

# Shelter Operator Expression of Interest

## Question and Answers

September 25, 2024

### Introduction

This document serves to clarify details of the 2024 Shelter Operator Expression of Interest (EOI), as defined in the [Toronto Shelter Operator Expression of Interest – Guidelines](#) (“Guidelines”).

The deadline for questions was Monday, September 23, 2024. This deadline ensured that (1) Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) can disseminate these responses to other Proponents, where deemed necessary by TSSS, and (2) that other Proponents are given enough time to incorporate responses, as necessary.

Please note that the information in this document shall not modify any of the requirements or provisions of the EOI, as described in the Guidelines. The Guidelines take precedence.

For more information, please visit the [EOI webpage](#) or contact Toronto Shelter and Support Services via email at [ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca](mailto:ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca).

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## Application questions

**Q1. Can I submit another application if I need to change my original submission?**

- Yes, you can submit as many applications as you deem necessary.
- If a Proponent submits multiple applications, TSSS will only consider the most recent application by default, unless the Proponent informs TSSS in writing via email to [ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca](mailto:ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca) to consider one of the other applications instead of the most recent application.

**Q2. Are location and community relationships factored into the application process?**

- Within the application there are sections for Proponents to describe their experience within specific geographies, as well as their partnerships and community relations.

**Q3. For those without financial statements, how does the trustee work?**

- Organizations that do not have non-profit status can partner with a non-profit to serve as their trustee. This requires a legal agreement between the two organizations.
- The trustee assumes financial oversight of your organization. They are responsible for financial reporting and must ensure funds provided by the City are included in annual audited statements.
- Funding would be then issued to the trustee for disbursement as per the trustee agreement.
- More information on working with a trustee can be found [on the City's website](#).

**Q4. If partnering, is the organization with the financial statements the main applicant?**

- If two agencies are jointly applying and both have financial statements, a lead agency must be identified in the Application.
- If an agency (agency A) is applying and using another agency only as a trustee, agency A should be listed as the lead agency. They will be asked to enter the details for the trustee in the application.

**Q5. What if my partner organization is not interested in applying?**

- If you are jointly applying with another organization, that partner organization must also agree to submit the application.
- This could be an opportunity to find a partner that would be eligible and interested in applying for this or future EOI applications.

**Q6. Can you clarify how to answer the turnover of the senior leadership question?**

- TSSS is looking for the number of and reason for changes/turnover, excluding term limits.
- This is an indicator of management stability.

**Q7. What if we don't have an advisory board meeting before the deadline?**

- Submitting an application is not a commitment for the organization.
- If you are successful through the EOI process, there may be a possibility to defer, and look to a future EOI application submission.

- TSSS is looking to onboard operators as soon as possible, ideally, when sites are confirmed, to ensure that the operator can co-design and be involved throughout the construction and design stage.

**Q8. Can you further reduce the number of questions or extend the deadline?**

- We have reduced the number of questions based on feedback from the Toronto Shelter Network.
- We acknowledge that there are organizations that vary in size, staffing, and other resources, which can limit their capacity to apply to processes such as these. We have considered this in the application by limiting the number of questions, required documents for this stage, and limiting text for questions.
- We are aiming to announce the successful Proponents by the end of 2024, in alignment with the announcement of the first Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS) shelter sites.

**Q9. Can TSSS share samples of budget and other benchmarking information?**

- For the EOI application, we do not require a budget submission.
- If you are selected as the Prospective Proponent, we can work with you to provide best practices and benchmarking.

**Q10. What is the maximum character capacity for each question?**

- The maximum character capacity varies across questions, depending on the type of question. The Application will automatically notify you once you have reached maximum for any question.
- Most numeric fields are limited to a maximum of 10 characters (e.g., phone numbers, years), though some numeric fields have longer counts (e.g., dollar values).
- Most open text fields are limited to a maximum of 2,000 characters. That said, the following open text questions have reduced maximums:

34. Partner organization name

- maximum 150 characters

35. Description of partner role (including details of activities/staffing they will provide).

- Maximum 750 characters

38. Please indicate the location(s) within the City of Toronto in which your organization is willing to provide services (e.g., entire GTA, North York only, Agincourt only, Westhill only, Etobicoke only).

Note that your organization will only be considered for HSCIS sites located in the areas that you have indicated.

- Maximum 750 characters

39. Please describe any parameters that your organization has in providing services to people experiencing homelessness (e.g., your organization only provides services to: youth who identify as LGBTQ2S+; adults who identify as female and are experiencing

outdoor homelessness; seniors who identify as male; families who are refugees).

Please note that your organization will only be considered for HSCIS sites that align with these parameters, as applicable.

Please enter N/A if there are no limitations/restrictions.

- Maximum 750 characters

45. Please describe the reason(s) for the unplanned change(s)/turnover(s). Please do not include any personal information in your response, if applicable.

Enter N/A if your organization has not experienced any change(s)/turnover(s) of Senior Leadership (e.g. Executive director, directors, board of directors, general manager) within the last five (5) years.

Important note: Both this question and the previous question are scored together, where one cumulative score is assigned both questions. Please ensure to provide as much valid information in both questions, as possible, to ensure that your responses are scored appropriately.

- Maximum 750 characters

57. Please describe how your organization's experience in delivering programs/services to the following other three sectors of people experiencing homelessness is transferable to providing services to youth (ages 16-24) experiencing homelessness.

- Single adults, including couples
- Families
- Seniors (ages 55+)

Important note: Both this question and the previous question are scored together for the Youth Qualified List (where one cumulative score is assigned both questions and a higher proportion of points is awarded for experience in delivering programs/services to youth experiencing homelessness). Please ensure to provide as much valid information in both questions, as possible, to ensure that your experiences in delivering programs/services are scored appropriately. That said, please do not duplicate any information in your responses to these two questions. The Evaluation Committee will disregard any duplicate information that is entered in this question when scoring.

Enter N/A if your organization has not delivered any programs/services to the above three sectors.

- Maximum 1,000 characters

61. Please describe how your organization's experience in delivering programs/services to the following other three sectors of people experiencing homelessness is transferable to providing services to single adults experiencing homelessness.

- Youth (Ages 16-24)
- Families
- Seniors (ages 55+)

Important note: Both this question and the previous question are scored together for the Single Adult Qualified List (where one cumulative score is assigned both questions and a higher proportion of points is awarded for experience in delivering programs/services to Single Adults experiencing homelessness). Please ensure to provide as much valid information in both questions, as possible, to ensure that your experiences in delivering programs/services are scored appropriately. That said, please do not duplicate any information in your responses to these two questions. The Evaluation Committee will disregard any duplicate information that is entered in this question when scoring.

Enter N/A if your organization has not delivered any programs/services to the above three sectors.

- Maximum 1,000 characters

65. Please describe how your organization's experience in delivering programs/services to the following other three sectors of people experiencing homelessness is transferable to providing services to Families experiencing homelessness.

- Single adults, including couples
- Youth (ages 16-24)
- Seniors (ages 55+)

Important note: Both this question and the previous question are scored together for the Family Qualified List (where one cumulative score is assigned both questions and a higher proportion of points is awarded for experience in delivering programs/services to families experiencing homelessness). Please ensure to provide as much valid information in both questions, as possible, to ensure that your experiences in delivering programs/services are scored appropriately. That said, please do not duplicate any information in your responses to these two questions. The Evaluation Committee will disregard any duplicate information that is entered in this question when scoring.

Enter N/A if your organization has not delivered any programs/services to the above three sectors.

- Maximum 1,000 characters

69. Please describe how your organization's experience in delivering programs/services to the following other three sectors of people experiencing homelessness is transferable to providing services to Seniors (ages 55+) experiencing homelessness.

- Single adults, including couples
- Families
- Youth (ages 16-24)

Important note: Both this question and the previous question are scored together for the

Senior Qualified List (where one cumulative score is assigned both questions and a higher proportion of points is awarded for experience in delivering programs/services to seniors experiencing homelessness). Please ensure to provide as much valid information in both questions, as possible, to ensure that your experiences in delivering programs/services are scored appropriately. That said, please do not duplicate any information in your responses to these two questions. The Evaluation Committee will disregard any duplicate information that is entered in this question when scoring.

Enter N/A if your organization has not delivered any programs/services to the above three sectors.

- Maximum 1,000 characters

## Sectors and populations

### **Q11. Are refugees included in the four prioritized sectors?**

- The City is currently accepting applications from organizations interested in operating sites that will serve single adults, families, youth, and seniors that support anyone experiencing homelessness, including individuals who identify as refugee claimants.

### **Q12. Is 2SLGBTQIA+ competency and inclusion considered?**

- Providing appropriate services for 2SLGBTQ+ communities is an ongoing priority for the City.
- In recent years there has been an increase in programs supporting this community however, more development is still needed.
- The four demographic sectors (youth, families, seniors, single adult), are differentiated by age and family composition and have different space and built form requirements that help to guide the search for potential sites.
- The City encourages applicants to describe programming for equity-seeking groups in the relevant sections of the application.
- TSSS will continue to assess and evaluate the EOI process throughout the duration of the HSCIS, as well as use insights from the upcoming Street Needs Assessment (SNA), to determine if there is a need to develop additional or separate processes to ensure appropriate supports for equity-seeking communities.

### **Q13. Will specific adult populations be prioritized (e.g., women, indigenous, refugees)?**

- Currently, there are no identified priority groups within the single adults sector; we welcome all applications, including equity-deserving groups within this sector.
- A separate process will be held in the future to secure operators to run dedicated Black-led and Indigenous sites.

### **Q14. Are there special considerations for Black-led groups interested in applying through this general EOI application?**

- We recognize there are areas where Black organizations may be disadvantaged in the general EOI application. As such, TSSS is developing a distinct EOI stream for Black-led groups, based on feedback from community partners.

- We encourage Black organizations to review the general EOI application to familiarize themselves with the eligibility requirements, policies, and expectations.

**Q15. Should Black organizations wait for the distinct Black-led EOI stream?**

- We encourage Black organizations to apply to the general EOI process to become familiar with the shelter requirements and standards.
- The distinct process will allow for Black-focused, Black-led, and Black-serving organizations (B3) to apply - especially smaller, grassroots organizations.

**Q16. Is there a set number of sites for the youth, adult, families, and senior sectors?**

- Currently, we are looking for operators for one youth, one adult, one family, and one senior site.
- The focus and need for future programs will be evaluated based on Street Needs Assessment and other internal service and socio-demographic data.

**Q17. Is the single adult sector expected to accommodate couples?**

- This EOI treats the single adult sector as a broad category and does not specify specific populations or program models.
- Proponents can propose program models (e.g., specific to genders, couples) based on their expertise and area(s) of interest.

**Site details**

**Q18. Why is TSSS not disclosing site locations before submitting the EOI deadline?**

- The City is in the final stages of signing agreements and conducting due diligence for the properties. During this time, the locations must be kept confidential in order to maintain the City's negotiating position and ensure best value for taxpayer dollars.
- Prospective Proponents will be advised of the site location as soon as possible and be given the opportunity to accept the site. If they do not accept the site, they will remain on the Qualified List for future opportunities.
- If they accept and are successful in the due diligence exercise, that Proponent will be invited to participate in design of the site during construction.

**Q19. Will HSCIS shelter sites be announced before the general EOI deadline?**

- This EOI is for HSCIS sites being acquired in 2024. Locations will be announced in 2024/2025.

**Q20. What is the timeline for HSCIS site acquisition?**

- The City is looking to acquire approximately five sites by the end of 2024. This includes a combination of purchased buildings and City-owned lands.

**Q21. How are spaces defined for family sites?**

- The family sector is defined per household, not by individual. The number of spaces per household unit can vary, depending on the number of individuals in the household.
- The adult, youth, and senior sectors are defined by individual beds.



**Q22. What is the approximate size of the new shelter sites?**

- Sites being sought are generally 20,000 square feet. in order to accommodate approximately 70-100 individuals.
- Family shelters will typically be larger than senior, youth, and single adult shelters.
- Smaller sized shelters may be considered for particular program needs.

**Q23. What is the difference between long-term and permanent shelters?**

- The HSCIS aims to develop up to 20 new permanent and long-term shelter sites.
- Permanent sites would be City-owned. If shelter demand pressures change, we could consider converting these spaces to affordable housing units.
- Long-term sites would be leased for 10+ years and would be considered for sites with strong operational potential, but no opportunity for purchase.

**Q24. Is there specific geography targeted for the HSCIS shelter sites?**

- The City is looking to ensure that there is access to shelter services across the city, including expanding services outside of the downtown core. TSSS is looking to fill in the gaps of shelter services across Toronto.

**Q25. What is the expected timeline for standing up the new shelters?**

- The first set of HSCIS sites are expected to open in or around 2026.

**Q26. Can applicants provide information on spacing arrangements for proposed sites?**

- If there is a particular layout/unit model an agency is suggesting, you can elaborate this in the innovative programming section. However, the intention is to bring operators into the design process early on so that they can inform design and construction.
- In the [Toronto Shelter Standards \(TSS\) and Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines \(SDTG\)](#) there are components that speak to priorities related to privacy, room size, and other factors related to the built form environment.

**Q27. How will you select design and construction services to build or renovate shelter sites that TSSS identifies?**

- Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) is responsible for the procurement of design and construction services for the HSCIS sites based on what is required for each location.

## **Funding details**

**Q28. Based on the new investment, is the intention that the Proponent continue to fundraise at the same level?**

- The intention of the City is to fund operation of the shelters within a reasonable range of comparable benchmarks and existing municipally funded shelter operations. Funding is contingent on annual Council approval.
- Agencies can choose to fundraise to support additional initiatives, at their own discretion.

**Q29. Will there be opportunities for agencies to own and operate their own building?**

- Within the application there is an optional section for Proponents who have an existing property and are seeking operational funding.

**Q30. How do we clarify whether we are proposing to use our own facility?**

- The Application requires you to apply to operate out of a City-owned facility.
- Additionally, the Application allows you to optionally propose to operate out of your own facility.

**Q31. If we secure our own location, can we be awarded more than one site?**

- No, the City intends to award one site per operator through the general EOI process, unless there are no qualified Proponents. However, the City welcomes joint applications from non-profit organizations interested in operating a site together, so long as one organization is identified as the lead and responsible for executing all agreements with the City.

**Q32. Is there a preference for agencies who are acquiring their own property?**

- TSSS assumes that all Proponents are seeking to operate out of City-owned facilities.
- The Application also allows Proponents to optionally propose the use of their own facility. This does not impact scoring either negatively or positively.
- That said, Proponents that have applied to this EOI and (1) have a passing score AND (2) are proposing to use their own facility, will be prioritized as a separate Prospective Proponent, given they will not need an HSCIS site from TSSS.
- There is no guarantee that Proponents who have secured a property will be identified as a Prospective Proponent.

**Q33. Is there a ratio for front line staff for overnight shelter programs?**

- There is currently no prescribed ratio for frontline staff.
- In the past, the City has relied on organizations to staff appropriately, based on each unique building and program.

**Q34. Are organizations expected to be equipped to operate programs 24/7 immediately upon launch?**

- The City is aiming to conduct capital development work before the shelter opens.
- Operators will be given sufficient time to prepare resources, policies, and procedures.
- New sites will gradually ramp up to 24/7.

**Q35. How does the \$53,000 minimum salary expectation affect existing programs?**

- These implications will be discussed between the City and applicable operators.
- This requirement is based on funding enhancements that have been made over the course of 2024, to bring nearly all municipal shelter sites to this funding level.
- The City acknowledges that there are complexities in enhancing wages across the sector, particularly for non-funded programs.

## Evaluation and selection

**Q36. What does it mean to be unsuccessful? Can TSSS work with me to ensure I am successful in a future EOI?**

- Unsuccessful Proponents can request feedback from TSSS via email to [ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca](mailto:ShelterEOI@Toronto.ca) within 30 calendar days of receiving notification of their unsuccessful application.
- In this case, TSSS will provide a written summary of opportunities for the Proponent to improve their application for a future EOI.
- Proponents are encouraged to record a copy of their responses in a separate external document (e.g., word) for future reference. You will not be able to access your submission in Medallia once submitted.

**Q37. If we apply one year and are successful, do we have to reapply every year?**

- Applicants that do not receive a site yet score at least 60% in a sector-based category will be added to a “Qualified List” to be considered for upcoming HSCIS shelter sites within that sector.
- Organizations will have the opportunity to update their application as needed through future annual EOI processes.

**Q38. If we do not participate in this general EOI round, when do we expect the next round of single adults, family, senior, and youth sites to be released?**

- The City intends to release shelter operator EOIs annually, throughout the course of HSCIS (2024-2033), until all sites have been secured.
- Sectors for future EOIs will be informed by the type of properties acquired, as well as insight from relevant data (e.g., Street Needs Assessment).
- If you are successful, but unprepared to move forward, you can let TSSS know.

**Q39. Are organizations looking to expand existing shelter spaces considered eligible?**

- No, the HSCIS is focused on developing new permanent or long-term shelter sites.
- Discussions about expanding existing shelter spaces should be approached separately by speaking to your Agency Review Officer (ARO).