

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 10 August 1998

TO/DEST. Coordinator
Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Social Services Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **SOMALI CENTRE FOR FAMILY SERVICES**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve:

- 1. That funding in the amount of \$30,000 be allocated for 1998 to support the Somali Centre for Family Services to maintain its counselling and personal support services, on a one-time basis only;**
- 2. That the funding come from savings from Child Tax Benefit implemented in August, 1998, and;**
- 3. That the Social Services Department work with the Somali Centre for Family Services to identify ways to obtain sustaining funding.**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend funding in the amount of \$30,000 to the Somali Centre for Family Services, in 1998 on a one-time basis only.

BACKGROUND

The Somali Centre for Family Services is a non-profit organisation that has strong community support and links with other related service providers. The Centre was established in 1989 to respond to the needs of Somali newcomers who came to Canada to flee the civil strife in Somalia. It is estimated that there are 15,000 - 17,000 Somalis in the Ottawa-Carleton Region, most of whom are single parent women with an average of five children per family. A large number of the community members receive social assistance. At present, the Somali community is in the process

of transition from settlement to integration. The settlement process challenged the community's capacity to deal with the personal, emotional and psychological needs to cope with the new environment. The integration process was hampered by the lack of meaningful support services and networks in the community. Services in the community do not have the resources or capacity to deal with the specific needs of the Somali community.

Through a needs assessment conducted in 1989/1990 the Somali Centre for Family Services identified a need for culturally sensitive counselling and personal support services for Somali families and youth. These services are provided in the areas of marital counselling, intergenerational reconciliation/mediation, conflict resolution and anger management in the family setting, peer support network and role modelling for youth. The Centre developed and enhanced its services to respond to these needs.

DISCUSSION

The Somali Centre for Family Services provides services designed to meet the specific needs of the community in a culturally sensitive manner. The Centre has been active in supporting members by providing direct services and facilitating access to relevant services in the community. The Centre provides direct services such as crisis intervention, individual and family counselling, seniors programs, youth mentoring and leadership training programs, translation, interpretation, immigration liaison services, assistance with housing issues, drop-in services, conflict resolution (in family settings, schools and in various community neighbourhoods), liaising with social services, marriage solemnization, palliative care, funeral arrangements, community advocacy, heritage schools, etc. The crisis intervention component is a critical service delivered through direct intervention and/or referral to appropriate services. These services have a preventive component which could contribute to reduce/avoid costs for social services in the long run.

Over the last eight years, the Somali Centre for Family Services has initiated a number of initiatives with CAS, the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police, Canada Immigration Centre, Carleton University, South East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community, the Youth Services Bureau, South Ottawa Community Legal Services, City of Ottawa, Better Beginnings Better Futures and the RCMP. These collaborative initiatives contribute to strengthen the network, facilitate access to services and strengthen the capacity of the Centre to complement gaps in services.

The focus and location of services provided by the Somali Centre for family Services are designed to complement services provided by other Somali agencies and other community resources. The primary focus of the Somali Centre for Family Services is to respond to the needs of the Somali community in the South and South East part of Ottawa-Carleton Region. However, all Somali community members in the Region have access to the services of the Centre.

FUNDING HISTORY

The Social Services Department has recognized the gaps in services for the Somali community and has supported the Somali Centre for Family Services in different ways. The Centre received Regional funding through the One Year Grant for the years 1993 and 1994 in the amount of \$25,000 each year. In 1996, the Department developed a strategy whereby funded agencies made a commitment to address gaps in services by sharing resources and collaborative initiatives. Through this process the Jewish Family Services made a commitment to reallocate 12% (equivalent to \$8,000) of its regionally-funded resources to support the Somali Centre for Family Services. The Jewish Family Services has also provided in-kind support related to supervision and administration which contributed to build the capacity of the Somali Centre for Family Services to deliver meaningful services and to network with related agencies.

Volunteer, cash and in kind contributions have been a major source of support for the Centre. Volunteers are involved in management, implementation and delivering of services. Currently the Centre has over one hundred volunteers who have the expertise and the commitment to provide support to clients.

The Somali Centre for Family Services has been able to initiate programs/projects and to sustain its services through volunteer support, in kind contributions and funding from different sources such as the United Way, the Social Services Department's One Year Grant and Heritage Canada.

In 1997 and 1998, the Somali Centre for Family Services received the following funds:

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>
	\$	\$
SSD One Year Grant	30,000	20,000
SSD Transition funds	10,705	-
United Way	35,000	10,000
RMOC Health Dept	12,500	-
Jewish Family Services	8,000	8,000
TOTAL	<u>\$ 96,205</u>	<u>\$ 38,000</u>

The funding is project-based and time limited. Currently the Somali Centre for Family Services does not receive ongoing funds to sustain its programs. This lack of ongoing funding creates concern regarding the continuity and sustainability of services. 1998 funding is 40% of 1997 funding which makes it difficult for the Centre to maintain the services it provided in the last years.

The lack of sustaining funding limits the Centre's capacity to access other funding sources. Although there is general recognition of need, in most cases, funders require that agencies have ongoing funding to ensure that any initiative they would support would be sustained through other resources of the agency.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

The amount of \$ 30,000 will be funded from the savings from the Child Tax Benefit, implemented on August 1st, 1998.

CONSULTATION

Public consultation was not required.

*Approved by
D. Stewart*

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