



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To: Members of the Committee of the Whole**

**From: Ken Doherty, Director Community Services**

**Meeting Date: February 16, 2016**

**Subject: Report CSD16-005**  
**Update on Municipal and Community Support of Refugees**

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## **Purpose**

A report to update Council on municipal and community support of refugees in Peterborough.

## **Recommendation**

That Council approve the recommendation outlined in Report CSD16-005 dated February 16, 2016 of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

That Council receive the presentation from the New Canadians Centre.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

There are no financial or budgetary implications in receiving this report. During 2016 Budget deliberations Council approved the provision of \$25,000 in 2016 and 2017 to assist with local efforts to relocate and integrate refugees in the community. With the approval of the CAO and Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Community Service allocated \$25,000 in unspent 2015 operational funds from the Arts Culture & Heritage Administration to establish a 2015 budget to deal with urgent needs and to leverage additional support.

## Background

### City Support

As a result of the discussion during budget deliberations, Council also directed staff to work with outside agencies to determine how best to allocate the funds. To facilitate this, Allan Seabrooke approved the creation of a Municipal Coordination Committee to work with both the New Canadians Centre (NCC) and the newly created Refugee Resettlement Task Force (RRTF) to assist them in their efforts to resettle and integrate refugees in Peterborough

### New Canadians Centre Peterborough

The New Canadians Centre Peterborough (NCC) is the only Peterborough agency delivering settlement services to immigrants and refugees. In September, 2015 the staff and the Board decided to take on coordination of refugee resettlement efforts in Peterborough. On Sept 10, 2015, they held a workshop to provide information to the community on how to privately sponsor refugees. The NCC has been supporting the sponsorship groups since then. To do this, NCC hired two additional staff to support the refugee resettlement work. As no other funding available, they used their reserve funds to create two positions at 16 hours per week (two days) for four months. As of mid-January 2016, the refugee coordinators are working with 20+ sponsorship groups bringing up to 100 individuals to Peterborough City and County.

Currently the NCC anticipates Peterborough will receive around 100 Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) and 250-500 Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) by the end of 2016. Privately Sponsored Refugees are supported by their sponsor group. They must support their refugee family's needs for a year. Government Assisted Refugees are selected by the government and sent to communities, they are not selected by the communities. The government contracts with local settlement agencies such as the NCC to provide all orientation and settlement support to the refugees through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP).

The NCC is in the process of completing their application to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for RAP funding for a year (April 2016 – March 2017). They anticipate GARs will begin arriving in Peterborough March or April 2016. The plan is to resettle up to eight GAR families a month one year for a maximum total of 96 families or 384 persons.

The resources and services that are required of the NCC to support the GARs are much greater than those for the PSR's. The coordination of the agencies involved in the service delivery is enormous as the GARs receive significantly less pre- and post-arrival support than the PSRs. These refugees are not receiving the detailed orientation prior to their coming to Canada. As this is not happening, it is up to the NCC, their volunteers and the community to provide the necessary supports. The success of their integration rests on the NCC as the settlement service provider in the local community.

## **New Canadians Centre 2015 Funding Request**

### **Refugee Coordinators:**

By early December 2015, with the arrival of the first sponsored refugee families, the NCC realized the refugee resettlement coordinators could not manage the required workload working just two days a week. They approached the City with an emergency request for matching funding from the City to provide for an additional two days a week up to March 31, 2016. The additional funding (\$15,413) would allow the two refugee resettlement coordinators to work four days a week (32 hours).

### **Housing Resource Centre:**

As the New Canadians Centre does not have experience in providing housing services they approached the Housing Resource Centre (HRC) to work in partnership with them. The HRC agreed to provide a dedicated experienced housing support worker to manage the increased workload of finding housing for 250-500 GARs. The NCC requested the funding needed for the contract, and HRC matched it with an additional \$6,000 for a total of \$12,000. They also waived their administration costs in this instance.

### **Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA):**

PRHC and the local medical/mental health community are working with the NCC and the Task Force to identify the mental health services the refugees will require once they arrive. Following their time in war zones or refugee camps, the refugees face increased rates of mental health problems ranging from depression to anxiety to post-traumatic stress disorders. It is important to have the necessary supports in place for when the refugees arrive. With funding support from the City, the NCC would be able to contract with CMHA to provide trauma and mental health counseling at the New Canadians Centre.

The NCC requested \$3,587 of funding for CMHA services for an embedded practitioner at the NCC. CMHA will match the funds with in-kind professional mental health supports and specific training to the NCC's front line staff on complex trauma recognition; the symptomatology of depression; anxiety; and concurrent disorders. The NCC staff will be able to use the screening tools to assess those individuals who may present with these symptoms and request support through the CMHA.

The chart below summarizes the 2015 funding request from the NCC and the funding they have been able to leverage.

<b>Services</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Matching City</b>	<b>CFDC</b>
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	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Refugee coordinator from Dec 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016	\$7,258	\$7,258	\$7,258
Refugee coordinator from Dec 21, 2015 – March 31, 2016	\$8,155	\$8,155	\$8,155
Refugee Housing Initiative - 15 weeks	\$6,000	\$6,000	
Canadians Mental Health Association	\$3,587	\$3,587	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$15,413.00</b>

The request was approved by the Director of Community Services, as the funds were available in the Arts, Culture and Heritage Division budget. The NCC will seek to extend the Refugee Coordinator positions and the housing and CMHA contracts after March 31, 2016, as they are needed and as funding permits.

### **Refugee Resettlement Task Force**

In November the NCC reached out to key community stakeholders in the community for help. They established the Refugee Resettlement Task Force (RRTF).

The RRTF has been created to work at a strategic level, to ensure community collaboration behind the provision of refugee support services. It includes, but is not limited to representatives from the City and County, both School Boards, Trent University, Fleming College, the Peterborough Police Service, the Peterborough County City Health Unit, the United Way of Peterborough and District, the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, General Electric, Children's Aid Society, Peterborough service clubs, the Kawartha Muslim Religious Association, the MP and MPP. Their Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix A.

As the RRTF identifies needs, the different organizations working with the NCC and with other community partners are forming ad-hoc working groups. To date there are groups working in the health/mental health, policing, education, and housing sectors. The earliest teams to meet formally are in the areas of employment and housing. There have also been informal meetings among interested partners in areas such as interpretation and cultural competency.

### **Employment:**

Headed by Nic Cunningham, a local economic development consultant, the Syrian Refugee Job Development and Economic Development Team (SYRJDED) is assisting newcomers' transition to employment. It consists of the following: Peterborough Chamber of Commerce; Community Futures; Great Peterborough Innovation Cluster; Employment and Planning and Counseling Peterborough; Fleming Crew; Workforce Development Board; City of Peterborough: Peterborough Economic Development; Kawartha Manufacturers Association; and New Canadians Centre.

Working through the New Canadians Centre, members of the team are assessing the skills of refugees as they arrive, and figuring out what it will take to allow the refugees either to start up their own business or find work in Peterborough. The team can be reached at [employment@nccpeterborough.ca](mailto:employment@nccpeterborough.ca).

#### Housing:

While helping to co-ordinate housing is already part of the New Canadians Centre's work, they need a centralized list of available units to deal with the increased demand and to assist the PSR sponsor groups and later the GARs. The Housing Committee is putting together a database of landlords and community members interested in contributing free, low-cost, discounted, and market-rate housing or temporary accommodation for refugees. NCC /RRTF are looking for a variety of units — from single bedrooms to two and three bedroom apartments or houses. When the GARs begin arriving, the Housing Committee and the Housing Resource Centre will help to match units in the database to incoming refugees.

The NCC web site includes a Housing & Temporary Accommodation Information Collection Form to collect information from landlords and homeowners. The link to fill up the form is at [http://www.nccpeterborough.ca/?page\\_id=10896](http://www.nccpeterborough.ca/?page_id=10896) and the email for further information is [michael@nccpeterborough.ca](mailto:michael@nccpeterborough.ca).

The landlord of Severn Court near Fleming College is providing the NCC with a building with eight furnished and move-in ready units. They have been offered below market rates on a per diem or monthly basis. The NCC will use the apartments for temporary housing for GARs.

**City Housing Contribution** - The City is also considering providing six houses purchased for a road widening project. All of the houses are in fairly good repair – most of them having been lived in until they were purchased for the Chemong Road widening project. They have been inspected by a home inspector and any required repairs are being made. The houses are currently unfurnished. The houses will be rented at market rates.

#### Other Local Initiatives

**Fundraising** - On December 14th, the NCC launched their campaign to raise \$150,000 to go towards supporting the work of resettling refugees into our community. The number of other community fundraisers and their formats are too numerous to mention.

**Family Reunification Efforts** –The NCC has identified family reunification as an important factor in the success of the settlement and integration process. This is a best practice for successful integration for a few reasons:

- It is generally what both families long for. Once they arrived in Canada, they can feel guilty and fearful for those left behind; they are aware that the family

members they left behind are waiting to be called with the news that they can come to Canada;

- Family already in Canada can explain to those elsewhere what life is like here in a cultural context that is familiar to them; and,
- Reunification promotes a community connection where the likelihood of Syrian families staying and building lives in Peterborough is strengthened.

The NCC has contacted IRRC and received support for Peterborough efforts to reunite families through the Government Assisted Refugee program. The first family reunifications took place recently with one family being relocated from Hamilton and another from Windsor.

**Community Symposiums** - The community organized a symposium that took place Thursday January 7, 2015 at Trent. It provided a forum for members of the 50+ private sponsorship groups in the city and surrounding counties to share strategies and problem solve together towards successful integration into the community. Sponsors were able to share successful practices already established in the community; provide participants with an understanding of, and feeling of belonging to the larger community response to this humanitarian issue; identify outstanding issues and identify resources for future assistance and action.

A second symposium is being held on February 7 for people who want to provide social support for Syrian refugees arriving in the Peterborough area. The New Canadians Centre is hoping to create up to 20 Government Assisted Refugees support groups to provide social support and community connections to GARs, similar to that provided by a private sponsorship group. These groups will not have to take on the large financial obligation of the sponsors for the PSRs.

## Summary

The refugees arriving in Peterborough may be coming as a result of civil war and the loss of much they hold dear, but they are resilient. They are coming with the intention of establishing themselves, participating in daily life, and contributing to the growth and prosperity of Peterborough. They are not coming to fail. The community has rallied around the needs of the refugees. New sponsorship groups continue to be formed and with the prospect of some 250-500 GARs arriving starting in April there is still much to be accomplished. The City has been generous in their support of the New Canadians Centre's recent refugee resettlement initiatives. The 2015 \$25,000 contribution leveraged an additional \$25,000 for the refugee coordinator positions, the contracts with the Housing Resource Corporation and with the Canadian Mental Health Association. The NCC aims to be able to similarly leverage the contributions in 2016 and 2017.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:  
Appendix A – Refugee Resettlement Task Force Terms of Reference

## **Appendix A – Refugee Resettlement Task Force Terms of Reference**

**Purpose:** The task force will consist of organizations represented by individual members who will be advised as to the current state of community efforts to resettle Syrian refugees, and act as champions of community will and resources towards that effort in the Peterborough area.

The Task Force will engage in the work of resettling refugees and bring resources to the table. The Task Force will not just be a gathering point for information, but also a launching pad to mobilize resources. When there are issues (health, security, education, finance, housing) the intention is that there will be people at the table that are able to provide resources.

The Task Force will provide information and develop institutional capacity, working towards the community mobilization of the necessary capacity to resettle Syrian refugees, particularly setting the stage for Government Assisted Refugees.

The New Canadians Centre is asking of the Task Force for input, buy-in, ideas, questioning, strategic thinking, and championing. The New Canadians Centre is not asking for oversight of our activities towards the purpose described above.

The New Canadians Centre wants to inform the Task Force of what we are involved in and allow the Task Force to provide NCC connections and help where that fits into their sphere of influence.