

research snapshot

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Path to Good Quality and Affordable Housing Is More Difficult for Refugee Claimants Than for Sponsored Refugees

What is this research about?

Canada accepts two kinds of refugees:

1. Sponsored refugees who arrive in Canada through a government or private program.
2. Refugee claimants who enter on their own and must prove that they are in need of asylum.

The difference in the way the government treats sponsored refugees and claimants has a strong impact on their ability to find good housing. Toronto, where most refugees settle, has very low vacancy rates and high costs for private rental housing. As a result, refugees in Toronto – especially claimants – find it enormously difficult to get housing.

What did the researcher do?

A researcher at York University looked at past research that describes the experiences of refugees to Canada and the UK. He then interviewed 44 refugees. About half of the interviewees were sponsored refugees. The

What you need to know:

More formal supports for getting affordable and good quality housing are needed for the refugee population in Canada, especially for refugee claimants. While the support of family, friends, and the local community can help refugees who are looking for housing, government and community organizations are better able to provide professional advice and act as guarantors for landlords. Refugees continue to pay too much for housing. They also live in generally poor conditions. The goal is to provide refugees with permanent housing which will help their integration into Canadian society.

other half was made up of refugee claimants. The interviews focused on the refugees' experiences as they tried to get housing in the city of Toronto.

What did the researcher find?

The researcher found that refugee claimants have a much more difficult time getting housing than sponsored refugees, even though they tend to have more education and better language skills. Sponsored refugees enjoyed more help

from the government in their move to Canada. For example, many were housed in government accommodations before looking for housing on their own. More sponsored refugees knew someone before arriving in Canada (65%) than did refugee claimants (45%). On average, sponsored refugees found permanent housing within a month. Refugee claimants, on the other hand, took an average of 7 months.

How can you use this research?

This research can help policymakers and community groups to understand the unique needs of both sponsored refugees and refugee claimants. There are currently very few services available to claimants who desperately need assistance when they arrive in cities like Toronto. Services like the 24 hour Red Cross First Contact information line need to be expanded.

About the Researcher

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Housing, Refugee claimants, Sponsored refugees, Toronto, Housing trajectories

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