

FROM: Toronto Community (Refugee) Hostel

TO: City of Toronto Budget Committee

January 18, 2023

1. Why We Are Here

- We are proud to belong to a City that has unhesitatingly welcomed refugees from around the world and has funded the shelter and services that refugees require for successful settlement in our city
- The tide of refugees to Toronto, including special visitors from Ukraine, is rising; so, City funding for refugee services needs to rise with it
- As one of only four agencies in the City that has for two decades focused exclusively on shelter and settlement services for refugees, we are seeking the opportunity to provide more service to more new arrivals to Toronto

2. Introducing the Toronto Community Hostel

- Incorporated not-for-profit for 50 years; exclusively serving newly-arrived refugee claimants since 2003; One of only four such agencies in Toronto
- Hostel in City-owned building on Spadina Road, operating 24/7/365
- 24 beds (16 during COVID) serving both families and individuals; always full; accommodating 100 new arrivals in a pre-COVID year
- Consistently meets all City standards; strong relationship with City staff
- With the experience, systems, and connections in place to provide/link to a full suite of ancillary services for new arrivals
 - settlement, children's, and housing support programs
 - employment counselling,
 - collaborations with MCIS, Legal Aid, Crossroads Clinic, Second Harvest, Furniture Bank, and a host of others

3. Refugee Pressures Growing, not Diminishing

- 700,000 Ukrainians have applied to Canada's special visitor program
- Exodus from central America, ongoing conflicts in Africa, southeast Asia, etc.
- Backlog processing refugee claims + housing shortage = longer hostel stays
- Not just accommodation needed; non-residential services, health/crisis supports for often traumatized people