



Dayton is America's first certified welcoming city

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Dayton is the first city in the United States to earn the status of Certified Welcoming in recognition of inclusiveness and integration of immigrants.

Dayton City Commissioners announced the certification this morning, while acknowledging the accomplishments of Welcome Dayton, the immigrant friendly initiative begun in 2011.

"We are proud of the recognition Dayton has earned as being the first Certified Welcoming city in the country. This recognition affirms to the country what we have known in Dayton—our community is a welcoming place for everyone who chooses to make Dayton home," said Mayor Nan Whaley.

Welcome Dayton successfully completed a rigorous certification process through Welcoming America, a non-partisan, national non-profit organization. Welcoming America evaluated local efforts to establish an inclusive community through government leadership, civic engagement, equitable access, education, economic development, and connected and safe communities.

"Since the inception of Welcome Dayton, Dayton has been a leader in the welcoming movement," said City Commissioner Matt Joseph. "With the recognition as the first Certified Welcoming city, we are excited to continue to lead the country on creating more welcoming and inclusive cities that benefit all residents. We have received this recognition because everyone in the community has recognized that we all have a responsibility to make Dayton welcoming for everyone who makes Dayton home."

Welcoming America launched the Certified Welcoming program in April 2017 to establish a formal designation for cities and counties that have taken action on their commitment to welcoming and met the high bar set by the Welcoming Standard.

"Communities like Dayton offer an alternative to the divisive rhetoric around immigration and show how inclusion is good for our economy, neighborhoods and future," added David Lubell, executive director of Welcoming America. "Certified Welcoming is the first of its kind initiative to identify the standard for other communities that want to follow this growing trend and show that they are welcoming not only in word, but in deed."



Dayton, OH
*A Certified Welcoming place
for all of us to call home.*

Immigrants in Dayton have made significant contributions to its neighborhoods and the local economy. According to research published by the New American Economy, immigrants have contributed to reversing the city's population decline and have preserved and created new jobs in the community.

"We are thrilled that Dayton has been certified as the first welcoming community in the country by Welcoming America. This distinction provides further proof that the Welcome Dayton initiative has been impactful for our community, creating a climate that encourages the social and economic empowerment of all of our citizens. The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to the continued growth and vibrancy of the Dayton region, and this recognition supports those efforts in a big way," said Phillip L. Parker, President & CEO, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce.

The certification is for three years, after which Dayton will go through a recertification process to ensure it is continuing to meet the Welcoming Standard and has maintained its commitment to welcoming.

"Knowing Dayton is a Certified Welcoming city makes me excited to raise my family here. The certification demonstrates that the culture and diversity I bring to the community are not only valued but also considered when making decisions," said Yonathan Kebede, Dayton resident and Welcome Dayton Committee member.

What is Welcoming America?

Welcoming America is a non-partisan, national nonprofit that leads a growing movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by helping everyone know they belong. We provide a road map and support for places to reduce barriers to full participation and build bridges between immigrants and long-time residents through direct contact and dialogue. Welcoming America believes that all people, including immigrants and refugees, are valued contributors who are vital to our shared future.

What is Welcome Dayton?

Welcome Dayton is a community initiative administered by the City of Dayton Human Relations Council. Welcome Dayton promotes immigrant integration into the greater Dayton region by encouraging business and economic development; providing access to education, government, health and social services; ensuring

equity in the justice system; and promoting an appreciation of arts and culture.

For more information, visit welcomedayton.org or welcomingamerica.org.

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