

# Politico

## City Readies Emergency Tent Shelters for Migrant Influx

By: Erin Durkin

The city will open emergency tent shelters for thousands of asylum seekers who have New York's homeless shelters bursting at the seams after being sent here by Republican border-state governors, Mayor Eric Adams announced Thursday.

The city is planning to open at least two Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers in the coming weeks, as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott continues to send buses of people arriving over the southern border to New York and other Democratic cities.

The first center will open at Orchard Beach in a remote section of the Bronx. That center will serve about 1,000 adults who will be allowed to stay in five tents. A second, yet-to-be-chosen location will cater to families.

The first center would likely include tightly packed cots, though the city says that arrangement would only be used for single adults. Another center for families would have a different setup, but no details of the plan for families have been determined.

At least 13,600 asylum seekers have entered the city shelter system in the last four months, and 10,300 of those remain in shelters currently, officials said Thursday. That includes 3,200 school-age children.

Officials say they will try to reroute buses from Port Authority to drop asylum seekers off directly in Orchard Beach. It is unclear how that will be achieved, since Adams has said Abbott has refused to coordinate with the city on the arrival of buses.

"More than 100 years ago, Ellis Island opened its doors to welcome in those 'yearning to breathe free.'

Now, more than ever, it's clear that we are again dealing with a humanitarian crisis created by human hands. While other leaders have abdicated their moral duty to support arriving asylum seekers, New York City refuses to do so," Adams said.

"This is not an everyday homelessness crisis, but a humanitarian crisis that requires a different approach."

Adams [has said the existing city shelter system](#) is "nearing its breaking point" due to the influx of asylum seekers. The city has at least twice violated its right to shelter law, which requires anyone who is homeless to be given a bed in a timely fashion.

Migrants who don't have immediate housing will stay at the emergency shelters for 24 to 96 hours, according to the city — but those stays could be extended depending on circumstances. City Hall could not say what the maximum stay would be.

"The decision to build what can only be described as a refugee camp is deeply disturbing," [said City Council Member Shahana Hanif](#), who chairs the immigration committee. She said the plan "is a clear product of the Adams Administration's goal to circumvent" the right to shelter and conditions in the tents "will inevitably fail to meet the bare minimum standards provided by the shelter system."

“We have room in our shelter system, as well as thousands of empty apartments and hotel rooms, but instead, this Mayor would prefer people to sleep in outdoor tents and trailers,” she said.

The tent camp will be erected in a parking lot at Orchard Beach, a location that is not accessible by subway or public bus. The city plans to use buses to transport asylum seekers there and have buses on site to transport them to other locations, a senior administration official said. The tents will be climate controlled, officials say. Migrants will be allowed to come and go as they please.

In addition to shelter, the relief centers will provide food, medical care, legal information, case work services, and a range of settlement options including helping new arrivals get in touch with family and friends in or outside New York City. Mental health staff will also be on site, the mayor’s office said. If needed, immigrants will be moved to traditional city shelters after their stay at the emergency centers.

The centers will be run by the Office of Emergency Management and Health and Hospitals, the city’s public hospital system.

“We are deeply concerned with any scenario in which families with children would be relegated to congregate settings. This practice, which has been widely condemned for its adverse and dangerous impact on this uniquely vulnerable population, is already subject to legal prohibitions,” the Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless said in a joint statement.

“That said, we remain willing to work with the city on a viable solution that satisfies New York’s legal and moral obligation to provide safe and adequate shelter to all who seek it, including asylum seekers.”

Adams has also [floated the idea](#) of using cruise ships to house arriving immigrants.

After the first two, additional relief centers may open in the coming weeks.

In addition to the buses sent by Abbott, buses of migrants have been arriving from El Paso, Del Rio, Laredo, and Eagle County.

Officials said some families appear to have been separated before the journey, with men arriving in New York while the rest of their families are sent elsewhere.