



Memorandum

TO: Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager 

FROM: Kira Tchang, Assistant Village Manager/HR Director 

FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees

DATE: January 12, 2024

SUBJECT: Update Regarding Asylum Seeking Migrants in Oak Park (New Arrivals)

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Board with an update regarding staff's response to the asylum-seeking migrants who are currently residing in the Village of Oak Park.

Background

The current Emergency Shelter Program at the Carleton Hotel and the West Cook YMCA is proposed to be extended through February 29, 2024 due to \$350,000 in additional funding through Cook County's Disaster Response and Recovery Fund. The Village's previous efforts beginning November 1, 2023 were funded via \$400,000 in Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) Grant funding through the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and \$650,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that were reallocated as lost revenue in the Village's general fund.

The Village's timeline of events, official communications and other relevant information is available on the Village's [Assisting Asylum Seekers](#) webpage.

Current Census

The Village's most recent census of asylum seekers includes 161 individuals, which includes 56 children under the age of 18.

As of January 11, 2024, asylum seekers are located as follows:

- 86 individuals including 40 children housed in 21 rooms
- 48 individuals including 16 children housed on the 4th floor of the YMCA
- 9 individuals, all single adult males, housed in SRO rooms on the 3rd floor of the YMCA
- 14 individuals, all single adult males, at a volunteer-led church location

Financial Projections

Below is a projection of the monthly expenses associated with the shelter program. One-time expenses totaling approximately \$62,000 which were previously shared with the Board in an update on November 13, 2023 are not included in this projection. Expenses highlighted in yellow are new or updated from staff's last projection.

Category	Cost	Note
Housing		
YMCA 4th Floor	\$6,432.00	
YMCA SROs	\$3,628.80	
Carleton Hotel	\$49,280.00	
YMCA general administration	\$1,396.08	
YMCA Cleaning Staff/Services	\$8,280.00	
Food		
Carleton Food (All Meals)	\$77,400.00	12/22 Village providing all meals
YMCA Food (Lunch & Dinner)	\$34,200.00	12/22 Village providing lunch & dinner
Beyond Hunger (Supplemental)	\$13,234.00	
Wraparound Services		
Housing Forward*	\$88,216.00	
*Staffing		
*Case Management		
*Volunteer Management		
*Behavior Health		
*Laundry		
*Transportation		
*Administration		
YMCA Intake Coordinator	\$1,200.00	
YMCA Overnight case manager	\$3,000.00	
YMCA Youth Support Programming	\$1,620.00	
YMCA Case Management	\$4,500.00	
Greater Chicago Legal Clinic	\$10,000.00	
Additional Legal Services	\$25,000.00	
Security		
Overnight at YMCA	\$3,600.00	
Overnight at Carleton & Church Location	\$23,500.00	
Language Access Services		
In person interpretation	\$10,000.00	
Utilities		
St. Catherine/St. Lucy Water Bill	\$1,200.00	
Grace Episcopal	\$240.00	
Total	\$365,926.88	

Please note that the Village has current contracts in place with the West Cook YMCA, Housing Forward in some of these expenses, the Village has contracts in place and some are projections.

Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) Grant Updates

As of January 10, 2024, the Village has submitted a total of \$388,736 in expenses to the Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Service (SMASS) grant administrators with additional invoices still pending. Inclusive of the outstanding invoices, the Village anticipates all SMASS grant funds have been exhausted through the months of November and December.

Cook County Disaster Response and Recovery Fund Updates

On December 25, 2023, the Village was notified that Cook County would award the Village \$350,000 in Disaster Response and Recovery Funds to be used to reimburse the Village for its emergency response to date. Staff received the application for funds on January 4, 2024 and are working closely with Cook County to ensure timely receipt of funds. The Village is also eligible to apply for reimbursement of expenses related to the temporary shelter program for the month of February, and will submit relevant expenses to Cook County for review.

Asylum Seeker Legal Services

As of the date of this memo, all shelter locations have held legal clinics outlining the asylum process for the asylum seekers. Asylum seekers at the YMCA have had individual legal consultations which included document review. Individual legal consultations for TPS-eligible migrants at the Carleton Hotel and Grace Episcopal Church are scheduled to begin next week with legal consultations for others at the Carleton and Grace anticipated to begin by end of January.

Next Steps

Effective February 29, 2024, the temporary shelter program at the West Cook YMCA and the Carleton Hotel will end. Two local community groups are actively leading efforts to identify alternate shelter or resettlement options for asylum seekers. To date, one family of 10 in the Village's shelter program has been relocated to longer term housing through community volunteer efforts and fundraising. The Village is actively working with another community group who wishes to establish an alternate temporary shelter location and requisite wraparound services. Such program may be eligible for state funding. Staff are coordinating with these community groups as appropriate with the goal of presenting multiple community pathways to asylum seekers in the Village's temporary shelter program. Village staff continue to coordinate with the City of Chicago should no additional solutions be available.

While an extension to the emergency declaration is not necessarily required to continue the temporary shelter program through February 29, 2024, staff recommends the Board approve the extension. This is to maintain and enhance eligibility for any subsequent Federal, State or County emergency funding that may become available for municipal response to the humanitarian crisis, in addition to suspending purchasing requirements such as formal bidding procedures and Board contract approvals when quick action is deemed necessary and when it is impractical to convene a Board meeting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kira Tchang, Assistant Village Manager/HR Director, via email: ktchang@oak-park.us or phone: 708-358-5652.

cc: Lisa Shelly, Deputy Village Manager
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