



Hamilton

CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 15, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Asylum Seekers (HSC19044) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Yolisa De Jager (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3863
SUBMITTED BY:	Edward John Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (a) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or his designate be authorized to enter into and execute an Agreement with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to receive payments covering actual and forecasted costs of secondary migration of asylum seekers within Hamilton's homeless-serving system; and,
- (b) That the General Manager of Healthy and Safe Communities Department or his designate be authorized:
- (i) To enter into and execute an Agreement with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada or the City of Toronto to receive funds to accommodate a predetermined number of asylum-seeking households from Toronto to Hamilton; and,
 - (ii) To implement spending caps, benefit frequency limits, or other controls necessary to ensure costs are contained within the approved budgeted amount.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) has experienced an influx of asylum-seeking households that originally entered Canada through the Province of Quebec from the United States. In the summer of 2018, the City of Toronto requested critical assistance from the City of Hamilton and other neighbouring municipalities to receive and resettle asylum-seeking households that needed to vacate university dormitories. Local social service agency, Wesley Urban Ministries, partnered directly with the City of Toronto to resettle 50 households.

In the spring of 2019, the City of Toronto and the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada again requested the City of Hamilton and neighbouring municipalities' support in alleviating capacity pressures related to asylum-seeking households utilizing emergency shelter services.

Upon reviewing local impact of asylum-seeking households arriving directly to Hamilton from Quebec, along with an examination of current emergency shelter capacity pressures, the City of Hamilton recommended receiving and settling 15 asylum-seeking households from Toronto, pending appropriate funding. In addition, staff is in the process of reviewing the potential of assisting additional families through securing 15 units for a predetermined period of time. The City of Hamilton also calculated and submitted to the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada the actual and forecasted extraordinary costs in 2018 and 2019 related to system capacity pressures due in part by the volume of asylum-seeking households arriving directly to Hamilton.

In order to recuperate previous costs and receive appropriate funding to accept and settle a predetermined number of asylum-seeking households from Toronto, it is recommended that the City of Hamilton enter into an agreement with the Federal Government, or with the City of Toronto functioning as a transfer payment agency.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The City of Hamilton will receive a one-time payment \$476,102 from the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, with \$255,550 of the total amount to be spent by March 31, 2020. Funds received will account for actual extraordinary costs incurred by Hamilton's emergency shelter services providing shelter and services to asylum seeking households in 2018; forecasted extraordinary costs of emergency shelters in 2019; and, additional funding to accommodate and house 15 asylum-seeking households prearranged with the City of Toronto.

Funding for the predetermined 15 households may be issued to Hamilton from the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada either directly or through the City of Toronto functioning as a payment transfer agency.

	Amount
2018 Actual Costs of Emergency Shelter/Hotel Overflow	\$ 83,800
2019 Forecasted Costs to Emergency Shelter/Hotel Overflow	\$136,752
2019-2020 Costs to accommodate 15 asylum-seeking households from Toronto	\$255,550
Total	\$476,102

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with Report HSC19044

Legal: To ensure that the City complies with the terms of the Transfer Payment Agreement, Legal Services will be involved in the review and drafting of any ancillary agreements, as may be required to deliver.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since late spring 2018, there has been an influx of asylum seekers/refugee claimants arriving from the United States into Canada. Majority of those entering into Canada first sought refuge in Quebec and secondarily migrated into Ontario. The majority of asylum-seekers/refugee claimants that have entered Ontario have sought resettlement in Toronto.

The increase in the volume of asylum-seekers/refugee claimants entering Toronto resulted in the municipality reaching capacity in the summer of 2018. The City of Toronto reached out to several municipalities across Ontario seeking assistance with resettlement. In addition, there was a time constraint to provide further temporary accommodation as college dormitories that were being used to as temporary accommodation, required to be vacated before August 9, 2018 to prepare for student arrivals. The Federal Government provided funding to Toronto to offset pressures related to the influx of asylum seekers/refugee claimants.

In keeping with Hamilton’s long history of welcoming newcomers and being a place of refuge for those seeking asylum, the City of Hamilton committed to assist Toronto with the increase of asylum seekers/refugee claimants and facilitated a connection with Wesley Urban Ministries. The City of Toronto worked directly with Wesley Urban Ministries, to fund temporary accommodations, case management and housing supports for 50 families with asylum/refugee status arriving in Hamilton in August 2018.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Housing Services Division consulted with Wesley Urban Ministries and Good Shepherd Centres as the two primary city-funded agencies impacted by the migration of asylum seekers to Hamilton. Both agencies were consulted on their agency capacity to shelter, case manage and house additional asylum-seeking families from Toronto. As a result of their input, the City of Hamilton recommends a total of 15 asylum-seeking households to be accepted from Toronto in August 2019 pending Council's approval to enter into an agreement with the Federal government and/or City of Toronto to receive compensation for these services. The City of Hamilton would revisit system capacity in September/October 2019 to identify if additional families could be accommodated, or alternatively if units could be reserved for a defined period of time to allow accommodation of additional families, pending funding for these services.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

In June 2019, the City of Toronto and the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada contacted the City of Hamilton and other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) seeking collaboration in developing a regional strategy related to anticipated pressures in Toronto's emergency shelter services due to inflow of asylum-seeking families from Quebec. This included a request for Hamilton, along with neighbouring municipalities, to accept asylum-seeking families from Toronto.

Thus far in 2019, Hamilton's emergency shelters and overflow beds on average have operated at over 100% capacity, with Notre Dame Youth Shelter as an exception. City-funded hotel usage as overflow accommodations for homeless families remains constant. City-funded shelters report continuous inflow of asylum-seeking families arriving in Hamilton directly from Quebec and Toronto since 2018.

Recognizing system pressures across the GTHA, including Hamilton-specific pressures, the City of Hamilton has calculated actual costs of asylum-seeking families incurred above and beyond normal shelter operations in 2018 and forecasted costs for 2019. Entering into an agreement with the Federal Government and/or the City of Toronto functioning as a transfer payment agency, the City of Hamilton would be positioned to:

- a) Recuperate extraordinary costs incurred in our shelter system in 2018.
- b) Receive funds for anticipated extraordinary costs in our shelter system in 2019 for asylum seekers who arrive directly to Hamilton outside of any formal agreements with the City of Toronto.

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- c) Negotiate the inflow of asylum-seeking families from Toronto to Hamilton and to receive the funding required to ensure households are efficiently rehoused in Hamilton and experience housing stability.
- d) Provide a mechanism to promote cost-sharing between Hamilton, Toronto and/or the Federal Government in addressing system and regional pressures associated to the inflow of asylum-seeking households from Quebec.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None