



Community Visits Program: Host Application

Welcoming America is excited to announce the opportunity for Welcoming Network Member Communities to showcase their flagship programs and partnerships to fellow network members. Through our community visit program, promising thought leaders, programs, and policies are shared with leaders from across the nation with the goal of expanding and replicating learnings.

Three to four Welcoming Network members will be selected in early April to host community visits in the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021. **Applications ([found here](#)) must be submitted by April 1, 2020.**

Background

Community visits provide participants with inspiration, networking, and professional development opportunities, all designed to strengthen local welcoming work back home and continue to build a robust movement around inclusion.

Over one and a half days, participants take a deep dive into innovations in the host city. Past agendas have included:

- Discussions on pressing current issues such as: boosting immigrant entrepreneurship; creative placemaking events; contact building strategies; language access, and more.
- Work blocks for participants to map out areas for replication in their community
- Ted Talk-style best practice sharing across the participant group
- Public Forums or events where hosts can highlight partner and peer work to their local networks

Inspired and informed by the Transatlantic Exchange, WE Global Network city to city visits, and the SPARK Fellow exchanges, the Community Visits Program offers an opportunity for Welcoming Network members to visit peers and take a deep dive into the innovative policies and programs of host communities. For the past few years that we've done community visits, they continue to be a highlight from members and staff alike. In 2020, a group of 12 went to Dallas, Texas, and in the Spring of 2020, we are taking a delegation to Winona + Austin, Minnesota and Portland, Maine.

2020-2021 Community Visits

The primary topic of focus is contact-building innovations and host communities must be able to highlight strong contact building programs.

Contact building strategies – Members have found creative ways to increase meaningful contact across groups of people who may not otherwise have substantial interaction, including those who were born in and outside of the U.S. Both smaller and larger communities have recognized the need for community building, especially across real or perceived barriers. Contact building facilitates opportunities to open hearts and minds.

Research supports contact building as one of the most effective ways to bridge divides and change opinion. To learn more about contact building, check out our [recent report](#).

In addition to contact building strategies, local hosts may have a secondary topical focus of their choosing.

Host Qualifications and Commitments

To be eligible to host a community visit organizations must be:

- A premium or core member in good standing
- Able to showcase contact building strategies in their community or region
- A proven leader on immigrant inclusion and welcoming with high-quality programs

Host communities will be asked to commit to the following:

- Participate in a host onboarding call
- Designate a point of contact for Welcoming America staff to connect with for planning and logistics
- Lead the development of the visit agenda and cultural experiences
- Provide transportation to participants during the visit
- Provide food and hospitality to up to 12 Welcoming Network Members for two lunch meals and two light breakfasts. (Hosts will receive a small stipend to cover some food and hospitality costs).

Support for Hosts

Host communities will receive the following resources and support for planning and executing a successful community visit:

- A designated Welcoming America staff person will work closely with host community staff on planning and executing the visit. The type of support provided by Welcoming America staff will be tailored to the host needs and often includes thought partnership on agenda development.
- Onsite support during the visit.
- Community visit host resources that covers best practices and lessons learned from previous visits.
- Communication tools including a template press release
- A small stipend (\$2,000-\$3,000) to cover food and logistic costs.

Welcoming America will manage the community visit participant selection, coordination, communication, and participant travel stipend processes.

Application Timeline and Process

The application can be found [here](#). Applications are due by the end of day on April 1, 2020. Selected host communities will be notified by April 15.

Questions about the Community Visit Program and this host community application should be directed to Jordyne Krumroy (jordyne@welcomingamerica.org).