CHARLES STEWART
MOTT FOUNDATION

WELCOMING
AMERICA

BUILDING A NATION OF NEIGHBORS

ADVANCING WELCOMING THROUGH COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Against growing levels of global migration, demographic change, and efforts to advance equity and inclusion, community foundations have an interest in — and responsibility to — invest in efforts to create more welcoming local communities. *Advancing Welcoming through Community Foundations*, a project funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation with the U.S.-based nonprofit Welcoming America, explores the potential for greater coordination, collaboration, and investment from community foundations in advancing the vital work of welcoming newcomers into U.S. communities.

Learnings gleaned from interviews and conversations with 24 staff at 17 community foundations, representing 13 states, suggest that, while many community foundations currently lack a cohesive strategy to support welcoming work, there is vast potential for increased collaboration, coordination, and investment, positioning foundations to emerge as leaders in advancing this critical work in local communities:

- Timely priority issues, such as access to affordable housing, offer strategic opportunities to align the current work of community foundations with immigrant inclusion.

- Community foundations almost universally name equity as a strategic pillar of their work.

- Welcoming America's Welcoming Standard provides a framework that community foundations can readily adapt to advance both immigrant inclusion and broader inclusion efforts.

- Peer learning cohorts hold promise for community foundations focused on welcoming work.

- Existing networks and conceptual frameworks already in use by community foundations can be leveraged to support and sustain welcoming work.

This report explores the potential of linking the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with resources from Welcoming America to provide a blueprint for community foundations interested in contributing to global collective impact in advancing equity, belonging, and inclusion.

ADVANCING WELCOMING THROUGH COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS PROJECT

According to a 2020 Pew Research Center report, more than one million immigrants arrive in the United States each year, settling in communities large and small across the country. In the past year, crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine have brought additional newcomers to the U.S. The New York Times reports that 76,000 Afghans reached the U.S. between August 2021 and August 2022, which it characterized as "the biggest influx of wartime evacuees since the fall of Saigon in Vietnam." Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that as of mid-October 2022, the U.S. has taken in more than 100,000 Ukrainian refugees.

Such situations heighten the urgency of adopting practices that ensure safe and sustainable integration of immigrants and refugees into their new communities. Ensuring that newcomers are welcomed — via intentional practices, policies, and norms that advance equity and inclusion — is critical to building secure, vibrant, and resilient communities that enable all residents to thrive, live, and contribute fully.

Welcoming can — and should — be a fundamental part of community foundations' stated missions of improving the quality of life of local residents. Yet many foundations, including those interviewed in support of this report, lack a cohesive or sustainable strategy to approach welcoming work. "We are starting a lot of research from scratch," explained one foundation officer.

Community foundations interested in creating more welcoming societies need not inaugurate brand new strategies to advance this critical work. In particular, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, provide a systemic framework for addressing timely global issues, including equity and inclusion. When synced with Welcoming America's comprehensive immigrant inclusion framework, the Welcoming Standard, the SDGs offer a roadmap for community foundations to ensure the sustainable implementation of welcoming principles and practices.

Envisioning closer collaboration with community foundations to advance a shared goal of creating more equitable and inclusive communities, Welcoming America launched the *Advancing Welcoming* project in 2022. The effort engaged 24 staff at 17 community foundations, representing 13 states, to dialogue around common interests in advancing welcoming work. Among the topics discussed were:

- Current and previous engagement in immigration-related work
- Main issues facing local communities
- Strategic and issue-area priorities of each foundation
- How immigration-related work connects with these priorities
- The need for a common language and frameworks to catalyze action in creating welcoming communities

Community foundations are well-positioned to become leaders in timely, urgent, and growing efforts to advance equity, inclusion, and belonging not only as a means to foster immigrant inclusion, but also in response to other pressing global issues. This white paper details current learnings from the *Advancing Welcoming* project's efforts to sustain and accelerate welcoming work across the U.S. by linking the efforts of community foundations, the SDG movement, and Welcoming America. The following pages offer a roadmap for action to advance welcoming in both local communities and on a global scale.

This report is being published at the end of the *Advancing Welcoming* project, a two-year initiative running through the end of 2023. Work on the project to date has included interviews with community foundations and several associations supporting the work of community foundations; an in-person convening of community foundations to discuss the potential for collaborative work with Welcoming America; a webinar looking at the relationship of the Sustainable Development Goals to welcoming work; crosswalking the Welcoming Standard to the SDGs; and organizing a panel discussion of the *Advancing Welcoming* project for the 2022 Annual National Conference for Growing Community Foundations (hosted by the Kansas Association of Community Foundations, October 12–14, 2022).

SHARED DEFINITIONS & COMMITMENTS TO WELCOMING

"Being welcoming is much more than being friendly, tolerant, or peaceful. We believe that truly welcoming places have **intentional, inclusive policies, practices, and norms** that enable all residents to live, thrive, and contribute fully — including immigrants."

— Welcoming America (https://welcomingamerica.org/what-is-welcoming/)

"Welcoming" begins as an attitude and an intention to invite newcomers into local communities, but it takes sustainable collective effort to ensure that such attitudes and intentions develop into actions, policies, and networks that make welcoming possible at the community level.

Just as community foundations seek to create enduring change in their communities, Welcoming America works to advance sustainable approaches to create and maintain truly welcoming places. Since 2009, Welcoming America has been working with communities "to build a welcoming society where every person, including immigrants, can fully contribute and shape our shared prosperity." In partnership with more than 300 local governmental and nonprofit organizations across the U.S., Welcoming America provides a roadmap, resources, training, coaching, and tools — such as the Welcoming Standard and Certified Welcoming program — that enable local leaders to accomplish more together.

FIGURE 1:

Certified Welcoming Places, November 2022

Source: https://certifiedwelcoming.org/

The Welcoming Standard outlines the specific steps a community needs to take to ensure the sustainable implementation of welcoming principles and practices. Developed in collaboration with immigrant advocates, local governments, private sector leaders, and academics, the goals-oriented framework sets out the policies, programs, and processes communities must invest in order to consider themselves welcoming, covering seven interlocking areas of work: government and community leadership, safe communities, civic engagement, connected communities, economic development, equitable access, and education. [See sidebar on page 6: The Welcoming Standard: Seven Benchmarks for Welcoming Communities]

Prior to embarking on a path to become a welcoming community, stakeholders should complete two preliminary steps: first, a community demographic assessment, and second, a landscape review of any immigrant inclusion work that has been completed or is in progress. The landscape review enables the community to identify the organizations and institutions that have a stake in this work, which is critical to building the coordinated network needed to sustain it.

The Welcoming Standard provides a road map, and a local "welcoming network" of engaged organizations serves as its means of implementation. Local governments, in particular, play a central role in this work along with a variety of nonprofit organizations including immigrant-serving organizations,

The Welcoming Standard: Seven Benchmarks for Welcoming Communities

The seven framework areas of the Welcoming Standard provide benchmarks for communities to be truly welcoming places.

Civic Engagement: Welcoming communities ensure that all residents, including immigrants, are able to fully participate in civic life. Immigrant residents have access to democratic spaces, and shape community priorities and policies. Immigrants hold leadership roles in the community, and local institutions are invested in increasing access to leadership positions for immigrant residents.

Connected Communities: Welcoming communities build connections and trust between residents. Community institutions — including local government, businesses, faith communities, and nonprofits — create opportunities and spaces for immigrant and non-immigrant residents to have constructive interactions on equal footing, develop relationships, and deepen their understanding of one another.

Economic Development: In welcoming communities, all residents — including immigrants — can participate fully in the economy. Programs that support entrepreneurship, business development, and workforce development are accessible to all residents, including immigrants. Local businesses are committed to inclusive hiring practices and retaining employees with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Education: In welcoming communities, the education system ensures all students, including immigrant students, have the opportunities and support they need to thrive in school and the knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce. Welcoming and inclusion efforts are not siloed within a single school or program but incorporated into the schools and school districts that serve the community.

Equitable Access: Welcoming communities ensure local services are accessible to all residents, including immigrants. Immigrant residents provide feedback to local government and community-based organizations to identify and address demographic disparities and gaps in services, and to improve access to programs, particularly in the areas of housing, health, transportation, financial services, and the justice system.

Government and Community Leadership: Welcoming communities have infrastructure in place to support immigrant participation, inclusion, and equity. The local government and community-based organizations regularly seek feedback from immigrant residents to understand the challenges and priorities of immigrant residents.

Safe Communities: Welcoming communities prioritize safety for all residents, including immigrants. Policies and practices are in place that prevent discrimination. Strong, trusting relationships are built between immigrant residents and local safety services, such as law enforcement, fire departments, code enforcement, and emergency response.

mutual assistance associations, chambers of commerce, development commissions, educational institutions, legal advisory services, arts and cultural organizations, and foundations.

Through its on-the-ground work with local partner organizations, Welcoming America has built a national Welcoming Network of more than 300 organizations that are playing an active role in building welcoming places. Members of the Welcoming Network "receive tools, resources, technical assistance, and a global community of practice to help communities of all sizes become more welcoming

places," while committing to "advancing and institutionalizing welcoming efforts in their community and to share their experience and lessons learned with the network."[1]

Once a city, county, or region has committed to becoming more welcoming, its government can take specific steps toward being designated as Certified Welcoming, by following the guidelines in the Welcoming Standard. As of November 2022, 18 places had achieved this status, as seen in Figure 1.

PROMOTING WELCOMING THROUGH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

"The 17 Goals represent a tapestry of thinking and action that applies in every community everywhere in the world. They are universal … and also indivisible. Though they are presented as individual goals, they actually represent a total, completely intertwined lattice of action that is relevant for every human being everywhere."

— David Nabarro, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, Special Adviser on 2030 Agenda

Adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a systematic roadmap for addressing the world's most pressing priorities — including welcoming, equity, and inclusion. The 17 SDGs are outlined in Figure 2. Embedded within these 17 SDGs are nearly 170 issue-focused targets and more than 230 indicators that all UN members, including the U.S., aim to achieve by 2030.

The SDGs' intent is perhaps most easily summarized via a mnemonic known as the 5 Ps: People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity, and Partnerships. [See Figure 3] Building up from the bottom of the pyramid in Figure 3, most of the SDGs focus on meeting People's needs, including both basic human needs (No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health, and Safety) and opportunities for human empowerment (Quality Education, Decent Work, and Reduced Inequalities).

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1   https://welcomingamerica.org/welcoming-network/

FIGURE 2:

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Source: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/about-us/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-and-disability.html

A second set of targets focuses on protecting the Planet, namely, taking care of our natural environment and taking care to engage in responsible consumption and production behaviors.

The remaining targets relate to building Peaceful societies and fostering shared Prosperity. Essential to meeting any of these targets are strategic Partnerships.

Crosswalking the Welcoming Standard to the SDGs

The utility of a framework like the SDGs is that it provides a comprehensive roadmap for addressing and advancing global goals like welcoming, equity, and inclusion. Moreover, the SDG framework emphasizes that it is only through networked partnerships that sustainable change can be achieved.

Both the SDGs and the Welcoming Standard represent holistic attempts to define an area of work — in one case, global development; in the other, immigrant inclusion — and identify the interconnected issues and actions needed to achieve a desired set of goals.

Similar to the SDGs' focus on sustainable change, Welcoming America works in a networked way to develop sustainable approaches to building and maintaining welcoming communities. With a focus on building and supporting local networks of cross-sector stakeholders, each subscribing to a set of agreed-upon standards and practices that have been demonstrated to optimize welcoming outcomes, Welcoming America builds the capacity of network members through training, coaching, and tools. Regular network convenings strengthen ties and expand relationships, all in the interest of ensuring sustainable outcomes where welcoming work is being done.

The Welcoming Standard sets out the policies, programs, and processes communities must advance in order to consider themselves welcoming. The Welcoming Standard is defined across seven interlocking pillars, such as Government and Community Leadership, Safe Communities, and Civic Engagement. [See Sidebar on page 6]
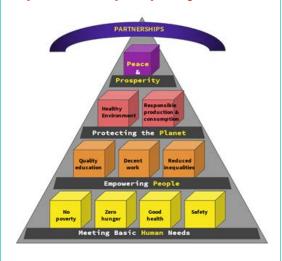
In the Government and Community Leadership pillar, for example, there are 27 requirements, one of which is that the local government has one or more staff positions whose responsibilities include advancing immigrant inclusion. Likewise,

one of the requirements in the Equitable Access pillar is that programs must be available that inform immigrants of workers' rights, workplace safety regulations, and available legal advice on employment and workplace issues. Each of these requirements represents a measure of progress toward becoming a welcoming community.

Because the SDGs encompass a radically inclusive set of global goals and targets, the Welcoming Standard can meaningfully be mapped onto the SDG framework. For example, the Welcoming Standard requirements related to Equitable Access map to aspects of seven different SDGs, including Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Figure 4 offers a high-level crosswalk between the Welcoming Standard and SDGs; full details can be found in the Appendix to this report.

As community foundations engage in welcoming work, conscious engagement with both the Welcoming Standard and the SDGs can help ensure that their work is contributing in sustainable ways to building inclusive communities and reducing inequities.

Crosswalking the Welcoming Standard and SDGs

Welcoming Standard	Sustainable Development Goals
Government Leadership	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH · 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE · 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES · 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES · 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS · 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Equitable Access	1 NO POVERTY · 2 ZERO HUNGER · 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING · 5 GENDER EQUALITY · 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES · 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS · 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Civic Engagement	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES · 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
Connected Communities	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Education	4 QUALITY EDUCATION · 5 GENDER EQUALITY
Economic Development	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
Safe Communities	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES · 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES · 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

ENGAGING COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS IN WELCOMING

The *Advancing Welcoming* project was designed to support community foundations in their efforts to build welcoming and inclusive communities, as well as to explore opportunities to work collaboratively with Welcoming America. To that end, Welcoming America engaged a range of community foundations of different sizes across the country to discuss the potential for collaboration on welcoming work. Interviews were conducted with 16 community foundations, two associations of foundations, and a member of the World Affairs Council network. An additional foundation joined an in-person discussion with other community foundations held during Welcoming America's annual Welcoming Interactive conference in Charlotte, North Carolina in May 2022. Participating community foundations included seven from the Midwest, four from the South, three from the Northeast, and three from the West.

These 17 foundations serve geographic areas with populations ranging from under 500,000 to over 4 million. Figure 5 shows the geographic distribution of the foundations interviewed for this project.

FIGURE 5:

Community Foundations Interviewed for the *Advancing Welcoming* Project

Northeast	Midwest	South	West
The Boston Foundation	Cleveland Foundation	Central Florida Foundation	Community Foundation of Southern Arizona
Fairfield County's Community Foundation (Connecticut)	Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (Iowa)	Collaboratory (formerly Southwest Florida Community Foundation)	Silicon Valley Community Foundation
	Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan	Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta	Ventura County Community Foundation (California)
	Kansas Association of Community Foundations	Delaware Community Foundation	
	Western Kansas Community Foundation	San Antonio Area Foundation	
	West Central Initiative (Minnesota)		
	Southwest Initiative Foundation (Minnesota)		
	St. Paul & Minnesota Foundation		
	Global Minnesota		
	Minnesota Council on Foundations		

Understanding Current Commitments

Stakeholder interviews provided a snapshot of community foundations' current welcoming and immigrant inclusion work, suggesting potential opportunities for more targeted investment, coordination, and collective impact.

1. **Few community foundations have staff or program areas focused exclusively on the immigrant community.** Among the 17 foundations participating in this initiative, just one was led by a director whose primary responsibility is to oversee a dedicated immigration-focused program. In six foundations, work relating to the immigrant community fell under the areas of Community Impact, Community Investment, Community Strategies and Initiatives, or Thriving Communities. At the Boston Foundation, immigration-related work is administered via the Social Justice Ecology area, a framework designed to address the racial leadership gap among Boston-area nonprofit organizations. At other foundations, the key staff person working on immigration issues is situated in areas such as Initiatives, Grantmaking Initiatives, and Collective Impact.

   Not all community foundations agree that an immigrant-focused program area would be the best approach to welcoming work. One program officer explained that she prefers a focus on broad human services needs, while incorporating an immigration lens to ensure that newcomers are included as beneficiaries. Because the metropolitan area her foundation serves has a large and diverse immigrant population, she says an immigrant-focused fund would be "humongous" and could further "siloize" the foundation's work.

2. **Much of community foundations' welcoming work consists of providing support to immigrant-serving organizations.** While one of the larger foundations, for example, has no dedicated projects focused specifically on newcomers, it funds organizations that support immigrant communities, adding that this is "a priority at the foundation and with donors." For example, the foundation funds the work of ImmSchools — "an immigrant-led nonprofit partnering with

educators and community leaders to ensure safe and inclusive schools for undocumented and mixed-status students and families." It also co-funded a migrant resource center, which assists migrants traveling through the city to their final destination.

Likewise, another large foundation that "doesn't necessarily have an immigration strategy at the moment" tends to address immigrant needs through its work in the areas of Education, Neighborhoods/Housing, and Jobs/Economic Development. Specifically, it makes grants to support immigrant-serving organizations working in these areas, such as a family services organization that works specifically with newcomers.

3. **Some foundations organize or contribute to immigrant-focused funding collaboratives**. For example, the Fairfield County Community Foundation's Immigrant Success Fund is a field-of-interest fund "open to donations — large and small — from individual, family, and corporate donors who care about our region's immigrants and understand the power of collective giving." The Delaware Community Foundation's Arsht-Cannon Fund takes a different approach by giving an existing Latinx community decision-making power to manage investments in an array of issues, including immigrant inclusion.

   A third approach is the Delivering on the Dream (DOTD) fund, coordinated by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). DOTD is a national network of state and local funding collaboratives that provide resources to protect and defend the rights of immigrants and refugees. The DOTD web page explains how it works: "Through a unique partnership model that leverages national matching funds, state and local funders engage in coordinated grantmaking to strengthen the immigrant rights and service infrastructure in diverse locales." Several of the foundations mentioned in this report participate in DOTD.

4. **Some community foundations focus on specific aspects of welcoming work, such as equitable access to legal services.** Other areas of focus include narrative change work, adult English-language acquisition,

financial literacy programs and micro-loans. Collaboratory and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan leverage existing programs focused on inclusive entrepreneurship to provide opportunities for immigrant participation.

5. **Few foundations approach welcoming work in partnership with local governments or other cross-sector stakeholders.** Perhaps the fullest example of such partnership work is the Building One Community initiative in Fairfield County, Connecticut. The City of Stamford and Fairfield County's Community Foundation are just two of more than 90 partner organizations participating in the initiative, which focuses specifically on the "successful integration of immigrants and their families."

In other cases, partnerships have involved either short-term support or indirect engagement with the immigrant community. In August 2018, for example, Metro Atlanta became the first major metropolitan area to adopt a regional welcoming plan, called the One Region Initiative. Led by Welcoming America, the initiative was supported by the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta and the Atlanta Regional Commission. The Foundation's role was primarily as a funder during the initiative's first two years.

Work done by the Ventura County Community Foundation in California to boost participation in the 2020 census led to an unexpected but positive outcome for the local immigrant community. It called attention to the fact that immigrant needs were being underserved, leading to a doubling of the number of defense attorneys at Immigrant Legal Defense.

6. **Few foundations have robust, long-term funding in place for welcoming work.** Only three foundations said their immigration-related spending typically amounts to $1 million or more per year. In some places, political divisiveness is a complicating factor. One foundation notes that while they have a field of interest fund that focuses on legal services and community seminars, "no one else in the state is contributing to immigration" due to local political dynamics.

Despite scarce resources, a number of foundations are engaged in proactive work to better serve the needs of newcomers. Several are engaged in formal mapping projects, supported by Connecting Communities in the Americas, to better understand the transnational communities in their regions. Another foundation aspires to raise money for a recently established fund that would allow it to support welcoming work beyond the originally intended lifespan of the fund.

Identifying Opportunities for Collective Impact

While the welcoming work at many community foundations tends to be limited and not well integrated into their programmatic structures and priorities, there are a number of findings that suggest opportunities to grow collective impact in this area.

1. **Timely priority issues, such as access to affordable housing, offer strategic opportunities to align the current work of community foundations with immigrant inclusion.** Several of the most pressing issues in communities across the country intersect with major concerns in the immigrant community. Housing, in particular, is top of mind for many foundations when asked about the main issues affecting their community. Lack of available, affordable housing in the Detroit area, for example, has relegated many of the nearly 1,800 Afghan newcomers that have relocated to Michigan in the past year to lengthy stays in hotel rooms, waiting for permanent housing to become available.

While other issues, such as access to living-wage employment, education and training, mental health services, and workforce development programs, were also mentioned, housing is almost uniformly named as the most critical issue facing communities across the country, including immigrant communities. As a leader at a western foundation summed up, "Housing looms large. It impacts so many areas of life — commutes, hiring, etc. Also, many immigrants [are employed in jobs that require on-site presence]; they need to be close to their jobs."

At the broadest level, adopting a newcomer lens when working in any issue area is important. At this moment, though, the priorities of community foundations and those doing welcoming work strongly coincide with respect to the issue of affordable housing, suggesting an opportune moment for strategic collaboration.

2. **Community foundations almost universally name equity as a strategic pillar of their work.** A midwestern foundation leader could have been speaking for most of the foundations we interviewed when she said, "The Community Foundation is undergoing a major evolution as we launch a new five-year strategic plan that embraces equity as the Foundation's number one priority. The focus is now on racial equity, not just equity. We've moved from an issue-area approach to a systems-level approach, e.g., looking at income and wealth disparities, economic mobility, housing, workforce development, education, etc."

As we explored the concept of welcoming work with community foundations, they were quick to see alignment with their own commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion. By broadening our working concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion to "include" immigrants, the notion of welcoming work becomes immediately relevant to the equity-related commitments being made by community foundations.

3. **The Welcoming Standard provides a framework that community foundations can readily adapt to advance both immigrant inclusion and broader inclusion efforts.** As community foundations strive to address issues such as economic development, education, safe communities, equitable access, and civic engagement, they would do well to familiarize themselves with the Welcoming Standard, which has identified these issues as pillars in building welcoming communities in a sustainable way.

Further, the Welcoming Standard has been road tested and successfully applied in dozens of communities across the U.S., including 16 that have become Certified Welcoming places. In short, there are hard-earned lessons to be learned from this substantial body of work carried out in the service of creating more equitable and inclusive communities.

While the unique challenges faced by immigrants have driven the development of the Welcoming Standard, the ideal of a welcoming community applies to everyone. It is instructive to substitute the name of any demographic group into the Welcoming Standard wherever the word "immigrant" appears. The universal applicability of the Welcoming Standard becomes immediately apparent.

4. **Peer learning cohorts hold promise for community foundations focused on welcoming work.** When Welcoming America convened community foundations in an in-person meeting during its annual Welcoming Interactive conference in May 2022, common feedback from participants was that opportunities for robust conversations around welcoming were both rare and much needed.

In follow-up interviews with community foundations, participants shared that they often work in relative isolation from each other on immigration issues. Many, if not most, are experiencing funding challenges related to immigration work. Moreover, the welcoming work of many community foundations tends to be isolated programmatically from other work being done at the foundation.

At the same time, some community foundations are well along in the process of building knowledge bases and partnership networks and could share challenges and lessons learned with a cohort of peers. Others need help figuring out what questions to ask, what data to look for, and who to reach out to for help in obtaining needed information. All of these factors point to the potential value of developing a learning cohort of community foundations focused on welcoming work.

5. **Existing conceptual frameworks and networks can be leveraged to support and sustain welcoming work.** Just as Welcoming America has developed sound methods and protocols for doing welcoming work, community foundations have also pooled their learnings to develop ways of working that complement and support the goal of fostering welcoming. Future collaboration between community foundations and Welcoming America offers the opportunity for building constructively upon these important knowledge bases.

Four initiatives, in particular, could be leveraged to further this work:

- CFLeads assembled a group of 36 community foundation leaders in 2008 to envision a deeper and more catalytic role for community foundations in fostering thriving communities. The outcome of that meeting was the Community Leadership Framework. Like the Welcoming Standard, the Community Leadership Framework has stood the test of time, undergoing an update in 2013 and serving as the frame of reference for the development of the Community Foundation Leadership Assessment Tool in 2020.

The Framework is based on the premise that "the community foundation is a community partner that creates a better future for all by pursuing the community's greatest opportunities and addressing the most critical challenges, inclusively uniting people, institutions and resources from throughout the community, and producing significant, widely shared and lasting results."[2] It outlines a set of "building blocks" for cultivating a foundation's community leadership potential.

At the foundational level are four building blocks that suggest strong points of connection with welcoming work:
- The community foundation is committed to effecting change that advances the common good.
- The community foundation is an engaged and trusted community partner.
- The community foundation serves as a place for residents and other stakeholders to connect with intellectual, political, social and financial capital.
- The community foundation actively learns about, with, and for the community.

- Connecting Communities in the Americas (CCA), an operating program of CFLeads, is building stronger connections between community foundations and transnational communities, i.e., "those whose residents have a sense of 'home' in more than one country."[3] CCA has funded 16 community foundations to map the transnational communities in their regions, in an effort to promote understanding of and collaboration with those communities. Results of these mapping projects are publicly available through CFLeads. Seven of the community foundations participating in the *Advancing Welcoming* project — Delaware Community Foundation, The Boston Foundation, Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, Collaboratory (based in Florida), San Antonio Area Foundation,

Fairfield County's Community Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque — have been recipients of CCA grants.

- Community Foundations of Canada's Vital Signs initiative embodies the data and information sharing so critical to both welcoming work and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. Adopted by more than 65 community foundations in Canada and more than 40 international foundations, Vital Signs provides a standardized methodology for collecting and reporting out information on critical dimensions of community vitality. Vital Signs indicators have been crosswalked to the Sustainable Development Goals, and the framework has begun to operationalize the concept of "belonging" as a metric of community strength.

Because of Vital Signs' widespread adoption, Canadian community foundations are able to benchmark progress relative to each other and work together as a national community of practice. It's possible that the seeds of a Vital Signs movement in the U.S. could be germinated by more closely aligning the work being done by Welcoming America, via the Welcoming Standard, with that of Connecting Communities in the Americas.

- Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) works with 130 member institutions and 1,200 individual grantmakers to mobilize philanthropic resources on issues facing immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. GCIR's members are local, state, regional, and national foundations from across the U.S., with diverse grantmaking priorities spanning the full range of philanthropic concerns. As their website notes, "Whether they explicitly fund immigrant-related efforts or not, all of these foundations recognize the importance of applying an immigration lens to their grantmaking. We inform funders about policy developments and help them make the connection between their priorities and immigration." As previously noted, GCIR also coordinates the national Delivering on the Dream network of 27 funding collaboratives in 21 states.

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2   https://cfleads.org/what-we-do/the-framework-for-community-leadership/
3   https://cfleads.org/issues-we-work-on/connecting-communities-in-the-americas/

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

The work to date on the *Advancing Welcoming* project has established a strong case for deeper engagement from community foundations on welcoming work. There are multiple opportunities for foundations to participate in existing programs and cross-sector networks offered by organizations like Welcoming America, and to initiate new opportunities for deeper coordination and collaboration in the community foundation sector.

1. **Join the** Welcoming Network**.** As part of a growing network of 300 nonprofits and local governments working to build more inclusive and welcoming communities, members can access coaching and strategy sessions with Welcoming America's experts; participate in a community of practice offering extensive opportunities for learning exchange; gain access to member resources, webinars, and dialogue; and collaborate with experts to design tailored programs that support communities in building a welcoming infrastructure.

2. **Partner with local Welcoming Network members to advance welcoming in your community.** The Welcoming Network has members in 43 states, including 140 local governments. Visit the Welcoming Network Directory to find nonprofit organizations currently engaged in welcoming work and begin exploring potential partnerships.

3. **Participate in** Welcoming Week**.** Join like-minded organizations across the world in an annual campaign and celebration, held in September, to showcase the movement of communities striving to be more welcoming places for all, including immigrants. Welcoming Week provides participants — including individuals, organizations, and communities — the opportunity to proclaim welcoming values through events and local initiatives that foster mutual understanding between immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as deeper belonging for all. Welcoming America produces a Welcoming Week toolkit offering a menu of ways to get involved.

4. **Attend the Welcoming Interactive.** The Welcoming Interactive is an annual conference that highlights successful practices and inspiring stories about immigrant inclusion, programs, policies, and partnerships on economic development, civic engagement, government leadership, and more. Attendees learn about promising practices from peer communities and come away with new ideas and energy to foster welcoming places for all.

5. **Apply for support from the** Gateways for Growth Challenge**.** The Gateways for Growth Challenge is a competitive opportunity for localities to receive research support and technical assistance from the American Immigration Council and Welcoming America to advance immigrant inclusion in their communities. Since its launch in 2016, the program has supported more than 70 localities across 35 states. Each year, a cohort of awardees receive customized quantitative research reports around immigration and economic development in their communities, as well as customized technical assistance in developing a comprehensive immigrant inclusion strategy.

6. **Conduct a welcoming audit.** The Welcoming Standard itemizes more than 100 specific steps communities can take to become more welcoming. One *Advancing Welcoming* project participant used the Welcoming Standard as a framework for conducting interviews with community leaders, with a goal of understanding how their local welcoming work connects with the Welcoming Standard's blueprint. For foundations working to fulfill commitments to equity and systems change, the Welcoming Standard's recommendations apply as well to other demographic groups as they do to newcomers.

7. **Champion a local effort to become a** Certified Welcoming **place.** Certified Welcoming is a formal designation for cities and counties that have created policies and programs reflecting their values and commitment to immigrant inclusion. This innovative program assesses city and county government efforts to include immigrants

in all areas of local civic, social, and economic life. With a Certified Welcoming designation, communities distinguish their efforts, build a competitive advantage, and gain access to opportunities to share their welcoming practices on a regional, national, and global stage.

8. **Initiate a community of practice for community foundations engaged in welcoming work.** As previously noted, community foundations, working in relative isolation on immigration issues, are eager to exchange knowledge and lessons learned in a community of practice. Asked to suggest steps that could be taken to further the welcoming work of community foundations, one program officer said, "Sponsor a small group cohort to facilitate learning. We need to know which community foundations are doing this work really well. We are starting a lot of research from scratch! Who should we talk to? What questions should we be asking? Also, deliver webinars to share knowledge. We need to learn from others' mistakes and successes."

9. **Join a community of practice for community foundations working with the SDGs.** The SDG framework is the world's most comprehensive and inclusive attempt to specify the parameters and interlocking components required to advance social change. Because they take a holistic view of the pressing global challenges, the SDGs underscore the imperative for cooperative efforts in meeting those challenges. Almost by definition, collective impact implies a community of practice approach. The Council on Foundations' SDG Learning Community for Community Foundations is an excellent platform for community foundations to deepen the connection between their local work and global goals.

Community foundations are primed to play a critical role as visible leaders in the timely, urgent work of creating welcoming communities. Yet they need not start from scratch — or operate alone — in responding effectively to demographic changes and migration. The frameworks provided by the SDGs and Welcoming Standard offer blueprints for deeper coordination, collaboration, and investment amongst community foundations on this timely issue, contributing in measurable ways to advancing welcoming at both the community and global level.

APPENDIX: MAPPING THE WELCOMING STANDARD TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

About the Welcoming Standard: The Welcoming Standard captures the core of what it means to be an inclusive and welcoming community. Developed in collaboration with local governments, advocates, and experts, and with input from the public at large, the Welcoming Standard provides a comprehensive roadmap for U.S. communities to become more inclusive of immigrants and refugees. The Welcoming Standard covers seven categories critical to building a welcoming community: Government and Community Leadership, Civic Engagement, Equitable Access, Education, Connected Communities, Economic Development, and Safe Communities. The Welcoming Standard establishes a benchmark to help local leaders identify where and how their welcoming efforts could be furthered and to assess their progress in building and sustaining a welcoming community.

About the UN Sustainable Development Goals: According to the United Nations, the SDGs "are an urgent call for action by all countries — developed and developing — in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests."[4] There are 17 SDGs in total.

All seven framework areas of the Welcoming Standard have alignment with at least one of the United Nations' SDGs. The Welcoming Standard is most aligned with Goal 10 (Reducing Inequality), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). The chart below illustrates how the Welcoming Standard correlates with applicable SDGs.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	Welcoming Standard Framework Alignment	Welcoming Standard Indicator, Criteria, or Policy
Goal 1: No Poverty End poverty in all its forms everywhere.	Equitable Access	Programs address barriers to accessing rental housing for immigrants. Programs address gaps in access to transportation for immigrants. Programs address barriers to homeownership for immigrants. Programs work with the state government and/or regional transit authorities on expanding access to transportation, including addressing the needs and priorities of immigrant residents.
Goal 2: Zero Hunger End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.	Equitable Access	Local government departments disseminate information on government services, resources, and public benefits with the goal of expanding access to immigrants.

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4   United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Do you know all 17 SDGs?" accessed October 6, 2022, https://sdgs.un.org/goals

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	Welcoming Standard Framework Alignment	Welcoming Standard Indicator, Criteria, or Policy
Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.	Equitable Access	Programs address barriers to immigrants accessing and navigating preventative healthcare. Programs address barriers to immigrants accessing and navigating maternal and infant healthcare. Programs address barriers to immigrants accessing and navigating mental health services.
Goal 4: Quality Education Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	Education	Immigrant families receive language accessible information about services available through the local K-12 school district(s), along with information on their educational rights. Programs address barriers to English-language classes, including meeting the local demand. Programs address barriers to navigating local K-12 school district(s) for immigrant families. Programs support immigrant students in understanding and accessing higher education opportunities. Programs support immigrant students that have limited or interrupted formal education to attain their educational goals. Programs address barriers to the adult education infrastructure for immigrant adults. Programs train K-12 educators and staff on teaching and supporting diverse student populations, including immigrant students. Programs support immigrant students in understanding and accessing local opportunities for technical and career readiness training. Programs provide contextualized English-language classes. Programs work with K-12 schools to regularly collect feedback from immigrant families on the school environment. Programs address barriers to participation in family engagement programs for immigrant families. K-12 schools accommodate diverse cultural and religious practices in daily operations. Programs work with K-12 school staff and students to set goals for creating welcoming environments. Programs support immigrant students in accessing mental health services. Programs engage the state government in expanding access to adult education programs for immigrant adults. Programs engage the state government in expanding access to early childhood education and care programs for immigrant children. Programs address barriers to early childhood education and care for immigrant children.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	Welcoming Standard Framework Alignment	Welcoming Standard Indicator, Criteria, or Policy
Goal 5: Gender Equality Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	Equitable Access	Programs address barriers to immigrants accessing and navigating maternal and infant healthcare.
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.	Economic Development	Programs support immigrant job seekers in finding and obtaining employment. Programs support immigrant job seekers in communicating foreign work experience and skills for U.S. employers. Programs support immigrant adults in accessing additional education to obtain the skills and degrees required to meet their employment goals. Programs address barriers for immigrant entrepreneurs and business owners. Programs provide information to local workforce agencies on current and projected demographic trends of the local immigrant population and the unique barriers faced by immigrant job seekers. Chambers of commerce and/or economic development agencies are engaged in immigrant inclusion work. Programs support immigrants in meeting licensing, certification, and credentialing requirements. Programs support immigrant business owners in accessing capital to start, sustain, and grow their businesses. Programs work with relevant state agencies to identify and address barriers to occupational licensing for immigrant residents. Programs work with employers to build welcoming work environments. Programs work with employers to identify and address barriers to hiring immigrant job seekers. Programs work with employers and immigrant employees to identify and address barriers to retaining immigrant staff. Programs address barriers to obtaining local government procurement and contracting opportunities.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	Welcoming Standard Framework Alignment	Welcoming Standard Indicator, Criteria, or Policy
Goal 9: Industry Innovation and Infrastructure Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.	Connected Communities	The group advancing immigrant inclusion is connected to broader equity work in the community. Programs bring together immigrant and non-immigrant residents to identify and work together on common interests, challenges, or opportunities. Public recreational spaces and libraries reflect the diverse interests of the immigrant community.
	Economic Development	Programs support immigrant business owners in accessing capital to start, sustain, and grow their businesses.
Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities Reduce inequality within and among countries.	Equitable Access	Local government departments disseminate information on government services, resources, and public benefits with the goal of expanding access to immigrants. This information is provided in languages other than English. Programs address barriers to digital inclusion for immigrant residents.
	Education	Immigrant families receive language accessible information about services available through the local K–12 school district(s), along with information on their educational rights. Programs engage the state government in expanding access to early childhood education and care programs for immigrant children. Programs address barriers to early childhood education and care for immigrant children.
	Safe Communities	Local law enforcement staff receive training on working with diverse residents, including immigrants. Local law enforcement agencies do not have policies in place where the primary purpose is to detain or deport immigrants.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	Welcoming Standard Framework Alignment	Welcoming Standard Indicator, Criteria, or Policy
Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.	Safe Communities	Programs connect immigrant victims with relevant community resources. Local emergency management agencies have a plan to inform immigrants of community emergencies, and that plan includes communications methods that are effective in reaching speakers of languages other than English. Local emergency notification platforms are available in languages other than English.
	Civic Engagement	Programs address barriers to immigrant participation on local government commissions and boards. Programs address language access needs for participation in public boards and commissions.
	Government Leadership	A group of local leaders and residents regularly convenes to advance immigrant inclusion efforts. The group advancing immigrant inclusion is staffed. The local government staff actively participates in the group advancing immigrant inclusion. Participants of the group advancing immigrant inclusion reflect the demographics, constituencies, and sectors of the community.
	Connected Communities	Public buildings include art that reflects the artistic traditions of the community. The group advancing immigrant inclusion is connected to broader equity work in the community. Programs bring together immigrant and non-immigrant residents to identify and collaborate on common interests, challenges, or opportunities.
	Economic Development	Chambers of commerce and/or economic development agencies are engaged in immigrant inclusion work. Programs support immigrants in meeting licensing, certification, and credentialing requirements. Programs support immigrant business owners in accessing capital to start, sustain, and grow their businesses.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	Welcoming Standard Framework Alignment	Welcoming Standard Indicator, Criteria, or Policy
Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.	Government Leadership	Programs engage other jurisdictions in adopting and implementing welcoming policies and programs across the region.
	Safe Communities	Local law enforcement staff receive training on working with all residents, including Immigrants. Programs inform immigrants about criminal and civil laws, including their rights and responsibilities when interacting with law enforcement and the legal system. Local law enforcement agencies have a process to work with immigrant residents and immigrant-serving organizations to identify concerns about local policing policies and practices.
	Civic Engagement	Programs build immigrant youth leadership. Programs address barriers to immigrant participation in public hearings and meetings. Programs address language access needs for participation in public hearings and meetings. Programs address barriers to immigrant participation on local government commissions and boards.
	Connected Communities	Ongoing programs bring together immigrant and non-immigrant residents to build and strengthen relationships. Programs bring together immigrant and non-immigrant residents to identify and work together on common interests, challenges, or opportunities.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Area	Welcoming Standard Framework Alignment	Welcoming Standard Indicator, Criteria, or Policy
Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	Connected Communities	Programs work to address biases about others held by non-immigrant residents. Programs work to address biases about others held by immigrant residents.
	Government Leadership	The local government supports and strengthens the capacity of ethnic community-based groups and organizations. Programs build local law enforcement's capacity for and commitment to immigrant inclusion. Programs build the local health departments' capacity for and commitment to immigrant inclusion. Programs build the economic development agencies' capacity for and commitment to immigrant inclusion. Programs build local recreational services' capacity for and commitment to immigrant inclusion. Programs build first responder and emergency medical services' (EMS) capacity for and commitment to immigrant inclusion. Programs build code enforcement agencies' capacity for and commitment to immigrant inclusion. Programs build the emergency management's capacity for and commitment to immigrant inclusion. A community-wide strategy is set by the group advancing immigrant inclusion through a community feedback process including immigrant and non-immigrant residents representing the community.
	Equitable Access	Programs collaborate with the state government and/or regional transit authorities in expanding access to transportation, including addressing the needs and priorities of immigrant residents. Programs provide training to legal counsel about the potential impact of civil and criminal convictions on residents of different immigration statuses.
	Education	Programs address barriers to navigating local K–12 school district(s) for immigrant families. Programs support immigrant students in understanding and accessing higher education opportunities.