



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Catholic Charities and Immigration

Since its founding over 100 years ago, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio (CCSWO) has worked closely with migrants. Today, in a polarized political climate, it is even more critical for CCSWO to provide these services to our vulnerable, new neighbors and to offer our local community an opportunity to engage hospitably with these families on a truly human level. To that end, this document describes our mission and addresses common misconceptions, some of which has even included intentional disinformation, about our work and that of other Catholic Charities agencies.

Who are we?

Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio (CCSWO) serves and empowers people through God's love in their times of vulnerability. We do so through a full range of local services that engage the community in building solidarity. We are local agency of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati that is separately incorporated in the State of Ohio. All of our services exist to realize Jesus Christ's command to love our neighbor.

What is the relationship among Catholic Charities agencies?

Most dioceses have a Catholic Charities organization that responds to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in their own localities. While Catholic Charities organizations are united in mission, they are separately organized and operate independently in their respective dioceses. Through the Catholic Charities USA network, agencies share technical assistance and best practices, but they are not formally affiliated with one another.

What services DO we provide?

Through our staff, over 800 annual volunteers and thousands of supporters, the CCSWO family provides food assistance, senior and caregiver support, mental health counseling, family and parenting education, refugee and migrant services, and other charitable ministries to nearly 20,000 people in need across an 11-county territory. Among these services, we unabashedly respond to the humanitarian needs of migrants and refugees who approach us for help, regardless of their immigration status. The services they are provided vary greatly depending upon their documentation status. Specifically, we provide:

- Resettlement services to refugees placed in Greater Cincinnati by the U.S. government via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB);
- Immigration Legal Services;
- Interpretation services through AccuracyNow Language Services;
- Emergency assistance, case management, home study/post-release services, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and health promotion through Su Casa Hispanic Center and other CCSWO programs.

What do we NOT do?

CCSWO always follows the law in providing services and has no role whatsoever in transporting or trafficking migrants. CCSWO does NOT encourage or "aid and abet illegal immigration." All services are provided because poor and vulnerable migrants willingly come to our agency seeking assistance once they are already here, just like thousands of our other clients. We do not refuse eligible services to anyone who walks through our doors based on their background, including country of origin or documentation status.

How are Refugees different from other Migrants?

Under U.S. law, refugees are those who are overseas, displaced from their homes, and have been identified by the United Nations and thoroughly vetted by the U.S. government. They have demonstrated a well-founded fear of persecution for their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. When a refugee is qualified for permanent resettlement, it is established through multiple federal agencies that they cannot return to their country of origin, and they pose no threat to our national security.

Once formally identified refugees arrive in Cincinnati, per government direction, CCSWO greets them, moves them into housing, and enrolls their children in school. Classes and employment services help them adjust to life in the United States and find jobs. These services are made possible through a contract between the U.S. State Department and U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It is supported also by private philanthropy and hundreds of wonderful volunteers.

Refugee Resettlement Services has operated publicly and transparently for over 40 years. It has been strongly supported by administrations of both political parties. It is fully endorsed by the State of Ohio, and it has received local support from the City of Cincinnati and other jurisdictions.

Refugees are NOT migrants at the border. The Refugee Resettlement program does not resettle migrants who are seeking asylum by entering through the U.S.-Mexico border.

How do our tax dollars support Catholic Charities' work with migrants?

CCSWO receives federal funds for two migrant populations only: 1) formally identified refugees and those federally authorized for temporary admission; and 2) unaccompanied children assigned for case management by the federal government.

At this time, we are seeing most refugees being relocated from overseas refugee camps in Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo and Eritrea. Examples of those federally authorized for temporary admission include evacuees from Afghanistan and Ukrainians seeking refuge from the Russian invasion.

CCSWO's contracts with the federal government, via partner agencies, to provide case management for unaccompanied minors who are placed in Greater Cincinnati by the government. These services help ensure that vulnerable children are safe from exploitation and human trafficking.

The full cost of these services also requires private funding and volunteer support. As a non-profit agency, CCSWO strives simply to maintain a balanced budget. We are not "profiting" from any services.

How does Catholic Charities carry out the mission of the Gospel through its services?

Catholic Charities and other charitable organizations pick up the pieces for Congress' and the Administration's failure to address our immigration policies in a way that restores order and promotes human dignity. Those who are concerned about immigration should address their concerns to their elected officials.

Just as Jesus cured the sick and embraced the outcasts of his time, even at the risk of ridicule, we do the same for anyone in crisis, including migrants. We do not shy away from this work even in a politically charged environment. In fact, in such times of confusion, CCSWO's mission to show its community what living the prophetic commands of the Gospel should look like becomes even clearer.

Do you have questions or want learn more? Contact David Taylor, Director of Marketing and Communications at (513) 672-3702 or dtaylor@ccswoh.org.