



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Budget Committee

From: Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

Meeting Date: November 28, 2016

Subject: Report CSD16-027
Municipal and Community Support of Refugees

Purpose

A report to provide information on municipal and community support of refugees in Peterborough and to request additional financial support for the New Canadians Center (NCC) for 2017.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSD16-027 dated November 28, 2016, of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That the City contribution of \$25,000 to the NCC for 2017 for the Integration of Refugees, as approved on November 23, 2015, be increased by an additional “one time” allocation of \$50,000 to help offset the anticipated impact of “Month 13” and the end of the Resettlement Assistance Program funding on the NCC’s operations;
- b) That staff be directed to report back to Council to provide an update on the activities associated with this work before the end of 2017.

Budget and Financial Implications

During the 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. In 2015, 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 settlement needs and to leverage additional support from community organizations.

This request for additional funding in 2017 is not included in the Draft Budget and would require an allocation from Contingency if approved.

Background

A. Funding Request

Previous Council Support

At the September 21, 2015 Committee of the Whole meeting, a motion was made to request:

That Staff prepare a report for Budget Committee on the process used to relocate refugees and how the City could assist groups in the community involved in the process.

At the November 23, 2015 Budget Committee Council approved the following:

- a) That a new line be added as an Expenditure under Community Services Administration, as shown on page 103 of the 2016 Highlights Book and pages 87-91 of the 2016 Operating Budget Details Book, with a budget of \$25,000 for the Integration of the Refugees into the City of Peterborough and that the impact to the all-inclusive rate is 0.01 moving the total all-inclusive rate to 2.51%;
- b) That staff work with outside agencies to determine how best to allocate the funds;
- c) That the 2017 Draft Budget include a further \$25,000 for the Integration of the Refugees;
- d) That staff report back to Council as required to provide an update on the activities associated with this project; and

- e) That the report on potential City support for the relocation of Syrian refugees to Peterborough be received for information.

Current Refugee Funding Model

Over the last year Peterborough has been receiving Privately Sponsored (PSR) and Government Assisted Refugees (GAR). PSRs receive financial, emotional, social support and resettlement advice from their private sponsors for one (1) year. GARs receive basic financial support for one (1) year from the Federal Government through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) which gives government-assisted refugees immediate and essential supports for their most basic needs. RAP funding is also given to the NCC to provide GARs with non-financial support/resettlement services.

Regardless of whether they are privately sponsored or government-assisted, the refugees receive only one year of financial support through their sponsors or through the Federal Government. The expectation is that after one year, they will become self-sufficient, or apply for social assistance. Since this transition takes place in the 13th month after refugees arrive to Canada, it is often referred to as “Month 13”.

Month 13

In month 13 both privately sponsored and government-assisted refugees transition off sponsor/government support to self-sufficiency or social assistance. Provincial and local systems become their social safety net. Some of the work will simply be administrative - making sure provincial assistance is available as soon as the federal or sponsor assistance ends, rather than seeing refugees wait for their applications to be processed. The province sets the rules and rates for Ontario Works, but the City administers the program. The GARs will receive letters prior to month 13 recommending that they work with the NCC to begin preparing for the transition. This transition will place heavy demands on the NCC who will have to continue to provide on-going intensive settlement supports to all the refugees as they go through the changes imposed by month 13.

It is unclear how many of the families will require social assistance after the first year. Some will do better than others, some will be independent, and some will not. Data from 2009, the latest stats available, shows that 49% of government-sponsored refugees who had arrived two years earlier were collecting welfare (compared to 19 per cent of privately sponsored refugees). Although most gradually wean off (50 per cent after the second year, 75 per cent by the fourth), a proportion stay dependent on welfare for the rest of their lives.¹

¹ Getting Syrians here was easy. Now comes the hard part. What happens when the refugees have to start supporting themselves? Officials are bracing for ‘month 13’; Michael Friscolanti, August 9, 2016 <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/warm-hearts-cold-reality/>

This is understandable since the Canadian Government Assisted Refugee program gives high priority to families and individuals who are the most vulnerable within their countries of origin – women at risk, individuals with medical conditions or trauma from violence and/or torture, and those facing systemic discrimination. The refugee reality is such that they continue to need support as it can take time for families to: navigate through the settlement process, integrate into the community, participate in society, and develop the skills necessary to find and keep a job.

The Refugee Resettlement Task Force, the NCC and Social Services are preparing for December 2016 when the first families will no longer receive support from their sponsors or the government. The NCC is coordinating all local activities to make sure the tools are available for the transition. They are also working closely with the Province and RAP funders lobbying for more resources and continued RAP funding.

NCC Budget Request

In 2017 the NCC is requesting an additional \$50,000 to the approved \$25,000 for a total of \$75,000. They presented this request at the November 23 Public Budget Meeting. The funding will be used to ensure the NCC will have Arabic speaking staff and adequate settlement support staff to deliver a full 12 months of increased resettlement support for all refugee families who arrive in 2017. It will also ensure that all 180-200 refugees receive adequate longer term settlement and employment support as they transition through their first full year without sponsor or government assistance. This funding will also provide interpretation support for the NCC and their clients and for other partner organizations in emergency situations.

The NCC will also need to continue to work with the Refugee Resettlement Task Force to improve service collaboration among sector agencies, and with institutional partners in healthcare, mental health and education, with employers and with the City of Peterborough. They will also need to continue coordinating the generous donations the community continues to provide.

Breakdown for proposed use of funding

<u>Position</u>	<u>Total for 12 months</u>
Interpretation/translation services	\$4,800
Arabic speaking settlement worker	\$43,585
Part time refugee coordinator	\$24,076
<u>Administrative Support</u>	<u>\$2,539</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$75,000</u>

The six 'Chemong' homes set aside by the City of Peterborough for the purpose of housing Syrian refugee families have greatly assisted the NCC in their search for suitable housing. The NCC would like to request on-going use of the six Chemong Road houses until the Chemong Road widening project starts. Detailed design for that project will not be completed until May 2018. The families could remain in the houses until the

project begins. They would be given appropriate notice to find new accommodation when the time comes. Five out of the six houses are filled now. The young families who are living there have been able to start to their lives in Canada with a sense of community and belonging. These homes have helped the NCC as housing larger families with young children is one of the largest challenges they face. This specific commitment from the City of Peterborough has allowed the NCC to keep their heads above water, as it pertains to housing families, and to serve these families with compassion and professionalism.

The NCC will continue to seek federal, provincial and other funding to assist in the settlement and support of refugees.

End of Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) Funding

As of the date of this report, the Federal Government has not started funding negotiations with settlement agencies and RAP centres. This means there is no confirmed support for any NCC program or position after the end of the Federal fiscal year on March 31, 2017 when the NCC's current contract ends. If the RAP funding does not continue (and this is impossible to predict at this time) then it is likely that at least 6 of the 8 positions hired to deliver RAP programs will be eliminated at a time when the NCC will have a continuing obligation to provide mandated settlement services to refugee families who have just arrived. (See Appendix A for the RAP mandated services.)

The NCC's current RAP contract calls for them to receive approximately three (3) government-assisted families per month. In actuality there have been some months with no families and other months with as many as ten (10) families. As the situation in the Middle East remains volatile, and countries often hold back exit visas at the last minute, there is no way for the NCC to accurately predict how many refugees will arrive in any given week or month. In a worst case scenario, in April 2017 the NCC could find itself trying to provide all the mandated resettlement services to newly arrived families without RAP funding for Arabic speaking case workers and support staff. (See Appendix A.)

Immigration Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has also indicated that there is a possibility of smaller communities continuing as RAP centers after the original contract to assist Syrian refugees ends on March 31, 2017. This means that Peterborough may have an opportunity to welcome refugees from diverse countries on an ongoing basis. The number of refugees that Peterborough could receive on a yearly basis would have to be determined, but would be less than the high number of Syrian refugees resettled in 2016 / 2017. The NCC would seek input from the city and other community partners through the Refugee Resettlement Task Force should this be the case.

Anticipated On-going Pressure Points

In the last five years the NCC has experienced significant client growth. In 2017 they are anticipating a 30% increase in client numbers as they serve:

- clients who come through the regular channels
- new Syrian refugees who arrive in 2017; and
- refugees from 2015/2016 transitioning through month 13.

The NCC has identified a number of on-going challenges. They are increased demands for:

- settlement & related services over the next two (2) years;
- pre-employment and employment supports including assessing skills, training to enter the job market, connecting refugees with opportunities and on the job training, and help retaining jobs;
- ESL classes & child care support for those taking the classes;
- continued mental health support and counselling for victims of trauma and/or torture;
- developmental, emotional and social supports for children and youth;
- increased staff support for families as they move from government / sponsorship support to other income (Month 13)
- finding and maintaining affordable housing stocks, especially for individuals and smaller families.²
- interpretation services and support for the refugees and many community organizations, especially those in the health sector;

Without additional support in 2017, it will be very difficult for the NCC to provide the level of support and resettlement services required by many newcomers and the refugee families.

B. First 2016 Progress Report

Resettlement Assistance Program

The NCC with the support of the community and their partners applied for, and was selected by IRCC to become one of the new Resettlement Assistance Program centres in March 2016. The NCC's RAP contract with IRCC is for one year – from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. The contract with IRCC calls for the NCC to receive a total of 180 GARS (approximately three (3) government-assisted families per month).

² The hardest financial challenges will be faced by individuals, couples without children and families with one child as they need to spend a higher proportion of income on rent (larger families have sufficient additional money from the child tax benefit)

Summary of Arrivals

Peterborough began receiving privately sponsored refugees in December 2015, and the NCC became a new Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) centre in March 2016, and began receiving Government Assisted Refugees shortly thereafter.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) destined 180 government assisted refugees for Peterborough in 2016, but due to a number of delays, only 39 had arrived as of August 31, 2016. However, the government instituted a fall push to meet their 2016/2017 targets and ten families arrived in September. The NCC expects the majority of the remaining families to arrive by December 2016 (although the situation is constantly changing and is thus difficult to predict with any great accuracy).

Total Numbers (actual arrivals and scheduled arrivals to October 12, 2016)

Peterborough	# Adults	# Children	Total
Privately Sponsored Refugees	46	42	88
Government Assisted Refugees	66	68	134
Peterborough Total	112	110	222
Durham Region	4	3	7
Kawartha Lakes	6	4	10
Northumberland County	18	11	29
Trenton	2	1	3
Total			271

The totals from Durham, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland and Trenton do not include the full count for the regions, but they are clients served by the NCC. An additional eleven (11) GARs arrived in Peterborough but requested to be relocated to other cities with larger Arabic speaking populations (one to Ottawa, one to Windsor), and one individual was transferred to Toronto by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). One Joint-Assistance Sponsorship Family from Trenton received orientation services through the Peterborough RAP program, but then moved on to Trenton as IRCC intended.

While several families have left Peterborough, three GAR families relocated to Peterborough to reunite with family members who are already here. Such relocation is common among GARs as they seek to join family and friends or to find a location that better meets their needs and interests. One GAR family initially decided to relocate to Ottawa, but after visiting there, they changed their minds and decided to remain in Peterborough.

Both the privately sponsored and government-assisted refugee families who have arrived, are settled and doing well. All families have been able to access needed community services and many are participating in NCC and other community activities and events.

Impact on the Community

The community at large has shown overwhelming generosity with respect to donating their expertise, time and dollars to support the resettlement efforts. They recognize that the needs are great and the work must continue. As can be seen by community members volunteering in other capacities community support is being sustained. Thanks to this support, the NCC has formed 24 GAR Support Groups of volunteer community members (10-20 per group). A group has been matched with each new government- assisted refugee family. This support has been very positively received by the refugee families, and many of the group members have formed close friendships with their families. The volunteer support groups have no financial responsibilities, but they provide:

- Welcome reception
- Social connections and activities
- Orientation to the community
- Assistance with childminding and transportation to appointments
- Informal ESL support
- Employment support through personal connections
- Assistance with permanent housing search

These support groups have made a huge difference to the families who have arrived and even influences their decision whether to remain in Peterborough or not. While the groups support refugee families, it is the NCC that supports them.

Local community organizations and agencies are however feeling the impact of having to deliver services to the refugee families. Many of them have been asking how they can work with the NCC to receive training and information on cultural competency and, modify their own processes to be more inclusive. For example, at PRHC, providing culturally competent and sensitive care was selected as a strategic directive for the organization.

One of the greatest challenges is the high need for interpretation and translation services as most community organizations are not able to provide services or information in languages other than English. Where possible, the organizations and agencies obtain documents from their peers in larger municipalities such as Peel or the Durham Region. The NCC does provide interpretation and translation services, but the increased demand from local organizations is placing a high demand on NCC staff and volunteer interpreters, as in addition to working with the Syrian refugees they are working with all their regular clients. The Peterborough Regional Hospital Centre, Family Health Teams, Health Unit, VON 360 and the School Boards have all had to make their own arrangements for translators and interpreters, but it is a costly service.

As families settle, the need for interpretation will continue until they are able to learn sufficient English for both basic and more complicated interactions. With support from the Federal government Fleming College was able to open two (2) new Language

Instruction for Newcomer Classes (LINC) to support the language needs of the new arrivals. The classes are currently full.

In addition to interpretation and translation services, there will be an increased need for long term settlement, employment and income support as both privately sponsored and government-assisted refugees transition off government or sponsorship support in their Month 13.

Impact on the NCC

The greatest impact has been on the NCC itself. As the only immigrant and refugee settlement organization in Peterborough, there has been significant increase in all of their programs (Settlement, Settlement Workers in School, Community Connections, Employment and Language Assessment, etc). To provide the services, and to achieve the program objectives, using RAP funding the NCC has increased its staffing by:

- 2 refugee coordinator positions;
- 1 Arabic speaking youth worker;
- 3 Arabic speaking refugee case workers;
- 0.5 Arabic speaking support worker;
- 0.5 volunteer coordinator; and,
- Added hours for the Frontline Services Coordinator; and,
- Extra administrative support.

The NCC has also taken on lead agency responsibility in working with, coordinating, and supporting community agencies in their efforts to support refugees. They continue to work with multiple community partners both at a high strategic level through the Refugee Resettlement Task Force (RRTF).³ Collaboration and quick and effective community response was possible due to Peterborough Immigration Partnership's (PIP) years of work in the community.

Summary

The NCC 2017 request for additional funding is to assist them to provide services to refugees in month 13 as the NCC's Resettlement Assistance Program ends. From April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 the NCC has been able to use the RAP funding to hire Arabic speaking staff and refugee coordinators to meet the needs of the refugees. With the increased funding from the City, the NCC will be able to hire one Arabic speaking settlement worker, a part-time refugee coordinator, and interpretation and translation services and add a few hours of administrative support. Without this funding, the NCC

³ See List of Members in Appendix B and see Detailed Summary of Work in Appendix C for work at the service level.

will be unable to adequately meet the needs of both the new refugees and the clients they traditionally serve.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:

Appendix A - Services mandated by the Resettlement Assistance Program
Appendix B - Refugee Resettlement Task Force Members
Appendix C - Summary of Work Done

Services Mandated by the Resettlement Assistance Program

The New Canadians Center is required to provide the following services to Government Assisted Refugees as well as to provide community support to assist with the successful integration of the refugees.

- Temporary accommodation during the four to six weeks following the refugee's arrival, and assistance locating and securing permanent accommodation for the remainder of the first year;
- Needs assessments to understand client immediate needs and potential barriers to learning and referrals to other non-RAP services that will support integration into Canadian society, including settlement services;
- Information and orientation, including information on income support and their financial responsibilities, as well as intensive life skills training to support to newly arrived, higher needs RAP clients who have life skills challenges beyond the scope of the basic suite of services delivered under RAP to help clients with higher needs transition to independence more effectively;
- Links to federal and provincial programs (e.g., social insurance number, permanent resident card, Canada Child Tax Benefit, Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), provincial health care, school registration);
- Interpretation and translation services to ensure the families have access to and benefit from core RAP services. Local interpretation and translation services should be used as much as possible.
- Transportation services within Canada (e.g., transportation from the airport to temporary accommodation and transportation from temporary housing to permanent accommodation);
- Temporary allowance to meet basic needs, including food or the means to acquire it, while in temporary accommodation.

The services must be culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive and delivered either in the client's own language or with appropriate translation and interpretation services.

Over and above this, the NCC is also expected to:

- provide support (e.g., training) to the refugee sponsorship community who have taken on families under the PSRs Program;
- provide orientation sessions on living in Canada, finances, housing, education, health, culture and Canadian values to GARs for the first year the refugee family is in Canada; and,
- prepare training workshops on cultural sensitivity, diversity & inclusiveness, and anti-racism and discrimination for the broader community.

Refugee Task Force Member Organizations
Avenues for Sponsorship
Canadian Mental Health Association Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge
City of Peterborough
Community Counselling and Resource Centre
County of Peterborough
Fleming College
Fleming Continuing Education and Employment Department
GE Energy Management
Kawartha Haliburton Children Aid Society
Kawartha Muslim Religious Association
Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
New Canadians Centre Peterborough
Office of Jeff Leal, MPP
Office of the Hon. Maryam Monsef
Ontario Provincial Police
Peterborough County City Health Unit
Peterborough Family Health Team
Peterborough Police Service
Peterborough Regional Health Centre
Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic School Board (Equity & Inclusive Education Advisory Committee),
Refuge for Refugees (St. Alphonsus)
Rotary Club of Peterborough - Kawartha
Trent International Program
Trent University
United Way of Peterborough and District
VON Peterborough, Victoria, Haliburton

Summary of Work Done

Housing

- NCC now has 2 established temporary housing sites: Severn Court at Fleming and the Glebe House at St. John's on Brock Street
- Continuing partnership with Housing Resource Centre, which provides information, support & last month's rent for eligible families
- Housing has been found for all government assisted and privately sponsored refugees to date
- 3 of the city houses are now occupied by families

Cross Cultural Workshops

- Funding for community cross cultural workshops provided by CFDC
- NCC partnering with Kawartha Muslim Religious Association to offer workshops
- First workshop held in June with 70 participants
- Workshop to be offered twice more within 2016 / 2017 fiscal year

English as a Second Language

- NCC and Fleming requested additional LINC classes from federal government - there are now 4 classes (vs 2) and classes continued during the summer for the first time. Will continue to monitor classes and request additional classes as required
- NCC matching families with tutors and running additional ESL drop in classes
- NCC partnered with YMCA during summer to offer ESL classes with onsite childcare

Health

- Partnering with Family Health Team, VON 360 Clinic and PRHC to prioritize care for refugees with urgent medical needs
- Partnering with Peterborough Health Unit to provide catch-up vaccinations for all individuals
- Partnering with Partners in Pregnancy to provide care for refugees arriving in late stages of pregnancy

Dental

- NCC created dental fund to help cover uninsured urgent dental costs; obtained a grant of \$10,000 for this purpose from the Canadian Council of Refugees
- NCC continuing partnership with Peterborough Health Unit's dental clinic to offer lower-cost dental care. NCC is also working with private dentists including Kawartha Endodontics who has offered to see clients at reduced rates

Mental Health

- Mental Health Working group of professionals continues to meet
- CMHA worker is on-site at the NCC every other week to assist clients and concerned sponsorship groups / support groups
- Training for professional mental health practitioners held in June by the Centre for Victims of Torture. Additional workshop focusing on refugee children and trauma is scheduled for September by the OASIS program - Thrive Child and Youth Trauma Services
- Mental health training for non professionals (dealing with people in distress) held in June with around 30 participants; led by CMHA and PRHC

Interpretation

- Bulk of interpretation for government refugees provided by RAP Workers
- NCC in partnership with Kawartha Muslim Religious Association maintains a list of volunteer interpreters
- Helping agencies such as VON 360 set up professional interpretation phone lines - some funding for professional interpretation for government assisted refugees available through the Resettlement Assistance Program

Employment

- As first families settle, beginning to book employment intakes at NCC
- Will be looking at forming possible Employment Working Group
- Meeting with Social Services in September to discuss ways for refugees to access their employment and other services

Education

- Continuing partnership with KPRDSB and PVNC
- All school-age children registered and / or attending school
- Schools are responsive and children are adapting well
- High participation rate of youth in NCC youth activities and programs

Other

- Continuing partnership with Kawartha Food share to provide a food box to government assistant refugee families on arrival
- Police attending orientation lunches to meet new families and answer questions