

Sanctuary Banner to Protect Immigrants, Other Targeted Populations

Sanctuary Info Sheet

Background and Principles

In the aftermath of the elections, Sanctuary has resonated widely in national debates especially on campuses and in sanctuary cities. But as a movement sanctuary has been developed through the National New Sanctuary Movement and, in NY, through the New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC since 2007.

The New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC is an interfaith network of congregations, organizations, and individuals, standing publicly in solidarity with families and communities resisting detention and deportation in order to stay together. It recognizes that unjust global and systemic economic relationships and racism form the basis of the injustices that affect immigrants. It seeks reform of United States immigration laws to promote fairness, social and economic justice.

The New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC (“the Coalition”) has grown from a half-dozen congregations to a City-wide Movement, working in coalition with NYC’s major immigrant organizations to reform immigration enforcement practices and policies, both locally and nationally, with a special focus on preserving family unity. Unlike other faith-based immigration reform advocacy groups, the Coalition operates at the congregational, grass-roots level, and focuses its efforts on reform of current detention and deportation practices, both nationally and in the NYC area.

Early in 2010, the Coalition gained **national attention** for its successful efforts to prevent the immediate deportation of Haitian immigrant Jean Montrevil, the father of one of its “Sanctuary Families,” and a member of Judson Church. And over the past two years, the Coalition has sparked a major ongoing campaign in NYC – a campaign that is looked to as a model for the nation – in de-coupling local law enforcement from immigration enforcement.

The new Movement was inspired by the 1980s “Sanctuary Movement.” That Movement had enlisted churches to transport, house, and hide refugees fleeing to the US from the civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala. In 2007, religious leaders in Chicago and California, plus Juan Carlos Ruiz, then a Catholic priest working with a Mexican immigrant organization in NYC, envisioned a “New Sanctuary Movement,” to engage faith-based groups specifically in support of the 12 million immigrants living in the US without legal status to stay here. Instead of hiding them, however, the New Sanctuary Movement proposed to publicize their stories, to put a human face on the issues, raise public awareness of their plight, and encourage legislative reform.

Levels of Sanctuary

Support – symbolically declaring sanctuary helps others who are doing more of the heavy lifting in the sanctuary movement, who are putting themselves on the line. It helps the vulnerable communities know that they are widely supported.

Safe Space – Sanctuary can simply be a place to feel ok and safe, where you know you won't be mistreated or dismissed, where you can speak your mind – the more such places there are in the city, the better. Many sanctuary spaces also offer safe spaces for a range of precarious lives, including LGBTQ youth.

No Info, No search – Like the city, like many universities and hospitals, organizations can declare that the immigration status of their staff, users, and members will not be requested and any such information will not be handed over to ICE. Federal immigration officials will not be permitted to search premises without a court-signed warrant.

Short-term Sanctuary – Sometimes when there are raids in neighborhoods or workplaces, people need a place to just sit and wait for a while. So short-term sanctuary are places where people can go in case they hear of raids in their neighborhoods to workplaces, whether or not they have deportation orders.

Physical Sanctuary – this is highest and rarest form of sanctuary, and the kind that can potentially lead to legal complications. Physical sanctuary is where people can stay until their deportation hearing is resolved. This is not used often. There is now only one person in NY area in sanctuary. This is the highest level of commitment. It entails commitment from the person seeking sanctuary as well, since it means the person cannot leave the premises.

Sanctuary Coalition

<https://newsanctuarynyc.wordpress.com/>

Sanctuary Movement

<http://sanctuarynotdeportation.org/>

Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility

<http://blogs.newschool.edu/zolberg-center/category/sanctuary/>

For more information on sanctuary campuses:

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-sanctuary-campuses-immigrants-20161203-story.html>

<http://wesleyanargus.com/2016/11/20/roth-declares-sanctuary-campus/>

<http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2016/11/21/columbia-declares-its-campus-a-sanctuary-for-undocumented-students/>

http://www.reed.edu/reed_magazine/sallyportal/posts/2016/sanctuary-college.html