



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 18, 2022

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

From: Jan Leshner 
Acting County Administrator

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

Shane Clark, Director for the Office of Emergency Management has provided an update on the current situation of the Southwest Border associated with asylum seekers. Since April 2021, 20,010 individuals seeking asylum have been released to the Casa Alitas Welcome Center.

An increasing challenge over the past six months has been the large difference in the number of individuals released daily, which, as an example, ranged from 3 to 344 per day from December 6, 2021 to January 2, 2022. The need for additional housing for COVID-10 positive individuals remains a concern.

As noted in the Memorandum from Director Clark, Pima County is hoping to secure additional funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Emergency Food and Shelter Program. On January 14, 2022, Pima County was awarded an additional \$3,300,000 by the National Board for FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program to address the humanitarian needs of Asylum Seekers. Staff remains in regular contact with federal partners to ascertain the availability of future funding.

JKL/mp

Attachments

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Mark Napier, Acting County Administrator
Shane Clark, Director Pima County Office of Emergency Management
Regina Kelly, Director, Grants Management and Innovation




EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 7, 2022

To: Jan Leshner
Acting County Administrator

From: Shane Clark
Director, OEM 

Re: Request for information, Southwest Border Update

Ma'am, per your request, below is a summary of the Southwest Border and county assistance provided to our humanitarian partner Catholic Community Services Casa Alitas Welcome Center (CAWC) and their ability to support releases of Asylum Seekers by the United States Department of Homeland Security via Border Patrol (BP), Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE), and Customs Border Patrol (CBP).

The County started coordination to support the Southwest Border (SWB) operation early 2021. This is the latest in multiple engagements when releases overwhelmed our humanitarian partners. The initial focus was coordinating transportation to support releases to CAWC and has since expanded to testing, medical care for those testing positive while isolated, vaccination, and non-congregate shelter. These efforts were needed as a result of the COVID public health emergency. Support has been provided by multiple county departments to include the Health Department, Grants Management & Innovation, Fleet Services, Facilities Management, Finance, Procurement, Community Workforce Development, Communications, and Emergency Management. The information provided below is updated through January 5, 2022.

Releases: Since April 22, 2021, 20,010 Asylum Seekers have been released to CAWC. They have done an incredible job managing releases in conjunction with COVID. It became very challenging over the last couple months as Border Patrol Yuma Sector has become a hot-spot of border crossers and the Border Patrol Tucson Sector has coordinated to receive, process, and release large numbers to CAWC. From December 6, 2021 (Monday) to January 2, 2022 (Sunday), weekly releases have increased from 472, 832, 1139, to 1252 (179/day). During that span the daily releases were as few as 3 to as many as 344 on New Year's Day. This has had a direct ripple effect to transportation, testing, medical support for those testing positive to COVID, vaccination, and non-congregate sheltering.

Transportation: The county has coordinated contracts with vendors to provide long and short-distance transport. Because of the limited resources within Cochise and Santa Cruz counties, transportation resources are designed to expand into those areas at a moment's notice. Supported by Pima County Fleet Services (PCFS) working with CAWC and vendors, 1685 trips have been coordinated between the Border Patrol Tucson Soft-Sided Facility to CAWC, non-congregate shelters, airport, and bus station. The city has provided Sun Tran to support the operation as needed and when available.

To ensure the safety of the vendors and passengers, and reduce the potential spread of COVID, the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) has coordinated personal protective equipment including masks and cleaning supplies to the vendors. A layer of operational and fiscal efficiency has been integrated by PCFS whereas the right vendor resource to transport the appropriate number of releases. This can range from a cab to a large bus depending on the number requiring transport.

Testing, Medical Care of COVID positive, and Vaccination: Since July 7, 2021, this operation has been conducted by a contractor in coordination with the PCHD. 14,035 Asylum Seekers have been tested and 477 persons have tested positive (3% rate). PCHD has gone to great measures working with CAWC and contract staff to ensure that once identified, those positive are isolated until they are safe to travel. They are provided medical screening and support on site to not burden the healthcare system unless absolutely necessary. Since vaccine became available on site, 2908 Asylum Seekers have elected to be vaccinated.

Non-Congregate Sheltering: CAWC serves as the inception point for releases, testing and vaccination. The site has 39 rooms available to house day and over-night guests. In 2021, the Hyatt through a contract with the City of Tucson was procured to expand beyond CAWC and the growing concern that surge numbers would go beyond the ability to acquire rooms “as needed”. The Red Roof Inn (117 rooms) was contracted because of its design to better served those with COVID and increase capacity. Late last year, due to a drastic drop in the number of releases, reduced occupancy, maximize funding, and maximize space the contract with Hyatt was terminated and focus was placed with the Red Roof Inn. Due to the growing numbers of homeless due to eviction, the Pima County Community Workforce Development (CWD) eviction/homeless program is scheduled to use rooms early next month. All of this is being accomplished under guidance of PCHD to ensure exposure to COVID is minimized and keeping groups separate. The recent dramatic increase in releases over the last month has placed strain on these non-congregate shelters. Due to a combination of the Border Patrol indicating release numbers could remain at this rate for the unforeseeable future, a recent increase in COVID positives amongst this group which require longer stays before travel, and the upcoming gem show which historically exhausts hotel availability the opportunity to secure another hotel has materialized. This hotel will provide an additional 82 rooms and could afford a more suitable solution for the CWD program and their potential to serve more clients while balancing the SWB releases.

Contracts: Pima County Procurement has secured three contracts and is currently working to secure a food contract that will support both SWB and CWD operations:

MA-PO-22-030 Hotel Shelter Services for COVID Positive Asylum Seekers

Term: 8/19/21—12/18/22 / NTE: \$4,808,000 – RRI 117 rooms / Comfort Suites 80 rooms

Funding Source: Shelter National Board Program (EFSP) pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Section 4008

MA-PO-21-171 Transportation Services Long Distance – Multiple Vendors

Term: 4/12/21—10/11/22 / NTE: \$550,000

Funding Source: American Rescue Plan Act

MA-PO-22-026 Transportation Services Short Distance – AAA Cab

Term: 8/16/21—8/15/22 / NTE: \$250,000

Funding Source: General Fund

Funding: Per the Pima County Grants Management & Innovation (GMI) Director, funding for the SWB operation has been provided through the federal FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program (FEMA EFSP). GMI has served as the fiscal agent of FEMA EFSP funds to defray costs incurred by the county and our partners, Catholic Community Services and City of Tucson. The county is in a critical stage as all FEMA ESFP dollars awarded since March 2021 (\$4,626,370) have been expended (see table, below). Until more significant federal funding can be identified and procured to cover costs at a burn rate of \$1.3M per month, the County is turning to its ARPA Emergency Housing project money (\$2.95M), which will also soon be expended. FEMA EFSP leadership have stated there is no new federal funding authorized to address the needs of the asylum seeker population after March 31, 2022. GMI is working to secure \$5.4 million from FEMA EFSP to cover County and partnership costs through March 31. Beyond that, the County and FEMA EFSP wait on Congress to authorize new funding for FEMA EFSP that can be used for asylum seeker humanitarian needs as soon as possible.

In summary, the situation is dynamic and ever changing. This has truly been a community wide partnership to ensure those released by the federal agencies have a safe environment until they relocate to other destinations. Pending questions, this concludes the memo.

C: Dr. Francisco Garcia, Deputy County Administrator
Mr. Mark Napier, Assistant County Administrator
Director Regina Kelly, Grants Management & Innovation
Director (Dr.) Theresa Cullen, Health Department
Director Terri Spencer, Procurement
Director Michelle Campaign, Finance
Director Daniel Sullivan, Community Workforce Development
Director Ray Ochotorena, Fleet Services
Director Mark Evans, Communications

Enclosure: Budget Request to FEMA

ATTACHMENT

FEMA Request for Additional Funding
 Prepared for FEMA EFSP Review and Discussion
 Prepared on 2022-01-05

<u>TOTAL COST ESTIMATE - UPDATED 2022-01-05</u>	<u>Actual Spending by Category</u> (March 1 - December 15 - pending end of December expenditures)	<u>ONE MONTH (averages</u> <u>using Oct / Nov / Dec</u> <u>spending - fixed contract</u> <u>rates)</u>	<u>EST COSTS THROUGH</u> <u>3/30/22</u>	<u>EST COSTS THROUGH</u> <u>6/30/22</u>
HOUSING - CAWC	\$ 175,736.53	\$ 13,743.26	\$ 41,229.78	\$ 82,459.56
HOUSING - HOTELING	\$ 3,483,612.48	\$ 749,112.75	\$ 2,247,338.25	\$ 4,494,676.50
FOOD - Hotels and CAWC	\$ 425,317.38	\$ 90,912.60	\$ 272,737.80	\$ 545,475.60
TOTAL MEDICAL AND COVID TESTING	\$ 516,378.07	\$ 87,089.50	\$ 261,268.50	\$ 522,537.00
TOTAL STAFFING - CCS / SECURITY	\$ 628,925.08	\$ 145,343.47	\$ 436,030.41	\$ 872,060.82
TOTAL TRANSPORTATION (long-distance)	\$ 131,734.38	\$ 12,836.67	\$ 38,510.01	\$ 77,020.02
Short Distance Transport (TRIPLE A / SUNTRAN)	\$ 200,405.66	\$ 51,860.59	\$ 155,581.77	\$ 311,163.54
OTHER	\$ 2,414.34			\$ -
TOTAL COSTS	\$ 5,564,523.92	\$ 1,150,898.84	\$ 3,452,696.52	\$ 6,905,393.04
	Range	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 3,900,000.00	
January - March 30 Funding Needed	\$ 3,452,696.52			
FEMA ADVANCES to-date	\$ 4,626,370.72			
Actual Spending MAR - DEC 15* (still pending expenses)	\$ 5,564,523.92			
BALANCE of FEMA Advances-to date compared to Actuals	\$ (938,153.20)	<i>*deficit as of 12/15/21 spending actuals</i>		
Balance Needed through 12/31 (if balance of 1st advance applied)	\$ 1,500,000.00	<i>*estimate with December close out costs</i>		
TOTAL PIMA Additional Fund Request	\$ 4,952,696.52			
Pima County Formal Request Range through 3/30	5 - 5.4M			