



In May of 2014, the City of Columbia signed a resolution to join the Welcoming America: Welcoming Cities program (see attached documents). One description of a Welcoming City, as offered by the program itself, is:

A Welcoming City or County is one that joins the Welcoming America network and works across multiple sectors, such as government, business, and non-profit, to create inclusive policies and practices such as making it easier for entrepreneurs to start a business or having government documents available in multiple languages. Welcoming Cities are guided by the principles of inclusion and creating communities that prosper because everyone feels welcome, including immigrants and refugees.

In essence, Welcoming Cities share best practices and resources on how they can support the diversity of their municipalities. Welcoming Cities, in this way, should not be confused with Sanctuary Cities, which are currently illegal under Missouri law. The Welcoming Cities consortium includes municipalities both larger and smaller than Columbia.

Since our original resolution in 2014, the program has grown and now requires a \$200 per year membership fee. After reviewing the program, the Human Rights Commission voted unanimously to ask that the City Council provide the funding necessary for us to re-join the Welcoming Cities network. Please consider this our request for those funds. The benefits of membership include: recognition marking Columbia as a city that strives to serve the entirety of its population competently and respectfully and access to tools to increase inclusion in the community. The Commission will continue to make itself available to the public to address issues of discrimination, and we believe this resource could help reduce unintentional discriminatory practices before they occur.

Thank you for your consideration.

Scott Dean  
Chair, Human Rights Commission



## WELCOMING CITIES AND COUNTIES

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Welcoming America and its municipal partners are convening U.S. cities and counties to support locally-driven efforts to create more welcoming, immigrant-friendly environments that maximize opportunities for economic growth and cultural vitality and position communities as globally competitive, 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders.

Participating city and county governments will connect with their peers through a community of practice that will share good ideas, develop new tools, and receive recognition for their efforts to create more welcoming communities that improve the quality of life and economic potential for immigrants and non-immigrants alike.

Cities and counties that join Welcoming Cities and Counties will have the chance to:

- Hear from local government leaders who are making the most of their diversity, by creating “immigrant-friendly” welcoming plans.
- Learn about large and small communities that are responding to demographic change and supporting long-term immigrant integration in a way that speaks to and benefits all members of the community.
- Access new tools and resources to help advance welcoming resolutions, initiatives and strategies.
- Receive support and recognition for their efforts to foster more vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming communities.
- Participate in national and transatlantic learning exchanges that highlight promising practices from globally competitive cities.

## **WHAT IS A WELCOMING CITY OR COUNTY?**

Welcoming America defines a welcoming city or county as one that:

1. **PLANS:** All relevant sectors, such as government, business, non-profit, and others are engaged to work together to create a welcoming community climate that supports long-term integration.
2. **COMMITTS:** Commitments are made to institutionalize strategies that ensure the ongoing inclusion and long-term economic and social integration of newcomers.
3. **BUILDS COMMUNITY:** Newcomers and long-time residents are engaged to find common ground and shared leadership.
4. **COMMUNICATES:** Messages of unity and shared values permeate the community through the media, through the voice of leaders, and among residents.
5. **SUSTAINS:** Policies and practices are considered in order to ensure that interactions between new and longer-term Americans remain positive ones and the community's economic vitality remains strong.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

There is no membership fee to join Welcoming Cities and Counties, but participants commit to:

- Advancing a municipal or county-level proclamation or resolution declaring their locality to be a welcoming one
- Finding ways to institutionalize welcoming efforts through the adoption of policies and/or practices that fit the unique local context and promote inclusion within local government and the broader community
- Joining a cohort of cities and communities that want to become more welcoming
- Appointing at least one key municipal staff contact or preferably a small team of staff from across departments for the project
- Participating in three conference calls per year to share their own accomplishments and challenges and learn from promising practices from other Welcoming Cities and Counties
- Participating in an annual in-person meeting with other municipal leaders (should travel resources be available)

## **POINTS OF CONTACT**

For more information about Welcoming Cities and Counties, please visit [www.welcomingcities.org](http://www.welcomingcities.org) or contact either:

Rachel Steinhardt

Welcoming America (Atlanta)

[rachel@welcomingamerica.org](mailto:rachel@welcomingamerica.org)

404-592-5621

Susan Downs-Karkos

Welcoming America (Denver)

[susan@welcomingamerica.org](mailto:susan@welcomingamerica.org)

303-808-1322

## **ABOUT WELCOMING AMERICA**

Welcoming America is a national, grassroots-driven collaborative that promotes mutual respect and cooperation between foreign-born and U.S.-born Americans. Through a countrywide network of member organizations and partners, Welcoming America works to promote a welcoming atmosphere – community by community – in which immigrants and native born residents can find common ground and shared prosperity. For more information, please visit [www.welcomingamerica.org](http://www.welcomingamerica.org).

## **PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

Welcoming Cities and Counties has been recognized as a [2013 Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Action](#).

This initiative is also supported by a growing list of partner organizations, including:

[City of Chicago](#)

[German Marshall Fund of the United States](#)

[Maytree's Cities of Migration](#)

[AS/COA](#)



### Commitment to Participate in the Welcoming Cities Project

As representatives of local government, we recognize that cities and communities that proactively welcome newcomers and take steps to ensure their successful integration will be strategically positioned as globally competitive, 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders.

We therefore resolve to participate in the *Welcoming Cities Project*, and commit to taking the following initial steps toward creating an environment that is receptive to immigrants, and that unlocks the full potential of all members of the community:

- **Advance a municipal or county-level proclamation or resolution** declaring our locality to be a welcoming one
- **Find ways to institutionalize welcoming efforts** through the adoption of policies and practices that promote inclusion within local government and the broader community
- **Join a cohort of cities and communities** that have pledged to become more welcoming
- **Appoint at least one key municipal staff contact** for the project
- **Participate in three conference calls each year** to share and learn from promising practices from other Welcoming Cities
- **Participate in an annual in-person meeting** with other Welcoming Cities (dependent upon available travel resources).

City or Community Name: *City of Columbia, MD*

Agency: *City of Columbia*

Representative Name: *Mike Matthes*

Date: *5-22-14*

Signature: *Mike Matthes*

Introduced by McDavid Council Bill No. R 94-14

**A RESOLUTION**

authorizing City membership in the Welcoming Cities Program to promote mutual respect and cooperation between foreign-born and United States born Americans through local policies, services and practices.

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia, Missouri is a welcoming place where people, families and institutions thrive and the contributions of all are celebrated and valued; and

WHEREAS, fostering a welcoming environment for all individuals, regardless of race, color or national origin, enhances the City's cultural fabric, economic growth and overall prosperity for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, community efforts that promote understanding and collaboration between native-born and foreign-born community members are essential in encouraging and preserving the City's welcoming environment; and


WHEREAS, the City of Columbia is pleased to join the Welcoming Cities and Counties initiative to help unite our community and ensure that all are welcome.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City Council hereby declares the City of Columbia, Missouri to be a member of the Welcoming Cities and Counties Initiative and supports the Human Rights Commission in their work to act as a resource for intercultural awareness, education and celebration among all Columbia residents.

ADOPTED this 19th day of May, 2014.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

  
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Mayor and Presiding Officer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
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City Counselor