

Cities press Ottawa to do more for immigrants

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Canadian municipalities say the federal government's narrow focus on helping new immigrants with language training and employment assistance ignores the basic needs of people coming to Canada from abroad – including affordable housing and public transportation.

In a report released Tuesday, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) also says Canada's cities are routinely ignored as Ottawa forms strategies to help newcomers adapt to life in this country.

"The reality is that municipalities are the first line of support with respect to dealing with new immigrant issues," said Berry Vrbanovic, a city councillor in Kitchener who is also president of the FCM, which represents more than 1,900 towns and cities across Canada. "We believe it's absolutely essential that the federal government works in partnership with the municipal and territorial orders of government in terms of the delivery of these services."

Federal immigration policy has traditionally been focused on helping immigrants learn English or French and aiding them in their search for jobs. But it is important to recognize that there are two important infrastructure issues that hit new Canadians harder than long-time residents of Canada, said Mr. Vrbanovic. "One is fixing the holes in the housing market, and the second being improving public transit," he said.

For more on this story, [click here](#).

For the FCM study, [click here](#).

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