



City of Grand Rapids, Michigan

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ROSALYNN C. BLISS
MAYOR

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the success of Grand Rapids depends on making sure that all Grand Rapidians are welcome. New Grand Rapidians are a vital part of our community, along with our long-time residents, who bring ideas, start businesses, serve in civic roles, and contribute to the vibrant diversity that we value; and

WHEREAS, in January of 2019, the City of Grand Rapids in collaboration with the immigrant community and organizational partners and with support of Gateways for Growth – a collaboration of New American Economy and Welcoming America - embarked on a journey to co-create a Welcoming Plan for our community; and

WHEREAS, to fully embrace diversity as an asset, our community must create policies and a culture that ensures everyone belongs and thrives. This includes addressing disparities, countering hate, understanding history, and helping neighbors come together; and

WHEREAS, our community has faced and often upheld systems and policies that discriminate against residents who were born in another country, are Black, Indigenous, and/or LGBTQIA+ to name but a few communities who face oppressive practices. While those most directly impacted are residents who are discriminated against, all residents are adversely impacted by anti-Blackness, racism, xenophobia and all forms of othering that threaten our collective well-being, health and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Rapids values diversity, equity and inclusion, and

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Rapids serves on the Welcome Plan Steering Committee; and over the past year launched the Welcoming GR series for staff to learn about and engage with the local immigrant community such as welcoming efforts for Afghan arrivals and upcoming training with the African Collaborative Network; and has worked to build stronger and more authentic relationships with the local immigrant and refugee community through the formation of the African Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Taskforce, Know Your Rights training, ongoing engagement with the Congolese community, and an increase in sponsorship for immigrant led celebrations that foster belonging; and

WHEREAS, the theme of the national Welcoming Week 2022 is “Where We Belong” and is focused on fostering a more welcoming nation where everyone – regardless of their background – can feel they belong;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rosalynn Bliss, Mayor of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, do hereby proclaim September 9-18, 2022, as

Welcoming Week

in Grand Rapids and call upon the residents and stakeholders of Grand Rapids to join together to build stronger communities and relationships with all our neighbors, renew our commitment to our common values, and take actions in the spirit of welcoming.



Rosalynn Bliss