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More federal housing support for asylum claimants

From: [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)

News release

July 18, 2023—Moncton—Canada is a nation that has been shaped by immigration. With increasing global migration, like many other countries, Canada is experiencing a rise in the number of people claiming asylum. While housing and supports for asylum claimants are the responsibility of provinces and municipalities, the federal government recognizes the need for all levels of government to work together on solutions to address the current need, and we have been there every step of the way.

Today, the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced funding that will ensure impacted communities have the capacity to keep a roof over the heads of vulnerable asylum claimants who want Canada's protection.

This support will come through a one-time injection of approximately \$212 million in funding into the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP), which will be extended until March 31, 2024. This includes approximately \$97 million in new funding for the City of Toronto. IHAP provides funding on a cost-sharing basis to provinces and municipalities for the costs of interim

housing for asylum claimants. Today's funding is in addition to the nearly \$700 million already delivered through the program, including over \$215 million for the City of Toronto.

In addition to IHAP, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has been working with the most impacted provinces and municipalities to increase the amount of temporary housing. As of early July, IRCC had over 3,800 hotel rooms in six provinces to provide temporary housing to asylum claimants.

The international migration situation requires pan-Canadian co-operation and engagement, and the Government of Canada remains committed to working together to find solutions. The federal government will continue to work closely with provinces and municipalities to ensure that there is support from all levels of government for those seeking refuge in Canada.

Quotes

"Canada will continue to support the world's most vulnerable people who seek our protection. Today, we have committed additional funds to ensure cities like Toronto have the capacity to keep a roof over the head of asylum seekers fleeing violence, war and persecution."

- The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

“The City of Toronto has no better partner than our federal government. Today’s funding announcement builds on our record of partnering with municipalities, including Toronto, to ensure that those seeking refuge and safety in Canada receive the support they deserve.”

– The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

Quick facts

- Immigration is crucial to both Canada’s short-term economic recovery following the pandemic, and to its long-term growth. Canada’s multi-year levels plan positions Canada to address current labour shortages—including in construction industries—and attract new skilled workers to help build our economy moving forward.
- Through the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP), the federal government provides funding to provincial and municipal governments, on a cost-sharing basis, to address extraordinary interim housing pressures resulting from increased volumes of asylum claimants since 2017. In fiscal year 2022–2023, over \$164 million in payments were made to cover eligible costs under IHAP, including approximately:
 - \$88 million to the City of Toronto
 - \$67 million to the Province of Quebec
 - \$9 million to the City of Ottawa
- The Government of Canada funds settlement services that help newcomer permanent residents settle and adapt to life in Canada. These services include information and referrals, language training,

assistance finding employment that matches newcomers' skills and education, and help integrating into Canadian society. For fiscal year 2023–2024, the government is investing \$1.076 billion in settlement funding, including over \$334 million in the Greater Toronto Area.

- In addition, the Resettlement Assistance Program provides immediate and essential support services and income support to assist in meeting refugees' resettlement needs, through contributions to service provider organizations. These services include, but are not limited to, reception services, assistance with accommodations, links to essential federal and provincial programs, and life-skills training. For the fiscal year 2023–2024, the government is investing \$310 million in resettlement funding, including over \$34 million in the Greater Toronto Area.
- The Government of Canada is dedicated to working with provinces and municipalities to implement permanent housing solutions. In April 2019, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a partnership with the City of Toronto worth more than \$1.3 billion to renew and repair more than 58,000 affordable housing units managed by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. The investment is part of the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, which provides low-cost loans and financial contributions to support and develop affordable housing that is energy efficient and accessible.
- Through Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, the Government of Canada has also committed nearly \$4 billion over 9 years to help tackle homelessness across the country. This includes over \$290 million allocated for Toronto between 2019–2020 and 2023–2024.

- IRCC implemented a temporary public policy (TPP) on November 16, 2022, that provides asylum claimants with timely access to open work permits, allowing them to enter Canada’s labour market sooner and provide for themselves while they await a decision on their asylum claim. From the launch of the public policy to May 31, 2023, IRCC has issued over 53,000 initial work permits for asylum claimants. Providing asylum claimants with access to a work permit earlier on in the process will allow them to access employment opportunities, reducing their dependence on provincial and territorial social assistance and other supports.

Contacts

Contacts for media only:

Bahoz Dara Aziz

Press Secretary

Minister’s Office

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Bahoz.DaraAziz@cic.gc.ca

Media Relations

Communications Branch

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

613-952-1650

media@cic.gc.ca

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