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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Finance and Administration Committee  
From: Commissioner of Finance  
Report: #2023-F-27  
Date: November 14, 2023

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**Subject:**

Extension of the Agreement with Community Development Council Durham for Settlement Services for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees

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**Recommendation:**

That the Finance and Administration Committee recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That Regional staff be delegated authority, for purposes of the Region's Humanitarian response to asylum-seekers and refugees, to extend the Region's agreement with Community Development Council Durham, execute any transfer payment agreements, expend funds up to a maximum of \$6.0 million in accordance with the program guidelines, make any modifications to the program(s) to ensure desired outcomes are achieved, receive any federal and/or provincial funds for this response, and waive the Region's Purchasing By-law and Budget Management Policy as required for this response; and
  - B) That any costs associated with the extension of this agreement not reimbursed under the federal Interim Housing Assistance Program or the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program be funded at the discretion of the Commissioner of Finance.
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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to extend the current agreement with Community Development Council Durham (CDCD), for purposes of the Region's Humanitarian response to asylum-seekers and refugees, for an additional four and a half months from November 15, 2023 to March 31, 2024. Any costs not reimbursed under the federal Interim Housing Assistance Program or the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program are recommended to be funded at the discretion of the Commissioner of Finance.

## **2. Previous Reports and Decisions**

- 2.1 [Council Information Report # 2023-INFO-81](#), dated September 28, 2023 provides a comprehensive update on the Region of Durham's humanitarian response for asylum-seekers and refugees.

## **3. Humanitarian Response for Asylum-Seekers and Refugees**

- 3.1 Since June, the Region has coordinated support for asylum seekers in conjunction with community partners through existing programs. Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) has been an important partner in providing this support.
- 3.2 CDCD has a proven history of successfully delivering a Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) in Durham from 2019 to 2023 and continues to lead the efforts of settlement and integration within our communities. Since August 2022, the Region has been in a partnership agreement with CDCD to deliver resettlement programming to Ukrainians. Responding to the influx of asylum-seekers, the program further expanded to accommodate all refugees. To date, CDCD has successfully assisted 228 households (403 individuals), relocating 116 families to affordable long-term housing.
- 3.3 The unexpected influx of new refugee claimants and asylum-seekers in Durham has created a strain on services throughout the Region, leaving refugees entering Durham to face hardship and difficulties in obtaining housing, employment and other important resettlement supports. As of November 1, 2023, three hotel sites are sheltering 294 individuals. In addition to those in temporary sheltering, approximately 100 are supported through the Christian Faith Outreach Centre in Ajax.
- 3.4 CDCD is seeking an extension of their existing partnership agreement with the Region including additional funding of up to \$6.0 million to further support the influx of refugees entering Durham from November 15, 2023 to March 31, 2024. This funding will be used to provide temporary sheltering for up to 250 asylum-seekers and refugees along with staffing required to provide wraparound supports, resettlement and housing outreach assistance. If the agreement with CDCD is not extended, providing urgent assistance to a rapidly growing number of asylum claimants and other vulnerable populations will be at risk. Without extending the agreement with CDCD, providing urgent assistance to a rapidly growing number of asylum claimants and other vulnerable populations will be at risk. It is expected that up to 250 asylum-seekers and refugees residing in Durham will be without shelter, supports for interim housing assistance and referrals, basic needs and access to food, settlement services, and other wrap around supports.

## **4. Financial Considerations**

- 4.1 The estimated cost to the Region of extending this agreement with CDCD from November 15, 2023 to March 31, 2024 is \$6.0 million.

- 4.2 Regional staff have applied for \$6.7 million in federal funding under the Interim Housing Assistance Program for reimbursement of costs incurred to date and those projected to be incurred by December 31, 2023. It is anticipated that the Region will hear confirmation from the federal government on any funding for the Region in the coming months. In addition, staff will look to utilize any available funding under the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program to offset these costs.
- 4.3 It is recommended that any costs associated with the extension of this agreement not reimbursed under the federal Interim Housing Assistance Program or the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program be funded at the discretion of the Commissioner of Finance.

## **5. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

- 5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
- 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.
  - 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.
  - Goal 5 Service Excellence – to provide exceptional value to Durham taxpayers through responsive, effective and financially sustainable service delivery.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 With the recent and ongoing influx of asylum-seekers and refugees, the Region is looking to extend its existing partnership agreement with CDCD for settlement services from November 15, 2023 to March 31, 2024 at an estimated cost of \$6.0 million. The Region has applied for funding under the federal government's Interim Housing Assistance Program to cover these costs. Any costs associated with the extension of the agreement not reimbursed under the federal Interim Housing Assistance Program or the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program would be funded at the discretion of the Commissioner of Finance.

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed By

Nancy Taylor, BBA, CPA, CA  
Commissioner of Finance

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original Signed By \_\_\_\_\_

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer