



## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

RON NIRENBERG  
MAYOR

December 12, 2023

The Honorable Henry Cuellar  
2373 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cuellar,

Thank you for your leadership and support. Since 2021, the City of San Antonio and Catholic Charities have worked closely to assist more than 580,000 asylum seekers transiting through San Antonio. With your support and the appropriations provided by Congress, we have been able to provide critical humanitarian and onward travel assistance to the unprecedented number of migrants traveling through our City. Without these funds, we cannot maintain operations at the Migrant Resource Center, which allows for a coordinated management of the influx of migrants through our community. The San Antonio International Airport, Greyhound Bus Station and our community would be overwhelmed with migrants who often lack the resources for basic necessities or for travel to their final destinations.

I am requesting your continued support to ensure that the San Antonio region receives the needed federal funds to keep up with the current operational demands. The City of San Antonio and Catholic Charities are the primary local entities providing services to migrants transiting through San Antonio. Our estimates indicate that the City would need an additional \$3 million this upcoming year from the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) to continue the current level of service through 2024. Additionally, given historical need trends, Catholic Charities estimates that an additional \$54.5 million will be necessary in 2024 to continue the services provided today.

As we work through the transition from the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) to the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) we have requested approval to waive grant restrictions related to travel, hotel usage, and transportation for the City of San Antonio and Catholic Charities. In other words, we request that both entities are allowed to operate in the same manner we have operated in 2023:

- Continuation of waiver to increase the amount of funding awarded to Catholic Charities to up to \$4 million per month to support migrants' onward travel including increasing the percentage of funds that can be used for air travel. These resources assist migrants who don't have funds to continue their onward travel and allows for the continued humanitarian assistance to incoming migrants.
- Continuation of local transportation occupancy waiver to allow vehicles to transport migrants at less than 75% occupancy. This allows us to efficiently transit individuals from service provider, medical, and outward-bound transit locations.

- Continuation of waiver to allow up to 20% of awarded funding for both entities to be used for hotel stays. These resources assist family members of individuals who arrive requiring extended medical care and treatment, to serve those who arrive with communicable diseases, and to assist those with special needs.

If we cannot continue current operations, we will be faced with the reality of having thousands of migrants wandering the streets and neighborhoods of the City which will unfortunately bolster anti-immigrant sentiments often associated with the influx. One key tool that would help address many issues is a temporary work visa program that would allow the migrant population to work so that they can provide food and shelter for themselves and their families as they wait for their asylum hearings. A work visa program would also facilitate resources for travel to their final destinations. Such a program would have an immediate positive impact on the issues facing many cities as they try to accommodate the influx of migrants.

We respectfully request your support to ensure the Shelter and Services Program funding in 2024 meets San Antonio's needs and that the administration continues implementing programs and initiatives to help cities being challenged by the increasing numbers of migrants.

Thank you for your service to the country.

Sincerely,



Ron Nirenberg  
MAYOR

CC: Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security