



WELCOMING WEEK

EVENT HOST TOOLKIT

*Join us for
Welcoming Week!
Sept. 14-23, 2018*





OVERVIEW

Thank you for joining us for Welcoming Week 2018! 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 and U.S.-born 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. 14-23, 2018, and we look forward to building on last year's success. In 2017, there were **over 700 events** in **300 communities** during Welcoming Week, with more than **50,000 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 United States and 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

Welcoming Week 2019 will take place September 13-22.

KEY STEPS FOR WELCOMING WEEK EVENT HOSTS

- ▶▶ Register your event at welcomingweek.org
- ▶▶ Participate in our I'm a Welcomer campaign
- ▶▶ Consider carefully what types of events will unite your community



WELCOMING WEEK BACKGROUND

During this annual series of events through Welcoming America and its partners, communities bring together new and long-time residents to build strong connections and affirm the benefits of welcoming everyone – including new Americans.

It's a time of immense challenges for our country and the communities we serve. We are becoming polarized, and too many Americans have been uprooted by the sense that they no longer belong. The values we stand for and the people we serve face grave threats.

At the same time, many people are standing up for their neighbors and affirming that our country is a place for everyone, weaving together new and long-time residents so that we can all be part of the fabric of our shared future.

To change the rhetoric, to shape the immigrant experience, to affirm our values and live up to them as a nation – this is an enormous task and will take all of us, working together. But never have we been such a powerful movement.

Welcomers are leading the way in communities across the country, and our movement is 40 million strong and growing. Celebrate Welcoming Week, and show the world how your community welcomes everyone, including immigrants and refugees.

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.



EVENT INSPIRATION

Local events are the heart of Welcoming Week, building stronger communities by bringing together new and U.S.-born residents. You can host a festival, volunteer project, cooking class, or any event that encourages connectivity and dialogue. Welcoming America will give you the tools you need to make it a success.

How to get started: Register your event at welcomingweek.org. Follow the prompts to set up your account and then add details of your event, which will be posted to our national map and searchable by location or activity. Through the hosting portal, you can access Welcoming Week-branded materials at a reduced cost and download print-ready promotional materials.

SERVICE PROJECTS

- » Clean up a local park
- » Paint a mural
- » Tend a community garden
- » Start a Voter Registration Drive (see pg. 7)

ENGAGE CHAMPIONS

- » Release a proclamation by Mayor/Governor
- » Host a welcoming summit
- » Invite a local public official
- » Become a Welcoming America government or organization member, welcomingamerica.org
- » Partner with faith leaders
- » Commit to becoming a Certified Welcoming city or county, 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 new Americans entrepreneurs with an award ceremony

CITIZENSHIP

- » Hold a naturalization ceremony; Citizenship Day is Sept. 17
- » Host a test preparation workshop

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

ACTIVITIES FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Denver, CO: A photography storytelling experience shared stories of immigrants and refugees. The mayor signed a Welcoming Denver Day proclamation while meeting with his Immigrant and Refugee Commission.

Omaha, NE: New Americans learned about government and met elected officials through the New American Civic Academy. Quilted Conscience held a workshop with Karen students from local schools with a family day including quilt unveiling, music, and food.

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

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.



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!**

5. Give Back:

Set up your Welcoming Week fundraiser by logging on to 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 for ideas. You can create a plan to make your school, campus, workplace, or community a more welcoming one; join the Welcoming America 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 **\$100,000 nationwide** this year to increase the number of places we are working with to create inclusive communities.*

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

1. Consider creating a crowdfunding page through our website, welcomingamerica.org:

- Click on "Donate" and follow the prompts to set up your page
- Set a personal goal for your fundraiser based on the number of people attending your event and the size of your network
- Share your fundraiser on social media
- Share talking points (see our Media Talking Points page) and give updates on your event
- Thank each donor as they give
- Provide an update on how you did after your fundraiser has ended

2. Create a Facebook Fundraising page:

- Click Fundraisers in the left menu of your News Feed
- Click Raise Money
- Select Nonprofit/Charity
- Select a charitable organization, choose a cover photo and fill in the fundraiser details
- Click Create

3. Take donations on site at your Welcoming Week event

Welcoming America thanks you for all of your support for Welcoming Week 2018, as well as your financial contributions. We are proud to support the many diverse communities and partners who are leading efforts to make their communities more vibrant places for all.



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
- 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
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**

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 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 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 (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 America member.
- Identify how you and your community will continue to welcome throughout the year.



VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

This year please be sure to vote and encourage those in your community to do the same. In a mid-term election year it is particularly important to make sure everyone is registered. As such, please consider a voter registration drive for Welcoming Week, a fun and easy way to hold your community accountable. If you've got questions or it's your first drive, we've adapted a plan from the League of Women Voters below!

- 1. Plan the drive:** *Who:* Define your target audience or population. Who are the potential voters and is there a specific group you're targeting? *Where:* Set up booths in public places. Collaborate with a community partner for a popular or well frequented location. Colleges, post offices, community centers or even sports events are excellent examples. *When:* Decide on the best time to hold your drive. Is it lunch time, half-time at a sporting event, a weekend? Be sure to choose a time with heaviest traffic. **Don't forget to add your event to our map at welcomingweek.org!**
- 2. Coordinate your volunteers:** Train your volunteers. Make sure that they understand all the forms and their specific responsibility during the drive. Provide them with a "Frequently Asked Questions" sheet so that they will be able to answer questions.
- 3. Publicize your drive:** Make sure you have a clear plan for engaging both immigrants and receiving community members in planning and executing the event. Send out email notifications, post on social media and post flyers to give people advance notice that a voter registration drive is coming. Your messages should be short and snappy and grab attention. If your drive or organization has a logo or title, it should be used on all advertisements.
- 4. Gather the materials:** You can obtain copies of voter registration forms, absentee ballot applications, and party affiliation declaration forms from your County Commissioner of Registration office. All of these forms can be found on the League of Women Voters web site, www.lwvny.org, and may be printed and photocopied.
- 5. During the drive:** When registering voters you should encourage on-location registration. It is preferable to get as many people as possible to fill out the forms while they are at the table. This way, you can check the forms to make sure they are filled out correctly and you can be sure that the form gets submitted to the elections office.
- 6. After the drive:** The most important thing after your drive is to make sure the forms get to the elections office promptly for processing. You should also evaluate the success of your drive. Was your site successful? Ask yourself these questions to prepare for your next voter registration drive.



MEDIA TALKING POINTS

OVERVIEW OF MESSAGING

It's a time of immense challenges for the communities we serve, many of whom are living in fear. We are becoming polarized, and many Americans have been uprooted by the sense that they no longer belong. The values we stand for and the people we serve face grave threats. At the same time, many people are standing up for their neighbors and affirming that our country is a place for everyone, weaving together new and longtime residents so that we can all be part of the fabric of our shared future.

MEDIA TALKING POINTS

- 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.
- There has never been a more important time for communities to show that they are welcoming to everyone, including immigrants and refugees.
- Our [community's/organization's] participation in Welcoming Week through [event(s)] shows that in (local community), 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.
- 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 for everyone. Welcoming Week is Sept. 14-23, 2018.
- More and more communities around the country and the world are recognizing that immigrants and refugees 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. Welcoming America believes 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 and search for Welcoming America.

Twitter: Go to 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.

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

- Immigrants & refugees make communities stronger economically & culturally. Celebrate #WelcomingWeek Sept 14-23
- Join us to celebrate #WelcomingWeek Sept 14-23, welcomingweek.org
- Every day more communities recognize that welcoming immigrants is the right & smart thing to do #WelcomingWeek
- How will you celebrate #WelcomingWeek? Join the growing movement; host or attend event near you: welcomingweek.org
- Let's show the world that our communities want to be welcoming to everyone #WelcomingWeek welcomingweek.org
- "#IWelcome immigrants and refugees because ..." @welcomingusa #WelcomingWeek



SAMPLE WELCOMING PROCLAMATION

Welcoming Week 2018

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 16th, 2018, 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, 2018

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 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. 14-23 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.