



Memorandum

TO: Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager 

FROM: Kira Tchang, Assistant Village Manager/HR Director 

FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees

DATE: November 13, 2023

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 in the Village of Oak Park, including current status, updated financial analysis, SMASS grant status, and other future plans.

Background

On Monday, November 6, 2023, staff provided an update regarding the asylum-seeking migrants who were located at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and staff's work to provide those individuals with support and a temporary housing plan for their continued shelter. At that meeting, the consensus position of the Board was to provide support for all asylum-seeking migrants who were in Oak Park at the time, specifically including the individuals who were temporarily sheltering at the United Lutheran Church who had the immediate need to relocate the following day on November 7, 2023. The direction from the Board was for the Village Manager to respond under the emergency proclamation that the Board of Trustees approved on Thursday, November 2nd and using the funds previously authorized by the Board including \$150,000 in funding that the Village was initially awarded through the Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) grant, \$150,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds the Board had re-allocated for this purpose on October 30, 2023, and an additional \$250,000 in SMASS grant funding that was made available to the Village.

The Village's Emergency Operation Center (EOC), immediately went to work planning and executing the relocation of all individuals from the United Lutheran Church location on the following day, and subsequently relocating all individuals from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church by the end of the week when the Church would become unavailable for temporary shelter.

Current Status

Last week the Village relocated approximately 162 individuals including 58 children, primarily to the Carleton Hotel and the West Cook YMCA. Our new neighbors range in age from 3 months to over 60 years old.

As of 11/13/2023:

- 89 individuals including 43 children housed in 22 rooms

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- 47 individuals including 15 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
- 16 individuals, all single adult males, at a volunteer-led church location,
- Additionally, 3 families (a total of 8 adults) who were originally at Good Shepherd or United Lutheran have secured their own housing with community members

Staff continue to work with partners to stabilize any concerns identified at these locations. The Village's primary partners include the YMCA, Carleton Hotel, and Housing Forward. Additional support is being provided by other partners, community members, and faith-based organizations, who are specifically providing food and other donations, transportation, and translation and interpretation services.

As of Friday, all temporary, short-term housing available to the Village has been exhausted. Staff have been in ongoing communication with area churches seeking additional options for immediate shelter. As of Friday, only one church informed staff it could immediately step in and accept new neighbors without the Village's support, and that is the volunteer-led church location identified above. To that end, staff were unable to identify any available short-term housing options for the additional 15-17 new arrivals who arrived at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church the night of Thursday, November 2nd, after the Village's temporary housing plan was put into action. These families were provided transportation to return to their original location in Chicago, however, staff believes volunteers sought alternate housing for these individuals.

Financial Projections

In addition to the \$40,304 in expenses already incurred that staff identified in the 11/6/2023 memo, staff is providing the following revised estimates for costs through 12/4/2023.

Category	Cost	Note
Housing		
YMCA 4th Floor	\$6,432.00	
YMCA SROs	\$3628.80	
Carleton Hotel	\$49,280.00	
YMCA Housing Supplies	\$25,526.00	One Time Cost
YMCA Hygiene Supplies	\$1,000.00	One Time Cost
YMCA general administration	\$1,396.08	
YMCA Cleaning Staff/Services	\$8,280.00	
Food		
Carleton Food (Dinner)	\$31,150.00	
YMCA Food (Dinner)	\$15,785.76	
YMCA Food Utensils	\$600.00	One Time Cost
Wraparound Services		
Housing Forward*	\$88,216.00	
*Staffing		
*Case Management		
*Volunteer Management		
*Behavior Health		

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*Laundry		
*Transportation		
*Administration		
YMCA Intake Coordinator	\$1,200.00	
YMCA overnight case manager	\$3,000.00	
YMCA youth Support Programming	\$1,620.00	
Greater Chicago Legal Clinic	\$0.00	Currently Pro Bono
Security		
Overnight at Carleton & Church Location		
Overnight at Carleton & Church Location	\$23,500.00	
Language Access Services		
In person interpretation	\$40,000.00	(to date + est. 10k placeholder)
Translator Devices (YMCA)	\$5,145.00	One Time Cost
Translator Devices (Village)	\$5,145.00	One Time Cost
Utilities		
St. Catherine/St. Lucy Water Bill	\$3,600.00	Est. 3 Months Cost
Total	\$314,271.00	

Including costs incurred prior to 11/6/2023, staff estimates approximately \$365,000 in expenses through December 4, 2023, of which approximately \$62,000 may be considered one-time expenses. Staff have revised down costs associated with security and in-person interpretation, though continuing to maintain a placeholder for expenses as needed, in addition to relying on technology to support some level of language access efforts.

Please note that in some of these expenses, the Village has contracts in place and some remain projections. New expenses may continue to be identified or revisions may occur with regard to these estimates.

Broadly speaking, at current rates of spending, with no new expenses identified, the existing authority of \$450,000 (which includes SMASS grant funding and the \$150,000 in ARPA funds allocated by the Board), would be exhausted by mid-December with a monthly projected cost of approximately \$300,000.

Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) Grant Updates

The Village Manager executed an agreement for the \$150,000 in initial grant funding that was allocated through the SMASS grant. Staff continue to make progress with the additional \$250,000 in funding, working to ensure that newly identified and projected expenses are built into the program design. Partners for the SMASS grant include Housing Forward, Catholic Charities, Beyond Hunger, West Cook YMCA, Greater Chicago Legal Clinic, Thrive and PCC Wellness. Once finalized, this agreement will be executed under the Emergency Proclamation and will not come forward to the Board, however the Village Manager will keep the Board informed. No additional funding has been made available to the Village of Oak Park beyond the \$400,000 already discussed, however conversation remains ongoing.

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Next Steps

Since the partial opening of the emergency operation center, the EOC's first mission was focused on the urgent relocation needs of individuals in temporary shelter locations, and EOC resources were allocated accordingly. As this particular mission winds down, staff have begun to focus planning efforts on next steps and anticipate conversations with asylum seekers to understand their needs and existing faith-based community members and churches regarding their capacity to have a volunteer-led shelter operation. The emergency proclamation expires on December 4, 2023 as does the Village's contract with the West Cook YMCA. On December 5th, asylum-seeking migrants who are currently at the Carleton Hotel will be quickly approaching the 30-day marker at which tenants' rights may allow persons to overstay without any funding in place.

Staff have a meeting with the City of Chicago on Wednesday, November 15, 2023. The purpose of this meeting is to gain a mutual understanding of the ways in which Chicago and Oak Park may partner and the resources and services that may be available to migrants both in and outside of Chicago.

Staff will seek direction from the Board regarding any extension of the emergency order, any additional funding authority, and policy direction as it relates to additional new arrivals to the Oak Park community. This direction will drive planning efforts. It is anticipated that an agenda item related to the asylum-seeking migrants will be brought before the Board as early as next Monday, November 20th.

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
Ahmad Zayyad, Deputy Village Manager
Shatonya Johnson, Police Chief
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