

## Starting Your Welcoming Committee

### What is a welcoming committee?

A welcoming committee is the group of people who work together to make their community more welcoming to immigrants and refugees. It is the core group of people who are involved in welcoming. In some communities, they call this committee the Welcoming Advisory Committee.

### How do you start a welcoming committee?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who will you invite to join your committee?
- What groups will you get involved with your committee?
- What will your goals be for the initiative?
- How will you keep people interested & engaged with your initiative?

### How do I get people to join a welcoming committee?

- Work with other organizations to get them involved.  
Questions to consider when thinking about what groups to approach:
  - Who is interest in doing this work?
  - Who has the capacity to do this work?
  - Who do you want to build a relationship with?
  - Who do you think should be involved in this work but isn't?
  - Why would a group want to get involved in a welcoming initiative? Does this reason mesh well with the goals of the welcoming initiative?
- Examples of groups or individuals you might want to work or partner with:
  - Religious groups: churches, regional organizations, social justice structures
  - Labor: unions, Jobs with Justice
  - Immigrant rights groups
  - Civic clubs: Lions club, Rotary club, neighborhood associations, Kiwanis
  - Business: Chambers of Commerce, Trade associations
  - Arts and cultural organizations
  - Service providers
  - Elected officials at various levels
  - Universities/educational institutions: faculty, staff and students
  - People with marketing and/or media experience/relationships
- Work with individuals that you have identified through previous community work, through organizations you're partnering with, or through welcoming presentations and other public engagement work.
- Look for individuals with specific skill sets or connections that will be helpful or useful in your initiative.

- Whether working with individuals or groups, it is important to figure out what a person is interested in working on, what values they share with you, and what their skill set is. This can be determined through conversations, general meetings, or one-on-one meetings.
- Holding an information session about welcoming can be a great place to find people who are interested in joining your committee.

## Responsibilities of a Welcoming Committee

- Setting achievable, realistic goals and working toward them
- Creating and implementing a work plan
- Making connections with and engaging other community stakeholders, groups and leaders
- Providing, creating and/or seeking out trainings for those involved with welcoming work
- Fundraising
- Maintaining engagement of participants
- Evaluation – revisiting and revising work plan and goals, when necessary
- Planning events – doing or delegating the following tasks:
  - Overall organizing of event
  - Recruiting participants for event
  - Reaching out to other potential community partners to have them co-sponsor, invite their membership and/or advertise the event
  - Media outreach: announce event in local paper, press release if it's a news worthy event, go on local radio shows or TV to promote event