



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Finance & Administration Committee  
From: Chief Administrative Officer  
Report: 2023-A-7  
Date: March 21, 2023

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**Subject:**

Ukrainian Humanitarian Response in Durham

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**Recommendation:**

- A) That Regional Council approve a request for up to \$750,000 to continue to provide supports to individuals and families arriving in Durham via the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) without independent financial means and are at risk of being precariously housed or homeless, with financing to be provided at the discretion of the Commissioner of Finance;
- B) That Regional staff be authorized to amend an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Community Development Council of Durham (CDCD) to continue to provide the needed wrap-around supports for these individuals for the duration of the project;
- C) That Regional staff be delegated authority or utilize existing delegated authorities to execute any transfer payment agreements, expend funds in accordance with the program guidelines, make any modifications to the program(s) to ensure desired outcomes are achieved, that the Purchasing By-law and Budget Management Policy be waived for this project as applicable and to receive any federal and/or provincial funds should they become available for this response;
- D) That Regional staff be directed to pursue full recovery from federal and/or provincial levels of government for the costs associated with the Region of Durham's (Region) Ukrainian humanitarian response, and that staff report back on the outcome of this undertaking; and,
- E) That a copy of report 2023-A-7 be circulated to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Durham Members of Parliament (MPs), Durham Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) for their information.

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**Report:****1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain approvals to continue to provide unbudgeted supports to individuals and families arriving in Durham via CUAET without independent financial means and are at risk of being precariously housed or homeless.

**2. Region of Durham Response**

- 2.1 In August 2022, the Region of Durham opened a temporary emergency accommodations site at a local hotel where wrap-around settlement and other services and supports are available for CUEAT arrivals in need of immediate shelter and assistance. This program is currently at capacity and slated to cease operations by April 30, 2023. However, requests continue to be placed with the program as the need continues to increase. Without commitment to continue this program, Regional staff and CDCD will have to close the program in April 2023.
- 2.2 Since opening, the Durham program has supported 199 individuals. The program has successfully resettled 62 families into affordable long-term housing in Durham and surrounding areas. One family was assisted with moving to Alberta, British Columbia.
- 2.3 It is understood that CUAET arrivals are being placed by the Government of Canada at a different local hotel for a 14-day stay. Once their stay has been exhausted, these individuals may be at risk of being precariously housed or homeless, and could result in pressures on already strained local shelters and other programs.
- 2.4 Since spring 2022, Regional staff, in collaboration with GTHA regions convened by Toronto, agreed to a collective and coordinated response to provide supports to Ukrainian newcomers.
- GTHA partners include Durham, York, Peel and Halton Regions, Toronto and the City of Hamilton. Most regional/municipal partners are operating similar hotel programs, which without extended funding and support of provincial and/of federal governments, will have to close by summer 2023.
- 2.5 A proposal was submitted by Toronto on behalf of GTHA partners to the Government of Canada (and shared with the province), noting the role of municipal governments as critical, yet often overlooked by provincial and federal governments. All GTHA partners have continually advocated to upper levels of government for support of this response. Multiple meetings have taken place and at the request of the federal and provincial governments, the partnership has provided a significant amount of data on regional/municipal programs supporting Ukrainian arrivals.

- 2.6 The federal government has acknowledged the proposal but has not indicated if the existing programs will be funded. Without committed federal and/or provincial funding, this will result in additional unfunded pressure on Regional budgets. Staff will continue joint advocacy efforts with GTHA partners to pursue full recovery from federal and/or provincial levels of government for the costs associated with the Region's Ukrainian humanitarian response.
- 2.7 Regional staff continue to support community groups, including the Durham Ukrainian Relief Project and the Durham Chapter of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, in navigating local services and coordinating supports for newcomers to Durham.
- a. This in-kind support has included attendance at community meetings, ongoing coordination between meetings and support for their advocacy efforts.
  - b. The DEI Division has purchased PRESTO transit cards through Durham Region Transit for this group to distribute to Ukrainian newcomers in need.
  - c. Regional staff coordinated with Feed the Need in Durham and the Relief Project for the introduction of a food bank specifically for newcomers in Durham.
- 2.8 The Region cross-departmental team continues to liaise regularly with other departments and community partners to draw in additional supports and programs as appropriate.
- 2.9 Regional Chair, John Henry has sent letters to provincial and federal governments about the response for supporting newcomers and other concerns, including housing needs.

### **3. Previous Reports and Decisions**

- 3.1 On June 28, 2022, Council approved recommendations provided in [Report #2022-A-22](#) to support individuals and families arriving via CUAET without independent financial means and are at risk of being precariously housed or homeless.
- 3.2 On May 27, 2022, [Report #2022-INFO-43](#) was provided on the arrival of Ukrainian immigrants and the local response in Durham, and on the ongoing collaboration of Region of Durham staff, with the GTHA regions convened by the City of Toronto (Toronto).
- 3.3 On March 9, 2022, [a presentation to Regional Committee of the Whole](#) was provided by Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Division staff on Canada's commitments to welcome Afghan refugees and Ukrainians fleeing war.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The estimated cost of continued supports for Ukrainian arrivals in Durham under this plan is \$750,000. It is recommended that the associated financing be provided at the discretion of the Commissioner of Finance.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1 Refugees and immigrants continue to arrive in Durham Region with immediate accommodation, housing and other settlement needs.
- 5.2 Ongoing influxes of Ukrainian immigrants arriving through special emergency federal immigration measures and Afghan refugees, in addition to other “regular” arrivals (immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers), outpace the current capacity of existing systems and services to best meet the needs of refugees and immigrants who have experienced incredible trauma.
- 5.3 In March 2022, the Government of Canada opened the CUAET as an immigration pathway to Ukrainians fleeing war, with no cap. Arrivals via the CUAET are classified as “visitors” for up to three years.
- a. As of March 10, 2023, 903,439 CUAET applications have been received. Of these, 592,405 have been approved.
  - b. The majority of arrivals are destined for the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA). Approximately 500-700 Ukrainian immigrants are arriving daily via commercial flights into Toronto Pearson International Airport.
- 5.4 Arrivals through Toronto Pearson International Airport are expected to continue to increase as the CUAET pathway has been extended to March 2024. Many individuals and families continue to present daily at airports with limited to no resources, housing arrangements, and connections in Canada, and are at risk of becoming precariously housed or homeless. “Visitor” status under the CUAET means that Ukrainians are not eligible to receive 12 months of income and housing support, which is generally provided to refugees by the federal government to assist with resettlement.
- 5.5 The Government of Canada has made some services and supports available for Ukrainians arriving through the CUAET including:
- a. Federally funded settlement services.
  - b. Access to employers and jobs via the Jobs for Ukraine – Job Bank.
  - c. One-time financial support under a new Canada-Ukraine Transitional Assistance Initiative of \$3,000 per adult (18 years or older) and \$1,500 per child (17 years or younger). An online application to access this funding was launched on June 2, 2022. All applicants will receive the full amount and are required to attest to their eligibility.
  - d. Hotel rooms for up to 14 days upon arrival. Limited settlement and other services are provided at these federal sites. Following the 14-day stay,

residents at these federal sites are referred to GTHA municipal/Regional hotel programs.

5.6 The Province of Ontario has committed to providing Ukrainians arriving through CUAET with access to:

- a. Provincially funded settlement services.
- b. The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) and drug benefits.
- c. Emergency Assistance via Ontario Works, allowing Ukrainian arrivals to access up to 48 days of emergency financial assistance for housing and other basic needs, ranging from \$733 per month for a single person to \$2,150 per month for a six-member household. Upon introduction, this assistance was classified as renewable based on individual household need for up to six months. The Government of Ontario has not indicated how long this will continue; however, it is known that assistance has been renewed for Ukrainian immigrants in receipt for over six months.
- d. No-cost education for elementary and secondary students.
- e. Trauma-informed counselling and culturally responsive supports.

5.7 Under provincial legislation, Ukrainian arrivals are not eligible for longer-term housing supports. Ukrainian arrivals are ineligible for social housing options and provincially funded rent supplement programs or portable housing benefits. Provincial legislation states that only Canadian citizens, permanent residents or individuals with an existing claim for refugee protection are eligible for longer-term housing supports.

5.8 Access to affordable housing is a significant barrier for many newcomers arriving in Durham, including Ukrainian arrivals. Newcomers arriving to Durham, many from the trauma of war and conflict, are at risk to becoming precariously housed or homeless. Should the Region not respond appropriately to this increasing need, existing local services and supports (i.e., the shelter system), which are already strained, could be impacted.

## **6. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Goal 2: Community Vitality – To foster an exceptional quality of life with services that contribute to strong neighbourhoods, vibrant and diverse communities, and influence our safety and well-being.
- b. Goal 4: Social Investment – To ensure a range of programs, services and supports are available and accessible to those in need, so that no individual is left behind.
- c. Goal 5: Service Excellence – To provide exceptional value to Durham taxpayers through responsive, effective, and fiscally sustainable service delivery.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Durham is a destination of choice for many immigrants. Newcomers will continue to arrive in Durham. It is expected that the number of Ukrainian immigrants arriving in Durham without Canadian connections and sufficient funds will continue to increase, contributing to local emergent need. The Region has a responsibility to ensure appropriate supports are available for immigrants as they settle in Durham communities.
- 7.2 Staff continue to participate on the GTHA partners' table and advocate as a collective whole for funding, direction, policy changes, and overall coordination from the federal and provincial government. Further information will be provided to Regional Council as it becomes available.
- 7.3 This report has been reviewed by the Finance Department and the Commissioner of Finance concurs with the financial recommendation.

For additional information, contact: Allison Hector-Alexander, Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, at 905-668-7711, extension 3893 and [Allison.Hector-Alexander@durham.ca](mailto:Allison.Hector-Alexander@durham.ca).

Prepared by: Sarah Hickman, Manager, Corporate Initiatives, at 905-431-4873 and [Sarah.Hickman@durham.ca](mailto:Sarah.Hickman@durham.ca).

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed By:

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer