





Memorandum

TO: Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager 

FROM: Kira Tchang, Assistant Village Manager/HR Director 

FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees

DATE: March 21, 2024

SUBJECT: Update Regarding Asylum Seekers in Oak Park

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Board with an update regarding staff's response to asylum-seeking migrants who have been residing in the Village of Oak Park ("Village"). The Village's timeline of events, official communications, and other relevant information is available on the Village's [Assisting Asylum Seekers](#) webpage.

Current Status – Oak Park Family Transitional Shelter

Per the Board's direction, the Village's temporary shelter programs and services at the West Cook YMCA ("YMCA") and the Carleton Hotel ended on February 29, 2024. In the days prior to February 29th, asylum seekers received assistance through the volunteer-run Resettlement Task Force ("RTF") in partnership with its fiscal agent, the Community of Congregations ("CoC"), to enter into lease arrangements which were funded through a combination of State, local, and private funding sources. Through these efforts, only 40 residents (including 16 children) transitioned into the State-funded Oak Park Family Transition Shelter ("OPFTS") located at the St. Edmunds Parish School building. All other asylum seekers at the Carleton Hotel were resettled directly into privately leased apartments. Asylum seekers at the YMCA who had signed lease agreements but could not move into their apartments prior to February 29th remained at the YMCA after February 29th until their scheduled move-out dates. During this time, all housing and services were provided directly by the YMCA.

As of March 21, 2024, there are five (5) families at the OPFTS comprised of 19 individuals, including six (6) children. Four (4) other families are scheduled to move in the coming weeks. There is only one family at the OPFTS that has not yet secured a resettlement plan and the RTF is actively working to identify housing options for that family.

Current Status – Grace Episcopal Church Shelter

Following the Board's March 11, 2024 approval of \$200,000 in additional funding for resettlement to include the asylum seekers who were residing at Grace Episcopal Church

(“Grace”), the RTF has been actively working with the 23 individuals at that location to identify longer-term housing. As of March 21, 2024, thirteen (13) individuals from Grace have been resettled out of the church location into apartments, and leases have been identified and signed for the remaining 10 individuals. Most of the asylum seekers at Grace are scheduled to move into their leased apartments by Friday, March 22, 2024, at which point Grace will close as a shelter location. The individuals who are not yet able to move into their apartments due to the timing of the shelter closure and the lease start date will be temporarily housed by the RTF and CoC in short-term housing.

Financial Update

To date, the Village has received \$400,000 in Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) Round I funds, \$365,261.59 in Cook County Disaster Response and Recovery Fund (DRRF) dollars, and \$2,070,750.00 in SMASS Round II funds. In addition, the Village Board has allocated \$650,000 in general funds that were taken as lost revenue from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars. The Board has since allocated \$350,000 of those dollars to the CoC for the purpose of resettling asylum seekers.

	Granted	Submitted	Reimbursed	Note
SMASS I	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 472,382.59	\$ 340,215.51	Under review
DRRF	\$ 365,261.59	\$ 365,261.59	\$ -	Cook County provided portal for document submission 3/20
SMASS II	\$ 2,070,750.00	\$ -	\$ -	First round expenses to be submitted by 4/7

Staff are actively working with the State, County and subgrantees to ensure there is appropriate documentation for all eligible expenses. This includes relevant contracts, lease agreements, proof of service or payment including copies of checks and/or receipts.

The Village has executed grant agreements in place with Cook County (DRRF) and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (SMASS). While it is anticipated that SMASS Round I funds and the DRRF funds will be fully expensed, the Village does not anticipate using the full allocation of SMASS Round II funds. Remaining funds from this grant include \$126,750, which was designated for additional Village staff oversight of a temporary shelter, and a portion of the \$1,244,000 which was designated to operate a temporary shelter housing 100 individuals for a four (4) month period. All asylum seekers are expected to exit the OPFTS by early April 2024. Officials from the State and Cook County have, however, approached Village staff to request that the Village apply for additional Cook County DRRF dollars to cover expenses for the temporary shelter in lieu of State funding. This follows the State and County’s evaluation of available grant funds and eligible uses and their interest in allocating funds in a collaborative and efficient manner. The State remains committed to providing grant funding for short-term rental assistance, legal services, and administrative services that were otherwise funded through SMASS Round II funds. Staff anticipate bringing forward a request to apply for additional DRRF grant funds in alignment with the State and County’s request on April 9th, 2024.

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For questions, please contact Kira Tchang, Assistant Village Manager/HR Director, via email at ktchang@oak-park.us or by phone at 708-358-5652.

cc: Lisa Shelley, Deputy Village Manager
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