

WELCOMING CHULA VISTA



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



As the state with the largest immigrant population in the country, California has implemented a number of programs and initiatives to create an environment of inclusion. California cities are following suit, instituting local and regional actions that serve to better the lives and opportunities for immigrants in their communities. The City of Chula Vista is proud to be one of the cities leading the charge and setting the standard for embracing immigrants and refugees.

Chula Vista is located at the center of one of the richest cultural, ethnically diverse, and multilingual communities in the United States. The strength and well-being of our immigrant community is important to residents and leaders of Chula Vista, which is why our City Council unanimously supported a resolution to join the “Welcoming America” network. Welcoming America provides tools and resources to help cities and partners reduce the barriers that immigrants face to fully participate in the economic and social fabric of the community and to build bridges between newcomers and long-time residents. The decision put in motion a new approach to develop and implement a program for better communication of our policies and services to the immigrant community and provide a framework for considering how to acknowledge and address the immigrant experience in Chula Vista. The decision also initiated the application process for Welcoming City Certification. This Plan is a key component for certification.



The development and ongoing implementation of this plan is one of the initiatives guided by Chula Vista Human Relations Commission in collaboration with city staff, partner agencies, and other groups and organizations who will contribute to the implementation of the plan. In addition, Chula Vista will continue to actively seek input and feedback to ensure the program is enhanced and expanded to reflect the desires of our elected officials, residents and immigrant community.

The commitment from the community is an important element to ensure the success of immigrant inclusion. The subject of immigration – whether on a local, national, or international level – can be sensitive; armed with misconceptions, stereotypes, and resistance. Chula Vista is committed to addressing these issues while maintaining appropriate public safety policies, to ultimately nurture an environment where all can feel welcomed and represented.

The City of Chula Vista has a commitment to recognizing its diverse population and has reflected that commitment in essential City planning documents including the Marketing and Communications Plan, Healthy Chula Vista Action Plan, Age Friendly Action Plan, Cultural Arts Master Plan, Chula Vista Library Strategic Vision Plan, Age Friendly Plan, Economic Development Workplan, and other efforts. For example, the Marketing and

Communications Plan recognizes the need for providing information and materials in English, Spanish and other languages so more residents can engage in civic, business, and community activities. The Cultural Arts Master Plan emphasizes our binational location geographically and culturally and identifies opportunities for more collaboration, more binational voices, more authentic stories. The Economic Development Workplan has a strong focus on inclusive economic development.

The Welcoming City Implementation Plan further extends immigrant inclusion in all facets of city life. The Plan was developed with input and collaboration from a variety of groups, outreach activities and meetings:

- Outreach and input from various stakeholders and City Council members in 2017 at City Council Meetings, community meetings, outreach meetings
- Input from Community as the Human Relations Commission was reestablished in 2017
- Input from Human Relations Commission members as Welcoming City Certification application was prepared
- Input and engagement from internal partners including staff in library, recreation, cultural arts, housing, and Healthy Chula Vista
- Input and engagement from external partners including South Bay Community Services, Chula Vista Collaborative, San Ysidro Health Center, Chula Vista Elementary School District, Sweetwater Union High School District, South County Economic Development Council and others
- Review of City documents including Marketing and Communications Plan, Welcoming City Communications Plan, Healthy Chula Vista Action Plan, Cultural Arts Master Plan, Chula Vista Police Department policies, and Language Access policies
- Participation in community engagement activities such as Districting Commission in 2014-2015, Infrastructure Assessment meetings and outreach, partnership with Alliance for Californians for Community Empowerment to improve neighborhood infrastructure

The City engages with a variety of stakeholders, partners, community members, commission members and others to accomplish many of the goals and efforts detailed in this Plan. Below are descriptions of these entities for the purposes of this plan. Some of these groups overlap and intersect.

Stakeholders

Internal: Elected officials, department heads, staff, members of City Board or Commission

External: Residents, business owners, employers, non-profit organizations, government agencies, education districts, and others

Partners

An organization, agency or business that collaborates with the city to deliver services or programs to Chula Vista residents such as Chula Vista Elementary School District, Sweetwater Union High School District, Southwestern College, Republic Services, San Diego Gas & Electric, South Bay Community Services, South County Economic Development Council, and others

Acting as the framework for Chula Vista's immigrant-inclusion plan, our City leadership ensures the program resonates in various settings to succeed throughout the community.

Chula Vista established an 11-member Human Relations Commission including the City Human Resources Director, City Attorney, Communications Manager, and other staff to engage cross-sector and diverse stakeholders in the maintenance and implementation of the plan. The Commission not only actively and purposefully supports the cause of the plan but includes multi-sector representation and reflects the diversity of the immigrant community and the receiving community. The Human Relations Commission is a diverse group with members from education, government, community, business, advocacy and other organizations.

Diversity isn't just limited to representation on the Commission. Chula Vista's local governing workforce truly reflects the diversity of our community and addresses barriers to inclusive hiring and employee retention. Using a variety of distribution methods, the City and its departments promote employment opportunities through digital, social, and printed avenues. Chula Vista's advancement opportunities are open to both new hires and existing employees.

The Commission has several duties to advance immigrant inclusion in the community. A core activity for the Commission is engaging with non-profit and community organizations, government and education agencies, and other entities to advance immigrant inclusion. In addition to progressing the local and minority, immigrant-owned businesses in the region, Chula Vista seeks out Community Based Organizations and groups working on immigrant inclusion to enhance our network of likeminded partners.



The Human Relations Commission also oversees the progress and success of the plan by regularly assessing the needs and priorities of the local immigrant community in each of the categories of the Welcoming Cities standard and use that feedback to strengthen the plan. This is achieved by not only measuring the success of the plan against our own high standards but by engaging cross-sector and diverse stakeholders in the maintenance of the plan. Chula Vista is committed to embracing accountability and implementing learning mechanisms to make changes as needs arise.

Chula Vista immigrants and refugees have readily available access to the resources we provide. The City's Housing, Library, and Communications divisions provide information on community services and events such as ESL and citizenship/naturalization classes, Know Your Rights classes, public benefits, economic development and entrepreneurship

resources, and other information. These initiatives are heavily promoted on the City calendar, newsletter, social media, and other channels.

The City is committed to fostering and advancing immigrant inclusion with the support and efforts of the Human Relations Commission.

Government Leadership Initiatives

- Engage Human Relations Commission as an advisory body to the Mayor and City Council to provide input on how the community welcomes and embraces diversity and safeguards opportunities for all residents that helps to support a healthy community, strong and secure neighborhoods and a connected community
- Engage with non-profit and community organizations, government and education agencies, and other entities to advance immigrant inclusion including but not limited to:
 - South Bay Community Services
 - San Ysidro Health District
 - Chula Vista Collaborative
 - Chula Vista Elementary School District
 - Sweetwater Union High School District
 - Southwestern College
- Coordinate with internal and external partners to provide information on community services
- Provide information on government resources, such as local government services and public benefits, English language learning opportunities, naturalization, economic development opportunities, education and other resources
- Coordinate with internal and external partners to implement inclusive economic development efforts and provide information on workforce and economic development services, starting or expanding a business, to ensure residents benefit from the community's economic vitality
- Engage Human Relations Commission and other stakeholders to review Welcoming City efforts and initiatives and review annually and consider updates, enhancements, and new initiatives needed

Creating an environment where immigrants are welcome is important, but we also want to create a community where they can *thrive*. Ensuring that equitable access is available to the immigrant and refugee population is a key aspect to the success of our plan. Chula Vista is dedicated to addressing social and economic issues and responding with policies and practices that advance opportunities.

Chula Vista's Human Relations Commission isn't alone in putting the work in toward equitable access. The City benefits from a number of strong partners and innovative programs including South Bay Community Services (SBCS), the Promise Neighborhood program, Family Resource Centers, and the Promotora Model used by a number of local organizations. With these partners, we work together to identify barriers to equitable access in our programs and services by making regular audits and improvements as needed.



One of the improvements Chula Vista recently implemented was to strengthen language access amongst our City and in our communications to residents. Chula Vista coordinates across departments, especially with staff who interact with the public, to respond in native languages relevant to our immigrant and refugee communities. We want to be sure that these communities can easily access and understand important messages coming from the City, especially when it comes to emergency safety information and alerts. As such, Chula Vista collaborates with San Diego County Office of Emergency Services to ensure access to emergency information in a variety of languages and across platforms. The County distributes emergency messages via text, email and phone and recipients can view/hear messages in English and Spanish. In addition, we post emergency messages via various social media platforms that allow for customization of language preferences. To continue the promotion and support of language access, the City provides bilingual pay

incentive and collaborates with Southwestern College to offer free Spanish classes to employees.

A key element to achieving equitable access involves closing the gaps where immigrant and refugee communities are vulnerable. In a multi-faceted partnership between Chula Vista and other entities, the City provides information to residents regarding potential fraud and scams, in addition to arresting any individuals who may be involved in these activities. Chula Vista understands that the immigrant community faces anxiety and fear when seeking medical and healthcare options and treatment. We have several ways for immigrants to learn about the insurance options available to them – whether it's at our libraries' workshops on the Affordable Care Act or through our partner agencies.

Chula Vista is proud of our Healthy Chula Vista program, which promotes immigrant access to services, testing, preventative health, mental health, and more. Housing is also a source of uncertainty for immigrants. The Chula Vista Housing Program coordinates an affordable housing program, while creating and sustaining decent, safe and affordable living environments. Our Housing Division offers a rent stabilization process for eligible residents to foster stability in the home and the neighborhood. Lastly, it's important for the immigrant and refugee community to have access to justice services without feeling threatened regarding their citizenship status. Chula Vista's Civic Center Branch Library offers weekly Law Librarian office hours for people who need assistance with legal information, including immigrants.

Equitable access isn't just a goal or a mission statement. It requires daily action to level the playing field for disadvantaged communities, and Chula Vista is committed to putting in the work to do so for all residents, including immigrant and refugee residents.

Equitable Access Initiatives

- Engage the Human Relations Commission to ensure the protection and strengthening of the rights of all groups to ensure the enjoyment of their constitutional privileges and the elimination thereby of prejudice, discrimination or bigotry in the City of Chula Vista
- Implement Language Access Program to ensure customers and stakeholders can successfully engage in civic, community and business endeavors
- Coordinate implementation of existing language access efforts meets required state and federal mandates for providing resources in other languages
- Collaborate with internal partners (City Manager, City Clerk) to identify opportunities to provide translation services as needed for City Council and other public meetings, including providing translation service information on agendas
- Coordinate with partners and programs to implement best practices to provide services that are responsive to diverse cultural practices, languages, and literacy levels
- Coordinate implementation of existing language access processes to ensure broad internal and external implementation
 - Develop process for staff to request translation services with identified and certified bilingual city staff
 - Develop process to secure translation services as needed through the Voiance program (used by CVPD) so all languages are accessible to internal and external stakeholders
- Collaborate across government agencies to ensure equitable language access to programs, services, and activities, including safety services and emergency and alert systems

- Collaborate externally across government agencies and internally across departments to ensure information and resources are available and promoted for immigrants to access housing, transportation planning and services, courts and legal services
- Engage Human Relations Commission and other stakeholders to review equitable access efforts and consider updates, enhancements, and new initiatives needed

Chula Vista's tactics for immigrant inclusion wouldn't be possible without the support of our partners. The City works with numerous entities to collaborate and create an environment that not only welcomes immigrants but seeks to support and propel them to success. The Human Relations Commission members also represent their communities and stakeholders that help bolster Chula Vista's leadership in civic engagement.

The City currently has 22 active commissions that residents join to participate in Chula Vista's government processes. By opening the door to get immigrants involved in shaping and influencing public policy, our City benefits from a more diverse point of view. There are ample opportunities for immigrants to join the City for candidate forums, budget, transportation, infrastructure workshops, and more at events hosted by the Chula Vista Library. The City promotes and encourages participation in City Council meetings, Boards and Commissions, hearings and other public meetings and events hosted by the City or our partners. We've also implemented a robust media outreach and social media program to promote participation and attendance at meetings and events. One of Chula Vista's goals is to encourage immigrants to participate in community activities. One of our most recent successes took place in October when more than 1,000 volunteers fanned out across the City to clean up and spruce up our parks and other common areas.



A number of community-based organizations and programs work with us to advance these initiatives and more. Three partners of note are the Chula Vista Library, Chula Vista Community Collaborative and Southwestern College, who are active participants in supporting the naturalization efforts of immigrants and asylum seekers. Chula Vista is also an innovative leader when it comes to establishing voting practices that will benefit immigrants. Election information and polling centers are readily available for residents.

Civic Engagement Initiatives

- Engage Chula Vista residents in the decision-making process by promoting participation in one of 22 Boards and Commissions, which helps shape and influence public policy and provide diverse viewpoints for the City Council to consider
- Collaborate with Charter Review Commission to request City Council consider change in policy for most City Commissioners to be registered voters (which requires U.S. citizenship), such as broadening the requirements to allow residents with certain designations (e.g., Lawful Permanent Resident, Student Visas, etc.) to apply to serve on Commissions

- Engage internal and external stakeholders such as Library, City Commissions, education providers, civic and community groups and others to promote civic engagement opportunities
- Use City website, social media, signage/kiosks, newsletter and other media outlets to promote civic engagement opportunities, general information on the responsibilities of local government, City Council meetings, budget workshops, public meetings and forums, community surveys, and other input opportunities for decision making
- Collaborate internally and externally to implement the Welcoming City Communications Plan to promote and secure civic engagement and participation in activities and events such as Census 2000, regional transportation planning, city planning, budget development, infrastructure planning, development projects, elections, and other activities
- Maintain a robust website for residents to access information on city services, as well as information on other County of San Diego services (birth certificates, District Attorney, Court System, etc.), public safety information, traffic and transit information, legal services, and more
- Engage Human Relations Commission and other stakeholders to review civic engagement efforts and consider updates, enhancements, and new initiatives needed

It can be an overwhelming and isolating feeling for immigrants and refugees to settle in communities that are completely unfamiliar. Whatever the circumstances that led to immigrants coming to Chula Vista, we want to create a synergy that makes their new home a comfortable place to live, work, and play, providing a smoother transition for all.



Chula Vista's Human Relations Commission has been leading efforts to enhance connections between immigrants and the receiving community. To promote regular interaction and communication between our leaders and leaders in the immigrant community, we host many citywide events that serve to meld our groups, such as Neighbor Day and the Multicultural Festival. Chula Vista is committed to keeping the gates of communication open, which is why

the Human Relations Commission and other stakeholders often collaborate with the immigrant community to work on issues of common concern.

Chula Vista has been successful in building relationships with the immigrant community and instituting programs specifically geared toward immigrant youth. Through City programs in housing, health, our libraries, school districts, and more, Chula Vista is nurturing connections that will improve the relationships between the immigrant community and receiving community for years to come. Chula Vista seeks to consistently invite the immigrant community to the table. By tapping into diverse media and communications platforms, Chula Vista distributes newsletters, social media posts, media articles, and more to promote the City as a welcoming community in the channels that count.

All these efforts have culminated into an impressive designation from New American Economy – Chula Vista is one of the top cities in the country for integrating immigrants into the economy and community.

Connected Communities Initiatives

- Promote City Council actions and ongoing activities that support immigrant inclusion and the City's welcoming culture for all residents
- Enhance connections with immigrants and other residents through events and activities held at City libraries, parks, recreation centers schools, and other locations
- Collaborate with partners to hold or promote events that celebrate community connections such as HarborFest, Mariachi Festival, ChulaFest, Bonita Fest, Neighbor Day, Beautify Chula Vista, Music in the Park, and Movies in the Park at City libraries, parks, recreation centers schools, and other locations

- Enhance collaboration with partners to promote a welcoming culture with activities that strengthen community bonds among immigrants and residents including youth; support immigrants in building diverse personal networks; and create more synergy among all communities in Chula Vista
- Implement Welcoming City Communications Plan to promote City's welcoming culture through communications activities across various media and communications platforms including social media, city website and newsletters, press releases, and other media outlets
- Participate in annual Welcoming Week in September to promote milestones, celebrate accomplishments, and build awareness for City's welcoming culture
- Engage Human Relations Commission and other stakeholders to review connected communities' efforts and consider updates, enhancements, and new initiatives needed

Chula Vista has a reputation of unparalleled education systems and academic prestige. That standard extends to all our student groups, and the immigrant community is no exception. Particularly of note are the programs at Chula Vista Elementary School District, Sweetwater Union High School District, and Southwestern College, which have a history of successful outcomes for immigrant and refugee students and have become models for other communities. The Chula Vista Elementary School District has programs that start as early as pre-K, with early learning, primary school readiness and Kindergarten Bootcamp available to immigrant students.

The City makes dedicated efforts to promote equitable outcomes for all students, but also understands the importance of parents' participation in our schools. Chula Vista's South Bay Community Services 'Promise Neighborhoods' program helps immigrant parents navigate the education system and assist with tasks such as enrollment support. We can't forget the other important player in the classroom: the teacher. The City partners with several school entities to establish training and support for educators who teach diverse student populations.

Immigrant students have a wealth of extracurricular and enrichment activities available to them. Both Chula Vista Elementary School District (CVESD) and Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) provide access to supplementary activities to students in their districts. Other services that Chula Vista facilitates for immigrant students include college readiness preparation, such as counseling, financial assistance, and in-state tuition. Southwestern College provides extensive services, including free tuition to qualifying individuals, to more than 20,000 students every semester.



Chula Vista's support of immigrant students even extends post-graduation. Southwestern College and the South County Career Center in Chula Vista provide career readiness support and professional development opportunities for both immigrant students and adults. They also help with the facilitation of technical degrees, certification programs, professional licensing, and credentialing for immigrants.

Education Initiatives

- Collaborate with education partners at CVESD and SUHSD and other stakeholders to promote and implement programs that advance equitable outcomes for all students including children in immigrant families

- Collaborate with education partners at CVESD and SUHSD and other stakeholders such as South Bay Community Services to reach immigrants and first-generation families and promote parent engagement in schools and support parents in navigating the education system
- Collaborate with education partners at SUHSD and Southwestern College to provide information on services, such as counseling, financial assistance, and free or in-state tuition options to increase immigrant student access to higher education
- Collaborate with education partners at CVESD and SUHSD and through the Chula Vista Public Library to address early learning and primary school readiness for children including immigrant children
- Collaborate with education partners at Southwestern College, South County Economic Development Council, San Diego Workforce Partnership and South County Career Center in Chula Vista to provide career readiness support for students
- Disseminate via social media, website, newsletter and other media outlets information on City and partner events that promote educational opportunities such as ASL Sign Language, Kindergarten Bootcamp, Innovation Station, Hydration Station, Adult Literacy, and others
- Engage Human Relations Commission, education providers and other stakeholders to review education efforts and consider updates, enhancements, and new initiatives needed

With only seven miles between Chula Vista and busiest land border crossing in the country, the City is at the epicenter of an international trade region. As a result, our economy is fierce and growing stronger year after year. With quality infrastructure, an educated workforce, and business-friendly policy, Chula Vista makes calculated efforts to nurture the vitality of our economy among both the immigrant community and the receiving community.

Chula Vista's economic development agencies have a strong commitment to supporting and engaging the diverse workforce, businesses, and entrepreneurs in the region. The City avidly seeks to identify opportunities for immigrants, as employers or employees, through workshops, training, and other events. For immigrants and refugees looking to establish their own enterprise in Chula Vista, the City partners with South County Economic Development Council, Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce, and the Small Business Development Center in South County to advance immigrant opportunities to start, build and grow businesses. The City's partnership with the South County Small Business Development Center provides a number of free classes and one-on-one coaching to entrepreneurs regardless of immigration status.



Chula Vista wants to equip immigrant entrepreneurs with all the tools they need for business success. The City's program to strengthen immigrants' knowledge of the financial system extend to all business owners, and also coaches them on the risk of predatory services. Chula Vista regularly assesses barriers for immigrant entrepreneurs and business owners and works with partners to identify and include immigrant parties in the City's economic development approach.

For immigrant job seekers, Chula Vista's offerings are just as robust. Immigrants can utilize our collaboration with the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce, the South County Economic Development Council, Southwestern College, and the South County Career Center to connect with employer networks, partake in professional networking and mentorship opportunities, get assistance in their search for jobs that provide a living wage, and identify relevant internships and apprenticeships. Because many immigrants come into Chula Vista with varied work experience, programs are in place to create workforce development solutions that meet the needs of both business owners and job seekers. To ensure immigrants can easily integrate into their new jobs, Chula Vista promotes workplace language learning opportunities for Spanish speakers.

One of the issues facing immigrant employees are hazardous work conditions and weakened workers' rights. Chula Vista promotes transparency and just practices by advocating for immigrants to know their rights in the workplace. Southwestern College

offers a variety of workplace classes through its Continuing Education Program. The South County Small Business Development Center also offers training and workshops on workplace issues and human resources. The City recently enhanced collaborations to address education on workers' rights, workplace safety, predatory practices, and improved access to legal advice.

Economic Development Initiatives

- Engage workforce development agencies, local employers, chambers of commerce, and other employer networks to promote inclusive economic development and immigrant inclusion
- Engage with Southwestern College, South County Economic Development Council, Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce, and the Small Business Development Center in South County to advance immigrant opportunities to start, build and grow businesses
- Engage with partners to identify economic development needs and opportunities for South County businesses including those run by immigrants by providing informational workshops, training and other resources to address contracting, financing, networking, technical assistance, workplace conditions and culture, discriminatory practices in hiring and employment, and other workplace issues
- Disseminate via social media, website, newsletter and other media outlets information on City and partner events that promote workforce and economic development opportunities, training and resources Chula Vista businesses including immigrant owned businesses
- Engage Human Relations Commission, economic development representatives, and other stakeholders to review efforts and consider updates, enhancements, and new initiatives needed

Recently ranked the third safest city in California, Chula Vista's safety personnel are highly skilled, progressive, and committed to prevention. The Chula Vista Police Department (CVPD) maintains a close partnership with community organizations to improve immigrant relations.

The Police Department places a high priority on providing training to aid the knowledge and capability of first responder personnel to interact and assist diverse communities. CVPD regularly hosts programs and events specifically intended to build relationships, enhance communication, and break down barriers between law enforcement and diverse communities, including the immigrant community. They also collaborate with community organizations on homelessness prevention and intervention, domestic violence intervention, and emergency response for immigrants.

To ensure immigrants have the knowledge of the City's regulations and their own rights and responsibilities, Chula Vista partnered with the ACLU to hold workshops at our libraries to educate immigrants.

In addition to the Police and Fire Departments, Code Enforcement is also under the jurisdiction of the City. Programs are in place to strengthen relationships and promote regular communication between law and code enforcement agencies and the immigrant community. The City endeavors to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for our communities and Code Enforcement is a key part of that effort. Chula Vista's Code Enforcement Division works to provide education of applicable codes and rules and work with residents to achieve code compliance, so Chula Vista will be a more livable city.

Safe Communities Initiatives

- Collaborate with Chula Vista Police and Fire Departments to ensure training and resources are dedicated to preparing and supporting first responder personnel to interact and communicate in diverse communities (see Language Access above)
- Promote collaboration among CVPD, CVFD, and Code enforcement to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for our communities
- Engage internally and externally to educate residents and immigrants about their rights and responsibilities under the law
- Communicate City policies regarding immigration including Chula Vista Police Department Policy 428 that outlines long-standing policies in place that are reflective of core values that focus on public safety – not immigration



- Participate and/or host programs and events intended to build relationships, enhance communication, and break down barriers between law enforcement and diverse communities, including the immigrant community
- Provide support for victims (crime, trauma, fire, etc.) through the Citizens Adversity Response Team (CAST) program
- Provide support for victims of domestic violence through collaboration with South Bay Community Services to respond 24/7 with an emergency response unit
- Engage with Code Enforcement Division to educate community on City codes and ordinances that have been created to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for residents of Chula Vista and work with residents and business owners to achieve code compliance
- Engage public safety and code enforcement representatives, Human Relations Commission and other stakeholders to review safe communities' efforts and consider updates, enhancements, and new initiatives needed



Evaluating the Welcoming Chula Vista Implementation Plan provides the opportunity to report on completed efforts and to review, revise and expand initiatives and priorities as needed. The process will be implemented through Human Relations Commission and will engage a diverse stakeholder group from the local immigrant community and receiving community.

The Plan will be evaluated annually with an initial discussion at the Human Relations Commission in

October, input from stakeholders and partners, followed by a report and recommendations from staff in January.

The assessment process will include inviting internal and external stakeholders to provide input and feedback on what’s working, what could be improved, and what new initiatives should be considered.

For more information, visit www.chulavistaca.gov/welcoming.