



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

The Honorable Jared Polis  
Governor of Colorado  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol Building  
200 E. Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

It is apparent that the influx of asylum seekers has provoked consternation amongst states. Although we share the concerns of accommodating the flood of asylum seekers, overburdening other cities is not the solution. We respectfully demand that you cease and desist sending migrants to New York City and Chicago. Since December of 2022, Chicago and New York City have received hundreds of individuals from Colorado. Before the first bus arrived in either of our cities, we informed a Colorado official directly that neither city had any additional room to accommodate any more migrants because of the thousands of migrants that had already been inhumanely bused to our respective cities from Texas since spring of 2022.

Despite this information, you have bused migrants to our cities. The buses have arrived, without any regard to either city's ability to appropriately shelter them.

Our understanding is that Colorado purports to be a welcoming state. At least as far as we are concerned, whether a welcoming state or welcoming city, the leaders must make sure that those values are lived in good times and especially in challenging times. That is what we have done and we urge you as governor of Colorado to do the same. We know it is hard because we have been facing these challenges for the last nine months. Colorado must reconsider its decision to send people, who are sheltered and receiving services from Denver-based community organizations, out of state, and particularly to cities like ours.

We have seen your statements in the media that you are simply accommodating the wishes of migrants to come to cities like New York City and Chicago. Both our cities are working tirelessly to ensure that migrants are able to reach their desired destinations where they are reunited with loved ones. However, you are sending migrants and families to New York City and Chicago that

do not have any ties, family members or community networks to welcome them, and at a time where both cities are at maximum capacity in shelter space and available services.

Since August 31, 2022, the City of Chicago has welcomed 3,854 migrants bused to its city from Texas and additional numbers of migrants who have arrived in Chicago through other means. In part, as hopefully you know, none of the asylum-seekers have work permits, and thus Chicago is currently providing services to over 1,600 individuals in its shelter system who have no place else to go. The City of Chicago is a welcoming city and is providing wrap around supports including emergency shelter; diversion services; necessities like food and showers; long-term housing; legal services; and both the physical and behavioral health support needs for individuals. Because of all these factors, its shelter system is now over capacity.

For the past nine months, New York City has welcomed an increase of asylum seekers. As of January 4, 2023, an estimated 36,400 asylum seekers have gone through New York City's emergency intake system, with more staying with family, friends, and other networks. New York City has opened emergency shelters and Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers to meet this unprecedented need. New York City is providing many forms of support, including shelter, food, legal services, household items like clothing and health care, but its ability to provide services is strained. New York City's shelters are over capacity. In fiscal year 2023 alone, New York City will spend about \$1 billion to address the asylum crisis, and this number will continue to rise if current arrival trends persist.

We urge you to follow the best practices set by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that identifies receiving states as leads in providing housing and wrap-around services to asylum-seekers. Additionally, the city of Denver is known nationally for providing some of the best services for unhoused populations—setting best practices throughout the country—it is unusual that you would deprive new arrivals from accessing those resources. In fact, many new arrivals from Colorado had been in your care for weeks, receiving services, and establishing connections only to be uprooted with a promise the receiving cities cannot keep.

To reiterate, you must stop busing migrants to Chicago and New York City. In the case of family reunification, let us work together to ensure that people are reconnected with their loved ones, however sending migrants to our cities whose systems are over capacity, where they may struggle to find shelter and other services is wrong and further victimizes these most vulnerable individuals. These actions do not live up to the values of a proclaimed welcoming state and should stop immediately.

Instead, let us work together to advocate to the federal government for a national solution that responds to this need. New York City and Chicago have always been cities of immigrants. While we are all grappling with a manufactured humanitarian crisis, we must all come together to address this nationwide problem and look forward to working together to meet this challenge.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Eric Adams in black ink.

Eric Adams  
Mayor  
New York City

Handwritten signature of Lori E. Lightfoot in black ink.

Lori E. Lightfoot  
Mayor  
Chicago