**The CRISIS Survey:
The Catholic Church's Work with Immigrants in the
United States in a Period of Crisis**

July 2021

Acknowledgements

This report was authored by Donald Kerwin and Daniela Alulema of the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS). CMS thanks Mike Nicholson for designing and programming the survey, which serves as the basis of this report. It thanks Jacquelyn Pavidon, CMS's Deputy Director, for her thorough analysis and visualization of the survey responses. It thanks the members of the advisory council of the Catholic Immigrant Integration Initiative (<https://cmsny.org/cms-initiatives/catholicintegration/>) for their guidance and encouragement in this work and their assistance in disseminating the survey. It thanks the following for their thoughtful comments and input on the survey's design:

- Rev. Joseph V. Corpora, C.S.C., Director of University-School Partnerships for the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education.
- Kathy Curran, Senior Director of Public Policy at the Catholic Health Association.
- Dr. Mary Gautier, Senior Research Associate at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.
- Dr. Hosffman Ospino, Associate Professor of Theology and Education and Chair of the Department of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College.
- Chris Ross, Senior Manager for Social Policy at Catholic Charities USA.
- Michelle Sardone, Deputy Director of Programs at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

CMS particularly wishes to acknowledge Dr. Brett C. Hoover, Associate Professor of Pastoral and Practical Theology at Loyola Marymount University, and Dr. Hosffman Ospino for their thorough review of and insightful comments and edits to this report. It thanks Melissa Katsoris, CMS's Publications and Events Coordinator, for her careful line edits and her work on the report's production. It thanks Josue Bustillo, Director of Communications for the Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN), for the report's layout and design.

CMS thanks all the participating institutions and ministries that responded to the survey and shared their work, challenges, vision, and experiences. Most of all, it thanks the survey respondents – many of them immigrants and refugees themselves – for their passionate commitment to welcome, accompany, and serve newcomers.

Suggested Citation: Kerwin, Donald and Daniela Alulema. 2021. *The CRISIS Survey: The Catholic Church's Work with Immigrants in the United States in a Period of Crisis*. Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) Report. New York, NY: CMS.

© 2021 Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS). All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or print, including photocopy, or any information storage retrieval system, without the permission of CMS.

For more information, visit www.cmsny.org

Photos

1. Cover: Vic Hinterlang / Shutterstock.com
2. Credit: Center for Migration Studies
3. Credit: Center for Migration Studies
4. Credit: Center for Migration Studies
5. Editorial credit: Vic Hinterlang / Shutterstock.com
6. Credit: Center for Migration Studies
7. Credit: Center for Migration Studies
8. Editorial credit: Vic Hinterlang / Shutterstock.com
9. Credit: Center for Migration Studies

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	4
The CRISIS Survey and Profile of Respondents.....	9
Services Provided by Respondents.....	12
Catholic Charities et al.....	12
Universities and Colleges.....	12
Catholic Schools.....	14
Parishes.....	15
Composition of Communities Served, Institutional Leadership, and Staff.....	16
The Effect of the Pandemic.....	18
Remote and Virtual Services.....	21
The Limits of Remote and Virtual Services.....	22
Barriers to Accessing Services Prior to the Pandemic.....	23
Obstacles to Accessing Services during the Pandemic.....	25
Immigration Enforcement and Accessing Catholic Institutions and Services.....	28
Federal Enforcement Partnerships with Localities.....	30
Conclusions/Recommendations.....	32
References.....	37

The CRISIS Survey: The Catholic Church's Work with Immigrants in the United States in a Period of Crisis

Executive Summary

Over the last five years, the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) has conducted four surveys of Catholic immigrant-serving institutions, programs, and ministries in the United States. These surveys identify the multi-faceted needs of immigrants and refugees, and examine the successes and challenges of Catholic institutions in responding to them. CMS administered its most recent survey, the Catholic Refugee and Immigrant Service Integration Survey (the "CRISIS Survey") from December 14, 2020 through February 5, 2021. This survey explored the work of Catholic institutions during the Trump administration and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CRISIS Survey documents the reach, diversity, and productivity of Catholic institutions that work with immigrants and refugees during a pandemic that has particularly devastated their communities and an administration whose policies and rhetoric made their work far more difficult. At a time of rampant "Catholic decline" narratives, the survey also documents the reach, vitality, and relevance of Catholic immigrant-serving institutions. It identifies the obstacles encountered by immigrants in accessing Catholic programs and ministries – both organizational (funding, staffing, and siting) and exogenous (federal policies, the pandemic, and community opposition). It underscores the threat posed by US immigration policies to immigrants and to the work of Catholic institutions.

Survey respondents reported that they offered new services during this period, such as:

- Financial assistance for families, particularly those at risk of losing housing or utilities.
- COVID-19 testing, education, contact tracing, and quarantine services.
- Mental health services.
- Grief support and assistance with funeral expenses.
- Delivery of food and sanitation supplies for infected and other homebound persons.
- Voter registration and Census promotion activities.

Virtually all respondents provided services remotely during the pandemic. Many reported on difficulties faced by immigrants in accessing their services, due to poor internet connections, limited computer access, and lack of communications technology and training.

Respondents identified several factors that negatively affected immigrants' access to their services pre-pandemic. As in previous CMS surveys, these factors included lack of immigration status, negative community attitudes toward immigrants, fear of apprehension (particularly after traffic stops) and deportation, public transportation deficiencies, stigma over receipt of mental

health services, and identification requirements to access public benefits. Respondents also reported on obstacles in working with immigrants during the pandemic. These included the pandemic itself, limited funding, demand that outpaced resources, government restrictions on relief and benefit eligibility, and (particularly for students) living arrangements, work, and family caretaking responsibilities.

Respondents overwhelmingly believed that immigration enforcement, tied to fear of deportation, very negatively or somewhat negatively affected participation in their services and programs. In Catholic terms, they reported that nativist immigration policies, rhetoric, and media sources interfere with their practice of discipleship. One respondent stated, “Fear of ICE and round-ups, locally in our state and nationally, along with negative immigration rhetoric from the outgoing president have made our clients very fearful to access services they rightly qualify for.” A healthcare provider reported that immigrants were “avoiding or delaying seeking treatment for COVID-19 for fear of apprehension and/or deportation.” Many said that enforcement partnerships between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and states and localities made immigrants fearful of reporting crimes or accessing government facilities. One said potential sponsors feared coming forward to reunify with children. Respondents also cited as problems delays in family reunification, barriers to asylum-seekers entering the United States, decreased refugee admissions, and the Trump administration’s rule on the public charge ground of inadmissibility.

The report recommends that Catholic institutions take stock of the creative new programs, skills and capacities that they have developed during the pandemic and build on them. It also recommends that scholars and researchers prioritize independent, person-centered research that critically analyzes the work of Catholic immigrant-serving institutions. Such research would ask whether these institutions are putting “the person at the center, in his or her many aspects” and honoring the “fundamental equality” of every person (Francis 2019). It would draw on the perspectives of immigrants served by Catholic institutions to examine the degree to which these institutions advance the rights, participation, and wellbeing of immigrants and their families in US society. It would also analyze how Catholic institutions work with each other – within Arch/dioceses, regionally, nationally, and across these realms – in response to the cross-cutting needs of immigrants.

“Catholic institutions should take stock of the creative new programs, skills, and capacities that they have developed during the pandemic and build on them.”

The report recommends that Catholic institutions develop programmatic plans to ensure that immigrants can return to or can continue to access their programs and ministries as the pandemic subsides. These plans will need to combine communication strategies, financial support, and services such as transportation and childcare. In addition, Catholic institutions should make it a high priority to ensure that immigrants can access the infrastructure, platforms, and training that will allow them to access virtual services. They should also develop strategies to engage Catholics who do not understand, who ignore, or who work at cross-purposes to Catholic teaching and policy positions in this area. Finally, they should redouble their work with the administration and Congress to reform US immigration laws, and with states and localities to promote welcoming and inclusive communities.

Introduction

Since 2013, the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) has convened diverse US Catholic immigrant-serving institutions in order to examine and to strengthen their individual and collective work with refugees, immigrants, and their families. This project, the Catholic Immigrant Integration Initiative (CIII), is guided by an advisory group of leaders from Catholic charitable, educational, health care, community organizing, parish-based, legal, refugee resettlement, youth, ministerial, philanthropic, and pastoral ministries. It draws on the expertise and insights of Catholic institutions and leaders both in the United States and (increasingly) in migrant source and transit countries, as well as from non-Catholic faith-based organizations (FBOs).

To inform this initiative and its participants, CMS has conducted four surveys on the services, successes, and challenges of Catholic institutions, programs, and ministries (“Catholic institutions”), and the needs and experiences of the immigrants and refugees with whom they work. CMS administered its most recent survey from December 14, 2020 through February 5, 2021. It titled this survey the Catholic Refugee and Immigrant Service Integration Survey (the “CRISIS” survey) because it took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and the closing days of the Trump administration. The survey queried respondents on the work of their institutions in light of these dual crises for immigrants and refugees. It covered the periods both prior to and during the pandemic. The survey used March 1, 2020 as the pandemic’s start date, since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO 2020), and the US president declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020, retroactive to March 1.¹

¹ “Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak,” Proclamation 9994 of March 13, 2020, 85 Fed. Reg. 15337 (March 18, 2020).

The three earlier CMS surveys in this series informed the development of the CRISIS Survey. In 2016, CMS, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, and Catholic Charities USA conducted the “Survey of Catholic Parishes and Schools on Immigrant Integration” and the “Survey of Catholic Social and Charitable Institutions on Immigrant Integration” (Kerwin and Barron 2017).² These two surveys sought to document the diverse work of Catholic institutions, to lift up promising and successful practices, to identify obstacles to this work, and to assess how Catholic institutions measure their work’s effectiveness. In early 2019, CMS conducted the Federal Enforcement Effect Research Survey (“FEER Survey”) (Kerwin and Nicholson 2019), which covered many of the same challenges as the two earlier surveys. The FEER Survey also examined more intentionally the impact of US immigration policies on immigrants and refugees, and by extension on Catholic immigrant-serving entities.³

The CIII process has explored a distinctly Catholic vision of “integration” rooted in the encounter of culturally diverse persons, a commitment to building stronger communities based on shared values, and ultimately communion among members of diverse immigrant communities and US-born persons (Kerwin and George 2014, 39-41).

² CMS does not name surveys until after they have been completed and analyzed in order not to bias responses to them.

³ In using the phrase “immigrant serving” to describe the work of survey respondents, the report does not imply a unidirectional relationship between these institutions and immigrant communities. Rather, respondents work “with” immigrants, who often lead Catholic ministries, staff Catholic institutions, serve as volunteers, and receive their services.

“Integration” does not fully capture CIII’s scope or ambition. As used in this initiative, the work of integration encompasses strategies to empower, accompany, and defend immigrants, as well as to promote the success and participation of immigrants as captured by more traditional integration metrics. The CIII provisionally defines integration – drawing from Catholic social teaching – “as a continuous, multigenerational process in which natives and newcomers work together to build communities based on the universal values found partially and imperfectly in diverse cultures” (ibid., 40). Communion, solidarity, and agency are central to this vision (ibid., 44-45).

“The work of integration encompasses strategies to empower, accompany, and defend immigrants, as well as to promote the success and participation of immigrants.”

CMS conducted the CRISIS Survey in a period of overlapping traumas for immigrants and refugees. In developing this survey, CMS relied on its past surveys, and insights from CIII advisors and a virtual CIII conference on October 1 and 2, 2020 that it organized with the University of Notre Dame.⁴ Beyond standard questions regarding services, immigrant needs, and institutional challenges, the CRISIS Survey posed a series of questions on the effect of Trump-era immigration policies and of COVID-19 on the work of Catholic institutions with immigrants and refugees.

Politicians and media sources habitually misuse the word “crisis” in reference to migrants and refugees, often in support of draconian immigration enforcement and restrictionist policies, and to create a political “wedge” issue. In using expressions like “refugee crisis,” for example, they seek to attribute the source of a problem to its victims, and to bolster support for policies that deny asylum-seekers access to protection and that put them in crisis. The term is rarely used to describe the conditions driving forced migration or the harsh realities often endured by migrants and refugees in transit and receiving communities.

The report identifies the Trump administration’s immigration policies as a “crisis” in that they divided families, sought to eviscerate US asylum, refugee, and anti-trafficking programs, systematically impeded pathways to permanent residence and naturalization, and made all undocumented immigrants enforcement targets (Guttentag 2021; Schoenholtz, Ramji-Nogales, and Schrag 2021; Kerwin and Warren 2019a). It also uses this term in reference to COVID-19, which has torn through immigrant communities with particular ferocity.⁵ The survey sought to determine how these two crises affected the work of Catholic institutions with immigrants and refugees.

Catholic institutions provide an important vantage point on immigrants and refugees in the United States for several reasons. First, they provide extensive and diverse services to these populations, rooted in their institutional commitment to promote the good of every person

⁴ The conference attracted 1,450 registrants from 34 countries and featured more than 70 speakers.

⁵ These same communities also produce disproportionate numbers of “essential” workers, who have been on the frontlines in addressing the pandemic (Kerwin and Warren 2020).

and the “whole” person; that is, human beings in all of their dimensions (Paul VI 1967, § 14). To provide a sense of their diversity and reach, the 16,703 Catholic parishes serve 67.7 million “parish-connected” Catholics (CARA 2021). The 4,903 Catholic elementary schools and 1,199 Catholic secondary schools serve more than 1.6 million students (ibid.). Different arms of the Catholic Church administer 668 Catholic hospitals in the United States and 1,589 continuing care facilities (CHA 2021). Catholic hospitals employ 525,844 full-time workers and 213,838 part-time workers, and treat one in every seven US hospital patients (ibid.). The 226 Catholic colleges and universities in 2018 served 850,000 enrolled students (ACCU 2021). The Catholic Charities network of 167 agencies operating in 3,500 sites serves more than 13 million persons per year, and constitutes the nation’s largest social service provider, after the federal government (CCUSA 2020). CLINIC supports a network of charitable legal programs that represent nearly 500,000 immigrants per year (CLINIC 2021). It is not an understatement to say that Catholic institutions serve tens of millions of US residents each year, including millions of immigrants and refugees.

Catholic institutions, of course, serve and advocate for undocumented immigrants. According to estimates produced by CMS based on 2019 American Community Survey data, 10.35 million undocumented immigrants reside in the United States (CMS 2021). The top countries of origin include Mexico (46 percent), El Salvador (7 percent), Guatemala (6 percent), India (6 percent), and Honduras (5 percent) (ibid.). This population has deep ties in the United States: 43 percent has lived in the country for over 15 years, 16 percent is married to a US citizen or lawful permanent resident (LPR), and 96 percent of those in the labor force is employed (ibid.). The CMS estimates also shed light on the needs and challenges faced by this community, including the 20 percent who live at or below the poverty threshold, the 50 percent who do not have health insurance, the 40 percent with less than a high school diploma, and 14 percent who do not speak English (ibid.).

Second, each of these Catholic institutions and networks prioritize work with immigrant communities. Many Catholic institutions were established in response to the needs and talents of previous generations of immigrants and their children (Kerwin and George 2014, 14, 74-75). The CIII process examines whether these institutions – created for and often by immigrants – have maintained their historic connection to immigrants. Certainly, many immigrants continue to view Catholic and other faith-based institutions as safe and trusted places. A recent study, for example, found that undocumented immigrants had lower levels of civic engagement than did naturalized citizens and lawfully present immigrants (Lai 2021). Tellingly, however, the study found that church membership and participation did *not* differ by status, all else being equal (Lai 2021, 219).

Third, Catholic institutions and networks are also grounded in a religious tradition that affirms the dignity and emphatically identifies with immigrants and refugees. In his 2016 Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis spoke directly on this aspect of their mission:

How can we ensure that integration will become mutual enrichment, open up positive perspectives to communities, and prevent the danger of discrimination, racism,

extreme nationalism or xenophobia?

Biblical revelation urges us to welcome the stranger; it tells us that in so doing, we open our doors to God, and that in the faces of others we see the face of Christ himself. Many institutions, associations, movements and groups, diocesan, national and international organizations are experiencing the wonder and joy of the feast of encounter, sharing and solidarity. They have heard the voice of Jesus Christ: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Rev 3:20). Yet there continue to be debates about the conditions and limits to be set for the reception of migrants, not only on the level of national policies, but also in some parish communities whose traditional tranquility seems to be threatened.

Faced with these issues, how can the Church fail to be inspired by the example and words of Jesus Christ? The answer of the Gospel is mercy (Francis 2016).

The CRISIS Survey and Profile of Respondents

In Catholic terms, the CRISIS Survey documents the work of mercy and justice by select institutions during one of the most difficult periods for immigrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees in recent memory. CMS disseminated the survey through its CIII advisory group members, conference attendees, and its extensive lists of Catholic institutions and leaders.⁶ The respondents come largely from traditional immigrant-destination states. They represent a strong cross-section of institutions that work on the frontlines with immigrant and refugee communities (Figure 1). They offer first-hand knowledge on the needs, aspirations, and challenges of immigrants, and on the hard work of immigrant empowerment, defense, and integration in a period of crisis.

The survey received 365 unique responses. CMS disqualified 176 survey responses that provided only information on the type of institution and name/location (129), were duplicative (33), were from non-Catholic institutions (9), were from outside the United States (4), or asked that their survey not be counted (1). In cases in which organizations provided duplicate surveys, CMS retained the response that covered the largest number of questions. The report does not include uninformative write-in results such as “N/A,” “not sure,” or “see above.” Not all respondents answered every question. As used in this report, the phrase “did not respond” means “did not respond to the particular question.” The study’s findings reflect shares of respondents answering each question rather than shares of total survey respondents.

Figure 1. Types of Institutions that Responded to the CRISIS Survey

One institution did not respond.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

⁶ The survey was distributed to religious orders and congregations, Archdioceses and Dioceses, parishes, Catholic Charities agencies, universities, hospitals, health associations, legal programs for immigrants, refugee resettlement programs, seminaries, elementary and secondary schools, foundations, community organizing agencies, and pastoral institutes.

The survey asked distinct sets of mostly close-ended questions, with some overlap, to five categories of institutions. The first survey track covers primarily Catholic Charities agencies, programs housed in these agencies (such as legal and refugee programs), community-based organizations, Archdiocesan and diocesan [hereinafter “Arch/diocesan”] offices, ministerial organizations (self-identified), and religious orders and congregations. The report will refer to these respondents as “Catholic Charities et al.” respondents. The second track covers hospitals and health clinics; the third colleges and universities; the fourth elementary, middle, and high schools (“Catholic schools”); and the fifth parishes. CMS received relatively high numbers of responses from Catholic Charities agencies and programs, colleges and universities, and parishes.⁷ Because the survey generated small numbers of responses from Catholic schools (four) and hospitals/health clinics (three), this report uses narrative responses from these institutions and others to complement its broader analysis. The 189 valid survey respondents include:

- 40 Catholic Charities/social service organizations (32 complete, eight partial responses).
- 28 parishes (24 complete, four partial).
- 24 universities and colleges (13 complete, 11 partial).
- 17 community-based organizing agencies (14 complete, three partial).
- 15 diocesan offices (13 complete, two partial).
- 14 ministerial organizations (10 complete, four partial).⁸
- 13 legal service programs (11 complete, two partial).
- 10 religious orders (seven complete, three partial) and five congregations (all complete).⁹
- Six “other” institutions (three complete, three partial).
- Five refugee resettlement programs (three complete, two partial).
- Four elementary, middle, or high schools (all complete).
- Three hospitals or health clinics (all complete).
- Two seminaries/houses of religious formation (one complete, one partial).
- One pastoral institute (complete).

⁷ Catholic parishes provide religious formation, sacraments, and pastoral counseling to the faithful within a particular geographic area. The CRISIS and prior CMS surveys reveal the extensive social services that are also offered by many parishes.

⁸ “Ministerial organizations” are Catholic organizations that are separately recognized under civil law, apart from their sponsoring religious order or congregation.

⁹ Religious orders are long-established communities whose members take “solemn” vows, while members of congregations take “simple vows.” The US Conference of Catholic Bishops defines a “congregation” as an institute of “men or women religious, all of which are commonly called *religious order*” (USCCB 2021).

- One foundation (complete).
- One undeclared.

Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents were based in New York, California, Texas, Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, and Florida (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Top Locations of Responding Institutions by State

All institutions responded.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

Asked to identify the “top five” countries they served, respondents collectively identified 64 countries.¹⁰ Of these 64 countries, Mexico (123), Guatemala (122), El Salvador (102), Honduras (88), and Haiti (32) were the most frequently cited “top five” countries of origin (Figure 3).

Respondents worked in institutions, programs, and ministries of different sizes. Most (112) worked in organizations of one to nine employees, followed by 39 in organizations with 10 to 49 employees. Thirteen respondents worked in organizations of 1,000 or more employees.

¹⁰ Respondents served immigrants from more than 64 countries, but these other countries were not among the “top five” identified by any respondent.

Figure 3. Countries of Origin of Immigrants Served by Survey Respondents*

*Countries of origin reported by less than five respondents are excluded.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

Services Provided by Respondents

Catholic Charities et al.

Catholic Charities agencies generated the largest number of survey responses. These and the other respondents in the Catholic Charities et al. survey track provide extensive and varied services, which respond to material, social, legal, and pastoral needs of immigrants and refugees (Figure 4). Their “other” services (not enumerated in Figure 4) include behavioral health, health service transportation, food distribution, afterschool programs, and emergency search and rescue services in the desert.

Universities and Colleges

The “CRISIS” survey received 24 valid responses from Catholic universities and colleges. These respondents reported providing scholarships for undocumented students, and health, cultural, and support services for immigrant students and the broader university/college community (Figure 5).¹¹

¹¹ The survey defined immigrant students as immigrants or those with immigrant parents, but not international students on student visas.

Figure 4. Types of Services Offered by Catholic Charities et al. Respondents (excludes Hospitals, Schools, Universities, and Parishes)

*Hospitals, clinics, schools, colleges, universities, and parishes are excluded and analyzed separately. Two institutions did not respond, two responded N/A or unsure.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

Figure 5. Types of Services Offered by Responding Catholic Universities and Colleges to Support Immigrant Students

One institution did not respond, one responded N/A or unsure.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

One university respondent organizes advocacy events and operates a weekly English as a Second Language (ESL) program at a local church with student volunteers. Respondents also educate and raise awareness on immigrant issues within the university community, such as information sessions for staff and faculty on the needs of undocumented students.

Catholic Schools

Catholic schools face immense challenges beyond their work with immigrant students and families. A study by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) reported that Catholic schools have recently experienced their most dramatic drop in enrollment since 1973 (CNA 2021). More than 200 schools closed following the 2019-2020 school year, and the number of students declined by 110,000 from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021, driven by decreased pre-kindergarten enrollment (40 percent) and elementary school enrollment (8.1 percent).¹²

Moreover, students with immigrant backgrounds, including English learners, have been particularly disadvantaged by school shutdowns and remote learning, given their higher rates of poverty, poor broadband access, and the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on their communities (Sugarman and Lazarín 2020).

¹² However, the pandemic also led families to transfer their children to Catholic schools. An NCEA survey of the parents of children who had transferred to Catholic schools during the year found one-half of the new enrollees from public schools would not have enrolled or were not sure if they would have enrolled in Catholic schools absent the pandemic (NCEA 2021).

Only four school respondents, including one diocesan school system, responded to the CRISIS Survey. Three respondents offered services to support immigrant parents and other adults to better participate in school life. Two of the four respondents offered teacher and staff training focusing on immigration or immigrant students, outreach to prospective students with immigrant backgrounds, scholarships for undocumented students, need-based financial assistance to families of immigrant students, pastoral services, and cultural programming. One respondent offered a *madrina* program; i.e., in which a respected member of an immigrant community serves as a point of contact to assist immigrant children and their parents to negotiate and fully participate in the life of the school. Past surveys show the vital role that *madrinas* and *padrinos* can play in the recruitment and retention of students from immigrant families (Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2014, 33-34). The respondent also offered immigrant students health screenings and referral to legal services. Another respondent provided foods, gifts, and clothing to immigrant students.

Parishes

While parishes primarily offer religious and pastoral services, the 2019 FEER Survey illustrated that a significant number also serve as a vital source of social, health, educational, and legal services (Kerwin and Nicholson 2019, 45). The CRISIS Survey strongly affirmed this finding (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Types of Services Offered by Responding Parishes

28 parishes responded to this question. One responded N/A or unsure.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

Among other services, individual parish respondents offered a faith and citizenship group devoted to advocacy on immigrant justice, women's groups, a tax return program, immigration workshops, pastoral care at shelters, payment of immigration attorney's fees, and referrals to service organizations.

At a time of national reckoning on racial injustice in the United States, the survey also queried parishes on their work to promote racial justice. Several parishes reported having created special initiatives, programs, and ministries to further this urgent priority, including:

- Racial justice dialogues and seminars.
- Activities to connect persons from different countries, languages, and cultural backgrounds.
- A conference on the intergenerational trauma of Native Americans.
- Monthly meetings on social justice and advocacy.
- Presentations by police officers on civil rights and sanctuary cities.
- Forums on differences within the community.
- Sessions on cultural diversity and racism.
- Workshops on domestic violence and racial injustice.
- Racial justice dialogues and seminars.

Parishes identified several racial justice programs that focus on immigrants, such as a housing program devoted to the needs of undocumented persons who lack recourse to federal pandemic relief programs, and know-your-rights sessions.

Composition of Communities Served, Institutional Leadership, and Staff

Past CMS and other studies of Catholic institutions highlight the importance of institutional leaders and staff that reflect the composition of the immigrant communities with whom they work (Hoover and Ospino 2016, 41-42; Kerwin and Barron 2017, 13-14, 33; Kerwin and Nicholson 2019). These earlier studies found stark disparities between the high percentage of immigrants in service communities, and their relatively low representation among Catholic institutional leaders and paid staff.

The Catholic Charities et al. track of the CRISIS survey found that these disparities endure, particularly between immigrant leadership and immigrants who access program services. Thus, 64 of 88 respondents reported that immigrants constitute 75 percent or more of the persons that use the agency's services (Figure 7), but only 12 of 74 respondents reported that immigrants represent 75 percent or more of agency leadership. Twenty of 68 respondents reported that immigrants represent more than 75 percent of their paid staff (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Percentages of Immigrants Among Clients, Agency Leadership, and Paid Staff in Surveyed Catholic Charities et al. Agencies

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

Most university and college respondents reported low percentages (less than 25 percent) of immigrant faculty members (nine of 12 respondents), staff (nine of 11 respondents), school leadership (10 of 11 respondents), and students (eight of 12 respondents).

Most parish respondents reported relatively high percentages of immigrants at all levels of their parish communities. Unlike in past studies, the CRISIS survey did *not* find stark differences in the rates of immigrant parishioners, parish staff, and priests:

- Eight parishes reported that immigrants constituted more than 75 percent of their communities; three reported that they constituted between 50 and 75 percent; five between 25 and 49 percent; and five, less than 25 percent.
- Immigrants were also active members of parish communities. Nine parish respondents said that immigrants constituted more than 75 percent of regular mass attendees, seven that they comprised between 50 and 75 percent, three between 25 and 49 percent, and four, less than 25 percent.
- Six parish respondents reported that immigrants represented more than 75 percent of registered parishioners; eight parishes that they constituted between 50 and 75 percent; three between 25 and 49 percent; and four, less than 25 percent.
- Immigrants also volunteered at high rates. Eight parish respondents reported that immigrants represented more than 75 percent of volunteers; seven between 50 to 75 percent of volunteers; five 25 to 49 percent; and three, fewer than 25 percent.

- Seven parish respondents reported that immigrants comprised more than 75 percent of paid staff; two that they comprised between 50 and 75 percent; seven between 25 and 49 percent; and six less than 25 percent.
- Nine parish respondents reported that immigrants comprised more than 75 percent of their priests; five that they comprised between 50 and 75 percent; one 25 to 49 percent; and seven less than 25 percent.
- Nine parish respondents reported that immigrants comprised more than 75 percent of their program ministry leadership; four parishes that they comprised between 50 and 75 percent; two 25 to 49 percent; and seven, less than 25 percent.

One respondent described the importance of pastors and parish leaders that reflect the composition of the immigrant community: “Seven or eight years ago, the Guatemalan community were not accepted and [were] neglected. Were not even allowed to enter into the church. Now, they are the majority in the Parish, with a good Pastor and a Mexican Pastoral Associate.”

The Effect of the Pandemic

Most Catholic Charities et al. respondents report that demand for their services increased a lot or a little during the pandemic (Figure 8). The budgets of most respondents stayed about the same (35), with 20 indicating their budgets had decreased and 16 that they had increased.

Figure 8. Change in Demand for Services Among Responding Catholic Charities et al. Institutions During the COVID-19 Pandemic*

18 institutions did not respond, and 10 responded N/A or unsure.

*Hospitals, clinics, schools, colleges, universities, and parishes are excluded and analyzed separately.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

CRISIS Survey respondents added significant new services during the pandemic (Figure 9). For Catholic Charities et al. respondents, these included:

- Delivery of food and sanitation supplies.
- Financial assistance for those at risk of losing housing or utilities.
- COVID-19 testing, education, contact tracing, and quarantine services.
- Mental health services.
- Breakfast and lunch for children not in school.

Figure 9. Number of Responding Catholic Charities et al. Institutions, Universities, and Parishes that Added New Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

34 institutions did not respond.

*Schools, colleges, hospitals, and clinics are excluded from this analysis.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

University and college respondents reported offering: emergency grants, financial support, pastoral support, prayer and spirituality rituals, and grief support. These respondents emphasized the need for heightened attention to the situations and challenges of immigrants during the pandemic. One said that some faculty members “do not understand the ‘at-home’ dynamics that can affect how students interact online:”

For example, a student shared that she does not like to turn her camera on when in class because she does not feel comfortable “broadcasting” her situation at home. Her professor was insistent that she turn on her camera without consideration for her circumstances. Other students have talked about the need to go to their friends’ homes so they can have a quiet space where they can attend class. These are real challenges that many faculty members ignore.

“University and college respondents emphasized the need for heightened attention to the situations and challenges of immigrants during the pandemic.”

According to respondents, the uncertainty of the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program also negatively affected immigrant students. The DACA program is an Obama-era program that offers a reprieve from deportation and employment authorization for undocumented persons who came to the United States prior to age 16 and have lived continuously in the country. A report released in April 2020 estimated that 450,000 undocumented students were enrolled in US colleges and universities, including 216,000 students eligible for the DACA program (Feldblum et al. 2020).

University and college respondents recounted that these students experience “a lot of anxiety,” stress, and uncertainty regarding their futures. One stated that the uncertainty made it difficult for them to “plan ahead/career build.” Another stated that it diminished their desire and energy to plan. Still another characterized this uncertainty as a “tremendous burden,” and said that students seeking support were mostly “looking for someone who understands their situation and will offer encouragement.”

One school respondent reported it had assisted its immigrant students and their families during the pandemic with food, electric bills, prescription costs, rent, car payments, internet access, and “computer devices.”

Parish respondents reported providing the following new services:

- Support funds for affected families.
- COVID-19 testing and information sessions on protection from infection.
- Assistance with funeral expenses.
- Information on available services and rental assistance.
- Zoom meetings for youth and other groups.
- Food distribution programs for persons infected with COVID-19 and other homebound persons.
- Coats, blankets, and heaters.
- Mental health services.
- Gift cards for food and gas.
- Pastoral visits to asylum-seekers at the border.
- Voter registration and Census promotion activities.

Remote and Virtual Services

The great majority of CRISIS Survey respondents continued to provide in-person services during the pandemic. A few continued to provide all of their services in-person. Many said they had suspended some services during the pandemic, such as tax assistance, classes, home visits, transportation and interpretation for medical appointments, shelter care, a dance group, communion to the sick in hospitals and convalescent homes, a special mass with immigrant children, and meetings of elderly, young family, and young adult groups.

Virtually all respondents provided services remotely (Figure 10). “What has changed,” summarized one respondent, was not so much the services provided as “the delivery of services.” Most Catholic Charities et al. respondents reported offering remote services during the pandemic and some only offered remote services, which included:

- Faith formation and religious education.
- Refugee case management services.
- Legal counseling, informational sessions, and representation.
- Social service and legal referrals.
- ESL, citizenship, and GED classes.
- Employment services and job training.
- Health care and medical services classes.
- Mental health case management.
- Telehealth services for substance use disorder treatment.
- Youth meetings and tutoring.
- Leadership training, accompaniment sessions, and prayer services.
- Rosaries and Novenas in Spanish for those who lost loved ones.
- Sacrament preparation.
- Parenting classes.
- Advocacy events.

Parish respondents, in turn, reported offering remote religious education, masses, funerals, religious services, faith formation, pastoral counseling, rent assistance, advocacy, economic support, COVID-19 testing, payment of power bills, English tutoring, citizenship preparation, naturalization assistance, legal information, and referrals.

Figure 10. Number of Responding Catholic Charities et al. and Parishes that Offered Remote Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

28 institutions did not respond.

*Schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics, and universities are excluded from this analysis.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

The Limits of Remote and Virtual Services

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the importance of digital access and digital literacy skills (Cherewka 2020).¹³ It also exacerbated the consequences of the “digital divide” between immigrants and US-born residents and households (ibid.). Perhaps in part for this reason, many respondents did not view remote or virtual services as an ideal way to serve immigrants. One Catholic Charities et al. respondent wrote:

Our program has been operating entirely remotely since mid-March 2020. We have faced many challenges providing remote services. Access to, and comprehension of, technology for video chats (for virtual home visits) and a reliable internet connection have been the biggest barriers. We have also struggled to get signed paperwork from clients (consent forms, release forms, etc.), due to similar reasons.

Another Catholic Charities et al. respondent spoke of “the steep learning curve that many people in our immigrant community face when using online/remote platforms such as Zoom.” Still another reported that it could not offer remote services early in the pandemic “because many of our client households did not have computing devices or internet connections.” This respondent ultimately developed a plan, recruited a “digitally savvy volunteer” and hired staff to assist “clients with their tech support needs.”

Remote services and learning present a particular challenge for students “already confronting

¹³ Digital literacy refers to the ability to problem solve and manage information through digital means.

significant linguistic, sociocultural and economic challenges as they navigate learning a new language and their schoolwork simultaneously” (Williams and Carhill-Poza 2020). In addition, many immigrant students work and must meet responsibilities at home “such as childcare, cooking, cleaning, bill paying and translating for other family members” (ibid.).

In response to an open-ended question on whether remote or virtual classes pose any unique challenges or obstacles to immigrant students, university and college respondents highlighted the living conditions of immigrants and their lack of necessary technology and internet access. One reported that immigrant students often live in “multigenerational household[s] in which multiple people are learning online” and “without many private spaces.” Another said that “immigrant students have less space to work in and may not have the same equipment and internet access.” This respondent also expressed concern that immigrant students may not take advantage of the assistance offered by the university in this area. One reported that immigrant students struggle with lack of privacy and “synchronous classes” in their households. Another lamented that immigrant students do not “have access to the same resources as non-immigrant students that the government provides.”

One respondent pointed out that “technology literacy and access was a challenge before the pandemic” but that students had been “trying harder to stay connected.” However, many were “no longer able to pay for courses and their family and work responsibilities are more demanding, stressful and time consuming.”

Parish respondents also remarked on the limitations of remote or virtual services. One reported that remote faith formation for children had been difficult “as many parents are not computer literate.” Another respondent said: “The biggest struggle was the inability of immigrants to deal with technology. The lack of knowledge of the different platforms and the lack of a PC or cellphone capacity to launch programs like Zoom or Teams.”

Another parish respondent spoke to the learning curve related to group meetings on Zoom, Skype, and WhatsApp: “The difficulty at the beginning was to learn and improvise since nobody was prepared for such an operation.” One spoke of the challenge of encouraging immigrants to register for and “stay faithful to Zoom classes.”

Barriers to Accessing Services Prior to the Pandemic

CMS’s 2019 FEER Survey queried about factors that negatively impacted immigrants’ access to Catholic programs and ministries. Among such factors, FEER respondents identified fear of apprehension or deportation (59 percent); lack of awareness about the availability of services (54 percent); transportation problems (46 percent); limited English proficiency (33 percent); lack of legal status (35 percent); hostility, prejudice, or indifference from the broader community (23 percent); cultural barriers (23 percent); hostility, prejudice, or indifference from the Catholic community (10 percent); and limited cell phone usage or internet access (7 percent).

The CRISIS Survey similarly asked respondents to identify major barriers to immigrants in accessing their services prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 (Figure

11). Catholic Charities et al. responses largely echoed FEER Survey responses. Respondents identified cultural and logistical barriers, lack of resources, government policies, lack of status, and community attitudes. However, smaller percentages of respondents (34 percent in the CRISIS survey, compared to 59 percent in the FEER Survey) identified “fear of apprehension or deportation” and a larger percentage (18 percent, compared to 7 percent) identified limited cell phone or internet access. In their comments, respondents also identified as major barriers childcare availability, work schedules, and limited agency capacity and resources. A diocesan respondent highlighted immigrants’ “fear of traveling due to legal status and local histories of profiling and detentions, transportation, lack of internet for some services, and work schedules.”

University and college respondents identified as the greatest barriers to the success of immigrant students pre-pandemic: lack of financial support; cultural disconnects with faculty and administrators; family poverty and instability; uncertainty about the future; fear of deportation; hostility/indifference from the Catholic community; trauma; lack of legal status; hostility/prejudice from the broader community; transportation difficulties; and non-responsive curricula.

Figure 11. Barriers to Immigrants’ Access to Services Provided by Responding Catholic Charities et al. Institutions Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic

All institutions responded, 9 responded N/A or unsure.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

Parish respondents identified several factors that negatively affected immigrants’ access to their services, programs and ministries, among them limited English, lack of awareness of services offered, and lack of legal status (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Barriers to Immigrants' Access to Services Provided by Responding Parishes Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic

All institutions responded, 3 responded N/A or unsure.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

“Other” factors identified by parish respondents were the slow pace of asylum case adjudications, the border wall, and lack of services for children with disabilities.

The three health care respondents recounted that the number of uninsured immigrants in their care had increased since the beginning of the pandemic. One said that the greatest obstacle to improving health care for immigrants was the “stigma of mental health.” Among other difficulties in treating immigrants during the pandemic, healthcare providers identified immigrants’ unfamiliarity with the US health system, lack of transportation, inability to speak English, distrust of government, fear of law enforcement, identification requirements, and lack of email accounts.

Obstacles to Accessing Services during the Pandemic

Asked to select the greatest obstacles they “currently” faced (i.e., during the pandemic) in serving immigrants and their families, 76 Catholic Charities et al. respondents identified the COVID-19 pandemic, 56 limited funding, 35 increased demand that outpaced resources, and 28 government restrictions (Figure 13). Some respondents spoke of the inability to meet in person, lack of funding, the need for interpreters, internet access problems, lack of culturally competent staff, the inability to connect immigrants to disability services, and leadership that is “almost entirely white non-immigrant.”

Figure 13. Obstacles Faced in Serving Immigrants and their Families during the COVID-19 Pandemic by Responding Catholic Charities et al. Institutions

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

University and college respondents identified the pandemic, the need for additional support services, and limited funding as the greatest obstacles to educating immigrant students (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Obstacles Faced in Educating Immigrant Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic by Responding Catholic Universities

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

University and college respondents also identified obstacles and challenges faced by immigrant students themselves. One reported that some immigrant students had caretaking responsibilities that required them to take online classes, and that some students might not be able to pursue in-person schooling in the fall of 2021. In the alternative, a return to in-person schooling would create difficulties for families that depend on students to care for their

siblings or to assume other household responsibilities.

One respondent said that immigrant students were “finding it difficult to balance their studies and their personal lives” and to stay in school given their families’ economic circumstances, a problem compounded by “relatives getting sick.” This respondent also reported that immigrants were “struggling to keep up with their studies and maintain a high level of performance.” Another spoke of increased “family pressures, due to parent loss of employment or cuts in work hours” and “having to care for sibling no longer attending school in person.”

As a respondent explained, “immigrant families live in more crowded conditions and work in more essential but vulnerable jobs.” In addition, these students may themselves be “essential workers mandated to work.” According CMS’s estimates, 69 percent of all immigrants in the US labor force and 74 percent of undocumented workers are essential workers (Kerwin and Warren 2020). Approximately 6.2 million essential workers were not eligible for relief payments under the CARES Act (ibid.). Other respondents reported on “financial challenges,” Zoom fatigue, poor internet access, “substandard resources (internet, laptop, cellphone)” for online learning, and lack of access to health care and financial relief. One respondent concluded that, “the gap” between immigrants and other students “keeps getting bigger.”

The school survey track asked respondents to identify unique obstacles or challenges created by the pandemic for immigrant students and families. One respondent identified the strain placed on family budgets by “stopping the labor force.” Two said that remote or virtual classes presented difficulties for immigrant students given their challenges in gaining internet access and lack of access to computers and related devices necessary “to learn.”

Parish respondents indicated that their greatest obstacles to serving immigrants and their families during the pandemic included the pandemic itself, limited funding, and increased demand for services that outpaced their resources (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Obstacles Faced by Responding Parishes in Serving Immigrants and their Families during the COVID-19 Pandemic

All institutions responded, 0 responded N/A or unsure.

Number of Parishes

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

Immigration Enforcement and Accessing Catholic Institutions and Services

Respondents overwhelmingly reported that immigration enforcement very negatively or somewhat negatively affects immigrants' participation in their services and programs (Figure 16). In their open-ended responses, Catholic Charities et al. respondents identified fear of deportation as a primary impediment to immigrants receiving their services and participating in their programs and ministries. One respondent put it bluntly: "Fear deters clients from seeking any services." Another explained that enforcement "[c]reates fear, [an] environment of misinformation, trauma for families who endured/endure extensive separation." Respondents particularly identified fear of driving without a license or legal documents.

One respondent reported, "Fear of ICE and round-ups, locally in our state and nationally, along with negative immigration rhetoric from the out-going president have made our clients very fearful to access services they rightly qualify for." Fear serves as a barrier "to even apply for legal status for fear of being rejected and then deported" or to "attend know-your rights" sessions. Recent arrests and raids, in particular, had led immigrants to "stop going to church" or to attend church events. However, another respondent argued that immigrants trusted Catholic institutions and were not afraid of receiving services from them.

"Catholic Charities et al. respondents identified fear of deportation as a primary impediment to immigrants receiving their services and participating in their programs and ministries."

Others pointed to how immigration policies and processes can serve as disincentives to participation in Catholic programs and ministries. These include requirements that visa beneficiaries leave the country for consular processing, delays in family reunification, barriers to asylum-seekers entering the United States, decreased refugee admissions, the public charge grounds of inadmissibility, and “Trump policies.”

Parish respondents also reported that fear of arrest when driving remained a barrier to immigrant participation in parish life. One respondent said that enforcement “causes panic in the community, not allowing the immigrant to look for opportunities to better themselves and makes them an easy target for injustices and labor abuses.” Another responded: “Fear, when there are rumors of raids or tightened enforcement families will not leave their homes or participate in programs or ministries.” Another recounted: “At one time we would get calls to confirm there were no unmarked vans outside our offices before clients would feel comfortable coming in.” According to respondents, fear of deportation also extends to the students of Catholic schools.

All three healthcare respondents believed that federal immigration policies negatively affected use of their services. As one put it, “fears of being arrested, deported, mistreated, misjudged, harassed preclude [immigrants] from seeking medical and mental health care.” The respondents strongly agreed that:

- Undocumented immigrants were “avoiding or delaying visits to hospitals or clinics for fear of apprehension and/or deportation.”
- Immigrants in their communities were avoiding or delaying visits to hospitals or clinics due to the Trump administration’s public charge rule.
- Undocumented immigrants were “avoiding or delaying seeking treatment for COVID-19 for fear of apprehension and/or deportation.”

Figure 16. Impact of Federal Immigration Enforcement on Immigrants’ Participation in Catholic Charities et al. Institutions, Universities, and Parishes

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

As with FEER Survey respondents, most university and college respondents to the CRISIS Survey reported that well-publicized enforcement events or announcements increased students' immigration-related advocacy or political activity. It also led them to seek out spaces to share their feelings and experiences; prevented some undocumented students from participating in off-campus protests; and made them fearful for parents and family members that might be at risk of removal.

One respondent made the point that university life can seem distant from the life experiences of many immigrant students, who cannot participate in campus life or fully benefit from the college experience:

Our campus often feels like a bubble, disconnected from the realities of many students in our region. Students who commute are the ones who are intimately connected to the reality in our neighborhoods, etc. They are the ones who often express being discouraged by the toxic rhetoric and immigration enforcements that have taken over the past few years. Because they are dealing with so much at home and in their private lives, students do not engage in on-campus student activities. They are [so] busy working, studying and making it through that extra-curricular activities take a back seat. This creates a vicious cycle since students lack the ability to network and take part in internships, etc. thus limiting the opportunities of landing a job upon graduation.

This respondent was encouraged by students who were “not staying quiet” and were “calling out policies that they deem as negatively affecting their communities.”

Federal Enforcement Partnerships with Localities

In the period covered by the CRISIS Survey, the two most prominent federal and state/local immigration enforcement partnerships were the Secure Communities and the 287(g) program, the latter named after the relevant section of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Under Secure Communities, state and local law enforcement agencies send the fingerprints of persons they arrest to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which automatically transmits them to DHS to be checked against immigration datasets. ICE can opt to place immigrants who may have violated US immigration laws in removal proceedings. Under the 287(g) program, ICE enters memoranda of understanding that delegate state and local law enforcement agencies with the authority to identify and process removable noncitizens. As of January 2021, ICE had 287(g) agreements with law enforcement agencies in 26 states (ICE 2021). Apart from these formal programs, local law enforcement agencies may also call ICE agents regarding persons they have stopped or arrested.

Most Catholic Charities et al. respondents recounted that cooperation between ICE and state and local law enforcement negatively affected the participation of immigrants in their programs (Figure 17). Some respondents reported that immigrants fear reporting crimes or accessing even basic government facilities like courts. One said that potential sponsors were reluctant to come forward and reunify with their children. Others reported fear of driving.

Significant numbers, however, said this cooperation had no effect on their work with immigrants. A few pointed out that they operated in sanctuary or immigrant-friendly jurisdictions where there was little or no cooperation with ICE. Two respondents, however, said that “rogue” police in sanctuary jurisdictions continued to call ICE on immigrants. Another responded that its engagement with ICE lowered immigrant fear. Others were not aware of local cooperation on immigration enforcement.

“Some respondents reported that immigrants fear reporting crimes or accessing even basic government facilities like courts. One said that potential sponsors were reluctant to come forward and reunify with children.”

Figure 17. Impact of Cooperation between ICE and Local Law Enforcement on Immigrants’ Participation in Services or Programs Offered by Catholic Charities et al. Institutions, Universities and Parishes

65 institutions did not respond to this question, and 47 responded N/A or unsure.

Source: Center for Migration Studies CRISIS Survey: 2020

Parish respondents also explained how cooperation between ICE and state and local law enforcement had negatively affected immigrants’ participation in their programs or ministries. Several said that this cooperation leads to fear of driving because, as one explained, “if by chance they land in jail they know ICE will be called.” Another said, “people do not trust ICE or the police officers” due to “too many deportations and family separations.” Federal/local enforcement partnerships, said one parish respondent, can lead to deportation “of people that are not a threat, or have any conviction, people that are working members, taxpayers, community contributors.”

Conclusions/Recommendations

The CRISIS Survey contributes to the relatively modest literature on the reach, diversity, and productivity of Catholic and other faith-based institutions that serve and work with immigrants and refugees. It identifies the obstacles encountered by immigrants in accessing Catholic programs and ministries – both organizational (funding, staffing, and siting) and exogenous (federal policies, the pandemic, and community opposition). It underscores the difficulties posed by the pandemic and by US immigration policies to the work of Catholic institutions with immigrants. It also shows the reach, vitality, and continued relevance of Catholic institutions to the integration, protection, and wellbeing of immigrant communities.

The report recommends that scholars and researchers prioritize independent, person-centered research that critically analyzes the work of Catholic immigrant-serving institutions. There is a growing body of research that centers the perspectives of immigrants and refugees on government policies and practices. Some of this research has been conducted through Catholic institutions. For example, the Kino Border Initiative (KBI), CMS, and the Office of Justice and Ecology of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States conducted a study on the effects of deportation on families (Kerwin, Alulema, and Nicholson 2018). The study included interviews of deportees at KBI in Nogales, Sonora and of the family members of deportees through Catholic parishes in Florida, Michigan, and Minnesota. There is far less research, however, that evaluates the work of Catholic and other faith-based institutions from the perspective of immigrants and refugees.

There is also a need for more analysis of how Catholic institutions work with each other – within Arch/dioceses, regionally, nationally, and across these realms – in response to the needs of immigrants. Catholic parishes, for example, provide legal, refugee resettlement, health, and educational services, while Arch/diocesan Catholic Charities agencies and national Catholic trade associations address the same overarching needs from different vantage points. CMS surveys and the CIII process have lifted up synergies between diverse Catholic agencies. Migration and Refugee Services of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, for example, administers refugee resettlement programs through and in partnership with Catholic Charities and parishes. Catholic hospitals, in turn, have created special training and employment programs for refugees. CLINIC supports a national network of legal service programs for immigrants that operate within Catholic Charities and, in some cases, Arch/diocesan offices.

The CRISIS Survey, earlier studies, and the CIII process have also accentuated the need for diverse Catholic agencies in the same Arch/dioceses and regions to gather regularly to address common challenges and to promote integrated, holistic services to immigrants. It would significantly strengthen the collective work of the Catholic Church with immigrants and refugees to map, assess, and improve the programmatic connections between Catholic institutions, particularly those responding to the same needs. Catholic institutions should continue to build pathways for immigrants that lead to paid staff and leadership positions. As shown in Figure 7, most Catholic Charities et al. respondents reported on the wide disparity between the rates of immigrant leadership in their institutions and immigrants who use their services. Having staff

and leadership who share the same language and cultural backgrounds as those with whom they work can facilitate outreach and service delivery.

“It would significantly strengthen the collective work of the Catholic Church with immigrants and refugees to map, assess, and improve the programmatic connections between Catholic institutions.”

Catholic institutions should also take stock of the creative new programs, skills, and capacities that they have developed during the pandemic and should build on them. They should also develop plans to ensure that immigrants can access their programs and ministries as the pandemic subsides. These plans will need to combine communication strategies, with financial support and services such as transportation, childcare, and training on use of communications technologies. The CRISIS Survey documents the increased needs of immigrants and increased obstacles to their ability to access Catholic institutions during the pandemic. It also highlights conditions that diminish and detract from their participation in Catholic institutions, such as the work and caregiving responsibilities of university students. In addition, it points to the possibility that some immigrants, including school children, will not return to Catholic institutions without significant encouragement and assistance. Catholic parishes have repeatedly urged parishioners to return to mass and other parish ministries. Other Catholic institutions should follow suit.

Catholic institutions should also develop a comprehensive strategy to engage Catholics who do not understand, who ignore, and who work at cross-purposes to Catholic teaching and policy positions in this area. The FEER Survey reported on government policies and nativist rhetoric that interfered with the ability of Catholic institutions to fulfill a core aspect of their mission; i.e.,

to welcome the stranger. Catholic institutions and other FBOs view such policies as “both an immense social problem, and a barrier to their pastoral work,” as reflected in “divided families, depopulated parish communities, reduced attendance at mass and parish ministries” (Kerwin, Alulema, and Nicholson 2018, 238-39).¹⁴ CRISIS Survey respondents recounted the same dynamic of immigrants who fear that they will be arrested, detained, and deported if they seek assistance from Catholic institutions, even support related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The CRISIS Survey points to the possibility that some immigrants, including school children, will not return to Catholic institutions without significant encouragement and assistance.”

Many Catholics in public life, sectors of the Catholic media, and individual Catholics harbor beliefs and attitudes about immigrants that are inconsistent with Catholic teaching. Some express support for individual immigrants, but otherwise echo the views of anti-immigrant politicians and news sources. Many Catholics treat migrant and refugee protection as a second-tier or lesser priority in Catholic social teaching, a viewpoint that Pope Francis has rejected (Francis 2018).¹⁵ This reality has been a major source of consternation for CIII participants and Catholic immigrant-serving institutions. It has also been a source of anguish for immigrants and their children, and it presents an overriding challenge for what scholars have characterized as a “church of ‘minorities’” (Ospino and Weitzel-O’Neill 2014, 6). Bishops, pastors, and other church leaders that may be disinclined to address what they view as politically controversial issues should nonetheless speak strongly on the importance of the work of Catholic institutions in this area and on the struggles and hopes of immigrants.

“Many Catholics in public life, sectors of the Catholic media, and individual Catholics harbor beliefs and attitudes about immigrants that are inconsistent with Catholic teaching.”

The work of Catholic institutions in promoting racial justice deserves far greater attention than the CRISIS Survey afforded it. Additional research might also explore difficulties in connecting immigrants (particularly children) to disability services, the stigma for immigrants over receipt of mental health service, and the very robust participation at all levels of immigrants in respondent parishes, as compared to respondents in previous surveys.

¹⁴ In several well-publicized cases, the Trump administration sought to confiscate land on the border owned by Catholic institutions in order to construct its signature border wall. Catholic leaders argued that this taking would impede access to their ministries, result in border crossing deaths, and violate their religious freedom (Guidos 2019).

¹⁵ “We often hear it said that, with respect to relativism and the flaws of our present world, the situation of migrants, for example, is a lesser issue. Some Catholics consider it a secondary issue compared to the ‘grave’ bioethical questions. That a politician looking for votes might say such a thing is understandable, but not a Christian, for whom the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children. Can we not realize that this is exactly what Jesus demands of us, when he tells us that in welcoming the stranger we welcome him (cf. Mt 25:35)?” (Francis 2018, §102).

Catholic institutions should also redouble their work with the administration and Congress to reform US immigrant laws. To that end, the US Citizenship Act of 2021 would:

- Provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented US residents who were physically present in the United States on or before January 1, 2021, as well as immigrants who engaged in essential critical labor or services during the COVID-19 public health emergency, H-2A non-immigrants (temporary agricultural workers), and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients.¹⁶
- Reduce the residence requirement for naturalization from five years to three years for all lawful permanent residents.
- Make noncitizens who entered the United States as children, including DACA recipients, eligible for permanent residence.
- Make nationals of countries designated for TPS or Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED) who have been continuously physically present in the United States since January 1, 2017 and were eligible for TPS or DED on that date, eligible for permanent residence.
- Eliminate bars that prohibit immigrants from returning to the United States for three years or 10 years based on prior lack of status.
- Reduce the immense family- and employment-based visa backlogs by recapturing unused visas (Kerwin and Warren 2019b), and by eliminating per-country visa caps.¹⁷

Catholic institutions should also work with states and localities to create welcoming and inclusive communities that promote immigrant integration. Given their work in responding to the COVID-19 crisis, Catholic institutions can play an important role in encouraging immigrants to become vaccinated and in advocating for equal benefits and services to immigrants as they seek to recover from the myriad effects of the pandemic.

These steps would not only improve the lives and prospects of immigrants, their families, and their broader circles of association, they would also remove a significant barrier to the expression by Catholic organizations and other FBOs of their core religious convictions. The Trump administration adopted a variety of tactics to obstruct the legal immigration process for disfavored groups, particularly low- and middle-income working-class persons, and persons with close family ties to a US citizen or LPR that would qualify them for a family-based visa (Kerwin and Warren 2019a). President Biden, in turn, has ordered an exhaustive review of “existing regulations, orders, guidance documents, policies, and any other similar agency actions” that are

¹⁶ Narrower legislation would legalize and offer a path to permanent residence to specific immigrant populations. The American Dream and Promise Act, H.R. 6, 117th Cong. (2021), for example, would provide a path to permanent residence for certain undocumented residents brought to the United States as children, and to TPS and DED recipients. The Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021, H.R.1603, 117th Cong. (2021) would legalize undocumented agricultural workers, offer a path to permanent residence to certain long-term agricultural workers, and amend the H-2A non-immigrant program.

¹⁷ US Citizenship Act of 2021 (HR 1177 and S. 348), 117th Cong. (2021-2022).

inconsistent with effective and efficient delivery of “immigration processes and other benefits.”¹⁸ The order also calls for eliminating “sources of fear and other barriers that prevent immigrants from accessing government services available to them,” and promoting “integration, inclusion, and citizenship.”¹⁹ Catholic institutions should strongly support this initiative.

“Catholic institutions have a particularly important role to play in encouraging immigrant communities to become vaccinated and in advocating for equal benefits and services to immigrants as they seek to recover from the myriad effects of the pandemic.”

The CRISIS survey lends support to legislative and administrative reform from the perspective of Catholic institutions and the immigrants with whom they work and worship. The survey demonstrates the responsiveness of these institutions to the needs of immigrant communities during a period of punitive immigration policies and a devastating pandemic. It documents the many ways that Catholic institutions have accompanied immigrants during an extraordinarily challenging time.

¹⁸ “Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans,” Exec. Order No. 14012, 86 Fed. Reg. 8277 (February 2, 2021).

¹⁹ Id.

References

- ACCU (American Catholic Colleges and Universities). 2021. "Catholic Higher Education FAQs." Washington, DC: ACCU. <https://www.accunet.org/Catholic-Higher-Ed-FAQs>.
- CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate). 2021. "Frequently Requested Church Statistics." Washington, DC: CARA. Accessed May 25, 2021. <https://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/>.
- CCUSA (Catholic Charities USA). 2020. "Living Our Faith Through Actions: 2019 Annual Report." Alexandria, VA: CCUSA. <https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CCUSA-2019-Annual-Report-ND-FINAL072020.pdf>.
- CHA (Catholic Health Association). 2021. "US Catholic Health Care: Fact Sheet." Washington, DC: CHA. https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2021-the-strategic-profile-sb_final.pdf?sfvrsn=2.
- Cherewka, Alexis. 2020. "The Digital Divide Hits US Immigrant Households Disproportionately during the COVID-19 Pandemic." Migration Information Source. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, September 3. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/digital-divide-hits-us-immigrant-households-during-covid-19>.
- CLINIC (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.). 2021. "About Us." Silver Spring, MD: CLINIC. <https://cliniclegal.org/about-us>.
- CMS (Center for Migration Studies of New York). 2021. "State-Level Unauthorized Population and Eligible-to-Naturalize Estimates." Data Tool. New York: CMS. <http://data.cmsny.org/>.
- CNA (Catholic News Agency). 2021. "Catholic school enrollment sees sharpest drop in nearly 50 years." Washington, DC: CNA, February 8. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/catholic-school-enrollment-sees-sharpest-drop-in-nearly-50-years-46744>.
- Feldblum, Miriam, Steven Hubbard, Andrew Lim, Christian Penichet-Paul, and Hannah Siegel. 2020. "Undocumented Students in Higher Education: How Many Students are in U.S. Colleges and Universities, and Who Are They?" Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration and New American Economy. <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/report-undocumented-students-in-higher-education-how-many-students-are-in-u-s-colleges-and-universities-and-who-are-they/>.
- Francis. 2019. "'It is not just about migrants.' Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2019." Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20190527_world-migrants-day-2019.html.

- _____. 2018. "Gaudete et Exsultate (Rejoice and be Glad)." Apostolic Exhortation, §102. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html.
- _____. 2016. "'Migrants and Refugees Challenge Us. The Response of the Gospel of Mercy.' Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees." Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20150912_world-migrants-day-2016.html.
- Guidos, Rhina. 2019. "Judge allows survey of church property for border wall construction." *Catholic News Service*, February 7. <https://www.catholicnews.com/judge-allows-survey-of-church-property-for-border-wall-construction/>.
- Guttentag, Lucas. 2021. "Immigration Policy Tracking Project." <https://immpolicytracking.org/home/>.
- Hoover, Brett, and Hosffman Ospino. 2016. "Hispanic Ministry and Parish Life." In *Hispanic Ministry in the 21st Century: Urgent Matters*, edited by Hosffman Ospino, Elsie Miranda, and Brett Hoover. Miami, FL: Convivium Press.
- ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). 2021. "Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g) Immigration and Nationality Act." Washington, DC: ICE. <https://www.ice.gov/identify-and-arrest/287g>.
- Kerwin, Donald, Daniela Alulema, and Mike Nicholson. 2018. "Communities in Crisis: Interior Removals and Their Human Consequences." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 6(4): 226-242. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2331502418820066>.
- Kerwin, Donald, and Kyle Barron. 2017. "Building Structures of Solidarity and Instruments of Justice: The Catholic Immigrant Integration Surveys." New York, NY: Center for Migration Studies. <https://cmsny.org/publications/ciisurveysreport/>.
- Kerwin, Donald, and Mike Nicholson. 2019. "The Effects of Immigration Enforcement of Faith-Based Organizations: An Analysis of the FEER Survey." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 7(2): 42-52. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2331502419854103>.
- Kerwin, Donald, and Robert Warren. 2019a. "Putting Americans First: A Statistical Case for Encouraging Rather than Impeding and Devaluing US Citizenship." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 7(4): 108-122. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2331502419894286>.
- _____. 2019b. "Fixing What's Most Broken in the US Immigration System: A Profile of the Family Members of US Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents Mired in Multiyear Backlogs." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 7(2): 36-41. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2331502419852925>.
- _____. 2020. "US Foreign-Born Workers in the Global Pandemic: Essential and Marginalized." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 8(3): 282-300. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2311502420952752>.

- Kerwin, Donald, and Breana George. 2014. *US Catholic Institutions and Immigrant Integration: Will the Church Rise to the Challenge?* Vatican City: Lateran University Press. <https://cmsny.org/publications/us-catholic-institutions-and-immigrant-integration-will-the-church-rise-to-the-challenge/>.
- Lai, Tianjian. 2021. "Legal Exclusion, Civic Exclusion: How Legal Status Stratifies Latino Immigrants' Civic Engagement." *International Migration Review* 55(1): 195-226.
- NCEA (National Catholic Education Association). 2021. "Data Brief: New Students in Catholic Schools." Leesburg, Virginia: NCEA. https://www.ncea.org/NCEA/Who_We_Are/About_Catholic_Schools/NCEA/Who_We_Are/About_Catholic_Schools/Catholic_School_Data/Catholic_School_Data.aspx?hkey=86ec3eb1-b329-4e98-9f0e-f271dc6b8d50.
- Ospino, Hosffman, and Patricia Weitzel-O'Neill. 2014. "Catholic Schools in an Increasingly Hispanic Church: A Summary Report of Findings from the National Survey of Catholic Schools Serving Hispanic Families." Boston, MA: Boston College. <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/stm/pdf/2016/Catholic%20Schools%20and%20Hispanic%20Families%20-%20Boston%20College%202016-FINALsec.pdf>.
- Paul VI. 1967. "*Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples)." Libreria Editrice Vaticana. http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html.
- Schoenholtz, Andrew I., Jaya Ramji-Nogales, and Philip G. Schrag. 2021. *The End of Asylum*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Sugarman, Julie and Melissa Lazarín. 2020. "Educating English Learners during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Policy Ideas for States and School Districts." Migration Policy Institute, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy. Washington, DC: MPI. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-english-learners-covid-19-final.pdf>.
- USCCB (US Conference of Catholic Bishops). 2021. "Glossary of Catholic Terms." Washington, DC: USCCB. <https://www.usccb.org/offices/public-affairs/catholic-terms>.
- WHO (World Health Organization). 2020. "Listings of WHO's Response to COVID-19." Geneva: WHO. <https://www.who.int/news/item/29-06-2020-covidtimeline>.
- Williams, Timothy P., and Avary Carhill-Poza. 2020. "For many immigrant students, remote learning during COVID-19 comes with more hurdles." *The Conversation*, September 21. <https://theconversation.com/for-many-immigrant-students-remote-learning-during-covid-19-comes-with-more-hurdles-144633>.