



# WELCOMING WEEK

## EVENT HOST TOOLKIT

*Join us for Welcoming Week!*  
*Sept. 13-22, 2019*



Presented by Ebay Foundation





## OVERVIEW

Thank you for joining us for Welcoming Week 2019! We are proud of the growing number of local and national hosts and partners who make this celebration a success.

During this annual series of events, communities bring together immigrants, refugees, and long-time residents in a spirit of unity to build strong connections across the community and affirm the benefits of welcoming everyone – including new Americans.

Welcoming Week takes place Sept. 13-22, 2019, and we look forward to building on last year's success. In 2018, there were **over 2,000 events** in **400 communities** during Welcoming Week, with more than **80,000 people participating** and over **14 million social media impressions**.

By hosting a Welcoming Week event, you are part of a movement of more and more communities across the world who recognize that being a welcoming community for all makes us stronger economically, socially, and culturally. We are grateful for your interest, and we look forward to partnering with you to make your event a success.

This toolkit provides materials to guide your participation in Welcoming Week, including:

- Welcoming Week background
- How to plan and host a local event
- Checklist, tips, inspiration, and more
- Strategies for engaging a social media audience
- Messaging and media talking points
- Sample press release and welcoming proclamation

**Want to plan ahead? Welcoming Week 2020 will take place September 11-20.**

### KEY STEPS FOR WELCOMING WEEK EVENT HOSTS

- ▶▶ Register your event at [welcomingweek.org](http://welcomingweek.org)
- ▶▶ Participate in our I'm a Welcomer campaign
- ▶▶ Consider carefully what types of events will  
unite your community



## WELCOMING WEEK BACKGROUND

This is a moment for us to reaffirm that our communities are stronger when we all feel like we belong and the contributions of all are welcome. At a time when political rhetoric has deepened divisions and hate crimes have risen around the world, Welcoming Week 2019 reminds us to double-down on our inclusive vision and find new ways to bring together people across lines of difference to develop greater understanding and mutual support.

To change the narrative, to shape the immigrant experience, to affirm our values and live up to them – these are enormous tasks that take all of us working together. Perhaps nothing is more important, for this is the heart of our democracy.

As Welcoming America celebrates its 10 year anniversary in 2019, we see how Welcomers are leading the way in communities across the globe, with a movement 40 million strong and growing. Celebrate Welcoming Week, and show the world how your community welcomes everyone, from every background and demographic.

**Together, we can make every community the kind of place where diverse people from around the world feel valued and want to put down roots. Together, we can build a nation of neighbors.**

Welcoming America is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that is leading a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by making everyone who lives there know they belong. We help places move beyond divisiveness to ensure that all residents—including immigrants and refugees—can fully participate.



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## EVENT INSPIRATION

Local events are the heart and soul of Welcoming Week, and they help build stronger communities by bringing together new and long-time residents. Consider events such as art shows, film viewings, panel presentations, or fun, family-oriented gatherings. **No matter your Welcoming Week event, it should have the goal of encouraging connectivity and dialogue.**

**How to get started:** Register your event at [welcomingweek.org](http://welcomingweek.org). Follow the prompts to set up your account and then add details of your event, which will be posted to our worldwide map and searchable by location or activity. If you have registered in the past please re-use your login credentials to add your 2019 Welcoming Week events. If you have forgotten your login credentials use the “Request New Password” option and you will be emailed with a link to reset your password. Your account also gives you access to print-ready promotional materials. For those interested, Welcoming Week branded apparel is also available at a reduced cost for Welcoming Network members.

### SERVICE PROJECTS

- » Clean up a local park
- » Tend a community garden
- » Host a 2020 Census workshop (see page 7 for ideas)

### ENGAGE CHAMPIONS

- » Release a proclamation by Mayor/Governor
- » Host a welcoming summit
- » Invite a local public official to your Welcoming Week event
- » [Become a Welcoming Network government or organization member](#)
- » Partner with faith leaders
- » [Commit to becoming a Certified Welcoming city or county, \[certifiedwelcoming.org\]\(http://certifiedwelcoming.org\).](#)

### ARTS, CULTURE, & SPORTS

- » Host a soccer or sports tournament
- » Partner with an arts organization

### LIFT UP DIVERSE BUSINESSES

- » Tour restaurants or businesses run by people of diverse backgrounds
- » Recognize immigrant entrepreneurs with an award ceremony

### CITIZENSHIP

- » Hold a naturalization ceremony; Citizenship Day is Sept. 17
- » Host a naturalization test preparation workshop
- » Host a workshop to help new citizens register to vote

### BUILD CONNECTIONS

- » Create a plan to make your school, campus, workplace, or community a more welcoming one
- » Host a dialogue to help people find common ground
- » Play the More Than One Story card game; order at [welcomingamerica.org/mtos](http://welcomingamerica.org/mtos)

## ACTIVITIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Redwood City, CA: A screening event of digital stories that were created by diverse community members including long-time residents, recent immigrants, and local business owners.

Cities such as Baltimore, Nashville, and Atlanta announced policy initiatives to improve the lives of immigrants and to foster a welcoming environment regardless of race, ethnicity, or place of origin.

St. Petersburg, FL: A university panel discussion with students from various cultural backgrounds with the goal to spread cultural awareness in order to better promote cultural inclusion

Ljubljana, Slovenia: SLOGA, a Slovenian non-profit organization, hosted a positive communications trainings for local inclusion practitioners.



## TIPS TO GET STARTED

*Build bridges through events that bring together immigrants and receiving community members. Volunteer projects help people from diverse communities come together and get to know each other, while also doing something positive for everyone.*

**1. Establish a clear purpose:**

Communicate the purpose of your event in a concise way. Remember, the goal is to have fun and get all the participants to interact with each other.

**2. Identify group volunteer projects:**

Family-friendly events are highly recommended. Be sure to establish clear communication with a representative from your partner organization. (Ex. Parks and Recreation Department for a park cleanup to provide the necessary tools.)

**3. Identify individuals to participate and lead the event:**

Make sure you have a clear plan for engaging both immigrants and long time residents in planning and participating in the event.

**4. Make your event known:**

Create and widely distribute a simple flyer through hard copies as well as email, text, and social media. Start with people you are connected with and ask them to distribute it to their friends and networks. **Don't forget to add your event to our map at [welcomingweek.org](http://welcomingweek.org)!**

**5. Give Back:**

Set up your Welcoming Week fundraiser by logging on to [welcomingamerica.org](http://welcomingamerica.org) and creating a fundraiser to share with your attendees.

**6. Press releases:**

Send press releases to local newspapers (including foreign language papers, if applicable). Check out our sample press release on page 9.

**7. Plan the event to encourage new relationships:**

For example, at a park cleanup you can gather everyone, explain directions, and send people out in small groups with people they don't know. Let the participants know at the beginning that part of the mission is to be meeting new people.

**8. Thank and recognize the participants:**

Thank them for giving and participating in the event, and ask them for their feedback and future participation. Some volunteers can be asked to take a future leadership role in planning your next event.

**9. Committing year round:**

Consider how you and your community can commit to the welcoming movement throughout the year, you can even check out [welcomingamerica.org](http://welcomingamerica.org) for ideas. You can create a plan to make your school, campus, workplace, or community a more welcoming one; join the Welcoming Network as an organization or local government; or take steps to get your community [Certified Welcoming](#).



## GIVING BACK

*Welcoming America relies on the support of people and organizations like you to continue our work. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 this year with the aim of creating more inclusive communities.*

### These are three ways that you can give back during Welcoming Week:

#### 1. Host a fundraising dinner:

- Pick a date, location and time that works best for you and your guest list
- Determine who you'd like to invite. It can be a small group of 5 people, or a larger one! Share your fundraiser on social media
- Determine your budget for food and location if applicable
- Develop your event program. For example, share your personal story, or the local and national impact of welcoming everyone.
- Set a monetary goal for the dinner
- Make a personal commitment or a match for the evening
- Thank everyone who gave at your event the next day, and include the amount raised.

*(\*You can also host in other ways! Have a breakfast, hold an auction, compete in a chili cook-off, have a neighborhood street party, hold a car wash, or a poker night!)*

#### 2. Create a **Facebook Fundraiser**:

- Click "Fundraisers" in the left menu of your News Feed
- Click "Raise Money"
- Select Nonprofit/Charity
- Select Welcoming America as your charitable organization, choose a cover photo and fill in the fundraiser details
- Click Create
- Thank each donor as they give

**3. Make a personal gift** at [welcomingamerica.org](http://welcomingamerica.org) or via Welcoming America, P.O. Box 2554, Decatur, GA 30031



## EVENT HOST CHECKLIST

### AGENDA

- Identify key audience(s) and partner(s)
- Design an event to engage longtime residents and immigrants
- Consider the type of events that will allow people of multiple backgrounds to meet and interact
- Identify setting and agenda that will ensure key audiences and partners feel welcomed
- Add your event to our map at [welcomingweek.org](http://welcomingweek.org)
- Register your event on the Welcoming Week Portal

### PRE-EVENT LOGISTICS

- Secure and confirm location for event
- Set time and date of event
- Add event details at [welcomingweek.org](http://welcomingweek.org)
- Set up your Welcoming Week Fundraiser!
- Set the speakers list, including inviting local VIPs and champions
- Recruit volunteers
- Secure or create all materials and props needed (e.g. microphone, speakers, podium, paper plates, paint brushes, etc.)
- Order Welcoming Week hats, shirts, and other merchandise at [www.welcomingweek.org](http://www.welcomingweek.org)

### CREATE A TURN-OUT PLAN

- Create and distribute flyers
- Post and share Facebook event
- Identify organizational partners - invite partners, allies, and volunteers
- Send out reminder with clear roles and logistics to volunteers

**Be sure to add your event to our map at [welcomingweek.org](http://welcomingweek.org) for access to marketing materials and host resources.**

### GET THE WORD OUT

- Send media advisory a week before your event, and remind journalists a couple of days in advance
- Make media follow-up/turn-out calls
- Send out press release day of event
- Assign a press contact person - this person should be available at the event
- Use [#WelcomingWeek](https://twitter.com/WelcomingWeek) in all social media

### ASSIGN DAY-OF ROLES

- Photographer/videographer (must also get signed release forms)
- Master of ceremonies
- Volunteer coordinator

### COLLECT YOUR EVENT MATERIALS

- Clipboards and pens
- Sign-in sheets
- Evaluations
- Welcoming banner
- Video/photo release forms
- Download and print Welcomer signs from [www.welcomingweek.org](http://www.welcomingweek.org) (available in various languages)

### AFTER THE EVENT

- Send thank you emails or notes
- Post and tag pictures on your website, blog, and Facebook page - please note for which photos/videos you have release forms and tag Welcoming America so that we can share
- Submit event survey
- Send us your best photos through the Welcoming Week event host portal
- Consider becoming a Welcoming Network member.
- Identify how you and your community will continue to welcome throughout the year.



## CENSUS 2020+WELCOMING WEEK

Beginning in March 2020 individuals across the United States will participate in our once a decade population count.

Census data will shape the future of each of our communities and define our voice in Congress. It will determine how more than \$800 billion in federal government resources will be distributed each year. It will impact where schools, roads, and hospitals are built, and how many congressional seats are apportioned for all levels of government. It is difficult to understate the impact of the census on our communities, and the importance of Getting Out the Count.

As trusted voices in your communities, local organizations and governments are critical to the success of the 2020 Census. We hope you'll consider hosting a Census 2020 focused event during Welcoming Week and help spread the word about the importance of census participation. You'll see several ideas for Welcoming Week census activities below. You can find more at [www.census.gov/partners/2020-materials.html](http://www.census.gov/partners/2020-materials.html).

- Have 2020 Census materials at your Welcoming Week events to communicate the importance of census data and encouraging census participation. You can find a variety of materials at [censuscounts.org](http://censuscounts.org).
- Host a census workshop for community partners during Welcoming Week to identify barriers and generate solutions for participation in the 2020 Census.
- Include 2020 Census messaging in your Welcoming Week communications. You can find sample content including messaging and images for social media at [www.census.gov/partners/2020-materials.html](http://www.census.gov/partners/2020-materials.html)
- If you're hosting a festival or parade include a census booth or table. Many communities have local and state Complete Count Committees that may be able to staff the booth. Be sure to have information on the frequently asked questions about the census. You can find resources in a number of languages at [censuscounts.org](http://censuscounts.org)
- Ask Welcoming Week event partners to commit to participating in upcoming census activities. Welcoming Week is a great time to engage new partners. Keep those partnerships active by committing new partners to future collaboration on the census and other welcoming activities.





# MEDIA TALKING POINTS

## OVERVIEW OF MESSAGING

This is a time when many are embracing a vision of inclusion, standing up for our democratic values, and promoting communities where all feel that they are part of our social fabric. This is also a time of fear and increased divisions as groups are pitted against each other and some wonder if they are still welcome. Research shows that communicating a positive vision - one that emphasizes inclusion, unity, and a positive shared future - is key to overcoming divisions. Welcoming America has a number of communication toolkits available to help you craft Welcoming Week messages, but here are a few sample talking points to help you get started.

## MEDIA TALKING POINTS

- This is a time to celebrate the values that unite us as neighbors, parents, and colleagues, and to make our towns more welcoming to newcomers and to everyone who calls our community home.
- Welcoming Week celebrates our nation's highest democratic values: freedom and opportunity.
- Welcoming Week reminds us that no matter where you come from, what your gender is, or the color of your skin, we all deserve the opportunity to reach our greatest potential.
- There has never been a more important time for communities to show that they are welcoming to everyone, of all backgrounds, including immigrants and refugees.
- Our [community's/organization's] participation in Welcoming Week through [event(s)] shows that in (local community), residents of all backgrounds are coming together to create stronger, more prosperous communities.
- We are proud to be a part of Welcoming Week, which is demonstrating that in places large and small, rural and urban, people of all backgrounds are coming together to create stronger communities.
- Welcoming Week is an annual celebration bringing together thousands of people and hundreds of local events that celebrate the contributions of all of us - newcomer and long-time residents alike - and the role communities play to foster greater welcome and opportunity for everyone. Welcoming Week is Sept. 13-22, 2019.
- More and more communities around the the world are recognizing that we need the talents of all of us to make our communities stronger economically, socially, and culturally.
- Welcoming America is leading a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by making everyone who lives there know they belong. We believe that all people, including immigrants, are valued contributors and vital to the success of both our communities and our shared future.



# STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

As we lead up to Welcoming Week, there will be a concerted social media push to engage audiences and influencers. By using united stories, graphics and hashtags, we will be able to reach a larger audience with our shared messaging. Welcoming America will provide suggested social media messages throughout Welcoming Week for anyone to use.

**Please use the following hashtags: #WelcomingWeek and #IWelcome.**

Show your support by adding our Welcoming Week social media profile photo frame.

**Facebook:** Go to [facebook.com/profilepicframes](https://facebook.com/profilepicframes) and search for Welcoming America.

**Twitter:** Go to [welcomi.ng/photofilter](https://welcomi.ng/photofilter) to add the frame to your profile photo.

**The photo frame is currently available.**

**#IWelcome campaign:** Take a photo of you or your team with our "I'm a Welcomer" sign and post to social media with how your community welcomes.

Download the "I'm a Welcomer" sign in a variety of languages: [welcomingweek.org](https://welcomingweek.org).

We also encourage you to highlight the personal stories of immigrants and refugees and their contributions to your community, adding #WelcomingWeek and #IWelcome.

## SUGGESTED GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

- Working together we can make communities stronger economically & culturally. Celebrate #WelcomingWeek Sept 13-22
- Proud to be doing my part to build a nation of neighbors. #WelcomingWeek
- Join us to celebrate #WelcomingWeek Sept 13-22, [welcomingweek.org](https://welcomingweek.org)
- Every day more communities recognize that opening up opportunity for all residents is the right & smart thing to do #WelcomingWeek
- How will you celebrate #WelcomingWeek? Join the growing movement; host or attend an event near you: [welcomingweek.org](https://welcomingweek.org)
- Let's show the world that our communities want to be welcoming to everyone #WelcomingWeek [welcomingweek.org](https://welcomingweek.org)
- "#IWelcome immigrants and refugees because ..." @welcomingusa #WelcomingWeek



# SAMPLE WELCOMING PROCLAMATION

*Welcoming Week 2019*

*By [THE GOVERNOR/MAYOR/COUNTY EXECUTIVE]*

*A Proclamation*

Our [COMMUNITY'S/STATE'S] success depends on making sure that all [RESIDENTS] feel welcome here. Today, new [RESIDENTS] are a vital part of our community — bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas, starting businesses, and contributing to the vibrant diversity that we all value.

This week, we honor the spirit of unity that is bringing neighbors together across [COMMUNITY/STATE]. During Welcoming Week, I invite all [RESIDENTS OF COMMUNITY/STATE] to join this movement of communities nationwide by renewing our commitment to our core American values and by taking action in the spirit of welcoming. By working together, we can achieve greater prosperity and make our [COMMUNITY/STATE] the kind of place where diverse people from around the world feel valued and want to put down roots.

Regardless of where we are born or what we look like, we are [RESIDENTS], united in our efforts to build a stronger [STATE/COMMUNITY]. By recognizing the contributions that we all make to create a vibrant culture and a growing economy, we make our community more prosperous and more inclusive to all who call it home.

Let us come together to build communities where every resident has the opportunity to contribute at his or her best. Let us come together to create more prosperous communities and to reaffirm that [STATE] still stands as a beacon of freedom and opportunity.

Now, therefore, I [NAME, TITLE], by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of [STATE/COMMUNITY], do hereby proclaim the week of September 13th, 2019, Welcoming Week. I call upon the people of [STATE] to join together to build stronger communities across [STATE/COMMUNITY].



# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. XX, 2019

### CONTACT:

[LOCAL ORGANIZER NAME AND CONTACT INFO HERE]

### **[NAME OF CITY/ORGANIZATION] Joins with Welcoming America and Hundreds of Communities to Celebrate New Americans during Welcoming Week**

CITY...This week, [NAME OF CITY OR ORGANIZATION, STATE] will celebrate Welcoming Week by hosting [TYPE OF EVENT – LINK TO YOUR POSTING ON WELCOMING AMERICA EVENT MAP] to recognize immigrant contributions to our community/ies.

[SUGGESTED QUOTE] Our [COMMUNITY'S/ORGANIZATION'S] participation in Welcoming Week through [EVENT(S)] shows that in [LOCAL COMMUNITY/NATIONWIDE], Americans of all backgrounds are coming together to create stronger, more prosperous communities. We are proud to be a part of Welcoming Week, which is demonstrating that in places large and small, rural and urban, people of all backgrounds are coming together to create stronger communities. It is a time to celebrate the values that unite us as neighbors, parents, and colleagues, and to make our towns more welcoming to newcomers and to everyone who calls our community home.

### [ADD DETAILS OF EVENT – WHAT, WHERE, WHO, ETC]

“These events are part of a powerful and growing movement in our country and around the world demonstrating that communities want to be welcoming,” said Rachel Peric, executive director of Welcoming America. “At a time of rising anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies that hurt families, Welcoming Week is a reminder of the resilient and inclusive spirit of American communities. Instead of casting blame, thousands of local leaders in communities large and small, rural and urban, are bringing their communities together to bridge divides and build stronger local economies where everyone belongs.”

For more information about how you can participate in Welcoming Week, visit [welcomingweek.org](http://welcomingweek.org) and use #welcomingweek.

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### ABOUT WELCOMING WEEK

Welcoming Week is an annual celebration bringing together thousands of people and hundreds of local events that builds unity between the contributions of immigrants and refugees and the role long term residents play to foster greater welcome. Welcoming Week is Sept. 13-22 across the country and is expanding to other parts of the world.

Welcoming America is leading a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by making everyone who lives there know they belong. Welcoming America believes that all people, including immigrants, are valued contributors and vital to the success of both our communities and our shared future. [welcomingamerica.org](http://welcomingamerica.org).