

Changing Community Perceptions of Immigrants



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WelcomingMichigan.org

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- **Overview**
- **How do we change perceptions?**
- **Core strategy**
- **Small group discussion**





Welcoming Michigan

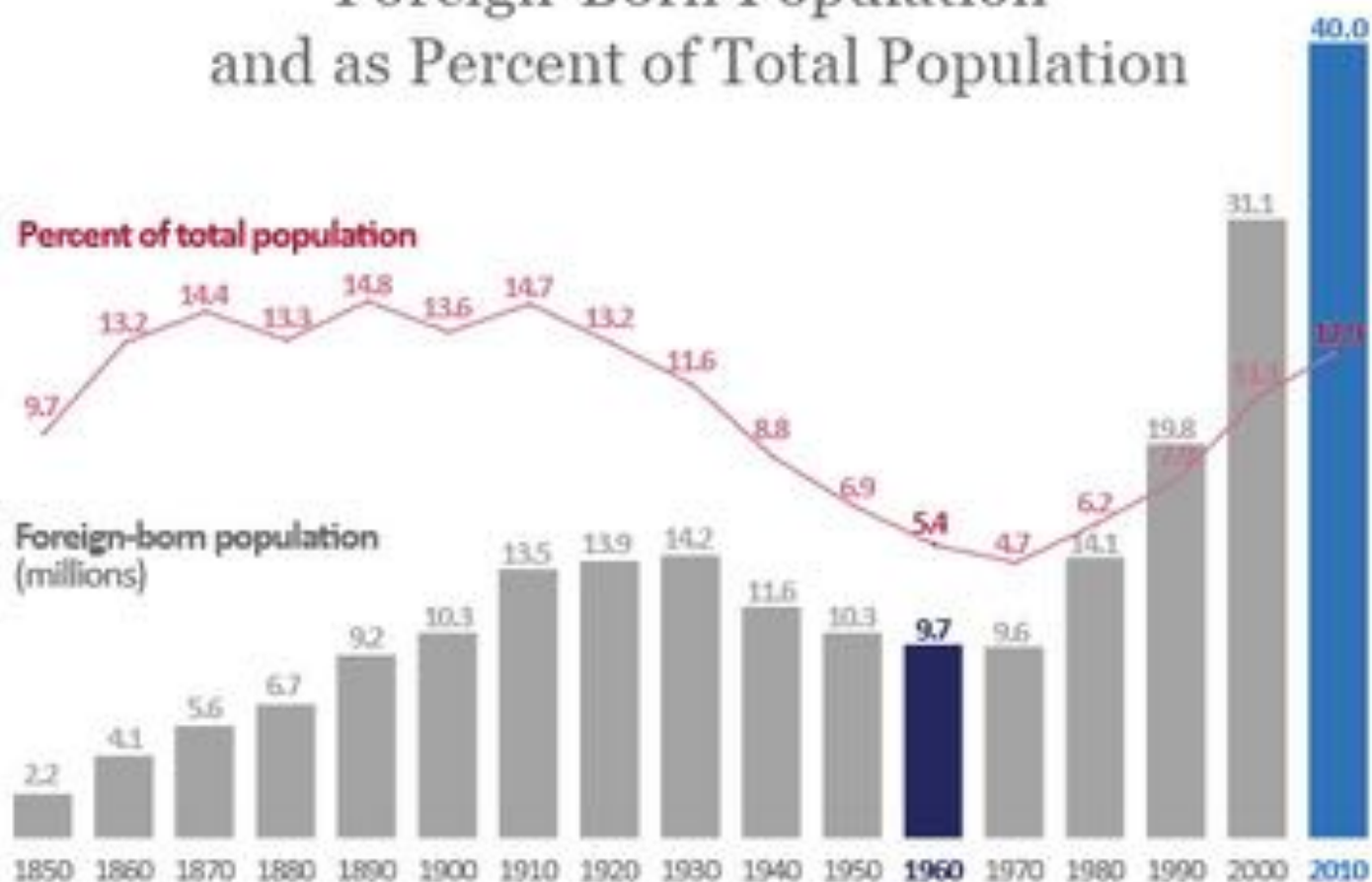
Building Immigrant Friendly Communities

- Immigrant integration initiative of Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
- Statewide effort, started in 4 focus communities:
 - Chadsey Condon (SW Detroit)
 - Van Buren County (SW MI)
 - Hamtramck
 - Sterling Heights
- Now includes Kalamazoo and 8 Welcoming Cities & Counties:
 - Macomb County
 - City of Sterling Heights
 - Clinton Township
 - City of Detroit
 - City of Hamtramck
 - West Bloomfield Township
 - City of East Lansing
 - Meridian Township
- Member of Welcoming America & WE Global



Long-term trends

Foreign-Born Population and as Percent of Total Population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1850–2000 Decennial Census; 2010 American Community Survey.

Changing Communities



Our Immigrant Past & Present



We connect by sharing our personal migration, immigration, or welcoming stories.

What do we have in common?

Just as in the past, today people move for better opportunities.



Our Philosophy

- When it comes to immigration, it's easy to let differences separate us. Michigan thrives when we bring the best of what has been and the best of what can be together to create a stronger, more vibrant Michigan for all.
- We seek to build mutual respect among foreign-born and U.S.-born people who call Michigan home today.
- We work to support Michigan's "receiving community" members — U.S.-born Americans who live in communities where immigrants settle — in creating welcoming communities where immigrants can fully integrate into their adopted hometowns.



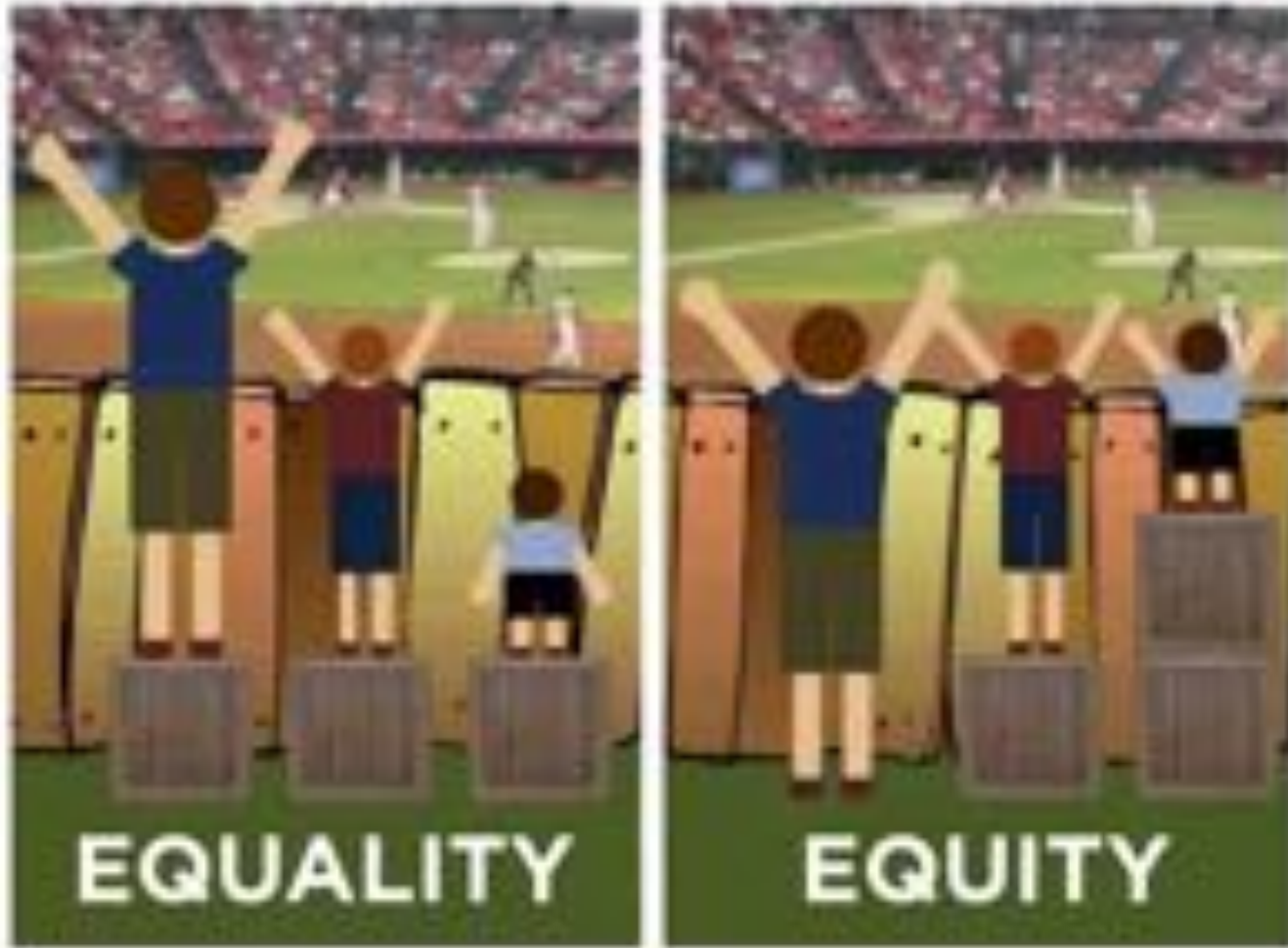
Welcoming Michigan

Building Immigrant Friendly Communities

Our Basic Principles

- 1.** We believe the majority of U.S. residents are empathetic and compassionate people, and that this compassion is being clouded by the country's current immigration debate.
- 2.** We believe most U.S. residents are hospitable, welcoming and inclusive of diversity and agree we have a shared responsibility to treat all our neighbors with respect and decency;
- 3.** We are dedicated to advancing the basic principles upon which the United States was founded, establishing the equality and dignity of all people, including immigrants;
- 4.** We recognize that immigrants are fellow human beings and reject the use of dehumanizing language;
- 5.** We are committed to raising the level of public discourse concerning immigrants and immigration and;
- 6.** We are committed to promoting understanding of the contributions that immigrants make to the U.S. and the effects of immigration on our communities, and to challenging common myths and stereotypes.
- 7.** We believe that Welcoming campaigns are an ideal vehicle for changing the public discourse on immigrants and immigration in our communities.

Moving to Equity



Supporting Immigrants by Engaging Receiving Communities



A welcoming community not only supports immigrants directly, but helps long-time residents understand, contribute to, and benefit from immigrant integration.

Who is the Receiving Community?

- Long-time residents
- May be very diverse
- Can be immigrants themselves
- May have conscious or unconscious fear or bias toward immigrants, or are simply ambivalent
- Elected officials, municipal staff, and community-based organizations
- Our neighbors and loved ones



Receiving Community Responses

Dayton, OH:

- Appalachian & Eastern European neighborhoods responded differently to Turks arriving – Appalachian neighborhood doing better thanks to a local organization
- Dayton attitudes study showed immigrant-dense neighborhoods (1st generation) had less welcoming attitudes

Sterling Heights, MI:

- Some areas very welcoming but complaints about signs in Arabic, new mosque
- Calls & comments submitted to city from neighborhood in close proximity to refugee housing & new mosque



What if we could change the way we see immigrants?

Immigrants as part of an inclusive whole...

...where all people, including immigrants, have the opportunity to reach their greatest potential, engage with their community, and fully contribute their talents – expanding prosperity and well-being for all.



Welcoming Communities

The Welcoming Community Curve



Welcoming Communities

- Engage both U.S.-born & foreign-born residents in creating a welcoming atmosphere
- Build relationships & mutual respect among longtime residents & newcomers
- Collaborate across sectors
- Newcomers are able to fully integrate, participate, contribute to the social, cultural, economic fabric of the community



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Building Immigrant Friendly Communities

How Do We Change Perceptions?



Mind Science

Implicit Bias: automatic associations of stereotypes or attitudes about particular groups

Racial Anxiety: discomfort about the experience and potential consequences of interracial interaction

Godsil et al, 2014. THE SCIENCE OF EQUALITY, VOLUME 1: ADDRESSING IMPLICIT BIAS, RACIAL ANXIETY, AND STEREOTYPE THREAT IN EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE

Bias Interventions

Counter-Stereotypic Imaging

This strategy involves imagining in detail counter-stereotypic others (Blair et al., 2001). These can be abstract (e.g., smart black people), famous (e.g., Barack Obama), or non-famous (e.g., a personal friend). The strategy makes positive exemplars salient and accessible when challenging a stereotype's validity.

Individuation

This strategy relies on preventing stereotypic inferences by obtaining specific information about group members (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Using this strategy helps people evaluate members of the target group based on personal, rather than group-based, attributes.

Perspective Taking

This strategy involves assuming a first-person perspective of a member of a stereotyped group. Perspective taking increases psychological closeness to the stigmatized group, which ameliorates automatic group-based evaluations (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

Increasing Opportunities for Contact

This strategy involves seeking opportunities to encounter and engage in positive interactions with out-group members. Increased contact can ameliorate implicit bias through a wide variety of mechanisms, including altering the cognitive representations of the group and directly improving evaluations of the group (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Devine et al., 2012).

Changing Perceptions

- **Perspective taking:** “Thank you. I lived in Michigan my whole life ignorant of immigrants and their struggles.”
- **Perspective taking:** “It made me so much more compassionate & understanding of what these folks go through to come here and what happened in their past.”
- **Perspective taking:** “Realized immigrants are just like me.”
- **Individuation:** “Made immigrants seem personal, not just a group.”
- **Counter stereotypic imaging:** “Learned that not all Arab women are alike or like the stereotype. Many can be assertive.”



Reducing Anxiety

- **Intergroup Contact:**
Contact between racial and ethnic groups can result in decreased prejudice, reduced racial anxiety, and positive shifts in intergroup attitudes *when participants have equal status, shared goals, and institutional support*
- **Indirect or extended contact:**
In segregated, racially homogenous neighborhoods we don't have opportunity to meet people different from ourselves but knowing that members of our group have friends in another group can positively shift attitudes toward and expectations for contact with members of the other group



Results & Feedback

- **Self-reported Surveys:** 75-100% increase in knowledge & welcoming attitudes
- **Polling:** “Since June 2011, the Sterling Heights area has seen an uptick in its support for immigrants.”
- **Getting involved:** “I'd like the opportunity to be involved in more events and helping our newer residents find their way in this land of ours--and now theirs. I'd love to help in any way I can.”
- **Developing leadership:** “I’ve made our church leadership staff aware of the growing population. We didn’t really have much education on it previously, so what I’m learning at the meetings I’m bringing back to my church leadership staff and sharing with them in an effort to make our church more involved and more welcoming.”
- **Fostering unity:** “I see the changes with people participating in Welcoming Michigan, where before I would think that many people only assisted their community members - if they were Filipino would mostly just service Filipino, or Asian or Chaldean or Arab and now I find that people involved are really interested in helping everyone that is an immigrant, not just their community or their culture.”
- **Feeling welcomed:** “I just saw your billboard. I have never felt so affirmed and welcomed. Thank you for the work you are doing. It makes me feel like I belong here.”

Core Strategy

- Leadership Development



- Community Building



- Media/Communications



Leadership Development

Cross-sector committees:
Connect leaders from
business, non-profits, local
government, education, law
enforcement, faith groups,
ethnic associations, refugee
resettlement agencies, etc.



Engage local,
respected community
leaders & opinion-
makers, including
elected officials

Community Building Activities

- Education & Training

- Race & Diversity
- Immigration 101

- Resident Storytelling

- Journey stories video project
- Get To Know Your Neighbors

- Arts & Culture

- Mural painting
- Multicultural celebration

- Dialogue

- Youth dialogues on diversity
- Dayton “Voices” Dialogues
- Film screening & discussion

- Food

- Community potluck
- Multicultural cooking classes

- Community clean-up or service project

- Celebration weeks/months e.g. Hispanic Heritage, World Refugee Day, National Welcoming Week



Local Government Collaborations

- City of Detroit
 - Welcoming City Launch
 - Immigration Task Force
- Hamtramck
 - Public Safety Day
 - Immigration 101
- Sterling Heights
 - Getting to Know Your Neighbors
 - Property clean-up
 - Cultural Exchange
 - Diversity Awards
 - ESL conversation program
- Macomb County
 - Breakfast of Nations
 - Naturalization workshops
- Clinton Township
 - Welcoming Township Launch



Tips for Planning Activities

- INCLUSION & OUTREACH - don't need to re-invent the wheel
- Establish trust between participants
- Partner with community organizations , think of where you might find natural audiences and design event for them
 - Breakfast of Nations with Chambers of Commerce
 - Cooking classes with TimeBank
 - Dayton “Voices” with schools
 - Sterling Heights clean-up with faith institutions
- Other tips from your experience?



Media & Communications



The New York Times



CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

Why we care



Media & Communications

- Work with your local media, send media advisories
- Often you can craft the message for the reporter
- Quotes from elected officials
- Submit Op-Eds



The Detroit News

Opinions + Editorial

News - Sports - Business - Autos - Entertainment - Lifestyle - Opinion - Multir

Home - Opinion - Editorials



DECEMBER 16, 2013 AT 1:00 AM

COLUMNS

A welcome to Michigan's immigrants

STATE REP. RASHIDA TLAIB AND STEVE TOBOCZNIK 1 COMMENT



MICHIGAN RADIO News for Michigan

Listen Live - Click to Launch
BBC World Service

Home - News - Programs & Specials - Stateside - Podcasts & RSS - Connect - Events

Making Michigan more welcoming

By TRACY SAMILTON • MAY 21, 2012

A new group plans to encourage four Michigan communities to welcome their new immigrants.



MACOMB DAILY POLITICS

News - Sports - Business - Entertainment - Lifestyle - Obituaries - Opinion - E-P

Home - News - Politics

Macomb County immigrants fuel job gains, not losses

Media & Communications

Divisive messages to AVOID:

- “us/them” distinctions – *talk about all aspects of the individual, i.e. immigrants are workers, business owners, mothers, neighbors*
- “immigrants are tools for economic development” – *dehumanizing, immigrants are more than just business creators*
- “skilled or high-skilled immigrants” – *implies some immigrants have no skills or value*
- “we are all immigrants” – *many African Americans don’t identify as having immigrant heritage, erases Native Americans*



Sample Message

- VALUE:** This country is known around the world as a land of opportunity, and immigrant communities contribute much to that reputation and to our success.
- PROBLEM:** However, we often leave immigrant communities high and dry when we consider the policies and services our communities need.
- SOLUTION:** It's important to remember that it is a two-way street when it comes to investing in our communities. We're all better off when new immigrants are set up to succeed and when they can attend English classes, get small business loans, and start on the road to citizenship.
- All of this adds up to a reinvigorated economy with confident, educated consumers, contributing diverse viewpoints and cultures to the our unique region.
- ACTION:** Support immigrant-friendly policies in your community.

The Opportunity Agenda



What can YOU do?

- Educate yourself about identity & immigration issues
- Meet and spend time with local immigrant and refugee communities
- Build **relationships** and support immigrant, refugee, ethnic leaders
- Ensure **cultural competency** & humility
- Consider how spaces, block clubs, atmosphere, and policies can be more **inclusive** of newcomers
 - Multilingual services
 - Welcoming signs & posters
- Be a welcoming ambassador! Tell others the good news



Small Group Discussion

Changing Community Perceptions:

- What has worked where you live? Why? What were the elements of success?
- What challenges have you encountered?
- Of the tools & strategies mentioned today, which ones do you think would work in your home community?



Learn more about us: WelcomingMichigan.org

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