



WELCOMING
AMERICA



BUILDING A NATION OF NEIGHBORS

Join us for Welcoming Week
September 16-25, 2016

Welcoming Week Hosting Toolkit



Photo Credit: Domonique Neukomm/*The Oracle*



OVERVIEW

Dear Valued Partner,

We are so excited for the 5th annual Welcoming Week in September, a series of events where communities bring together new and long-time residents in a spirit of unity to raise awareness of the benefits of welcoming everyone – including new Americans.

By hosting an event, you are part of a movement of more and more communities across the United States and the world who recognize that immigrants and refugees make our communities stronger economically, socially, and culturally.

Thank you for joining us; we are proud of the growing number of local and national partners who continue to make this event a success.

This toolkit contains materials to help you make your local Welcoming Week event a success, including:

- Welcoming Week background
- Event checklist and tips for success
- Event inspiration
- Sample press release
- Sample Welcoming Proclamation

Welcoming Week is a time to demonstrate how, in communities 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 communities more welcoming to newcomers, and to everyone who calls our community home.

Together, we can make every community in America 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.

Thank you for joining us, and please don't hesitate to reach out to us if we can help you to make your Welcoming Week efforts a success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David M. Lubell".

David Lubell
Executive Director
Welcoming America



WELCOMING WEEK BACKGROUND.

Momentum is building in the welcoming movement, and more and more communities across the United States and the world are recognizing that immigrants and refugees make our communities stronger economically, socially, and culturally.

During this annual series of events through Welcoming America and its partners, communities bring together new and long-time residents in a spirit of unity to raise awareness of the benefits of welcoming everyone – including new Americans. More and more communities across the United States and the world are recognizing that immigrants and refugees make our communities stronger economically, socially, and culturally.

In 2015, there were 245 events in over 80 communities during Welcoming Week, with more than 22,000 people participating.

Welcoming America is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that is leading a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by making everyone who lives there feel like they belong. As communities are reshaped by demographic change, there must be an intentional effort to manage that transformation. Our unique focus is helping communities move beyond divisiveness and fragmentation to a coordinated web of policies and programs that ensure that all residents—including immigrants—can fully participate and belong. We partner with more than 100 communities across the United States; are the nonprofit partner to the White House’s Building Welcoming Communities Campaign; and are piloting international welcoming efforts in Germany and Australia. Learn how your community can become a more welcoming place: www.welcomingamerica.org.

Make sure your event gets counted! Register it at welcomingweek.org. Your event will be promoted to a national audience, and you will gain access to additional marketing materials and host resources.



CHECKLIST

As you plan your event, we suggest that you use and add to the following checklist to make sure important tasks are covered.

AGENDA

- Identify key audience(s) and partner(s)
- Design event to engage receiving community and immigrants
- Identify setting and agenda that will ensure key audiences & partners feel welcomed

LOGISTICS PRE-EVENT

- Secure and confirm location for event
- Set time and date of event
- Submit event details at welcomingweek.org**
- 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.)

CREATE A TURN-OUT PLAN

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

Make sure your event gets counted! Register it at welcomingweek.org. Your event will be promoted to a national audience, and you will gain access to additional marketing materials and host resources.

PRESS/MEDIA WORK

- Send out media advisory (usually done 1 week and 2-3 days before event) to your media list
- Make media follow-up/turn-out calls
- Send out media release (usually done day of event)
- Assign a press contact person - this person should be available at event
- Use #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

- Clip boards and pens
- Sign-in Sheets
- Evaluations
- Welcoming banner
- Video/photo release forms
- "Call to action" postcards to pass out at event

AFTER THE EVENT

- Send out thank you emails or notes
- Post and tag pictures on your website, blog, and/or Facebook page - please note for which photos/videos you have release forms
- Submit event survey
- Send Welcoming America photos here: <http://welcomi.ng/wwphotoform>



ORGANIZING VOLUNTEER EVENTS

Build Relationships through volunteer 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 the community.

TIPS TO GET STARTED

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 a 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 receiving community members in planning and executing the event.

4. Make your event known:

Create and widely distribute a simple flyer through hard copies as well as email, text, and Facebook. Start with people you are connected with and ask them to distribute it to their friends and networks.

5. Press releases:

Send press releases to local newspapers (including foreign language papers, if applicable to your area).

6. 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. Encourage mingling.

7. Thank and recognize the participants:

Ask them for their feedback and future participation. Some volunteers can be asked to take a future leadership role in planning your next event.



EVENT INSPIRATION

SERVICE PROJECTS

- » Park Clean-up
- » Hands-on Construction Project
- » Mural Painting
- » Community Garden
- » Food Gleaning

ENGAGE CHAMPIONS

- » Mayor/Governor Proclamation
- » Summit on Welcoming Agenda
- » Invite a legislator or commissioner
- » Become a Welcoming City/County
See www.welcomingcities.org
- » Partner with faith leaders

BUSINESS TOURS

- » Restaurants Tour
- » Business Tour of Immigrant Entrepreneurs
- » Recognize inspiring start-ups by New Americans and long-term residents
- » Award entrepreneurs

CITIZENSHIP WORK

- » U.S. Naturalization Ceremonies
- » Test preparation workshop
Remember: Citizenship Day is September 16th

ARTS, CULTURE, SPORT, & GAMES

- » Games with themes of unity
- » Soccer & sports tournaments
- » Partner with a local arts organization to highlight cultural diversity
- » “More Than One Story” card game
Order here: welcomingamerica.org/mtos

WELCOMING WEEK ACTIVITIES FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Denver, CO: “Stories of Integration”, a photography storytelling experience, was displayed throughout Welcoming Week. This display was designed to share the stories of immigrants and refugees in Denver. The Mayor of Denver signed a Welcoming Denver Day proclamation during the meeting of his Immigrant and Refugee Commission, a membership group of many prominent refugees in the Denver community.

Omaha, NE : Throughout September in Omaha, refugee and immigrant community members learned about government, met elected officials, and learned how to use their voices and leadership through the New American Civic Academy. The Quilted Conscience held a week long quilting workshop with Karen students from a local schools. At the end of the week, there was a family day with a quilt unveiling, music, and food.

Jacksonville, FL: A Welcoming Institute graduate coordinated four welcoming dinners that included a cooking lesson, dinner, and facilitated discussion. During these dinners, families from Cuba, Iraq, Ethiopia, and Burma welcomed U.S.-born residents into their homes.

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



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. XX, 2016

CONTACT:

[LOCAL ORGANIZER NAME AND CONTACT INFO HERE]

[NAME OF CITY/ORGANIZATION] Joins Welcoming America and Hundreds of Communities across the Country to Celebrate Immigrants and Refugees 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 celebrations are part of a powerful and growing movement in our country and around the world,” said David Lubell, founder and executive director of Welcoming America. “Communities recognize that they are more vibrant and prosperous when everyone feels welcomed and can fully participate. In events across the world this week, new and long-time residents are building bridges and make their communities stronger.”

For more information about how you can participate in Welcoming Week, visit www.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 celebrate the contributions of immigrants and refugees and the role communities play to foster greater welcome. Welcoming Week is Sept. 16-25 across the country and now 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 feel like 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. www.welcomingamerica.org.



PROCLAMATION

Welcoming Week 2016

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 creating 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 16th, 2016, Welcoming Week. I call upon the people of [STATE] to join together to build stronger communities across [STATE/COMMUNITY].