



Interim Executive Directors Report

Operational Update - March 29, 2023



Operational Update

Arrivals

- RODS continues to receive 30+ arrivals per month, clients are both Global and Afghan arrivals. While the intent is to see a return of charter flights of Afghan arrivals, there is no ETA for that to begin again. RODS has been advised by IRCC that with Global GAR arrivals, Afghan Charters and Afghan arrivals that we could be supporting 440 government assisted refugees this upcoming fiscal year.
- A charter flight from Warsaw with displaced Ukrainians will arrive in Regina on March 27th. There is a possibility of additional charter flights from Warsaw in the next fiscal year. In recent in person meetings with IRCC, RODS has requested an allocation of IRCC hotel rooms to provide temporary emergency accommodation to independent non-charter arrivals from Ukraine. We were informed that a possible allocation of hotel rooms to Regina would not be possible well into the new fiscal year.



Operational Update

Arrivals cont'd

- For those who arrive in Regina on Provincial Charters, the Province of Saskatchewan provides 2 weeks of paid accommodation and meals, while those who arrive independently are only eligible for 3 days of emergency accommodation upon request. The 3 days is not sufficient to allow the arrivals from Ukraine to apply for and receive one time Federal dollars or to apply and receive Social Assistance. RODS continues to receive requests for assistance from displaced Ukrainians who are choosing to relocate to Regina, and have been able to assist with support from non-RAP staff and settlement services, as well as providing donated Air BNB accommodation. With the depletion of donated Air BNB accommodation, RODS has been helping out with short term accommodation using donated funds, and we have successfully applied for and received \$12,000.00 from the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation to assist with accommodation and start up food costs for these individuals. We will not be able to sustain this level of support, and will continue to pressure IRCC into providing hotels rooms like they have done in Saskatoon.

Operational Update

IRCC

- We are still in the midst of finalizing budget envelopes for LINC, RAP and the Consolidated Settlement Programs. LINC was recently asked to only submit a 3 month budget for the 23/24 fiscal year due to limited Federal funds in the region. With the higher levels of GAR clients and displaced Ukrainians, language classes are at capacity and have added classes, requiring budget dollars that exceed the levels agreed to in the initial 5 year contract.
- Settlement Umbrella Organizations from across Canada have submitted requests on behalf of their member agencies to collectively request IRCC consideration for increases in salary contributions in light of inflation and the challenges with the current labour market. Following our discussions with the specific program contract officers, the PNT Region of IRCC has stated that any increase above amounts in the signed agreements would not be considered at this time. IRCC did indicate that they would consider a formal proposal with evidence and rationale for salary increases. Given the pending end of the fiscal year, RODS will proceed with its budgeted 1.5% increase across all salary lines in program budgets.



Operational Update

IRCC cont'd

- RODS has been receiving GAR arrivals who have come with a medical escort and require immediate medical care. Working with our colleagues at Calgary Catholic Immigration, RODS will be supporting the relocation of a family to Calgary where essential medical care can be provided.
- Settlement has been successful in negotiating the lease of 3 furnished 2 bedroom apartments with Devereaux Homes in Harbour Landing. The furnished suites will act as the second level Reception House for the next fiscal year. The RODS Reception House continues to be a full capacity. IRCC has indicated that they would like to see increased capacity in Regina to support more non hotel temporary accommodation. When larger numbers of arrivals come within a short period of time, or if we receive a charter flight, hotels will once again be used.

Operational Update

COVID Update

- Language classes have established a regular schedule of onsite classes in both buildings within a hybrid online/on site model.
- Employment Services have many staff on site and are delivering courses in person.
- Settlement have returned staff to onsite work and service delivery, with the continued delivery of online/hybrid services where it supports the needs of our clients.
- Finance and Central Admin staff are working on site.
- Staff and clients are still required to wear masks inside all RODS facilities and when working with clients in the community. Social distancing in meeting, conference rooms and classrooms is strived for. We have recently experienced a Covid outbreak on staff. We anticipate the removal of the mask requirement with the arrival of the 'real' spring weather.

Operational Update

General Information

- RODS has been asked to participate in a Compensation Survey being undertaken by the Saskatoon Open Door Society (SODS) on leadership/management compensation. We should be receiving the report finding in April.
- We continue to follow the deliberations of the City of Regina Catalyst Committee and Regina City Council and its recent recommendations on capital projects in the Regina downtown.
- Our relationship with RBC continues to develop with RBC recently announcing that they have hired our former Newcomer Welcome Centre Manager as the new point person to assist RODS new arrival clients & all newcomers with new accounts and banking needs.
- The United Way of Regina has notified member agencies that declining fundraising and changing priorities will impact future funding.

Operational Update

General cont'd

- ▶ In February of this year, we were notified by Scotiabank that a cheque payable to one of our interpreters had been altered and an attempt was made to deposit it on 2 occasions for higher amounts. The bank did not process the fraudulent cheques with their Fraud Department dealing with the matter. We were told that no additional attempts to deposit or cash that one cheque number would be possible due to bank procedures.
- ▶ Last week, we determined that 3 additional successful attempts were made to deposit or cash the same cheque with larger amounts. These new attempts followed just days after the initial attempts. We advised the bank, initiated a formal complaint, completed the necessary documentation to be refunded the \$2,200.00 taken from our accounts, and filed a report with the Regina City Police. The local Branch Manager apologized for their error and failure to identify the repeated fraud.
- ▶ As a part of the 23/24 Finance work plan already in motion, Linda and her team are already moving towards electronic deposit for payment to all of our vendors and interpreters/translators.

Strategic Plan/Whistleblower/Budget Update

- We have received the initial draft summary of the strategic objectives, deliverables, departmental assignments, timelines, budget implications and key metrics from Laura. The Management Team will be meeting this Wednesday, March 29, to review the document and set times frames for teams to complete their assigned parts of the plan.
- HR and Communications have reviewed the Whistle Blower policy and will be forwarding a few questions for clarification.
- The 2023/24 budget is nearing completion and should be ready to be presented at the April meeting of the Finance Committee and then to the Board. The following are some of the key assumptions that have gone into the 2023/24 RODS budget:

Strategic Plan/Whistleblower/Budget Update

- As mentioned earlier, the assumption for salary increases remains at 1.5%.
- A 2% inflation assumption was built into all IRCC contracts when the 5 year contracts were negotiated. This is far below the inflationary reality we have been experiencing so Finance and the programs will need to work diligently to operate within the budgeted reality.
- There are no anticipated plans for capital projects at 1855 Smith Street or at the Reception House.
- IRCC program contracts are at or higher than the negotiated contract amounts within the 5 year agreement. With a higher number of arrivals LINC is anticipated to have a slightly increased budget for 23/24, budgeting \$2,920,609.35 up from \$2,856,361.15. Settlement budgets from IRCC will also be at or higher than negotiated contract amounts, with RAP having significantly more GAR arrivals, anticipating a 23/24 budget of \$1,652,979.00 as opposed to a contract budget of \$472,892.00. The Consolidated Settlement budget (SSWIS, OSN, WCN) will have an anticipated budget of \$4,232,565.00 in 23/24, slightly higher than the initial contract budget of \$4,189,808.

Strategic Plan/Whistleblower/Budget Update

- Our provincially funded language programs are funded on a calendar year, and in those programs, English for Employment and Stage 1 & 2, we successfully competed in an RFP and received additional classes/seats and so budgets have a higher budget of \$272,000.00.
- Our provincially funded employment programs received a one time top up payment of \$55,000 in the fall of 2022, now totalling \$1,215,946.00. Given that the Readiness contract has not come up for renewal yet we are not able to anticipate the ongoing funding level. There were references made in last weeks budget that CBOs would be receiving an increase to their funding base from a \$17.6 million dollar increase to that funding envelope.
- The 2023 Provincial Budget also referenced a \$5.4 million dollar budget increase to support the Provincial Nominee Program, settlement services and to assist displaced Ukrainians. We are not sure the impact that will have on our programs.