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**Deputation to Toronto City Council's Economic & Executive Committee  
Shelter Infrastructure Plan  
& Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy**

**October 24th, 2023**

For Distribution To - Economic and Community Development Committee, Toronto City Council

Meeting Item Number - EC7.3 – Social Development Grants – Addressing Reconciliation and Equity via Community Funding.

Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Councillors, Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

The Career Foundation is a non-profit organization and registered charity that has been connecting job seekers and employers through workforce development initiatives in Toronto since 1988. We are intentional about creating fair labour market access for marginalized and equity-deserving groups with a strong focus on employment preparation, skills development, and employer engagement. We aim to help reduce traditional and systemic barriers that have slowed the progress of Torontonians, and we strive to move people into sustainable and equitable employment.

Our organization is very concerned about the current living conditions of the people - mothers, fathers, children, babies, and grandparents who now find themselves refugees in the middle of the City of Toronto. We have been supporting local initiatives at the temporary shelters, churches and, more recently, the Fork and Fingers Restaurant in Etobicoke through donations of goods and services. We have witnessed the appalling conditions that hundreds of refugees are now living in, with mattresses and suitcases lining a local restaurant floor. This has now spilled over into the shared space of a commercial strip mall, where the store owners have allowed refugees to sleep on the concrete floors of their basements.

While we are grateful to the owner of the Fork and Fingers Restaurant, who essentially closed her business to provide shelter for hundreds of refugees that ended up on her doorstep, and to the neighbouring businesses, we cannot allow people who have sought refuge in Toronto to continue living in these conditions.

We are making this deputation for more support of refugees, specifically from African countries who have fled life-threatening unrest in their home country and have sought safety in the City of Toronto. The Career Foundation is working very closely with Delta Family Resources to offer employment readiness services such as resume

development to help refugees who are eager and ready to work in Canada and urgently need to be settled into safer and more humane living conditions. We are also in the process of coordinating a refugee-focused employment fair with Revival Time Tabernacle, which has supported more than 600 refugees to date. We are happy to come alongside these vital community groups to provide the employment support needed; however, basic shelter and other wrap-around support are urgently required.

We see Toronto's proposed Shelter Infrastructure Plan and the Homelessness Infrastructural Action Plan as providing immediate relief to this crisis. We urge all levels of government to work together to ensure our newcomer refugees are supported in making a positive transition to Toronto, obtaining meaningful employment, and building productive lives that contribute to the diversity and economic growth of the City.

The Career Foundation values the opportunity to make this deputation and put forward our support for tangible actions that will help the African refugees who have landed on our doorstep to make a positive and productive transition to life in Toronto.

Respectfully,



Evelyn Akselrod, Vice-President  
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