



2024 Certified Welcoming Foundation and Leadership Cohort Programs

A technical assistance program for local governments seeking to become Certified Welcoming

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Welcoming America is excited to announce an inaugural national cohort program for local governments seeking a Certified Welcoming star designation. Two cohorts, a Certified Welcoming Leadership Program and a Certified Welcoming Foundation Program, will provide participants with direct support in achieving their certification goals.

The Certified Welcoming Leadership Cohort is designed for local governments seeking the 3-, 4-, or 5-star designation. Competitive applicants for this program will have a clear staff member working on immigrant inclusion within their local government, a collective impact group focused on immigrant inclusion, and are looking to further institutionalize their work through proactive policies, advocacy, and cross-jurisdictional partnerships.

The goal of this one-year program is to help local governments get organized, collect evidence, and further institutionalize welcoming work in their government structure and throughout their communities.

If your community is interested in Certified Welcoming, but is not ready to meet the criteria for the 3-, 4-, or 5-star designation, [please look out for our Certified Welcoming Foundation Cohort](#), for 1- and 2-star applicants, launching in Fall 2024.

Which star designation would my community qualify for?

Not sure which star designation your community would be able to achieve? [Take the pre-assessment quiz!](#)

PROGRAM DETAILS AND KEY DATES

Selected local governments will be notified by March 1, 2024 and a virtual onboarding will be held March 21, 2024 at 2 p.m. ET on Zoom. Participants are encouraged to invite key stakeholders, community partners, and government champions to the call to learn about the Certified Welcoming process, requirements for certification, and what it will take to get started and earn the designation.

The cohort will then meet monthly, with all sessions, other than the optional in-person convening, to be held at 2 p.m. ET for 90 minutes on Zoom. Since timelines to complete certification are



based on the star designation, some participants may have different timelines to complete their certification and topics may be repeated throughout the program cycle.

Current timeline and programming:

- **March 21, 2024:** Onboarding call with staff, elected and appointed officials, community stakeholders, and partners
- **April 10, 2024 (9 am-12 pm):** Optional in-person session for the Welcoming Standard bootcamp prior to the [Welcoming Interactive](#) conference in Dallas
 - If you are unable to attend , you will receive with a pre-recorded webinar of the Welcoming Standard bootcamp
- **May 16, 2024:** "Creating your Certification Team"
- **June 13, 2024:** "Engaging Stakeholders for Certified Welcoming"
- **July 25, 2024:** "Gathering Evidence (Part 1)"
- **August 22, 2024:** "Gathering Evidence (Part 2)"
- **September 19, 2024:** "Preparing for your certification audit"
- **October 17, 2024:** "Furthering community relations"
- **November 14, 2024:** Drop-in office hours
- **December 12, 2024:** Drop-in office hours
- **January 16, 2025:** "Analyzing results and planning next steps"
- **February 20, 2025:** "Sharing information and celebrating success"
- **March 20, 2025:** Closing meeting for the cohort

PROGRAM BENEFITS

Each participant of the Certified Welcoming Leadership Cohort will receive:

- Two complimentary registrations to the Welcoming Interactive (held in Dallas, TX from April 10-12)
- Regular networking and convening opportunities with the national cohort, including an in-person opportunity at the Welcoming Interactive
- Assistance from a dedicated Certified Welcoming staff member providing project management and coaching support
- Opportunity to accelerate your community's immigrant inclusion and welcoming work
- Public relations and marketing assistance for your certification announcement and potential blog post about your work on [CertifiedWelcoming.org](#).
- Access to a Welcoming America Regional Manager for additional guidance and support
- Discount on Certified Welcoming fees and access to a scholarship to waive fees



- How-to guides, resources, and other project management tools

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must:

- Be a local government (e.g. county, city, town)
- Have a collective impact group that focuses on immigrant inclusion
 - A collective impact group is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions who advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems level change.
- Receive a 3, 4, or 5-star recommendation from the [pre-assessment](#)
- Show evidence of and a commitment to continue advancing welcoming work in your community
- Commit at least one staff person from the local government to participate in the cohort. Staff should plan to spend 5-10 hours each month on certification and an additional 1-2 hours each month for the cohort calls.

Additionally, applicants — particularly local governments — may be assessed for these additional criteria:

- Diverse community representation including factors such as geography, economic conditions, diversity of demographics, and population size;
- Sufficient staff resources to complete the certification process;
- Demonstrated commitment to accelerating action on welcoming, immigrant inclusion, and equity;
- A vision for using certification results to advance solutions and prioritize investments in community-wide welcoming;
- Willingness to be open, transparent, data-driven, and address challenges head-on.

PROGRAM FEES

There are no fees to participate in the Certified Welcoming Leadership Cohort. However, each selected locality is required to pay the Certified Welcoming fees, currently discounted to \$9,000 for program participants. Scholarships are available to cover the certification fees.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS



Access the application below and complete the form. The deadline to apply is February 16, 11:59 p.m. ET:

[Application Link](#)

Need more information before applying? Register for the Certified Welcoming Leadership Cohort Informational Webinar on January 31, 2024 at 2 p.m. ET.

[Register for the Webinar](#)

This webinar will share information about the Certified Welcoming Leadership Cohort program and application process. Attendees will also hear about the Certified Welcoming process, benefits of joining the Welcoming Network, and ask questions to Welcoming America staff.

Attendees will walk away with the information needed to decide whether they are ready to apply for the Certified Welcoming Leadership Cohort (for local governments ready for the 3-, 4-, or 5-star designation) or if they should wait for the Certified Welcoming Foundation Cohort (for local governments ready for the 1- or 2-star designation) launching in the fall of 2024.

Certified Welcoming is a program of [Welcoming America](#). You can learn more about Certified Welcoming [here](#) and review the Welcoming Standard [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the Certified Welcoming team at certified@welcomingamerica.org