



STRATEGIC
PLAN

2021 - 2023



A Message from the Directors

First, we sincerely want to thank you...

Whether you have worked with us on a project, talked with us at an event, contributed to our organization, or if this is your first contact with us, reading this means you are interested in making the Mahoning Valley more inclusive and welcoming, and we couldn't be happier.

From the beginning, **Thrive Mahoning Valley** has focused on setting a strong foundation on which people can come together and build community. Over our first two years (2018-2020), we have watched this effort grow from a single project, our bilingual resource guide, into a 501(c)3 organization with direction and measurable goals. The relationships we have formed with other people and organizations who are also passionate about improving our communities have offered ongoing support. Without these collaborations and relationships, we wouldn't be nearly as prepared to take on the big ideas and challenges found in this strategic plan.

As we start this next chapter in our organization's history and begin to take on bigger and tougher challenges, we want to recognize the broader context in which our work continues to unfold. This plan comes at a time when our nation is grappling with the complications of a global pandemic caused by COVID-19, a movement for Black lives spurred by the senseless killings of people of color, and the emboldening of hate, harassment, and violence based on race, religion, and other forms of difference. The core of our work is to connect people from various backgrounds and work together to create a more inclusive community. Our commitment to anti-racism and equity will continue to be essential components of our work going forward.

Chris Tennant  *Justin Mondok*

THE TEAM

Justin Mondok | Co-Director

Christopher Tennant | Co-Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nicole Pettitt | Board President

Ra'Cole Taltoan | Board Treasurer

Ariana Wyndham | Board Recorder

Arlene Floyd | Board Member

Terry Vicars | Board Member

Sarah Wilschek | Board Member



SPECIAL THANKS

Cassandra Clevenger | Immediate Past President



A Letter from the Board President

We've all felt it: walking alone into a crowded room or party where we don't know a soul... but everyone else knows each other. Many things may run through our minds when we're the odd one out. Does anyone notice I'm alone and don't have anyone to talk to? Will anyone meet my gaze, take a moment to say "hello," maybe introduce me to others? Should I try to introduce myself or leave everyone alone so they can catch up? How grateful we are when someone — even one person — opens up and welcomes us into the fold! What a wonderful feeling to belong.

Welcoming. Creating spaces of belonging. Increasing access for new members of the community. These formed the impetus for the foundation of Thrive Mahoning Valley in 2018, and they continue to drive our work today. From the first bilingual resource website for newly-arrived neighbors from Puerto Rico, to hosting the Mahoning Valley's first celebration of Welcoming Week in 2019, we are committed to creating the most vibrant, diverse, and equitable region via efforts to welcome newcomers to the Valley and welcome back those who are returning after moving away. We know that "welcoming" is a two-way street, so we are equally dedicated to inviting and equipping long-time Valley residents to join us in these efforts.

As we look toward 2021 and beyond, we face many challenges that can only be overcome together. So, as you read Thrive Mahoning Valley's first Strategic Plan, I hope you'll see how many partners have captured a vision for "welcoming" in our community, and that you'll capture that vision too. Will you join me in asking: What can I do to create a more welcoming and equitable Mahoning Valley, in my day-to-day life and interactions, as well as in our broader community?

With gratitude,



Nicole Pettitt, Ph.D.



I'd love to hear from you.

I can be reached at:

thrivemvpresident@gmail.com

MISSION & VISION



ThriveMV MISSION

Thrive Mahoning Valley works to create a more welcoming and equitable community while striving to connect new and current residents to economic, social, and educational opportunities.

ThriveMV VISION

Our vision is for the Mahoning Valley to be recognized as a community that is welcoming to all. By cultivating a culture of inclusion & equity, and setting the table for regional economic growth, we can bring together the communities of the Mahoning Valley to Thrive for generations to come.



Organizational Goals



Goal 1

Promote the four components of cultural competency:

1) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview, 2) Open attitude towards cultural differences, 3) Knowledge of different cultural practices and world views, and 4) Cross-cultural skills.

Action Steps:

- Act to promote more local organizations to attend equity and anti-racism education and trainings
- Elevate the voices of the most marginalized individuals and groups through advocacy and education, to better foster understanding of shared life experiences
- Work with community partners to increase cultural and linguistic accessibility of community and government services

Goal 2

Develop localized policy guidelines as the foundation for future advocacy and community education around the concepts of welcoming and belonging.

Action Steps:

- Develop policy guidelines for the Mahoning Valley that take inspiration from the Welcoming Standard*
- Advocate for policy change so that our communities are better aligned with the Welcoming Standard

Goal 3

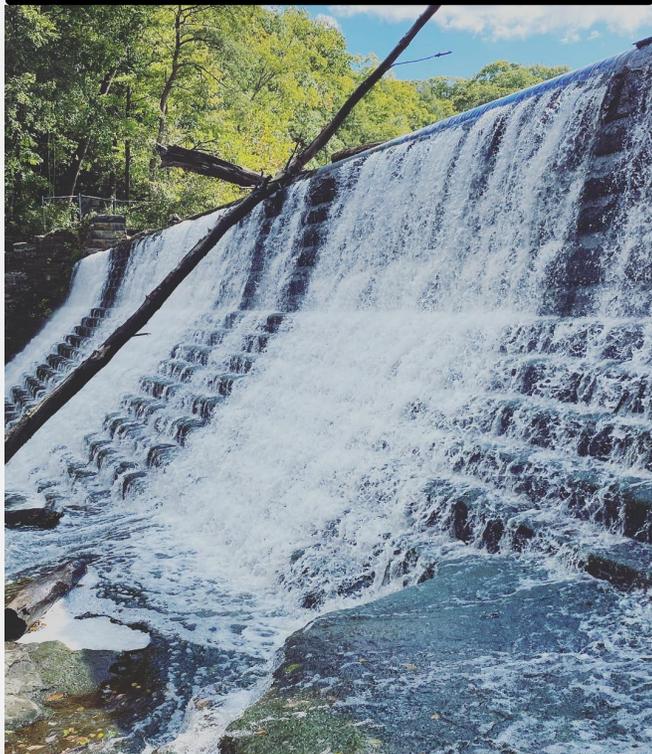
Communicate the concept of welcoming and belonging by actively engaging with local initiatives through organizational and community partnerships.

Action Steps:

- Host annual Welcoming Week festivities in the Mahoning Valley to highlight the benefits of welcoming all
- Work to better understand and disseminate all of the positive impacts that immigrants bring to the community, both culturally and economically, through data
- Promote regional economic growth through the active engagement of individuals, as well as civic, cultural, corporate, faith-based, nonprofit and educational institutions

*The Welcoming Standard, as established by Welcoming America, provides a comprehensive roadmap for places building more cohesive and equitable communities and fostering connections between newer immigrants and long-time residents. It also sets benchmarks that community organizations, residents, and others can use to hold welcoming places accountable and inspire continued innovation.

BARRIERS & OBSTACLES



We recognize there will be obstacles while working to foster community, welcoming, and belonging. ThriveMV has identified those obstacles below.

RACISM

Institutional, systematic, and structural, racism is the biggest threat to our work. While we strive to bring communities together, there are systems in place specifically designed to prevent that from occurring. Every member of our team has individually taken steps to understand their own biases and places within racist systems.

LANGUAGE

We recognize that language is powerful; it is the origin of the organization. We will work to clarify and broaden our messaging to be as accessible to as many as possible.

POSITIONALITY

People occupy many different positions in society and have their own stories. Everyone's stories are valuable. We know that people are experiencing different struggles, and we want our work to meet people where they are. Understanding the situations that are actively marginalizing or causing specific hardships for people will be critical to ensuring that our work is effective.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

It is no secret that the social environment surrounding race and other forms of difference is difficult and at times dangerous. Harassment and violence have become more common in recent years, and we are committed to creating a safe environment for those who may feel threatened or afraid in our communities.



Get to Know Us!

Our Accomplishments

- Launched online bilingual Resource Guide (English and Spanish)
- Hosted the inaugural Mahoning Valley Welcoming Week in 2019, and 2nd annual event in 2020
 - Member organization of Welcoming America
- Completed community listening campaign
 - Listening and learning from MV residents and visitors about what makes them feel welcomed or unwelcomed in our community
- Created partnerships throughout the community with area businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations
- Participated (co-director) in Leadership Now: Ohio fellowship
- Received Community Investment Grant
- Participated in Racial Equity Institute training
- Assisted in registering voters



How to Get Involved

- Amplify our messaging by engaging with us and others
 - Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Comment, share, retweet, and like
 - Send us a message or email. We would love to chat. We believe that the more we dialogue about welcoming and belonging, and even the barriers we face in creating equitable spaces where all belong, the more natural these conversations will become in our daily lives
- Join us at events throughout the year
 - One initial step towards making change is simply showing up!
 - We work to make sure that our events are structured so all can participate
- Call or email your representatives and political leaders, and tell them you want to see the Mahoning Valley become Certified Welcoming
- Contribute to our work with a monetary donation
 - There is no way around it: the work takes money
 - We are a registered 501(c)3 organization and entirely volunteer run
 - Every single contribution goes directly to the community to advance our goals
 - Email us at info@thrivemv.org to make a donation

Welcome 欢迎光临 Bienvenue

Bienvenidos  Willkommen

Добро пожаловать Hoş geldiniz

Benvenuti Welkom Dobrodošli

歡迎光臨 Bem-vindo ようこそ

Bonvenon Witamy أهلاً وسهلاً

Aloha Selamat datang ברוך הבא

Được tiếp đãi ân cần 환영합니다


thrive
mahoning valley

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