



## REPORT FOR ACTION

# Request for Federal Data on Refugee/Asylum Claimants in Toronto's Shelter System

**Date:** July 20, 2018

**To:** City Council

**From:** Interim City Manager

**Wards:** All

## SUMMARY

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As directed by City Council at its meeting of June 26, 27, 28 and 29, 2018, a formal request for data about refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto's shelter system has been submitted to the Government of Canada.

City staff will continue to collaboratively work with federal and provincial officials to support a data-informed approach. Any information received from the Government of Canada will be provided to City Council, as possible, as part of future updates on this issue.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Interim City Manager recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There are no financial impacts resulting from the adoption of this report.

The Interim Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## DECISION HISTORY

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**June 26, 2018** –CD29.8 2019 Shelter Infrastructure Plan and System Update Report; CD29.8b Refugee/Asylum Claimant Arrivals to Toronto: Current Situation Update:  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.CD29.8>

City Council advised the governments of Canada and Ontario that the City of Toronto does not have the facilities, personnel, or financial resources necessary to provide on its own, housing supports to any additional refugee/asylum claimants who arrive in Toronto seeking services. In addition, City Council requested the City Manager to request the Federal Government to provide the following information:

- number of shelter users who are established refugees who have had hearings accepted and have Permanent Residence;
- number of shelter users who have had asylum claims accepted and are waiting for a final ruling;
- number of shelter users who are asylum seekers, people who have entered Canada, claimed for asylum and are waiting to find out if their claim will be tested at a hearing;
- number of shelter users landed by the government from overseas at Pearson International Airport and settled within the City;
- number of shelter users who are in Canada but have made no claim whatsoever; and
- number of children broken down by same class

and to report the results directly to the July 23, 24 and 25, 2018 City Council meeting.

**November 7, 2017** – CD23.12 Managing Refugee Flows:  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD23.12>

City Council requested the federal and provincial governments to provide additional funding to the City of Toronto and partner stakeholder agencies within Toronto and surrounding areas, so that the City and the settlement sector are appropriately resourced to welcome newcomers, including refugee/asylum claimants, to Toronto to assist them with settlement, language training, education, employment and housing.

**April 26, 2017** – CD19.9 Refugees, Refugee Claimants and Undocumented Torontonians - Recent Trends and Issues:  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD19.9>

City Council requested the federal and provincial governments to provide additional funding to the City of Toronto to better support necessary programs, given the increased pressure on the shelter system, the Toronto Newcomer Office and social programming systems from refugee and refugee/asylum claimants.

## COMMENTS

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This report is an update on the City's request for information from the federal government about refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto's shelter system.

The City of Toronto continues to work cooperatively with other governments to respond to the acute pressure of refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto's shelter system. Access to relevant data is important for developing sustainable solutions and the City is committed to supporting a cooperative, data-informed approach. For example, the City is sharing shelter system data with federal and provincial officials on a weekly basis.

As directed by City Council at its meeting of June 26, 27, 28 and 29, 2018, a formal request for data about refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto's shelter system was sent to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Any information received from the Government of Canada will be provided to City Council, as possible, as part of future updates on this issue.

The City has a responsibility to serve the inhabitants of Toronto. City Council has taken a proactive policy position and clarified that this responsibility includes Torontonians without full status or full status documents. Council reaffirmed this position in 2013, 2014 and 2017, committing to ensure that undocumented Torontonians can access municipal services (the "Access T.O." policy). Immigration and citizenship information is only to be collected if required by provincial or federal policies, legislation or agreements.

The City's data collection practices are guided by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. 28.2*. The data that City Council has requested from the Federal Government pertains to information about the status of refugees and refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto's shelter system. The City does not routinely collect this information, particularly not at the level of detail requested, because immigration status does not play a role in clients' eligibility to receive shelter accommodation.

Although immigration status does not generally determine eligibility for City services, it does determine if an individual will be eligible to receive other supports that are provincially or federally funded, including Ontario Works, housing subsidies and child care subsidies. Therefore, in the process of case management, and during the intake process, clients may self-report their immigration status. The City's case management database for the Shelter, Support and Housing Division is the source of information about the surge in refugee claimant cases in the Toronto shelter system – information that is being shared weekly with the governments of Ontario and Canada. It does not include detailed information about the refugee claimants' status.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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