

# City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201



**Agenda Item Number:** R94-14

**Department Source:** Law

**To:** City Council

**From:** City Manager & Staff

**Council Meeting Date:** May 19, 2014

**Re:** Welcoming Cities Program Membership - Resolution

## Documents Included With This Agenda Item

Council Memo, Resolution/Ordinance

**Supporting documentation includes:** Summary of Board/Commission Reports

## Executive Summary

This is a resolution to Council for membership in a national program called "Welcoming Cities." On Tuesday, March 4, 2014, the Columbia Human Rights Commission reviewed the program and voted to unanimously recommend to Council that Columbia join. This is a program for cities to promote mutual respect and cooperation between foreign-born and U.S.-born Americans through local policies, services and practices. Communities in the program commit to welcoming efforts and strategies on an individual level, an institutional level and on a local government level. The program launched in June of 2013 and has commitments from thirty (30) cities and counties across the United States. It has been recognized as a 2013 Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Action.

## Discussion

The commitments the City makes to the program by joining include to (1) advance a resolution declaring Columbia to be a Welcoming City, (2) find ways to institutionalize welcoming efforts, (3) appoint at least one key municipal staff contact, (4) participate in three conference calls each year, and (5) participate in an annual in-person meeting dependent upon available travel resources. There are no fixed standards within these commitments; the Welcoming Cities program is flexible to be as responsive as it can to meet each community's unique needs.

The benefits to the City in joining the program include receiving support from the national organization "Welcoming America," forming relationships with other local governments and communities to share ideas and best practices, having access to resources to improve welcoming efforts, receiving national recognition for our efforts through the program and improving human relations within our own community. The program should support the City's existing efforts to engage Columbia's immigrant community on an individual, institutional and local government level to improve services and programs.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None

Long-Term Impact: None

## Vision, Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

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Vision Impact: Community Pride and Human Relations

Strategic Plan Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impact: Not Applicable

## Suggested Council Action

If Council advances the resolution, then Columbia will become a member of the Welcoming Cities & Counties Initiative.

## Legislative History

March 4, 2014 - HRC unanimously votes to recommend membership to City Council in this program.

May 5, 2014, - Council considers report from HRC and requests staff draft a resolution for consideration.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Approved

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager Approved

Introduced by \_\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2014.

ATTEST:

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

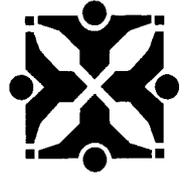
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor and Presiding Officer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Counselor

City of Columbia

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**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS INCLUDED WITH  
THIS AGENDA ITEM ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

Summary of Board/Commission Reports



Re: Welcoming Cities Program Membership – Report  
City Council Report – May 5, 2014

### WELCOMING CITIES PROGRAM – OVERVIEW

“Welcoming Cities” is a program offered by the national organization “Welcoming America.” The premise of the program is that cities join to develop a countrywide network of member organizations and partners to promote more welcoming, immigrant-friendly communities. The program is for communities to commit to welcoming efforts and strategies (1) on an individual level by creating more opportunities for contact with immigrants and long-term residents, (2) on an institutional level by engaging a wide range of organizations and their leaders from the business, faith, and service-based community, and (3) on a local government level to adopt policies and practices advancing this goal.

### WELCOMING CITIES PROGRAM – PARTICIPATING CITIES AND COUNTIES

- Allegheny County, PA
- Atlanta, GA
- Austin, TX
- Baltimore, MD
- Boise, ID
- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, IL
- Clarkston, GA
- Columbus, OH
- Dayton, OH
- Dodge City, KS
- Hamtramck, MI
- High Point, NC
- Iowa City, IA
- Lincoln, NE
- Los Angeles, CA
- Louisville, KY
- Macomb County, MI
- Memphis, TN
- Montgomery County, MD
- Nashville, TN
- New York, NY
- Oakley, CA
- Philadelphia, PN
- San Francisco, CA
- St. Louis, MO (city)
- St. Louis, MO (county)
- Sterling Heights, MI
- Tucson, AZ
- Washington, DC

## WELCOMING CITIES – MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS

Membership in the program requires five (5) commitments. The commitments are set forth below along with a description of current or future efforts based on the commitment.

**(1) Advance a municipal resolution declaring our locality to be a welcoming one**

*- Requirement to be completed if the City wishes to join the program*

**(2) Find ways to institutionalize welcoming efforts through the adoption of policies and practices that promote inclusion within local government and the broader community**

*Some efforts already being made by the City include, but are not limited to:*

- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy [Ord 19-176]*
- Human Rights Commission – Eliminate Discrimination & Improve Human Relations*
- Fair housing counseling services to the public*
- Human Services
  - Refugee exams, several programs provided in languages other than English, programs provided for all Boone County residents, social services funding for after school programming to ELL students at Centro Latino**
- Transportation Services
  - Limited English Proficiency Action Plans of Columbia Transit and CATSO to provide interpretive service and meaningful access to all residents for transit services*
  - Columbia Transit’s partnership with MU International Center to provide an “Introduction to Columbia Transit” for international students**

**(3) Join a cohort of cities and communities that have pledged to become more welcoming**

*- The City’s HRC would coordinate with service organizations, agencies and groups around the community to discuss the program and identify local government needs*

**(4) Appoint at least one key municipal staff contact for the project**

*- City appoints a staff person*

**(5) Participate in three conference calls each year to share and learn from promising practices from other Welcoming Cities and Counties**

*- Key municipal staff contact would participate in these*

**(6) Participate in an annual in-person meeting with other participants (dependent upon available travel resources)**

*- This requirement is dependent upon available travel resources. The national organization Welcoming America also has scholarships available for the program.*