

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 22, 2017</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO SYRIAN NEWCOMERS - UPDATE</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, the following report on Supporting the Community Response to Syrian Newcomers – Update, **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes.

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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- Supporting the Community Response to Syrian Newcomers – Update, (CPSC, May 25, 2016)
- Supporting the Community Response to Syrian Newcomers, (CPSC, February 17, 2016)

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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On May 25, 2016, City Council received an information report from the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home with respect to an update on supporting the community response to the Syrian newcomers.

Civic Administration, through the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, continues to chair a task force which supports the efforts of the community in assisting the Syrian newcomers. This report provides an update on efforts and activities that have occurred since the last update.

Federal Update

The Government of Canada met its target to resettle more than 25,000 Syrian refugees between November 4, 2015 and February 29, 2016. As of January 2, 2017, Canada has welcomed a total of 39,671 Syrian refugees since November 4, 2015. This number represents: 21,751 Syrian Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) for a total of approximately 55%; 13,997 Privately Sponsored Refugees for a total of 35%; and 3,923 Blended Visa Office Referrals (BVORs) for the remainder 10%.

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) continues to work with Resettlement and Settlement Service Providing Organizations to identify challenges and opportunities to support the Syrian Refugee Initiative. IRCC also provided additional funding for the remainder of the federal 2016 funding year to address Language Training, Child care and Settlement needs through the agencies that it currently funds.

Provincial Update

As of December 6, 2016, of the approximate 39,671 Syrian refugees who have entered Canada since November 2015, more than 15,000 refugees (40%) have found safety and a new start in over 120 Ontario communities. Approximately 87% have settled in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, Ottawa, London, Waterloo Region and Windsor.

Moving forward, the province continues to support refugee families, through provincially funded refugee service providers. Since December 2016, more than 5,500 adults have received language assessments and are currently participating in free language training and over 4,600 children have been registered in Ontario schools. The province is working with school boards to ensure refugee students have the resources and supports to succeed.

### Local Update

London is the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees in Ontario after Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa (combining all visa categories) and the seventh largest in Canada. As of the end of December 2016, London has received 1,181 Syrian GARs, 382 PSRs (with applications for another 260 people in progress) and 75 BVORs (arrived since November 4, 2015). The IRCC local office is still waiting for the new 2017 GAR numbers; which will include GARs arriving from all countries.

The London Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC) continues to provide resettlement services to the Government Assisted Refugees and other settlement service organizations are providing a role in helping to settle all of the Syrians across the community.

The role of Civic Administration remains to help coordinate community efforts and to communicate information on the availability of services offered free of charge by the settlement agencies, other health, education, and employment organizations. Civic Administration continues to participate in various provincial, federal and local committees as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Task Force on Syrian Refugee Resettlement. The Syrian Task Force of local service agencies, convened by Civic Administration under the Managing Director of Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, has continued to meet to exchange information and to facilitate the coordination of efforts. This group has now met a total of seven times and at the last meeting on January 18, 2017, it was decided that the group would meet again in a year or as needed to see if there are new needs that have emerged.

The CCLC welcomed 1,195 Syrian GARs in 2016 for a total of 1,256 Syrian GARs since November 1, 2015. For more information for 2016, please see report in Appendix A.

With extra funds received from IRCC, London's service agencies developed new partnerships, created new service time schedules and expanded certain services such as language classes, and child-minding. They also prepared Syrians for employment, recreation, and as community agencies are thinking about future needs. Throughout the summer months, various activities were developed such as English Language classes for children grades 1 through 8, free or lost cost day camps for children, half day English classes for adults, family daytrips to various local attractions, and downtown festivals.

### Local needs and concerns for future

The Syrian Task Force of local service agencies has discussed a range of needs for the short and long term future. Complementary supports and services exist within the community in the areas of health care, education, English language training, job preparation, and other areas. There will be ongoing challenges in supporting the successful integration of the Syrian newcomers into the community, making them job ready, and especially assisting with mental health and trauma supports.

An additional information session was organized for Privately Sponsored newcomers by the CCLC and London & Middlesex Immigration Partnership (LMLIP) on November 22, 2016 at the BMO Centre. This session was to advise new sponsors of services and supports in the community and to update current sponsors on transitional funding supports.

The London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership (LMLIP) will be holding a Day of Learning, Wednesday, March 1, 1:00-4:00 pm at Nichols Arena on the theme of Building a Welcoming Community for Immigrants to London and Middlesex. The objectives are to involve new stakeholders in creating welcoming communities, exploring the conditions required for creating a welcoming community in London-Middlesex, and developing resources and action plans for creating a welcoming community for immigrants.

**CONCLUSION**

Civic Administration will continue to support the community response to Syrian newcomers through the LMLIP, settlement services, and other broader support services by providing coordination and communication assistance where required.

This report was prepared with contributions from many individuals, including members of the City of London Task Force on Welcoming Syrian Newcomers.

<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
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Cc: Syrian Task Force of local service agencies

Appendix A: Report: 2016 Annual Report: Syrian GARs in London, Ontario, 2016

