



Working to Reduce Poverty in America

August 30, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader of the Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer,

Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), and its 167 member-agencies operating 3,000 sites across 50 states and territories, has a long history of serving local communities and alleviating poverty. In 2020, the Catholic Charities' nationwide network provided more than 15 million people with essential services.<sup>1</sup> **As Congress considers action on budget reconciliation legislation, we urge support for the following priorities:**

Chair of the Board  
Michael D. Connelly

President & CEO  
Sr. Donna Markham OP, PhD

Episcopal Liaison  
The Most Reverend  
Frank J. Dewane  
Bishop of Venice, FL

**Support Affordable Housing:** In 2020, Catholic Charities helped over 403,000 people access shelter and provided 35,000 permanent housing units through programs such as the Family Eviction Prevention Collaborative of San Francisco, led by **Catholic Charities San Francisco**. We urge Congress to take immediate action to address the eviction crisis. Additionally, we ask support for critical programs, including the National Housing Trust Fund, HUD Section 202, public housing, rental assistance, HOME, Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, Housing Choice Voucher program, Section 515 USDA Rural Housing and the Multifamily Housing Preservation and Revitalization Program, homeownership assistance, and the Community Development Block Grant.

**Support Families:** The Catholic Charities network encourages Congress to support children and families by investing in the permanent, expanded Child Tax Credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and a federally-supported, national Paid Family and Medical Leave program.

**Support Early Education:** The Catholic Charities network provides early education across the country through agencies like the **Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York**, which served 87,000 children in New York in 2017.<sup>2</sup> We urge Congress to invest in early education programs such as universal pre-K, Early Head Start, Head Start and child care for working families.

**Alleviate Hunger:** In 2020, Catholic Charities agencies fed over 12 million people nationwide through programs such as the Food Pantry at the **Catholic Charities Diocese of Fresno**, which feeds nearly 200,000 individuals every year, including 34% who are under 17 years old.<sup>3</sup> We urge Congress to support child nutrition by extending the WIC certification period, increasing eligibility to 6 years old, allowing an additional snack for full day care and extending Pandemic-EBT.

<sup>1</sup> [2020 Annual Report](https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/2020-annual-report/), Catholic Charities USA, [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org](https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/).

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York, [www.catholiccharitiesny.org](https://www.catholiccharitiesny.org/).

<sup>3</sup> Catholic Charities Diocese of Fresno CA, <https://ccdof.org/food-pantry/>.



**Support Healthcare:** Catholic Charities agencies are committed to community health, providing health and wellness services to 500,000 people and housing 11,070 seniors in 2020.<sup>4</sup> We urge Congress to close the Medicaid coverage gap; expand Medicare by lowering the eligibility age and adding coverage for dental, vision and hearing; and provide support for nursing homes, affordable prescription drugs, Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), community health centers, behavioral/mental health and telehealth services.

**Support Immigration Reform:** In 2020, Catholic Charities agencies helped over 237,000 migrants. We urge Congress to support immigration reforms and a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure holders as well a pathway to legalization for unauthorized agricultural workers, and reforms to the existing temporary agricultural worker visa program.

**Support Nonprofit Employee Retention and Energy Efficiency:** Nonprofits represent the third-largest employer in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> As one of the largest networks of nonprofits in the country<sup>6</sup>, we urge Congress to extend the Employee Retention Tax Credit and include provisions to help nonprofits make energy-efficient upgrades.

**Support Charitable Giving:** Catholic Charities agencies rely on private charitable donations to support their work. We urge Congress to encourage giving by making the Universal Charitable Deduction permanent.

**Support Workforce Development and Job Training:** In 2020, 63 Catholic Charities agencies provided employment services to over 32,000 people and helped 7,300 people get a job. We urge Congress to support workforce development, job training and access to capital and markets for small businesses.

**Protect Life:** Catholic Charities agencies uphold the sanctity and dignity of all human life from conception until natural death. We urge Congress to maintain policies that protect human life, including the Hyde amendment protections.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. We look forward to working with Congress and the administration to alleviate poverty.

Sincerely,



Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD  
President & CEO

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<sup>4</sup> [2020 Annual Report](#), Catholic Charities USA, [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org).

<sup>5</sup> [2020 Nonprofit Employment Report](#), Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, [www.ccss.jhu.edu](http://www.ccss.jhu.edu).

<sup>6</sup> *NPT 100: Nonprofits Walked A Tightrope in FY 2019*, The Nonprofit Times, Mark Hrywna, Nov. 2020.