




CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTEMENT
Ontario Works Division

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
COMMITTEE DATE:	January 18, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis Response Update and Recommendation (HSC22029(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Bonnie Elder (905) 546-2424 Ext 4058 Connie Verhaeghe (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6038
SUBMITTED BY:	Angela Burden General Manager Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That staff be directed to continue responding to the Ukraine Crisis, including but not limited to short-term and temporary accommodations and wrap around supports, with an extended timeframe to June 30, 2023 and with an upset spending limit of \$500,000 to be funded from the Corporate Financials – Expenditures/Non-Program Dept ID; and,
- (b) That staff be directed to continue to work with the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) Committee on a regional approach to pursuing full recovery from senior levels of government for the costs associated with the City's response to the Ukraine Crisis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 22, 2022, Council authorized staff to respond to the Ukraine Crisis by supporting short-term and temporary accommodations and wrap around supports with an estimated cost up to \$670,000 per month for two months (\$1,340,000) through Report HSC22029. On August 12, 2022, Council extended the timeframe beyond August 2022 to approximately January 31, 2023 with an upset limit of \$1,340,000.

Numbers and costs have not been as great as originally anticipated, and Ukrainians have accessed traditional newcomer supports funded by provincial and federal levels of government and informal supports available within networks of friends, family and the community. Between June 22 and as of December 13, 2022, with the support of the

SUBJECT: Hamilton Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis Response Update and Recommendation (HSC22029(b)) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 5

YMCA, the City of Hamilton has covered gaps in service provision and supported 66 Ukrainians to settle in our community at a total cost of approximately \$77,000 to the municipality.

In June 2022, to coordinate the potential need for accommodations for Ukrainians, Hamilton joined a Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) response and actively participated with GTHA Ukrainian Response Committee to develop a regional plan for the provision of temporary accommodations for Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) visa holders. This temporary accommodation plan was activated across the GTHA and was intended to support an increase of Ukrainian arrivals into the GTHA. Participating municipalities including Toronto, Peel, Durham, Halton Region, York Region, and Hamilton, who collectively developed plans to accommodate Ukrainians.

Local settlement agencies in Hamilton including the YMCA, Wesley, YWCA, and the Immigrant Working Centre (IWC) are currently funded by the Federal Government to support Ukrainians with settlement services, including supports for education, translation and employment supports. Even with all this assistance, access to affordable housing has been identified as one of the most significant barriers by Ukrainians arriving in Ontario.

If CUAET visa holders arrive in Canada without secured housing, they are directed to national housing supports, currently administered by the Canadian Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society (CUIAS), for up to seven nights of hotel accommodations through the Canadian Red Cross in addition to a Federal Government commitment of an additional two weeks hotel accommodation.

Despite this support, there is sometimes a shortfall of housing for Ukrainians once this federal support is exhausted. Ukrainian arrivals are not eligible to receive longer-term housing supports under the provincial *Housing Services Act, 2011*. Housing support to Ukrainian arrivals is therefore limited to informal, private hosting/billeting or the municipal system authorized through Report HSC22029(a).

Though there has been a steady number of Ukrainians arriving in Canada, based on the information we have received through the GTHA committee, most individuals are staying in accommodations in the areas of Peel and Toronto. Individuals are often only coming to Hamilton if accommodations in the GTA are full or if they have pre-existing connections to our community. This has resulted in fewer individuals arriving in Hamilton in need of accommodations provided through the municipal system.

Advocacy to senior levels of government for funding and policy changes to support Ukrainian arrivals with accommodations has occurred through the GTHA committee, to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The committee

SUBJECT: Hamilton Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis Response Update and Recommendation (HSC22029(b)) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 5

requested dedicated funding and reimbursement of funding used to support Ukrainians with accommodations. In August, 2022, via Council motion, Mayor Eisenburger sent a letter to the minister requesting financial support and reimbursement for Hamilton's response.

To date, the GTHA municipalities have been unable to secure a funding commitment from other levels of government. GTHA municipalities are locally deliberating how to move forward with their response to support Ukrainian arrivals. A lack of housing for this population will likely place additional pressure on emergency shelter programs within GTHA municipalities.

Alternatives for Consideration – N/A

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: An unfunded pressure of with an upset limit of \$500,000, to be charged to the Corporate Financials – Expenditures/Non-Program Dept Id.

Staff will continue to work with GTHA committee and advocate to the Federal and Provincial Governments to secure reimbursement for any expenses incurred in the preparation and delivery of the humanitarian response.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since February 24, 2022 displaced Ukrainians have been arriving in Canada fleeing their war-torn country of Ukraine. As of November 1, 2022, the Federal Government has received 662,563 applications for the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET). Canada has approved 360,922 of these applications and has welcomed approximately 76,500 CUAET visa holders to Canada.

The federal government has classified Ukrainian arrivals as "visitors" not "refugees." This limits the assistance that can be provided to this population. Unlike refugees, Ukrainian arrivals are not eligible to receive 12 months of income support (including housing assistance) that is provided to refugees by the federal government to assist with resettlement.

On May 23, 2022 the federal government announced that Ukrainian arrivals with a valid work permit, study permit, temporary resident permit, or visitor record in Canada under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) immigration stream

SUBJECT: Hamilton Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis Response Update and Recommendation (HSC22029(b)) (City Wide) - Page 4 of 5

will receive 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). In June 2022 the provincial government changed the requirements related to Ontario Works – Emergency Income Assistance, allowing Ukrainian arrivals to access up to 48 days of emergency income assistance for housing and other basic needs. This can be renewed based on individual household emergency need.

To support this humanitarian crisis, in April 2022 the City of Hamilton 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 newcomers, as well as the Hamilton chapter of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC). The mission of this team has been to coordinate local efforts by proactively planning and coordinating support for Ukrainians who have already arrived in Hamilton and to plan for a potential surge of arrivals and/or a secondary migration to Hamilton. The response team initiatives focused on coordinating housing, health services, childcare and education, emergency income assistance and settlement services such as employment and language skill development.

In addition, to coordinate potential need for accommodations for Ukrainians, Hamilton joined the GTHA Committee to develop a regional plan for the provision of temporary accommodations for CUAET visa holders. This temporary accommodation plan was activated across the GTHA and was intended to support an increase of Ukrainian arrivals into the GTHA.

The municipal system authorized through Report HSC22029(a) allowed for the use of colleges/university dorms for the summer months and the use of hotels on an as needed and as available basis from September 2022 until January 31, 2023.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

N/A

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

All levels of government are working hard to make sure that people affected by the conflict in Ukraine have access to the services and support they need to settle in their destination.

SUBJECT: Hamilton Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis Response Update and Recommendation (HSC22029(b)) (City Wide) - Page 5 of 5

To date, many Ukrainians have arrived with connections to families, friends, and host families, hence, the exact number of Ukrainians that have arrived in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area is hard to determine.

There continues to be approximately 500 Ukrainians arriving daily at Pearson airport. According to the Canadian Red Cross there appears to be an increase in the number of individuals arriving with barriers and without connections to community.

Without approval of the recommendations staff will end intake into supported accommodations effective January 31, 2023, as originally approved through Report HSC22029(a). Ukrainians without secured housing, looking to come to Hamilton, would then be required to enter the Hamilton emergency shelter system

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent, and accessible approach to City Government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community

Healthy and Safe Communities

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

Culture and Diversity

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None