

Dear

I am writing to urge you to demonstrate your support in the creation of an LGBTQ+ safe emergency shelter.

There have been many appeals to the City of Ottawa to take more intentional action in supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Wisdom2Action created a call to action in 2023 speaking to the unique challenges the LGBTQ+ community is facing in Ottawa. The City of Ottawa's community safety and wellbeing research also spoke to the critical need for an LGBTQ+ shelter, accessible housing programs, and protection against discrimination. The Daybreak Non-Profit Housing also found in 2017 that the community was having struggles in accessing emergency shelters and feeling a sense of safety both from staff and other clients.

The City of Ottawa has created a 10-year plan for tackling Housing and Homelessness. One of the key themes it outlines is to create a dedicated shelter space for people who identify as LGBTQ+. It speaks to the importance of creating a safer community for all. It also notes that the LGBTQ+ community and despite having a high prevalence of homelessness they are less likely to access emergency shelters due to fears for safety and not feeling supported. Despite this, there has been no action on the part of the city to make this happen.

I urge you to voice your support for the Ottawa Queer Haven Project's position, including the following measures:

1. Include in the 10-year Ottawa Housing Plan an effort to address the unique needs of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community by funding an LGBTQ+ emergency shelter
2. Create a mandatory standard for emergency shelters that employees must be trained in supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ community
3. Increase presence of 2SLGBTQIA+ persons in conversations about their needs by funding a leadership coalition in Ottawa
4. Improve data collection on 2SLGBTQIA+ communities
5. Address the continuation of discrimination against 2SLGBTQIA+ community regarding housing and shelter access

These actions speak to the urgency in creating safer housing options for our LGBTQ+ community. The City of Ottawa has shown that it recognizes the unique barriers and vulnerabilities of our community, however, has not made any tangible steps to change this reality for us.

We are pleading that you take your own research to heart, as well as the calls from community, and start making a change.

Sincerely,