



Media Statement

April 22, 2024

California Welcoming Taskforce Statement

RE: New Federal Asylum Funding for the San Diego Region

From Lindsay Toczylowski, executive director of Immigrant Defenders Law Center; Erika Pinheiro, executive director of Al Otro Lado; Esmeralda Flores, southern region policy manager for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights; Kate Clark, Esq., senior director of immigration services, Jewish Family Service of San Diego; and Isa Peña, director of strategy for Innovation Law Lab

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced \$39.2 million in new federal funding to the San Diego region as part of its Shelter and Services Program (SSP). This investment from the federal government will bolster local efforts to provide shelter, food and other supportive services to people seeking asylum, connecting them with family members or sponsors in the U.S.

Now, we strongly urge County of San Diego government leaders to work closely with the [California Welcoming Task Force](#)'s member organizations – working on-the-ground every day – to learn the region's most urgent needs, and collaborate with us to ensure that this federal funding goes where it can do the most good in advance of the April 26 federal response deadline. Without these critical conversations, San Diego does not have a coordinated regional response.

This funding could not come at a better time. Every day, vulnerable children, families and adults fleeing violence and persecution are dumped onto the streets of San Diego, left to fend for themselves in a new country without food, housing, transportation, or any other resources. This unacceptable practice of what is known as "street releases" can add hundreds of people to our state's unhoused population, and is a growing, preventable humanitarian crisis. In the past month alone, 23,000 people seeking asylum were released onto the streets of San Diego.

This increased investment by the federal government is the direct result of years-long advocacy efforts by member organizations of the California Welcoming Task Force. We are incredibly grateful to our federal government partners and our elected representatives in Congress for listening to our concerns, and for recognizing the [model infrastructure](#) in our region to help people seeking asylum that has been built by local nonprofit organizations.

The California Welcoming Task Force is a binational coalition dedicated to re-envisioning how the U.S. can welcome people seeking asylum safely and expeditiously at our border by coordinating across sectors (humanitarian and health, legal, advocacy and communications). More info. at www.rapidresponsesd.org/cawtf.

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