



Frequently Asked Questions about the University Y's New American Welcome Center

Why are YMCAs such as the University Y developing New American Welcome Centers?

The Y is a global organization with an inclusive mission. We welcome all people. The Y's core values are caring, honesty, respect and responsibility - they guide everything we do. We focus our energy and resources on our cause: strengthening community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. With the changing demographics in our communities, the development of New American Welcome Centers is a strategic initiative aimed at fulfilling our mission.

What are the key principles behind the Y's Newcomer Integration Strategy?

- The Y is committed to helping all individuals, including newcomers, access the support and resources needed to reach their full potential.
- We deliver on our cause to strengthen community by empowering newcomers to be self-reliant, contributing members of society and fostering community cohesion.
- Through direct and referral services, as well as community bridge building efforts, we help newcomers integrate into American society and prepare receiving communities to be welcoming and inclusive.
- We believe that communities are at their strongest when everyone has an opportunity to contribute and neighbors from all backgrounds work together on a shared vision for the future.

What is the Role of the NAWC Advisory Committee?

A central focus of our NAWC will be aimed at engaging community institutions and mobilizing community resources to make our community welcoming to newcomers and immigrants. The NAWC Advisory Committee represents key stakeholders that represent elected officials, public and private sector institutions, immigrant leaders, non-profit organizations and faith communities. Together these community leaders will identify needs, develop strategies and oversee the implementation of plans to ensure that we are a welcoming community for all. The Advisory Committee will meet three times a year but will convene working groups to develop action plans between meetings.

Who will be served by the New American Welcome Center?

The NAWC will serve all newcomers and immigrants in our community without regard to their legal status. As noted, the Y is a global organization with an inclusive mission that welcomes all people.

What types of services will be offered through the New American Welcome Center?

The University Y will continue to support immigrants through existing programs such as La Linea, our Spanish language community helpline and our New Americans Initiative that does outreach and support to immigrant community about becoming U.S. citizens. But an important step in developing the New American Welcome Center will be identifying needs as well as gaps in services in an effort to strengthen and possibly expand services to meet the needs of local immigrant communities. Our emphasis will be on five pathways of integration - Language & Education, Health & Well-being, Citizenship & Civic Engagement, Economic Integration & Employment, and Community Development.

Where will the NAWC be located?

The NAWC is both a physical and virtual space. An important part of our work will be to ensure that all of our community institutions are actively engaged in being part of a welcoming community. This means that the programs and services of the NAWC will not be contained in one building or location but rather integrated in all aspects of life in our community. However, one of the goals of the center will be to ensure that services for immigrants are easy to access. In that regard, we anticipate that one of the projects might include identifying a location in our community that can house a variety of agencies that actively serve immigrants and refugees to make those services more accessible and easier to utilize.