



American Islamic College Temporary Shelter - FAQ

June 21st, 2023

How many have arrived to Chicago?

Since August 31, 2022, Chicago has provided resources to more than 11,000 men, women, and children who have arrived to our City homeless and without sponsors.

Who are the people arriving to Chicago?

While most asylum seekers are from Venezuela, individuals and families are also from all over the world, including countries from Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the Middle East.

How do Individuals arrive in Chicago?

For most, their journey starts in South America. Several migrants travel through one of the world's most dangerous migration routes known as the Darien Gap, into Central America and Mexico, eventually arriving to the U.S.-Mexico border. New arrivals who arrive in Chicago are processed by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at a U.S. port of entry and undergo a credible fear interview to request the opportunity to apply for asylum. Once process, thousands are bussed to Chicago & dropped off at Chicago's Union Station from Texas and Colorado.

Why is this shelter necessary?

All shelters are at capacity. To date, over **5,369** asylum seekers are in temporary shelter, and **957** asylum seekers are awaiting shelter placement in police stations across the City. On any given day, the existing homeless shelter system is at or near capacity with only 3,000 shelter beds. In order to serve both the Chicago homeless population and new arrival populations, the City needs to increase the capacity of our shelter system.

When will the city begin moving people into the facility?

The earliest possible move-in date is July 28th

What population will be housed at the American Islamic College?

Families with children will be sheltered at the American Islamic College.

How long will you use the building for shelter?

Currently, the City does not have an end date as this remains a fluid situation. We will have to remain flexible with our timelines.

How will the City maintain security within the building? What is the CPD safety plan?

The site will have 24/7 security provided by City contractors, posted at all entrances. They will conduct regular rounds inside and around the building. CPD is implementing a community safety plan, which includes regular visits to the building during every watch.

Are there any health concerns with new arrivals?

Due to high vaccination coverage, vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, mumps, rubella, polio, and varicella (chicken pox) are rare in the U.S. and most Chicagoans are protected through routine childhood vaccinations. Reports that migrants may be the source of disease spread in Chicago are inaccurate and can fuel xenophobia. The City is continuing to monitor the situation with our partners and providing appropriate guidance and services as needed.

How can the community remain involved moving forward?



We are grateful for the generosity of Chicagoans. We want the City's new arrivals response to be a community-wide effort. Please visit chicago.gov/support to learn more about how to support new arrivals.

Can individuals stay at the shelter all day long?

Shelters are open 24/7, with a curfew of 11 pm. Every shelter has onsite case managers that help connect new arrivals to the services they need, including: healthcare, mental health, family reunification, and other supports. Individuals at these shelters are focused on rebuilding their lives and creating stability for themselves and their families back home. Many are building new support networks, often with help from case managers, and connect with local faith-based institutions to find community.

Can new arrivals work?

Non-citizens need authorization from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work. USCIS requires each individual apply for an employment authorization document (i.e., work permit). *New arrivals must wait 150 days to apply for work permit from the time they have a pending immigration application.*

What rules and expectations are there for residents?

Rules include:

- Upon leaving or entering the facility, clients must sign in and out with front desk staff.
- Clients must abide by 11PM curfew. After curfew, clients may not leave the facility except for reasons approved by staff (e.g., employment) or in case of emergency.
- Clients may not have visitors within the facility.
- Drugs and alcohol are not allowed on the property. If alcohol, illicit drugs, and marijuana are found, items will be confiscated and discarded. If these items or drug paraphernalia are found in common areas, shelter staff have the right to conduct a search of all client belongings.
- Clients must respect the entire property and treat it carefully.
- Smoking is prohibited inside the facility. Smoking is permitted in designated outdoor areas only.

Residents may be discharged for violation of rules

- Unless the reason for discharge is violence or active threat toward others, resident may be placed at another shelter.

Is this mission taking away resources from homeless individuals?

The City **has not** diverted funding from the homeless shelter system to support the new arrival mission and we are working to enhance and expand services. We continue to invest in new, long-term homeless solutions, including developing new non-congregate shelter spaces and increasing permanent supportive housing options.