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Overall Findings

Star	Total Criteria	Compliance	Non-Compliant
One-Star	16	16	0
Two-Star	23	23	0
Three-Star	21	21	0
Four-Star	20	16	4
Five-Star	26	14	12

Summary

With additional evidence submitted, Worcester has achieved the 3-star Certified Welcoming designation and demonstrates a strong commitment to immigrant inclusion. Policies, practices, and programs across Worcester demonstrate intentional efforts to foster an inclusive sense of belonging and sustain collaborative systems that promote immigrant inclusion and wellbeing. Networks and partnerships are central to this strategy, forming the foundation of Worcester's immigrant inclusion infrastructure, with community-anchored organizations and leaders shaping priorities, implementing programs, and helping ensure policies and practices reflect immigrant needs and goals.

The Office of New Americans at Friendly House, the broader Friendly House system, the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, and the Worcester Public Library provide essential support, advancing equitable access in areas of ongoing and growing need. Community-based organizations, including the Southeast Asian Coalition, African Community Education, the Latino Education Institute, and Worcester Refugee and Immigrant Support and Empowerment for Health, leverage strong community ties to implement culturally informed, community-connected programs.

Education and economic development are strengths. The Worcester Public Schools' Office of Multilingual Education and Office of Family and Community Engagement

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coordinate programs and initiatives for multilingual learners, strengthening the inclusion of immigrant students and families. Meanwhile, the City of Worcester's Executive Office of Economic Development and community partners advance culturally responsive workforce and business development initiatives aligned with immigrant residents' needs and priorities.

As the City of Worcester continues to deepen its work, there are opportunities to expand local government investments in immigrant leadership, provide training on accessing and using government data, scale mental health support, and enhance public trust in law enforcement. The City of Worcester's goal to develop and implement an Immigrant Welcoming Plan presents a strategic opportunity to deepen and further institutionalize immigrant inclusion priorities, policies, and practices across government departments and in partnership with immigrant residents and the broader community.

The City of Worcester's Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, including Office of Human Rights, supports language access and cross-departmental initiatives, strengthening the local government's capacity to drive systemic change. The strong progress and momentum in enhancing cross-departmental coordination demonstrates promising potential for further advancing immigrant inclusion as part of broader equity initiatives.

Additionally, the evidence provided of Worcester's immigrant inclusion work reflects a strong focus on new arrivals and low-income residents. While meeting the urgent needs of and targeted investment in these populations are essential, there may be an opportunity to also deepen engagement with longstanding immigrants and incorporate asset-based strategies across a wide range of income levels.

Detailed information about each framework area, including compliance, observations, highlights for specific criteria, and a summary of findings, is provided in the sections below.

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Framework Areas & Indicators

This section provides feedback from the auditor regarding all frameworks and indicators.

Civic Engagement

Welcoming communities ensure that all residents, including immigrants, are able to fully participate in civic life. Immigrant residents have access to democratic spaces, and shape community priorities and policies. Immigrants hold leadership roles in the community, and local institutions are invested in increasing access to leadership positions for immigrant residents.

One-Star		Two-Star		Three-Star		Four-Star		Five-Star	
Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant
1	0	1	0	3	0	3	0	1	3

Framework Summary

With additional evidence submitted, Worcester meets all of the criteria for the 4-star Certified Welcoming designation in the civic engagement framework area. Additional gaps remain for compliance with 5-star criteria. Civic engagement in Worcester is supported by a robust network of local government and community-based organizations.

Community-based organizations such as the Southeast Asian Coalition, African Community Education, and Latino Education Institute serve as anchors in the community, offering programs that cultivate youth leadership, build community power, and foster civic belonging. Meanwhile, government entities such as the Worcester Election Commission, Citizens Advisory Council, and Worcester Public Library advance access to resources and opportunities that support immigrant

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participation in civic life.

The Citizens Advisory Council's removal of the registered voter requirement for commissions and boards reflects a structural change that expands pathways for non-citizen residents to participate in civic decision-making and represent their communities. There is an observation for CE 5.0 (Programs address barriers to immigrant participation on local government commissions and boards). Identification of and addressing additional barriers is required for recertification.

Evidence of the Worcester Immigrant Belonging Program, including evidence of the first gathering held on July 21, 2026, and the plan for monthly workshops held through the program, fulfill the criteria for CE 3.1 (A program connects immigrants with local government departments and community resources with the goal of supporting immigrants in navigating and accessing these services). Additionally, the program design, which incorporates data on language access needs, and the multilingual interpretation services offered to program participants, fulfill the criteria for CE 3.2. (The program is accessible to speakers of languages other than English). There are observations for CE 3.1 and CE 3.2; as the Worcester Immigrant Belonging Program is newly established, continued implementation of the program is required to demonstrate continued compliance with the criteria.

Worcester's Immigrant Belonging program demonstrates strong promise and momentum for enhancing the local civic engagement infrastructure by opening new opportunities for immigrant residents to build and deepen relationships with local government and community resources and personnel.

Gaps in evidence remain for the following 5-star criteria:

CE 5.1 (Programs address language access needs for participation in public boards and commissions). The intent of this criteria is that local government boards and commissions allow for individuals with limited or no English proficiency to serve. A general language access policy alone is insufficient as there is an expectation that language access support is actively available and communicated for boards and commissions, including in outreach and recruitment strategies and during board and commission meetings regardless if there is or is not an explicitly stated need.

CE 5.2 (Programs engage state and/or local election offices on barriers to voting for eligible immigrants). Evidence should address systemic and institutional barriers that are specific to voting.

CE 5.3 (Programs provide training to immigrant residents on accessing and using local governments' data and information). The evidence is expected to demonstrate that the provided training is reaching immigrants.

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Indicator Feedback

Indicator	Compliance	Evidence	Observations	Highlights
CE1.0 Programs support immigrants in obtaining U.S. citizenship.	Compliant	Citizenship courses offered by Worcester Public Library and Catholic Charities of Worcester County		
CE2.0 Programs support eligible immigrants in voting.	Compliant	Resources and outreach by Worcester Election Commission, Worcester Public Library, the League of Women Voters, and the Southeast Asian Coalition		
CE3.0 Programs support immigrants in developing civic leadership skills and are accessible to speakers of languages other than English	Compliant	Southeast Asian Coalition and Latino Education Institute's Latinos Involved in Discovering Educational Resources Program		
CE3.1 A program connects immigrants with local government departments and community resources with the goal of supporting immigrants in navigating and accessing these services.	Compliant	Worcester Immigrant Belonging Program, including evidence of the first gathering held on July 21, 2026, and the plan for monthly workshops	As the Worcester Immigrant Belonging Program is newly established, continued implementation of the program is required to demonstrate continued compliance with this criteria.	
CE3.2 The program (CE 3.1) is accessible to	Compliant	Multilingual interpretation	As the Worcester Immigrant	

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speakers of languages other than English.		services offered for program participants and program design, which incorporates demographic trends, community data, and linguistic needs	Belonging Program is newly established, continued implementation of the program is required to demonstrate continued compliance with this criteria.	
CE4.0 Programs build immigrant youth leadership.	Compliant	African Community Education's Student Leadership Council, the Latino Education Institute's Latinos Involved in Discovering Educational Resources program, and the Southeast Asian Coalition's Youth Effect program		
CE4.1 Programs address barriers to immigrant participation in public hearings and meetings.	Compliant	Childcare services and the City Clerk Office's development and dissemination of a Public Participation Guide		
CE4.2 Programs address language access needs for participation in public hearings and meetings.	Compliant	In-person and online language interpretation offered by the City of Worcester		
CE5.0 Programs address barriers to immigrant participation on local government commissions and boards.	Compliant	The Community Advisory Council's removal of the registered voter requirement for serving on commissions and boards	Identification of and addressing additional barriers is required for recertification.	
CE5.1 Programs address language access	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		

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needs for participation in public boards and commissions.				
CE5.2 Programs engage state and / or local election offices on barriers to voting for eligible immigrants.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
CE5.3 Programs provide training to immigrant residents on accessing and using local governments' data and information.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		

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Connected Communities

Welcoming communities build connections and trust between residents. Community institutions — including local government, businesses, faith communities, and nonprofits — create opportunities and spaces for immigrant and non-immigrant residents to have constructive interactions, develop relationships, and deepen their understanding of one another. Institutions support residents in building their personal capacity to engage with people different from themselves on equal footing and in sustained ways that reduce prejudice and strengthen diverse community relationships.

One-Star		Two-Star		Three-Star		Four-Star		Five-Star	
Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant
4	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	1	1

Framework Summary

Worcester meets all of the criteria for the 3-star Certified Welcoming designation in the connected communities framework area, but does not yet meet all of the criteria for a 5-star designation.

Across Worcester, multiple initiatives provide opportunities for residents of diverse backgrounds to come together, exchange experiences, and build relationships. Examples include Edward Street Child Services' community events, the Office of New Americans' International Migrants Day, and cultural festivals and celebrations organized by and in collaboration with immigrant communities that bring residents of diverse backgrounds together.

Public communication from local government leaders, including the Mayor and City Manager, has been consistent and ongoing, demonstrating a visible commitment to welcoming immigrants. In addition, both government and community organizations demonstrate efforts of connecting immigrant inclusion within broader equity work. The Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion's coordination efforts are a strength, creating a strong foundation and opportunity for deepening cross-departmental strategies that recognize the intersectional identities of residents.

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Welcoming communities build connection and trust by creating opportunities and spaces for constructive, sustained interactions among people from different backgrounds and identities, helping to reduce prejudice over time. In addition, the intersectionality of identity is essential to immigrant inclusion efforts, as individuals may experience overlapping forms of discrimination. In this context, analysts note that allegations of transphobia involving the Worcester City Council were identified through the desktop research and media scan, and encourage continued efforts to address and honor the full range of community experiences and identities.

Gaps in evidence remain for CC 4.0 and CC 5.1.

CC 4.0 (Programs that serve diverse immigrant and non-immigrant residents embed strategies to build relationships between immigrant and non-immigrant participants and CC 5.1 (Programs resource initiatives that bring immigrant and non-immigrant residents together to identify and work on common interests or challenges). The evidence provided in the self-assessment (Advocacy for Refugee and Immigrant Services for Empowerment's matching of advocates with families and the Worcester Alliance for Refugee Ministry's Befriend A Family program), while meaningful and relationship-oriented, do not meet the intent of the criteria as they are focused around support and accompaniment, not equal-footing relationship building.

CC 4.0 and CC 5.1 focus on program design and as such, evidence must demonstrate that programs that bring immigrant and non-immigrant residents together are intentional in their strategy through program design to build relationships between residents. Evidence of the program design and the strategies it utilizes are closely evaluated for these criteria.

Welcoming America utilizes intergroup contact theory.

Key components of intergroup contact theory include bringing the same people together over a period of time to engage on equal footing on a common issue or goal. Welcoming America recommends the webinar and toolkit from Global Detroit ["Best Practices for Cultivating Social Cohesion Using Contact Theory"](#) and the toolkit from Center for Inclusion and Belonging, Welcoming America, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, ["Cultivating Contact: A Guide to Building Bridges and Meaningful Connections Between Groups."](#)

In addition, there is an observation for CC 5.0 (The local government accommodates diverse cultural and religious practices in its daily operations). Although the City of Worcester's reasonable accommodations policy fulfills the criteria, additional and continued efforts to identify and address the evolving and diverse needs of staff are expected for recertification.

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Indicator Feedback

Indicator	Compliance	Evidence	Observations	Highlights
CC1.0 Local government leadership does not make public statements discouraging immigration or immigrant inclusion.	Compliant	No such statements were found during research and analysis.		
CC1.1 There is ongoing public communication from local government leadership about its commitment to welcoming immigrants.	Compliant	Local government leaders regularly make statements about their commitment to welcoming, as evidenced by press releases, public statements, and social media.		
CC1.2 Local government leadership does not make public statements directly attacking individuals or groups on the basis of their immigration status, national origin, religion, ethnicity, race, gender and gender identity, ancestry, sexual orientation, or ability.	Compliant	No such statements were found during research and analysis.		
CC1.3 The local government participates in celebrations of immigrant cultures, customs, and beliefs.	Compliant	The Mayor's participation in cultural celebrations, including Centro's Hispanic Heritage Breakfast and the Armenian Festival		
CC2.0 Programs bring together immigrant and non-immigrant residents to build relationships.	Compliant	The Worcester's Refugee Assistance Teen Mentoring program, the Clemente Course		

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		in the Humanities experiential education program, and Welcome Tables at the Day of Play Family Festival organized by Edward Street Child Services		
CC2.1 Arts and creative placemaking programs highlight the diverse artistic traditions of the community in public spaces.	Compliant	"We are Worcester" art project and Casita Cultural Latina's Dia de los Muertos displays		
CC2.2 Community efforts advancing immigrant inclusion are connected to broader equity work.	Compliant	The Worcester Food Assessment and efforts by the Worcester Food Policy Council and its partners		
CC3.0 Local government efforts to advance immigrant inclusion are connected to and reinforce the local government's broader equity work.	Compliant	The Executive Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and its division of Human Rights, and the Greater Worcester Community Health Improvement Plan		
CC4.0 Programs that serve diverse immigrant and non-immigrant residents embed strategies to build relationships between immigrant and non-immigrant participants.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
CC4.1 Programs work to address biases about others held by non-immigrant residents.	Compliant	Community education opportunities by the Office of New Americans at Friendly		

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		House, including International Migrants Day storytelling and training activities		
CC4.2 Programs work to address biases about others held by immigrant residents.	Compliant	Southeast Asian Coalition's community education and the Clemente Course in the Humanities		
CC5.0 The local government accommodates diverse cultural and religious practices in its daily operations.	Compliant	City of Worcester's reasonable accommodations policy for employees and applicants who make requests for religious practices	Additional and continued efforts to identify and address the evolving and diverse needs of staff are expected for recertification.	
CC5.1 Programs resource initiatives that bring immigrant and non-immigrant residents together to identify and work on common interests or challenges.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		

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Economic Development

In welcoming communities, all residents — including immigrants — can participate fully in the economy. Workforce and economic development infrastructure address the priorities and needs of immigrant residents and immigrant jobseekers. Programs that support entrepreneurship, business development, and workforce development are accessible to all residents, including immigrants. Local businesses are committed to diverse hiring and retaining employees with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

One-Star		Two-Star		Three-Star		Four-Star		Five-Star	
Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant
2	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	5	0

Framework Summary

Worcester meets all of the criteria for the 5-star Certified Welcoming designation in the economic development framework area. Economic development is a strength for Worcester.

An array of initiatives, including partnerships between local government and community organizations, across Worcester supports immigrant residents in accessing jobs, training opportunities, and entrepreneurship pathways. These efforts help ensure that workforce and business development resources are accessible, culturally responsive, and aligned with the goals and aspirations of immigrant communities.

Key partners include the Executive Office of Economic Development, MassHire Central Region Workforce, Worcester State University, the Latin American Business Organization, the Worcester Regional Food Hub, the Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition, and the African Bridge Network.

There are multiple highlights in the economic development framework area.

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Worcester State University's guide to Professional Licensure is recognized as a highlight for resourcing immigrant job seekers in pathways to career goals in multiple sectors.

The Diverse Business Certification Program is also a highlight for its program design and marketing, which address barriers immigrant businesses face in certification and procurement processes. In addition, the ESOL Bridge Grant is a highlight for providing ESOL training through local employers, addressing a barrier to retention.

There is an observation for EC 5.1 (Programs work with employers to build welcoming work environments) and EC 5.2 (Programs work with employers to identify and address barriers to hiring immigrant job seekers). Although the Human Services Career Support Program's collaboration with Open Sky Community Services and the Seven Hills Foundation fulfills the criteria for EC 5.1 and EC 5.2, evidence of additional programs—particularly at expanded scale and across sectors beyond human services—working to build welcoming workplace environments and identify and address barriers to hiring is expected for recertification.

In addition, there may be an opportunity to deepen relationships with business cooperatives, recognizing their promise in supporting inclusive economic models and fostering shared ownership that could strengthen both economic stability and community belonging for immigrant residents.

Continued investment in Worcester's economic development can further advance immigrant inclusion by expanding and enhancing opportunities for Worcester's immigrant residents to apply their skills and talents and access economic mobility, while also benefiting from and contributing to the city's growth.

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Indicator Feedback

Indicator	Compliance	Evidence	Observations	Highlights
EC1.0 Programs support immigrant job seekers in finding and obtaining employment.	Compliant	MassHire's Immigrant and Refugee Employment Initiative and Ascentria Care Alliance's job readiness and vocational services		
EC1.1 Programs support immigrant business owners in starting, sustaining, or growing their businesses.	Compliant	Latin American Business Organization, Worcester Regional Food Hub, Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition, and Southeast Asian Coalition		
EC2.0 Programs support immigrant adults in accessing additional education to obtain the skills and degrees required to meet their employment goals.	Compliant	Worcester Jobs Fund and Worcester State University's Intensive English Language Institute's Guide to Professional Licensure		Worcester State University's Intensive English Language Institute's Guide to Professional Licensure is recognized as a highlight as it is a comprehensive resource to support immigrant adults in accessing the education needed to meet their employment goals.
EC2.1 Programs address barriers for immigrant entrepreneurs and business	Compliant	City of Worcester Executive Office of Economic Development's information		

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owners.		sessions in partnership with Latin American Business Organization, African Community Education, and the Liberian Association of Worcester, among other community-based organizations		
EC3.0 Local workforce agencies have information on current and projected demographic trends of the local immigrant population and the unique barriers faced by immigrant jobseekers.	Compliant	MassHire Worcester Career Center and the broader MassHire system		
EC3.1 Programs support immigrant job seekers in communicating foreign work experience and skills for U.S. employers.	Compliant	African Bridge Network and Worcester State University's Guide to Professional Licensure		
EC3.2 Chambers of commerce and/or economic development agencies are engaged in immigrant inclusion work.	Compliant	Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce's Diverse Professionals Roundtable		
EC4.0 Programs support immigrants in meeting occupational certification and / or credentialing requirements.	Compliant	MassHire Central Region Workforce Board and North Central Workforce Boards and African Bridge Network's workshops, including Orientation Workshop for Foreign-Trained Professionals and the Immigrant		

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		Professionals Fellowship		
EC4.1 Programs support immigrant business owners in accessing capital to start, sustain, and grow their businesses.	Compliant	City of Worcester's Executive Office of Economic Development's Diverse Business Certification Grant Program, including partnerships with Latin American Business Association, Mass Women of Color, and the Southeast Asian Coalition		
EC5.0 Programs work with relevant state agencies to address barriers to occupational licensing for immigrant residents.	Compliant	Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition and African Bridge Network's advocacy for the Physician Pathway Act		
EC5.1 Programs work with employers to build welcoming work environments.	Compliant	Human Services Career Support program's engagement with staff coordinators at Open Sky Community Services and the Seven Hills Foundation	Evidence of additional programs, with attention to scale and across sectors beyond human services, working to build welcoming work environments, is expected for recertification.	
EC5.2 Programs work with employers to identify and address barriers to hiring immigrant job seekers.	Compliant	Human Services Career Support program, in collaboration with Open Sky Community Services and the Seven Hills Foundation	Evidence of additional programs, with attention to scale and across sectors beyond human services, working to identify and address	

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			barriers to hiring immigrant job seekers, is expected for recertification.	
EC5.3 Programs work with employers and immigrant employees to identify and address barriers to retaining immigrant staff.	Compliant	Workforce Training Fund Program and its ESOL Bridge Grant, and Human Services Career Support program		The ESOL Bridge Grant is a highlight for providing ESOL training through local employers, addressing a barrier to retention.
EC5.4 Programs address barriers to obtaining local government procurement and contracting opportunities.	Compliant	City of Worcester's Executive Office of Economic Development's partnership with the UMass Donahue Institute and development of the Diverse Business Certification Program		The Diverse Business Certification Program is a highlight for partnering to address barriers for immigrant businesses in certification and procurement.

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Education

In welcoming communities, the education system ensures all students, including immigrant students, have the support they need to thrive in school and the knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce. Schools and community education programs are informed by the needs and priorities of immigrant students and families, and are accessible to all residents, including immigrants. Welcoming and inclusion efforts are not siloed within a single school or program, but incorporated into the schools and school districts that serve the community.

One-Star		Two-Star		Three-Star		Four-Star		Five-Star	
Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant
3	0	3	0	4	0	3	0	3	1

Framework Summary

Worcester meets all of the criteria for the 4-star designation in the education framework area, and all but one criteria to achieve a 5-star designation in this area. Education is a strength for Worcester. Worcester benefits from a robust landscape of programs, led by Worcester Public Schools (WPS) and multiple higher education and nonprofit partners, that support immigrant students and families in accessing and participating in the education system from early learning through adulthood.

WPS' Office of Multilingual Education, Office of Family and Community Engagement, and Wraparound Coordinators serve as key actors in coordinating programs and initiatives for multilingual learners and strengthening the inclusion of immigrant students and families in the school system.

The WPS Family Institute for Student Success is a highlight for its structure and intentional, evidence-based plan to engage families, with particular attention to diverse families. In addition, WPS' proactive approach to family engagement demonstrates active evaluation and adjustment of strategies to strengthen relationships with immigrant families. By responding to and elevating family voices, these efforts facilitate trust-building and strengthen immigrant families' sense of belonging in

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Worcester schools.

Worcester demonstrates investments in early childhood education, including through local and state advocacy engagement by groups such as Edward Street Child Services. In addition, Worcester benefits from a number of higher education access and adult education service providers, programs, and resources, such as Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester Adult Learning Center, the Latino Education Institute, and African Community Education.

Gaps in evidence remain for ED 5.1 (Programs support immigrant students in accessing mental health services). Accessibility, scale, and consistency of mental health services for immigrant students are factored into the compliance assessment.

As Worcester continues to invest in its education landscape, targeted policy, funding, and state engagement efforts to advance family engagement, deepen linguistically and culturally responsive interpretation services, and expand adult learning pathways, will be key to supporting the success and wellbeing of immigrant students and families.

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Indicator Feedback

Indicator	Compliance	Evidence	Observations	Highlights
ED1.0 Programs address barriers to navigating local K-12 school district(s) for immigrant families.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools' Office of Multilingual Education, Office of Family and Community Engagement, and partnership with the Latino Education Institute		
ED1.1 Local K-12 school districts provide language accessible information about the school system and services available to immigrant families.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools offers registration videos and flyers in multiple languages. Their enrollment staff are linguistically and culturally competent, with more than ten languages spoken.		
ED1.2 Programs work to address barriers to adult English language classes.	Compliant	Worcester Adult Learning Center, Quinsigamond Community College, and Worcester Public Library's ESOL program		
ED2.0 Programs support immigrant family engagement in their child's education.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools' Family Institute for Student Success and English Learners Parent Advisory Council		The Worcester Public Schools Family Institute for Student Success is a highlight due to its structure, intentionality, and evidence-based plan to engage families with attention

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				to diverse families.
ED2.1 Programs support immigrant students in understanding and accessing higher education opportunities.	Compliant	African Community Education's programs, and Worcester State University and Latino Education Institute's Latinos Involved in Discovering Educational Resources program		
ED2.2 Programs address barriers to the adult education infrastructure for immigrant adults.	Compliant	Quinsigamond Community College's The Future Focus Program and Adult Community Learning Center		
ED3.0 Programs train K-12 educators and staff on teaching and supporting diverse student populations, including immigrant students.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools Family Training Series		
ED3.1 Programs support immigrant students in accessing career technical education.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools Career Vocational Technical Education programs		
ED3.2 K-12 schools support immigrant students that have limited or interrupted formal education to attain their educational goals.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools' Office of Multilingual Education and its three New Citizens Centers		
ED3.3 Programs provide contextualized English language classes for adult English learners.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools Adult Learning Center, Quinsigamond Community		

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		College, Worcester Adult Learning Center's Certified Nursing Assistant program, and Advocacy for Refugee and Immigrant Services for Empowerment's courses		
ED4.0 Programs work with K-12 schools to regularly collect feedback from immigrant families on the school environment.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools' Culture and Climate Survey		
ED4.1 Programs address barriers to participation in family engagement programs for immigrant families.	Compliant	Worcester Public Schools, including its Office of Family and Community Engagement		
ED4.2 Programs address barriers to early childhood education and care for immigrant children.	Compliant	Edward Street Child Services advocacy and community outreach		
ED5.0 K-12 schools accommodate diverse cultural and religious practices in daily operations.	Compliant	Culturally sensitive menus, faith holiday acknowledgments, and dress code accommodations for Worcester Public Schools students		
ED5.1 Programs support immigrant students in accessing mental health services.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
ED5.2 Programs engage the state government on expanding access to adult	Compliant	Quinsigamond Community College's advocacy		

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education programs for immigrant adults.		engagement with the State of Massachusetts		
ED5.3 Programs engage the state government on expanding access to early childhood education and care programs for immigrant children.	Compliant	Edward Street Child Services engagement with the State of Massachusetts		

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Equitable Access

Welcoming communities ensure local services are accessible to all residents, including immigrants. Immigrant residents provide feedback to local government and community based organizations to identify and address demographic disparities and gaps in services, and to improve access to programs, particularly in the areas of housing, health, transportation, financial services, and the justice system.

One-Star		Two-Star		Three-Star		Four-Star		Five-Star	
Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant
1	0	4	0	3	0	4	0	3	1

Framework Summary

Worcester meets all of the criteria for a 4-star designation in the equitable access framework area, and all but one criteria to achieve a 5-star designation in this area. Equitable access is a strength, with networks and systems driven by service providers and community-based organizations that are intentionally designed to increase access and reduce disparities for immigrant residents.

Worcester benefits from a community infrastructure that enables programs and services to adapt quickly to emerging needs, as demonstrated by the community's repeated efforts to support new arrivals, including the 2023 arrivals of Haitian individuals and families.

The Office of New Americans at Friendly House, and the broader Friendly House system, are a strength. By coordinating resources, volunteers, and community connections, they serve as pillars of support for immigrant residents and families. Friendly House's coordination of employment, housing, food, and social services provides essential support. In addition, institutions such as the Greater Worcester Community Foundation work closely with local partners to support the resourcing of efforts that strengthen the levers for community vitality.

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Worcester RISE (Refugee and Immigrant Support and Empowerment) for Health's Community Doulas Program is a highlight for providing non-medical, culturally affirming support during pregnancy, childbirth, and the early postpartum period, with intentional efforts aimed to match individuals with doulas who share or understand their language and cultural experiences.

In addition, Worcester Public Library's monthly legal consultations are a highlight, demonstrating collaboration with legal service providers and community organizations to address barriers to legal services. The library's efforts to clarify immigrant patrons' rights and privacy support safe and inclusive access to library services, including for legal assistance consultations.

Gaps in evidence remain for EA 5.1 (Programs address barriers to homeownership for immigrants). The evidence provided in the self-assessment does not meet the intent of this criteria, which is the existence of programs that identify and address barriers immigrants face in becoming homeowners.

There is an opportunity to deepen and expand initiatives that address barriers to access to mental health services for immigrant communities, in recognition of the ongoing and growing scale of need. Those who have experienced displacement, uprooting, or other migration-related trauma face mental health challenges that are further compounded by fear and uncertainty stemming from the current political climate of immigration enforcement.

Looking ahead, continued investment in legal access, inclusive and accessible government communications, and strategies to meet evolving community needs will be essential, particularly amid heightened immigration enforcement measures, which have increased fear of accessing services. Continuing to strengthen these efforts can enhance immigrant communities' access to resources, reduce disparities, and foster a deeper sense of belonging.

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Indicator Feedback

Indicator	Compliance	Evidence	Observations	Highlights
EA1.0 Local government departments disseminate information on government services, resources, and public benefits with the goal of expanding access to immigrants.	Compliant	City of Worcester's Office of the City Manager, including its communications division, information sharing with the Office of New Americans at Friendly House		
EA2.0 Information from the local government (EA 1.0) is communicated through outreach methods that are proven to be effective in reaching immigrant residents.	Compliant	City of Worcester, including Communications division's, engagement with the Office of New Americans at Friendly House for targeted dissemination of information and City of Worcester Public Health Division's Church Initiative		
EA2.1 Programs address barriers to immigrants accessing and navigating preventative healthcare.	Compliant	Worcester RISE (Refugee and Immigrant Support and Empowerment) for Health and the Family Health Center of Worcester		
EA2.2 Programs inform immigrants of workers' rights.	Compliant	Worcester Public Library and various community partner sites display multilingual materials		

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EA2.3 Programs address barriers to digital inclusion for immigrant residents.	Compliant	City of Worcester's Digital Equity Planning Report and African Community Education's partnership with Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and UMass Lowell		
EA3.0 Information from the local government (EA 1.0) is provided in languages other than English.	Compliant	Cross-departmental language access coordination, including translation and interpretation services, by the Office of Human Rights of the City of Worcester's Executive Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion		
EA3.1 Programs address barriers to immigrants in accessing immigration legal services.	Compliant	Catholic Charities of Worcester County, Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice, Ascentria's Immigrant Legal Assistance Program, and Free Immigration Legal Help Clinic collaboration at the Worcester Public Library		The Worcester Public Library Free Immigration Legal Help Clinic monthly legal assistance program is a highlight for collaborating with community-based and legal aid organizations to address barriers to immigration legal services.
EA3.2 Programs address barriers to immigrants accessing and navigating maternal and infant healthcare.	Compliant	Worcester RISE (Refugee and Immigrant Support and Empowerment) for Health's Maternal & Child Health Program and Community Doulas Program		Worcester RISE Health's Community Doulas Program is a highlight for providing non-medical, culturally affirming support during pregnancy, childbirth, and the early

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				postpartum period, with intentional efforts to match individuals with doulas who share or understand their language and cultural experiences.
EA4.0 Programs address barriers to immigrants accessing and navigating mental health services.	Compliant	Worcester RISE (Refugee and Immigrant Support and Empowerment) for Health's Ubuntu program and UMass Memorial Community Healthlink		
EA4.1 Programs address barriers to accessing rental housing for immigrants.	Compliant	Friendly House's Social Services department and Housing Search Worker		
EA4.2 Local mobility planning efforts address the needs and priorities of immigrant residents.	Compliant	City of Worcester's Mobility Action Plan and community engagement		
EA4.3 Programs address barriers to immigrants in accessing civil legal services.	Compliant	Central West Justice Center		
EA5.0 Information from the local government (EA 1.0) is proactively written and designed with translation and the diversity of residents in mind.	Compliant	City of Worcester's Considerations for Inclusive Communications Policy, including use of inclusive imagery and graphics		
EA5.1 Programs address barriers to	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		

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homeownership for immigrants.				
EA5.2 Programs work with the state government and/or regional transit authorities on expanding access to transportation, including addressing the needs and priorities of immigrant residents.	Compliant	Worcester Regional Transit Authority's Travel Trainer and partnership with Emergency Assistance shelter providers		
EA5.3 Programs provide training to those in the legal system on the potential impact of criminal convictions on residents with different immigration statuses.	Compliant	Central West Justice Center and Massachusetts Committee for Public Counsel Services		

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Government and Community Leadership

Welcoming communities have infrastructure in place to support immigrant participation, inclusion, and equity. The local government and community based organizations regularly seek feedback from immigrant residents to understand the challenges and priorities of immigrant residents. Institutions work closely together to prioritize and build capacity to implement immigrant participation, inclusion, and equity strategies.

One-Star		Two-Star		Three-Star		Four-Star		Five-Star	
Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant
3	0	6	0	4	0	0	3	1	4

Framework Summary

With additional evidence submitted, Worcester meets all of the criteria for the 3-star designation in the government and community leadership framework area. Gaps in evidence remain for 4- and 5-star criteria.

Worcester benefits from a collaborative ecosystem of community-based organizations who work closely to identify needs and advance immigrant inclusion goals. These partnerships facilitate information sharing, strengthen trust, and create avenues for immigrant and broader community input into planning processes. Networks and groups such as the New Arrivals Task Force organized by the Office of New Americans at Friendly House facilitate coordinated and cross-sector responses.

The Office of New Americans is a strength, serving as a dynamic, proactive connector for Worcester's immigrant communities and frontline organizations, facilitating access to resources, and shedding light on lived experiences. There may be an opportunity to explore further enhancing the Office's capacity in recognition of the scale of community needs and breadth of scope and responsibilities involved.

The presence of multiple initiatives at the Worcester Public Library (WPL), including ESOL navigation, citizenship courses, legal services, Know Your Rights events,

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and language collections, is a highlight as it demonstrates the implementation of a comprehensive strategy to address the diverse needs and goals of immigrant residents. Additionally, the regional leadership of the New Americans Librarian is a highlight, demonstrating a broad commitment to promoting welcoming library spaces and services by exchanging ideas, strategies, and best practices across the state of Massachusetts.

Although WPL's New Americans Librarian fulfills the criteria for GL 1.0 (The local government has one or more staff positions whose responsibilities include advancing immigrant inclusion), there is an opportunity to embed immigration inclusion within the job descriptions of other government staff whose responsibilities include advancing immigrant inclusion. Embedding immigrant inclusion responsibilities in staff job descriptions, particularly those whose day-to-day work coordinates across multiple government departments, can expand influence across the local government and such measures would create guardrails that help ensure welcoming practices are sustained over time, regardless of staff changes or leadership transitions.

Evidence of the Language Line and Language Access Training for City Employees content, full cabinet meeting agenda on July 14, 2026, and updated language access policy that establishes ongoing training expectations, including for new employees, fulfill the criteria for GL 3.2.

In addition, evidence of the Data-Informed Equity Planning presentation in the cabinet meeting agenda on July 14, 2026, sharing of data with cabinet members, and use of demographic trends and community data on linguistic needs for informing the design of the Worcester Immigrant Belonging Program fulfill the criteria for GL 3.0. Additional evidence demonstrating how knowledge of immigrant data informs the activities and planning of government departments is expected for recertification.

The City of Worcester, including through the leadership of the Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, is demonstrating clear momentum toward strengthening cross-departmental coordination for immigrant inclusion. These efforts help integrate welcoming and inclusion strategies, policies, and practices into the city's broader equity initiatives, while ensuring they are consistently applied, regularly evaluated, and strengthened across city departments.

Gaps in evidence remain for the following 4 and 5-star criteria: GL 4.0, GL 4.1, GL 4.2, GL 5.0, GL 5.1, GL 5.2, and GL 5.4. For information regarding the intent of each criteria, please see Welcoming America's Welcoming Standard Guidance Notes resource.

The development and implementation of the Immigrant Welcoming Plan will help address gaps related to insufficient evidence for several indicators. Building on a strong foundation, the City of Worcester's expressed goals for the welcoming plan present an opportunity to embed, advance, and institutionalize immigrant inclusion priorities, policies, and practices across government departments and in partnership with the wider community. By deepening and clarifying shared ownership of this work, city leaders, staff, and community stakeholders can collectively advance immigrant inclusion goals and the sustainability of welcoming efforts.

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Indicator Feedback

Indicator	Compliance	Evidence	Observations	Highlights
GL1.0 The local government has one or more staff positions whose responsibilities include advancing immigrant inclusion.	Compliant	Worcester Public Library's New Americans Librarian		
GL1.1 The local government has a process in place to ensure regular communication with immigrant residents.	Compliant	Communication between the Office of New Americans at Friendly House and its New Arrivals Task Force with the Office of the City Manager		
GL1.2 Public libraries implement an immigrant inclusion strategy.	Compliant	Worcester Public Library (WPL)'s ESOL and citizenship classes, hosting of monthly free legal consultations, language learning databases, World Languages collections, drop-in hours with the New Americans Librarian, community partnerships, and guidance and policy for interactions with United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement.		The presence of multiple initiatives at the WPL is a highlight as it demonstrates a comprehensive strategy to address the diverse needs and goals of immigrant residents.
GL2.0 The local government leadership has an immigrant inclusion strategy for its	Compliant	City of Worcester's Strategic Plan for 2025-2020 and Office		

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departments and agencies.		of the City Manager and Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion's cross-departmental efforts		
GL2.1 A group of local leaders and residents regularly convenes to advance immigrant inclusion efforts.	Compliant	New Arrivals Task Force organized by the Office of New Americans at Friendly House		
GL2.2 Participants of the group advancing immigrant inclusion (GL 2.1) reflect the diversity of the community in demographics, constituencies, and sectors.	Compliant	New Arrivals Task Force organized by the Office of New Americans at Friendly House		
GL2.3 The group advancing immigrant inclusion (GL 2.1) has a process in place to ensure regular bidirectional communication with immigrant communities.	Compliant	New Arrivals Task Force organized by the Office of New Americans at Friendly House		
GL2.4 The group (GL 2.1) informs local government staff and is able to provide direct feedback on issues impacting and priorities of the immigrant community.	Compliant	New Arrivals Task Force organized by the Office of New Americans at Friendly House		
GL2.5 Local recreational programs implement an immigrant inclusion strategy.	Compliant	Recreation Worcester		
GL3.0 Local government departments know the demographics of the immigrant population and have access to tools to serve these residents.*	Compliant	Data-Informed Equity Planning presentation in the full cabinet meeting agenda on July 14, 2026, sharing of data with cabinet members, and use of	Additional evidence demonstrating how knowledge of immigrant data informs the activities and planning of government departments is	

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		data for informing the design of the Worcester Immigrant Belonging Program	expected for recertification.	
GL3.1 The local government has a language access policy that includes interpretation and translation protocols for all externally facing government departments.*	Compliant	City of Worcester's Limited English Proficiency Language Access Policy and Procedures		
GL3.2 The local government provides regular training to its staff about language access requirements, available resources to provide meaningful language access, and working with speakers of languages other than English.*	Compliant	Language Line and Language Access Training for City Employees presentation, July 14, 2026 cabinet meeting agenda, and updated language access policy efforts that establish ongoing training expectations		
GL3.3 The local government regularly assesses language access needs and usage across departments in order to improve each department's ability to conduct business in languages other than English.*	Compliant	Human Rights division of the City of Worcester's Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion assesses language needs and usage through Language Line department codes		
GL4.0 A community-wide strategy for immigrant inclusion is set through a feedback process including immigrant and non-immigrant residents representing the diversity in the community.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		

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GL4.1 There is a process in place to regularly update the strategy (GL 4.0) with feedback from immigrant and non-immigrant residents.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
GL4.2 Local government departments annually set and monitor goals for immigrant inclusion informed by the needs of immigrant residents and the community-wide strategy (GL 4.0).*	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
GL5.0 Local government departments have programs that build relationships with immigrant residents.*	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
GL5.1 Local government departments have programs that address the needs and priorities of immigrant residents.*	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
GL5.2 Local government departments receive training on working with diverse populations, including immigrants.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
GL5.3 Programs engage regional jurisdictions on adopting and implementing welcoming policies and programs across the region.	Compliant	New Americans Librarian's information exchange and partnerships with libraries across the state of Massachusetts		The regional leadership of the New Americans Librarian is a highlight, demonstrating a broad commitment to promoting welcoming library spaces and services by exchanging ideas, strategies, and best practices across the state of Massachusetts.

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GL5.4 The local housing authority implements an immigrant inclusion strategy.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
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Safe Communities

Welcoming communities prioritize safety for all residents, including immigrants. Policies and practices are in place that prevent discrimination. Strong, trusting relationships are built between immigrant residents and local safety services, such as law enforcement, fire departments, code enforcement, and emergency response. Effective bidirectional communication between safety services and immigrant residents exists, and programs are in place to address implicit and structural bias. Community partnerships are built to identify and address needs and gaps in services.

One-Star		Two-Star		Three-Star		Four-Star		Five-Star	
Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant	Compliance	Non-Compliant
2	0	4	0	3	0	2	0	0	2

Framework Summary

Worcester meets all of the criteria for the 4-star Certified Welcoming designation in the safe communities framework area. Gaps in evidence remain for 5-star criteria. The City of Worcester benefits from collaboration and outreach supported by its emergency and public safety services.

The LGBTQ+ Liaison Officer within the Worcester Police Department is a strength, as the officer's intentional efforts to support individuals navigating both immigration-related stressors and LGBTQI+ identity exemplifies an intersectional approach to safety services. Through sustained community partnerships and culturally responsive engagement, the role aims to reduce barriers to reporting harm, abuse, or crime for marginalized communities.

To achieve the 5-star designation, additional evidence is required for the following criteria:

SC 5.1 (Law enforcement agencies publicly share data on arrests, jail population, use of deadly force, resident complaints, and language access usage and disaggregate this data by race, ethnicity, gender, and geography). The intent of this criteria is for data to be published and available without it being requested through

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a public records request.

SC 5.0 (Local law enforcement has one or more staff positions whose responsibilities include advancing immigrant inclusion). A formal job description that reflects immigrant inclusion work within law enforcement is required for this criteria to be considered compliant.

As the City of Worcester works to deepen and advance its immigrant inclusion efforts, continuing to invest in initiatives that address implicit and structural biases and implement whole-of-community approaches for identifying and addressing safety concerns and priorities, will help ensure the protection and wellbeing of all residents, including immigrants.

In addition, ongoing public dialogue and community advocacy, influenced by the Eureka Street events of May 2025 and other immigration enforcement actions, highlight the deep impact of these experiences on immigrants and the wider community. Reinforcements and sustained dialogue among immigrant and non-immigrant residents, community organizations, public safety institutions, and local government leadership will be essential to the continued strengthening of policies and practices and supporting healing, while also expanding opportunities for law enforcement and the broader local government to deepen commitments to transparency and accountability in service of community trust.

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Indicator Feedback

Indicator	Compliance	Evidence	Observations	Highlights
SC1.0 Local law enforcement agencies have programs in place to build trust and mutual understanding with immigrant communities and immigrant-serving organizations.	Compliant	Worcester Police Department Community Liaison Officer and LGBTQ+ Liaison Officer		
SC1.1 Local law enforcement agencies do not have policies in place where the primary purpose is to detain or deport immigrants.	Compliant	No such policy was found during the research or analysis stage.		
SC2.0 Programs inform immigrants of their rights and responsibilities when interacting with local law enforcement and the legal system.	Compliant	Worcester Public Library's Know Your Rights events and distribution of resources developed by Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition and partners		
SC2.1 Programs inform immigrants of their rights and responsibilities when interacting with immigration enforcement and the detention system.	Compliant	Office of New Americans handouts in collaboration with immigrant serving organizations; Worcester Public Library's Know Your Rights events and distribution of resources developed by Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition		

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SC2.2 Local law enforcement agencies have programs to ensure regular communication with immigrant residents.	Compliant	Worcester Police Department's Neighborhood Response Unit, Community Liaison Officer's participation in community meetings, and LGBTQ+ Liaison Officer's engagement with LGBT Asylum Taskforce		
SC2.3 Programs connect immigrant victims and witnesses of crime with community resources.	Compliant	Ascentria Care Alliance's Immigration and Legal Assistance Program and the City of Worcester's Office of Human Rights		
SC3.0 Law enforcement staff receive regular training, over the course of their career, on working with diverse residents, including immigrants.	Compliant	Community Policing Curriculum and bi-annual training by the Worcester Police Department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office		
SC3.1 A policy is in place that clarifies the jurisdiction and separation between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement agencies.	Compliant	Executive Order Concerning Local Immigration Protocol		
SC3.2 Local emergency management agencies have a plan to inform immigrants of community emergencies, and that plan includes communications methods that are effective in reaching speakers of languages other than English.	Compliant	Use of Language Line and visual-based communication tools; coordination with the Red Cross and community liaisons to assess needs; Community Outreach and Emergency Alert Enrollment		

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SC4.0 Local emergency notification platforms are available in languages other than English.	Compliant	ALERTWorcester		
SC4.1 The local government has a process in place to identify the priorities and goals of immigrant residents for creating a safer community.	Compliant	Worcester Police Department's LGBTQ+ Liaison officer's engagement with the LGBT Asylum Taskforce and Neighborhood Response Team's participation in Neighborhood Meetings		
SC5.0 Local law enforcement has one or more staff positions whose responsibilities include advancing immigrant inclusion.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		
SC5.1 Law enforcement agencies publicly share data on arrests, jail population, use of deadly force, resident complaints, and language access usage and disaggregate this data by race, ethnicity, gender, and geography.	Not Compliant	Insufficient evidence provided.		