



Working to Reduce Poverty in America

May 15, 2023

The Honorable Dave Joyce  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry Cuellar  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Joyce and Ranking Member Cuellar:

Catholic Charities USA writes to request increased funding in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) programs and operations that address the needs of vulnerable populations, including disaster-stricken communities, persons impacted by homelessness, survivors of human trafficking, asylum seekers, and migrants. DHS plays a crucial role in addressing the concerns of these individuals and their families by providing support, resources, and expertise to respond to emergencies, protect our borders, and ensure the safety and security of our communities. Increased funding will better equip the agency to confront these challenges effectively.

Chair of the Board  
Neal Black

President & CEO  
Sr. Donna Markham OP, PhD

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

Having more than 110 years of social service ministry experience, Catholic Charities agencies are frequently the first entities the federal government comes to for assistance with welcoming newcomers into this country, serving the homeless, and managing disaster response. We do this work in fulfillment of our commitment to serve people in need and in obedience to the Gospel mandate to welcome the stranger and care for the poor. Catholic Charities staff and volunteers served over 15 million people in 2021, and we remain deeply committed to continuing these ministries.

As natural disasters and other emergencies are becoming more frequent and severe, so are the devastating consequences for communities across the country. We are thankful for our collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to prepare people before, during, and after a disaster strikes. Since October, Catholic Charities agencies have responded to 45 disasters across the country, including tornadoes, floods, heavy storms, hurricanes, fire, blizzards, wide-spread power outages, ice storms, and shootings. The agencies worked alongside federal, state, and local authorities to provide food, temporary shelter, and case management support to impacted individuals. Increasing funds for FEMA would bolster its capabilities and provide essential resources for disaster mitigation and response, strengthening community resilience programs to better protect our communities from the impacts of disasters and emergencies.

Welcoming newcomers to this country continues to be one of Catholic Charities' core ministries by providing a range of services to help immigrants make a new start in the United States. Immigration is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires adequate funding for DHS programs to effectively manage our borders, protect our national security, and provide humanitarian protections to those in need. Catholic Charities agencies collaborate with the government at all levels to welcome displaced populations from around the world, including Afghans, Ukrainians, Syrians, Haitians, Russians, and other nationals seeking protection from exploitation, poverty, natural disaster, and persecution in their homelands. Catholic Charities have assisted these newcomers with food, temporary shelter, healthcare support, mental health counseling, legal services, and more.



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With the end of the enforcement of the Title 42 public health order, migration through southern ports of entry are expected to increase greatly. We are thankful for the robust funding of the humanitarian portion of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) through FEMA for FY 2023 to provide emergency assistance to people in need who encounter DHS. These funds will help to mitigate some of the challenges that receiving communities will confront when welcoming asylum seekers, especially those in border states.

Additionally, CCUSA supports increased funding for regular, appropriated EFSP funds to assist nearly every county and city in the U.S. and its territories, which allows local community and government-based EFSP boards to respond to the homelessness crisis with emergency shelter and food distribution. This nearly 40-year public-private collaboration between the faith community, other NGOs and local and national government remains essential to addressing local critical needs.

Furthermore, we request increased funding for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to provide the resources the agency needs to administer lawful immigration to the United States. USCIS is predominantly funded by application fees. Without more funding, the agency will continue to face compounding challenges, including case backlogs, significantly delayed case processing times, and staffing shortages. Adequately funding USCIS will provide the much-needed resources to hire more immigration officers and implement innovative policies to modernize the immigration process.

Carrying out our ministries of service is a priority. The safety of our clients, staff, and volunteers is equally important. Therefore, in light of heightened safety threats across the country aimed at faith-based and other institutions, we urge for increased funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program above the FY 2023 levels so that our network and other nonprofit agencies may strengthen security measures at their various service locations.

We remain committed to carrying out the Gospel mandate of welcoming the stranger and serving the poor and helping communities thrive. We look forward to our continued collaboration with you to respond to these needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony J. Granado", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anthony J. Granado  
Vice President, Government Relations  
Catholic Charities USA