

**From:** [Flavia Genovese](#)  
**To:** [Budget Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Deputation for Budget Committee January 10th 2018  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 10, 2018 12:46:51 PM  
**Attachments:** [Deputation for Budget Committee around homelessness Jan 10th 2018.docx](#)

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To whom it may concern:

Please find attached a deputation on behalf of several agencies working with the homeless community in Toronto.

We would like to submit it to the Budget Committee.

Sincerely,

Flavia Genovese, MSW, RSW  
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Regent Park Community Health Centre  
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## Budget Committee Deputation

January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

The state of the shelter system is in complete crisis. Agencies, advocates, community groups and individuals with lived experience of homelessness have attempted to draw Council's attention to the dire and reprehensible state of the shelter system for years to no avail.

Year after year, Council has opted to rely on band aid solutions, underfunded emergency measures and temporary fixes to systemic issues that put lives at risk and force people experiencing homelessness into unsafe and unacceptable situations.

The crisis has led to the preventable deaths of homeless community members, 24/7 drop ins and respite centres operating as defacto shelters, complete reliance on Out of The Cold(OOTC) volunteer led services and ultimately to a system that is operating at essentially 100% capacity every single night.

Under pressure, the City has now responded, though inadequately, by taking some steps to address this crisis by opening the Moss Park Armoury, additional respite centres and the Better Living Centre. These spaces are not only temporary, but do not provide proper shelter. While these additional measures will help to save lives this winter, they do not provide an adequate response to this crisis.

The budget committee must address the crisis of the shelter system by allocating money for the effective implementation of these services for 2018-2019:

- 1) **Funding to open a minimum of 1500 new permanent shelter beds in 2018.** This includes the 650 people who are currently estimated to be using OOTC, Drop Ins and respite centres who will be displaced when these facilities close in April 2018. In addition, a minimum of 400 beds is required to bring the current shelter occupancy to 90%. At the same time, there are over 400 people documented by the City's last street needs assessment to be sleeping outside and many more "hidden homeless", including individuals who are couch surfing and who are not accounted for in this calculation. **This new shelter must include low threshold and harm reduction shelters for men and women. In addition, the City must urgently address the state of crisis within the family shelter system and allocate funds to increase and improve the family shelter system.**
- 2) **Measures must be taken to ensure that the shelter system across all sectors operates at 90% occupancy each night**, excluding flex beds, mats, temporary spaces, transitional housing and other beds that are not available or accessible on an emergency basis, from this 90% occupancy calculation.
- 3) We are in the midst of an overdose crisis, with insufficient and precarious resources to adequately respond. **We demand core funding for harm reduction programming that will save**

**lives and increase supports**, case management services and overdose prevention spaces across the city.

- 4) **Adequate, accessible, RGI and supportive housing and adequate income supports is what is required to actually address the homelessness crisis.** In the interim, the City of Toronto, and we as a City have the responsibility to at a minimum provide appropriate and adequate emergency shelter.

We are in a dire situation that must be addressed with the required funding. We urge the Budget committee and all of City Council to take the immediate measures required to address this crisis.

The undersigned,

Street Health

Sistering

Regent Park Community Health Centre

Toronto Drop-In Network

PARC

South Riverdale Community Health Centre

Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre

Houselink Community Homes

Sanctuary

Inner City Family Health Team