"The Welcome Program helped me meet editors of different experience levels and genres. It also encouraged me to become more involved with the EFA through courses. Working from home can feel isolating, but meeting so many other editors in the same situation made me feel less alone in my editing bubble."—Ashley, North Carolina

The Welcome Program offers new members the opportunity to optimize their EFA membership benefits and grow their professional networks. Qualifying newcomers are paired with an experienced editorial professional who volunteers to offer guidance on how to navigate the EFA. The Welcome Program is a great way to connect with peers (it is not a training or mentor program however). The program typically runs each year for three months. Participants will join both group and one-on-one networking sessions.

Welcomer Requirements
- Have at least one year of EFA membership and be a member in good standing throughout the duration of the program
- Have two to three years of freelancer experience
- Be able to volunteer at least one hour per month during the three-month program
- Commit to upholding the DEB’s Mission Statement, Non-Discrimination Statement, and the EFA Anti-Harassment Policy
- Complete an intake survey

Newcomer Requirements
- Have less than one year of EFA membership and be a member in good standing throughout the duration of the program
- Participate in monthly check-ins with assigned welcomer
- Provide feedback on an exit survey
  - Commit to upholding the DEB’s Mission Statement and Non-Discrimination Statement, and the EFA Anti-Harassment Policy
- Complete an intake survey

Calls for new cohorts of welcomers and newcomers are distributed each year by email, through the Discussion List, and through every chapter. The program can only accept as many newcomers as there are welcomers who volunteer. Eligible welcomers are encouraged to volunteer to allow access for all newcomers who want to participate.

If you would like to learn more or volunteer for the Welcome Program, contact diversitywelcomeprogram@the-efa.org
Welcome Program History

One of the first programs launched by the Diversity Initiative (now Diversity, Equity & Belonging), the Welcome Program originally formed in 2017, when several volunteers expressed the need to foster inclusiveness within the EFA and developed an informal pilot program. In 2018, Brittany Dowdle, Kellie Hultgren, Alissa McGowan, and Sangeeta Mehta established the program’s parameters by creating overviews and surveys, and Alissa McGowan became the Welcome Program’s first director. In 2019, Brittany Dowdle took over, and the program has been directed by Linda Ruggeri since 2020, with the support of Pia Kohler and Marcella Lopez who help coordinate the program.