

Research Project

Immigrants, Discrimination, and Homelessness A Longitudinal Study of Homeless Immigrant Families in Toronto

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Community Partners	COSTI North York Housing Help Centre; Midaynta Association of Somali Service Agencies; Woodgreen Red Door Family Shelter.
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Objectives

One significant segment of Canada's unhoused population is families with children. Within this group are many immigrant and refugee families. Homelessness and shelter life impose great stress on mothers and their children.

As a nation that welcomes so many immigrants, most of whom settle in large cities, we need to understand the problems that produce family homelessness in general, and homelessness among immigrant and refugee families in particular. A better understanding of the way in which discrimination contributes to homelessness among immigrant and refugee families with children can improve public policy and programs for immigrant families, thereby reducing family homelessness.

The proposed study will focus on Toronto, where almost half of all immigrants settle after their arrival in Canada. Our approach will look at the housing careers of immigrant families over time.

Research Questions

We will try to answer four sets of questions:

- How and why do some immigrant and refugee families become homeless in Toronto and what role, if any, does discrimination and racism play in the process?

- How long do immigrant families remain homeless, how many spells of homelessness do they experience, and how they cope when they are homeless?
- How do immigrant families exit homelessness, what kind of housing do they find, and what factors or services are most helpful in ending the homelessness of immigrant families?
- What policies and programs most effectively and efficiently (a) prevent families from becoming homeless, (b) help homeless families out of their homeless status more quickly, (c) address issues relating to discrimination and racism to the extent these play a role in producing, maintaining, and ending family homelessness?

Our approach involves interviewing 100 families four times during the course of a year. The sample will include two groups of 50 homeless families: (1) racialized homeless immigrant and refugee families, and (2) white, non-aboriginal, native-born homeless families.

for further information:

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