



# CITY OF BETHLEHEM

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## **Our Commitment to Remaining an Inclusive and Welcoming Community**

The City of Bethlehem is currently home to approximately 78,000 diverse residents, with 30% identifying as Latino/Hispanic, 11% identifying as foreign born, and 25% disclosing that they speak a language other than English at home. The administration believes that whether your family has been here for generations, or whether you have been here for a month, that all are deserving of the opportunity to reside, thrive, and contribute to Bethlehem's welcoming community. In this city, we believe in the power of coalition building and creating a safe and vibrant quality of life for all of our residents. We acknowledge that while many cities are seeking to respond to the recent threats of deportation by creating a "welcoming ordinance," the City of Bethlehem already has practices and policies through City Hall and its Police Department which live into the recommendations of such criteria. In fact, many of these practices have been in place for years within the City of Bethlehem.

City Hall currently participates and facilitates the intentional celebration of various immigrant cultures, customs, and beliefs, and utilizes our office to refer immigrant communities to programs that can help obtain U.S. citizenship. We actively work with our community-based organizations, such as our public library, school district, faith communities, and other partners to provide our immigrant communities needed resources and supports. For this administration, it has been a fundamental principle for us to invest our time and resources into the community we serve under a strategy and philosophy entitled, "We Build Bethlehem," which seeks to provide direct service delivery, financial support for our community-based partners to create equitable outcomes, and intentional partnerships to establish communal wellbeing for all residents, regardless of immigration status.

Communication is key in building trust, which is why the City's departments and bureaus, including our Police Department, Health Bureau, and Community and Economic Development Department, all have language access plans to insure that the sharing of information is never compromised with those who do not speak English as their primary language. Additionally, the City of Bethlehem is currently undergoing a Communication Audit which will evaluate how our local emergency management efforts can inform the community of a crisis in their primary languages, with our engagement platform and city website already able to toggle its contents between English and Spanish.

In the midst of Executive Orders and federal policy changes, our Police Department remains committed to serving our community, and is in regular contact with Bethlehem Area School District and our faith community to make sure our citizens feel safe. With concerns around targeted deportation efforts coming to our police department, it's important to note that each officer of the Bethlehem Police Department promises upon the start of their employment to protect and serve all residents without bias, prohibiting discrimination when it comes to race, color, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, economic status, cultural affiliation, ancestry, handicap, disability, or any other identifiable categorization, including ability to speak English. Please see Chief Kott's memo for a more in-depth review of the Bethlehem Police Department's policies in practice. All of our employees follow a similar rule - provide the highest quality and respectful service to every resident no matter their story or how long they have resided in our city.

The City of Bethlehem's Administration remains committed to being a welcoming community and fostering a culture of dignity and respect for all of our residents. In the midst of a changing federal landscape, we continue to be fully present and intentional about keeping our communication channels open, allowing our residents to feel safe and empowered. Over the past three years, with an increase in the last month, we are continuing to meet with residents and community groups, with professionals and leadership in our City departments and bureaus, to discuss, review, listen, and answer questions as they relate to our promise and commitment to being a city which is to remain inclusive and welcoming to all who visit or seek to call Bethlehem "home."

In solidarity,



J. William Reynolds  
Mayor of Bethlehem



Janine Carambot Santoro  
Director of Equity and Inclusion