



**NEW AMERICAN ECONOMY &
WELCOMING AMERICA**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
FOR
THE GATEWAYS FOR GROWTH CHALLENGE
May 2017**

SUMMARY

The Gateways for Growth Challenge is a competitive opportunity for local communities to receive tailored research, direct technical assistance, and/or matching grants from New American Economy and Welcoming America in support of the development of multi-sector plans for welcoming and integrating immigrants into local communities. This opportunity is open to urban, suburban, and rural communities alike.

BACKGROUND

Over the past few decades, more and more communities across the United States have been shaped by immigration, seeing their demographics shift with new populations that have revitalized neighborhoods, added vitality to business corridors, enriched communities with cultural diversity, increased the tax base, and spurred innovation and creativity in local colleges and universities. With these changes have come both opportunities and challenges—opportunities to leverage the myriad economic, social, and civic contributions immigrants make in their new home, and challenges to ensure that cities meet the needs of and engage an increasingly diverse population while promoting social cohesion. At the same time, uncertainty around the shifting federal immigration policy landscape has put communities in a tenuous position when it comes to ensuring all of their residents feel protected and welcome. In the face of this, communities are increasingly thinking proactively about how to create an environment that sends a message of inclusion, maximizes the contributions of all residents, and gives all residents the tools they need to thrive and succeed.

Communities have approached this work in several ways, with efforts led by mayor's offices and city councils as well as local chambers of commerce. Many communities are creating plans to welcome and integrate new Americans, bringing multiple stakeholders from local government, business, and civic organizations to work together to craft a vision and strategy to ensure the community is inclusive and economically vibrant. In most cases, a multi-sectoral task force or steering committee is appointed to lead this work over a period of months, and is tasked with providing concrete recommendations on what the community should do to promote immigrant integration, from economic development strategies to encouraging civic engagement and a positive public narrative around immigration. Examples of communities that have gone through this process include [Atlanta](#), [Charlotte](#), [Chicago](#), [Dayton](#), [Pittsburgh](#), [Salt Lake County](#), and [San Jose](#), among many others.

To support and scale this work, in 2016 Welcoming America and NAE launched the [Gateways for Growth Challenge](#) (G4G), a competitive opportunity that offered a combination of tailored research, direct technical assistance, and/or matching grants to 20 communities nationwide. Following the successful completion of its first year, we are pleased to announce a call for applications for Gateways for Growth Round II.

In 2017, NAE and Welcoming America will once again offer resources to aid immigrant integration planning efforts in communities that have demonstrated a public-private commitment to facilitating a community-wide strategic planning process. These resources will range from tailored research products that illustrate and quantify the role immigrants play in local economies to tailored technical assistance that can include coaching by phone as well as in-person site visits. For cities that have the financial commitment of a local funder, there will also be an opportunity for a modest matching grant to support the planning process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SUPPORT OFFERED

NAE and Welcoming America will work with a maximum of 20 urban, suburban, and rural communities through this competitive opportunity. Communities can apply for assistance in one or more of the following areas:

1. Local Research

In many places, a lack of information around who immigrants are and how they engage in the economy prevents communities from designing programs that maximize the skills and talent of their global community. Up to **20 communities** will receive customized research products that highlight the economic and demographic impact of immigrants and refugees locally, including their tax contributions and spending power, roles in the local labor force, population and demographic trends, and other key information. This research can be used to inform existing planning processes, or can be used to start the conversation on why a community should proactively develop an immigrant integration strategy. G4G local research awardees are expected to publicly release the completed research brief within 12 months of the award being given. A few examples of research briefs from 2016 awardees include: [Birmingham](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Lancaster](#), and [Macomb County](#).

2. Direct Technical Assistance

Up to **ten communities** will receive ongoing technical assistance from Welcoming America and NAE to support the development of their strategic plans between September 2017 and September 2018. During this time, communities will be able to choose the level of engagement with these national organizations, which can range from monthly or bi-monthly check-in calls and at least one site visit from a NAE and/or Welcoming America representative, as needed. For communities just starting out, this site visit could be offered in the form of an initial convening or stakeholder meetings facilitated by NAE and/or Welcoming America that brings together key leaders across sectors in the community. For communities further along in this process, this could include facilitating community engagement in the planning process; sharing best practices and models for developing an integration strategy or recommendations; or advice on public messaging campaigns. These points of engagement will be an opportunity for communities to direct specific questions to Welcoming America and NAE staff throughout the Gateways for Growth Challenge period.

Except in special circumstances, formal direct technical assistance, including telephone coaching, will end 12 months after the Gateways for Growth Challenge award is given.

3. Matching Grants

Up to **ten communities** that have been able to secure a commitment from a local funder (a community foundation, corporate sponsor, the city, etc.) to support this work will be eligible to receive a small planning grant of up to \$12,500—to be matched locally for a total of up to \$25,000—towards their strategic planning process. Some ways these funds could be used include, but are not limited to, hosting an initial convening of stakeholders; hiring a consultant to advise or facilitate the planning process; supplementing staff time of a point-person for managing or facilitating the strategic planning process; and developing a community outreach and messaging campaign. Matching grant recipients will be required to enter into a grant agreement with NAE in order to receive funding. It is expected that funds be spent within 12 months of the start of the formal direct technical assistance process. **Additionally, all matching grant communities will be expected to participate in the direct technical assistance program outlined previously in Section 2.**

4. Participation in Peer Learning Program

Communities selected for the Gateways for Growth Challenge will be provided with the opportunity to connect with peer communities in their cohort as well as the 2016 cohort of Gateways for Growth awardees. These connections will allow recipients to learn from the experiences of similar communities and, over time, will help build a community of colleagues undertaking similar immigrant integration work at the local level.

TIMELINE

Communities that are awarded research, direct technical assistance, and/or a matching grant through the Gateways for Growth Challenge should be prepared to spend 3–12 months working with Welcoming America and NAE, depending on the type of support awarded. Most communities that were awarded technical assistance through Gateways for Growth Challenge Round I required approximately 12 months to complete the process, including building connections with community stakeholders, convening working groups, and developing and presenting their strategic plans. Communities that were awarded customized research took, in most cases, three months to develop and release their reports. The following sample timeline illustrates the general/approximate time commitment the strategic planning process requires.

Sample Timeline for Strategic Planning

Research will be delivered within the first six months of the planning process

- Months 1-2: Convene core partners for definition of goals, timeline, process
- Months 3-9: Convene working groups; engage community for feedback
- Months 10-12: Draft strategic plan; solicit feedback; finalize and publicly launch plan

GRANTEE EXPECTATIONS/CRITERIA

Successful planning processes bring many partners to the table, and are coordinated by one or two organizations that convene and support the work behind the scenes to give direction to the effort. Applications are being requested from organizations that will—together with a partner

organization—lead this planning effort. We strongly encourage applications to come either from city/county government or from chambers of commerce, but applications from non-profits or foundations will also be considered. Although the lead organization can be any of these entities, demonstrated institutional support for this planning effort from either local government or a local chamber of commerce is required. While communities at the very initial stages of community planning that may still need assistance in identifying community partners and champions are encouraged to apply for tailored research and direct technical assistance, communities interested in the matching grant opportunity are required to demonstrate a formal commitment from a local community foundation or corporate sponsor.

Expectations

Communities applying for any level of support must demonstrate evidence of the following:

- Metro area population of at least 100,000 people (The applicant community can be smaller, but research methodology requires an 100,000-person minimum for analysis);
- Commitment from a lead/convening partner (e.g., city/county government, local chamber, nonprofit);
- Interest or endorsement from the private sector (e.g., local chamber, economic development entity);

For communities applying for technical assistance:

- Ability and staff capacity to appoint an individual or committee to oversee and coordinate the planning process within the community, as well as serve as the liaison between the community and Welcoming America/NAE; and
- Commitment to developing and publicly releasing a multi-sector strategic plan by September 2018 that engages community leaders in the planning process.

For communities applying for the matching grant:

- Demonstrated financial commitment from a local funder to match the grant awarded.

Review Criteria

Applications will be judged on the following criteria:

- Commitment of lead organization to facilitate this strategic planning process (Applications submitted by city entities or chambers of commerce are preferred, but non-profits will also be considered);
- Strength of local partnerships and organizational capability of the proposed collaboration, as well as prospects for new partners from multiple sectors to join the effort;
- Demonstrated capacity of a staff person to lead this effort;
- Evidence of leadership, vision, and commitment to working toward immigrant integration;
- Whether the application is coming from a place where the number of immigrants is growing rapidly and significantly changing the social, economic and political dynamics in the community OR a community that is actively seeking to attract immigrant residents;
- Level of understanding of community integration needs; and
- Potential to leverage local funding.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS/PROCESS

This request solicits applications from local government or chambers of commerce interested in leading a strategic planning process towards a community welcoming initiative for their city or county. Applications from other entities (such as non-profits, community foundations, etc.) will be considered if there is a **demonstrated commitment from a city/county agency or chamber to partner.**

A webinar to address Frequently Asked Questions will be held on **Thursday, June 8th from 12–1pm EST**. To register, please click [this link](https://cc.readytalk.com/r/pd2yzsp92bsw&eom) (or copy and paste <https://cc.readytalk.com/r/pd2yzsp92bsw&eom> into your web browser) and fill in the necessary information. This webinar will be recorded and will be made available upon request for those unable to join at this time.

Applications should be in 12-point font, **no longer than four one-sided pages**, and should not include a cover letter. Applications are due by **Friday, August 4th at 5pm EST** to challenge@gatewaysforgrowth.org. Follow up questions, if necessary, will be sent on a rolling basis and must be answered within ten days of receipt. All communities will be notified of the selection committee's decision by Thursday, September 7th.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Identify the lead agency, including:
 - Agency name
 - Contact person and title
 - Address
 - Phone, e-mail and website address
 - Tax-exempt status
2. Identify the geographical boundaries of the community, the population size, and the estimated size of the immigrant community. If there is information on the ethnic breakdown and characteristics of the immigrant community, please include this, but more important is a narrative on the city's recent immigration history.
3. Identify the level(s) of support the community is applying for: tailored research, direct technical assistance, and/or matching grant. Communities may apply for all, a combination of, or one of the levels of support. **If applying for a matching grant, identify the local funder who is committed to supporting the planning process and submit a letter of commitment from that local funder by the application due date.** Matching grants must amount to \$5,000 – \$12,500 and should be cash donations. If applying for research, please identify the desired geographical scope of the research (e.g.: city, metropolitan area, county, etc.)
4. Explain why immigrant integration and, if applying for technical assistance, why creating a multi-sector strategic plan is important to your community. How has your community approached immigrant integration before? What have been challenges of immigrant integration up until this point, and how do you envision an immigrant integration strategy

and planning process addressing these challenges?

5. Identify a partner from government and/or the private sector who will support this process and be involved in the planning process. How will this partner be engaged? **Please include a letter of commitment from the identified partner organization.**
6. Identify who else will be involved in the planning process and their organizational or community affiliations. Explain each participant's role and why each will be involved. Who will the key contact be for coordinating the plan and serving as the liaison with Welcoming America and NAE? How many hours per week can this person devote to coordinating this process?
7. Describe any other community planning processes the above community members have participated in before. How will this planning process be different and/or add to work that's previously been done?

CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES

All questions about the application process should be sent to challenge@gatewaysforgrowth.org.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

New American Economy

New American Economy (NAE, www.newamericaneconomy.org) brings together more than 500 mayors and business leaders united in making the economic case for streamlining, modernizing, and rationalizing our country's immigration policies at the national, state, and local levels. [NAE's State and Local Initiatives](#) work with policymakers, business, and civic leaders to build capacity and infrastructure in non-traditional geographic areas to help facilitate immigrant integration and drive economic growth. To do this, NAE provides original research quantifying the demographic and economic role of immigrants in a given community, as well as technical assistance to support multi-sector strategic planning efforts, and messaging/advocacy support to highlight the economic imperative for local policies that ensure that all residents can succeed.

Welcoming America

Welcoming America (www.welcomingamerica.org) connects a broad network of nonprofits and local governments in more than 100 communities across the U.S., and supports them in developing plans, programs, and policies that transform communities into vibrant places where everyone's talents are valued and cultivated. Welcoming America also hosts the Welcoming Cities and Counties Initiative, which connects immigrant-friendly local governments throughout the U.S. and supports them in working with nonprofit, philanthropic, faith, and business partners to create and implement immigrant integration agendas.