learn from each other through a variety of programs and convenings.

Proposal Review Criteria

- Evidence of strong interest and readiness to join the Welcoming Network
- Track record of working to advance inclusion in the community
- Evidence of being able to convene and engage a diverse set of residents of different backgrounds
- Population less than 50,000 in a city that is not considered a suburb of a metropolitan area
- Commitment to advance the following actions in the 2023 programmatic year:
 - Develop two (2) inclusion goals that align with the [Welcoming Standard](#)
 - Attend the 2023 Welcoming Interactive
 - Host one (1) [Welcoming Week](#) event in your community
 - Draft a “Welcoming Week Narrative”

What is my commitment?

Participants commit to identifying and working toward two inclusion goals aligned with the Welcoming Standard through participation in the Rural Welcoming Initiative 2023 program. One staff person from the member organization (and one staff person from the organizational partner, if it is a joint application) is committing to full participation in all activities outlined in the chart below:

What	When	Anticipated time commitment
One (1) virtual learning sessions with subject area experts	January 2023 – December 2023	1 hour
Four (4) peer-to-peer learning sessions	January, April, July, October	8 hours
Seven (7) one-on-one coaching calls with RWI Program team	February 2023 – December 2022	7 hours
Continued learning, implementation, and collaboration between sessions	January 2023 – December 2023	Self-directed time
Complete evaluation of the Program and of outputs achieved through the Program	December 2023	1 hour

Total Time Commitment	January 2022 – December 2022	17 hours plus self-directed time
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Application Process

Submit an online application by **December 2nd, 2022** to be considered. All applicants will be notified of the status of their applications by **December 9th, 2022**.

The electronic application can be accessed and completed [here](#).

For more information on this program or how to access the application please email membership@welcomingamerica.org.

Is there a cost to participate?

There is no cost to participate. Each site will receive a complimentary core membership to the Welcoming Network (valued at \$2,500) to participate in the RWI.

Questions

Questions can be addressed to membership@welcomingamerica.org.