

City Council**Motion without Notice**

MM36.39	ACTION			Ward: All
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City of Toronto Support for Afghan Refugees - by Mayor John Tory, seconded by Councillor Michael Thompson

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.
* This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Mayor John Tory, seconded by Councillor Michael Thompson, recommends that:

1. City Council express its support for the national effort to resettle Afghan refugees and others arriving to Canada from Afghanistan.
2. City Council direct the City Manager to instruct relevant staff to work with the Federal and Provincial in the creation of a formal inter-governmental strategy specific to large-scale refugee resettlement and large-scale refugee claimant arrivals.
3. City Council approve \$0.200 million in one-time funding available within the 2021 approved operating budget for Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to fund the implementation of the Refugee Resettlement Program, specifically enhancements to refugee supports provided by community partners, based on emerging and urgent needs; and provide direction for staff to consider the addition of one full-time position within the Toronto Newcomer Office, for consideration as part of the 2022 Budget process.
4. City Council authorize the Director, Strategic Partnerships to accept, financial and in-kind donations to support the resettlement of Afghan Refugees in compliance with the Donations to the City of Toronto for Community Benefits Policy.

Summary

The federal government has committed to resettling 20,000 Afghans forced to flee from their country. The resettlement is expected to take two years and will be completed through two programs, one of which is for Afghans who were integral to Canada's efforts in Afghanistan.

Since July 2021, close to 2,500 Afghans have arrived to Canada with more than a 1,000 already in their destination communities. Approximately 50 percent are children. Many of the resettled Afghans have a strong desire to settle in Toronto and area. This is not surprising, given that the Greater Toronto Area is home to the largest Afghan community in Canada (out of 84,000

nationally, 50 percent live in the Greater Toronto Area).

Utilizing learning from the Syrian resettlement, the City of Toronto reactivated its Refugee Resettlement Program under the leadership of the Toronto Newcomer Office. Critical activities include: i) mobilization and coordination through the Inter-Agency Task Force, ii) establishment of working groups focused on housing and employment, iii) establishment of the Toronto Region Afghan Resettlement Fund in partnership with United Way and Lifeline Afghanistan, iv) relaunch of the webpage www.toronto.ca/refugees, v) coordination of ongoing communication between all levels of government and key community partners, v) monitoring and analysis of relevant policy, program and government announcements and vi) development of advice and options for internal and external stakeholders.

Currently, the staffing capacity of the Newcomer Office is insufficient to appropriately support this work. The Office has one full-time staff person funded by the City, and has a significant mandate given through City Council direction that is beyond the work that is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

This Motion is urgent as Community partners are providing urgent supports to Afghan evacuees to support their immediate needs and additional funding is required to be able to adequately and quickly respond to these urgent and emerging needs.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM36.39