



Executive Directors Report

Operational Update - September 2023



Operational Update

Arrivals

- ▶ RODS continued to receive arrivals over the summer months, both Global and Afghan arrivals. The fall is projected to be at a similar pace. RODS has received a total of 298 Global and Afghan arrivals from January 1, 2023 to August 31, 2023.
- ▶ Afghanistan, The Democratic Republic of Congo and Syria and the top countries of arrivals based on citizenship and country of birth. Approximately 30% of the arrivals are under the age of 14.
- ▶ There are no scheduled charter flights of arrivals from Ukraine. Independent arrivals from Ukraine continue at a slower rate.



IRCC

- IRCC continues information gathering for the upcoming CFP, as well as scheduling sessions in conjunction with Regional SPO meetings. Based on previous information, we still anticipate the drop of the CFP in late fall/early winter 2023. The Management Team has pulled together a framework of information and requirements for RODS CFP work.
- IRCC has completed several onsite monitors, attending in person service delivery activities. Feedback from the monitors is pending.



IRCC Cont'd

- ▶ As mentioned previously, IRCC has contracted with the Regina RRLIP to hire an external consultant to undertake a review of the Zone Pilot initiative that is underway in Saskatchewan and Manitoba as part of the 2020-2025 CFP. RODS Senior Manager Getachew Woldeysus is representing the Regina agencies on the committee. The interim report is scheduled to be sent to IRCC on September 30th.

New Opportunities.....

- ▶ RODS has been successful in placing 2 staff on the Board of SAISIA, The Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies. Ricardo Arisnabarreta, Senior Manager of LINC has agreed to be Board Chair, and I am a member at large.
- ▶ The Public Health Agency of Canada has in principle awarded RODS additional funding for the balance of the fiscal year to support a general vaccination/immunization program.
- ▶ After a lengthy review process, the coordinated application from RODS & SODS to Saskatchewan Blue Cross for health literacy funding has been approved at \$30,000.00 per organization. Blue Cross has been supportive of RODS harmonizing this funding and associated activities with Public Health of Canada funding as well as other health literacy activities.
- ▶ The RBC Foundation has confirmed that it will provide \$80,000.00 in funding in 2023/24 for the RODS Employment Readiness Youth programs. RBC has provided \$400,000.00 to our Youth Programs and Career Fairs over the last 5 years.

New Opportunities.....

- ▶ Working with Altered Minds Inc. from Winnipeg, RODS LINC Program has begun delivering free computer fundamentals classes, **Computers for Life**, for refugees and immigrants in Regina and area. The program is funded by the Federal Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

<https://alteredminds.ca/computers-for-life/>

- Over the summer, RODS Welcoming Communities Program (WCN), Victoria, community partners and local artists completed the long waited mural project on the west facing wall of the Donahue Building. The lead artist for this mural is Geanna Dunbar in collaboration with Bruno Hernani, as well as Sarah Pitman from Regina Public Library. The mural was unveiled in August and has drawn considerable attention the downtown community.
- Settlement has participated in a RFP with Immigration and Career Training, Province of Saskatchewan to provide settlement services for the Foreign Trained Nurses Program. RODS has been shortlisted with one other organization for the contract, and as part of the second stage of the RFP RODS will make a presentation to the Evaluation committee at months end.







Some challenges.....

- ▶ I will provide the Board with an update on the alleged threats made to clients and its connection to the organization.
- ▶ The one time inflationary payments approved by the Board went out to staff in July. The feedback from staff was heartwarming, with many sincere expressions of appreciation to the Board for their care and support.
- ▶ RODS is beginning to experience the departure of long term staff, as well as the long standing experience of RODS often being the training ground for staff in their career path. While the pending IRCC CFP will present the organization an opportunity to review its salary grid and requested COLA increases, a compensation review may be necessary.
- ▶ Unfortunately, RODS has now lost its 3rd fleet vehicle, recently being declared a total loss by SGI. One car was hit while parked on the street in front of the Reception House and recently one of our staff was the victim of a hit and run, with a vehicle running a red light and fleeing the scene.

Some challenges.....

- ▶ *On all IRCC contracts a 15% Admin Fee is charged, as well as smaller % on other funders based on the ability of the contract to support it. A review of the Admin fee identified funds that could be used to address strategic priorities in HR, IT and other areas. However, the use of those funds has been temporarily suspended pending the outcome of IRCC directives to move IT /Microage costs from program overhead to the Admin fee in specific contracts. This is a challenging development given that our contracts state that organization wide system IT fees would be borne by program overhead, an agreement that was specifically negotiated into the 2020-2025 CFP. If IRCC is not willing to abide by the initial agreement, this could potentially impact the Admin fee by \$110,000.00 annually.

Strat Plan/Ops Plan Update

C.1. Improve the client experience through the implementation of a customer relationship management system (CRM)

- ▶ As mentioned previously, our application to the Federal Community Service Recovery Fund for funding to hire a staff person on contract to lead the needs analysis and research on possible CRM solutions was not successful. We have yet been able to identify any additional Federal granting opportunities where we meet the requirements. We think we have a possible solution that lines up with needs shared with the Board in June in the Communications and Marketing area. A possible decision item will be shared with the Finance Committee and the Board to extend the term of Mutahir Masood in Communications and Marketing, with Mutahir potentially undertaking the research and review portion of the CRM search as part on an inter departmental committee.
- ▶ **C.2. Establish a welcoming community for newcomers**
 - The development of a comprehensive plan and department consultation is in process. Current promotion of RODS programming, initiatives and activities in ongoing.
 - The search for an external funder to support the development and roll out of enhanced cultural support and awareness programs is underway.

Strat Plan/Ops Plan Update

I.1. Maximize internal capacities and process efficiency

- ▶ New onboarding/off boarding communication strategy, processes and documentation have been developed and implemented by HR/IT and Finance. HRDownloads has been added as a tool to provide a centralized profile of required staff information. All staff have access to the system to update required information, and the system is set up to manage onboarding information and processes. Our current web based time and attendance system is becoming less than reliable these days, a search is underway for a less expensive and more responsive and reliable solution.
- ▶ Customer Service training to address the need for reception service standards, intake and referral. Departments will be engaged on service standards with training during the fall of 2023.
- ▶ IT response time was to be addressed as part of a review of possible utilization of Admin Fee funds and an additional staff position. IT has accepted a Saskatchewan Polytech internship for 4 months beginning in July. The Internship candidate has agreed to work 8 casual hours a week to assist with IT service tickets. Plans to utilize Admin funds to add additional staff capacity to IT have been disrupted as mentioned above in challenges*.

Strat Plan/Ops Plan Update

I.2. Strengthen relationships with partners and community stakeholders

- ▶ RODS is in ongoing discussions with partners around zones and the pending CFP.
- ▶ RODS is engaged with partner agencies RIWC and CFS on the IRCC led review of the Zone pilot project. The project has been divided into two components, a review of the zone strategy and the case management strategy. Findings are hoped to inform the upcoming CFP.
- ▶ The Management Team will be conducting a SWOT analysis regarding opportunities and partnerships. Currently RODS is re-engaging strategically with local partners, SAISIA and IRCC. Currently, 2 members of the RODS Management Team have joined the SAISIA Board.

P.1. Strengthen recruitment and onboarding capability to meet growing demand

- LINC is piloting the development of new staff orientation & onboarding tools. Other Departments will replicate these efforts with specific content.

Strat Plan/Ops Plan Update

- ▶ Departments will be consulted on what they perceive to be their needs for additional HR support. The availability of additional HR resources and a possible additional part time position will be part of the review of possible utilization of Admin Fee funds. As mentioned in challenges above, any additional staffing has been put on hold pending the resolution of the IRCC directive to move professional IT expenses to the Admin fee*.

P.2. Improve workplace experience and employee retention

- ▶ Leadership Training for Managers and Team Leads was conducted in March 2023. Following discussions with the Management Team and identification of future needs, future training will be delivered.
- HR has built tools to continue to gather retention and turnover data.
- A review of staff recognition practices and development of a employee recognition strategy is pending.

Strat Plan/Ops Plan Update

P.3. Increase volunteer experience and retention

- Departments have agreed upon objectives and outlined a committee to lead the development of an online, centralized, 'single door' intake portal for all organizational volunteers. The newly created TIPS Portal will be replicated to provide a new central volunteer intake system. Interested members of the community can identify potential volunteer opportunities, go through an initial intake/screening and onboarding led by WCN, with individual departments managing the second step of onboarding and orientation based on the specific volunteer role. The portal will allow RODS to communicate with volunteers about upcoming volunteer opportunities and consolidate all volunteer data in one location. Volunteer recognition will be at an organizational level. Work on this portal has been delayed with the departure of the Volunteer Coordinator in the WCN Program. Mutahir Masood, our contract staff person in Communications and Marketing is the developer of the portal, and we will hopefully be speaking with the Finance Committee and Board about securing funds to extend his term at RODS.

Strat Plan/Ops Plan Update

S.1. Improve relationships with funders for long term funding

- Regularly scheduled meetings with Federal and Provincial funding partners have been established. The Management Team will be conducting a SWOT analysis regarding opportunities and partnerships. Currently RODS is re-engaging strategically with local partners, SAISIA and IRCC.

S. 2. Strengthen proposal management and grant acquisition

- Members of the Management Team have attended SAISIA organized proposal writing workshop. Additional training course are being researched.

S. 3. Explore non-government sources of funding

- An initial scan of external grant opportunities is underway, forthcoming discussions with the Management Team will connect delivery needs and an ongoing search for funding sources.

Strat Plan/Ops Plan Update

S.4.

- ▶ The development of a sustainable daycare plan will be presented at the October Board retreat.