

Office of New Americans Advisory Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 9, 2023
12:00 pm-4:00 PM
Virginia Humanities, ROOM: VH101-Mansbach
946 Grady Ave, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903,

DRAFT FOR REVIEW

Office of New Americans Advisory Board (ONAAB) members present:

Ahoo Salem, Andrei Lipan, Eric Lin, Hassan Ahmad, James Gordon, Juan Santacoloma, Kate Ayers, Krishendeo Ramsingh, Mike Hoefer (joined for part of the meeting), Milton Vickerman, Susannah Lepley

Joining Online: Karina Martich

ONAAB members absent: Micheal Hoeffler (for part of the meeting), Eric-Michel Sossou-Gloh

ONAAB Ex-officio members present:

Office of New Americans (ONA) and Governor's Office Staff present:

Louise Pocokk, Program Administration Specialist, Office of New Americans and Board Administrator, ONAAB

Additional Guests:

Susan Whyte, Assistant Attorney General

Welcome and Call to Order

Kate Ayers called the meeting to order at 12:00pm. It was noted that we have a quorum
Request for Online Participation: Andrei Lipan motioned, and James Gordon and Susannah Lepley approved

Karina Martich joined electronically

- Welcome and introductions with Karina

Previous Meeting Minutes Approval

July 2023 minutes

According to Susan Whyte, Members who have not been there the previous time can abstain.

Several typos in members' names' were identified and corrected.

Susanah motioned for approval of the minutes.

Hassan and Andrei seconded.

Member	Yes	No	Abstain
Ahoo Salem	x		
Andrei Lipan	x		

Eric Lin			x (not present in June)
Eric-Michel Sossou-Gloh	absent		
Hassan Ahmad	x		
James Gordon	x		
Juan Santacoloma	x		
Kate Ayers			x (not present in June)
Krishendeo Ramsingh			x (not present in June)
Mike Hoefer	absent		
Milton Vickerman	x		
Susannah Lepley	x		
Karina Martich			x (New Member)

Public Comment

Louise Pockok

No Public Comment

Admisbtratrice updates

Seyoum Berhe- not present

Louise Pockok shared that ONA is looking for a Language Access coordinator for ONA

The job posting is not up yet- ONAAB will get the chance to recommend candidates for this role

Chair report:

Kate Ayers

- The Board allocated time to preparing the report
- Executive committee met in September
- The Governor is not able to meet with us to receive the report.
- Kate had reached out in september, she thinks maybe we need to start reaching out earlier or strengthen our relationship with his office
- Some of the other Advsiroy Boards got meetings with governor
- Eric mentioned that Chief Brown and Micheal Perez could help us get meetings with the Governor
- Eric also reminded that we will send the report to the General Assembly and that we had discussed getting a briefing to share it with legislators as well
- Opportunity to reach our to legislators: there will be some new legislators who may be interested in learning more about issues, due to re-distribution and new zonings
 - Reach out and introduce ourselves, create relationships for the next year
 - Not enough time to focus on this year's report, but these issues can be addressed in the next years
 - Reaching out to each of our legislators could be a way to do this

- As long as only 2 Board members present, it will not be considered a meeting following FOIA

- Karina highlighted some of the barriers she sees with Spanish speaking population in Richmond:
 - Language barriers
 - Limited information about SBA, certification processes, regulatory processes, process to receive funding

International business symposium/ Global Economic Summit

- Eric shared a background of how this work was done in the past and with the help of existing Advisory Boards
 - Opportunity to bring counselor trade officials from different countries
 - Integrating international trade from different countries who wanted to invest in the US and at the same time looking into exporting to those countries
- Department of Minority Enterprise backed this effort up in the past
- The symposium was very well attended (300 businesses)
 - focused on SWAM certification
- Possibility now: revisiting that work and incorporating new factors in it
 - Small business development
 - Entrepreneur opportunities
 - workforce development
 - Department of labor
- Challenge: those New Americans who can contribute to these efforts do not have much information about regulations
 - *the workforce development lens helps highlight the contributions of new americans and also advocate for some of the resources (language access, english acquisition, access to services, etc) New Americans need
- This could be a 2 year plan and requires support from a state department or an entity that can make actions happen
- VAB and VLAB are the other Advisory Boards that can help with this efforts
- these boards have direct connections to the governor
- Andrei could also help facilitate connections with the governor
- Eric will write something and have it ready for the next meeting
- Those working on this effort need to be here longer than until next june

Annual Report approval

Andrei Lipan motioned to pass

Hassan Ahmad and Juan Santacoloma Seconded

Member	Yes	No	Abstain
Ahoo Salem	x		
Andrei Lipan	x		

Eric Lin	X		
Eric-Michel Sossou-Gloh			
Hassan Ahmad	X		
James Gordon	X		
Juan Santacoloma	X		
Kate Ayers	X		
Krishendeo Ramsingh	X		
Mike Hoefer			
Milton Vickerman	X		
Susannah Lepley	X		
Karina Martich	Left the online meeting		

- Kate will share the executive summary with ONAAB so we can share it with their legislators
 - Looking at our membership we don't have anyone from Tidewater area at the moment
- We may have someone from that region as we have 4 new members that are not sworn in yet

Looking ahead to 2024

Kate Ayers

- Longer term strategic plan for ONAAB
 - Orientation for new board members
 - Eric shared that in the past the Governors' office and Secretariat's offered an orientation for advisory boards that worked under them
 - Perhaps we can ask DSS to provide one to our Board
- Transparent communication and Building better relationships with legislators
 1. Better understanding of the landscape of policy work
 2. Outside communication and how to reach more people
 - Website can be a good resource→ it is now updated
 - Louise / ONA can now provide information on the website
- Create a framework for for establishing a welcoming commonwealth
- Empower board members to write a stronger report

Board Members shared what they would like to see going forward:

- More training on contacting legislators
- Training on how policy works
- Exploring fundraising options
- Better understanding of economic opprotunities for New Americans

- Recognizing the good work ONAAB has done over the past years and not losing track of the areas we worked on in the first years of creation of ONAAB
- Recommendations: need data and baseline of information
 - Funding needed to create a data base to make recommendations and identify areas of need
 - e.g: no data base of number of people who have received professional training outside of the United States
- Support of ex-officio who would attend our meetings and direct us towards existing resources / help us understand the nuances of policy/ bridge the existing gaps

2024 executive committee elections

Chair

Andrei Lipan

- One of Andrei's visions is to raise funds for ONAAB

Co-chair

Micheal Hoefer

- Proving consistency and continuation, as he has a longer term position
- Has more flexibility with his time

Secretary (optional)

In absence of secretary the chair will send in the notices and minutes

Treasurer

Milton Vickerman (nominated during the meeting)

- Discussions: If we have 3 EC members that are in different geographical locations, reaching meeting requirements will be more difficult
- Question: Can we go on with chair and co-chair and then decide on treasurer when we are at point of needing a treasurer/ fundraising
- Final decisions: Milton's nomination is put on hold until we have the need for a treasurer

Susanah motioned to vote

Hassan Second

Member	Yes	No	Abstain
Chair and co-chair			
Ahoo Salem	x		
Andrei Lipan	x		
Eric Lin	x		
Eric-Michel Sossou-Gloh			
Hassan Ahmad	x		
James Gordon	x		
Juan Santacoloma	x		

Kate Ayers	x		
Krishendeo Ramsingh	x		
Mike Hoefer	x		
Milton Vickerman	x		
Susannah Lepley	x		
Karina Martich	No vote		

Calendar:

2024 proposed meetings:

- Jan 8, 2024 → Online (New date)
- Apr 17, 2024 → In-person (New date- 10th is Eid)
- July 10, 2024 → Online
- October 9, 2024 → In-person
- Suggestion: Having an alternate date in case we miss a meeting
- October 16th, 2024 → in-person

If we get approved for 5 meetings:

- December 11, 2024 → In-person
 - Kate and Andrei will ask DSS to make a request on our behalf to remove limitations on the number of meetings we can have

Kate Ayers motioned to vote

Eric Lin and Andrei Lipan second

Member	Yes	No	Abstain
Ahoo Salem	x		
Andrei Lipan	x		
Eric Lin	x		
Eric-Michel Sossou-Gloh			
Hassan Ahmad	x		
James Gordon	x		
Juan Santacoloma	x		
Kate Ayers	x		
Krishendeo Ramsingh	x		
Mike Hoefer	x		
Milton Vickerman	x		
Susannah Lepley	x		

Karina Martich	No vote		
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Welcoming America

Jordyne Krumroy- Senior regional manager, Welcoming America

- Welcoming standards and certification process
- Membership based for
 - Cities and counties
 - Non profits, chambers of commerce, etc
- Over 300 members in the States
- Certification provides a benchmark of best practices from a national standpoint
- Certified welcoming 2.0→ a continuum of work, which the communities can build on
 - Continuity can be a good outcome of the certification process/ as opposed to a one off initiative by cities

Welcoming Roanoke

Ahoo Salem- ONAAB Board Member

- Information about the evolution of Welcoming Roanoke
- Certification process through Welcoming America
 - Benefits of the certification process and how it can be applied to other localities

Miscellaneous Business

None

The meeting adjourned at 4:11



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Virginia Office of New Americans Advisory Board

Committee Meetings

November 9, 2023



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10:00-12:00

Committees discuss
next steps for report
recommendations;
present later in
meeting



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Committee Discussion- next steps for annual report recommendations

- Who do you want to talk to?
- What information/data is needed?
- What can we do to educate the whole board?
- Who can you invite to share with board about your issue areas?

Access to Services

Economic Opportunity

Inter/Intra Governmental



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Virginia Office of New Americans Advisory Board

General Board Meeting

November 9,, 2023



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Welcome & Call to Order

Kate Ayers
Chair

**Approval for electronic
participation: Michael
Hoefler and Karina Martich**



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July 2023 Minutes Approval

Ahoo Salem
Secretary



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Public Comment

Louise Pocock

ONAAB Liaison



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Chair Report

Kate Ayers,
Chair

- **Drafting of report**
- **EC meeting in C'ville in September**
- **Meeting with the Governor- not this year**
- **International Symposium**



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Global Economic Summit (Eric Lin)

- Event was first held 10 years ago and brought Consulates of International Trade together with Secretary of Commerce and Small Business Administration.
- In partnership with VAAB and VLAB
- Currently reaching out to possible partners



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Administrative Update

Seyoum Berthe
Director, ONA



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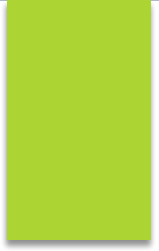
Annual Report Vote

Kate Ayers,
Chair



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BREAK





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Executive Committee Elections

Louise Pocock

ONA Board Liaison



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Miscellaneous Board Business

- 2024 Proposed Meeting Schedule Vote

ONAAB Board



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2024 Schedule

January 10, 2024

April 10, 2024

July 10, 2024

October 9, 2024

If we get approved for 5
meetings: December 11,
2024



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Looking Ahead to 2024

Kate Ayers

Chair



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Suggested Framework

- CREATE A LONGER-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ONAAB
- MORE TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION
- BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATORS + STATE AGENCIES
- CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR ESTABLISHING A WELCOMING COMMONWEALTH
- EMPOWER BOARD MEMBERS TO WRITE A STRONGER REPORT



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Lessons Learned:

CREATE A LONGER-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ONAAB

- We are still learning and building a foundation
- We will have a need to operationalize our communication strategies
- We see a need for a stronger new member orientation
- We need to engage with the community more strategically to understand new issues and concerns



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Lessons Learned:

MORE TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION

- We have limitations on how we communicate, need to be intentional and strategic
 - What worked?
 - What do you want more or less of?
- Newsletter was a lot of work- not feasible to do every quarter- but maybe annually after we release the report



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Lessons Learned:

BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATORS +
STATE AGENCIES

- International symposium could be helpful
- Next steps for report recommendations



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Lessons Learned:

CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR ESTABLISHING A
WELCOMING COMMONWEALTH

- Welcoming America will present today
- This framework can help inform and support our focus areas
- We can also share it with our networks and localities that we live and work



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Lessons Learned:

EMPOWER BOARD MEMBERS TO WRITE A STRONGER
REPORT

- What was helpful?
- What do you still need?
- Idea: Bring in experts that are connected to our recommendations to build shared understanding.
- What are the next steps? Where do you want to go in 2024?



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Committees Share- next steps for annual report recommendations

- Who do you want to talk to?
- What information/data is needed?
- What can we do to educate the whole board?

Access to Services

Economic Opportunity

Inter/Intra Governmental



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Presentation: Welcoming America and Welcoming Roanoke Policy recommendations and case study

Jordyne Krumroy

Welcoming America

Ahoo Salem

ONNAB Member



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Adjourn

Kate Ayers
Chair



Welcoming Roanoke: A Case Study in Creating a Welcoming Community

Ahoo Salem, Ph.D.

11/09/2023

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Office of the New Americans Advisory Board
November Board Meeting

Email: asalem@brlit.org



Background and history

- First welcoming Roanoke celebration: 2018
- Gateways for Growth Challenge Grant: 2019–2020
 - Received support to create the Welcoming Roanoke Plan
- The plan serves as the City’s multi-sector strategic plan for integration and aligns with themes of the City of Roanoke 2040 Comprehensive plan.
 - Interwoven Equity
 - Healthy Community
 - Resilient Economy
 - Harmony with Nature
 - Livable Built Environment
 - Responsible Regionalism

◦



Support the refugee, immigrant, and New American communities in the City of Roanoke and celebrate the strength that diversity brings to our City.

Welcoming Week Celebration: 2018- Present

Takes place in September

- Planned by community members and stakeholders
 - Supported by Roanoke City
- Transitioned over the years with a focus on providing equitable access to resources

Welcoming Roanoke 2023

- the 3rd Annual Roanoke Runs for Refugees 5K and Kids' 1 K
- Welcoming Week Job Fair
- Municipal Building Tour and Open House
- Annual Citizenship Celebration



Welcoming Week 2023



Welcoming Week 2023



It Goes Beyond One Week



Roanoke Nowruz celebration heralds the new year in a new land

Molly Hunter Mar 15, 2023 4



My City Academy

- Free leadership training program that empowers Roanoke's refugee and immigrant populations to better understand and participate in Roanoke's local government.
- 5 In-person training sessions
 - City departments
 - Community-based organizations
 - Field trips and interactive activities.



Becoming a Certified Welcoming City

Certified Welcoming is a formal designation for cities and counties.

The program assesses city and county governments on their efforts to include and welcome immigrants in all areas of civic, social, and economic life in their communities.

With a Certified Welcoming designation, communities distinguish their local efforts, build a competitive advantage, and gain access to opportunities to share their welcoming practices on a regional, national, and global stage.

As of 2023, 18 cities and counties across the U.S. are Certified Welcoming:

★ City of Baltimore, Maryland

★ City of Champaign, Illinois

★ City of Dallas

★ City of Detroit

★ City of Lancaster, Pennsylvania

★ City of Boise, Idaho

★ City of Charlotte, North Carolina

★ City of Dayton, Ohio

★ City of Erie, Pennsylvania

★ City of Louisville, Kentucky

★ City of Nashua, New Hampshire

★ City of Philadelphia

★ City of Portland, Maine

★ City of Toledo, Ohio

★ Lucas County, Ohio

★ Salt Lake County, Utah

★ City of New Orleans

★ City of Pittsburgh

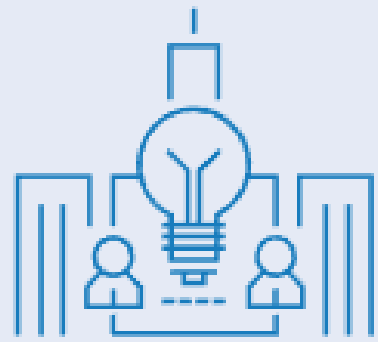
★ City of San Jose, California

★ City of Tulsa, Oklahoma

★ Montgomery County

Becoming a Certified Welcoming City: Welcoming Standards

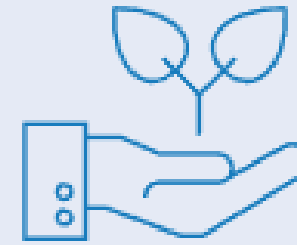
The Welcoming Standard is organized according to our seven framework categories:



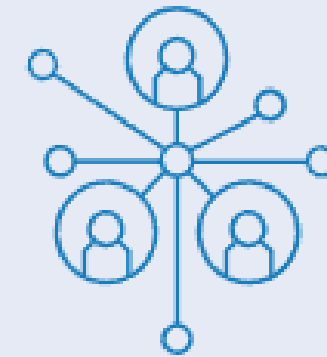
**Government and
Community
Leadership**



Civic Leadership



Equitable Access



**Connected
Communities**



Education



Economic Development



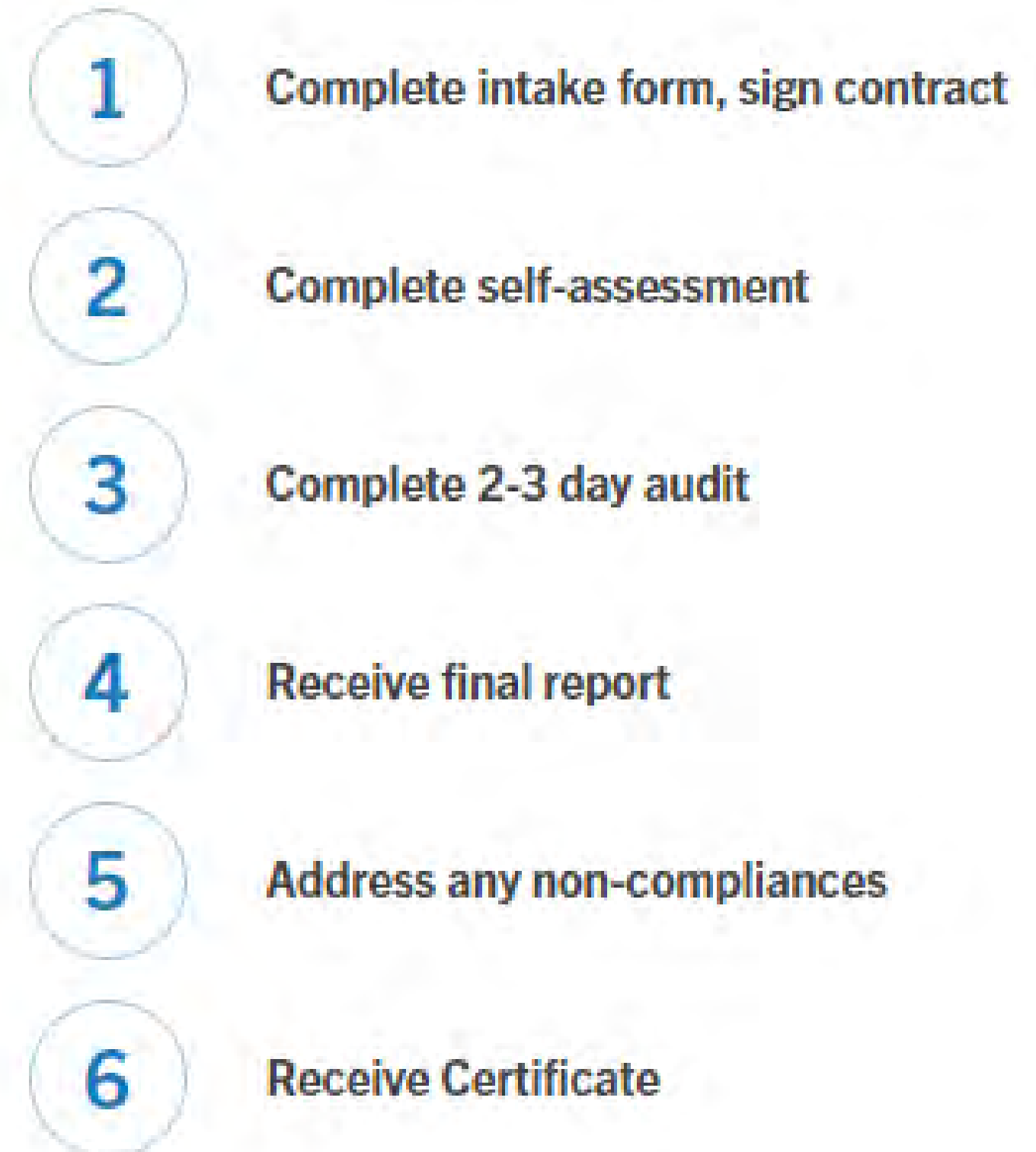
Safe Communities

Becoming a Certified Welcoming City: Process and Timeline

The certification process typically takes six months to one year.

- Local governments are the lead applicant.
- Partners contribute to the process at any stage, including completing the application, contributing to the self-assessment, and being consultants during the site visit.

Certificates are valid for four years.

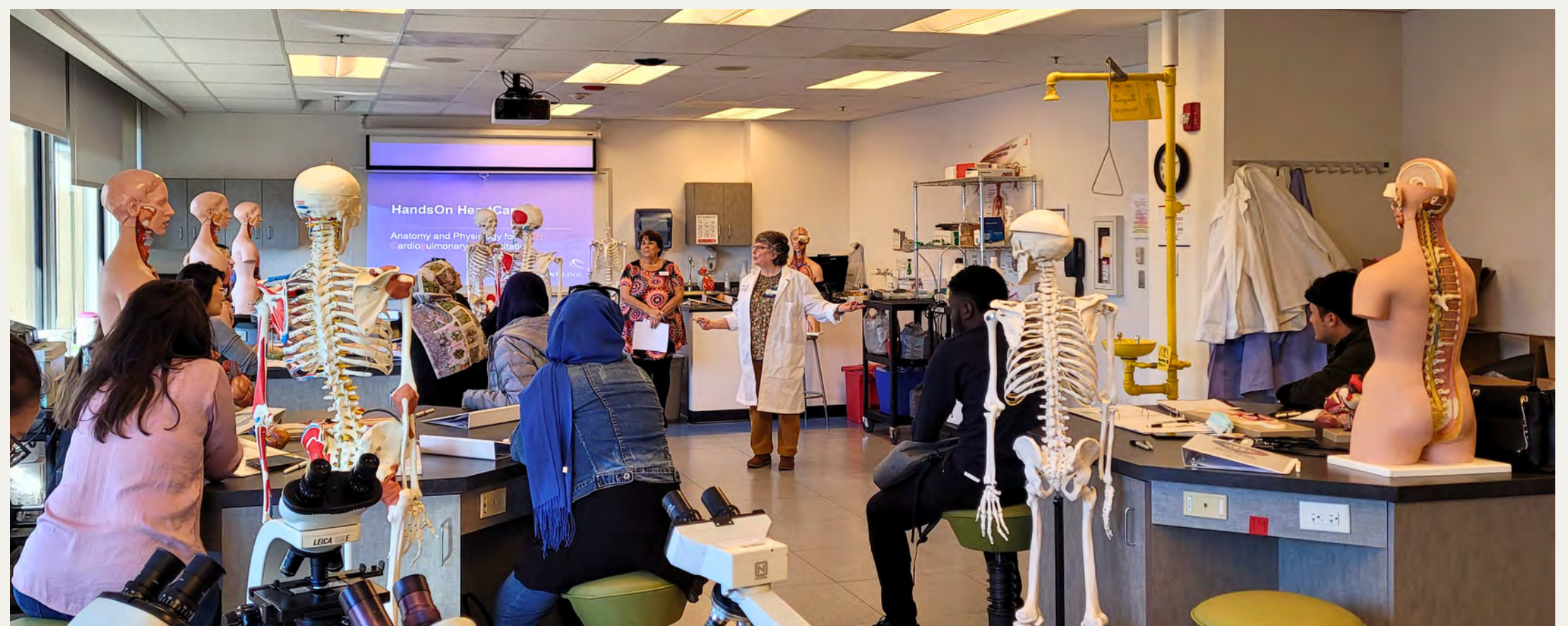


Becoming a Certified Welcoming City: Local Experience

Valuable process for understanding local strengths and gaps

- A great tool to highlight the scope of community-based organizations' efforts in the inclusion and integration of New Americans. Example from Blue Ridge Literacy:
 - **Equitable Access:**
 - E2.3- Programs Addressing Barriers to Digital Literacy
 - E2.1- Programs Addressing Barriers to Accessing Health Care
 - ED 1.2. Programs Addressing Barriers to Adult English Language Classes
 - ED 2.0 Programs Supporting Family Engagement in Child's Education
 - **Connected Communities**
 - CC 2.0. Programs Bring Together Immigrant and Non-immigrant Residents to Build Relationships
 - **Civic Engagement**
 - C10. Programs Supporting Eligible Applicants to Obtain Citizenship
- Gaps can inform future funding/ planning priorities and help guide the city's Equity and Empowerment Advisory Board's efforts

Becoming a Certified Welcoming City: Local Experience



Becoming a Certified Welcoming City: Local Experience



Final Notes:

Important factors:

- Existing structures and policies supporting inclusion and integration
 - Help advance the work being done in these areas
 - Provides a framework for addressing gaps
- Clear understanding of how outcomes will be measured
 - Quality vs. Quantity
 - Process vs. End result
 - Time
- Scalability



THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

Email asalem@brlit.org for further questions or suggestions

