

From: [George Wilobo](#)
To: [Economic and Community Development](#)
Subject: [External Sender] Deputation material
Date: October 23, 2023 2:33:58 PM
Attachments: [CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE REFUGEE CENTRE V11.pdf](#)
[ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGEE CENTRE PROJECT PROPOSAL.pdf](#)
[DEPUTATION FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.pdf](#)

Hello Team, please kindly find herein attached the material to support our deputation tomorrow on the agenda EC7.7. Also, herein attached is our deputation for review and printing if necessary.

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Kind Regards
George



Program Proposal

INTEGRATED REFUGEE SETTLEMENT SHELTER & DROP-IN CENTRE



THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR REFUGEES IN
ONTARIO-CANADA

A Better World is Possible

PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY GEORGE WILOBO
AFRICAN CENTRE FOR REFUGEES IN ONTARIO
433 JARVIS STREET EAST

In partnership with **Street Haven** (contact: Dr. Siu Mee Cheng, PhD,
Executive Director Email: executivedirector@streethaven.com)





1.0 Introduction

The African Centre for Refugees in Ontario-Canada is a registered non-profit, non-sectarian and an all-inclusive organization with emphasis on supporting Refugees of African Descent both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ who are already vulnerable refugees on the on-set from the African continent to unite as a harmonious community and create a friendly and supportive environment.

We aim at addressing interests of African descent refugees and other persons in Ontario from the moment they enter the country until they are integrated into the Canadian setting following the IRCC agency of the Canadian Government. The organization was founded based on the lived experiences of its founder and serves over 900 African refugee claimants annually in Toronto.

With the geopolitical events taking place in Africa, Toronto has experienced a significant rise in the number of African newcomers arriving at the city, often with little supports and fleeing from threats of violence and danger. This has intersected with the homeless and housing crisis. The lack of affordable housing stock and driven up demand in the shelter system because of the increased number of homeless individuals. The number of individuals sleeping shelter less nightly increased from under 100 in 2022 to over 200 nightly. Because there has been no flow from shelters into affordable rental housing in Toronto, shelters have been at capacity unable to accept new shelter clients. The number of refugees has increased substantively and shelter providers such as Street Haven have seen their shelter client demographics change; Street Haven (SH) has gone from 25% of shelter clients composed of newcomers in August 2022 to 90% composed of African claimants and refugees as of August 2023 ending. Projections show that the number of African refugee claimants will continue to increase over time in Canada because of policy changes taking place in the African continent and other destabilizing forces including climate change, and civil war and strife to name a few. Moreover, these newcomers suffer from mental health and emotional challenges as they are anxious in a new environment with no family and are experiencing trauma because they are fleeing from violence and have suffered persecution.

The current refugee shelter capacity, which is a third of total city-funded shelters in Toronto is not enough to support the sharp rise in demand among African newcomers. Moreover, the absence of an organized and structured settlement support system in the city has contributed to the refugee crisis, which has been characterized as “unacceptable” by the Prime Minister and has reached humanitarian proportions in the city. Despite the grass-roots response by agencies such as ARC and other Black-led agencies and refugee claimant serving agencies including Street Haven, the responses are not



financially sustainable in the face of unrelenting demand for shelter and other newcomer supports.

ARC proposes an integrated Newcomer Refugee Shelter and Drop-in Centre that is aimed at supporting African refugees and claimants only that will be undertaken in partnership with SH. The program will be governed and led by ARC and operated through a service agreement with SH. The purpose of the shelter will be to offer a shelter bed, bathing facilities, and healthy and nutritious meals for homeless African newcomers. This will be coupled with other supports that will enable successful settlement and integration into Canada including documentation supports to ensure successful legal status attainment, housing security and income security. The drop-in centre will allow for housed and unhoused African newcomers to access settlement and housing supports during the day, to enable successful integration, housing security and income security. Homeless clients registered as a drop-in centre client will be on the wait list to access the shelter component of the integrated proposal. The aim of the proposal is to serve 100 shelter clients and 40 drop-in centre daily and may result in serving over 700 unique shelter clients and 500 unique drop-in clients annually. Ultimately, the integrated proposal will address the homeless refugee crisis in the city.

1.1. Value-proposition

ARC brings extensive and deep expertise in settlement supports and serving African refugees and claimants. Annually, the organization supports over 1,300 Africans in Canada. We provide services from a culturally appropriate, anti-racist and inclusive lens that reflects the needs, experiences, and challenges of African newcomers. We can provide services in several African languages. Lastly, we have an expertise in serving the LGBTQ2S+ African community and can respond to this community's needs using a trauma-informed and culturally responsive lens.

The partnership with SH will ensure that the shelter and drop-in centre are operated in accordance with city standards and from a quality lens. Street Haven has deep experienced operating shelters, and has the historical importance of having established Canada's first women's shelter in 1968, and was able to ramp up the operations of a shelter hotel in 72 hours. Street Haven currently operates 75 shelter beds, and 90% of these beds are now occupied by African newcomers. In addition, Street Haven has had success in providing housing supports and helped to house chronically homeless and newcomers into affordable housing. Street Haven also operates with a trauma-informed lens and has had success supporting women who have experienced violence and poverty, including members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Because SH is a multi-service agency that has made a commitment to integrated health and social care, it has



incorporated its training supports, supportive housing, and addictions treatment programs, clients benefit from enhanced access to SH services and seamless care. It should be stressed that access to women's addictions treatment services is limited in the city with long wait times in place, and partnership with SH will ensure enhanced access for African newcomers. An integrated services delivery model will be adopted in the operations of the shelter and drop-in centre.

2.0 Program description

2.1 Shelter

The integrated refugee settlement shelter and drop-in centre program is composed of 100 shelter beds for adult African newcomer men and women with an emphasis on serving members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. The shelter will be operated in accordance with the city shelter standards. It will provide several critical supports and services including:

1. Safe and clean shelter beds organized in single- and double-bedded rooms
2. Healthy nutritious meals outsourced through Street Haven kitchen services operations
3. Housing supports for clients to assist clients towards greater housing security.
4. Documentation to seek legal status: assist refugee claimants with completing their applications for asylum as well as other settlement issues including referrals to other settlement service agencies providing.
5. Social assistance supports to access Ontario Works and/or Ontario Disability Support Program to enable greater income security.
6. Volunteering opportunities for clients to acquire relevant experiences that may contribute to furthering their employment and academic opportunities in Canada
7. Services coordination and referrals to healthcare partners including primary healthcare, addictions services, mental health supports, trauma, and crisis service expertise.
8. Training supports and career workshops such as basic life skills, financial literacy workshops, language literacy, resume writing that encourages community partnerships and liaison with employers to integrate the African 2SLGBTIQ+ Refugees
9. Peer-based programming to build social networks, enhance skills and knowledge.



2.2 Drop-in Centre

The drop-in centre component of the proposal will allow for 40 adult African newcomer men and women to be served at any one point in time with an emphasis on serving members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. The centre will be operated in accordance with the city standards. It will provide several critical supports and services including:

1. Healthy nutritious meals outsourced through Street Haven kitchen services operations
2. Housing supports for clients to assist clients towards greater housing security.
3. Documentation to seek legal status: assist refugee claimants with completing their applications for asylum as well as other settlement issues including referrals to other settlement service agencies providing.
4. Social assistance supports access Ontario Works and/or Ontario Disability Support Program to enable greater income security.
5. Volunteering opportunities for clients to acquire relevant experiences that may contribute to furthering their employment and academic opportunities in Canada.
6. Services coordination and referrals to healthcare partners including primary healthcare, addictions services, mental health supports, trauma, and crisis service expertise.
7. Training supports and career workshops such as basic life skills, financial literacy workshops, language literacy, resume writing that encourages community partnerships and liaison.
8. Peer-based programming to build social networks, enhance skills and knowledge.

3.0 Program Outcomes

The program will address the following outcomes:

- o Successful settlement and integration of African newcomers
- o Successful legal status acquisition of African refugee claimants
- o Housing security for African newcomers
- o Income security for African newcomers
- o Employment within 6 months of refugee status acquisition
- o Low crisis incidence among clients
- o Low hospitalization rates among clients

4.0 Budget (DRAFT)

The proposed cost to operate a 100-bed shelter and a drop-in centre for 40 clients is \$6,982,235 (See Budget Table). This equals \$3,902,965 in salaries and benefits, \$1,652,000 in programming costs and \$637,000 in occupancy costs (including rent for



building). An operating fee of \$1,162,270 would be required to offset the operating partnership with Street Haven. Street Haven will ensure the programming operations of the shelter and the drop-in centre as well as support the administrative functions. A one-time amount of \$910,000 is proposed to undertake necessary construction (security doors, walls, etc.), purchase of furniture including shelter beds, initial hiring, recruitment and orientation, and initial purchase of technology (computers and phones).

Shelter and Drop in Budget	
EXPENSES	
SALARIES & BENEFITS	
Salary- Executive Director (.30 FTE)	\$ 46,575
Salary Director Operation (.30 FTE)	\$ 28,575
Salary - Director of Shelter and Drop-in (.50 of FTE)	\$ 45,000
Subtotal with Benefits	\$ 156,195
Shelter	
Salary - Shelter Manager (1 FTE)	\$ 75,000
Salary - Weekend Supervisor for Shelter and drop-in (1 PTE)	\$ 50,250
Salary - Case mgr (day, evening and overnight 18 FTE)	\$ 990,000
Salary - Case mgr p/t (f-Su) (18 PTE at .75 FTE)	\$ 742,500
Salary - Housing support workers (SW) 3 FTE @58K	\$ 174,000
Salaries -- Relief Counsellors	\$ 35,000
Subtotal with Benefits	\$ 2,686,775
Drop-in	
Salary – Drop-in Centre Supervisor(1 FTE) - SH	\$ 67,000
Salary - Case mgr (day, evening and overnight 2 FTE @55K)	\$ 110,000
Salary - Case mgr p/t (f-Su) (2 PTE at .75 FTE)	\$ 82,500
Salary - Housing support worker (SW) 1 FTE @58K	\$ 58,000
Salaries -- Relief Counsellors (25/hr) +vac,train, etc	\$ 15,000
Subtotal with Benefits	\$ 432,250
Multi-disciplinary Team	
Salaries – Life Stabilization Outreach .5 FTE	\$ 35,000
Salary – Settlement worker 2 FTE @ 70K	\$ 140,000
Salary - Trauma Counsellor 1 FTE @ 65K	\$ 65,000
Subtotal with Benefits	\$ 312,000
Support Team	
Salary - Housekeeping (2 FTE)	\$ 40,000
Salary - IT support p/t (25 hr@ \$85h/hr)	\$ 37,500
Salary - IPACC (.5FTE @35k)	\$ 35,000



Subtotal with Benefits	\$ 146,250
Administration Staff for both programs	
Financial mgr (.50 FTE)	\$ 35,000
HR Officer (.40 FTE)	\$ 35,000
Accounts Payable (.50 FTE)	\$ 25,000
Administration Assistant (1 FTE)	\$ 55,000
Subtotal with Benefits	\$ 169,500
Total Salary and benefits	\$ 3,902,965
PROGRAM COST FOR SHELTER AND DROP-IN	
Food (180,000 meals)	\$ 1,650,000
Food Packaging	\$ 40,000
Food delivery costs	\$ 18,000
Client Expenses (shelter and drop-in and personal products)	\$ 75,000
Information technology, licenses, and Communication	\$ 45,000
Staff Travel	\$ 35,000
Client Transportation & Support	\$ 15,000
Consultants and Professional Services	\$ 6,000
Staff Development	\$ 10,000
Recruitment	\$ 5,000
Memberships	\$ 3,000
Office Expenses	\$ 5,000
PPE	\$ 10,000
Total Programming Cost	\$ 1,917,000
OCCUPANCY	
Lease, Utility, and other related costs (insurance, tax, etc.)	\$ 600,000
Cleaning, household, and General Service Calls	\$ 30,000
Pest control	\$ 7,000
Total Occupancy Costs	\$ 637,000
STREET HAVEN OPERATING PARTNERSHIP FEE	\$ 1,162,270
TOTAL ON-GOING OPERATING COSTS	\$ 6,982,235
ONE-TIME COST	
IT purchase (PCs, phones, etc.)	\$ 125,000
Consulting Fees – recruitment, labour relations, legal	\$ 40,000
Orientation	\$ 40,000
Furniture (Beds, Chairs, Tables, TVs, and others)	\$ 255,000
Renovation construction costs (room conversions, doors, and etc.)	\$ 450,000
Total One-Time Cost	\$ 910,000



**THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR REFUGEES IN
ONTARIO-CANADA**

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CONCEPT NOTE

ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGEE CENTRE

Project Name:	Establishment of Refugee Centre
Contact Person:	Christopher Nkambwe
Project Director	George Wilobo
Organization:	African Centre for Refugees in Ontario
Project Amount:	

1.0 Introduction

The African Centre for Refugees in Ontario Canada is a registered Non-profit, non-sectarian and all-inclusive Organization with emphasis on supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers of African Descent both Heterisexual and LGBTQ+ who are already vulnerable on the on-set from the African Continent to integrate into the Canadian harmonious community and creating a friendly as well as supportive environment.

We aim at addressing interests of the African Descent Refugees and asylum seekers in Ontario Canada from the moment they enter the Country until they are intergrated into the Canadian Setting

Activities

1. New-Comer Settlement Programs

We offer new comers (Refugees) settlement support services to address the barrier of homelessness they face in Canada. Additionally, we assist refugee claimants with completing their applications for asylum as well as other settlement issues including referrals to other settlement service agencies providing; Educational, Housing, Health, Immigration and Social Assistance services among others. To date, we have supported over 2000 Newcomers and still counting, these are people that directly benefit from our services.

2. Volunteer Engagement Services

Volunteering is one of the greatest ways that we utilize to open up our organization to the communities to actively participate in its operations through active involvement to ensure the sustainability of the organization. This is an inclusive program that welcomes people from all races, religions, gender, nationalities, sexual orientation, education background and skills.

3. Career Workshop

We offer career workshops such as financial literacy workshops, language literacy, resume writing that encourages community partnerships and liaison with employers to integrate the African LGBTIQ+ Refugees and other persons into the workforce. Participation in this program is not restricted by race, religion, gender, nationality, education background, or religion. Everyone is welcome. Check our program schedule about when you can enroll.

4. Connecting Newcomers to Settlement Services

African Centre for Refugees prides in its rooted approach to helping Newcomer's access social services through our referral program. We have successfully partnered with other agencies within the GTA to provide real time response to our client's settlement needs ranging from; Shelter and housing support, Employment, Social Services among others

Statement of the Problem (Refugee Asylum Seeker Housing Crisis)

From the beginning of this year 2023, The African Centre for Refugees has continued to receive extremely high numbers of calls from individual asylum seekers, community organizations, as well as welcome Centre for assistance on how to help newly arrived refugee asylum seekers to access shelter services. However, as time went on there has been tremendous increase in the numbers of arrivals and all our referral services became saturated by overwhelming backlog and lack of shelter space in almost all refugee and non-refugee shelters. The Refugees and Asylum seekers are forced to sleep outside of peter street and other surrounding areas because of lack of housing and adequate shelter space in Toronto. According to city officials, up to 45% of Newcomers who call or walk into the central intake system get turned away

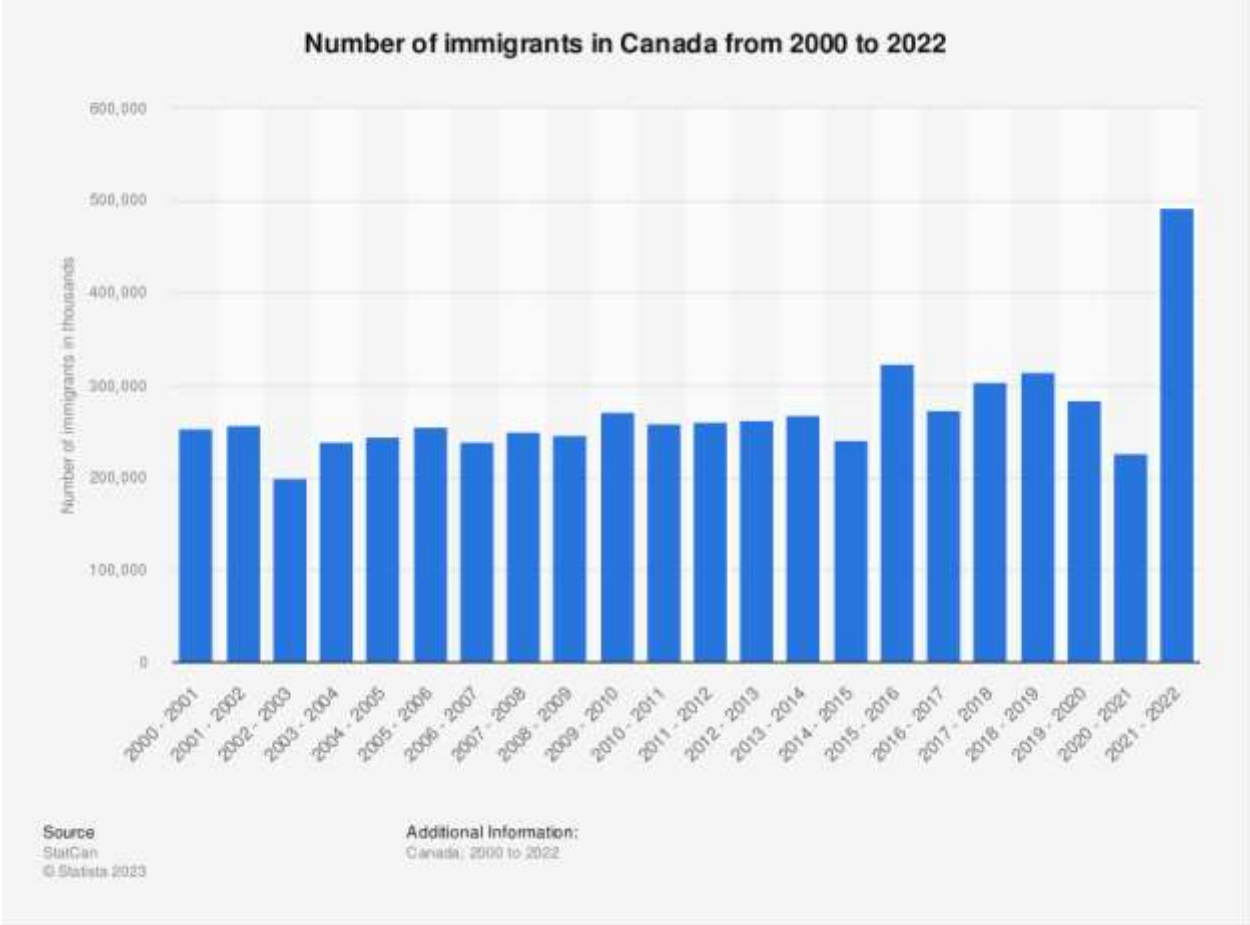
We have witnessed a significant number of asylum seekers taking refuge and sleeping on the streets Infront of the central intake Centre. The crisis has created fear for safety, health and wellness of the asylum seekers as well as Mental Health issues among other concerns including Human Rights violations.

There are more than 3200 refugee claimants in the City's Shelter system, accounting for over 35%. More than 200 people are left with out shelter space on an average Night, with more than half being refugee claimants.

As African Centre for Refugees in Ontario, we are overwhelmed by the calls for assistance and referral support for housing and shelters and also incapacitated by our financial abilities to provide the dire needs of the people. Coupled with continuous scenes of People of African Descent fleeing violence and persecution for many different reasons including Sexual Orientation related are among those facing the ordeal of having to sleep on the floor, or in churches to barely have shelter.

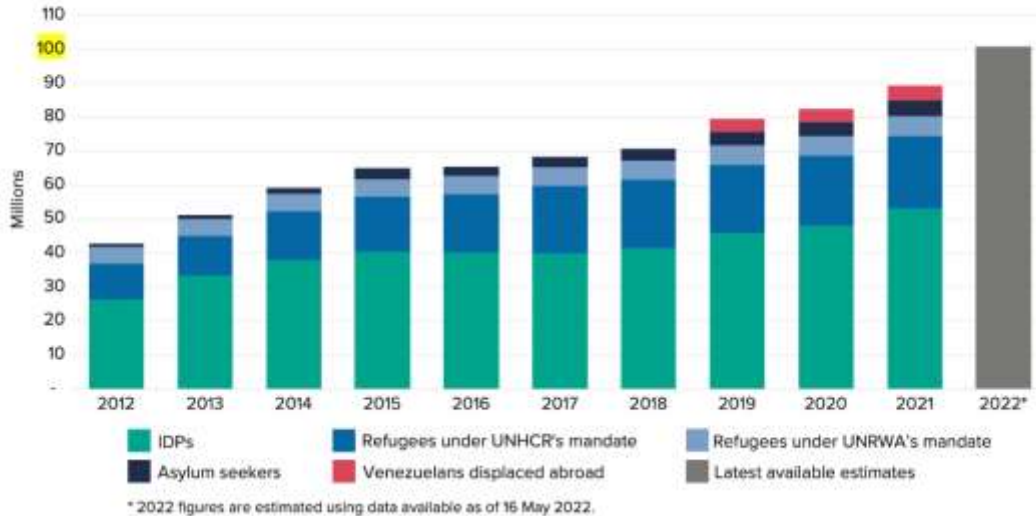
With regards to the above background, African Centre for Refugees in Ontario has discovered the most effective way to solve the problem, as the federal, provincial government and the City grapple with unending crisis of refugees and asylum seeker, the trend may not seize any time soon unless drastic unjust policies are passed. According to Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada date, the Number of asylum seekers entering Canada has surged and total number of refugee claims made in Canada rose to

12,010 by July 2023, the highest monthly total since January 2017. Additionally, the annual Immigration in Canada amounts to around 500,000 new immigrants one of the highest rates per population of any country in the world according to Statista Research Canada, as shown below



In addition to the above to understand the trends, according to the UNHCRs Global Trends and latest official statistics on Refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless people worldwide show that; at the end of 2022, 108.4 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order. The statistics also represents an increase of 19 million people compared to the end of 2021, its also the largest ever increase between years according to UNHCRs statistics on forced displacement. More than 1 in every 74 people on earth has been forced to flee as shown below;

Figure 1 | People forced to flee | 2012–2022



18 Source: UNHCR, [Ukraine situation: Refugees from Ukraine across Europe as of 29 May 2022](#)

19 See: [2022 Global Report on Food Crises](#); 82 per cent of IDPs (source IDMC) and 72 per cent of refugees under UNHCR's mandate, people in refugee-like situations, Venezuelans displaced abroad, and asylum seekers originate from these countries. 40 per cent of those displaced across borders are hosted in these same countries.

20 See: [Vaccination against COVID-19 will define countries' socio-economic recovery](#)

21 See IMF, [War sets back the global recovery](#)

22 See: [Global Trends 2020](#)

23 See [100 million forcibly displaced](#)

Findings of the African Centre for Refugees in Ontario

Through our own emergency fact finding mission, we discovered the following;

- The newly arrived immigrants are flexible with regards to shelter alternatives
- The sights of asylum seeker sleeping on the streets is very embarrassing to the city more so Canada as a country
- The Newly arrived asylum seekers are willing to receive any assistance
- Mental Health status of most Immigrants seeking shelter services is a concerning as they are anxious in a new environment with no family, fleeing violence, suffering and persecution but yet there are currently in similar situations.
- There are more men than women in the demographics of the asylum seekers
- The current Hotel accommodation shelters settings of the city are very expensive to sustain
- A Long-Term Structure/Building with Refugee purposed setting up including settlement services is the most ultimate solution to the refugee situation.

- All non-refugee shelters are currently occupied by the asylum seekers and refugees who have in turn displaced the Homeless person that absconded their bedspace during curfew.
- Most of the Refugees fleeing from East Africa are fleeing persecution due to sexual Orientation and hence the trend is not ending soon.
- With better settlement service set up, Asylum seekers need a minimum of 3 months in the shelter bedspace.

Our Proposition

To help reduce the congestion and backlog as well as embarrassing sights of asylum seekers sleeping on the street while during the bad weather conditions, the African Centre for Refugees in Ontario Canada has ear marked a long-term solution into the Housing Crisis by proposing to establish the First of its kind one stop “African Centre for Refugees”. The centre shall consist of over 300 bed spaces with a community centre, green garden roof top form urban agriculture, Offices for Settlement Services among others.

The Proposed shelter shall assist by housing homeless Refugees and Asylum seekers including Youth, LGBTQ+ individuals and women. Meals and basic necessities are provided in a secure environment, as well as case management, counseling, and support programs for adult refugees and asylum seekers. Housing workers shall help clients in pursuing permanent housing opportunities.

To help secure settlement services closer and in real time for supporting the asylum seekers, we shall partner with established refugee serving agency Street Haven to provide; Mental Health, Housing, Education and Immigration settlement services.

The Centre shall abide by the City of Toronto’s shelter standards according to the rules and rights provided for operating shelters.

The Proposal seek to Create a specialized Newcomer Refugee Shelter that serves adult African refugees and newcomers;

- City-aligned shelter for African adult refugees and newcomers with 100 beds in downtown east Toronto
- Operate kitchen services to provide hot meals
- Housing supports to enable timely access to affordable housing and housing benefits
- Mental health and addictions programming supports
- Access to healthcare services through community partnerships
- Settlement programming services to support timely documentation and status acquisition that respond to the needs of African newcomers
- Life skills training (basic literacy, financial literacy, etc.,) and career supports



The African Centre for Refugees

PAUL RAFF STUDIO ARCHITECTS
September 16, 2023



VEGETABLE PLANTERS / ROOF GARDEN

RESIDENT ROOMS FOR 325 PEOPLE

ROOFTOP LOUNGE

RESIDENT'S COMMUNAL SPACE

DINING ROOM AND ROOF TERRACE

ROOF GARDEN AND OUTDOOR SOCIAL SPACE

MULTIMEDIA / EVENT SPACE

ENTRY / RECEPTION / ADMINISTRATION OFFICES



The African Centre for Refugees

PAUL RAFF STUDIO ARCHITECTS
September 16, 2023



VEGETABLE PLANTERS /
ROOF GARDEN

ROOFTOP LOUNGE

SOCIAL STAIRCASE

RESIDENT'S COMMUNAL SPACE

ROOF GARDEN AND
OUTDOOR SOCIAL SPACE





MULTIMEDIA / EVENT SPACE

MEDICAL / TREATMENT / MEETING ROOMS

ENTRY / RECEPTION / ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

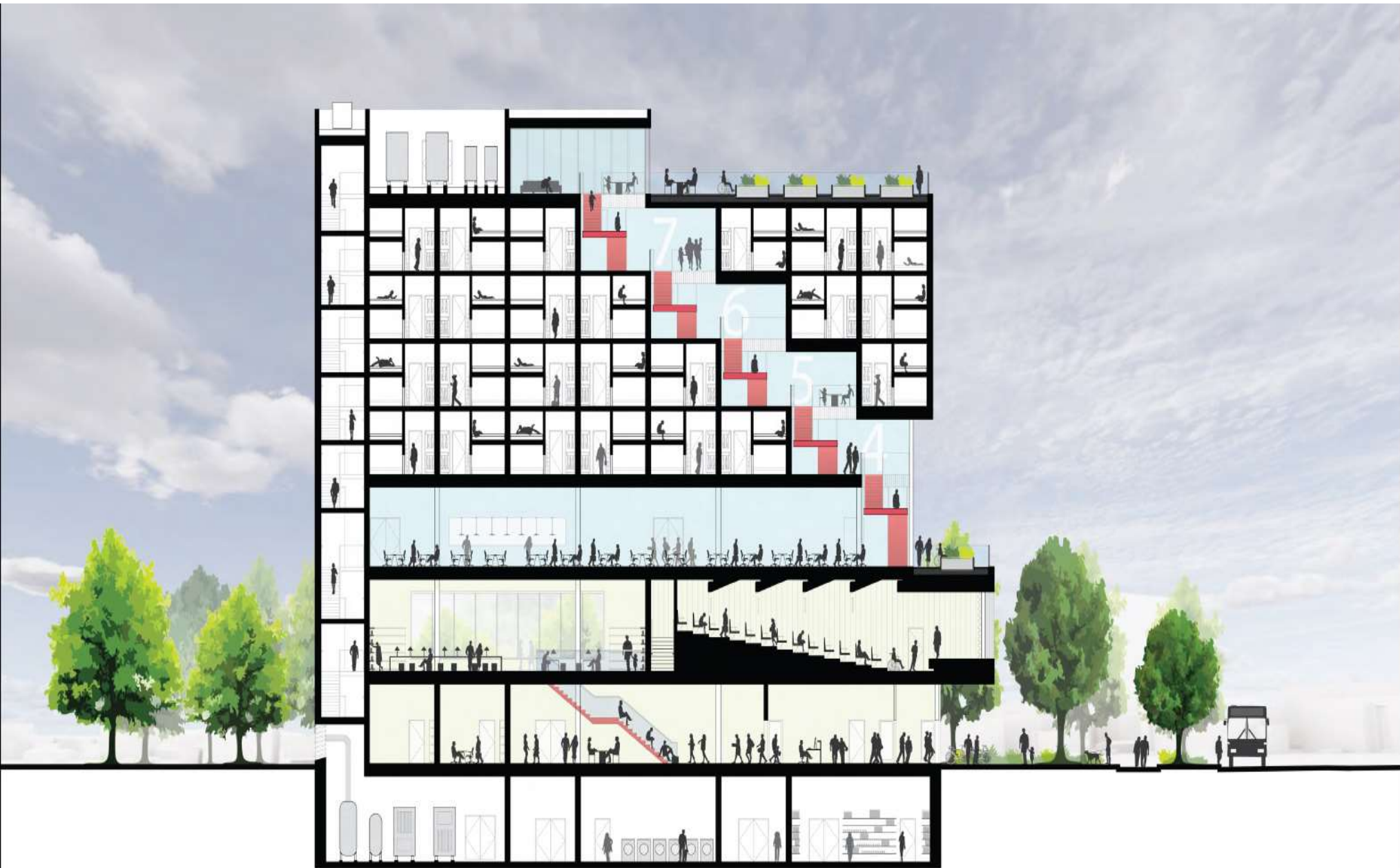
THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR REFUGEES IN ONTARIO-CANADA
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CONCEPT RENDERING



The African Centre for Refugees

PAUL RAFF STUDIO ARCHITECTS
September 16, 2023

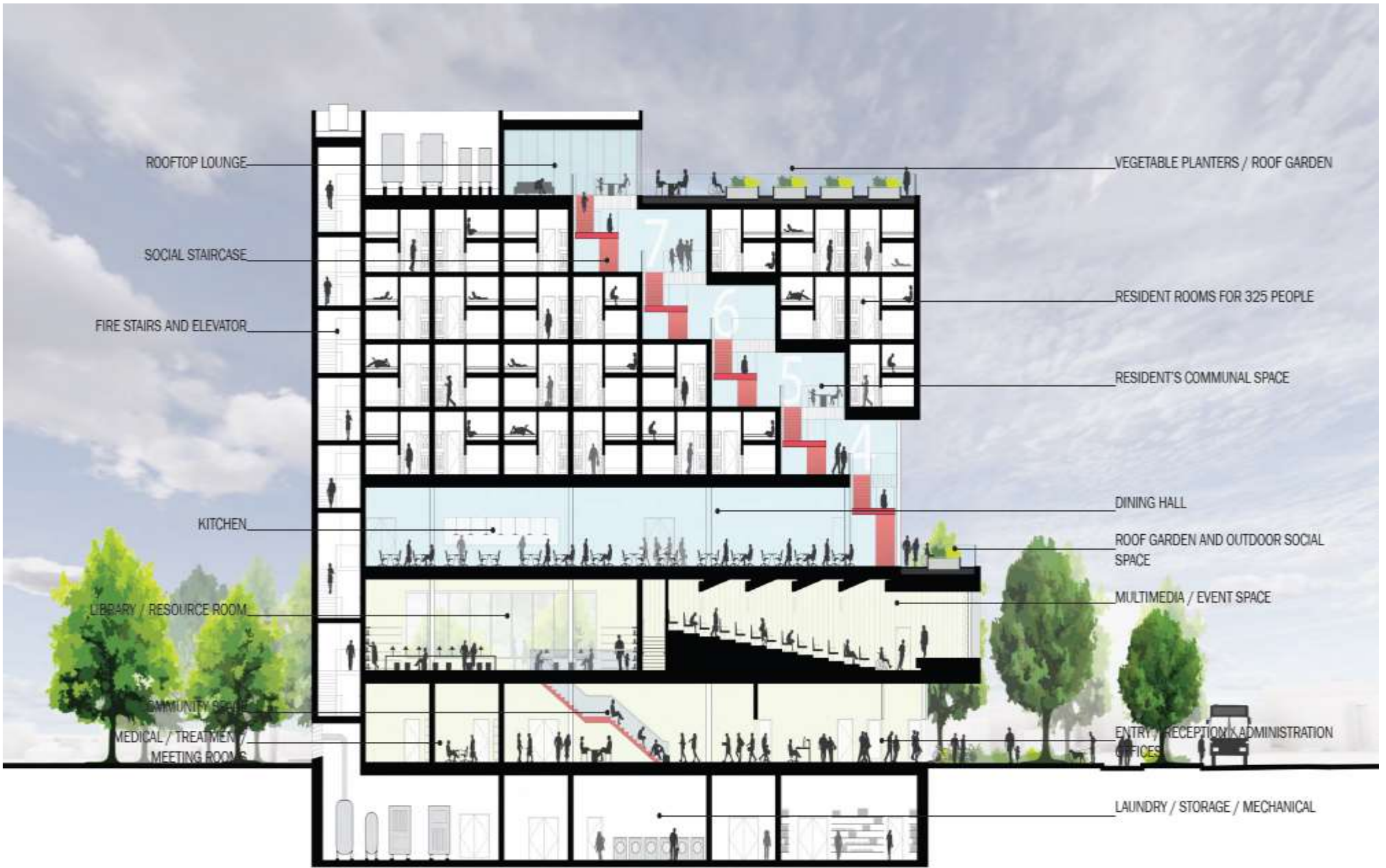


CONCEPT BUILDING SECTION



The African Centre for Refugees

PAUL RAFF STUDIO ARCHITECTS
September 16, 2023



ROOFTOP LOUNGE

SOCIAL STAIRCASE

FIRE STAIRS AND ELEVATOR

KITCHEN

LIBRARY / RESOURCE ROOM

COMMUNITY SPACE

MEDICAL / TREATMENT / MEETING ROOMS

VEGETABLE PLANTERS / ROOF GARDEN

RESIDENT ROOMS FOR 325 PEOPLE

RESIDENT'S COMMUNAL SPACE

DINING HALL

ROOF GARDEN AND OUTDOOR SOCIAL SPACE

MULTIMEDIA / EVENT SPACE

ENTRY / RECEPTION / ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

LAUNDRY / STORAGE / MECHANICAL

CONCEPT BUILDING SECTION



The African Centre for Refugees

PAUL RAFF STUDIO ARCHITECTS
September 16, 2023

Proposed Budget for Establishment of African Centre for Refugees

Description and costings
Land \$13,700/acre by 2 acres total cost of Land \$27,400
Construction \$210-310 sq/ft for 10 stories commercial/shelter bedspace total cost 12.5M – 20M

NB: the above estimates are based on the assumption that all factors are kept constant including prices at the time of inquiries and based on the actual basic needs prioritized any corrections and adjustments are highly appreciated.



Project Timelines

Activity	Sept 2023	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept 2024
Project Launch													
Architectural Drawing Completion													
Project Presentation													
Fundraising Committee													
Fundraising													
Fundraising Dinner													
Project Start, Contracting, Acquisition, Evaluation, and Monitoring													



**THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR REFUGEES IN
ONTARIO-CANADA**

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DEPUTATION
ON
AGENDA EC7.7: Shelter Infrastructure
Plan and Homelessness Service
Capital Infrastructure Strategy
(HSCIS)
IN
Partnership with
Street Haven



GEORGEWILLIAM WILOBO
AFRICAN CENTRE FOR REFUGEES IN ONTARIO
433 JARVIS STREET

Introduction:

Hello members of the Economic and Community Development Committee, my name is **Georgewilliam Wilobo** the Strategy and Operations Director of African Centre for Refugees in Ontario Canada, with me Today is **Christopher Nkambwe** the Executive Director of the same Entity, with us today is **Dr. Sui Mee Cheng** and **Bobbie Gunn** both from Street Haven who are our Technical Support.

*The **African Centre for Refugees in Ontario-Canada** is a registered non-profit, non-sectarian and an all-inclusive organization with emphasis on supporting Refugees of African Descent both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ who are already vulnerable refugees on the on-set from the African continent to unite as a harmonious community and create a friendly and supportive environment*

At African Centre for refugees, we all are Newcomers to Canada with First hand understanding of the challenges, Mental implications that a typical Refugee/asylum seeker goes through on a daily. This is why we were among the first refugee serving agencies to be at the frontlines of the Refugees/Asylum Seekers Shelter crisis advocacy which brought attention to many other entities as well as all levels of government.

What we Intend to Do

We are proposing a Midterm and Long-Term Infrastructure establishment of a Nubian/Black/African Led and operated Shelter space to manage the influx of refugees and Asylum Seekers from the African content or the Global South.

A. The Mid Term;

Together with Street Haven as our Technical Guide, we have verbally secured a 15,000 Sq/ft property which we intend to utilize as Newcomer Refugee Shelter and Drop-in Centre for the City of Toronto located at 272 Richmond Street East, considering the current Shelter crisis and weather change.

Why African Centre for refugees

- Our Service scope Supports 3 fundamental Categories;
 - 1. Refugees**
 - 2. LGBTQ+**
 - 3. African/Black/Nubians**
- Establishing a one stop Centre that support all the above categories of people
- We're a Black led not-for-profit agency that has deep experience and understanding of the lived experiences of African refugee claimants and newcomers will be the lead agency leading and governing the shelter and drop-in centre.
- Currently supports over 900 African refugee claimants.
- Have experience and knowledge in navigating settlement and integration challenges and needs of African and LGBTQ+ refugee claimants.
- Engagement with refugee claimants.
- Empty building for lease identified – downtown east Toronto.

We hereby lay on the table, our Proposition

The Long-Term

As the African Centre for Refugees in Ontario, we made some findings;

Through our own emergency fact finding mission, we discovered the following;

- The newly arrived immigrants are flexible with regards to shelter alternatives
- The sights of asylum seeker sleeping on the streets is very embarrassing to the city more so Canada as a country
- The Newly arrived asylum seekers are willing to receive any assistance
- Mental Health status of most Immigrants seeking shelter services is a concerning as they are anxious in a new environment with no family, fleeing violence, suffering and persecution but yet there are currently in similar situations.
- There are more men than women in the demographics of the asylum seekers
- The current Hotel accommodation shelters settings of the city are very expensive to sustain
- A Long-Term Structure/Building with Refugee purposed setting up including settlement services is the most ultimate solution to the refugee situation.
- Most of non-refugee shelters are currently occupied by the asylum seekers and refugees who have in turn displaced the Homeless person that absconded their bedspace during curfew.
- Most of the Refugees fleeing from East Africa are fleeing persecution due to sexual Orientation and hence the trend is not ending soon.
- With better settlement service set up, Asylum seekers need a minimum of 3 months in the shelter bedspace.

Our Proposition

To help reduce the congestion and backlog as well as embarrassing sights of asylum seekers sleeping on the street while during the bad weather conditions, the African Centre for Refugees in Ontario Canada has ear marked a long-term solution into the Housing Crisis by proposing to establish the First of its kind one stop “African Centre for Refugees”.

The Centre shall consist of over 325 bed spaces with a community Centre, green garden roof top for urban agriculture, Offices for Settlement Services among others with Architectural plan now available.

The Proposed shelter shall assist by housing homeless Refugees and Asylum seekers including Youth, LGBTQ+ individuals and women of African Descent.

- Meals and basic necessities shall be provided in a secure environment, as well as case management, counseling, and support programs for adult refugees and asylum seekers. Housing workers shall help clients in pursuing permanent housing opportunities.
- To help secure settlement services closer and in real time for supporting the asylum seekers, we shall partner with established refugee serving agency Street Haven to provide; Mental Health, Housing, Education and Immigration settlement services.
- The Centre shall abide by the City of Toronto’s shelter standards according to the rules and rights provided for operating shelters.

- The Proposal seek to Create a specialized Newcomer Refugee Shelter that serves adult African refugees and newcomers;
- City-aligned shelter for African adult refugees and newcomers with 325 beds in downtown east Toronto
- Operate kitchen services to provide hot meals and cultural appropriate Meals
- Housing supports to enable timely access to affordable housing and housing benefits
- Mental health and addictions programming supports
- Access to healthcare services through community partnerships
- Settlement programming services to support timely documentation and status acquisition that respond to the needs of African newcomers
- Life skills training (basic literacy, financial literacy, etc.,) and career supports

About Our technical Partner.

- Canada's oldest women's shelter provider and will be an operating partner with the African Centre for Refugees to operate the shelter
- Deep experience (nearly 60 years) operating quality and safe women's shelters and drop-in Centre's (75 beds in total and over 1000 shelter users annually).
- Expertise in providing housing supports to enable homeless individuals towards housing security.
- Able to engage in integrated health and social care for homeless individuals including mental health, income security and training supports.

We hereby lay the proposition on table

Thank you for giving us this opportunity today and we at African Centre Say "a better world is possible"