



Report and Action Plan

A Forum Focused on Solutions:

Addressing the Urgent Shelter and
Housing Needs of Refugee Claimants in BC

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Acknowledgements

The Refugee Claimant Housing Forum Organizers thank

- all the attendees who participated in the 10 May 2018 forum and helped shape the actions in this report,
- the volunteer note takers Madeleine Northgate, Dustin Lupick, Marzia Rizvi, Jessica Lee, Amy Schwab, Tammy Johnson, and Doug Peat,
- Marzia Rizvi and Amy Schwab for transcribing the conversations and drafting a summary report,
- MOSAIC for hosting and funding the Forum, and
- Celine Mauboules and John Dubé for preparing this finalized Report and Action Plan, with help from members of the Planning Committee.

The Refugee Claimant Housing Forum Organizers included

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10 July 2018

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report and Action Plan is the outcome of a forum held on May 10, 2018 (hosted at MOSAIC, 5575 Boundary Road, Vancouver) which brought together over 60 creative community leaders, decision makers, and refugee claimants to develop strategic actions to address the housing needs of refugee claimants¹ in BC's Lower Mainland.

Low-vacancy rates and high housing costs pose significant challenges for many living in BC's Lower Mainland. Refugee claimants are particularly vulnerable as they lack financial resources and generally accepted identification documents, as well as Canadian work and rental references. They have limited to no knowledge of housing in the region and Canadian culture generally. Many refugee claimants arrive unexpectedly and are in significant distress due to country of origin trauma, migration risks they have faced, and to the anxiety they experience engaging the refugee determination system and other bureaucracies while meeting basic needs. Support to refugee claimants is therefore complex. It is also resource limited, as many not for profit and/or government services are restricted to certain population groups that often exclude refugee claimants.

The forum generated creative discussion and identified the following Short Term and Longer Term Actions:

Short Term Actions (within the next year)

- Increase awareness and understanding of refugee claimants
- Identify and leverage vacant or underutilized units
- Identify opportunities to increase supply of new units
- Support refugee claimants in securing housing along the housing continuum
- Strengthen and build resilience within refugee claimant community networks
- Strengthen and build capacity within existing collaborative initiatives of the refugee claimant support sector

Longer Term Actions (within 3–5 years)

- Increase awareness and understanding of refugee claimants
- Establish a coordinated plan for Refugee claimant reception and integration
- Increase supply of new safe, secure and affordable housing for refugee claimants
- Promote legislative change to support refugee claimant integration
- Strengthen and build capacity within existing collaborative initiatives of the refugee claimant support sector

¹ Refugee claimants, also known as asylum seekers, are people who have fled their country of origin, are legally in Canada, and have made a claim for refugee protection.

The forum reinforced the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in formulating creative solutions and the ability to tackle the housing and resettlement needs of refugee claimants. BC's Multi Agency Partnership (MAP), an unincorporated coalition of government, non-government, and inter-government agencies committed to eliminating barriers and gaps for refugee claimants, has a mission and vision to engage the necessary partners and refugee claimants in the further development and implementation of the actions identified in this report.

2. OVERVIEW

a. Historical Context

Refugee claimants (RCs) – also known as asylum seekers – are people seeking refugee protection in Canada. RCs have always found it difficult to access safe, secure, affordable housing in BC (see [Appendix A](#)).

The unprecedented arrival in 2017 of just over 50,400 RCs in Canada reverberated in British Columbia where 2,300 RCs arrived compared to 1,360 the previous year. The low-vacancy rate and expensive housing market amplified the significant challenges RCs faced accessing housing. The few dedicated housing and service providers for RCs in the lower mainland worked very hard to assist as they could. The existing shelter system reported increasing numbers of RCs accessing their already at capacity services. Meanwhile, other provinces – especially Manitoba and Quebec – entered into an emergency response mode to manage the increased numbers of RCs.

This experience highlighted:

1. the extreme vulnerability of RCs,
2. the critical importance of the basic human need of housing,
3. the increasingly inhospitable housing market marked by low vacancy and high rental rates, and
4. the need for coordinated action and forward thinking by RC service providers.

Reflecting on this experience, and listening to the voices of RCs, agencies with mandates dedicated to RCs in BC initiated a proactive effort to strengthen current activities and generate housing into the future. In February 2018, the idea of a solution-focused forum was set in motion, which led to the successful 10 May 2018 *A Forum Focused on Solutions: Addressing the Urgent Shelter and Housing Needs of Refugee Claimants in BC*, the content and results of which serve as the foundation for this Action Plan.

b. Summary and Objectives

On 10 May 2018, the Refugee Claimant Housing Forum Organizers convened over 60 creative community leaders, decision makers (representing 45 agencies – see [Appendix C](#)),

and RCs for a full-day of facilitated workshops to develop actionable strategies to address the housing needs of RCs in BC. The purpose of the forum was to:

- Explore the current challenges facing RCs along the housing continuum
- Discuss the responsibilities, capacities, and opportunities of government, private and non-profit sectors to address the challenges facing RCs.
- Discern creative possibilities to move forward in addressing the needs of RCs along the housing continuum
- Launch strategic next-step actions to provide suitable accommodation across the housing continuum (shelter–transitional–permanent) for RCs.

3. FORUM PROCESS

a. Framework for Discussion

Participants were seated in groups of approximately 10 participants and discussion was guided by a facilitator with the conversation documented by a note taker. Participants were encouraged to sit with those they don't typically work with, and RCs joined tables to enrich the conversation with their lived experience. The goals of the facilitated discussions were to:

- highlight the challenges facing refugees along the housing continuum
- spark creative ideas on how to address those challenges through conversation; and finally,
- identify opportunities for collaboration and next steps.

b. Background and Context for Discussion

The forum began with opening remarks and a series of presentations to help set the context and purpose for the forum and to spark creative thinking and dialogue for the work ahead. The presentations revealed the changing landscape of housing supply and demand in Metro Vancouver over multiple years. The opening remarks closed with the confirmation that there is a housing crisis in Metro Vancouver, but that the focus of the forum was on strategies to respond that were doable and with strong potential for success. As a community of engaged and caring citizens and professionals, there is a strong will and commitment to integrating the community of refugee claimants/asylum seekers. [Appendix A](#) includes the information shared with forum participants.

c. Facilitated Workshop #1 – Current State

Participants were asked to describe what was working well in meeting the housing needs of RCs, what their hopes were for the outcome of the forum, what potential future pitfalls or risks could endanger those outcomes and what might be done to address the risks.

1. What's Currently Working for Refugee Claimants

Participants agreed that a strong collaborating practice already exists among government, non-government and inter-government agencies that provide services to RCs. This collaboration ultimately benefits refugee claimants. For example, the organized Multi Agency Partnership (MAP) www.mapbc.org demonstrates the effectiveness of this collaborative partnership and joint programming.

Participants noted that, while capacity and resources of housing and support agencies assisting RCs in BC do not fully meet the needs of RCs, these agencies are specialized and have developed expertise over many years and deliver their programs successfully.

Participants also noted that raising awareness, providing cultural connections and engaging local community have been essential thus far in supporting incoming RCs. RCs find housing within their ethnic communities often through churches, or faith-based shelters or with friends and family members in local communities. Finally, the resilience, willingness and determination of RCs has had a positive impact on the success of claimants who are able to secure short term and long-term housing.

2. Aspirations and wishes for the outcomes of the forum

Participants stressed a desire that the plan developed through the forum would be integrated, comprehensive and provide a consistent approach to ensure RCs have equitable access to services and housing regardless of need or geographic location. The plan should also provide clarity on who is responsible for each action and that the focus must be on addressing the ongoing needs of RCs rather than addressing it as a crisis response.

It was also hoped that supports to RCs during the claimant application process would be improved – including lessening processing time and increasing financial support and assistance from government which would help them secure housing.

3. Risks Associated with Developing and Implementing a Successful Plan

Participants discussed pitfalls that could endanger the outcome of developing and implementing a successful plan. Beyond the well understood challenges of high housing costs, and low vacancy rates, participants expressed concern about the potential influx of RCs given political events occurring in the US, and abroad. A well developed and executed plan that creates better housing outcomes may encourage individuals and families to cross the Canadian border. As is already witnessed, a larger than expected arrival of RCs puts pressure on systems operated by all levels of government, as well as RC serving agencies.

Another potential risk identified was donor fatigue and lack of funding and the potential backlash against RCs as local communities are already facing a lack of affordable housing. These tensions could also increase stigma and negative public perceptions of RCs, further polarizing the issue.

d. Facilitated Workshop #2 and #3 – Action Plan, Roles and Responsibilities

The remaining two facilitated workshops focused on developing an action plan of immediate and longer term (3 years) strategies to making a positive impact on addressing the housing needs of RCs along the housing continuum. For each action, participants were also asked to consider the following questions:

- Who is responsible/needs to be involved?
- Who should monitor/track progress?
- Are the right resources in place? If not, what is needed?

Overall, most participants in the group discussions determined that follow up on connections made at the forum were an important part of achieving the short term and long-term strategies. This included organizing future events to track progress, involving all levels of government, NPOs, RCs, community members, real estate agencies, financial institutions, private investors.

To address funding and resource allocation, it was felt that appropriate leadership roles from the Federal and Provincial governments are required.

The plan that emerged from the discussion is summarized in Section Four below.

e. Two Gives and Two Gets

Participants completed an exercise called “2 Gives and 2 Gets.” Beside their name, each participant wrote down “2 Gives” (two things they could give to ensure the success of the action plan). They also wrote down “2 Gets” (things they would like to receive to support the development of the plan). The objectives of this activity were to:

- Recognize the rich supply of knowledge, skills and abilities in the room, and
- Identify allies, supporters and potential contributors to support the MAP working group who will shepherd the plan forward.

The following summary highlights the key give and gets from participants (Appendix D includes the detailed list).

GIVES – What can attendees give to create housing solutions for RCs?

Bridge Building – build on momentum of connections made at forum

- Facilitate connections for RC support organizations/groups and the non-profit housing sector
- Provide educational workshops for housing providers
- Connect agencies with expertise to Metro Vancouver Housing to make presentation on housing needs for refugees and claimants

- Help build connections with BC Housing and provincial housing policy staff (BC Housing)

Housing knowledge and expertise

- Advocacy, education and support within the non-profit housing sector
- Experience and expertise living at the intersection of housing needs for RCs
- Real estate investing services
- How to leverage private investment
- Financial modeling and analysis
- Housing development advice
- Connection to real estate investment groups
- Introduce to social enterprise that refurbishes empty properties and bring them back to use for RCs
- Expertise in the housing market and engaging with developers

Housing supply

- Offers of housing/condo rental to refugees
- Collaborate with family to purchase a unit to make available for rent.
- Open our home for short-term (2–5 days) housing from referral organizations
- Secure 20,000 sq. feet of serviced land for at least 10 years then can fund and build 30 modular units for RCs

RC Support

- Help Arabic-speaking refugee claimants with their needs (if possible) and direct them to resources or agencies if stuck
- Help Spanish-speaking RCs with meeting landlords and/or offer my language skills.
- Can give
 - money
 - knowledge
 - use contacts to find housing

Action Plan Support

- Assistance at events
- Promotional support.
- Time | Facilitation | Coordination and Meeting space

- Holding space at City of Abbotsford for further discussion as part of the Housing Table of Abbotsford.
- Write a funding proposal to potential funder for a housing coordinator
- Subject matter expertise from agency staff
- Ensure final report from the forum is shared with key staff in all interested and invested government and not for profit agencies
- **Help Raise Awareness**
- Raise profile of claimant needs and solutions through weekly newsletter and website already giving out on broader topics.
- Information-sharing to those unaware of the complexity of the problem faced by refugees via personal network and SNS
- Host, chair local conversations to promote learning, dispel fear and promote social connectedness
- Share stats, trends and observations on RCs
- Conduct training on how trauma impacts individuals

GETS – What do attendees hope to get out of helping and being involved in solving this issue?

Personal satisfaction:

- Happiness that RCs are moving into permanent housing
- Joy that all contributors are growing in relationship and purpose
- Increased connection to those willing to co-create solutions
- A sense of community
- Increased understanding of RCs
- Increased network of diverse backgrounds
- Personal satisfaction, feeling that I have contributed and that I have helped in some way
- People value my skills instead of seeing my status (RC)
- Opportunity to contribute to the growth of the community I live in (RC)

Stronger more inclusive communities

- A thriving and inclusive community
- Better and stronger communities
- A neighborhood enriched by motivated talents of people who have nothing to lose and everything to gain

Strengthened networks and resilience

- More knowledge about who/which agency is doing what
- Stronger working relationships with other reorganizations
- New collaborative relationships with community partners and partnerships developed from the forum
- Support the development of healthy communities, inclusive and less stigma

4. ACTION PLAN

Short and longer term actions identified by forum participants are outlined below. The lead agency/person, as well as the resources and necessary partnerships will be identified as the MAP Housing Working Group moves forward with the implementation of the Plan.

a. Short Term (within next year)

Action	Key Tasks
Increase awareness and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop communications campaign<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use RC testimonials to increase awareness of RC challenges – break down stigma, stereotypes and show skills and expertise they contribute to community• Develop material to inform the public and stakeholders about the difference between assisted refugees and RCs and the challenges they face• Work with existing cultural, faith-based and other community organizations to spread the word through their networks and communications material• Targeted strategy to educate and inform landlords about barriers RCs face when trying to secure rental housing (credit checks, sources of income, number of individuals that can stay in a given space)• Create local committees or associations to help connect incoming RCs with alumni claimants:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Info-sharing, networking, community support• Train RCs to become advocates for other RCs• Increase knowledge and information about RCs – map refugee claimant population and housing needs• Keep complex constellation of RC needs at the fore-front while developing housing solutions

Action	Key Tasks
Identify and leverage vacant or underutilized units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Landlord BC and create communications strategy that targets their members to connect landlords with vacancies to RC serving organizations. • Identify opportunities to secure units in homes of empty nesters (Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House initiative could serve as a pilot) • Secure agreements with developers to use empty houses awaiting redevelopment as a temporary form of housing (eg., CHIMO in Richmond) • Repurpose underutilized space – eg., Abbotsford temporary foreign worker housing • Reach out to Airbnb and Strata Councils to identify opportunities to access Airbnb and guest suites in condo buildings • Work with BCH and RC serving organizations to develop and implement an RC Housing database and registry that includes existing stock, current or pending vacancies and list of applicants • Get VanCity to provide no interest loans to set up homes to make them livable for refugees (did this during Syrian refugee crisis) • Identify supporters who might be willing to provide short term housing until family reunification is completed
Identify opportunities to increase supply of new units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local, provincial and federal governments to raise awareness about need for and solutions to RC housing as identified in this plan • Work with non-profit and private sector to identify housing supply opportunities
Support RCs in securing housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale up and target ready to rent courses to RCs – Landlords are recognizing certificate from taking this course • Make RC's as a specified group eligible for Provincial rent subsidies • Expedite processing time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For eligibility to make a refugee claim • Of work permit application (Currently, it can take up to 2–3 months to obtain a work permit and many RCs are eager to work and support their families and communities) • Of refugee determination timeline

Action	Key Tasks
Strengthen and build resilience within RC community networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen and expand existing support networks and capacity building opportunities to allow RCs to help and support one another (jobs, housing, transportation, etc.) Provide mechanism/opportunity for RCs to demonstrate their skills, experience as a community asset.
Strengthen and build capacity within existing collaborative initiatives of the RC support sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase resourcing to the neutral and highly collaborative Multi Agency Partnership (MAP) Re-launch and resource the MAP Housing Working Group Develop the Forum Report and Action Plan into a Refugee Claimant Housing in BC Strategic Plan

b. Longer Term (within 3–5 years)

Action	Key Tasks
Increase Awareness and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an ambassador/visionary to lead implementation of Action Plan Assign community leaders as key Action Leads Continue communications campaign/strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell personal, family stories to break down myths Organizing more welcoming events Continue strengthening RC support sector
Establish a coordinated plan for RC reception, housing, and integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a province-wide, diversely-owned, sector-coordinated strategic plan to receive, house, and integrate RCs Establish/expand “landing spot” specific for refugee claimants Source of support for someone who does not know anyone Single source of information for RCs and people supporting them

Action

Key Tasks

Increase supply of new safe, secure and affordable, permanent, housing for RCs

- Access CMHC innovation fund to increase supply through creative partnerships that use new models/technologies – tiny homes, modular homes, floating houses, de-commissioned BC ferries.
- Create new units of safe, affordable and permanent housing
 - Create **tax incentive options** to support increase of supply of housing options for RCs (capital gains, incentives to rent empty rooms)
 - Continue working with **all levels of government** to secure capital funding for housing
 - Explore/secure land trust model
 - **Explore partnership** with modular housing manufacturer and BC housing and churches for land. Create supply to meet the needs of families (3+ bedrooms)
 - Utilize resources of Alumni claimants
 - Promote permanent housing solutions with high integration value (no ghettos)
- Supportive, transitional housing
 - Generate creative housing models such as Social Purpose Real Estate (SPRE)

Promote legislative change to support RC integration

- **Amend National Housing Standards** – to consider cultural factors/backgrounds in determining bedrooms/household size or allow exemption for populations like RCs
- **Remove known barriers** to integration into the society – i.e. expedite employment work permits
- Create a Support Help Line to provide RCs with information and assistance during the refugee claim process
- Reasonably moderate processing times (not too long, not too short) for the refugee claim process and make it more predictable
- Increase income assistance allowances (welfare)

Strengthen and build capacity within existing collaborative initiatives of the RC support sector

- Resource MAP and Housing Working Group for strategic regional leadership

c. Moving forward

The forum brought together enthusiastic, engaged and compassionate individuals committed to creating housing opportunities for RCs. The forum reinforced the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in formulating creative solutions and ability to tackle the housing and resettlement needs of RCs.

Forum participants will receive the Forum Report and Action Plan as will other stakeholders in the community. Participants are encouraged to promote and reference the document in a bid to increase refugee claimant housing opportunities.

British Columbia's Multi Agency Partnership (MAP), an unincorporated coalition of government, non-government, and inter-government agencies committed to eliminating barriers and gaps for refugee claimants (See [Appendix D](#)), is re-launching its Housing Working Group with a mandate to engage the necessary partners and RCs in the further development and implementation of the actions identified in this report.

An immediate next step in the Action Plan is to assign lead agencies/actors for each of the Actions/Key Tasks listed in this Report.

APPENDIX A

Forum Documents: Flyer, Refugee Claimant Backgrounder and Statistics²

A Forum Focused on Solutions:

Addressing the Urgent Shelter and Housing Needs of Refugee Claimants in BC

Date	Time	Location
10 May 2018	Registration 8:30 am Lunch included Wrap-up 4:00 pm	MOSAIC 5575 Boundary Road Vancouver, BC



By invitation only.

Refugee claimants comprise one of the many vulnerable populations impacted by limited shelter space, increasingly expensive rental accommodation, and scarce affordable housing in BC's Lower Mainland.

This forum brings together concerned and creative leaders to:

- learn the current shelter and housing challenges facing refugee claimants
- discuss the responsibilities, capacities, and opportunities of government, business, not-for-profit, and inter-governmental organizations
- discern creative possibilities forward
- launch strategic solution-focused actions to provide suitable accommodation across the housing continuum (shelter-transitional-permanent).

Forum Organizers:



CONNECTIONS
Homelessness Services
Association of BC



Archdiocese of Vancouver
CATHOLIC CHARITIES SHELTER SERVICES



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



MOSAIC



inasmuch
This is my home



kinbrace
REFUGEE HOUSING & SUPPORT



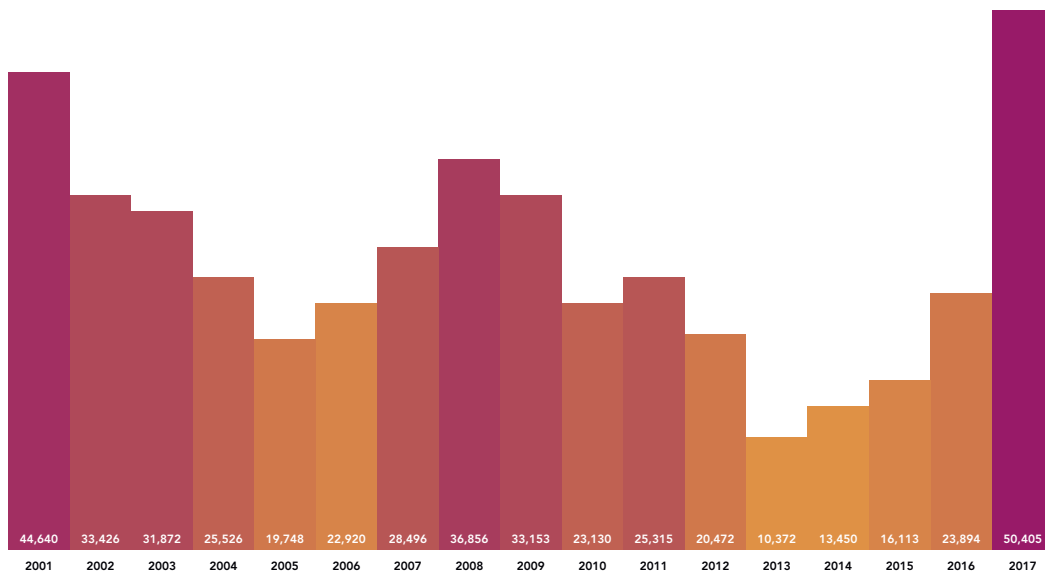
JOURNEY HOME
COMMUNITY



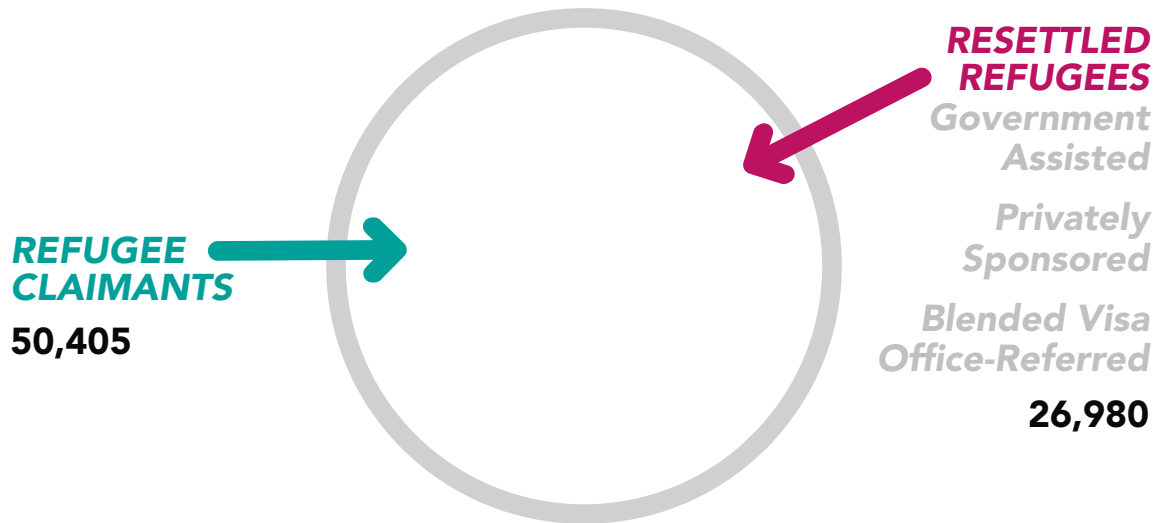
British Refugee Society of British Columbia

² Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/asylum-claims/processed-claims.html> and <http://www.cic.gc.ca/ftp/pdf/Asylum-asile-eng.pdf> and <https://www.unhcr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Canada-Resettlement-Fact-Sheet-2018-En-20April.jpg>

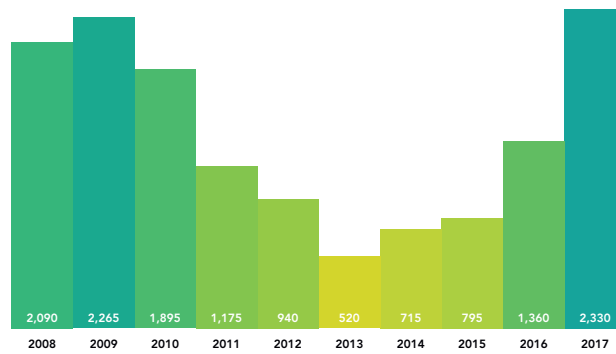
ANNUAL ARRIVAL OF REFUGEE CLAIMANTS IN CANADA 2001 – 2017



REFUGEE PATHWAYS TO CANADA 2017



ANNUAL ARRIVAL OF REFUGEE CLAIMANTS IN BC 2008 – 2017



A Forum Focused on Solutions: Addressing the Urgent Shelter and Housing Needs of Refugee Claimants in BC

Welcome to the Refugee Claimant Housing Forum

This forum brings together concerned and creative leaders to:

- learn about the shelter and housing challenges facing refugee claimants
- discuss the responsibilities, capacities, and opportunities of government, business, not-for-profit, and inter-governmental organizations discern creative possibilities forward
- launch strategic next-step actions to provide suitable accommodation across the housing continuum (shelter–transitional–permanent).

Who are Refugee Claimants?

Refugee Claimants are people seeking refugee protection in Canada. They fear returning to their country of origin due to danger of suffering serious harm for reasons related to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group or they risk cruel or unusual punishment, torture or death.

Globally, these forcibly displaced people are often called asylum seekers. Once they arrive in Canada and are found eligible to make a claim for protection, they are called Refugee Claimants (RCs).

RCs are distinct from resettled refugees arriving in Canada. Resettled refugees include Government Assisted Refugees (GAR), Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR), and Blended Visa Office-Referrred Refugees (BVOR).

In 2017 a record 50,405 RCs arrived in Canada. 2300 of these arrived in BC. By comparison, the average national arrival rate between 2001–2017 is 27,046 with the lowest number being 10,372 in 2013. As a rough rule, 5% of the national number of refugee claimants arrive in BC, almost all of them in the Lower Mainland.

Refugee Claimants come from diverse countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, China, Iran, Sudan, Eritrea, Syria and many others.

The majority of those who make a claim for protection in Canada will receive it, with annual, national acceptance rates ranging from 44% (2013) to 70% (2017) in the past 5 years. Numerous variables impact refugee determination outcomes including country of origin situation, the personal experience/story of the claimant, credibility, documentation of events, trauma, a myriad of legal issues, access to and presence of legal representation, the capacities of the decision maker, the complexity of Canadian bureaucracies, health and mental wellbeing, stressors while making a claim, among others.

While vulnerable, RCs generally demonstrate significant resilience and adaptability as they pass through the complex refugee determination and initial settlement in Canada.

What community and settlement supports are in place for Refugee Claimants?

Refugee Claimants are not eligible for settlement support from federally funded programs through the large settlement agencies in BC. The Province of BC and some municipalities provide funding to meet the basic orientation and referral needs of RCs. A few small charities, religious communities, and other communities of welcome provide transitional housing, referral, orientation, accompaniment, form-filling, and language learning classes. There is no coordinated strategy to meet the complex needs of refugee claimants. There is also no government funding specifically dedicated to RC housing.

Most RCs arrive with limited or no physical resources, most of it exhausted through the experience of forced displacement. Many RCs depend at first on provincial income assistance till they receive a work permit. The majority are keen to work, taking what jobs are available.

Refugee claimants are covered by the Interim Federal Health Program once they are eligible to make a refugee claim, giving them access to medical help as needed, similar to MSP.

The psychological space RCs inhabit is significantly defined by stressful waiting: they currently wait 12–18 months for their refugee hearing (when the decision is made on their claim for refugee protection) and, if they get protection, another 1–2 years awaiting outcome on their Permanent Residence application.

What's it like for Refugee Claimants to find housing?

Securing shelter and housing has never been easy for refugee claimants, and it's becoming even more difficult.

On arrival in BC and prior to getting their refugee claim documents, RCs may have some cash in pocket for housing, but this is quickly spent. Once they receive refugee claim documents, they can apply for income assistance, but many barriers make finding housing difficult, including:

- limited BC income assistance shelter rates (e.g. single person receives \$375/mo; family of 6 receives \$785/mo)
- high market rental rates:
 - BC average: bachelor \$972/mo; 3 bedroom apartment \$1478 (CMHC 2017 BC)
 - Vancouver CMA average: bachelor \$1060/mo; 3 bedroom \$1801 (CMHC 2017 VanCMA)
- a competitive rental market, driven by <1% vacancy rate, which exploits/sidelines RCs who are new to the culture, may not speak English/French, have no line of credit or rental history in the country, etc.

Refugee Claimants access housing through the help of strangers, acquaintances, and agencies. Though no hard statistics are available, anecdotally about 60% of the RC population seeks housing assistance through initial contact organizations such as Inland Refugee Society of BC.

Couch surfing in overcrowded conditions is common, as is staying briefly in multiple shelters and short-stay accommodation.

About 30–35 RC family units (to approximately 75 RCs) are available through dedicated transitional housing communities (Inasmuch, Journey Home Community, and Kinbrace), which provide 3–6 month accommodation while offering comprehensive support through the refugee claim and early settlement process.

Affordable permanent housing is virtually non-existent for RCs and the flow of housing needs is backed up into transitional housing, shelters, and the community.

Why is affordable housing so important for Refugee Claimants?

1. Shelter is a physiological human need, a primary requirement.
2. With permanent, affordable housing secured, RCs can more fully focus on their claim for refugee protection.
3. With refugee protection secured, refugees are able to apply for Permanent Residence and begin rooting and thriving.

What kind and how much housing do Refugee Claimants currently need in BC's Lower Mainland?

The best housing for RCs mitigates ongoing displacement; the sooner they receive permanent housing, the better the outcomes.

Based on the most vulnerable 60% of annual arrival average of 1408 (2008–2017), approximately 850 refugee claimants seek housing support each year. This is conservative in the context of increasing systemic housing pressures, but it gives us a number to start discussion.

1. Permanent, affordable housing
 - Need: enough units per year (from bachelor to 7 bedroom)
 - Currently have: 0 dedicated to RCs
2. Dedicated, transitional housing
 - Need: enough units per year to accommodate need
 - Currently have: 30–35 units available annually (serving about 75 people)
3. Short term shelter
 - Need: enough beds per year dedicated to RCs (not existing shelter beds)
 - Currently have: 7 dedicated beds for RCs

Some questions to consider prior to the forum:

1. What experience do I have that will contribute to this forum addressing the urgent shelter and housing needs of refugee claimants in BC?
2. Thinking creatively, if I had to create one or more affordable housing units, what would I need to make this happen?
3. Who can I think of who might contribute to housing solutions for refugee claimants?

APPENDIX B

Forum Agenda

MAY 10, 2018 FORUM AGENDA

8:30–9:00	Registration
9:00–9:25	Indigenous Territorial recognition, welcome, introductions and review of the agenda
9:25–10:15	Opening remarks, overview of current state and refugee lived experience
10:15–11:15	Facilitated small group discussion #1
11:05–11:15	Break
11:15–11:25	Presentation
11:25–12:25	Facilitated small group discussion #2
12:25–1:15	Lunch
1:15–2:00	Give and Get exercise
2:00–3:30	Facilitated small group discussion #3
3:00–4:00	Closing remarks and next steps

APPENDIX C

List of Forum Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Count	Affiliation
Alice	Sundberg	1	Housing Consultant
Amy	Schwab	1	
Andrea	Loewen	1	Abbotsford Community Services
Baldwin	Wong	1	City of Vancouver
Bob	Derksen	1	New Hope Community Services
Bruk	Melles	1	BC Housing
Camilla	Boisvert	1	Fraser Health
Catherine	Ludgate	1	Vancity
Celine	Mauboules	1	Homelessness Services Association of BC
Cherie	White	1	Kingdom Investements
David	Lee	2	Canada Border Services Agency
Dena Kae	Beno	1	City of Abbotsford
Dennis	Juarez	1	Options Community Services
Dorla	Tune	1	United Way of the Lower Mainland
Doug	Peat	1	Journey Home Community Association
Dustin	Lupick	1	Homelessness Services Association of BC
Emily	Gemmell	1	Ph.D. student, University of British Columbia
James	Grunau	1	Journey Home Community Association
Jenny	Moss	1	Multi Agency Partnership
Jessica	Lee	1	
Joanne	Baker	1	BC Society of Transition Houses
John	Dubé	1	MOSAIC
Jonathan	Bird	1	City Gate Leadership Forum
Jonquil	Hallgate	1	Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Council of Community Homelessness Tables
Katherine	de Visser	1	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Khim	Tan	1	Options Community Services
Kingsley	Eke	1	
Lesley	Sherlock	1	City of Richmond
Loren	Balisky	1	Kinbrace
Lucy	Swib	1	Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology
Madeleine	Northgate	1	

First Name	Last Name	Count	Affiliation
Mandana	Salimian	1	Canadian Red Cross
Manpreet	Grewal	1	Abbotsford Community Services
Margaret	Manifold	1	City of Burnaby
Margaret	Pinto	1	Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver
Marika	Albert	1	BC Non Profit Housing Association
Marleni	Curi	1	
Marvin	Miller	1	Journey Home Community
Marzia	Rizvi	1	UBC's School of Public Policy and Global Affairs
Matt	Putra	1	New Market Funds
Mira	Oreck	1	Province of BC
Mobin	Maqsoodi	1	Inland Refugee Society
Mona	Hassannia	1	Settlement Orientation Services
Mukhtar	Latif	1	Pomegranate Housing Consultancy
Nicole	Stinson	1	BC Housing
Patricia	Mahecha	1	Inland Refugee Society
Patricia	Woroch	1	Immigrant Services Society of BC
Peter	Prediger	1	Inasmuch
Raul	Gatica	1	Kinbrace
Richard	Stewart	1	City of Coquitlam
Robert	Gemmell	1	
Saleem	Spindari	1	MOSAIC
Seyon	Kim	1	
Sherman	Chan	1	MOSAIC
Sophia	Yee	1	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Stephanie	Innes	1	
Tammy	Johnson	1	Inasmuch
Theresa	Harding	1	Metro Vancouver Community Entity, Homelessness Partnering Strategy
Tracey	Harvey	1	Street to Home
Vanessa	Hernandez	1	First United Church
Virginia	Holden	1	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Province of British Columbia
Warren	Jacobs	1	BC Non Profit Housing Association

Total attendees 63

APPENDIX D

Types of Housing Along the Continuum

The “housing continuum” refers to the wide range of shelter and housing options available in communities, from emergency shelters and transitional housing, to supportive housing for vulnerable populations including seniors and people with mental illness, to non-market, social, or subsidized rental housing, to market rental, and home ownership. The term isn’t intended to imply progression towards homeownership – it simply represents the full range of options that match people’s needs and preferences with appropriate forms of housing and supports (if needed). Ideally, there should be options available for those who need them all along the housing continuum.

The table below shows the types of housing along the continuum. For more information on terms such as social or subsidized housing, to transitional or supportive housing, please see <http://homelesshub.ca/solutions/housing-accommodation-and-supports/affordable-housing>.

Housing Continuum

Emergency Shelters	Transitional Housing	Supportive Housing	Subsidized Housing	Market Rental Housing	Market Homeownership Housing
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APPENDIX E

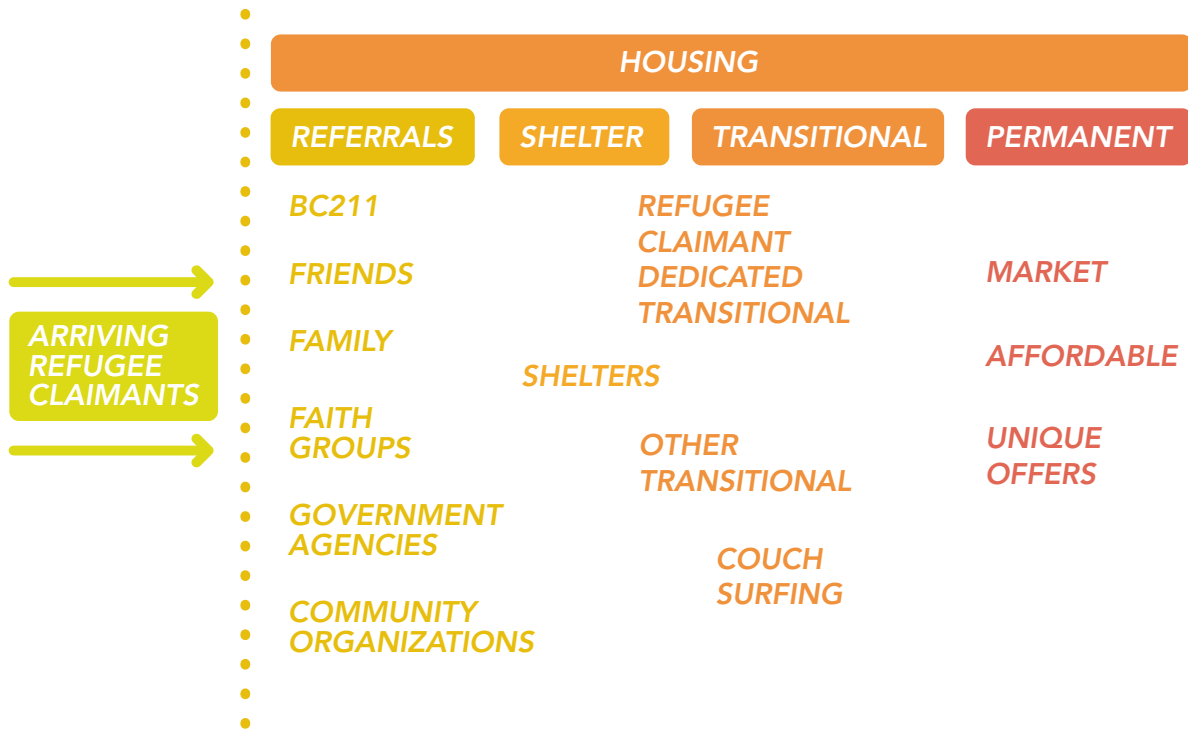
Refugee Claimant Housing in BC

The best housing for refugee claimants (RCs) mitigates ongoing displacement; the sooner they receive permanent housing, the better the outcomes in every area for RCs.

Over the past 20 years, a limited supply of dedicated transitional housing has emerged in response to RCs immediate housing needs and their quest to attain safe, secure permanent housing in BC. This dedicated housing is operated by non-profit housing providers that also offer integration expertise and relational support for RCs during the critical first weeks and months of the refugee claim process. Average length of stay in transitional housing ranges from 1–6 months.

- **Permanent, affordable housing**
 - Currently have: 0 dedicated to RCs
 - Need: enough self-contained units per year (from bachelor to 7 bedroom)
- **Dedicated, transitional housing**
 - Currently have:
 - 6 houses that can accommodate a range of family sizes (up to 22 beds)
 - 20 apartment units with 1–2 bedrooms that can accommodate a range of household types (up to 42 beds)
 - Need: enough units per year to accommodate need
- **Short term shelter**
 - Currently have: 0 dedicated beds for RCs
 - Need: enough beds per year dedicated to RCs (not existing shelter beds)

COMPLEX HOUSING FLOW FOR REFUGEE CLAIMANTS IN BC



APPENDIX F

Participant ‘Gives and Gets’

Participant	Gives	Gets
1	<p>Story on the benefits of supportive transitional housing model for RCs.</p> <p>20 years living at the intersection of housing needs for RCs.</p>	<p>Happiness that RCs are moving into permanent housing.</p> <p>Joy that all contributors are growing in relationship and purpose.</p>
2	<p>Link our services to claimants to inasmuch? And city housing strategy.</p>	<p>Get out ALIP table to create a housing for claimant sub group.</p> <p>Will get better coordination on housing.</p> <p>More efficiencies in serving claimants.</p>
3	<p>I can share my expertise in working with refugees, join organizing teams, host group discussions and lead action plans.</p>	
4	<p>Facilitate connections (be a bridge) for refugee support organizations/groups and the non-profit housing sector</p> <p>Advocacy, education and support within the non-profit housing sector.</p>	<p>Maximizing our resources in the sector to find housing for refugees (affordable and permanent).</p> <p>A thriving and inclusive community.</p>
5	<p>Give legal support to claimants in the application process.</p> <p>Assistance at any events or promotional support.</p>	
6	<p>I can offer real estate investing services. Ultimately, eventually offer condo rentals to refugees</p>	<p>I would love to get more investors. (778-968-8614)</p>
7	<p>Raise profile of claimant needs and solutions through weekly newsletter and website already giving out on broader topics.</p> <p>Input on how to attract and leverage private investment</p>	

Participant	Gives	Gets
8	Volunteer with different organizations/attend events Information-sharing to those unaware of the complexity of the problem faced by refugees via personal network and SNS	Personal reward Increased network of diverse backgrounds
9	Give educational workshops for housing providers	
10	Time and expertise to city committee and business groups on the value of RCs Secure transition housing in Abbotsford with vision for the valley	Greater awareness and funding for supporting RC's.
11	Coordinate and facilitate meetings and connections	Increased understanding of refugee claimants. Better and stronger communities.
12	Host, chair local conversations to promote learning dispel fear and promote social connectedness Access to key partnerships aligned with housing needs to invite them to the solution conversation.	A new way for UWLM to support refugee claimants. Increased connection to those willing to co-create solutions.
13	DTT staff time to attend future FOORA on this and other topics related to RCs. Ensure final report from the forum is shared with key staff in my ministry and other related ministries.	
14	Help Arabic speaking refugee claimants with the needs (if possible) Direct RCs to resources or agencies if stuck	Personal gratification to helping people in need.
15	My time to support the working group break down stigma By sharing stories, providing information through our members and networks.	Satisfaction knowing that I am helping newcomers. A diverse inclusive community.

Participant	Gives	Gets
16	<p>Holding space at City of Abbotsford for further discussion as part of the Housing Table of Abbotsford.</p> <p>I can give my time to further a collaborative or partnered initiative</p> <p>Either personal or professional time</p>	<p>By holding space for collaborative action around issues related to refugee housing and integrating the “collective we” in Abbotsford. Will be able to support.</p> <p>Access to housing, services and community supports and well-being.</p>
17	<p>Participate as an educator/spread awareness on RC issues</p> <p>Provide meeting space</p>	<p>Decrease in number of issues faced by RC (reduced capacity).</p>
18	<p>Share stats, trends and observations on RCs</p> <p>MAP can reactivate its housing working group as a focus for idea sharing and action.</p> <p>I speak Spanish – I can help RCs with meeting landlords and/or offer my language skills.</p>	<p>A better venue of social justice ad equity.</p> <p>A of having contributed to a difficult but important goal.</p>
19	<p>Connect Journey Home to Metro Vancouver Housing to make presentation on housing needs for refugees and claimants.</p> <p>Information through discussion on using HPS Housing First approach as template for working with, supporting refugees and claimants.</p>	
20	<p>Financial modeling and analysis</p>	<p>Healthier and more resilient society.</p>
21	<p>Provide information on our role as processing</p> <p>Issues related to IRCC and fed up? And NHQ</p>	
22	<p>Housing development advice</p> <p>Meeting facilitation</p>	<p>More inclusive neighborhoods.</p> <p>Cities that participate in contributing to housing affordability.</p>
23	<p>Write a proposal to potential funder for a housing coordinator</p> <p>Support staff in doing work with refugee claimants</p> <p>Conduct training on how trauma impacts individuals</p>	<p>More knowledge about who/which agency is doing what.</p> <p>Develop stronger working relationships and other reorganization.</p>
24	<p>My knowledge, networking and help improving skills.</p>	

Participant	Gives	Gets
25	<p>Can be part of MAP housing working group.</p> <p>Can work with our own JHC housing developer to continue to find housing solutions</p>	
26	<p>Time</p> <p>Talents/skills</p>	Satisfaction of accomplishment.
27	<p>I want still organizing community events to bring our community together with message of inclusion and balance of life.</p> <p>I can support claimant refugee organization</p>	<p>The people value my skills instead of seeing my status.</p> <p>Opportunity to work in my field as promoting or marketing.</p>
28		More knowledge on housing programs and services to inform and direct claimant once processing is complete.
29		Canada fulfilled its social responsibility goals.
30	<p>Advertise special events with local churches</p> <p>Create awareness about refugee challenges</p>	<p>More funding to be able to provide more services for refugees.</p> <p>More support from the government.</p>
31	<p>Bring event bigger awareness with Options housing services on claimant needs</p> <p>Connect with and create awareness at city of surrey around claimant housing issues.</p>	<p>More funding for hosing outreach.</p> <p>Workers who can advocate “educate” and search housing and also work with landlords.</p> <p>More coordinated efforts among service providers.</p>
32	<p>Provide admin support towards action items identified from forum</p> <p>Consider collaborating with family to purchase a unit to make available for rent.</p>	<p>Joy of seeing a refugee claimant thrive in their new community.</p> <p>New collaborative relationships with community partners and partnerships developed from the forum.</p>
33	<p>Connection to real estate investment groups</p> <p>Discuss being a landlord to refugee claimants</p> <p>Potential investors in social purpose real estate</p> <p>Opening our home for short-term (2–5 days) housing from referral organizations</p>	<p>Satisfaction of working on challenging and complex issues to provide tangible support.</p> <p>New relationships and connections for my family.</p>

Participant	Gives	Gets
34	<p>Spread awareness at the Policy School at UBC</p> <p>Be willing to write notes and reports at forums such as this one.</p>	<p>Be more aware of this imperative issue.</p> <p>Take in these excellent and creative ideas as a possible way to approach solutions in similar areas.</p>
35	<p>Introduce to social enterprise that refurbish empty properties and bring them back to use</p> <p>Possible work and access opportunity.</p>	<p>If we can secure 20,000 sq. feet of land for at least 10 years then can fund and build 30 modular units.</p>
36	<p>Connections with homeless sector</p> <p>Research facilitation</p>	<p>Increasing inclusive, welcoming, diverse city or region that supports and helps all people regardless of status.</p>
37	<p>Help build connections with BC Housing and provincial housing policy people</p> <p>Give advise, suggestions and ideas to help build the awareness and incentivization story.</p>	<p>Information on community and governments resources to help refugees with housing.</p>
38	<p>Part time employment</p> <p>Accommodation for single individuals</p>	<p>Building partnerships.</p> <p>Access to different language skills.</p>
39	<p>I can give information to other would be refugee claimants from Nigeria and across Africa on what to expect and how to deal with the shortcomings of refugee claimants in BC and Canada.</p> <p>I can give technical support to refugee claimants in search of housing</p>	<p>Affordable housing for my family.</p> <p>Opportunities to contribute to the growth of the community I live in.</p>
40	<p>Space for meeting</p> <p>Engage MOSAIC to the short and long term strategies</p>	<p>Contributions from refugees.</p> <p>Just society.</p>
41	<p>I can give money</p> <p>I can give knowledge</p> <p>I can use contacts to find housing</p>	

Participant	Gives	Gets
42	Motivate people to give and share, storyteller Tell a story of successful sharing Sense of thankfulness of being able to give Gratitude of being with others and hear of their expertise	Sense of thankfulness of being able to 'give.' Gratitude of being with others and hear of their expertise.
43	Space for meeting Subject matter expertise from staff at ISS of BC	Be part of the solutions. Information to help us influence policy.
44	Connecting business and faith leaders Education and literacy to the flight of RCs	Investment in community and city. Seeing families thrive and pay it forward.
45	Connection to academic work, knowledge Connection to community groups/ organizations interested in refugee well being.	Personal Ideas, insights and connection for PhD research.
46	I can give my ability of translating (Spanish) I can give my time and I would love to get more involved around this growing issue.	
47	Coordinate and facilitate strategic follow-up meetings. Develop some written materials.	Increased exposure for JHC leading to housing options for refugees. Potential business partnerships for developing housing.
48	Access to a network of community members and volunteers who can help spread the message of the need for housing and tap into potential resources. My time to service or lead committee or organize forum in Abbotsford.	Resources that I can then share with the refugees I support through my work. An opportunity to continue working with resilient, courageous future Canadians.
49	Expertise in the housing market and engaging with developers. Help in setting up structures for flips and investors, etc.	Sense of satisfaction that people have been helped. Greater understanding of the refugee issues.
50	Legal research into viability of projects and help organize other law students. One on one speaker training for refugee claimants in program.	Greater connection to a wider community Personal satisfaction

Participant	Gives	Gets
51	(Personal) Provide translation services on a volunteer basis (Amharic) (Organization) Explore further opportunities within BCH to expand our partnership with refugee serving NGOs.	Personal satisfaction knowing I play a role in awareness and contributing to support families of RCs Support the development of healthy communities, inclusive and stigma awareness NGOs.
52		A sense of community Knowledge sharing regarding personal experience and understanding.
53		Tax deductions for renting to claimants. A neighborhood enriched by motivated talents of people who have nothing to lose and everything to gain.
54		Sense of positive contribution to real solutions for RCs and housing.
55		The feeling that I have contributed my grain of salt and feel great that I have helped in some way!
56		Get that personal satisfaction Satisfaction of helping refugee claimants. Knowledge from people who come from different cultures.

APPENDIX G

Movable Modular Housing Opportunity – Anhart Community Housing



Organization Profile

Anhart Community Housing is a non-profit society that creates affordable housing through private development. It is part of Anhart, a global network of non-profit, community-based and social enterprise organizations that has worked since 1983 to empower people through creating affordable housing and investing in the infrastructure of health and well-being.

The Offer:

- 30-40 units
- Anhart Community Housing will finance the project and own the units.
- Below market rents
- Work with referral agencies to offer transitional housing to those in need.
- Relocate the buildings at the end of the lease.
- Property taxes and negotiable lease payment.



Left: VAHA Marpole Modular Site (2017). Right: VAHA Modular Site at Main and Terminal (2017). Vancouver, BC.

The Ask:

- The site should be:
 - Up to 20,000 square feet but can be a minimum of 10,000 square feet (if parking is not required).
 - Fully serviced (sewer, powerlines...etc.)
 - Zoned multi family or CD1
 - In proximity to transit
- The lease:
 - 5-10+ years

More About Us

Anhart is always looking for partners/landowners to develop or redevelop land acting either as the development agency or as a partner in a joint venture.

We have owned and operated rental buildings in Vancouver since 2000, when we started as a unique partnership between philanthropic property developers and a business-minded charity. As Anhart grew, it operated other buildings on contract for the City of Vancouver and private owners, reaching a peak of 800 tenants. We are now focused on developing new affordable housing projects, with a goal to create 2,000 privately developed affordable homes across Canada by 2028.

Our buildings are funded by conventional mortgages and private patient capital, and we operate with efficient management and no government operating subsidy. Tenants are empowered through leadership and employment to build community and take ownership of their home. Anhart focused on developing social enterprises offering property-related services. We also developed a proprietary tenant support database which allows us to scale operations anywhere in Canada.

Who We Are

Anhart is a global network of non-profit, community-based and social enterprise organizations that work to empower people through creating affordable housing and investing in the infrastructure of health and well-being. Our areas of focus include:

Anhart
Homes



Developing affordable housing for communities in Canada

Anhart
Community
Housing



Providing subsidized housing for vulnerable and at-risk communities in Canada

Anhart
Social
Enterprises



Creating social enterprises that meet the needs of the communities we serve, and provide meaningful employment opportunities

Anhart
Global
Villages



Investing in global community organizations that strengthen access to banking, water, housing and other essential services

APPENDIX H

Background to Multi Agency Partnership (MAP)

MAP is a collaboration of more than 40 government and non-government agencies working to support refugee claimants in the BC Lower Mainland.

The organization emerged in 2007/8 during the needs assessment process carried out by the Canadian Red Cross in establishing the 'First Contact' program for claimants modelled on a similar successful program in Toronto (see <http://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/migrant-and-refugee-services/first-contact/first-contact-ontario>).

Settlement agencies, housing providers, lawyers, information providers and government agencies were brought together to jointly solve the needs of newly arrived claimants. The group called itself MAP – Multi Agency Partnership, to underline the collaborative nature of decision-making within the group.

Its mission is to work collaboratively to identify barriers and provide solutions to promote the protection and well-being of refugee claimants and service providers, by facilitating networking and information sharing.

MAP members sign an agreement to support the mission and abide by these values in their work with refugee claimants: humanity, integrity, neutrality, impartiality and respect.

Working Groups were developed along the most pressing needs: housing, legal, information services and health/mental health issues.

Since First Contact was launched in Vancouver in November 2008 MAP has continued to meet and provide a united voice for refugee claimants.

www.mapbc.org