



# Interim Executive Directors Report

3-2-1 Board Report - October 2022



## Operational Overview

**RAP & IRCC:** The \$68,000.00 to be reimbursed to RODS for accommodation expenses that exceeded budget is still pending. A national call with all affected SPOs in July outlined IRCCs recommendation to Treasury Board and the Deputy Minister to secure funds to reimburse the affected agencies, and it required additional steps for the agencies. IRCC stressed that even though they have recommended reimbursement to Treasury Board and to the Deputy Minister, there are no guarantees. RODS has completed the required next steps, confirming balance owing and an attestation to that fact. IRCC also confirmed that the reimbursement would be net of the 15% Admin fee.

Discussions with IRCC indicate that the decision to reimburse is still with senior IRCC officials.

A charter flight of Afghan arrivals will be coming to Saskatoon on November 2, 2022, with approximately 97 arrivals destined to Regina. We have communicated with IRCC that given that the current RAP budget is already in a deficit in accommodation expenses, we are looking for assurances that the additional accommodation and meals expenses will be supported with an upward amendment to the RAP budget.

**FLIP:** RODS has been contracted to deliver a pilot initiative called FLIP, 'Fast-Track to Learning and Interaction for Parents (FLIP) for Early Learners'. The initiative, led by Mothers Matters (also the lead for HIPPIE) targets newly arrived refugee families with children ages 3 to 5 within their first 12 weeks in Canada. Lack of arrivals from July to date has resulted in a slow roll out of the initiative, we hope by sharing the initiative with the arrivals from Ukraine charter and the Afghan charter that we can get the pilot rolling. Please see the one page description of the initiative attached.

**Blue Cross:** Following discussions with Blue Cross, RODS & SODS have been asked to submit a joint proposal to Blue Cross for a 3 year Health Literacy Initiative to develop materials and deliver information to newcomers in our communities regarding health. This proposal is in the process of joint development.



## Operational Overview cont.

**Arrivals from Ukraine & Afghanistan:** A third charter from Warsaw with arrivals from Ukraine will be arriving in Regina on October 25<sup>th</sup>. RODS will once again be participating in the One Stop Shop Sessions and will also be promoting the pilot FLIP program, highlighted earlier. A charter of over 300 Afghan arrivals will land in Saskatoon on November 2, with Afghan arrivals onward destined to a number of locations in Saskatchewan and all across Canada, with 97 coming to Regina. In addition, RODS will be receiving an additional 27 Global GAR arrivals in the days preceding and following November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The relatively close arrival of a charter from Ukraine and the Afghan charters in Saskatoon, with 97 clients moving onward into Regina and 27 additional Global arrivals, will see the organizations workload increase dramatically. The availability of hotel accommodation has been and will be challenging given that Grey Cup festivities will commence the week of November 14<sup>th</sup> and Agribition runs from November 28<sup>th</sup> to December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Province of Saskatchewan will be providing temporary accommodation for the arrivals from Ukraine, which is early enough to not be impacted by the Grey Cup. Staff have secured hotel rooms for Afghan arrivals for the first 12 nights, and has a pending plan for additional hotel rooms from November 12<sup>th</sup> onward subject to the re-opening of a local motel.

## Operational Overview cont.

**Covid 19:** RODS has lifted all restrictions to building access with the exception of requiring that masks be worn at all times. Staff are still scheduled when coming to the buildings. New procedures are in place to install HEPA filter air purifiers in a number of classrooms where instructors are having difficulty teaching 'in person classes' wearing masks. Instructors will wear face shields when distancing from students, wear a mask when working closely with students, with students continuing to wear masks.

The number of in person language classes will be increasing in November, as will the number of onsite Settlement staff and in person/group service delivery.

**Province of Saskatchewan: Funding Applications CFP:** The Province of Saskatchewan has issued the call for proposals for language assessment, language classes (Stage 1 and 2) and English for Employment (E for E). Currently RODS provides all of these programs, but the Province has stated that they do not want the same organization delivering language assessments and language/English for employment classes. RODS will be applying to deliver Language and E for E classes.

Senior Leadership recently met with Senior Officials with Immigration and Career Training about the challenges surrounding 0% increases in the Employment contract for multiple years. It was a productive discussion, with the Province agreeing to make the case for additional financial resources for the next budget cycle. **As of October 25, 2022, RODS has been informed that we will receive a 4.37% increase in funding to our ICT Employment contract.**

## Highlight #1: Arrivals and pending financial support

- ▶ With the projected arrival of the Afghan charter flight and the Ukraine charter RODS will be incredibly busy, catching up both on GAR arrivals and assisting Ukrainian arrivals with their non-RAP needs.
- ▶ The joint application with SODS for support from Blue Cross for multi year health literacy funding will allow RODS to extend the reach of the Settlement based Health Facilitator Team.



## Highlight #2: Strategic Planning Discussion

- ▶ Senior staff are feeling positive about the discussions that took place at the Board Strategic Planning session. Staff are well aware of the current challenges the organizations faces and opportunities to manage and mitigate those challenges.



## Highlight #3: RODS possible Airport Presence

- Victoria was able to have some very positive discussions with the staff at the Regina Airport Authority regarding establishing a RODS presence at the airport. As the long standing RAP provider, RODS staff have a strong working relationship with airport staff. While in the early stages of discussion, the concept is to have a presence at the airport to greet new arrivals to the community and refer them on to RODS services and other designated partner agencies. Given that RODS does not have the resources to staff such a presence, consideration is being given to coordinating a volunteer program to provide a presence for the organization, and provide a wonderful volunteer opportunity. Stay tuned!



## Challenge #1: Service Competition and Non traditional settlement activity

- ▶ The introduction of Zones and the funding of other service providers within a relatively small service community continues to present challenges within a 'client first' service model. Prior to the upcoming CFP in late 2023, RODS will continue to drive its brand and profile its services and activities, along with working with like minded agencies on greater cooperation. Early discussions with the Saskatoon Open Door Society indicate some common views on the challenges resulting from Zones and case management allocation, we look forward to joint discussions and a coordinated effort to engage IRCC.
- ▶ With the Province of Saskatchewan assisting to bring arrivals from Ukraine to the province, their continues a somewhat fuzzy service continuum. The parallel tracks seeming to be offered by the Federal and Provincial Governments, combined with the Saskatchewan Government publicly expressing an interest in taking over all immigration to Saskatchewan should make for a interesting period of time. With the October 25 charter of arrivals from Ukraine, there has been mention by the Province of many of the new arrivals relocating to smaller/Rural Centres in the province where housing is more available and affordable.



## Challenge #2: Many arrivals in a narrow window

- ▶ Managing the influx of GAR arrivals and arrivals from the Ukraine charter. With hotel accommodation challenges, a resurgence in the pandemic and already busy workloads, the weeks leading to the Festive Season will be incredibly busy, and we will work hard to care for our clients and our staff.



## Hope/Future Goal:

- ▶ The Leadership Team are motivated to work with the board on the new strategic plan, addressing the key challenges and opportunities that face the organization.
- ▶ To work towards a healthy 'return to the office' plan, to enable both staff and clients to engage in person wherever possible.

