

Cities seek help to meet immigrant demands ^[1]

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Source: Toronto Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 14 Sep 2011

EXCERPTS

Should affordable housing and public transit be counted - and funded - as a service for new immigrants?

They are, according to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Ottawa currently funds orientation, employment and language training for newcomers, but the federation - made up of 1,900 municipalities across the country - wants the federal government to invest in municipal infrastructure and services crucial to immigrants' integration into the local community.

"Municipalities now have to dig deeper to meet the growing demand of services essential to the effective integration of immigrants. These include affordable housing, public transit, child care, recreation and library services," said a new report released by the federation Wednesday.

"In a world where talented workers are highly mobile, municipal governments must ensure a high quality of life and welcoming environment. And when immigrants don't succeed, municipal and community services like shelters and food banks figure prominently in meeting their needs.'

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Among the report's recommendations:

- Expand settlement services and funding to include a broader range of integration needs
- Improve data collection and information-sharing about immigrant flow and settlement
- Increase rental housing supply and renewal of expiring federal housing programs and subsidies
- Renew dedicated funding for public transit and transit-supportive tax policies
- A formal role for municipalities in developing immigration policies and programs

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

Related link: Press release from FCM ^[2]

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