

# Toward One Wausau

HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR COMMUNITY A  
WELCOMING PLACE FOR EVERYONE?



## Key Project Findings

- **13 months** time-span for project (September 2016-October 2017)
- **359** community members took an online concerns gathering survey
- **304** individuals participated in **15** listening sessions and story circles
- **315** people participated in **20** deliberative dialogues
- **231** community members completed a post-deliberative event survey
- **65 volunteers** were trained as neutral facilitators, or served as moderators or special story circle guests

*NOTE: Survey respondents and event participants were not randomly selected. Results, therefore, are not scientific. However, project organizers sought out diverse demographic groups to ensure broad participation.*

1. Surveys taken at events reflected ethnic demographics similar to those of Wausau in general.
2. Overwhelming consensus that Wausau would be more welcoming if people who look and think differently got to know each other through deliberate individual and group interaction.
3. The greatest change is most likely to come from individuals — each of us makes a difference by becoming an ally to the community.
4. This is a difficult topic that many people were unwilling to discuss in a public setting. Those who participated showed both courage and concern for their community, but participants believe more work is needed to reach out to others.
5. **68%** of respondents said yes to the question: “Has your thinking about how to make our community a more welcoming place for all changed after participating in this forum?”
6. **78%** said dialogue exposed them to aspects of this issue they had never considered.
7. **Strongest agreement (92%):** “A perception of mistrust between diverse populations and law enforcement could be improved with deep neighborhood relationship-building.” But there are a number of caveats. This must be implemented carefully, conscientiously, and in partnership WITH diverse community input rather than as an imposition. Some creative thinking is in order.
8. Most participants (**85%**) want greater transparency from justice and governance processes EVEN IF it takes more energy and resources from government at the expense of efficiency.

9. **Strongest opposition (54%):** “Help recent immigrants and new residents assimilate quickly to local culture and customs EVEN IF it requires newcomers to give up or curtail cultural and language preferences.”
10. Institutions (local media, local government, law enforcement, other organizations) play an important role in reflecting, accepting and welcoming more diverse leadership in our community.
11. Overwhelming support (**86%**) for more diverse community events, though most agreed this alone would not significantly change perceptions in our community.
12. Strong agreement that youth viewpoints are the key to changing community attitudes and behavior, and schools should play a role.
13. Creating opportunities for leadership development (**91%**) and pathways to leadership positions for diverse residents was strongly desired by most participants. However, a significant group of participants, including people of minority backgrounds, want to ensure that this does not become mere tokenism. The way to combat tokenism, residents said, is to broaden and deepen our personal and community relationships with diverse people.
14. Most support implicit bias (**84%**) and experiential diversity training for local institutions, including businesses, non-profits and government. They do NOT want the “same old” passive diversity training.
15. Over-riding theme: It’s important to find common ground as human beings. We must remove the masks and set down the baggage to better live in harmony and unity. As one participant put it, “By lifting each other up, we lift the whole community up.”



Please help evaluate the "Culmination, Evaluation and Celebration Event by taking an online survey using the QR Code or the following URL: [wipps.org/towsurvey/](https://wipps.org/towsurvey/)

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