

Housing Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS)

Shelter Operator Expression of Interest Guidelines

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

In November 2023, Toronto City Council (“City Council”) adopted the [Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy](#) (HSCIS) to proactively inform capital spending decisions to promote recovery and stability in the City of Toronto’s (the “City”) shelter system. This includes short, medium, and long-term goals to transition Toronto's shelter system from an emergency focused COVID-19 response to a long-term, proactive approach to capital planning. This aims to ensure new spaces are proactively acquired, thoughtfully designed to enhance safety and dignity, meet the needs of Toronto’s diverse homeless population, and are well integrated into the surrounding community.

In part, the HSCIS provides a roadmap to develop up to 1,600 new shelter spaces across up to 20 sites (approximately 80 spaces each) over 2024-2033 to support recovery and stability in the shelter system. These HSCIS spaces will provide shelter infrastructure that is purpose-built to better serve shelter clients, improve operations, and allow the City’s Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) division to move away from the use of temporary hotel shelter sites. A key focus of this approach is to look for shelter opportunities across the Greater Toronto Area and in areas of the city that are currently lacking homelessness services. This will help people experiencing homelessness access support in their existing communities.

TSSS is committed to ensuring that its homelessness services, including emergency and transitional shelters, are accessible and responsive to the needs of all people experiencing homelessness, including specific client groups who may experience barriers to accessing service. This includes, but is not limited to, women, families, youth, seniors, Indigenous peoples, people who identify as Black, people who identify as 2SLGBTQI+, people living in encampments, people with a history of living outdoors, people who use substances, people experiencing mental health issues, people with pets, and couples.

1.2 Purpose

TSSS developed this Expression of Interest (EOI) process to provide opportunities for non-profit organizations across the city to apply to act as Shelter Operator for HSCIS shelter sites being developed over the course of 2024-2033.

TSSS intends to relaunch this EOI on a rotating schedule on or around an annual basis over the course of 2024-2033, in alignment with the acquisition of suitable HSCIS shelter sites. The EOI may be fully closed once TSSS has reached its goals, as listed in the HSCIS. This means that organizations that submit an Application (“Proponents”) may have multiple opportunities to submit Applications to be selected to operate an HSCIS shelter site. That said, TSSS intends to allocate a **maximum of one (1)** HSCIS site to each successful organization over the 10-year period of the HSCIS (2024-2033), however this is subject to change over the lifespan of the strategy and may vary depending on the number of interested and qualified candidates.

Each EOI will have its own schedule, requirements, and supporting materials, all of which will be available on TSSS’s [EOI webpage](#). Details on the specific sites will be provided as information becomes available.

The guidelines set out for this EOI are designed to ensure that Applications are received through an open process and that Proponents receive fair and equitable treatment in the solicitation,

receipt, and evaluation of its Applications, based on criteria as determined by TSSS. TSSS shall reject the Applications of any Proponent who fails to comply with any such guidelines.

Any proposals/requests for shelter operating funding that are submitted to TSSS and/or the City *outside* of this EOI process will be directed to apply via the EOI process.

1.3 Applicable Standards and Requirements

Successful Proponents shall comply with the building and service delivery expectations outlined in the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#). Additional guidelines and models may also apply, including the [Toronto Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines](#) and supplemental Shelter Service Model(s), as required by TSSS.

Additional shelter service model(s) are being developed, based on the findings of the 2018-2024 Council-approved [New Shelter Service Model](#) pilot. Successful Proponents may be expected to commit to and abide by the provisions of additional new shelter service model(s), to be defined in the Operating Agreement between the Successful Proponent and the City.

TSSS values its community partners and is committed to working with both clients and operators to help maintain compliance with applicable standards and models.

1.4 Authorities

TSSS is releasing this EOI under the authorities delegated by City Council in [CD24.7](#), as described in reports to City Council in items [EC7.7](#), [EC9.4](#), and [EX15.3](#).

2.0 Application Instructions

2.1 Important Dates

Please visit TSSS's [EOI webpage](#) for details on important dates and deadlines. **This schedule is subject to change.** Proponents are responsible for regularly checking the EOI website for updates and adhering to all timelines.

2.2 Who should apply to this Expression of Interest?

TSSS is seeking Applications from non-profit organizations that:

1. Meet all the eligibility requirements for this EOI,
2. Have expertise in providing direct services to people experiencing homelessness, including organizations that do not necessarily have experience operating shelters but do have experience in providing other services to people experiencing homelessness, AND,
3. Have a strong financial record as relates to the operation of said services.

TSSS welcomes joint Applications from organizations proposing to operate services in partnership in response to this EOI, where one organization is identified as the lead and responsible for executing all agreements with TSSS. In this case, a proposed governance and decision-making model must be provided to clarify the relationship.

TSSS's preference is for operators with experience operating emergency shelters and the evaluation committee will award points accordingly. Proponents should also demonstrate its experience in and ability to deliver direct services, as relates to the provisions of these Guidelines.

2.3 Application instructions

Proponents must meet all the following criteria, **prior** to submitting an Application:

1. Read all information available on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#), including this document, in its entirety.
2. Read the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#), in its entirety.
3. Ensure that your organization meets each eligibility requirement, as defined in section 4.0.
4. Complete an electronic Application via Medallia, PRIOR to the **posted deadline** on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#).
 - a. Note that Proponents can find the link to the Medallia survey on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#).

Applications will not be accepted for **any** of the following reasons:

1. Applications that are submitted later than the posted deadline on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#).
 - a. Note that ad hoc evaluations shall be conducted under special circumstances, as described in section 7.4.
2. Applications that are incomplete and/or deemed ineligible.
3. Applications that are not completed in Medallia (e.g., email, fax, physical copy).

2.4 Contact

All communications and questions regarding this EOI should be sent via email to ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca **before** the deadline for written questions, as listed on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#). This deadline ensures (1) TSSS can disseminate the response(s) to the question(s) to other Proponents, where deemed necessary by TSSS, and (2) that other Proponents are given enough time to incorporate said response(s) in its Application.

No City representative, whether an official, agent, or employee, other than those contacted via ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca are authorized to speak for TSSS with respect to this EOI. Any Proponent who uses any information, clarification, or interpretation from any other representative does so entirely at the Proponent's own risk. Any attempt by a Proponent to bypass the EOI process may be grounds for rejection of its Application.

3.0 Funding and Resources

3.1 Operating Funding

If the Successful Proponent(s) will rely on TSSS for the provision of operational funding, in whole or in part, to cover the costs associated with the delivery of required services specific to the operation of the municipal shelter, TSSS and the Successful Proponent will define reasonable funding levels in the respective Operating Agreement, which are within range of comparable municipal shelter operations, prior to execution of said agreement. See section 6.0 for additional details.

TSSS intends to provide this operational funding to the Successful Proponent(s) prior to the completion of construction, following execution of the Operating Agreement, to ensure the Successful Proponent(s) can establish the support services program, including recruitment and training of staff, and undertake activities required to prepare the building for occupancy.

Actual funding levels may vary, based on the type and level of services provided at each HSCIS site, to ensure funding is appropriate to the level of supports required and reasonable within a range of comparable municipal shelter operations. Ongoing operational funding is subject to annual review and is contingent on City Council's approval of the annual budget for TSSS. See section 6.0 for additional details.

3.2 Capital Funding and Facility Specifications

Successful Proponent(s) will operate the emergency shelter program in a facility that is provided by TSSS, unless the Proponent has secured their own facility that meets the requirements of TSSS. Any facility provided by TSSS will comply with the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#). Additional guidelines and models may apply, including the [Toronto Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines](#) and supplemental Shelter Service Model(s).

These facilities will generally meet the following criteria:

- a) Be designed with input of the Successful Proponent(s) and City staff, where possible.
- b) Accommodate approximately 80-100 spaces, subject to the program delivery model and clients served.
- c) Have a reserve of 20% flex space to increase or decrease space capacity when directed. This additional flex space will be proportionally reflected in the annual funding.
- d) Comply with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005](#) and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- e) Provide maximum privacy for clients, subject to site constraints.
- f) Not use bunk beds, subject to the program delivery model and clients served (e.g., families).
- g) Include sufficient privacy and confidentiality consideration for counselling, programming, case management, and staff office spaces.
- h) Include a designated, secure outdoor space, including an outdoor smoking space.
- i) Include designated indoor and outdoor pet spaces.
- j) Include wireless internet connection that will be made freely available to clients.

3.3 Co-Funding

While TSSS intends to provide 100% of necessary operational funding for required services, within a reasonable range of comparable municipal shelter operations, and 100% of capital funding to acquire and fit-up the site, the evaluation committee reserves the right to extend additional consideration to Proponents who offer notable supplemental operational funding and/or capital funding. This can include co-funding, secured funding from other levels of government, and/or secured donations.

Proponents who are proposing to operate a shelter in its own facility (either owned or with a long-term lease) may apply to do so in the appropriate section of the Application form - "Optional: Application to Use Own Facility as an Emergency Shelter".

4.0 Eligibility requirements

Proponents must meet ALL the following requirements to be eligible for this EOI:

1. Be incorporated as a non-profit organization with a recently audited financial statement (audited within the last 23 months).
 - a. Unincorporated associations and/or incorporated non-profit organizations without a financial statement that was audited within the last 23 months may apply with a trustee.
 - b. **For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply or serve as a trustee.**
2. Be primarily located in the Greater Toronto Area and whose primary activities take place within the Greater Toronto Area.
3. Be in good standing with the City (e.g., recipients of funding must have met the terms and conditions of previous funding).

- a. The organization shall not have been or currently be indebted to the City or be in default of the terms and conditions of any agreement (including any previous operating agreement), in the opinion of the division head, with any division, organization, board, and/or commission of the City of Toronto
- 4. Be able to commit to and abide by the building and service delivery expectations outlined in (1) the EOI Guidelines (this document), (2) the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#), and (3) supplemental shelter service model(s), as required by TSSS.

5.0 Scope of work

The following is a list of key requirements with which all Proponents must comply to be considered eligible to submit an Application for this EOI. Please note that this is a high-level description of requirements that are fully detailed in the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#). In the event of inconsistency and/or contradiction between (1) the requirements described in this list, and (2) the Operating Agreement, the Toronto Shelter Standards, and/or supplemental shelter service model(s), as defined by TSSS, the interpretation of requirements in the documents listed in (2) shall take precedence. These minimum requirements may change, based on programming and clients served, as defined by TSSS.

5.1 Operational Requirements

- a) Commit to operating an emergency shelter program for a minimum of ten (10) years, from the date of the execution of the Operating Agreement, subject to (1) the availability of funds, the necessary appropriations of the Applicable Funder, and where applicable, the payment of those funds to the City, and (2) City Council approval of TSSS's operating budgets.
- b) Operate the emergency shelter for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- c) Commit to regular site visits, audits, and/or reviews by TSSS or other City accountability officers (e.g., Toronto Auditor General, Ombudsman Toronto), as deemed necessary by the City.
- d) Use TSSS's Shelter Management Information System (SMIS) to record all relevant client-related information (e.g., intake, triage, admission, standardized assessment tools for best-fit support services, discharge, incident reports, complaints, case management notes, service restrictions).
- e) Participate in an annual program evaluation by TSSS, including an assessment against performance indicators, as outlined in an Operating Agreement.
- f) Prioritize and receive referrals for all new/returning clients through the City's defined referral processes (which may include, but is not limited to, referrals via Central Intake, Streets to Homes, the Encampment Office, and/or other urgent priorities as directed by TSSS).
- g) Participate in collecting and reporting on TSSS performance indicator metrics.

5.2 Program Requirements

- a) Provide individualized and housing-focused case management and system navigation supports to clients, including but not limited to housing, health, employment, culture, recreation, and referrals to community partners.
- b) Connect clients with appropriate community services, if the required resources are not available on site and/or if additional supports are required.
- c) Accommodate all clients within the applicable sector, regardless of their unique identity and support needs (e.g., ability, gender, age, sexual orientation, race, substance use, state of mental health).

- d) Assist clients to find and secure housing (e.g., permanent housing, supportive housing, long-term care, etc.), working with a "Housing First" approach (for more information see section 5.3 in the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#)).
- e) Provide services to clients in a manner that is client-centred, strengths-focused, human-rights focused, trauma-informed, equity-focused, and supportive to accommodate individuals with a variety of needs.
- f) Operate with a harm reduction approach, in alignment with [TSSS's Harm Reduction Framework](#).
- g) Accept pets and develop related policies and procedures.
- h) Conduct regular case management team meetings.
- i) Participate in a peer support program.
- j) Develop a process to engage clients in identifying program priorities.

5.3 Partnership and Community Engagement Requirements

- a) Develop and maintain partnerships with community-based homeless service agencies and health service providers.
- b) Work with TSSS and with other funders (e.g., local health integration networks, private sector, other levels of government, public sector) to access additional resources.
- c) Act as a hub for community connections and integrate services within the community.
- d) Work closely with the community in which the shelter site is located to maintain a positive community relationship, including:
 - i. Maintaining a clean and welcoming exterior of the building and property.
 - ii. Developing a community engagement policy and procedure to provide a timely response to community complaints.
 - iii. Designating a staff lead to respond to questions and complaints from clients, the community, City Council offices, and partners, in a timely fashion.
 - iv. Proactively engaging the community to foster a positive relationship with neighbours, local businesses, and other key stakeholders, and respond quickly to community concerns.

5.4 Asset Management Requirements

- a) Develop and implement a facility management plan for maintaining cleanliness.
- b) Conduct facility maintenance and repairs, as necessary.
- c) Develop and implement a pest management policy and program.
- d) Participate in regular audits of the building condition.
- e) Support TSSS in conducting state of good repair work, as required.

5.5 Staffing Requirements

- a) Staffing model (minimum requirement):
 - i. **Manager:** Minimum 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) for the site.
 - ii. **Supervisor(s):** Minimum 1 FTE for case workers, in addition to other supervision for other staff and operations, as required.
 - iii. **Frontline staff:** On site for all operating hours (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year).
 - iv. **Community Relations & Client Programming:** Minimum 1 FTE.
 - v. **Housing workers/caseworkers:** At a 1:20 staff-to-client ratio.
 - vi. **Maintenance staff:** Minimum 1 FTE.
- b) The following may be part of your staff complement or you may subcontract these services. If you are selected as a 'Prospective Proponent', you will be required to provide details on these supplemental staff roles as part of the Phase 4 of the Evaluation (see [section 7.2 \(d\)](#) for more details).

- i. Cleaning staff.
 - ii. Catering or food preparation staff.
- c) Staff must be adequately trained in a broad range of client service approaches and methods, including, but not limited to, anti-racism/anti-oppression approaches, cultural competence (e.g., training to provide quality services to people who are Indigenous, belong to racialized communities, belong to 2SLGBTQI+ communities, are newcomers to Canada, have disabilities, have experienced trauma) and are trained to deliver services that meet a Housing First approach, customer service standards, harm reduction strategies, and adheres to health and safety regulations.
- d) All staff, whether directly employed or subcontracted, must be paid a fair living wage, at a minimum of \$53,000 annual or higher, based on 2025 figures.

6.0 Budget

Proponents are required to provide budgetary information over up to two distinct stages (see section 7.2(a) and 7.2(d) for more details). This aims to minimize the administrative burden for Proponents in preparing their Medallia applications, so that detailed budget projections are only required for Prospective Proponents in a later stage.

This includes:

1. **Stage 1:** Via the initial Medallia application, all Proponents are required to provide basic details on their financial and organizational health. This includes providing a recently audited financial statement, annual operating spending values, current unrestricted reserve fund values, and basic details on the organization.
2. **Stage 2:** Prospective Proponents provide more detailed budgets which may include, but is not limited to, details on additional funding sources and the associated values, projected revenue, long-term debt, legal disputes and/or liability cases, and liquidity.

Combined, these two budget stages provide TSSS with enough information to effectively assess the financial health, operational forecast, and reserve funding to select a Successful Proponent.

7.0 Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

7.1 Evaluation Committee

TSSS established a dedicated Evaluation Committee that is comprised of a diverse selection of staff to oversee the review and evaluation of all completed Applications. The Evaluation Committee may, at its sole discretion, retain additional committee members or advisors as required.

By applying, Proponents agree that the decisions of the Evaluation Committee are final.

7.2 Evaluation and Selection Process

All Applications will be evaluated through a comprehensive review by the Evaluation Committee, which includes the following phases:

- a) **Phase 1 - Verify Eligibility:** The Evaluation Committee will eliminate all Applications that (1) are incomplete, (2) were submitted after the deadline, and/or (3) do not meet the full set of eligibility criteria, as outlined in these Guidelines.

- b) **Phase 2 - Score Applications:** The Evaluation Committee will review and evaluate each remaining Application using consistent and pre-determined scoring criteria. The Evaluation Committee will add successful proponents to each of the five sector-based “Qualified Lists”, where applicable. See section 7.3 for more details.
- c) **Phase 3 - Match Site:** Once TSSS has a firm offer on an HSCIS site and confirmed the program sector for that site, the Evaluation Committee will review the corresponding sector-based Qualified List to identify a “Prospective Proponent”. This phase includes, but is not limited to:
- Excluding Proponents that indicated that they are not willing to provide services (1) in the area in which site is located, (2) to the sector that will be served at the site, or (3) any other restrictions as listed in “Section 2: Service Delivery Interests” of the application.
 - Selecting the Proponent with the **highest score** from the corresponding sector-based Qualified List.
 - Selecting Proponents that indicated that they have existing experience and/or partnerships/networks in the area.

For example, TSSS has a firm offer on a site in Etobicoke York and has determined that the site will be a youth site. The Evaluation Committee will consult the “Youth Qualified List” and (1) eliminate any Proponents that have indicated that they **will not** provide services in Etobicoke York, (2) eliminate any Proponents that have indicated that they **will not** work with youth (despite potentially qualifying to serve youth), (3) factor in any other parameters indicated by Proponents in their application, and (4) select the Proponent with the highest score among the remaining proponents on the Youth Qualified List. This Proponent will become the Prospective Proponent for that site.

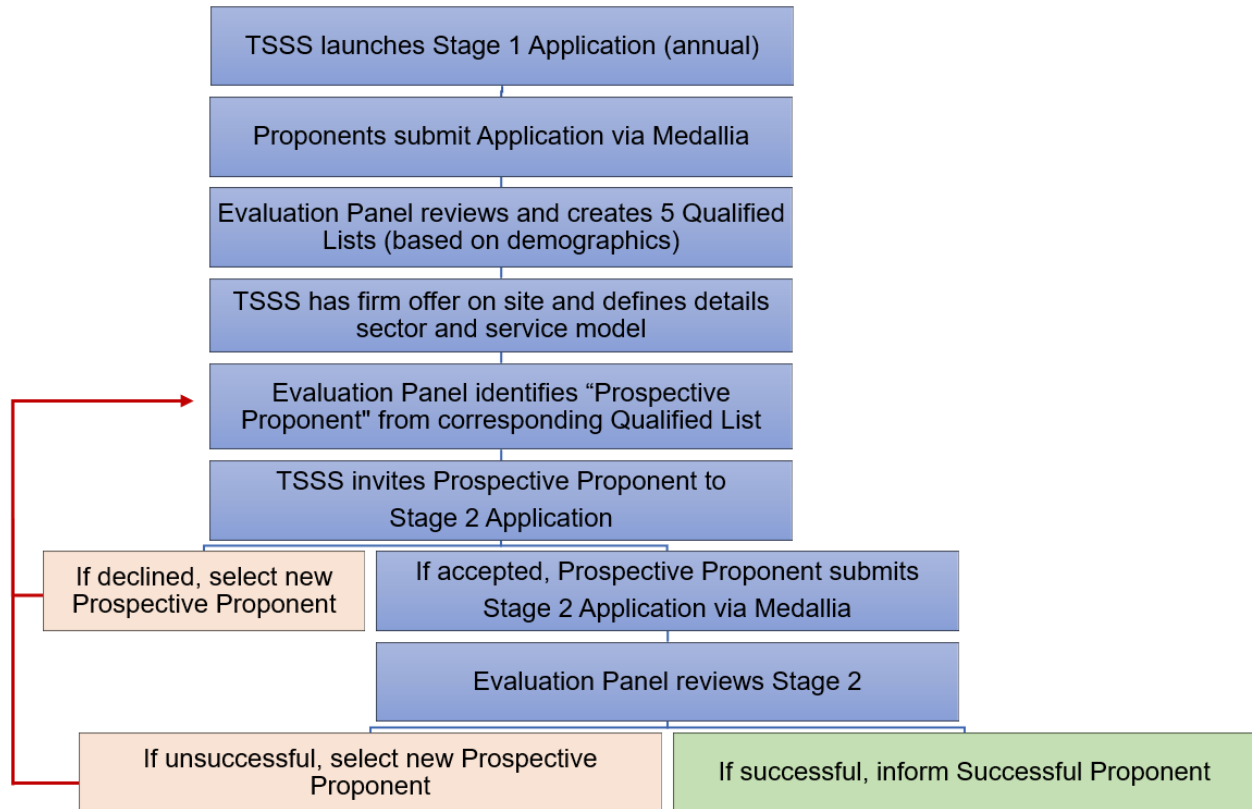
- d) **Phase 4 – Review the Prospective Proponent:** The Evaluation Committee will invite the Prospective Proponent to participate in the second stage application.
- If the Prospective Proponent declines, TSSS will return to phase 3 to select a new Prospective Proponent.
 - If the Prospective Proponent accepts, TSSS will provide them with a link to the second stage application, which can include, at the discretion of the Evaluation committee:
 - i. **An expanded budget submission**, which allows the Evaluation Committee to further review detailed information from the Prospective Proponent regarding its projected budget and financial health.
 - ii. **A proposed program model** for the site.
 - iii. **Site visits**, which may be applicable to (1) gain a better understanding of the Prospective Proponent’s current operations, and/or (2) if the Prospective Proponent is proposing to use its own facility, to verify that the facility meets all applicable standards.
 - Note: At this phase, TSSS may reveal details of the respective site, however limitations may be imposed due to the confidential nature of this work.

If the Evaluation Committee **is satisfied** with the Prospective Proponent’s responses in Phase 4, the Evaluation Committee will proceed to Phase 5.

If the Evaluation Committee **is not satisfied** with the Prospective Proponent’s responses in Phase 4, the Evaluation Committee will return to Phase 3 to identify a new Prospective Proponent.

- e) **Phase 5 – Final Selection:** The Evaluation Committee will make a recommendation to the General Manager of TSSS to approve its selection of a Successful Proponent that best matches the needs of a shelter site.

Figure 1: Evaluation Workflow



7.3 Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Evaluation Criteria	Value
Section 1: Eligibility Verification	Pass / Fail
Section 2: Service Delivery Interests	Not scored - used to match Proponents with HSCIS sites
Section 3: Financial and Organizational Health Verification	16% of total
Section 4: Service Experience	73% of total
Section 5: Partnerships and Community Relations	11% of total
Section 6: Optional: Application to Use Own Facility as an Emergency Shelter	Pass / Fail
Total Application content	100%

The Evaluation Committee will assign each Application with a total score out of 100 for **each of the following** four (4) sector-based categories:

- i. Single adults
- ii. Youth
- iii. Families
- iv. Seniors

The scores in each of these categories reflect the overall quality of the Application and the projected capacity of the respective Proponent to provide shelter services to the respective sector, in alignment with these Guidelines and applicable standards.

Proponents that achieve at least **60/100** in each sector-based category, as defined by TSSS, will be added to the corresponding sector-based “Qualified List”. This means that they are deemed qualified by TSSS to provide services to that respective demographic and shall be **considered** to be selected as a Prospective Proponent for an upcoming HSCIS shelter site(s), pending the remaining Phases of the evaluation.

For example, Proponent A received the following scores:

- i. Single adults - 65/100
- ii. Youth - 57/100
- iii. Families - 63/100
- iv. Seniors - 54/100

In this example, Proponent A:

- Received a passing score for the “single adults” and “families” sectors, and therefore is added to the respective Qualified Lists and eligible to be considered for future single women and family sites.
- Did not receive a passing score for the “youth”, and “seniors” sectors, and therefore is not added to the respective Qualified Lists, and consequently is not considered eligible for future single men, youth, and senior sites. Proponent A may have the opportunity to resubmit in a future cycle of the EOI, with the aim improve their scores.

7.4 Ad Hoc Evaluation

The Evaluation Committee shall consider evaluating and selecting Applications that are submitted after the Application Deadline in a separate evaluation (“Ad hoc Evaluation”), outside of the evaluation period for this Application process, **if** the Application meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. The Proponent has (1) secured its own facility that meets all City’s [building requirements](#) AND (2) the facility is available for occupancy **before** the current/next scheduled standard evaluation period can be reasonably completed.
2. The Proponent has (1) secured funding to cover significant ongoing operational/capital funding AND (2) there is a risk of that supplemental funding being revoked, if remaining operational/capital funds are not secured **before** the current/next scheduled standard evaluation period can be reasonably completed.

In all cases, Ad hoc Evaluation will only be considered by the Evaluation Committee if confirmation and/or provision of operating funding is required **before** the current/next scheduled standard evaluation period can be reasonably completed. Eligibility for an Application to be considered as part of this Ad hoc Evaluation is solely at the discretion of the Evaluation Committee.

These Ad Hoc Evaluations aim to ensure that TSSS can:

1. Achieve potential cost-savings opportunities by leveraging external funding and/or resources, and by decanting temporary hotels at a faster rate by selecting Successful Proponents outside of the scheduled evaluation periods.

2. Respond to emergent opportunities in a timely manner by selecting Shelter Operators throughout the full course of the HSCIS (2024-2033), while ensuring consistent Application and evaluation methodologies.

7.5 Clarifications and Follow-Ups

As part of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Committee may contact a Proponent(s) to verify and/or clarify information submitted as part of its Application. The clarification process will not be used to obtain required information that was not submitted prior to the Application Deadline. This may occur for some, all, or none of the Proponents, at the full discretion of the Evaluation Committee on an as-needed basis. The Evaluation Committee may choose to disregard some or all the supplemental information that is provided by the Proponent as part of this clarification process.

The Evaluation Committee will not accept unsolicited supplemental information provided by Proponents, outside of the Application or unsolicited requests to meet with the Evaluation Committee.

7.6 Feedback

Unsuccessful Proponents can request feedback from TSSS on its Application via email to ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca within **30 calendar days** of receiving notification of its unsuccessful Application. In this case, TSSS will provide a written summary of opportunities for the Proponent to improve its Application for a future cycle of the EOI.

The following Proponents are not eligible to receive feedback from TSSS on its Application:

1. Successful Proponents.
2. Proponents whose Applications were considered ineligible.
3. Proponents with incomplete Applications.

8.0 Appendix A: Terms and Conditions

8.1 Definitions

The following definitions shall give meaning to terms used in this EOI:

Application: An Application submitted by a Proponent in the Medallia, including all the information and documentation necessary to satisfy the Application requirements of this EOI.

Application Deadline: The date and time by which all Proponents must submit its completed Application for consideration by the Evaluation Committee, as indicated on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#).

Central Intake: A City-operated, 24/7 telephone-based service that offers referrals to emergency shelter and other overnight accommodation, as well as information about other homelessness services.

Client: Any individual or family unit who is in receipt of any kind of support services provided by a shelter. Clients can also be referred to as a "Resident", meaning an individual who has been admitted to a shelter's bedded program.

Emergency Shelter: A shelter that is accessible by an individual or family experiencing homelessness with or without a referral, with the intention of providing short-term accommodation and the support services required to move clients into housing.

Evaluation Committee: A dedicated TSSS committee that is comprised of a diverse selection of TSSS staff to oversee the review and evaluation of all submitted Applications as part of this EOI.

Expression of Interest (EOI): The process hosted by TSSS to select Shelter Operators to operate Emergency Shelters at sites developed according to the HSCIS, as described in these Guidelines in its entirety, inclusive of all Appendices and Addenda that may be issued by TSSS. This process is designed to ensure that Applications are received through an open process and that Proponents receive fair and equitable treatment in the solicitation, receipt, and evaluation of its Applications, based on criteria as determined by TSSS.

Freedom of Information (FOI) request: Formal requests for records of the City of Toronto. For more information, see the City's [freedom of information webpage](#).

Harm Reduction: A philosophy, approach, set of practical strategies, and policies or programs, aimed at reducing the adverse health, social, and economic consequences associated with substance use (both legal and illegal) in ways that are non-judgmental and non-coercive. Harm reduction as a philosophy and approach can align with abstinence-based shelter programs.

Housing First: A service approach that focuses on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and then connecting them to supports and services as needed to stabilize their housing.

Housing Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS): A 10-year capital infrastructure strategy designed to proactively inform TSSS's shelter-related capital spending decisions over 2023-2033. Visit [here](#) for more information.

Medallia: An online survey platform which Proponents must use to apply for this EOI.

Operating Agreement: A contract between the City and a not-for-profit organization that sets out the terms and conditions of providing services on behalf of TSSS to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Proponent: There are three (3) designations of Proponents, as part of this EOI, including:

1. **Proponent:** A non-profit organization/association that submits an Application as part of this EOI.
2. **Prospective Proponent:** A Proponent that is selected by the Evaluation Committee to participate in the Phase 4 evaluation for a specific HSCIS site.
3. **Successful Proponent:** The Proponent whose Application best meets TSSS's requirements, as determined exclusively by the Evaluation Committee.

Qualified Lists: The Evaluation Committee maintains four (4) distinct sector-based Qualified Lists (single adults, youth, families, seniors) of Proponents that it has deemed eligible for **consideration** to be selected as the Prospective Proponent for an HSCIS site of the corresponding sector, based on TSSS's determination of best fit. Placement on the

Qualified List does not guarantee that a Proponent will be selected as the Prospective or Successful Proponent.

Shelter Operator: Either (1) a not-for-profit organization/association that provides shelter services on behalf of the City or (2) TSSS directly providing shelter services in Directly Operated Service (DOS) shelters.

Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS): A City of Toronto division that is responsible for the management of Toronto's homelessness service system, encompassing both direct operations and partnerships with community agencies. These services span from emergency shelters and street outreach to 24-hour respite and drop-in programs. The division's mission is to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. To achieve this goal, TSSS collaborates with various community stakeholders, focusing on a person-centered and outcome-driven approach.

Toronto Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines: A document that provides best practices to assist those designing and building shelters or undertaking major shelter renovations in Toronto. The Guidelines are intended to respond to the evolving needs of those experiencing homelessness, and enhance positive outcomes for all shelter users, staff, visitors, and the surrounding community in new and renovated shelters. Recommendations in the Technical Guidelines span a broad range of areas from design principles to functional components of the building, environmental design, and materials and finishes. Visit [here](#) for more information.

Toronto Shelter Standards: A document that provides City of Toronto-funded shelter providers and clients with a clear set of expectations, guidelines and minimum requirements for the delivery of shelter services in Toronto. All emergency and transitional shelters funded or directly operated by TSSS, are required to meet the minimum service standards outlined in the Toronto Shelter Standards. Visit [here](#) for more information.

8.2 Limitations and Acceptance of Applications

TSSS intends to allocate a **maximum of one (1)** HSCIS site to each successful organization over the 10-year period of the HSCIS (2024-2033), however this is subject to change over the lifespan of the strategy and may vary depending on the number of interested and qualified candidates.

Acceptance of an Application does not commit the City to proceed with an Operating Agreement with the Proponent.

TSSS shall not be obliged to accept any response to this EOI. TSSS may, without incurring any liability or costs whatsoever from the City to any Proponent:

- a) Accept or reject any or all Applications at any time.
- b) Waive immaterial defects and minor irregularities in any Application.
- c) Suspend, modify, and/or cancel this EOI prior to accepting any Application.
- d) Reissue a new EOI, in place of this EOI.

TSSS is relying on the experience and expertise of the Proponent. TSSS reserves the right to disqualify any Proponent who has breached any of the responsibilities listed in this document, in the sole opinion of TSSS.

TSSS has no obligation to provide funding to any Proponents, including Successful Proponents, until an Operating Agreement is signed with the City, based on the requirements of TSSS. The

Operating Agreement will be contingent on establishment of funding allocated to the service by TSSS. The relevant terms, text, and/or content of this EOI and the Successful Proponent's Application will be incorporated into an Operating Agreement.

8.3 Proponent's Responsibility

It shall be the responsibility of each Proponent to:

- a) Read and understand all components of this EOI, including all appendices, forms, and addenda, prior to completing an Application.
- b) Read and understand the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#) in its entirety, prior to completing an Application.
- c) Participate in virtual information sessions regarding the EOI, where possible.
- d) Ensure they meet all the eligibility requirements, as listed in this document.
- e) Ensure all information provided in the Application is complete, true, and not misleading.
- f) Ensure approval of the Proponent's board of directors and executive management prior to submitting the Application.

It shall be the responsibility of each Successful Proponent to:

- Execute an Operating Agreement with the City, as directed by TSSS
- Provide input to the design stage of the respective HSCIS site, where possible and subject to parameters determined by TSSS and/or its consultant(s), including available funding and other emergent factors. This includes, but is not limited to, participating in up to weekly design meetings for approximately one year prior to construction, and participating in up to weekly construction meetings for approximately one year prior to commencing operations.

8.4 Confidentiality

Proponents acknowledge that its Application, including associated documentation, attachments, correspondence (e.g., email), and evaluation details, in connection with or arising out of this EOI, once received by TSSS, is under the custody and control of the City and may be appended to an Operating Agreement, and/or any additional agreements with the Successful Proponent.

A proponent should not include any personal information in its Application. Any confidential information submitted to the City in an Application is a record in the custody or under the control of City and may be subject to a FOI request.

8.5 Omissions, Discrepancies, and Interpretations

A Proponent that finds omissions, discrepancies, ambiguities, and/or conflicts in any of the EOI documentation, or is in doubt as to the meaning of any part of the EOI should notify TSSS via email at ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca no later than the deadline for submitting questions, as listed on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#).

The decisions and interpretations of TSSS shall be final. No supplementary explanation or interpretation, either in verbal or written form, shall modify any of the requirements or provisions of the EOI documents.

8.6 Addenda

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this EOI, including all associated documents, the information will be posted on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#). **It is the responsibility of the Proponent to regularly check this website for updates.** Proponents should monitor TSSS's [EOI webpage](#) to inform itself of any addenda until the deadline. TSSS is not responsible for any incomplete or

incorrect Applications resulting from the issuance of an addendum or a Proponent's failure to update its Application in response to an addendum.

TSSS reserves the right to revise this EOI at any time up to deadline for addendums (see on TSSS's [EOI webpage](#)). When an addendum is issued, the date for submitting Applications may be revised by TSSS if, in its sole opinion, TSSS determines more time is necessary to enable Proponents to revise its Application. TSSS will make reasonable efforts to issue the final addendum (if any) in a sufficient time prior to the closing deadline to allow Proponents to apply.

8.7 Decisions are Final

By applying to this EOI, Proponents agree that any decisions of the Evaluation Committee and TSSS are final.

8.8 Incurred Costs

The City shall not be liable to any Proponent for any costs whatsoever incurred in the preparation, submission, or presentation of any Application, follow-ups, communication, or any other activity that may be requested as part of the evaluation process or the process for the negotiation or execution of an Operating Agreement with the City. The rejection or non-acceptance of any or all Applications shall not render the City liable for any costs or damages to any Proponent.

8.9 Post-Application Adjustments and Withdrawal of Responses

A Proponent can amend its Application as often as is required prior to the Application Deadline. No notification of the changes is required to TSSS.

A Proponent may withdraw its Application prior to the Application Deadline by notifying TSSS in writing via email to ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca. A Proponent who has withdrawn an Application may submit a new Application in accordance with the terms of the EOI.

8.10 Verification

TSSS reserves the right to verify with any Proponent or with any other person any information provided in its Application but shall be under no obligation to receive further information.

8.11 Conflicts of Interest

Proponents must disclose to TSSS any potential conflict of interest as part of its Application. If such a conflict of interest exists, TSSS may, at its discretion, refuse to consider the Application. The Proponent must also disclose whether it is aware of any City employee, City Council councillor, member, or employee of a City organization, board, or commission, having a financial interest in the Proponent and the nature of that interest. If such an interest exists or arises during the evaluation process, TSSS may, at its discretion, refuse to consider the Application or withhold the selection of the Proponent until the matter is resolved to TSSS's satisfaction.