

Mayor Olivia Chow and Toronto City Council
City of Toronto 100 Queen St. W. Toronto
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clerk@toronto.ca

December 17, 2024

Re: Adopt Ombudsman Toronto Recommendations Regarding Refugee Claimant Access to Shelter Services

Dear Mayor Chow and Council Members,

I am writing to request that you adopt and implement Ombudsman Toronto's Recommendations in the report, [An Investigation into the City's Decision to Stop Allowing Refugee Claimants into Base Shelter System Beds](#) released on December 12, 2024. We are also writing to express our deepest concern at City Manager Paul Johnson's [statement](#) that he disagrees with some of the findings in the report and will not direct the City to implement recommendations.

We hope that this request is received in advance of your consideration of item CC24.1 - Ombudsman Toronto Report - An Investigation into the City's Decision to Stop Allowing Refugee Claimants into Base Shelter System Beds, today, on December 17, 2024.

OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants is the umbrella organization and collective voice for immigrant and refugee-serving agencies in Ontario. The Council champions equity and human rights for im/migrants and refugees through advocacy, collective action, collaborative planning, research, capacity-building, and information and knowledge transfer. More than 100 of our member agencies are located in Toronto, representing more than 50% of our membership. Many of our Toronto member agencies provide shelter, services and support to refugee claimants arriving in Toronto, including the claimants referenced in this report.

On June 21, 2023 OCASI wrote to [Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto](#), as well as federal [Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Sean Fraser](#), and [provincial Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development Monte McNaughton](#), calling for urgent action for emergency and long-term shelter for refugee claimants in Toronto.

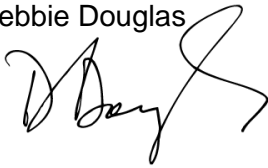
We are deeply disturbed by the Ombudsman's findings of systemic discrimination and anti-Black racism, as well as inconsistency with City policies, unhelpful referrals and harmful impacts and lack of accountability.

We welcome the Ombudsman's 14 recommendations in the report to strengthen fairness and transparency, and further the human right to adequate housing in the City's shelter system, ensuring all residents are treated with dignity and respect, and particularly to address anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination consistent with the City's own commitment to do so.

We look to you as the elected leadership of the City of Toronto to uphold these commitments, and urge you to adopt the Ombudsman's report and make a public commitment to implement all recommendations contained therein.

Yours truly,

Debbie Douglas



Executive Director