

# Amber Morley

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Dear Mayor Chow,

As Chair of the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee (CABRAC), I write today to call your attention to the urgent and widespread issue of homelessness that highlights a broader systemic challenge to adequately support all the residents of our city. In Toronto, a combination of insufficient social assistance, limited resources for vulnerable groups, a severe shortage of truly affordable housing, and the growing influx of refugees has placed immense pressure on Toronto's shelter system.

Toronto residents witnessed the harmful gaps in shelter provision in spring 2023 when African refugees were left sleeping on the street after being directed from Pearson Airport by federal officials to find shelter in our city. This was particularly painful for Toronto's Black residents. While the federal government's policy changes and funding decisions remain to be examined as underlying causes of this crisis, there are nevertheless important questions which have not yet been answered about the City's response.

The December 2024 report of Ombudsman Toronto's investigation into these events raises significant issues that are of profound concern to CABRAC:

- Why was this group, which included children, and in clear and urgent need of services left outside, resulting in Black leaders, Black-led churches, and Black-led organizations feeling the need to step in to shelter this group?
- Why was the expertise of the Human Rights Office and Social Development and Finance Administration, including the Newcomer Office, not at the table as decisions were being made?
- Why was Toronto Emergency Management not mobilized to meet this urgent need and what is the threshold of human need for mobilizing such a response?

CABRAC exists to provide expert advice to City Council on strategic and emerging issues to ensure that City policies, programs, and initiatives adequately serve people of African descent in Toronto. This includes critical matters like the one at hand, where systemic barriers continue to impact Black communities and refugees.

Residents of Toronto – and specifically the Black community – are still waiting for answers on these critical issues. These items should come to CABRAC so that its members and the public can obtain answers that have implications for the Black community and all residents in urgent need of services, including shelter. I believe that by engaging with CABRAC, and taking into account our insight and perspectives, the City will be better positioned to address these urgent issues and demonstrate leadership, accountability, and compassion in its response to the challenges faced by marginalized communities in Toronto.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to collaborating further to ensure a more equitable and inclusive future for all residents.

Sincerely,



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