

AGENDA
CULTURAL RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD
RETREAT

Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 2025 – 9:00 am
East Training Room Santa Fe Depot (201 E. Wyatt Earp)

Call to Order: Chair Brenda Carmona

Election of Officers:

1. Election of 2025 Chair
2. Election of 2025 Vice Chair

Visitors:

Consent Calendar:

1. Approve CRAB Minutes from January 15, 2025

Unfinished Business:

1. Certified Welcoming Process - Report by Roxana Arjon
2. Kansas Department of Commerce, Global Cuisines and Cultures Week – Report by Darlin Rayo
3. Humanities Kansas Grant - Report by Holly Mercer and Melissa McCoy
4. Naturalization Scholarships 2025 – Report by Darlin Rayo
5. CRAB 15th Anniversary – Report by Roxana Arjon
6. Multicultural Committee's Language Exchange project - Report by Karla Lees

New Business:

1. Strategic Plan for Welcoming and Integration
 - a. Equitable Access & Communication
 - b. Civic Engagement
 - c. Refugee & Immigrant Integration
 - d. Safe & Healthy Community
 - e. Education & Economic Opportunity
2. Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA) & Kansas Open Record Act Training (KORA)
3. Guatemalan Consulate
4. Felix Fitness Health Fair
5. Engage Dodge
6. Gateways4Growth
7. International Festival 2025 Planning

Board Program/Dates (keep in mind):

- March 16-23 – Kansas Department of Commerce, Global Cuisines and Cultures Week
- June 16, 7:00pm – Proclamation related to CRAB 15 Anniversary
- June 20 (tentative) - CRAB 15th Anniversary activities
- September 2, 6:00pm – Cultural Relations City Commission Update
- September 2, 7:00pm – Welcoming Week Proclamation
- September 7, 2:00pm-6:00pm – Dodge City International Festival

Board Member and Staff Comments:

Next Meeting Dates:

- March 19
- April 16– International Festival Planning and Cultural Relations Advisory Board
- May 21– International Festival Planning and Cultural Relations Advisory Board
- June 18– International Festival Planning and Cultural Relations Advisory Board
- July 16– International Festival Planning and Cultural Relations Advisory Board
- August 20– International Festival Planning and Cultural Relations Advisory Board
- September 17 – Cultural Relations Advisory Board
- October 15 – Cultural Relations Advisory Board
- November 19 – Cultural Relations Advisory Board

ADJOURNMENT

MEETING MINUTES

CULTURAL RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, January 15, 2025 – 10:00 am
East Training Room Santa Fe Depot – 201 E Wyatt Earp Blvd.

Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Brenda Carmona called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

Present: Brenda Carmona, Holly Mercer, Kristin Hines, Yari Sanchez, Debbie Snapp, Perla Lopez, Jose Ramos, and Susan Finley.

Absent: Esmeralda Soto, Karla Lees, and Jeff Hiers

Visitors: Hugo Hernandez

Staff: Melissa McCoy and Darlin Rayo

Consent Calendar

1. Approval of CRAB Minutes from November 20, 2024.
 - Yari Sanchez motioned to approve the minutes. Susan Finley seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

Visitors Section

Unfinished Business

1. Certified Welcoming Process

Report by Roxana Arjon and Melissa McCoy:

- We are largely complete with the process and are just waiting on some final bits of information. Roxana has emailed those folks whose information is outstanding. The deadline to submit the information to City staff is this Friday, January 17th. If anyone needs more time, have them let us know. There is some wiggle room between this 17th deadline and the final deadline (31st) for submitting all information.

2. Welcoming America Interactive Proposal

Report by Darlin Rayo:

- Darlin Rayo shared that Staff received an email stating that our proposal was not one of the selected sessions for the Welcoming interactive 2025 Conference.

3. Kansas Department of Commerce Global Cuisines and Cultures Week

Report by Darlin Rayo:

- Darlin Rayo reported that the City is collaborating with Mainstreet Dodge City and the Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce to recruit businesses to participate in the event. It will take place March 16-23 and the plan is to have a “Loteria” style bingo card to promote businesses

who are participating. Yari Sanchez provided the board with regulations that need to be followed in order to avoid legal issues.

4. Multicultural Committee's Language Exchange

Report by Karla Lees and Darlin Rayo

- Next steps for this project are to apply for a grant to fund the project. The Multicultural Committee will begin the process of design.

5. Humanities Kansas Grant

Report by Holly Mercer and Melissa McCoy:

- The next grant idea focuses on a podcast about water resources, paired with a public event, possibly during Dodge City Days, featuring a panel discussion. The panel may include a Kansas-based scholar, a farmer, and representatives from major corporations like Cargill or Hilmar. Topics will cover water conservation, irrigation practices, and watershed management, with potential student engagement from high schools or colleges. Two funding opportunities are available, requiring careful budgeting. Additional ideas include exploring dry riverbed excavation costs, cultural ties to water, and a unique episode on off-grid water use.

New Business

1. CRAB 15th Anniversary

Report by Roxana Arjon and Melissa McCoy

- The Cultural Relations Advisory Board will be turning 15 this year. Roxana thought it would be nice to celebrate the Board's "quinceñera" on Friday, June 20th at 4 pm. CRAB's anniversary falls on Saturday, June 21st, but the Friday also happens to be World Refugee Day.

2. Naturalization Scholarships 2025

Report by Darlin Rayo

- We were awarded grant funding by the CFSWKS to provide Naturalization Scholarships once again. This year there are 15 \$400 scholarships available to residents of Ford County. The deadline for submitting their application will be April 16th.

Board Program/Dates to Keep in Mind

- March 16-23 – Kansas Department of Commerce, Global Cuisines and Cultures Week
- June 16, 7:00pm – Proclamation related to CRAB 15 Anniversary
- June 20 (tentative) - CRAB 15th Anniversary activities
- September 2, 6:00pm – Cultural Relations City Commission Update
- September 2, 7:00pm – Welcoming Week Proclamation
- September 7, 2:00pm-6:00pm – Dodge City International Festival

Board Member and Staff Comments

- Planning for the International Festival will begin in April, with an initial meeting scheduled prior to the CRAB meeting on April 16. Committees will be formed as they were last year, with a staff leader assigned to each group. Darlin Rayo will provide a detailed timeline for the event during the April meeting.

- The CRAB Retreat is scheduled for February 19th at the Municipal Services Building (MSB), located at 100 Chaffin Rd, from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM. The retreat will focus on reviewing the 2024 metrics and strategizing ways to enhance efforts for 2025.

Next Meeting Dates

- February 19 *CRAB Retreat 9:00am-12:00pm*
- March 19
- April 16
- May 21
- June 18
- July 16
- August 20
- September 17
- October 15
- November 19

Adjournment

Kristin Hines motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Yari Sanchez. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.



Memorandum

To: Cultural Relations Advisory Board
From: Darlin Rayo and Roxana Arjon, City Staff Representatives
Date: Wednesday, March 5, 2025
Subject: Cultural Relations Advisory Board Goals for 2025
Agenda Item: New Business

Purpose: The Strategic Plan for Welcoming and Integration (Welcoming Plan) is meant to position the City to become a more welcoming community. The Cultural Relations Advisory Board is responsible for the implementation of this plan with the City serving as a convener, connector, promoter, or whatever role best ensures its implementation and sustainability.

Recommendation: Staff recommends the following for the Welcoming Plan Implementation Priorities for 2025

Equitable Access & Communication

- **Language Access:** Conduct a community survey to assess language access needs and improve accessibility to resources.
- **Connecting Communities:** Secure additional sponsorships for the International Festival, specifically for World Threads and Crossroads Kitchen, by increasing booth participation and funding support.
- **Public Transportation & Walkability:** Host a "Walk with Your Neighbor" event or create an informational video highlighting the City's planned walking trails to promote a more pedestrian-friendly community.
- **Initiatives Expansion:** Expand the Engage Dodge program to include more entities, such as Arrowhead West, and develop additional programs in partnership with USD 443.

Civic Engagement

- **Local Leadership:** Support the Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce to host an event encouraging community members to apply for leadership positions and run for local office. CRAB will support the event by providing interpreters and meeting spaces.

Refugee & Immigrant Integration

- **Immigration Legal Assistance:** Host United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) mobile services and outreach events quarterly (March, June, September, December) as well as provide naturalization scholarships to assist residents in obtaining U.S. citizenship. Host and support Mexican and Guatemalan Consulate mobile services as available.

Safe & Healthy Community

- **Mental Healthcare:** Support the 10-33 organization in providing mental health training for first responders.
- **Physical Health:** Support LHEAT (Local Health Equity Action Teams) in efforts to address physical health and nutrition.

Background: The City of Dodge City and Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas received a technical grant to create a Strategic Plan for Welcoming and Integration, which helped position the City to becoming a more welcoming community. The Welcoming Plan was created in February 2022 after a year-long community engagement process. Each year since, CRAB collectively prioritizes the recommendations listed in the Welcoming Plan and sets annual goals and priorities for its implementation.

Justification: By addressing these key areas, CRAB ensures that Dodge City continues to be a vibrant, inclusive, and engaged community that supports all its residents.

Financial Considerations: None

Purpose/Mission: The mission of the Cultural Relations Advisory Board (CRAB) is to promote inclusivity, civic engagement, and equitable access to resources for all residents of Dodge City. Approval of these recommendations will help guide the Board's work in enacting its mission.

Legal Considerations: None

Attachments: Dodge City Welcoming Plan - Implementation Metrics

Dodge City Welcoming Plan - Implementation Metrics

Impact Indicators	2023	2024	
	Actual	Goal	Actual
Equitable Access & Communication			
<p>Language Access: Encourage local public entities to adopt and implement a Language Access Plan with a comprehensive and current bank of qualified interpreters.</p>	<p>① Work is ongoing, but currently, there is no specific plan in place. Resources from other communities have been compiled to create draft templates.</p> <p>② CRAB met with Honorable Judge Theresa Watson to discuss language access implementations, aiming to gather ideas for implementation.</p>	<p>CRAB will develop and implement a comprehensive language access plan to ensure effective communication across the city and affiliated entities, enhancing accessibility and inclusivity for all community members.</p>	<p>① Darlin Rayo and Roxana Arjon attended the Welcoming Interactive Conference, where they gained valuable insights into providing effective language access. This knowledge was applied to the Engage Dodge program by offering fully Spanish-language sessions and utilizing transmitters to facilitate real-time translation during English sessions.</p>
<p>Diverse Community Ambassadors: Assemble, inform and engage key influencers, leaders, and potential leaders from the entire community to better understand how information is received by community members, ensure accurate information is disseminated and engagement is inclusive.</p>			
<p>Connect Communities: Community-building events bring newcomers, long-time residents, law enforcement officers, nonprofits and others together to learn from and about each other, share food and music and build trust.</p>	<p>Crossroads Kitchen was a highlight of the International Festival, showcasing culinary delights from 10 different countries and regions. Each participant shared a sample of food representing their home country.</p>	<p>CRAB will continue Crossroads Kitchen and search for more diverse participants to include in the International Festival.</p>	<p>① CRAB introduced a cultural fashion show, "World Threads (Hilos Mundiales)," as part of the International Festival. This new addition promoted community connections and complemented Crossroads Kitchen and the overall celebration of cultural diversity at the festival.</p>
<p>Technology: Internet access and technology is equitable, affordable, and available to all residents. Basic computer skills classes and technical assistance are available and affordable. Community partners provide culturally relevant services.</p>		<p>CRAB will work on project/flyers to Inform individuals about the availability and locations of free access to technology.</p>	
<p>Public Transportation: is available at the times residents need it (including evenings and weekends), alternative transportation (walkability and biking) safety is improved.</p>		<p>CRAB will look at Introducing alternative transportation options and expanding walking trails to significantly enhance the City's pedestrian-friendliness by finding grants to assist with projects.</p>	
<p>Initiatives: Such as the Engage Dodge Program that help residents understand, engage with and participate in local government and civic life are well-known and accessible to newcomers.</p>	<p>The Spanish-language Engage Dodge program was conducted in collaboration with participants from the Naturalization Conference, held over a seven-week period in the fall. The sessions lasted for two hours each evening, with a total of 17 participants.</p>	<p>CRAB will collaborate with the ESOL and Diversity Program to initiate another program in the spring. Another class will be held in the fall focused on the Recipients of the Naturalization Scholarship.</p>	<p>① Engage Dodge sessions in 2024 catered to recipients of Naturalization Scholarships, and ESOL & Diversity/SLIFE students. The spring sessions spanned six weeks, offering an in-depth experience for participants. In the fall, the program was condensed to four sessions over two weeks for scholarship recipients and two sessions over two weeks for Spanish-speaking students. These adjustments increased engagement and effectively highlighted essential information tailored to specific audiences.</p>
Civic Engagement			

<p>Voter registration and Get Out The Vote Efforts: Eligible voters are registered and informed on the issues and candidates, voting polls are accessible and voters know where to exercise their right to vote.</p>	<p>In collaboration with Ford County, a series of six videos were produced in both English and Spanish, providing essential information to the public leading up to election day.</p>	<p>CRAB will coordinate with the Ford County Election Officer to update the voting videos and ensure continued awareness of important information to the public.</p>	<p>① City staff continued to share GOTV information on the City and Welcoming Facebook pages. ② The City offered free transportation to the polls during the election seasons.</p>
<p>Continuous education about the decennial Census, the American Community Survey, and the redistricting process occurs in the community.</p>	<p>City staff has started attending webinars to gain further insights and develop a strategic plan for the necessary actions.</p>	<p>City staff is actively participating in webinars to enhance the understanding of the process. It's important to note that the City has been undercounted in the past, and one of the goals is to educate families about the Census process to alleviate any apprehensions they may have.</p>	
<p>Civic mentorship programs are established: Current civic leaders are paired with community members to mentor them about civic leadership and encourage them to pursue leadership positions in the community.</p>			
<p>Local leadership positions are publicly advertised and all members of the community are encouraged to apply. Workshops and information sessions on how to run for local office and join local boards are held in multiple locations, times and languages.</p>			

Refugee & Immigrant Integration			
<p>Community Welcome Center: Centralized location (both physical and virtual) for accessing information about community services relevant to newcomers. The Welcome Center also facilitates communication between service provider agencies in the community and there is follow-up on referrals made.</p>	<p>Catholic Charities and the City of Dodge City, in collaboration with several other entities, worked together to establish a warming shelter during severe weather days this winter.</p>		
<p>Immigration legal assistance including free clinics (DACA renewal and Naturalization consultations), United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and consular mobile services are held regularly, accessible and advertised widely. A permanent USCIS office be established in Southwest Kansas, with preference of a Dodge City location. Immigration legal services assistance capacity is expanded with additional funding support and community volunteers.</p>	<p>① In partnership with the City of Dodge City and the Dodge City Public Library, the Guatemalan Consulate provided mobile services to community members. ② In partnership with Catholic Charities of SWKS and Gateways For Growth, the City of Dodge City offered twelve \$400 scholarships to community members to help pay fees related to becoming a U.S. Citizen. ③ In partnership with the City of Dodge City and NOVO Legal, UFCW Local 2 held their third annual, free citizenship assistance event for the community.</p>	<p>① USCIS mobile services and outreach event (March, June, September, December) ② Provide Scholarships for residents who want to get their Citizenships ③ CRAB will join efforts being made by the DCPL to put together an informative session with Immigration Attorneys</p>	<p>① USCIS mobile services quarterly (March, June, September, December) ② The City and partners provided naturalization scholarships for residents ③ Catholic Charities provided scholarship recipients with legal assistance DCPL put together an informative session with Immigration Attorneys</p>
<p>Provide education and training about acceptable identification documents commonly used by immigrants and refugees in the community, including documents produced by USCIS consular offices of foreign countries in the United States.</p>	<p>USCIS hosted an informative outreach event in the fall, offering valuable information on the citizenship process.</p>	<p>USCIS mobile services will come to Dodge City quarterly, along with USCIS outreach events for the public creating awareness on services and procedures.</p>	
<p>Positive stories and spotlights about newcomers are regularly published in local news outlets and across the state.</p>			
<p>Regular opportunities for newcomers to interact with long-term residents and build neighborly friendships are coordinated intentionally; New arrivals are paired with long-term residents for mentorship and social connection. In addition, initiatives, and programs to build trust among New Americans and Law Enforcement are available and promoted. Volunteer opportunities are widely available.</p>		<p>CRAB will host "Meet Your Neighbor" type gatherings to engage the community, providing light snacks and refreshments to encourage social connections.</p>	
<p>Governmental entities and community organizations advocate for inclusive legislation, policies, and initiatives at the local, state and federal level.</p>	<p>① The City of Dodge City and the Southwest Kansas Coalition have approved and supported Legislative Policy to create a pathway to sensible immigration reform including, but not limited to, a permanent solution and pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients.</p>		<p>① The City of Dodge City and the Southwest Kansas Coalition have approved and supported Legislative Policy to create a pathway to sensible immigration reform including, but not limited to, a permanent solution and pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients.</p>
Safe & Healthy Community			
<p>Healthcare Access: All Dodge City residents know when and where to access healthcare services, including dental and vision services, and are able to get the support they need regardless of insurance status, socioeconomic status, cultural concerns, language challenges or other barriers. Health education community outreach and clinics for basic healthcare needs occur frequently.</p>	<p>① Genesis Family Health and Alce Su Voz were present at the 2023 Guatemalan Consulate mobile services event and connected community members with health resources and language access information when seeking medical care.</p>		

<p>Mental Healthcare: is available and accessible Bilingual providers are available. All providers are trained in trauma informed care. Mental health services are culturally competent. Community outreach assists with overcoming stigma of mental health diagnoses and treatment.</p>			
<p>Disaster Preparedness: Enhance outreach and support for disaster preparedness and emergency responses that are culturally and linguistically responsive through coordination with local disaster response agencies and Ford County Emergency Management. Interpretation services are immediately available for 911 calls.</p>	<p>① The City of Dodge City worked with Ford County Emergency Management to distribute Warming Shelter information in Spanish as well as English.</p>		

Education & Economic Opportunity			
<p>Child Care: Quality child care is affordable and available at the times parents need to work (including 2nd and 3rd shifts), go to school, or engage in the community. Newcomers are empowered, educated and are aware of resources available to become certified child care providers.</p>	<p>The Child Care Coalition has collaborated on a grant application to secure funding for a new child care facility.</p>	<p>CRAB will explore the requirements and steps needed to secure the grant funding essential for initiating the design work on a new child care facility.</p>	
<p>Banking and Financial Services: Lending institutions offer products and services that are appropriate and accessible across cultural, religious, and national origin status. Banks and financial institutions recognize and accept identification documents and immigration status (other than exclusively citizenship and/or green card status) while catering these services.</p>			
<p>Housing Challenges and Opportunities: Affordable, appropriate housing is available, families are educated about tenant rights and responsibilities, local governments and nonprofit organizations are partners in improving housing opportunities and families are able to become homeowners.</p>		<p>CRAB will work with partners such as the Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation, Community Housing Association of Dodge City and similar entities to promote and provide information to residents for their programs and grants such as Revive the Block.</p>	
<p>Youth Mentorship Programs Are Established: Current community leaders and professionals are paired with youth (with intentional outreach to immigrant and refugee youth) to mentor them about post-secondary opportunities, specific career paths and encourage them to pursue staying or coming back to Dodge City after college graduation.</p>		<p>Roxana will create a Youth Council to gather information and insights to present to the commission.</p>	<p>① Roxana Arjon and Darlin Rayo met with representatives from other communities to explore best practices for facilitating youth mentorship programs.</p>
<p>Clear paths to professional recertification exist for foreign-educated professionals through local and state education institutions</p>			
<p>Adult education is available and accessible for all newcomers and meets their needs, including English as a Second Language and trade certification programs.</p>			