

Resolution No \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of Alameda County**

**Designation of Alameda County as a “Welcoming County” for immigrants and refugees.**

WHEREAS, a collaborative of community, non-profit, agency, and other stakeholders have established Building Home Together, a multi-sector initiative to create a vision and strategy for expanding opportunities for new Americans and all other residents in Alameda County, and supporting the leadership, visibility and voices of the county’s diverse immigrant and refugee communities; and

WHEREAS, the building of a welcoming community is fundamental to a vibrant and inclusive Alameda County, assuring immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers opportunities for economic security, empowerment, civic engagement, safety and freedom from discrimination, oppression and violence; and

WHEREAS, a welcoming community addresses language and cultural access barriers to services and participation in civic life, promotes coordination of services and resources for immigrants and refugees across all systems, champions cultural competency and understanding, and strengthens accountability to maintain the highest quality of services for immigrant and refugee communities; and

WHEREAS, Bay Area communities are the most equitable when all residents are fully able to participate in the region’s economic vitality, contribute to the region’s readiness for the future, and connect to the region’s assets and resources<sup>1</sup>;

WHEREAS, addressing quality of life issues, including access to housing, quality health and legal resources, gentrification, healthy and safe communities, living wages, economic stability, and safety from discrimination and exploitation, requires immigrant and refugee communities to build partnerships across all communities, thereby improving quality of life for all county residents; and

WHEREAS, Alameda County is the fourth most diverse county in the United States, with foreign-born residents comprising over 34% of the county’s total population, and cities in each supervisorial district having foreign-born resident populations over 30%; and large numbers of undocumented immigrants who face challenges with access and safety due to their status;

WHEREAS, immigrants, refugees and other newcomers add significantly to the vitality of the state and national economies, with foreign-born workers representing close to 17% of

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<sup>1</sup> PolicyLink and PERE’s *An Equity Profile of the San Francisco Bay Area Region* (2015)

the current U.S. labor force, and over 33.4% of business owners in California<sup>2</sup>; and will account for over 85% of the net growth in the U.S. labor force over the next 20 years;

WHEREAS, the current political environment is marked by anti-immigrant, anti-refugee and Islamophobic rhetoric, requiring of all residents greater awareness, understanding, and dialogue; and

WHEREAS, The President, through the Building Welcoming Communities Campaign of the White House Task Force on New Americans, has called upon local communities to endorse a set of principles to build inclusive, welcoming communities that allow all residents to thrive and advance civic, economic, and social integration; and

WHEREAS, Alameda County aspires to be a model for inclusion and equity for all populations, including immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers, through its commitments to support the ongoing inclusion and long-term economic and social integration of newcomers, demonstrate values of unity and understanding, by implementing policies and practices ensuring that interactions between new and longer-term Americans remain positive ones; and

WHEREAS, Building Home Together is organizing a campaign for Alameda County and the Bay Area cities and counties to become welcoming communities for immigrants and refugees, and develop policies, programs, and systems to fully address the issues and needs of foreign born residents;

NOW BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF ALAMEDA COUNTY,

- Declare and affirm that Alameda County is a Welcoming County;
- Promote the value among all residents of advancing efforts for integrating immigrant and refugee communities, recognizing that a community is strongest when everyone feels welcomed;
- Bring immigrants and refugees and the broader community together to develop policies, programs, and initiatives that build welcoming communities and provide all residents with the knowledge and tools to thrive and fully participate in their communities;
- Support the Building Home Together collaborative in its efforts to engage the entire community in a comprehensive planning process that will examine the issues, challenges and aspirations of Alameda County's foreign born immigrant and refugee communities, examine the systems, structures, resources and programs that support them, and explore new models for effectively serving immigrant, refugee, and newcomers needs.

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<sup>2</sup> Institute for Local Government (2010).

Dated this August \_\_, 2016

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Wilma Chan, District 3  
(sponsor)

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Keith Carson, District 5

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Richard Valle, District 2

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Scott Haggerty, District 1

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Nate Miley, District 4



## **Building Home Together Network Draft Vision and Purpose**

### **Who We Are**

The Building Home Together network is comprised of organizations, communities, advocates and systems with shared concerns about the state of immigrant and refugee community wellbeing. In working together, we hope to lift up and support the leadership, visibility and voices of diverse immigrant and refugee communities in Alameda County and in the greater Bay Area. As of 2014, the foreign-born population represents 34% of Alameda County's residents, and that number is growing. The time for change is now!

### **Our Vision for Change**

Building Home Together sees this work as healing. Our shared vision for change includes the intersection of work, health, legal rights and protections, visibility and community empowerment as they impact all immigrants and refugees. Our efforts seek changes in policy and praxis including addressing language access barriers to services and participation in civic life, improving coordination of services and resources for immigrants and refugees across all systems, improving cultural competency and understanding of immigrant and refugee communities for organizations and systems that support their wellbeing, and strengthening accountability through policies and infrastructure built to maintain the highest overall quality of attention to immigrant and refugee community needs and aspirations.

### **Change Involves Us All**

Building Home Together recognizes that the way our most vulnerable individuals and communities fair impacts and implicates everyone. Working on the quality of life for immigrants and refugees requires building relationships across communities, building allies and being allies for social justice and health equity. It requires creating spaces for curiosity, dialogue and deep sharing, building trust, deepening mutual understandings, cultivating durable relationships, and shifting from a culture that promotes divisiveness and competitiveness between communities to a culture of building, together, a community that is home for everyone.

### **First Steps**

In 2016, Building Home Together is organizing a campaign for the County and area cities to formally adopt a resolution that prioritizes being welcoming communities for immigrants and refugees. As part of this request, we are asking for investment in a process that will engage the diverse stakeholders necessary to create a comprehensive plan to address the needs of immigrant and refugee communities, **including pushing for the establishment of a Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Welcome Center** that will serve as a hub for communities and the network of organizations and systems that advocate for and serve them and an **Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs** in Alameda County to hold their needs as a priority.

## Immigrant Services Comparison

Topic Area	San Francisco	Santa Clara	San Jose
<b>Total population</b>	852K	1.9M	1M
<b>Foreign-born residents make up 1/3 or more of the population</b>	37%	36%	38.7%
<b>Immigrant affairs office</b>	Housed in GSA-City Administrator's office since late 1980's	Strong pro-immigrant policies since 1996 with Office of Immigrant Affairs established in 2015 within County's Executive Office in response to Obama's executive order for DACA	Office of Immigrant Affairs recently established in response to Obama's executive order for DACA
<b>Immigrants Affairs Office comprise approximately \$1.8-\$2.2 M of the county's budgets</b>	1.8M	2.2M	250K + 500K from Santa Clara County)
<b>Services of the office</b>	Civic engagement, community safety, grantmaking, integrated immigrant services, language access	Immigration reform, coordination of services, immigrant integration, research on community needs, community awareness of immigrant contributions	Welcoming Immigration Plan to address: Equitable access and civic engagement, economic opportunity, education and safe, healthy & connected communities.
<b>Needs assessments</b>	Contributes 50% of total funding for a 3-year public-private partnership between the city and 6 philanthropic organizations, the SF Pathways to Citizenship Initiative. The first year is a pilot needs assessment phase	Committed \$500K to conduct a two-year assessment of human needs of immigrants	Working on a three-year immigrant integration plan beginning August 2015