



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

A Better World is Possible

DEPUTATION

IN SUPPORT OF

**Agenda EC7.7: Shelter Infrastructure
Plan and Homelessness Service
Capital Infrastructure Strategy
(HSCIS)**

Partnership with Street Haven



**GEORGE 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 Partners.

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

At African Centre for refugees, we have Firsthand understanding of the challenges and Mental Health implications that a typical Refugee Claimant goes through on a daily. This is why we Support the 10-year infrastructure plan especially on creating permanent shelter beds and specifically for Black-led shelters

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 African refugees Claimants.

A. The Mid Term;

Together with Street Haven as our Technical Guide, we have sourced 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**
- Establishing a one stop Centre that support all the above categories of people is within our main Mission.
- We're a Black led not-for-profit agency that has deep experience and understanding of the lived experiences of African refugee claimants
- Currently, we support over 900 African refugee claimants.
- We Have experience and knowledge in navigating settlement and integration challenges and needs of African and LGBTQ+ refugee claimants.

We hereby lay on the table, our Proposition

B. The Long-Term which also aligns with the Focus of the agenda EC7.7

Our Proposition

We have earmarked a long-term solution into the Housing Crisis by proposing to establish the one stop “African Centre for Refugees”.

Why its Important

- The Centre shall consist of over 325 bed spaces with a community Centre for African Refugee Claimants.
- It shall provide case management, counseling, and support programs for adult refugee claimants. Housing workers shall help clients in pursuing permanent housing opportunities.
- Provide settlement services closer and in real time to Refugee claimants, we shall partner with established refugee serving agency Street Haven to provide; Mental Health, Housing, Education and Immigration settlement services.
- The Proposal seek to Create a specialized Newcomer Refugee Shelter that serves adult African refugees and newcomers with respect and dignity.
- Operate kitchen services to provide hot meals and culturally appropriate Meals
- The centre shall provide Housing supports to enable timely access to affordable housing and housing benefits
- Access to healthcare services through community partnerships, Mental health and addictions programming supports
- 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 as most African Refugees come when they are Educated enough to Quickly get integrated provided settlement services are tailored in one space.

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”