



March 18, 2024

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
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Hon. Marc Miller
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
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RE: Regularize All Undocumented People and Ensure Permanent Resident Status for All Migrants

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Miller,

On behalf of Access Alliance Multicultural Health & Community Services, a non-profit, multi-service community health organization in Toronto, we write to express our support for Minister Marc Miller's recent announcement highlighting the federal government's commitment to crafting a "broad and comprehensive program" for undocumented individuals seeking permanent residence status. We understand that a proposal is set to be presented to Cabinet this spring.

We are eager to see some action on the mandate letter issued back in December 2021. As a major health and settlement agency in Canada's largest city dedicated to serving immigrants and refugees, our client demographics reflect inevitable global migration trends. Currently, over 30% of our clients lack permanent immigration status, a percentage that has been increasing every year. The demand for our services has been intensifying as a result. From frontline staff to our Board of Directors, we are keenly aware of the multitude of challenges faced by individuals without status. Despite their contributions to the Canadian economy and society at large, notably in healthcare and agriculture, individuals without permanent status face challenges in having their basic needs met. Services and supports are inconsistent, patchwork and not easy to access. We, like so many organizations, work hard to bridge these service gaps through piecemeal responses.

Nearly one year ago, we sent you our **Undocumented.Stories** book, a collection of firsthand accounts from undocumented Toronto residents, where every day living without permanent status means facing discrimination, mistreatment, inability to access basic services, social isolation and constant fear. The Call to Action therein outlines the demand for a "regularization program" that leaves no one behind and is inclusive of all

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undocumented individuals. You can view a digital version of the **Undocumented.Stories** book, including the Call to Action, here: <https://bit.ly/AAUndocStories>

As your government currently maps out a plan for regularization, we encourage you to revisit these narratives which vividly illustrate the daily struggles faced by individuals without permanent immigration status, from workplace discrimination to denial of essential services. We are confident that the federal government shares our vision of a country where, irrespective of status, everyone has a fair opportunity to lead a healthy life in Canada, free from the fear of deportation, discrimination, and exploitation.

Our demands remain clear:

- Immediately create a comprehensive, transparent, and equitable regularization program providing a pathway to permanent residence status for all people with precarious/undocumented immigration status in Canada, including migrant workers and failed claimants;
- Ensure no caps or restrictions by industry or geography, and no two-step immigration with temporary work permits;
- Implement a simple, cost-free application process, independent of immigration advisors or employers, with a moratorium on deportations and detentions during the regularization process.

The alternative - a partial, small, temporary and exclusionary program that will give rights to a few and deny them to most - is unethical and has major societal and economic costs. For instance, it has been shown that [deportations impose greater financial burdens on the federal government than providing settlement and integration opportunities](#). Successful programs as seen in many European countries highlight that broad and inclusive regularization (including at scale of 500,000 or more) is not just operationally feasible but has multiple positive benefits to temporary migrant families and to the host country.

We also want to draw your attention to the fact that the migrant care worker program is expiring soon, potentially rendering thousands of migrant women undocumented. Many cannot apply for permanent residency due to unattainable language testing and educational accreditation requirements. Additionally, with capped study permits and permanent residency, more individuals than ever will remain on temporary and exploitative permits.

Therefore, we also advocate for:

- An interim program for migrant caregivers to apply for permanent resident status without educational accreditation and language test score requirements;
- Ending tied work permits and hours of work limits for international students to prevent migrant exploitation;
- Ensuring permanent resident status for all working-class people in Canada.

We endorse proposals by the Migrant Rights Network for both [regularization](#) and [migrant care workers](#), and advise the federal government to incorporate them into their planning.

Lastly, we remind the federal government of Canada's commitment to the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration](#) promoted by the United Nations. As a signatory, Canada has a duty to implement and report on actions ensuring migrants' rights to legal identity, basic services, and protection from vulnerabilities, exploitation, and human rights violations. The new "regularization program" represents an opportunity to step up as a global leader, particularly amid growing racism and xenophobia, and develop a plan that centers these obligations.

This is a pivotal moment for Canada to uphold its commitment to human rights and create a fair and inclusive society for all residents right now. But this is also about the future for Canadians – with one billion people on the move globally, we have to ensure our societal structures are fair, flexible, responsive. We urge you to take decisive action to enact a comprehensive regularization program without delay.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you very much,



Kiran K. Govind
Acting Board Chair
Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services

Cc: Migrant Rights Network