

On the work of the Catholic Charities network

There are 168 independent Catholic Charities agencies operating more than 3,900 facilities serving people living in poverty and in vulnerable populations throughout the United States and its territories. The work of Catholic Charities agencies represents the social services ministry of the Catholic Church in the United States. The services offered by each agency vary, because each agency responds to the specific needs of the most vulnerable members of its community. Nationwide, the most significant focus of the work of Catholic Charities agencies is feeding hungry people and assisting with financial stability. Catholic Charities agencies also serve the elderly, expectant mothers, children in poverty, veterans, individuals suffering with mental health challenges — and people facing almost any other category of suffering you can imagine. In 2022, Catholic Charities agencies across the United States served 15 million people in need.

On Catholic Charities ministry to migrants

Some Catholic Charities agencies serve immigrants and refugees who have entered the country and been processed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Catholic Charities agencies serve these people not because they are newcomers to the U.S., but because they are vulnerable and in need like all others we serve. Catholic Charities agencies located near the border provide basic humanitarian aid – food, shelter, clothing, etc. Catholic Charities agencies near the border have close working relationships with local governments, law enforcement officials, and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, who often bring migrants to Catholic Charities respite centers after they have been processed and allowed to enter the country. Migrants typically stay at respite centers for one or two nights before continuing to their destination cities to comply with their immigration court requirements. Their destinations are determined by DHS and the migrants, not by Catholic Charities. This work is legal and done in close coordination with local, state and federal authorities.

On outrageous suggestions linking Catholic Charities to human trafficking

Suggestions that Catholic Charities agencies enable, encourage, or facilitate child trafficking are absurd and offensive. Catholic Charities agencies all around this country care for children in need, and they have been doing so for more than 110 years. Catholic Charities agencies near the border employ staff who have specific training in identifying and flagging signs of human trafficking. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has repeatedly highlighted and called for increased protections for migrant children, in [letters](#) to Congress and [Congressional testimony](#).

On federal funding supporting Catholic Charities' ministry to migrants

Some Catholic Charities agencies — along with other nonprofits and cities and towns themselves — receive funds from the federal government for providing humanitarian aid to migrants. These funds are given to Catholic Charities agencies to reimburse some of the agencies' costs for the humanitarian care provided to migrants. The introduction of these funds for this usage to ease the burden on U.S. communities began in 2019 during the Trump administration. Catholic Charities agencies document and report how these funds are spent.

On Catholic Charities agencies helping migrants navigate the transportation system

Catholic Charities agencies are not involved in determining migrants' destination cities. When asylum seekers are processed by the Department of Homeland Security, they are released with an assigned check-in date — often within two weeks of their arrival in the country — in a specific destination city. The location is typically near a city in which the migrant has family members or friends who can act as a sponsor.

Catholic Charities agencies provide guidance on the U.S. transportation system to help migrants — frequently non-English speakers who have been processed and released by federal authorities — arrive in their destination cities and comply with their immigration case requirements.

Migrants or their sponsors are expected to pay for their transportation. Transportation is sometimes funded by social services agencies, such as Catholic Charities, if migrants are unable to pay the necessary travel costs to reach their final destinations.

On the idea that Catholic Charities ministry to migrants encourages more migration

The notion that Catholic Charities agencies' ministry to migrants encourages more migrants to travel to America strains credulity. Catholic Charities agencies provide migrants with basic humanitarian aid — a place to sleep for one or two nights, a warm shower, clean clothes, a hot meal. The idea that individuals and families travel hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of miles, often at great cost and considerable risks to their safety, to briefly receive these basic services defies logic.

On the Catholic Church's position on immigration

The Catholic Church teaches that all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and must be treated with dignity, respect, and mercy. That certainly applies to immigrants and refugees. Cardinal Dolan in New York has been particularly vocal and eloquent on the Church's ministry to migrants, and you can read his writing on this topic in the [New York Post](#), [America Magazine](#), and on the Archdiocese of New York's [website](#).

The Catholic Church also recognizes a country's need to regulate its own borders, and Catholic Charities USA, along with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has for years called on the federal government to fix our broken immigration system. The status quo is unacceptable and unsustainable, and concerns about security, drug trafficking, human trafficking and the heinous actions of cartels on the other side of the border are pressing moral issues. Partisan bickering and political gamesmanship have, time and time again, gotten in the way of any meaningful attempts to address this broken system. Congress must act to fix the problem and to protect the border in a way that respects the human dignity of all persons. Catholic Charities does not write the laws, but rather addresses the human tragedy caused by decades of inaction by Congress.

In the meantime, presidential administrations of both parties, Congress, state governments, and local governments have repeatedly called on Catholic Charities agencies to provide basic services to migrants after they have been permitted to enter the country. These government entities, along with Border Patrol and other law enforcement officials, rely on Catholic Charities agencies to do this work. What would our communities look like today if not for Catholic Charities agencies and other nonprofits filling this void? How would these communities respond to the daily influx of migrants needing a place to sleep and access to food?