




CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	January 17, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) (HSC24003) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Rob Mastroianni (905) 546-2424 Ext. 8035
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or their designate, be authorized to:
- (i) Enter into and execute an agreement with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to receive \$3.5 M in funding through the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) to partially reimburse for costs incurred providing temporary housing within Hamilton's homelessness serving system to asylum claimants in 2023; and
 - (ii) Enter into and execute any future agreements with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to receive any additional Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) funding to address ongoing pressures; and
- (b) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or their designate, be authorized to enter into any agreements with Community Services Provider(s), and any ancillary agreements, contracts, extensions and documents, associated with the funding, including the authority to authorize the submission of budgets and quarterly and/or year-end reporting, as well as, the

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

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authority to make appropriate payments to community service providers, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Hamilton has experienced an influx of asylum-seeking households that have arrived in Canada through various ports of entry and are seeking support from Hamilton's homelessness serving system. Over the last several months, there has been a continued increase in the number of individuals seeking support, with current data showing an average of 35% of Hamilton's emergency shelter and hotel overflow spaces are utilized by asylum-seeking households. Municipalities across the country are experiencing similar trends to that seen in Hamilton.

Hamilton has undertaken several advocacy efforts with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to seek support in addressing the pressures within Hamilton's homelessness serving system. As a result, IRCC has committed to provide \$3.5 M in funding to reimburse for costs from January to September 2023, with commitment of further discussions to address ongoing needs. Estimated costs for all of 2023 exceed \$10 million.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The City of Hamilton will receive a one-time payment of \$3.5 M from the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to address pressures realized from January to September 2023, with commitment from IRCC of ongoing discussion to explore further potential compensation for October 2023 onward. Funds received will account for actual extraordinary costs incurred by Hamilton's homelessness serving system.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with Report HSC24003

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.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since early 2023, there has been an influx of asylum-seeking households arriving into Canada from various ports of entry. Municipalities across Canada have experienced pressures in supporting these households within their homelessness serving system.

Similarly, Hamilton has been experiencing month over month increases in the number of asylum-seeking households presenting at local support services. Currently, 35% of emergency shelter and hotel overflow spaces are utilized by asylum-seeking households.

In keeping with Hamilton's long history of welcoming newcomers and being a place of refuge for those seeking asylum, while also recognizing the pressures already existing within the local homelessness serving system, the City of Hamilton engaged with Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to explore financial and related supports which can be provided to assist in addressing current pressures.

As a result of this collaboration, IRCC has committed to provide funding in the amount of \$3.5 M to address costs associated with supporting asylum-seeking families between January and September 2023. Additionally, IRCC has committed to continued discussion in exploring potential future compensation for pressures from October 2023 onward.

The Housing Services Division will continue to collaborate with IRCC partners on options to support asylum-seeking households on an ongoing basis.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The Housing Services Division engages in ongoing consultation with partners within the homelessness serving system overall in regard to pressures within the system. Discussions have been ongoing specific to pressures in serving this increased number of asylum-seeking families and options to provide effective support. Housing Services Division will continue to consult with partners across the system on an ongoing basis.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Throughout 2023, there has been a continued increase in the number of asylum-seeking households presenting for supports within Hamilton's homelessness serving system agencies. In Fall 2023, discussions with the Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada led to an analysis of emergency shelter and hotel overflow usage which shows an increasing trend in utilization by asylum-seeking families, with current usage at 35% of Hamilton's overall capacity.

Entering into an agreement with the Federal government, the City of Hamilton will be positioned to recuperate extraordinary costs incurred within the homelessness serving system between January and September 2023 and continue seeking recuperation of expenses from October 2023 onward.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None