



Interim Executive Directors Report

3-2-1 Board Report - September 2022



Operational Overview

- ▶ In follow up to the June 2022 Operational & Issue Update, please find below recent information about the issues RODS was dealing with at the beginning of the summer and up to today's date.

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.

PHAC: RODS was asked by PHAC to submit a proposal for funds to support activities to provide education about and delivery of COVID 19 vaccines, booster shots and immunizations. RODS was specifically requested to submit a proposal based on the organizations efforts to promote and facilitate COVID 19 vaccines throughout the pandemic. The application was successful and work is underway.

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.

CRM Discovery: RODS has previewed the CRM developed and implemented by ISSBC utilizing MicroSoft Dynamic CRM. With the long term goal of looking to establish a specific RODS client, volunteer and program database, we are considering contracting with **Tendigits** from Vancouver on a discovery exercise. As the development and implementation team for ISSBC, **Tendigits** is well placed to review the current state of our databases, processes and readiness/hurdles to implementing a CRM, and would use the discovery process to determine suitability, feasibility and estimated cost of development and implementation. The estimated discovery cost is \$15,000.00, and we anticipate requesting to use LINC slippage to fund the work. Earlier in 2022 IRCC confirmed that they deem enterprise database software an allowable program support expense. (RODS current databases are funder driven and do not allow the organization to effectively capture, manage and utilize vital client and service information)

Arrivals from Ukraine: The Summer of 2022 saw 2 charter flight of temporary residents from Ukraine land in Regina. The flights, carrying over 400 people combined, were arranged by the Province of Saskatchewan in partnership humanitarian organizations Open Arms and Solidaire, and were managed by the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre(PEOC). Initially, RODS and SODS were asked by the provincial Department of Immigration and Career Training (ICT) to submit budgets to provide RAP like services to the Ukrainian arrivals, but a decision was made to activate PEOC. RODS assisted with providing information to ICT and PEOC, and was asked to participate in One Stop Shop Sessions organized by PEOC to allow SPOs, SHA, Service Canada and other organizations to assist the arrivals. While the arrivals from Ukraine and the provincial Government efforts has generated both community and SPO activity, the situation on the ground is a far different from that which Federally funded GAR arrivals experience. The UCC has been funded to refer the arrivals to agencies and to coordinate volunteer homestay homes for the arrivals, but there seems to be lack of a clear service continuum and details of what exactly provincially funded organizations are doing.

Operational Overview cont.

Arrivals from Ukraine cont.

RODS had strong presence at both One Stop Shops, and has had a significant number of walk in requests for service. In particular SSWIS has been busy with school start up and orientation, with over 1,100 new Global clients in the month of August (150 from Ukraine). Employment Readiness is currently booking appointments with Employment Counsellors into October. One area of concern is the arrival of non-charter clients from Ukraine. While temporary accommodation has been provided for charter arrivals, there is a gap in services for non-charter individuals. RODS has received inquiries on both social media and from our website about airport reception and temporary accommodation, both outside of our IRCC RAP agreement. As of this week, we have been advised that there will be a third charter flight to Regina in the 3rd week of October.

GAR Arrivals and Afghan Arrivals: A charter flight of Afghan arrivals was scheduled to arrive in Saskatoon this summer, with approximately 80 clients destined to Regina, but the flight was cancelled due to the Government of Pakistan not providing exit visas. IRCC has stated that the intent is to have another charter flight to Saskatchewan but could not confirm a date at this point. Other Global arrivals have slowed over the summer, with indications from IRCC that arrivals would increase this fall with the addition of more international and domestic flights.

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. Even with the mask requirements RODS has experienced an significant increase in staff testing positive to Covid, but at this point to the best of our knowledge cases are not originating from work exposures. Additional literacy classes are now being offered onsite with that number expected to increase in October. Settlement has moved back into in person Youth activities onsite (Coding Camp) and some orientations and group activities. Masks continue to be required and social distancing where possible. We anticipate steady progress to 'whatever a return to the office' looks like going forward. We do anticipate future discussions with some staff about what a post Covid hybrid model of work will look like.

Highlight #1: PHAC funding & a Blue Cross possibility!

- ▶ RODS is excited to receive funding from PHAC to expand its efforts to PHAC to provide education about and delivery of COVID 19 vaccines, booster shots and immunizations.
- ▶ 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: RODS Staff Rally to assist arrivals from Ukraine

- ▶ In spite of the non-traditional service continuum for Ukrainian arrivals, RODS staff have worked hard to provide assistance and support to the new arrivals.
- ▶ With the increase in overall Global arrivals, refugee and immigrant, combined with people from Ukraine, walk in service requests and requests for employment assistance have increased tremendously.
- ▶ The RODS Leadership Team and Departments worked hard to organize a strong presence at the One Stop Shops, with numerous interpreters and staff actively gathering client information to allow RODS to reach out to offer services post event.



Highlight #3: RODS New Website launch

- ▶ In May, RODS launched the new Website. With financial assistance from FCC, our Communications Manager Victoria Flores and staff worked with Strategy Lab to undertake a complete rebuild of the site, with better user optimization, usability and functionality.
- ▶ RODS also introduced a temporary internal ticketing referral system. RODS has signed a short term contract with Fresh Desk to utilize their platform to manage email inquiries, walk in traffic and phone inquiries fresh desk through an internal ticketing system.



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.
- ▶ With the Province of Saskatchewan assisting to bring arrivals from Ukraine to the province, there now exists 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 an interesting period of time



Challenge #2: Preparation for the next CFP

- ▶ With RODS being in year 3 of the 5 year contract with IRCC, the organization needs to begin preparations for the next CFP.
- ▶ RODS will need to continue to market itself, build and promote our brand, and build service delivery metrics to clearly show the lead role of the organization in settlement, language, employment and childcare in Regina.
- ▶ The RODS Leadership Team has already had discussions on the value of some direct proposal writing experience and dedicated staff resources for the upcoming CFP.



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.
- ▶ To begin preparations and strategies in earnest for the pending CFP.

