



Memorandum

TO: Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager

FROM: Lisa Shelley, Deputy Village Manager

FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees

DATE: February 20, 2024

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

Introduction

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

Current Update

Last week the Village Board held two meetings on February 13, 2024 and February 15, 2024 to review and approve various agreements associated with the \$1.944 million-dollar grant received from the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus for a non-Village operated emergency shelter in Oak Park due to two of the current emergency shelters closing on February 29, 2024. The new shelter provides additional time for new arrivals to have a place to stay during the colder months and offers additional time for new arrivals to make connections for resettlement opportunities.

Last week the Village Board also approved an agreement with the Community of Congregations for \$300,000 in grant funds to be used for rent or leases, also granted from the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus, for resettlement opportunities on a temporary basis for shelter through June 2024 for those currently in the Village's emergency shelter. The Village Board also directed staff to prepare an agreement with the Community of Congregations for an additional \$150,000 in general funds for this same purpose.

In less than one week the Village's emergency shelter sites at the Carlton Hotel and the YMCA will close. New arrivals will have the option to opt-in to the new emergency shelter run by the West Side Service Connector d/b/the Oak Park Family Transition Shelter and can stay until June 30, 2024. The Village's emergency operations center will assist with the moves to the new shelter as was done when the Village moved the non-noticed new arrivals into the Carleton and the YMCA. Staff remains in contact regularly with the Community of Congregations and their resettlement efforts. With the most recent update on resettlement from the Community of Congregations today February 20, 2024, in which the Village predicts less than 100 individuals will be moving to the new emergency temporary shelter next week however the Community of Congregations is still very active and heavily working to reduce this number further if not next week perhaps by mid-March.

At the next Village Board meeting staff anticipates the final grant agreement related to the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus grant on the agenda for legal services in the amount of \$360,000. Dr. Walker, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer is leading this work. More details will follow.

Next, we will continue discussions with Grace Episcopal and the single men the Village placed at that location. This shelter is anticipated to close on March 15th.

Below is a copy from the update from February 6, 2024

Background

On January 23, 2024, the Village Board extended the Village's Emergency Proclamation through February 29, 2024. The Village's current temporary shelter program at the Carleton Hotel and the West Cook YMCA have been extended through this same date. The Village recently was granted \$1.944 million by the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus to provide ongoing services to asylum seeking migrants in the Village in the form of short-term temporary shelter, legal services and short-term rental assistance. Such grant-funded services are designed to serve as an off-ramp from the Village's current shelter and emergency response effort, however, work remains to establish a short-term temporary shelter in the community and to finalize service agreements with subgrantees related to other services.

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

Current Census

As of February 5, 2024, the Village's most recent census of asylum seekers counts 142 individuals, including 49 children under the age of 18.

As of February 5, 2024, asylum seekers are located as follows:

- 78 individuals including 35 children housed in 20 rooms
- 42 individuals including 14 children housed on the 4th floor of the YMCA
- 8 individuals, all single males, housed in SRO rooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors of the YMCA
- 14 individuals, all single adult males, at a volunteer-led church location

Four families (10 individuals including 4 children) at the YMCA are currently planning for resettlement prior to February 29, 2024. Three families (14 individuals including 8 children) at The Carleton are currently planning for resettlement prior to February 29, 2024.

If all families listed above successfully resettle within the anticipated timeline, the Village's shelter program will include 128 individuals, including 37 children, as of February 29, 2024. As other individuals and families are at different steps in the resettlement process, there is potential for additional resettlement prior to February 29th.

Financial Summary

The summary below outlines the Village's approach to funding the emergency response, temporary shelter program and off-ramping of services. To date, the Village has been granted \$2,694,000 to support its response to the humanitarian crisis. In addition, the Board has allocated \$650,000 in general funds from its federally-allotted American Rescue Plan Act monies for the effort.

VOP Temporary Shelter Program (11/1/2023-2/29/2024)

The Village received \$400,000 in Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) Grant Round I funds which were exhausted through November and December 2023. The Village received \$350,000 in Cook County Disaster Response and Recovery Funds which will apply to operational expenses for January and February 2024. The Village Board authorized the use of \$650,000 in general funds from its federally-allotted American Rescue Plan Act monies that were subsequently taken as lost revenue. Below is a summary of actual expenses related to the Village's Asylum Seeker Response since inception on November 1, 2023.

Summary of Expenses from November & December

	Nov 2023 Invoices	Dec 2023 Invoices	Total Expenses Nov-Dec*	SMASS Round I Reimbursement
Legal Services	\$ -	\$ 2,846.00	\$ 2,846.00	
Security Services	\$ 27,468.00	\$ 26,880.00	\$ 54,348.00	\$ 4,032.00
Food	\$ 27,218.31	\$ 103,220.73	\$ 130,439.04	\$ 130,439.04
Language Access	\$ 27,543.67	\$ 7,883.54	\$ 35,427.21	\$ 34,954.32
Maintenance	\$ 499.77	\$ -	\$ 499.77	
Wraparound	\$ 36,984.00	\$ 4,756.99	\$ 41,740.99	\$ 27,775.57
Housing	\$ 62,450.40	\$ 62,450.40	\$ 124,900.80	\$ 115,200.00
Utilities/Refuse	\$ 4,100.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 5,300.00	
Medical Supplies	\$ 423.29	\$ 31.69	\$ 454.98	
Other Supplies	\$ 122.77	\$ 27,691.81	\$ 27,814.58	\$ 27,814.58
			\$ -	
Total Expenses	\$ 186,810.21	\$ 236,395.35	\$ 423,205.56	\$ 340,215.51
*Does not include Housing Forward for December - not to exceed \$79,000				

Through November and December 2023, Village operational expenses were approximately \$250,000 per month. The Village estimates total expenditures of approximately \$502,205 for this two-month window. \$340,215.51 has been approved for reimbursement through the SMASS grant with staff finalizing the remaining \$59,784.49 in eligible expenses, exhausting the SMASS Round I grant funding.

Summary of Expenses from January & February

	Jan 2024 Invoices	Feb 2024 Invoices	Total Expenses to Date*
Legal Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Security Services	\$ 28,140.00	\$ -	\$ 28,140.00
Food	\$ 78,630.82	\$ 11,978.87	\$ 90,609.69
Language Access	\$ 3,359.40	\$ 3,975.72	\$ 7,335.12
Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Wraparound	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Housing	\$ 57,600.00	\$ -	\$ 57,600.00

Utilities/Refuse	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Medical Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Operational Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
			\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ 167,730.22	\$ 15,954.59	\$ 183,684.81
*Does not include Housing Forward for January - not to exceed \$79,000			
*Does not include YMCA for January - ~\$5400			

Expenses are being tracked for January and February 2024. The Village anticipates increased costs in the areas of food and legal services where the Village has expanded programming for asylum seekers. The Village will submit all eligible expenses to Cook County for reimbursement from the \$350,000 Cook County grant.

To date, the Village has been invoiced for \$606,890.37 in expenses, with the largest outstanding invoices from Housing Forward and the YMCA for December and January that are not to exceed \$163,400, putting expenses for the first three months of the program at approximately \$770,000. Grant funding from the SMASS Grant Round I and Cook County Disaster Response and Recovery Fund totals \$750,000.

State-funded Services (4/1/2024 to 6/30/2024)

The Village’s most recent grant of \$1.944 million will apply primarily to services that will take effect following the closure of the Village’s current temporary shelter program on February 29, 2024. Staff’s recommendation for grant programming includes providing temporary shelter through the Oak Park Family Transition Shelter, legal services, short-term rental assistance, and administrative expenses, all within the eligibility requirements of the grant. Because the grant term covers services between January 16, 2024 and June 30, 2024, programming for services related to temporary shelter and housing were designed to provide multiple means for asylum seekers to remain sheltered from the winter elements.

While the cost of operating a temporary shelter and providing all food and services for a four-month period exceeds the projected cost of one year of rental assistance for asylum seekers, per the terms of the grant, the funding for short-term housing can only be used for rental assistance services through June 30, 2024. The Resettlement Task Force has estimated the annual cost of resettling the 40 households who have signed up at \$890,400. Under this model, the \$300,000 in grant funds will cover approximately four months of rent eligible for reimbursement. By simultaneously offering rental assistance and establishing a temporary shelter, community groups will have more opportunity to identify partners to sign and fund longer-term leases.

Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) Grant Round I 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. A total of \$340,215.51 of those expenses were approved for reimbursement. Staff are working with grant administrators to finalize the remaining \$59,784.49 in reimbursement funds.

SMASS Grant Round II Updates

On Friday, February 1, 2024, the Village received notification that the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus granted the Village an additional \$1,944,000 in SMASS Round II funding to provide services to asylum seekers in the Village. This grant was the result of an application that was approved for submission by the Village Board on January 23, 2024. The grant includes: \$1,244,000 for registered 501(c)3 organization West Side Service Connector d/b/a the Oak Park Family Transition Shelter to operate a temporary shelter located at the former St. Edmund's Parish School, pending lease negotiations with the Archdiocese of Chicago; \$360,000 for legal services supporting the application process for temporary protected status, asylum, and employer authorization; \$300,000 for the Community of Congregations, the fiscal agent of the Resettlement Task Force, for short term rental assistance through June 30, 2024; and \$40,000 for administrative expenses incurred by the Village.

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 submitted the application to Cook County on January 29, 2024. Cook County has agreed to reimburse the Village for rehabilitation and restoration expenses related to the Village's temporary shelter program. Village Staff members are working closely with Cook County to ensure timely receipt of funds.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lisa Shelley, Deputy Village Manager, via email at lshelley@oak-park.us by phone at 708-358-5777.

cc: Kira Tchang, Assistant Village Manager/Human Resources Director
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