



**To: Ottawa City Council**

XX March 2017

We, the undersigned, support Ottawa becoming a Sanctuary City. A Sanctuary City is one where all people who call the City of Ottawa home can access municipal services - regardless of their immigration status and without fear of detention or deportation.

Migrant and racialized communities in Canada are experiencing increased insecurity and violence as a result of the rise in anti-immigrant sentiment and Islamophobia. Ottawa has taken important steps to welcome refugees, and support migrants' rights. Making Ottawa a Sanctuary City would strengthen these efforts, and create a healthier, safer, and more welcoming city.

People with precarious immigration status, including refugees, temporary foreign workers, and undocumented migrants, are often reluctant to access municipal services for fear that municipal staff or police may turn them over to the Canada Border Services Agency and that they could be detained or deported. As a result, these individuals do not access services that they might require and are entitled to, such as food banks, emergency shelters, health care, or even calling 911 during an emergency.

Making Ottawa a Sanctuary City would send the strong message to our friends, neighbours, and community members that they have the right and the ability to access municipal services without fear.

We ask the City of Ottawa to pass a motion at city council declaring Ottawa a Sanctuary City and to put in place policies that would allow individuals to access services without the need to produce immigration or other identifying documents. It would also direct municipal services to refrain from sharing information about their clients with immigration enforcement. By doing this, we can make Ottawa a more inclusive and safer city for all those who live here.

Sincerely,

Signed by the following organizations:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



### How can your organization sign the letter?

- 1) Read the letter and determine if your organization would agree to sign it.
- 2) Email Ottawa Sanctuary City Network ([ottawasanctuarycitynetwork@gmail.com](mailto:ottawasanctuarycitynetwork@gmail.com)) to confirm that your organization will sign-on, ideally by or around March 21st.
- 3) Follow-up actions:
  - Can your organization share our petition with your members?
  - Can your organization phone or email your city councillor or the mayor to urge them to support Ottawa becoming a Sanctuary City?
  - Can your organization do an up to five minute deputation at the March 30th Community and Protective Services committee, explaining why you support Ottawa?

**Timeline:** Shortly after March 21st, once we have collected a good number of organizational endorsements for this sign-on letter, we will prepare a press release, and announce the support we have gathered. If you would be comfortable speaking to media about your support of this work, please let us know.

We will then make the text public on our website, invite any other organization that hasn't heard about it yet to continue signing-on, and send the letter to all members of the Ottawa City Council.