### City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201



Agenda Item Number: REP 45-14

Department Source: Law

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: May 5, 2014

Re: Welcoming Cities Program Membership - Report

#### Documents Included With This Agenda Item

Council memo

Supporting documentation includes: Summary of Board/Commission Reports

#### **Executive Summary**

This is a report to Council about a national program called "Welcoming Cities". On Tuesday, March 4, 2014, the Columbia Human Rights Commission reviewed the program and voted unanimously to 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 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: No fiscal impact. Long-Term Impact: No fiscal impact.

### City of Columbia

Department Approved

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201



Vision, Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact	
Vision Impact: Community Pride and Humo	an Relations
Strategic Plan Impact: Not Applicable	
Comprehensive Plan Impact: Not Applicat	ole
Suggested Council Action	
	man Rights Commission has made a recommendation the ested in considering membership in the program, then stafation.
Le	egislative History
March 4, 2014 - HRC unanimously votes to	recommend membership to City Council in this program.
Department Approved	City Manager Approved

## City of Columbia 701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201



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

Summary of Board/Commission Reports



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION** 

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.