



Office of the Commissioner
Community and Health Services Department

Memorandum

To: Members of Committee of the Whole
From: Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services
Date: October 6, 2016
Re: **Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative Update**

This memo provides an update on York Region's response to the Government of Canada's Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by March 31, 2016.

Federal and Provincial governments' responses continue

After meeting the initial goal of 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada, the federal government has announced that 59,400 refugees will be welcomed to Canada by the end of 2016. It is not yet known how many of these expected refugees will be of Syrian origin.

The federal government has publicly committed to all approved individuals and groups who, prior to March 31, 2016, submitted a private sponsorship request to assist Syrian refugees, that their sponsored person or family will arrive in Canada by the end of 2016. The federal government has pledged up to \$678 million over six years towards resettlement and integration support.

York Region will receive over 300 Syrian refugees by end of 2016

Between November 4, 2015 and August 7, 2016, 257 Syrian refugees arrived in York Region, most through the private sponsorship process. The remainder of Syrian refugees came here as Blended Visa Office Refugees, a relatively new immigration stream where the government provides six months of sponsorship and private sponsors provide the remaining six months. York Region has not and does not expect to receive any fully government sponsored refugees.

As of March 31, 2016, there were 96 private sponsor applications by York Region residents or groups, approved by the federal government, that are expected to arrive by the end of this year.

Table 1 shows the numbers of Syrian refugee arrivals in Canada as of September 18, 2016.

Table 1
Syrian Refugee Admissions and Applications to Canada
September 18, 2016

Destination	Total Refugees Admitted	Government Assisted Admissions	Privately Sponsored Admissions	Blended Visa-Office Admissions	Private Sponsor Applications in Process
Canada	30,647	16,350	11,239	3,058	19,475
Ontario	11,124	6,108	3,422	1,594	4,067
Greater Toronto Area	7,333	1,973	2,692	2,368	444
York Region	285	0	211	74	137

Refugee Admissions and Applications to Canada as of September 18, 2016. Note: Numbers do not include destination communities with values less than five. Source: Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada. Data retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp> September 22, 2016.

York Region Actions

Following the York Region Information Fair for refugee sponsors held in February 2016, a Refugee Planning Table was created to plan for the expected long-term impact of the refugee resettlement process. Representation at the planning table consists of Welcome Centres, boards of education, community agencies serving refugees, Community and Health Services, including Public Health and Social Services, Access York, York Region Transit and York Regional Police.

The Planning Table's first action was to assess refugee service needs and the impact to existing programs. The results revealed that some agencies saw an increased demand for their services while others identified an increased need for Arabic interpretation and assistance with transportation for refugees.

In April 2016, Council approved a one-time funding allocation of up to \$200,000 to support the Syrian refugee York Region resettlement efforts to address service needs and transportation. ([Integrated Community Planning for Refugees](#)) Not-for-profit agencies that serve refugees, and who were recipients of 2016 Community Investment Funding were invited to apply.

Under the authority of the Commissioner and Health Services funds were allocated as follows:

- \$133,322 to six agencies to address a range of critical needs from housing and legal support to life skills training and access to food, furniture, clothing and needed items for school
- \$66,677 to twelve agencies that identified a need for increased Transit Ticket Program funding

For details on exact funding allocations see Attachment 1.

York Region Next Steps

The York Region Refugee Planning Table will continue to work with partners, including the Welcome Centres, to address refugee needs.

In the spring of 2016, Job Skills received funding from the United Way Toronto and York Region to provide training for agencies and sponsors to better support refugees. York Region and other members of the Refugee Planning Table were asked to participate on Job Skills' advisory committee. This advisory committee is developing:

- Three workshops for sponsors to build their capacity to support their sponsored families and provide information on supports and services available for refugees in York Region. The workshops will help in understanding the Syrian culture, sharing lessons learned and the pathways to employment. Workshops will be held October 5, 2016 in Richmond Hill, October 25, 2016 in Vaughan and November 30, 2016 in Markham.
- A full-day forum for front-line community workers to learn more about supporting and working with Syrian refugees in York Region will take place on November 8, 2016 in Markham. The forum will provide information about mental health supports and cultural awareness as well as an overview of the Welcome Centre's programs and services.

Additional updates will be provided to Regional Council as more information becomes available.

Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

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Attachment (1)

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Refugee Settlement In-Year Funding Allocation Service Needs				
Agency	Current Funded Project	How Will Funding Support the Settlement of Refugees?	Estimated Number of Refugees Served	Funding Allocated
Community Legal Clinic of York Region	Eviction Prevention Project	Provide legal support and advice with the support of immigration specialists every other week in Markham, Vaughan, and Richmond Hill. Six workshops will be organized, with translations available, to address the enforcement of basic employment rights and new renters in Ontario.	165	\$9,597.28
COSTI	Life Success Strategies	Provide life skills training suitable for refugees as a step toward social and economic integration that will include a two-week workshop, two individual counseling sessions, and follow-up and referrals.	40	\$31,950.37
The Housing Help Centre	Information and Case Management	Educate refugees about how the rental process works in Ontario, help them access and retain housing, and provide referrals to other community services.	500	\$21,079.74
Human Endeavour	Multi-Community Building Project	Additional funding will allow the agency to reach out to more refugees in need to deliver: 1. Settlement services with social inclusion through a welcome and trusting community environment. 2. Provide critical needs support partnering with schools and school boards.	150-200	\$29,991.50

Refugee Settlement In-Year Funding Allocation Service Needs				
Agency	Current Funded Project	How Will Funding Support the Settlement of Refugees?	Estimated Number of Refugees Served	Funding Allocated
Jewish Russian Community Centre of Ontario	JRCC Furniture Depot	Used furniture, received from community partners and donors, will be provided free of cost. The additional funding will assist with current service delivery demands.	49 families	\$23,564.75
LifeCorps International (Humanity First)	LifeCorps Food Share	The agency will be acting as a flow-through for Humanity First. Additional funding will support early settlement needs of refugees arriving in York Region to assist them with start-up supplies, winter clothing, and basic food assistance. Additional orientation and information sessions will be available to newly arrived refugees.	100	\$17,138.00
Total				\$133,321.64

Refugee Settlement In-Year Funding Allocation for the Transit Ticket Program		
Agency	Estimated Number of Refugees Served	Funding Allocated
Canadian Mental Health Association	93-120	\$9,000
Catholic Community Services of York Region	250	\$5,725
COSTI	26	\$4,760
Elsbeth Heyworth Centre for Women	15	\$5,760
Housing Help Centre (Scarborough Housing Help Centre)	400	\$2,500
Human Endeavour	100	\$6,000
Jewish Russian Community Centre	50 families	\$1,000
Job Skills	30	\$5,544
Life Corps International (A flow-through for Humanity First)	200	\$10,000
Parya Trillium Foundation	520 individual trips	\$10,400
Routes Connecting Communities (Georgina Mobility Transit)	6	\$988
Society of St Vincent de Paul	60	\$5,000
Total		\$66,677