

# VOICES FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

## AN OHIO ADVOCACY GUIDE

PREPARED  
BY



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## Dear Community Leader,

In every neighborhood, town, and city across Ohio, immigrants are helping to build stronger, more vibrant communities. They open businesses, care for our families, staff our hospitals, teach in our schools, and contribute culturally, socially, and economically in significant and innovative ways.

Immigrants are also essential to Ohio's future. They contribute to our population growth, tax revenue, and the strength of our workforce. Yet despite these contributions, immigrant communities are often left out of the conversations that shape public policy. That is why **advocacy matters** - because decisions are being made every day that affect our families, our schools, our jobs, and our future. We must ensure that those decisions reflect our voices, our experiences, and our hopes.

At Vibrant Ohio, we believe that having a strong relationship in the community and with elected officials is instrumental to being fully civically engaged. Whether it is community organizing for a local program or advocating for local or statewide policies regarding workforce development, healthcare, or education, we are a stronger society when those affected by policy have a voice and are engaged in legislation rooted in community.

Advocacy begins with relationships. Both long-established and newly sworn-in elected officials benefit from hearing from people who live and work in the communities they serve. When we tell our stories, share data, and show up with a spirit of partnership, we open doors to change.

This guide was created to equip you with tools, strategies, and confidence to start or become more civically engaged. Whether you're meeting with a policymaker, mobilizing your community, or crafting a compelling message, we hope this resource will serve as both a practical roadmap and a source of inspiration.

Together, we can build a more inviting, informed, and vibrant Ohio.

The Executive Team at Vibrant Ohio



# AN OHIO ADVOCACY GUIDE

## BACKGROUND

Many policy changes are taking place at the federal, state, and local government levels, including dramatic shifts within the White House and federal agencies. The State of Ohio and local municipalities are deciding how to respond and care for their communities and community members.

Now is a crucial time for Ohioans to get engaged in our government, at the ground level. From City Council to School Board, County Sheriffs and Prosecutors to Members of the Ohio General Assembly and United States Congress, policymakers who live in our neighborhoods are making major decisions that impact our families, futures, and quality of life. Their job is to listen to us before making these decisions.

Whether you are currently eligible to vote or not, you have a voice in Ohio and our United States democracy. **Your voice matters. This guide will help you use it.**

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is for the general public; refugee, immigrant, and immigration advocates; and nonprofit and faith-based organizations who want to make their voices heard on immigration policies in the state of Ohio and beyond. Vibrant Ohio created this guide for three purposes:

- **Building Awareness** - teaching Ohioans how to engage with policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels
- **Building Community** - helping like-minded Ohioans come together to create a more welcoming, inclusive state
- **Building Power** - combining forces across Ohio to influence the decisions elected officials make that impact our families and communities

### “ USE AND SHARE THIS GUIDE! ”

Share this guide with your families, friends, co-workers, organizations, congregations, and community groups.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was prepared by members of Vibrant Ohio, a statewide network of local welcoming initiatives that shares best practices and advocates for the economic integration of immigrants and refugees. It is led by **Cincinnati Compass, Welcoming City/US Together Inc. - Columbus, Welcome Toledo-Lucas County, Welcome Dayton, Global Cleveland, and Welcome Bowling Green.**

Additional contributions were made by:

**Anacaona LLC**  
**MASKAZI LLC**



Produced in partnership with the  
Refugee Advocacy Lab.



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# DATA ON IMMIGRANTS IN OHIO

Source: [American Immigration Council](#), 2025

## WHY NUMBERS MATTER

Immigrants aren't just part of Ohio's story, they are building Ohio's future. Statistics show how immigrants strengthen our communities, fuel our economy, and bring global connections to our state. From keeping hospitals running to launching businesses, immigrants contribute to what makes Ohio thrive. Understanding these facts helps us make smarter decisions about policies that affect all Ohioans.

## OHIO IS HOME TO



**601,100**  
immigrants

About **5.1%** of Ohio residents were born in another country



Over **45,000** immigrant children live in Ohio

## COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

**TOP 5** India, Mexico, China, Philippines, Ukraine

**81%** Speak English and many are multilingual

## ECONOMIC DRIVERS



Nearly **37,000** international students contribute **\$1.3B** to the economy and sustain **11,000** jobs

Refugees hold **\$2.1B** in household income and contribute **\$200.2M** in state/local taxes with **\$1.6B** in spending power

Undocumented community members hold **\$3.3B** in household income and contribute **\$274.4M** in state/local taxes with **\$2.6B** in spending power

## THE ECONOMIC POWER



Household income: **\$27.3B**

Total taxes paid: **\$7.3B**

Including **\$2.5B** in state/local taxes

Total Spending Power: **\$20.0B**

Contributions to Social Security: **\$2.7B**

Contributions to Medicare: **\$722.8M**

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP & TALENTED WORKFORCE

**6.2%** of Labor Force

**7** Fortune 500 Companies were founded by immigrants or their children

**8.2%** are **Entrepreneurs** where **38,200** Business Owners earned **\$1B** in income

**44.5%** of foreign-born hold a bachelor's degree or higher

**12.2%** of all STEM workers in Ohio are immigrants

**22.2%** Physicians in Ohio are immigrants

### Top Ohio Industries Employing Immigrants

Transportation and warehousing; manufacturing; professional, scientific, administrative, and waste services; wholesale trade; healthcare; and social assistance

## HOUSING



**\$47.3B** in Home Ownership

**137,000** immigrant homeowners

**1.6B** in rent from Immigrants

Additional data about the economic contributions of immigrants in Ohio can be found [here](#).

<https://shorturl.at/bcoEQ>

# HOW TO CONTACT THE OHIO GOVERNMENT

## OHIO GOVERNMENT - EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Governor Mike DeWine (R) &  
Lieutenant Governor Jim Tressel (R)  
[governor.ohio.gov](http://governor.ohio.gov)  
Email or call (614) 644-4357

Attorney General David Yost (R)  
[ohioattorneygeneral.gov](http://ohioattorneygeneral.gov)  
Email or call 1-800-282-0515

Secretary of State Frank LaRose (R)  
[ohiosos.gov](http://ohiosos.gov)  
Email or call (877) 767-6446

Auditor Keith Faber (R)  
[ohioauditor.gov](http://ohioauditor.gov)  
[Contact](#)

## OHIO GOVERNMENT - LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

[legislature.ohio.gov](http://legislature.ohio.gov)

- Enter your address [here](#) ("Who Represents Me?") to find your Ohio Senator and Representative. <https://shorturl.at/zD9Q8>
- Browse legislative districts for both the Ohio House and Senate [here](#).  
<https://shorturl.at/OjE5B>

## THE LOCAL OHIO GOVERNMENT

Ohio is comprised of 88 counties and thousands of cities, towns, villages, and townships. Together, these cities, towns, villages, and townships are known as **municipalities**. Counties and municipalities make up Ohio's system of **local government**.

Below are some of the core offices in county and municipal government. To learn who your local officials are, do an internet search using the name of your county or municipality along with the office title (e.g., Columbus mayor or Franklin County commissioner).

Every person in Ohio lives in one county and one municipality.

Each county and each municipality has its own governing bodies, elected officials, and areas of responsibility.



### COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

- **Board of County Commissioners** - A group of elected officials who serve as the legislative body for the county (*Cuyahoga and Summit Counties have County Executives and County Councils instead*)
- **County Sheriff** — The highest-ranking public safety official in the county
- **Board of Elections** — The local governing body responsible for conducting free and fair elections

### MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

- **Mayor** — The highest-ranking municipal leader of a city
- **City/Town/Village Council** — A group of elected officials who serve as the legislative body for the municipality
- **Police Chief** — The highest-ranking public safety official in a municipality (not an elected position)

**Note:** This list does not include every local government office, but highlights the ones you are most likely to engage with as advocates for immigrants and refugees. For example, while counties and municipalities do have judicial branches, we have not included judges in this list.

# HOW TO CONTACT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT - LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

To reach the Washington, D.C. office of any member of the U.S. Congress, in either chamber, call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

United States Senate  
[senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov)



OH U.S. SENATOR  
BERNIE MORENO (R)  
[MORENO.SENATE.GOV](https://www.moreno.senate.gov)



OH U.S. SENATOR  
JOHN HUSTED (R)  
[HUSTED.SENATE.GOV](https://www.husted.senate.gov)

United States House of Representatives  
[house.gov](https://www.house.gov)

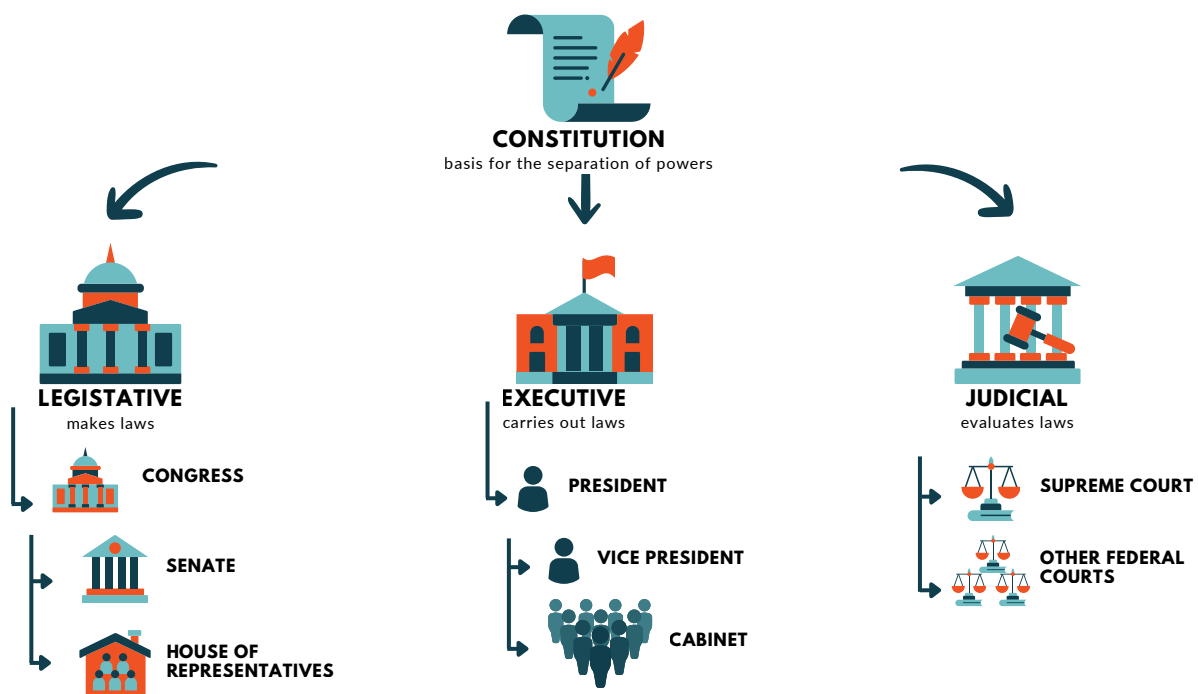
Find your U.S. House of Representative:

- [Enter](#) your zip code to find your U.S. House Representative. <https://shorturl.at/ARZUg>
- View the full list of Ohio Congressional Representatives [here](#). <https://shorturl.at/BgRwl>
- See a map of Ohio Congressional Districts [here](#). <https://shorturl.at/jA8Uc>

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT - EXECUTIVE BRANCH

President Donald Trump (R) & Vice President J.D. Vance (R)  
[whitehouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov)  
[Email](#) or call 202-456-1111

## 3 BRANCHES OF U.S. GOVERNMENT







# ADVOCACY TOOLS



# HOW TO MEET WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

Everyone has the right to contact federal, state, and local officials and voice their concerns about policy issues, government services, and how your tax dollars are spent. Speaking up about an issue to ask lawmakers for support in this way is known **advocacy**. People who do this are called **advocates**.



## 1 IDENTIFY WHO CAN HELP YOU SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM

- **Federal Government** – U.S. Senators and Representatives make national laws. They have offices in Ohio and Washington, D.C.
- **State Government** – Ohio Senators and Representatives work on state laws. Their offices are located in Columbus, Ohio
- **Local Government** – County Officials, Mayors and City Councils handle local community issues



You can meet with a representative from your area or one in a leadership role.

## 2 DETERMINE YOUR PLAN OF ACTION

- Decide if you want to meet in person or online
- Choose whether to go alone or with a group
- If working with others, plan your strategy together



See “[How to Organize a Coalition](#)” for tips on group advocacy

## 3 SCHEDULE A MEETING

- Find your official’s contact information online
- Ask their office for a meeting with them or their staff
- Check if they have public events where you can speak with them

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# HOW TO MEET WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

*Everyone has the right to contact federal, state, and local officials and voice their concerns about policy issues, government services, and how your tax dollars are spent.*



## 4 PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

- Learn about the official's views on your issue
- Gather materials like fact sheets or news articles that highlight your concern
- If in a group, decide who will speak and what you will ask



See “[5 Tips for a Successful Advocacy Meeting](#)” for more guidance

## 5 THE MEETING & FOLLOW-UP

- Arrive 15 minutes early
- Be polite and introduce yourself
- Clearly explain your concern and how it affects people
- Listen carefully and ask questions
- Give the official your materials

## AFTER THE MEETING

- Send a Thank-You email
- Share any additional information and repeat your request



You do not need to be an expert - just speak from the heart.  
Your voice matters!



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# MESSAGING



## ♥ VALUE

Immigrants are important members of Ohio who are loved and appreciated by their communities. They live here, work hard, raise families, and help our state grow stronger. Immigrants are essential workers in many important jobs, including in food, hospitality, and healthcare industries; manufacturing; construction; and more. Whether someone came from another country, another state, or has always lived here, we all call Ohio home. And we all help shape its future.

## ★ VISION

We want an Ohio where everyone is welcome, no matter where they were born. We need our leaders to create fair policies that support all families. Everyone should be able to live with respect, care for their loved ones, and have what they need to succeed. That is the kind of Ohio we are working to create.

(For more on the Value-Villain-Vision message framework, see [ASO Communications](https://asocommunications.com/))  
<https://asocommunications.com/>

# HOW TO POSITION DIRECTLY IMPACTED PEOPLE INTO CENTRAL ADVOCACY ROLES

Some advocates understand laws and policies because they specialize in these areas. Others understand these issues because they have personal experience as immigrants or refugees, or their family members do. Many people bring both personal and professional experience to their advocacy.

Refugee leaders from Refugee Congress, Refugee Advocacy Lab, and Church World Service created 10 helpful tips. These tips show how to make sure immigrant and refugee voices are at the center of policy and media work. Want to learn more? Just click this link:

<https://shorturl.at/QueWS>.

## 10 TIPS FOR CENTERING REFUGEE VOICES



Begin with Refugee Leadership



Respect Boundaries



Focus on the *Now* vs. *Then*



Check In on Safety



Get Informed Consent



Create an Accessible space for Sharing



Provide Leadership Development Opportunities



Pay People for Their Time when Possible



Hire Refugees for Leadership Roles



Ask Others to Share Stories in Safe, Respectful ways

*Immigrants and refugees are not just their visas, their past, or where they were born. They are people, just like anyone else. When we follow their lead and listen to their ideas, we make better plans and get better results.*



# 5 TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY MEETING

Whether you are meeting with an official in local government, a state agency, the Ohio General Assembly, or the U.S. Congress, here are five tips for effective advocacy.

## 1 KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Prepare for a meeting like you would for a job interview. Learn about the person you are meeting with. Look at their background and what they have said or done about the issue you care about.

Are they a small business owner? Do they have a child in college? Do you come from the same hometown? These are ways you can connect with them. If they have already done something helpful, like supporting a bill you like, be sure to say *Thank You*.

## 2 MAKE THE ISSUE PERSONAL

Elected officials are more likely to meet with people who are directly affected by the issue you are advocating for. If you can not bring someone impacted by the issue to the meeting, prepare to share a real story about someone who has faced the same challenge. This personal connection helps the official understand why the issue matters. See [How to Position Directly Impacted People into Central Advocacy Roles](#).

## 3 BE ATTENTIVE AND LISTEN WITH INTENTION

It is often clear from the start of a meeting whether the official or staff member is interested in your issue or concern. Pay attention to their body language - how they sit, move and make eye contact. If someone in your group is talking more than the others, politely redirect the conversation so others can speak. While you are there to deliver your opinion, you are also there to learn about the official's perspective. Ask questions to discover the information they need in order to support your position and ideas.

## 4 BE PREPARED WITH AN “ASK”

Before the meeting, decide what you want the official to do and what your request will be - this is the **ask**. Do you want them to support a bill or stop supporting it? Do you want them to speak in public *for* or *against* the issue? Make sure your whole group agrees on this ask. Repeat your ask during the meeting. At the end, *thank them* and say your ask again.

## 5 BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Right after the meeting, send a Thank-You email. Repeat your main request “*the ask*” and share any materials you talked about in the meeting. If it makes sense, add them to your group's email list.

As a follow-up to the meeting, if the official does or says something helpful, say *Thank You*. If they say or do something harmful, follow up about that too.

Try to build a good relationship with their office. Ask to meet with them again in the future. Look for more ways to work together on bills or initiatives.

# HOW TO ORGANIZE A COALITION

*We are stronger when we work together.*

As the Haitian Creole saying goes: *“Anpil men, chay pa lou.”*  
(Many hands make the load lighter.)

Over the years, we have learned that teamwork makes a big difference when advocating for fair and kind immigration and social policies.

Sometimes, we raise public awareness by ourselves. Other times, we work with others in a group called a **coalition**. A **coalition** is a team of different people or groups working to reach the same goal.

## WHAT IS A COALITION?



Group of people working together

## WHY THEY MATTER?



Shared Strength



Common Goals



Stronger Impact

## 5 STEPS TO BUILD A COALITION

### 1 DETERMINE YOUR GOAL

Before choosing partners, know your goal. Ask yourself:

- Do you want to **support or stop a bill** in the Ohio legislature?
- Are you trying to **change a federal policy** (or keep it the same)?
- Do you need **services or policy changes** from your city or county?

Be clear about what you want and why. This helps you find the right partners

### 2 FIND THE RIGHT PARTNERS

Look for people and groups who:

- **Care about the same goal** as you do
- **Will work with others** to make change

**Common partners:**

- Businesses, unions, and faith groups
- Colleges (for research and experts)
- Hospitals, police, schools, and consumer/financial groups (if the issue affects them)

**Important roles to include:**

- **A legal expert** (to explain laws)
- **A data expert** (to share facts and numbers)

**Remember to include:**

- People directly affected by the policy - their voices matter most!



See [“How to Position Directly Impacted People into Central Advocacy Roles”](#)

# HOW TO ORGANIZE A COALITION

## 3 MAKE SURE EVERYONE AGREES ON THE GOAL

To work well together, your group needs:

- **Shared values** – Be honest about why you are joining
- **Clear goals** – Discuss in a meeting to confirm everyone is in agreement

Why this matters:

- Different groups can support the same policy **for different reasons**
- But if their **core beliefs clash**, teamwork will be hard

Examples:

- **Hospitals** might want foreign-trained doctors to fill staff shortages
- **Immigrant advocates** might want those doctors to earn fair wages



These groups can still work together if they respect each other's goals.

## 4 TAKE ACTION AS A TEAM

Now is the time to do something together!

Examples:

- Organize an **Advocacy Day** or **Press Conference**
- Have one group write a **report** and others help promote it

How to succeed:

- **Plan as a team** – Agree on key messages and who does what
- **Share the work** – Team up on funding, problem-solving, and tasks
- **Do it together** – Make a coalition by taking action as a group

## 5 CHOOSE A NAME FOR YOUR GROUP

Why it matters:

- Helps people recognize your coalition
- Shows your strength in numbers
- **Example:** "*Vibrant Ohio*" (a group that helps immigrants succeed)

How to do it:

- **Decide together** – All members should agree on the name
- **Create a simple website** – Link your partners so others can find you

Remember:

- It is okay if members sometimes work differently—you are still a team
- Keep your own voice and unite when it matters most
- **Working Together = Stronger Impact**

# 5 STEPS TO ORGANIZE A CALL CAMPAIGN

*Meeting with a legislator's office is not the only way to make your voice heard. By organizing a call campaign, you can engage the public in your advocacy.*

## 1 CHOOSE WHO TO CALL

- **Identify the elected officials:** Use government guides to select elected officials ([federal](#)/[state](#)/[local](#))



Engage decision-makers who control your issue

## 2 TEST THE PHONE NUMBER

- Find your elected officials' contact information using [government directories](#)
- **In preparation**, call to learn the following:
  - Does a human answer?
  - Can callers leave voicemails?
  - What menu option leads to messaging?

## 3 PLAN YOUR APPROACH

- **Write:** A 15-second script and memorable hashtag (#StopBill123)
- **Time it right:**
  - Before important hearings and voting sessions
  - On issue-related, advocacy awareness days

**Motivate callers:** Explain why your issue is *important* to you and others


## 4 MOBILIZE YOUR NETWORK

- **Free tools:** Create a shareable "Call Toolkit" with:
  - Scripts
  - Phone numbers
  - Results tracker (Google Form)
  - Staff/Board makes the first calls
  - Blast emails and social media posts
  - Partners share simultaneously

## 5 BE PERSISTENT

- **Track:** Count calls made (via your tracker)
- **Amplify:**
  - Share caller stories ("Gloria called because...")
  - If you receive no response, continue to call and reach out



A person's hands are visible, holding a black smartphone and a white pen over a notebook. In the background, a professional microphone on a tripod stands on a wooden desk. The scene is dimly lit, with a soft blue overlay. The text 'COMMUNICATION TOOLS' is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font.

# COMMUNICATION TOOLS

# HOW TO USE THE MEDIA IN ADVOCACY



**In nonprofit work, how we share our message is important.**

When we use the media to tell our side of the story, we can:

- Educate and inspire decision-makers to support our **vision and ask**
- Engage more people to support us, like volunteers, donors, and community members

**Elected officials and their staff pay attention to public opinion.** Being interviewed by the media requires the same skills you use when meeting with elected officials:

- Be ready
- Say your message clearly (“**messaging**”)
- Ask people to take action

**Doing these interviews can feel scary, but do not worry:**

- **You are the expert on your life.** You know your story best. Be proud of that.
- **Focus on what you want to say.** Most reporters want to hear your point of view. If you become nervous or forget what you were saying, pause, take a breath, and try again.
- **Go with your gut.** If something about the interview, reporter or media company does not feel right, it is okay to say no. You have the choice to continue or stop.

**Working with the media helps you speak out and call on leaders to make change.**

**Want more help?** Visit these sections in this Advocacy Guide:

- [Messaging](#)
- [5 Tips for a Successful Media Interview](#)
- [Writing Op-Eds and Letters To The Editor](#)
- [Press Release](#) and [Media Advisory](#) Templates



# 5 TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEDIA INTERVIEW

Working with the news media is a great way to share your message and work toward policy changes. Follow these five best practices for interviews:

## 1 KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Before agreeing to an interview, research the media company and reporter. What kind of stories do they cover? Do they focus on specific issues or regions? Check if their reporting matches with your goals - if not, say **NO** to the interview.

Ask how it will be performed:

- Will it be live or recorded?
- Is it for TV, radio, print or online?
- Who else is being interviewed?

## 2 SET GROUND RULES

Clarify how you will be identified (e.g., your title, organization name). If interviewing someone affected by a policy, protect their privacy:

- Can they use a nickname or avoid photos
- Consult a lawyer if their immigration status is sensitive
- If the media company does not agree to these rules, **do not do the interview**



## 3 PREPARE

Practice presenting your important message and some stories that support it. Include a clear call to action, like:

- "Contact your elected officials"
- "Visit [website] to learn more"

## 4 CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW

- Repeat your important message multiple times
- If you do not know an answer, say so - never guess
- Pause if nervous; edits will fix mistakes
- Do **NOT** answer uncomfortable or inappropriate questions with confidence

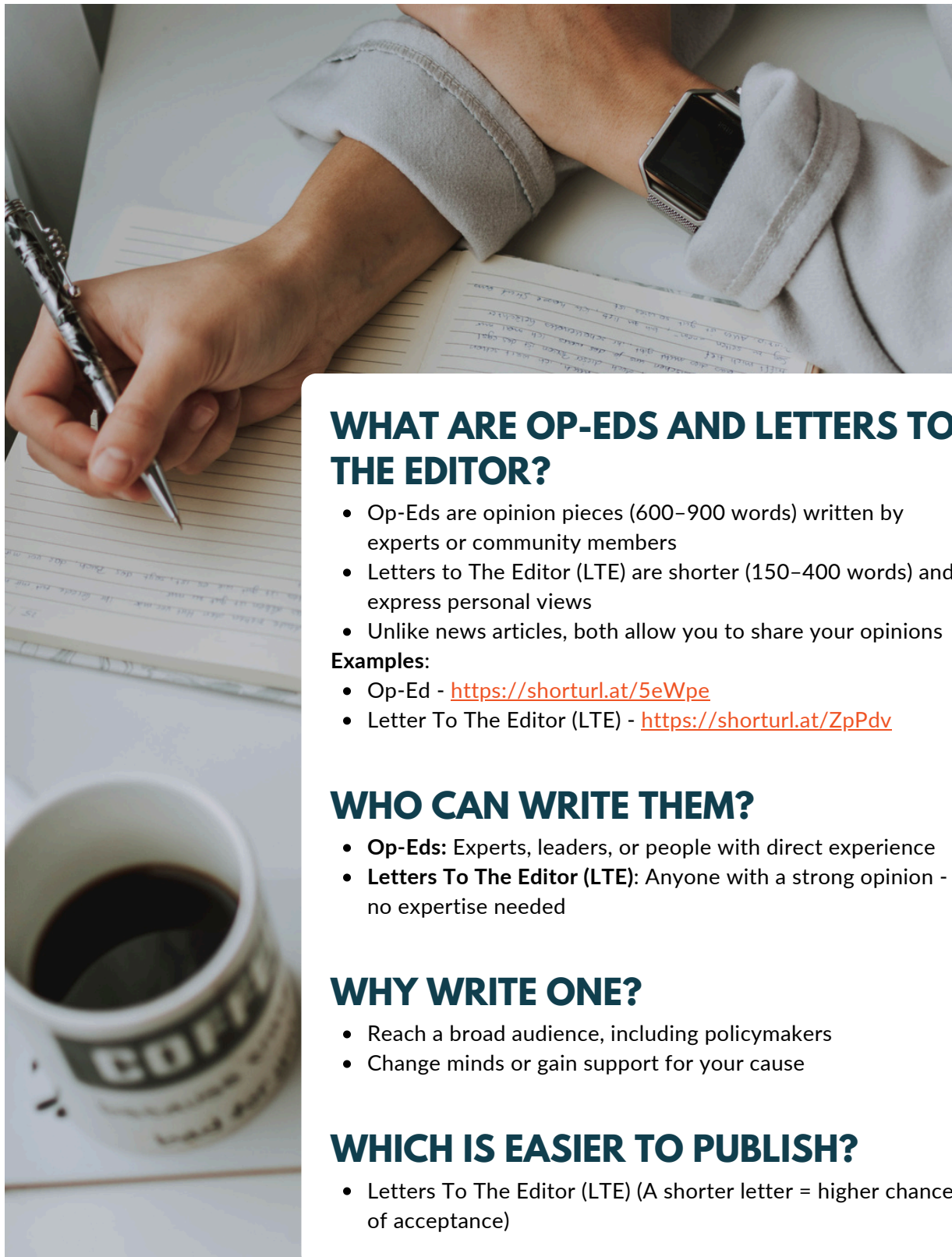
## 5 SPREAD THE MESSAGE

After the interview:

- Email the reporter resources to include
- Share the story if you and your message are presented well; if not, request corrections

# WRITING OP-EDS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### WHAT ARE OP-EDS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR?

- Op-Eds are opinion pieces (600–900 words) written by experts or community members
- Letters To The Editor (LTE) are shorter (150–400 words) and express personal views
- Unlike news articles, both allow you to share your opinions

#### Examples:

- Op-Ed - <https://shorturl.at/5eWpe>
- Letter To The Editor (LTE) - <https://shorturl.at/ZpPdv>

### WHO CAN WRITE THEM?

- **Op-Eds:** Experts, leaders, or people with direct experience
- **Letters To The Editor (LTE):** Anyone with a strong opinion - no expertise needed

### WHY WRITE ONE?

- Reach a broad audience, including policymakers
- Change minds or gain support for your cause

### WHICH IS EASIER TO PUBLISH?

- Letters To The Editor (LTE) (A shorter letter = higher chance of acceptance)



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# OP-ED & LETTER TO THE EDITOR TEMPLATES AND INSTRUCTIONS

## HOW TO WRITE AN OP-ED

- **Headline:** Make it interesting “catchy” (e.g., “Ohio’s Families Need Healthcare Reform Now”)
- **Opening:** Begin with a strong message, statistic, story, or issue-related news connection
- **Problem & Values:** State the issue and why it matters (e.g., fairness, safety)
- **Examples:** Share a personal story or data
- **Call to Action:** Strongly ask for changes on the issues! (e.g., “Call your senator to support Bill X”)
- **Bio:** Include your name, title, and organization (e.g., “Jane Doe leads Ohio Health Advocates. Learn more: [website]”)

## PUBLISHING TIPS

- Submit **Op-Ed** to **one local paper** at a time (e.g., *Cleveland Plain Dealer*)
- Follow the media company’s **exact guidelines** (word count, formatting)
- If no reply within **48 hours**, politely follow up (phone call, email)
- If rejected, try another paper or publish on **Medium**



## HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

- **Headline:** Keep it short (e.g., “Fix Our Schools”)
- **First Sentence:** Name the issue (“The June 5 article on school funding missed important points...”)
- **Opinion & Credibility:** The Letter should be written by people who are respected and/or related to the issue (“As a teacher, I see overcrowded classrooms daily”)
- **Values:** Explain why the issue matters (“All kids deserve safe schools”)
- **Call to Action:** Strongly ask for what you would like others to do (“Vote YES on Issue 10 this November”)

## PUBLISHING TIPS

- Check the media company’s **Letters to the Editor guidelines**
- Include your **contact information**. Only your name and city are published with your letter
- If unpublished after a week, submit your letter elsewhere

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# PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Press Release  
[INSERT LOGO]

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

CONTACT: [name, email, cell phone number]

### Headline

*Optional subheading*

[CITY] — Interesting “*catchy*” introduction. Explain what is happening and why it matters.

1. **Name, Title, Organization**, “Quote that summarizes their reaction to the news, their assessment of it, and/or what they hope to see happen as a result.”

“Connecting paragraph.”

2. **Name, Title, Organization**, “Quote that summarizes their reaction to the news, their assessment of it, and/or what they hope to see happen as a result.”

Additional resources, information, and/or call to action like attending an event or visiting a website.

###

*[Organizational mission statement and website]*

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# MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE

**Media Advisory**  
[INSERT LOGO]

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[Date]

**CONTACT:** [name, email, cell phone number]

## **Media Advisory - [location]** **Headline**

*Optional subheading*

[CITY] — Explain what is happening, where, with whom, and why it is important.

**WHAT:** Type of event

**WHEN:** Date and time

**WHERE:** Location (include RSVP if needed)

**WHO:** List of speakers with titles and organizations (affiliations)

**AUDIO/VISUALS:** Give reporters an idea about what they will be able to capture on camera/video/audio recorder to use in their stories.

Additional resources or information, including background for reporters to read, location details, etc.

###

*[Organizational mission statement and website]*





JOHN ADAMS • DANE • QUINCY • J. Q. ADAMS • WEBSTER • SUMNER • WILSON • ANDREW • CHOATE • PARSONS

MILESTONES ON THE ROAD TO FREEDOM IN MASSACHUSETTS



1797 - DAWN OF TOLERANCE IN MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC REPENTANCE. JUDGE SAMUEL SEWALL FOR HIS ACTION IN THE WITCHCRAFT TRIALS



1788 - JOHN HANCOCK, OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS TO PROPOSING THE ADDITION OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION



1779 - JOHN ADAMS, SAMUEL ADAMS AND JAMES BOWDOIN DRAFTING THE MASSACHUSETTS CONSTITUTION OF 1780

# CIVICS 101

# THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT: AN OVERVIEW

## HOW THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WORKS: THREE BRANCHES OF POWER

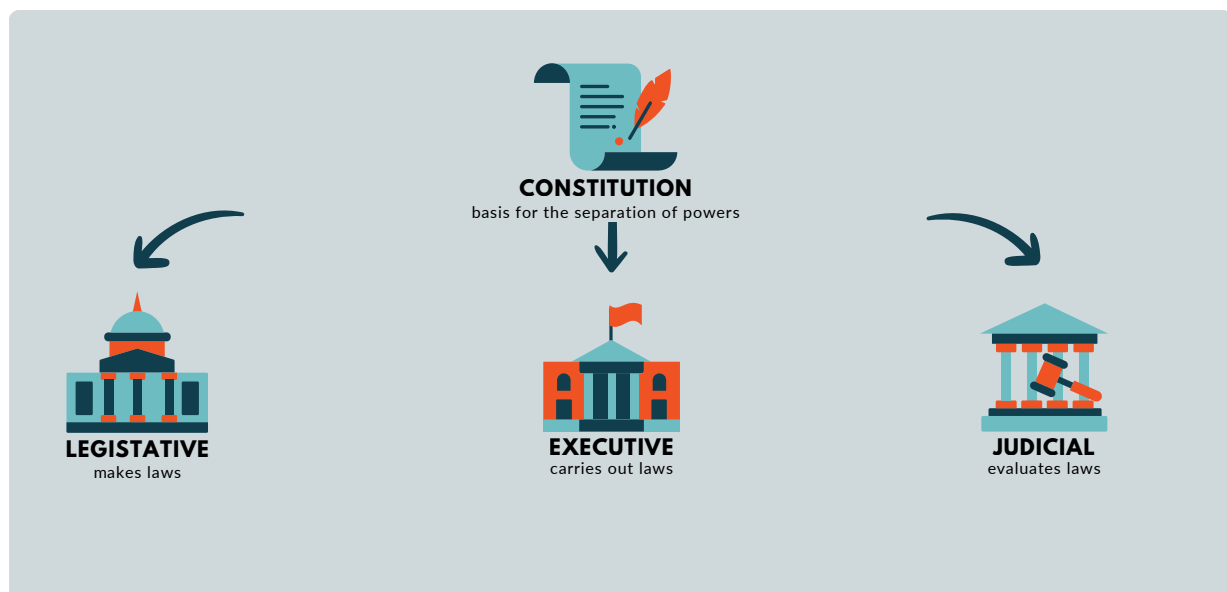
The United States is a *democracy*. That means people can vote for leaders, called **representatives**, who are to work together to serve the people.

Our government has **three parts**, or *branches*. Each one has a different job:

- The **Legislative Branch** makes the laws
- The **Executive Branch** carries out the laws
- The **Judicial Branch** evaluates the laws and settles disagreements about them

At the national (Federal) level, voters choose the people in the Legislative and Executive Branches. Judges (Judicial Branch) are appointed by the President or Congress and are not elected. But in state and local government, voters often do elect judges. Judges have the responsibility to make fair decisions based only on the law.

As an Ohioan, you are a **constituent** of the state, whether you can vote or not. That means government officials, especially in the Legislative and Executive Branches, have the responsibility to meet with their constituents and listen to their concerns. Judges usually do not meet with the public, because they must stay neutral and fair.





# UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT: 3 LEVELS THAT AFFECT YOUR LIFE

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (NATIONAL)

- **Includes:** President, Congress, Federal courts, and Agencies
- Makes and enforces national laws (the U.S. Code)
- Makes decisions that affect everyone in the country



## STATE GOVERNMENT (OHIO)

- **Includes:** Governor, Ohio lawmakers, State courts, and Agencies
- Enforces state laws (Ohio Revised Code)
- Makes decisions about education, health, jobs, and more

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (YOUR CITY & COUNTY)

- **Includes:** Mayors, Sheriffs, Councils, School Boards, and Courts
- Enforces **local laws** (ordinances)
- Impacts everyday life - safety, schools, roads, and housing



### WHO WRITES THE LAWS?

- **U.S. Congress** (Senators & Representatives): writes national laws
- **Ohio General Assembly** (State Senators & Representatives): writes Ohio laws
- Both use **committees** to review bills
- Immigration laws are often handled by Judiciary and Public Safety committees



### WHO ENFORCES THE LAWS?

- **President and Federal Agencies** (like Homeland Security)
- **Ohio Governor and State Agencies** (like Jobs and Family Services)
- These leaders oversee services that are used by all constituents including immigrants, workers, families, and schools



### WHY LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS IMPORTANT

- Local leaders make rules about housing, schools, and policing.
- Their decisions can create a welcoming and safe environment.



# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



In the U.S. Congress and Ohio's state legislature, lawmakers can suggest changes to the law by writing something called a **bill**. A bill is an idea written down, and it must go through many steps before becoming a law. Many bills are introduced each year, but most do not become a law. Changing the U.S. Constitution is even harder, it takes a majority vote in Congress and approval from most states in the country.

After a bill is introduced, a **committee** (a group of lawmakers) meets to talk about the bill. They may invite experts, constituents, or other people to speak. The committee can suggest changes (**amendments**) and then vote on whether to support the updated bill.



**Drafting a bill**



**Introducing a bill**



**The introduced bill goes to committee**



**Subcommittee review**

If the bill passes, the full House or Senate will look at the bill and vote again. If they say yes, the bill moves to the other group (House or Senate) and goes through the same steps. If both sides pass the bill, it goes to the Governor or President to be signed. If they say no (**veto**), the lawmakers can try again and require a larger majority vote to make the bill a law.



**Committee makes amendments and votes**



**The House or Senate votes on the bill**



**Referral of the bill to the next chamber**



**The bill goes to the Governor or President**

**Watch** “Inside the Ohio Statehouse - How a Bill Becomes a Law,” Honesty for Ohio Education. <https://shorturl.at/UJm4B>

**Watch** “How an Idea Becomes a Law,” PBS. <https://shorturl.at/5XNGC>

A person is shown in profile, working at a desk in a modern office. They are looking at a computer monitor and typing on a keyboard. The office has large windows in the background, and the overall lighting is soft and professional. The text 'TERMS & DEFINITIONS' is overlaid in the center of the image.

# **TERMS & DEFINITIONS**

# GOVERNMENT AND ADVOCACY TERMS



<b>Amendment</b>	A change made to a bill before it becomes a law.
<b>Advocacy</b>	Speaking up about an issue to ask lawmakers for support. People who do this are called <i>advocates</i> .
<b>Approve</b>	When lawmakers vote “yes” to help a bill become a law.
<b>Bill / Legislation</b>	An idea for a new law, written down by lawmakers and voted on.
<b>Call to Action</b>	A request for the public to do something to help a cause.
<b>Campaign</b>	When politicians try to get elected or are re-elected. In advocacy, a campaign is a group effort to reach a specific goal. Nonprofits must be careful not to become too involved in political campaigns.
<b>Committee</b>	A small group of lawmakers who look closely at certain issues or bills.
<b>Constitution / Code</b>	The main rules that everyone in a country, state, or town must follow.
<b>Deliberative Process</b>	When lawmakers talk about a bill and decide whether to change it, vote on it, or reject it.
<b>Grassroots Movements and Organizations</b>	Volunteers at the local level join together to create change at the local, regional, national, or international levels.



# GOVERNMENT AND ADVOCACY TERMS



## Executive Branch

The part of government that enforces laws, and is led by the President (federal) or the Governor (state).

## The Floor

The main area where lawmakers meet to talk and vote on bills.

## Judicial Branch

The courts that help solve problems with the law and make sure laws are followed fairly.

## Lawmaker / Legislator / Elected Official

Someone the public votes into office to write laws and help run the government.

## Legislative Branch

The part of government that writes laws and decides how to spend public money.

## Mark-Up

A meeting where lawmakers suggest changes to a bill.

## Organizing

Bringing people together to speak up and work toward the same goal.

## Oversight

When one part of the government checks on another to make sure they are doing things right.

## Policy

A rule or plan that explains how a law will be carried out.

## Veto

When the President or Governor says “no” to a bill. Lawmakers can try to pass it again, even after a veto.

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# U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP STATUSES

Asylee	Someone who comes to the U.S. and asks to stay because it is not safe to go home. If the U.S. agrees, they can stay and may later apply for a green card and citizenship.
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	Temporary protection for some people who came to the U.S. as children. It allows them to stay and work in the U.S., but does <b>not</b> lead to a green card or citizenship.
Humanitarian Parole	Special permission to enter the U.S. without a visa. It does <b>not</b> lead to a green card or citizenship.
Immigrant	A person who was born in another country and chose to move to the U.S. for work, education, or family reasons.
Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) / Green Card Holder	A person with legal permission to live and work in the U.S. long-term. They can lose this status if they break certain rules but can usually apply for citizenship later.
Naturalized Citizen	A person born outside the U.S. who moves to the U.S., applies for U.S. citizenship, and becomes a U.S. Citizen.
Non-Immigrant Visa Holder	Someone who comes to the U.S. for a short time to study, work, or travel but <b>not</b> to stay permanently.
Refugee	A person who had to leave their home country for safety and was allowed to come to the U.S. as part of a program. Refugees can later apply to stay permanently and become citizens.
Temporary Protected Status (TPS)	A short-term legal status for people from countries in crisis. It allows them to stay and work in the U.S. for a specific time period, but does <b>not</b> lead to a green card or citizenship.
U.S.-Born Citizen	A person born in the U.S. or to U.S. parents overseas. They are citizens from birth.
Undocumented Immigrant	A person in the U.S. without official permission. They might have crossed the border without a visa or stayed after their visa expired.

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# ADDITIONAL READING

## OHIO STATE LEGISLATION

Ohioans Against Extremism maintains a tracker of immigration, education, and other bills introduced in the Ohio legislature. Additional information can be found at [legislature.ohio.gov](https://legislature.ohio.gov).

The Tracker - <https://shorturl.at/CBB6O>

The Ohio Legislature - <https://legislature.ohio.gov/>

## DATA ON OHIO POLICY ISSUES

Policy Matters Ohio publishes research and policy analysis on social and economic issues, to inform the conversation about building a more vibrant, equitable, sustainable, and inclusive Ohio.

Policy Matters Ohio - <https://policymattersohio.org>

## DATA ON IMMIGRANTS IN OHIO

The American Immigration Council publishes data about immigrants in Ohio, including their demographic and economic traits.

Immigrants in Ohio - <https://shorturl.at/TEpyG>

## “OHIO IS HOME” RESOURCE BANK

The Ohio Immigrant Alliance created a resource bank for Ohio immigrants, service providers, and members of the public to learn about immigrants’ legal rights, and how agencies with a community-facing role can stay focused on their mission. The website is available in English, French, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese at [OhiolsHome.org](https://OhiolsHome.org).

Ohio is Home - <https://ohioishome.org>

## FEDERAL IMMIGRATION POLICY

Lucas Guttentag, a former Department of Homeland Security official and ACLU Immigrant Rights Project leader, publishes Trump administration immigration policies here.

Immigration Policy Tracking Project - <https://immpolicytracking.org>

## FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION

Find bills on immigration issues introduced in the U.S. Congress on this website, maintained by the Library of Congress. Additional information can be found on [congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov).

Immigration-related bills - <https://shorturl.at/HaksB>

Congress - <https://www.congress.gov>

## OHIO STANDS WITH IMMIGRANTS

Thousands of Ohio residents from 69 counties — and over 80 local organizations — are standing up for immigrants by sharing the *Ohio Stands With Immigrants* petition.

Source: OPAWL - Ohio Stands With Immigrants Toolkit - <https://shorturl.at/ZdSwD>



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# ABOUT VIBRANT OHIO

Vibrant Ohio is a statewide organization that enhances local immigrant and refugee integration efforts to build a more inclusive, equitable and prosperous Ohio economy.

Vibrant Ohio was founded in 2014 as the Ohio Welcoming Initiatives Network (OWIN) and changed its name after a 2020 strategic planning and organizational development process.

## AS VIBRANT OHIO

**We** believe that immigrants, refugees and the broader international community make Ohio a more vibrant place to call home.

**We** are the trusted connector to Ohio's immigrant and refugee communities and represent Ohio's major cities and a growing movement of smaller communities.

**We** work with Ohio's public and private institutions to promote economic integration of Ohio's growing immigrant and refugee communities.

**We** focus on workforce and economic development, language access, and expanded citizenship.



WelcomingCity



