



**The Ontario Coalition of Service Providers for Refugee Claimants Calls on the Provincial Government to Reverse Its Plan to Eliminate the Transition Child Benefit (TCB).**

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has announced plans to eliminate Transition Child Benefit (TCB) as of November 1, 2019. TCB provides families with up to a maximum of \$230 per child per month. This monthly amount is a lifeline to ensure that children are protected and cared for. Losing this benefit will have devastating consequences, not only for refugee families, but also for other children whose parents are on Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and currently receiving TCB.

Since some families are not eligible for the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) or the closely-aligned Canada Child Benefit (CCB), the Transition Child Benefit was set up to ensure that the children of those parents who are receiving Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) but ineligible for other child benefits would not be without money for food, clothing and basic needs. The removal of TCB stands as a threat to the health and wellbeing of vulnerable families across the province. Refugee claimants will be disproportionately affected if TCB is eliminated, since they are not eligible to receive other benefits for their children based on their immigration status.

The agencies of the Ontario Coalition of Service Providers for Refugee Claimants are on the frontline when it comes to responding to the needs of refugee claimants and precarious migrants in Ontario. We, as service providers to refugees—many among us refugee houses and shelters—support and provide temporary housing for thousands of individuals and families each year as they navigate the refugee determination system and settle into communities across the province.

As outlined below, the consequences of the Ontario Government's failure to provide support for the basic needs of children will be serious:

- The elimination of TCB will put many low-income refugee families in the difficult position of choosing whether to pay the rent or put food on the table. This is an impossible choice that will result in children being undernourished and families being put at severe risk of homelessness.
- Refugee claimants in emergency shelter systems across the province will not be able to secure and maintain housing accommodations, as the combination of rising rental costs and low social assistance rates means that housing will be entirely unaffordable for families on social assistance without the monthly TCB allowance.
- Cities and regions across Ontario will see an intensification of the shelter and housing crisis we experienced in 2017 and 2018—that is, newly arrived refugee claimants will have no access to housing, and with emergency shelter systems overwhelmed, many families will be forced out onto the streets or into precarious circumstances.
- The elimination of TCB will force already vulnerable claimants to depend more on shelters, food banks, and other social supports. Ultimately, the consequence of the decision to eliminate TCB will be that the cost will be borne by other government departments indirectly as children and families are pushed into deeper levels of poverty.



**Ontario Coalition of Service  
Providers for Refugee Claimants**

- Many families will be at increased risk of exploitation by employers and landlords, as the desperation of parents to provide food, shelter and basic needs for their children will place more refugees and low-income families into unsafe employment and housing situations.

For the most part, the Ontario Coalition of Service Providers for Refugee Claimants are small non-profit organizations. Already operating above capacity, our organizations will inevitably become further overwhelmed as we work to triage increased demands for shelter and basic needs supports for refugee claimants who are no longer able to access financial support for their children. We cannot, in good conscience, close the doors on families with children, forcing them to go hungry or spend the night on the streets. However, given that the charitable sector is already financially constrained, our longstanding work of supporting refugee claimants will be further limited if we find ourselves forced to cover additional emergency housing costs in order to keep families off the streets and children fed. This would mean our overall ability to provide even basic services to refugees would be severely compromised as a result of this decision to eliminate the Transition Child Benefit.

We implore the Government of Ontario stand up for what is right, and to ensure that the Transition Child Benefit continues to be provided to low-income children across the province. No one fleeing persecution and seeking protection in our country should be at risk of such extreme poverty—and certainly not the youngest and most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

The Ontario Coalition of Service Providers for Refugee Claimants

**Member Agencies:**

Adam House, Toronto

Angela Rose House, Windsor

Carty House, Ottawa

Casa El Norte, Fort Erie

Casa Maria Refugee Homes, Peterborough

Chez Marie, Fort Erie

Christie Refugee Welcome Centre, Toronto

COSTI Immigrant Services, Toronto

FCJ Refugee Centre, Toronto

Fort Erie Multi-Cultural Centre, Fort Erie

Matthew House, Fort Erie

Matthew House, Ottawa

Matthew House, Toronto

Matthew House, Windsor

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, Kitchener

Micah House, Hamilton

Quaker Refugee Committee, Toronto

Romero House, Toronto

Silas Hill Home for Refugees, Toronto

Sojourn House, Toronto

The 519 Church Street Community Centre, Toronto