



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 18, 2022
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis Response (HSC22029) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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COUNCIL DIRECTION

On March 30, 2022, Council endorsed the Mayor's Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis and Response Advisory Committee motion and that:

- (e) Staff report back to the General Issues Committee with a progress update, the number of displaced Ukrainians that could be supported and any resource requirements.

INFORMATION

As of early May 2022, more than 5 M Ukrainians have fled their country due to the ongoing conflict. In doing so, they put themselves in life-threatening situations, while overwhelming the refugee-reception capacity of receiving countries. With no immediate prospect of returning home in sight, and limited opportunity to rebuild their lives under current conditions, 22,253 Ukrainians have arrived in Canada since January 1, 2022 (Source IRCC April 24, 2022). It is estimated that over 100 Ukrainians have arrived in the City of Hamilton and are living with family, friends and host families.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Local response structure

In response to Council's direction, the City developed a response structure called the Hamilton Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis Response Team (HUHCR). The team is comprised of City staff and key leaders from community organizations who specialize in resettlement and settlement of refugees, as well as the Hamilton chapter of the Canadian Ukrainian Congress. The mission of this team is to coordinate local efforts to proactively plan and coordinate support for Ukrainians who have already arrived in Hamilton and to anticipate a surge of arrivals and/or a secondary migration to Hamilton.

Response initiatives are coordinated through the HUHCR Operations Section and the development of working groups that focus on specific needs of Ukrainians settling in Hamilton. These working groups are:

1) Health Services Working Group

The Health Service working group consists of a steering table with co-leads from Public Health and the Greater Hamilton Health Network. Members are from primary health, hospitals, Wesley Urban Ministries, pharmacies, mental health and home and community care. The steering table is overseeing three working groups: 1) Primary Care/Public Health, 2) Specialist Care and 3) Mental Health. A list of specialized clinics is being developed to assist with care not covered under primary care. The mental health response is being addressed through specialists trained in post-traumatic stress and those who have provided care to refugees from war-torn countries.

2) Housing Working Group

The Housing working group is led by the City of Hamilton and includes the YMCA and other housing agencies and community partners with accommodation capacity and/or expertise. Their immediate focus is on:

- Immediate and available spaces in hotels, university/college campuses; and,
- A process for intake and matching billeting in host homes within the community.

Hotel space in Hamilton is at a minimum, thus compromising the ability to provide immediate housing. There is however, incredible collaboration and support from Mohawk College, Redeemer University and McMaster University. Depending on funding, temporary accommodations could begin mid-May to mid-August as a possible temporary housing option for Ukrainians arriving mid-May.

The YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington, and Brantford have expanded their services to include a process for intake and matching billeting in homes of community members

who have offered to host individuals or families. With guidance from COSTI Immigrant Services an established resettlement agency in Toronto, YMCA is facilitating the matching of newcomer Ukrainians with vetted hosts for accommodations. This provides a consistent approach to billeting across municipalities. It should be noted that the Ukrainian Canada Congress has also facilitated matching of billeting into host homes, helping to settle Ukrainians who have arrived without support in Hamilton.

3) Education and Childcare Working Group

The Education and Childcare working group is led by Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board and includes St. Charles Adult & Continuing Education Centre and the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board. Collectively the group has already accepted approximately 25 to 30 Ukrainians who have registered for education and are expanding their child care for before and after school space to accommodate requests. They have developed a registration information package to assist newcomers arriving in Hamilton with registration. Adult education at St. Charles is also anticipating requests for education and are preparing to offer adult education as needed.

4) Social Assistance Working Group

The Social Assistance working group is led by the Ontario Works Division (OW) and has already received requests for financial support. OW has processed requests for emergency income and drug cards to support Ukrainians that have arrived in Hamilton.

5) The Settlement, Resettlement, Employment, Language and Skills Development Working Group

This working group is led by the Wesley Urban Ministries and includes the Immigrants Working Centre, the YWCA, Workforce Planning Hamilton and other settlement agencies. They have an established program for refugees and have met to assist Ukrainians with issues related to settlement, resettlement, employment, language and skills development and employment opportunities. They have made links with community agencies for employment opportunities and language classes. They have also made links with the YMCA to assist with housing issues.

6) Community Supports Working Group

The Community Supports working group is led by the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council and includes McMaster University Strategic Initiatives and Special Projects. They are focused on supporting and advocating newcomers to Hamilton. This working group has developed a Welcome and Information Guide consolidating resources in Hamilton to support Ukrainians in the community. They have connected those seeking

support to resettlement and settlement agencies and other community agencies in an effort to settle newcomers in Hamilton.

Regional Response

Coordination is key to an effective response; with support of CAOs, Toronto has taken the lead to convene GTHA municipalities and the group has worked together to develop the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area Regional Response Team. The purpose of this team is to coordinate response within Toronto and the surrounding municipalities of Durham, York Region, Peel Region, Halton Region and the City of Hamilton. This team has been meeting at least once/week to develop a regional plan, consistency in approach between municipalities and communication with federal and provincial partners with respect to funding and resource needs. Capacity and funding are common challenges across all GTHA partners, with housing and accommodation stated as a critical need in every municipality.

Proactive coordination between local Ukrainian community, the City, immigration/resettlement agencies, public health and health care agencies, housing and income supports, child care and education and funding/support from provincial and federal levels of government are needed to safely support and warmly welcome the arrival of Ukrainian newcomers.

On May 2, 2022, the City of Hamilton in partnership with the Ukrainian Canada Congress - Hamilton Chapter (UCC) launched a Ukrainian Welcome and Information Centre with an aim to support the resettlement of Ukrainian and host families who have arrived in Hamilton.

As a drop-in event, Ukrainian newcomers and host families were invited to access a one-stop location for information and services including primary care and health, income supports, housing, education, child care, immigration and partnerships within Hamilton. The event was a success with over 70 participants that included host families and recent arrivals. Applications were made for Social Insurance Numbers, financial supports, health care, dental care, education, child care and language classes.

Hamilton is one of the designated urban cities for refugee resettlement in Ontario. In Hamilton, the Wesley Urban Ministries is the only federal agency responsible for the resettlement of Government Assisted Refugees. Many Ukrainians have arrived in Canada as Privately Sponsored Refugees and although the government has changed the provision of service for Wesley, various settlement agencies, religious organizations, community groups and private citizens are engaged in providing service to Ukrainians.

Municipalities have a significant role in newcomer integration. They are providers of services that are often critical. For successful settlement, childcare, affordable housing,

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transit and many other essential services are needed. The following outlines city supports that are required to resettle Ukrainians, as well as activities that will facilitate coordination of supports available in the community:

- public health services: urgent dental care and immunization
- medical and specialized services
- mental health services
- provision of temporary housing solutions
- provision of permanent housing solutions
- child care
- Ontario Works supports

The short- and long-term needs of Ukrainian newcomers are multi-faceted. They include health, housing, school, language, training, employment, community orientation, community support, access to useful information and civic engagement. How well these needs are met goes a long way to ensuring the physical, mental, emotional, financial, familial, material and social wellbeing of the newcomers. It will take the entire community to ensure Ukrainian newcomers are successful in building a new life for themselves and their families in Hamilton.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None