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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: July 1, 2021

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **Update on Southwest Border Transportation and Shelter for Asylum Seekers**

Please see the attached June 30, 2021 memorandum from Director of Emergency Management Shane Clark updating the current situation on the Southwest Border associated with asylum seekers. The flow of asylum seekers is now approaching the numbers that occurred on average in 2019. Over the last seven days, there have been 615 releases.

Our challenges continue to be transportation related, specifically from Casa Alitas to other modes of transportation for departing asylum seekers to their final location in the United States as well as additional potential housing for COVID-19 positive individuals. The City of Tucson has been the primary provider of non-congregate housing through contracts with local hotels/motels. The City is fully reimbursed for these costs through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Food and Emergency Shelter Grant. The County received an advance of \$2.4 million.

If you have any questions on this subject, please contact me.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Jan Leshar, 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  
Shane Clark, Director, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security



# MEMORANDUM

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Date: June 30, 2021

To: Chuck Huckelberry  
County Administrator

From: Shane Clark   
Director

**Re: Southwest Border Update, Transportation and Non-Congregate Sheltering**

Per your request, below is a summary on the current status of Transportation and Non-Congregate Sheltering provided to support Casa Alitas and pertaining to the current flow of migrants into Pima County. This will also include current challenges faced, especially if the anticipated surge occurs with the change in federal law allowing more migrants as anticipated as early as July 21, 2021. We have been told that is when the numbers processed and entering the United States through our corridor will be 3-4 times the numbers of 2019 when the county averaged 100/day.

The last seven (7) days of data shows that we are approaching numbers of 2019. Unlike 2019 when transportation was coordinated by the federal government to Casa Alitas and non-congregate shelters were managed within the faith-based community with support of the County and City of Tucson, this year sheltering is coordinated with local hotel partners by Catholic Community Services and the City of Tucson.

In the last seven (7) days, Casa Alitas has seen 615 releases (~90/day). This is from transportation coordinated by the county with shuttle and bus vendors and direct releases from Border Patrol and ICE. Within the Border Patrol drop-offs are numbers from Yuma Sector as the Tucson Sector supports processing and release.

Transportation

To date, transportation vendors coordinated by the county are adequately supporting incoming requests. There is one route, twice-daily releases from the Nogales DeConcini Port of Entry. In addition to transporting to Casa Alitas, the transportation vendors on request have extended their capability to transport directly to hotels that provide non-congregate sheltering.

There are challenges:

1. Transportation is being coordinated by PCDOT employee(s) who needs to be replaced. We are currently seeking a solution that can include out-sourcing.
2. Transportation between the hotel, the airport or the bus station is currently being handled by Casa Alitas volunteers and City of Tucson Sun Tran. Sun Tran has indicated limitations based on staff shortages. Sun Tran is limited to 3-4 trips/day and are mainly used in the morning. While they have been a critical resource (estimated transporting 572 passengers over 43 trips since June 9<sup>th</sup>), they may not be a sustainable option when the surge occurs so other options are being explored at this time. One option being explored is extending to the current van or bus vendors but preliminary results find this is too costly. An RFP may be necessary to find the right resource(s).

### Non-Congregate Sheltering

The City of Tucson is coordinating rooms with hotel vendors, which then is reimbursement coordinated with PCGMI. We estimate there are approximately 180 rooms currently available. In the last week, with the increase number of releases and contributing factors not seen in 2019, there were a number of challenges identified that placed stress on the system:

1. COVID positives can have an impact with extended stay. In 2019, the average stay in a non-congregate shelter was 1-2 days. Migrants that are COVID positive (and part of a family unit) not only require an extended stay but require testing and medical checks.
2. Extended stays occur when “Sponsors” are not ready to receive for a variety of reasons.
3. Flight cancellations have contributed to extended stays.
4. Other medical conditions have been noted in some cases.
5. Reunification with other family members have resulted in extended stays.

For this reason, the City of Tucson is attempting to coordinate more hotels to support the anticipated surge. As previously reported, the Viscount is close to being added and I have been told 3-4 additional locations are also being considered.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

c: Jan Lesher