

Peel opens shelter for homeless asylum claimants

Peel Reception Centre is located in Mississauga and is the largest shelter of its kind in Canada

By ZACHARY ROMAN

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Region of Peel has opened a new shelter to house asylum claimants.

In a February 3 news release, the Region announced the Peel Reception Centre had opened in Mississauga. It's the largest shelter of its kind in Canada and has the capacity to serve 680 homeless asylum claimants in Peel.

“With just over \$22 million in funding through the Federal government's Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP), Peel was able to open the centre in just three months, complete construction in six months, and anticipate completing it \$2 million under budget,” said the Region in a statement. “By separating local homelessness from asylum claimant homelessness, Peel Region is able to efficiently serve each of these vulnerable populations, and to pilot wrap-around supports and programming in the new facility that meet the unique needs of asylum claimants.”

Programs and services at the Peel Reception Centre are being offered by the Region in collaboration with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The IRCC will provide immigration case management services and coordinated exits to other municipalities through employment opportunities. The Peel Reception Centre will offer on-site settlement services, employment support, housing support, and access to income support programs, among other supports.

The Region states the size and scale of the reception centre's function is dependent on additional Federal funding supports and a sustainable national system that scales to meet the needs of asylum claimants in Peel and across the country.

“Peel Region remains committed to working with IRCC on Canada's collective response to this ongoing challenge and to provide the necessary supports to seamlessly integrate these newcomers into the community,” reads the release.

Peel Region Chair Nando Iannicca said he's hopeful for continued Federal support.

“Peel's response to unprecedented pressures, and our ability to stand up a first of its kind facility in record time to meet those pressures, is something to be very proud of,” said Iannicca.

Peel's Human Services Commissioner Steve Jacques said Peel Region has come a long way in a short time to become leaders when it comes to helping asylum claimants.

“I want to acknowledge our dedicated staff who have worked so hard to make this happen. Discussions continue with our federal and provincial partners, but this is a significant milestone. Peel should be very proud,” said Jacques.