



## Summary of Research Report

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the severely negative effects that a minimum residency requirement for social assistance would have on refugee claimants in Canada. After conducting a survey of service providers who work directly with refugees as well as gathering personal testimonies from claimants, the report provides ample evidence that the policy would be inadvisable on economic, humanitarian, and legal grounds. (p. 2-3)

## Key Findings & Figures

- ♦ Refugees are often accused of being a burden on the Canadian system, however if all claimants received assistance, this would only account for less than 1% of the total number of people on welfare. (p. 7)
- ♦ There may appear to be a financial incentive for minimum residency requirements for social assistance, however the money saved would be transferred to municipalities and charities to provide shelter, food and other necessities to refugees. (p. 6)
- ♦ Social assistance is often the only source of income as many do not have a work permit or are otherwise unable to work. This must cover their most basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and the expense of their claim including legal aid. (p. 9-10)
- ♦ Social assistance also allows refugee claimants to access other social services such as language and vocational training, job search assistance, and workshops to facilitate such skills as resume writing and job interview preparation, which is crucial for integration. (p. 11)
- ♦ When service providers were asked how negatively impacted refugees would be from a minimum residency requirement on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much), 93% chose either 9 or 10. (p. 12)

### Title

**The Invisible Victim:  
Examining the Impacts of  
a Minimum Residency  
Requirements for Social  
Assistance on Refugee  
Claimants**

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Citizens for Public Justice

### Link to YSM's Digital Catalogue

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### Research Tags

Refugee, Claimant, Social Assistance, Minimum Residency Requirements, Economic, Humanitarian, Legal





## Why Research?

The Yonge Street Mission believes in the incredible value that evidenced-based research and information sharing plays in developing—as well as delivering—the most enhanced and effective programs and services to our community members. We are called to be stewards of knowledge; educated, informed and diligently tapping into innovation and insight. Best practices are continually refined, and studies, research and analysis are regularly being published. Keeping up to date and well-versed with this literature is essential. It is for this reason we've designed this Research Bulletin to promptly scan and disseminate the key findings and recommendations from recently published research materials relevant to the Social Service sector, and to our work at The Yonge Street Mission.

**This summary has been prepared by The Yonge Street Mission. The information given does not purport to be an exhaustive or exact replica of the original research. Omissions or errors resulting from the summation process are the responsibility of The Yonge Street Mission.**

## Proposed Recommendations & Areas For Action

The writers of this document proposed that this information can be used:

- ♦ To provide a resource for refugee agencies, policy and decision-makers, and individuals with an interest in refugee issues to provide a compelling case for why imposing a minimum residency requirement for social assistance would not be a sound policy choice on economic, humanitarian, and legal grounds. (p. 16)
- ♦ To refute any claims that refugees are a drain on our welfare system and to combat anti-refugee sentiments. (p. 16)
- ♦ To Encourage the leaders of provincial and territorial governments to continue to refuse any actions that would create further hardship for refugees, and to demonstrate that Canada is willing to continue its proud tradition of welcoming those in need of our protection. (p. 16)

## Notable Quotes

- ♦ “..Social assistance is a crucial lifeline for refugees who arrive in Canada often with little money and few possessions. This is oftentimes their only source of income as many do not have a work permit or are otherwise unable to work.” (p. 9)
- ♦ “Going through the refugee status determination (RSD) process can take months, if not years. Typically, between forty and fifty percent of refugee claimants are eventually accepted as protected persons.” (p. 4)
- ♦ “Ultimately, there is no evidence that a minimum residency requirement for social assistance would save provinces or territories any significant amount of money.” (p. 9)
- ♦ “Until authorities can determine whether or not they qualify for refugee status under Canadian law, it is the moral obligation of governments to provide enough to ensure the survival and wellbeing of all those who reside within their borders.” (p. 12)
- ♦ “Contrary to the cuts to refugee healthcare, the legislation removing the prohibition on a minimum residency requirement for social assistance was passed largely without notice.” (p. 14)

