



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### City of Toronto Resettlement Program - Update

<b>Date:</b>	December 7, 2015
<b>To:</b>	City Council
<b>From:</b>	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	CD8.9

### SUMMARY

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In October 2015, Toronto City Council approved the City of Toronto Refugee Resettlement Program. The Toronto Newcomer Office (TNO) is coordinating City divisions and partners to implement the Program.

As directed by Council, the Program will mobilize the existing supports within and outside of the City structures, and facilitate enhancements where needed.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA) recommend that:

1. City Council delegate authority to the Executive Director, Social Development Finance and Administration to allocate and enter into agreements with community based agency partners to implement the City of Toronto Refugee Resettlement Program.
2. City Council delegate authority to the Executive Director, Social Development Finance and Administration to direct resources to City programs requiring additional support to implement the City of Toronto Refugee Resettlement Program.

3. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development Finance and Administration to report on the progress of the City of Toronto Refugee Resettlement Program in the first quarter of 2016.

## **Equity Impact**

Newcomers to Toronto, including refugees, face a number of barriers that challenge their ability to successfully integrate into the social, economic and civic life of the city. Toronto City Council approved the Toronto Newcomer Strategy in 2013 in recognition of the important roles the City of Toronto plays in advancing the successful settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in Toronto. The Syrian refugees coming to Toronto will require targeted and coordinated support from the City, community and institutional partners and Toronto residents. Targeted efforts will ensure that programs, services, and opportunities are available to meet the needs of Syrian refugees to assist them to effectively transition and settle into life in Toronto.

## **Financial Impact**

There is no new financial impact associated with the recommendations in this report. However, City Council approved a one-time allocation of \$0.600 million from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve (XQ0703) to fund the settlement program, with an increase of \$0.025 million gross and zero net to the 2015 Approved Operating Budget and include the remainder of \$0.575 million gross and zero net in the 2016 Operating Budget Submission for Social Development and Finance Administration. The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

In February 2013, City Council approved the mission, vision and guiding principles contained in the Toronto Newcomer Strategy:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD18.7>

In October 2015, City Council approved the City of Toronto Refugee Resettlement Program, and a one-time allocation of \$0.600 million from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve (XQ0703) to fund the settlement program:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX8.39>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The Federal Government recently announced their plans related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees. It is expected that Toronto will be one of the main destination communities.

Based on the released Federal plans, 2,602 privately sponsored Syrian refugees, approximately 500 to 600 families, will arrive in Toronto by the end of 2015, in addition

to a smaller number of government sponsored. Arrivals will continue at a similar level for the months of January and February 2016, but of primarily government sponsored refugees. The total number of refugees arriving to Toronto for until the end of 2016 could potentially surpass 7,000.

## **COMMENTS**

Since the approval of the Program, the City has been working closely with community and other partners to identify gaps in settlement support systems and opportunities to address them.

Those identified as requiring immediate attention include:

1. ensuring that adequate and appropriate supports are in place for privately sponsored refugees and their sponsors
2. assistance for all refugees to secure housing
3. a public awareness campaign to send a clear message that racism, violence and intolerance are unacceptable

For supports related to ensuring that private sponsorships are successful, the City to enter into service agreements with the Arab Community Centre, Catholic Crosscultural Services and Lifeline Syria, to enhance their capacity to provide supports to private sponsors in Toronto. This includes workshops for sponsors on how to address common problems, open sessions with sponsoring groups to discuss any problems they are facing and share solutions, as well as problem solving support through email, phone and meetings with sponsoring groups. The total amount of funding should not exceed \$200,000.

For assistance related to housing supports, the City to enter into service agreements with COSTI to enhance their capacity so that private sponsors can access their housing help services; and with Woodgreen Community Services to provide housing help services to private sponsors. The total amount of funding should not exceed \$160,000.

For public awareness campaign, the City to enter into a service agreement with Ontario Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI ) to develop and implement such a campaign. The total amount of funding should not exceed \$80,000.

The remainder of the funding (minimum \$160,000) will be held in order to address additional needs identified over 2016.

## **Conclusion**

Support systems will play a significant role in ensuring the successful settlement and integration of these new Torontonians, so that they "reach their full potential to thrive in their local neighbourhood, community and city, ensuring Toronto's continued success and prosperity." (Toronto Newcomer Strategy, 2013). With their imminent arrival, it is critical that these community-based supports are ready and available as soon as possible.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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