

Welcome Dayton Committee Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2023, in person at Dayton Metro Library, 215 E. Third St. Dayton, OH 45402

Attendees:

Welcome Dayton Committee Members: Kate Conway, Gwen Eberly, Nozipo Glen, Jyl Hall, Matt Joseph, Karla Knox, Jean de Dieu Mukunzi, Claire Preston, Jorge Ramirez, Mary Reid, Tom Thompson, Pete Williams

City Staff: Adama Diakhate, Jeannette Horwitz, Desire Ntwayingabo, Martha-Jeannette Rodriguez,

Guests: Baraa Ali (in for Bryan Stewart)

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Joseph called the meeting to order at 3.35 p.m.

II. Approval of the Minutes

Commissioner Joseph asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 9 Welcome Dayton Committee meeting. Tom Thompson moved to approve. Gwen Eberly second. The minutes were approved.

Note: Agenda and Minutes are available on Welcome Dayton's website:

<https://www.daytonohio.gov/AgendaCenter/Welcome-Dayton-Committee-11>

III. Welcome and Introductions

Introductions followed by each participant sharing a fun fact about themselves. One member shared that while he does not drink coffee, when in a hotel he always makes coffee in the room for the good smell!

IV. General Updates

The committee currently has 26 members. Five will reach the end of their term in December 2023. Jeannette Horwitz will reach out with reappointment information to those members.

V. Federal Immigration Updates – Katie Kersh, Senior Attorney and Project Director, ABLE

Jeannette Horwitz shared on behalf of Katie Kersh the following updates from ABLE:

ABLE is hosting an asylum info session on August 29 at Dayton Metro Library at 5 PM. The session will be held in English, Spanish, and Swahili. Another session will be held in Ukrainian and/or Turkish at the Huber Heights library at a date that is TBD.

ABLE is hosting an asylum clinic on Monday September 25. People MUST register and complete a pre-clinic screening and paperwork before they can participate. The clinic will be at the downtown library, and we will have sessions starting at 9:30 and 1. Preference to register will be given to people who are able to attend the info sessions. More information on how to register for the clinic coming.

Any Afghan wishing to apply for re-parole or other services in Montgomery County should apply for ABLE's services by calling 419-930-2555?

Federal updates:

The Biden administration implemented a parole process for people with approved visa petitions from El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, and Honduras. People whose family have petitioned for them and those petitions have been approved may receive an invitation from the National Visa Center to apply for parole to enter the United States. The family and employment immigrant visa processing system is like going to the deli: having your visa petition approved is like when you take your number ticket at the counter, but then you have to wait for them to actually *call* your number—or for a visa to become available to you. The second step—having a visa become available—can take decades. This new parole process is important because it will allow people who have lawful pathways to enter the United States to reunite with their families sooner. As of now, the Biden administration intends to grant parole to 100,000 people, so not everyone who has an approved visa petition will be allowed to enter on parole.

Afghan Adjustment Act was introduced in the Senate in July. It would provide a pathway to lawful permanent residence and eventual citizenship for Afghans who entered under the Operation Allies Welcome parole process. While the act does seem to have bipartisan support, it has not been brought for a vote in either chamber yet.

The 9th Circuit has temporarily allowed Biden’s new asylum procedures to move forward by lifting a stay that was put in place by a district court judge. The new policies effectively bar immigrants from applying for asylum if they enter the country illegally or if they do not apply for asylum in a country they traveled through to reach the United States. There are some exceptions to the policy, such as unaccompanied children. People may still apply for asylum if they present themselves at a port of entry along the border. These policies are concerning because they contradict US obligations under international law and place restrictions far beyond our own federal asylum systems.

VI. Coordinator’s Updates

Jeannette Horwitz shared the following updates:

Clap-in at the International School, August 14, 8:45 a.m. arrival

East & Central Africa Welcome Event August 26 + School Supply Drive for event

Global Artisan Marketplace – Collaboration with 2nd Street Market

MVCID Drive September 16 at Christian Life Center in Vandalia and November 4 at DML.

Registration opens on August 16 on Welcome Dayton’s website.

City of Dayton Neighborhood Conference September 30 at Ponitz Career Technology Center

International Peace Museum is working on an exhibit for IWD 2024 about how women’s rights around the world are affected by violence, conflict and peace. Looking to meet female refugees from war torn areas and discuss their experience both in their home nation and upon arrival in the US.

Seeing the effects of “Welcoming” in the community is awesome.

-Miami Valley Meals contacted WD to be connected to someone from the Turkish community to learn how to cook traditional Turkish food. WD connected them to Fatima Akhmedova (NLI Grad, DPS Teacher) who did a Turkish cooking session with MVM chefs.

-Food Bank has ordered “I speak Spanish” buttons for employees who speak Spanish that they wear as they’ve seen an increase in need from the Hispanic community.

-Volunteers from the community who help at our events – incredible!

-Many churches and other organizations are hosting events to welcome newcomers. WD participate with resource tables – great way to connect

VII. Subcommittee Updates – Subcommittee Chairs or Representatives

a. Business and Economic Development – Gwen Eberly

Gwen shared that the committee is still looking to collaborate with others in the community on assisting New Americans who want to start a business or grow their already existing business.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 14 at 3:00 p.m. (email Gwen for location)

b. Education – Dani Heeter

Jeannette Horwitz shared on behalf of Dani Heeter:

New American Job Fair on September 14 at St. John’s ESOL school. Flyer in English to pass around. Have it in multiple languages. Aspire Program is inviting employers.

New American Employer Roundtable on October 18 at Montgomery County Business Solutions Center – 3rd and final roundtable for this year. *Retention: Cultural Considerations*. Thank you to Dayton Chamber of Commerce for their support with this, registration, refreshments, etc.

Next meeting: Monday, August 14 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom.

c. Community, Culture and Arts – Rachel Gut

Jeannette Horwitz shared on behalf of Rachel Gut.

New American’s Art Exhibit and performance art showcase applications are out, at least one application has been returned. Exhibit is November 1 – December 31. Opening Reception is November 4. Those submitting art, due October 1. Those interested in performing (music or dancing) at opening reception on November 4, due October 1.

Committee will work with members of Countywide Exploratory Committee on resource guide for New Americans.

Committee has had conversation about supporting New American's mental health and wellness and possibly partnering with Health and Human Services on this. Rachel Gut will reach out to Mary Reid.

d. **Government and Justice** – David Larson

Tom Thompson shared on behalf of David Larson.

Another Interacting with the Police event is taking place on Saturday, September 2, for Pastor Fidele Nsengimana and the African SDA Church, located on Grandview Hospital's campus. Sinclair PD, Dayton PD, Mediation Response Unit and Welcome Dayton will participate.

The committee's Language Access working group has broken into two different teams. One is focusing on best practices and policies for courts and the other is starting to put together education for courts, police departments and public defenders to ensure immigrants and refugees are treated equitable in the justice system. Tom shared an update on *Immigrant Connection Dayton* starting in September. ICD is a Department of Justice Recognized Office that provides low-cost legal consultations to individuals who are seeking assistance with issues related to immigration. For more information, see <https://icdayton.org/> Tom will reach out to Katie Kersh and David Larson to discuss specifics of services ICD will provide.

Kate Conway asked about the disability waiver form for the US Citizenship test and would like some more information and assistance to better understanding this. Claire Preston asked if ICD can speak at events. Tom will connect Kate and Claire to those running ICD for more information.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 4 at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

e. **Health and Human Services** – Mary Reid

Mary shared that the Health & Human Services Subcommittee held meetings in June (6/22) and July (7/27) and that the committee continues to grow.

June meeting:

- Continued discussion on including newcomer representation in community health data
 - o Focus groups conducted by ADAMHS Board
 - o Efforts to include speakers of other languages in recent Community Health Needs Assessment completed by Dayton Children's
- Partner resources-
 - o Kettering College Community Health Worker training program. Potential to:
 - § Recruit participants for diverse representation in CHW workforce
 - § Opportunity to host students in program in practicum placements to provide exposure to work with foreign born populations, including experience in use of interpretation in medical/social service setting
 - o WSU Boonshoft School of Medicine- conducting home visits for patients served through the Global Health Clinic- piloting with funding received to serve Afghan Parolee population
- Identified desire to discuss barrier removal at July meeting

July meeting:

- Discussed the primary languages, other than English, that patients/clients speak
 - o Across the board Spanish, predominate language, with large Kinyarwanda and Swahili speaking populations as well
 - o Premier and Ebenezer Health Care noted growing Haitian/Creole populations
 - o RJ shared EMR system at Premier in process of upgrades to provide discharge instructions in other languages
- Exploration of Welcoming Provider recognition- on agenda for full discussion

Next meeting: Thursday, August 24th at 2:30 p.m. via Teams. Dayton Children's to provide report on recently released Community Health Assessment.

f. Countywide Exploratory Committee – Jyl Hall / Pete Williams

Jyl Hall reported that the committee has had two great meetings so far. She is very excited about the solid group. A subcommittee has formed to develop a resource guide for immigrants/refugees. Listening sessions are starting and the first one will be organized by Peter Williams and take place in Riverside. Pete shared he wasn't sure there'd be a good turnout in Riverside but in the past two weeks, both the local school district and the faith community have reached out to Pete as they have had things going on involving immigrants/refugees. The first listening session will take place either the week of September 18 or 25 in Riverside City Hall chambers, a central location that's easy to access. Pete has been working with Michelle Zarembo from Dayton Mediation Center on the format of the listening session. The intended audience is New Americans and leaders within schools, faith communities, etc. in the Riverside community. Additional listening sessions in other communities in the Dayton area will follow this one.

Next meeting: TBA.

g. Natural Helpers – Jeannette Horwitz

No report. Committee is currently resting.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

Jeannette Horwitz thanked those who were able to attend the July 19 reception and City Commission meeting to celebrate Dayton's recertification as a 'Certified Welcoming' city. She will be working with subcommittee chairs on "Where do we go from here?" and areas in the certification that can be improved further.

Mary Reid shared the idea of organizations, agencies, businesses, etc., showing they are a welcoming provider. Example: PHDMC's Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.

<https://mceveryonereachone.org/breastfeeding-friendly-workplace-awards/>

Silver: Commitment to being Welcoming

Gold: Language Access Policy in place

Platinum: All over the above + Accepting MVCID

The Health and Human Services Subcommittee discussed this in their July meeting and the consensus is that it's a good idea. Welcome Dayton is a movement, and we want others to buy into it and join. Commissioner Joseph added that this might give us additional good connections in the community. Kate Conway suggested offering certificates to highlight businesses and organizations that have been especially welcoming. Mary and Jeannette will continue the conversation and explore possibilities.

Claire Preston added that she will continue to work with the local Afghan community through the grant MCESC has received as it will continue for a second year.

X. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Commissioner Joseph concluded by saying he is very excited about everything that's going on and thanked everyone for their continued involvement and commitment to welcoming efforts. The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

XI. Next Meeting Date: Friday, October 13, 2023, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Conference Room 3A, Dayton Metro Library (Main).

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeannette Horwitz, Welcome Dayton Coordinator