

How does a congregation or individual become a member of WCS?

Membership in WCS is open to any individual or congregation who pledges to educate themselves, and others, about immigration issues; who pledges to advocate for immigration reform; and who pledges to either shelter an immigrant guest seeking sanctuary or to help another congregation that has done so in providing the basic needs of an immigrant in sanctuary.

I pledge

to be watchful

to protect you

to witness your life

with love



Contact Information

Washtenaw Congregational Sanctuary

[www.facebook.com/
WashtenawCongregationalSanctuary](http://www.facebook.com/WashtenawCongregationalSanctuary)

www.icpj.org/CongregationalSanctuary

Send an email to be added to:

General WCS list:

washtenawcongregationalsanctuary@lists.icpj.net

Education/Outreach: wcseducation@lists.icpj.net

Advocacy/Action: wcsadvocacy@lists.icpj.net

Legal/Fundraising: wcsfundlegal@lists.icpj.net

Logistics: wcslogistics@lists.icpj.net

Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice

www.icpj.org

www.facebook.com/icpja2

Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights

www.facebook.com/WICIR



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What is WCS?

Washtenaw Congregational Sanctuary (WCS) is an interfaith coalition of congregations, and unaffiliated individuals, throughout Washtenaw County who have joined together to support immigrants and their families in our community. The group, led by the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) and the Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (WICIR), held a first organizational meeting in January of 2017. WCS formed in response to intensified and increasingly unjust activities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in our community.

Goals of WCS:

- **Educate ourselves and others about immigration issues.**
- **Prepare a network of support for any congregation in our community offering sanctuary to an individual or family in danger of being unjustly detained and deported.**
- **Advocate for immigration policy reform.**
- **Harness the energy of social justice volunteers who support immigration reform.**

What is congregational sanctuary?

Congregational Sanctuary is a safe space traditionally located within a faith community, school, or hospital building which is culturally recognized as "off limits" by law enforcement agents. Sanctuary is a tradition stretching back hundreds of years. It is not a law. In a 2011 memo the Department of Homeland Security clarified its longstanding policy that immigration enforcement activities including interviews, arrests, searches and surveillance should not occur in these "sensitive locations."

Why is congregational sanctuary necessary now?

Many individuals who had previously been told they deserved to stay in the United States are now being deported. Students who were brought to this country as children and parents who have lived and worked in our community for years - supporting their families, contributing to social networks, and paying taxes - now live in constant fear of detention and deportation. Families are being separated and left without a breadwinner. Many immigrants face extreme danger from violence and drug cartels should they be forced to return to their countries of origin.

Is becoming a congregational sanctuary illegal?

Becoming a congregational sanctuary is an act of civil disobedience. Because it is a public act and the intent is not to conceal, the Center for Constitutional Rights maintains the congregation will not be violating federal law. Although this argument has not been tested in court, over the past forty years, no U.S. congregation has been prosecuted for providing sanctuary.



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How long would the sanctuary period be?

A prime candidate for sanctuary would be an individual who according to immigration lawyers needs more time to pursue a good case for attaining legal status and remaining in the U.S. Some cases may be resolved in a few days, weeks, or months. Others may take longer.

How will WCS support sanctuary congregations?

WCS has four committees to support sanctuary congregations:

- 1. Education and Outreach Committee** - provides information to the public and to congregations considering sanctuary, including an informational slide presentation and speakers bureau.
- 2. Advocacy and Action** - advocates on behalf of immigrant rights in our community and takes action to defend those rights when necessary. Supports publicity efforts of a congregation who invites an immigrant into sanctuary and, upon request, helps to share the story publicly.
- 3. Legal and Fundraising** - raising donations for legal and other expenses that an immigrant in sanctuary might face. ICPJ, a non-profit organization, acts as fiscal sponsor for donated funds.
- 4. Logistics** - organizes volunteers who will provide meals, transportation, shopping, interpretation, socializing, and financial support to a congregational sanctuary and their sanctuary guest.