

Shelter Pressures and Access Initiatives - Updates

Date: November 18, 2025

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) continues to manage the largest municipal shelter system in Canada amidst unprecedented demand, driven by the housing affordability crisis, limited income supports, and continued high refugee claimant shelter demand. In response to operational pressures and the Toronto Ombudsman's 2024 recommendations, City Council directed TSSS to enhance transparency, equity, and accountability in shelter access through [CC28.2 - Identifying and Addressing Pressures in the Refugee and Emergency Shelter System](#).

This report responds to City Council's direction to provide a status update on the implementation of all recommendations in the fourth quarter of 2025. It includes an overview of the progress made to date.

This report provides updates on key initiatives, including:

- Access to Shelter Framework
- Emergency Family Shelter Support (EFSS)
- Operational measures aimed at advancing establishment of a dedicated refugee service system
- Additional Council-directed Actions through CC28.2 and EC22.12
- Research and Data Sharing Partnerships

The report also outlines next steps to implement initiatives noted above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services recommends that:

1. Economic and Community Development Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications arising from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on July 9, 2025, the City of Toronto's Economic and Community Development Committee directed the General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services, in consultation with Humber River Health and other relevant health-care providers, to report back in the fourth quarter of 2025 on options for partnerships with local hospitals and health-care providers. These partnerships are intended to develop shelter spaces that integrate safe care plans and transitions for individuals leaving health-care facilities who require both health and housing supports ([2025.EC22.12](#)).

At its meeting on March 26 and 27, 2025, City Council directed General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services, to implement a series of directions to address pressures within the shelter system, improve access and equity for all shelter users, and enhance the transparency and accountability of shelter service delivery. These recommendations include the development of a framework to analyze future proposed shelter eligibility changes, tracking access to shelter and housing outcomes for all users, conducting stakeholder engagements and creating an engagement strategy for the refugee service system, completing mandatory trainings and learning sessions to strengthen senior leadership and staff capacity and renewing the AccessTO public education campaign. City Council also directed the General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services to report back with a status update on the implementation of all these directions to City Council in the fourth quarter of 2025. ([2025.CC28.2](#)).

COMMENTS

Toronto's Shelter system continues to face pressures. Toronto Shelter and Support Services has undertaken several initiatives to address these pressures and to account for Council Directions, implementing an Access to Shelter Framework, the Emergency Family Shelter Support, a transition towards sustainable refugee service system, partnering with hospitals and health care providers and improving data sharing opportunities provided under this section will provide the necessary information and context for the recommendations in this report.

Through these initiatives, TSSS will continue to address demand in the shelter system, improve fairness and transparency, and advance equitable access to shelter services and housing for all Torontonians.

CONTACT

Joseph Stalteri, Director, Service Planning and Integrity, Toronto Shelter and Support Services, 416-397-1275, Joseph.Stalteri@toronto.ca

Vera Dodic, Director, Refugee Response, Toronto Shelter and Support Services, 416-397-4633, Vera.Dodic@toronto.ca

Akwatu Khenti, Director, Social Policy, Analysis and Research, Social Development, 416-392-8608, Akwatu.Khenti@toronto.ca

Sutha Balasingham, Director, Central District, Toronto Employment and Social Services, 416-392-8258, Sutha.Balasingham@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Gord Tanner
General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Service