




---

# MEMORANDUM

---

Date: January 28, 2021

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry,  
County Administrator 

Re: **Increased Asylum Seeker Processing at Casa Alitas**

Beginning October 16, 2017 and lasting through December 19, 2019, there was a substantial increase in the number of individuals from Mexico and South America crossing the US border seeking asylum. These individuals were apprehended and processed by the US Border Patrol and Customs officials.

A number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), mostly faith-based, nonprofits, accepted these individuals once processed through federal authorities and provided temporary shelter, medical clearance and transportation to their final destination where they are released into the custody of usually a relative or close friend.

At its height, this region through Pima County was processing over 350 per day asylum seekers. Given the lack of space, the County in cooperation with Catholic Community Services opened a transition center in unused portions of the Juvenile Justice Complex. The formerly unused detention facilities were converted into temporary living quarters. Medical clearance, administrative processing, food and shelter are provided transitory asylum seekers.

In the recent past, the number of asylum seekers has decreased to 9 per week on average. Within the last few weeks we have been experiencing an uptick. However, we have been alerted and working with US Border Patrol and Customs in the anticipation of a significant increase of individuals being processed and essentially reactivating Casa Alitas and preparing it to provide maximum capacity and temporary shelter services.

The purpose of this communication is to alert you to the pending matter and our preparation with federal authorities to significantly accept and process asylum seekers.

CHH/anc

c: Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator  
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,  
Health and Community Services