



— **OBCM** —
Ontario's Big City Mayors

Motion Regarding the Wind-Down of the Interim Housing Assistance Program

Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow

WHEREAS Everyone deserves a roof over their head. Refugee claimants, asylum seekers, and people experiencing homelessness deserve dignified shelter and housing. No one should be forced to sleep on the street or in parks.

WHEREAS refugee demand for local shelter beds creates significant and unpredictable pressures for municipal service systems, which are not designed to respond to international migration but rather to support the local homeless population.

WHEREAS given the ongoing global instability and current trends, large-scale arrivals of refugee claimants are anticipated to continue to increase. In 2024, approximately 170,000 claims were made, with more than half in Ontario. Of the claims made in Ontario the majority were filed inland.

WHEREAS recent changes to the IHAP funding requirements gradually shifts financial responsibility to municipalities over a period of two years, creating an unsustainable burden for municipalities, despite the federal government having the overall authority over immigration.

WHEREAS the reduced federal participation in cost-sharing and the requirement to demonstrate availability of other funding sources will discourage more municipalities to apply. This will limit opportunities for claimants to move to other locations, while also reducing options to build a coordinated national response.

Therefore, be it resolved that Ontario Big City Mayors:

1. Request the Federal Government to immediately reverse the decision to wind-down the Interim Housing Assistance Program and continue providing support for municipalities for 100 percent of the cost of providing shelter for refugees and asylum seekers.
2. Request the Federal Government to expand the definition of the term “asylum claimant” as eligible for IHAP funded services to include those who have initiated a refugee claim and haven’t completed it yet, and those who arrived to Canada with the intention to make a refugee claim and are preparing to make it.

Sources: Toronto City Council [CC28.2 – identifying and Addressing Pressures in the Refugee and Emergency Shelter System](#).