

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****August 6, 2019**

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SUBJECT: ASYLUM SEEKER SHELTERING OPERATION PLANNING

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's request to provide information regarding asylum seeker sheltering operations in coordination with Catholic Charities, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

In the month of May, El Paso saw 30,000 migrants seeking asylum. This number had been gradually increasing since October 2018, almost 7-10 times the number of last year, and this is just one border crossing. These individuals are legal asylum seekers that have been processed through federal agencies, including ICE and are awaiting a court date.

Because of the large numbers seen at the border, jurisdictions across the state of Texas were advised in April to prepare to receive asylum seekers. In the last couple of months, the number of asylum seekers at the border has reduced, decreasing the need for asylum seeker shelter operations across the state.

Although the numbers have decreased, we continue to communicate and coordinate with our partners in order to be able to support, activate, and coordinate temporary shelters if ever needed. Fort Worth would be one stop along the way as individuals seeking asylum will be transported (by bus) to their final sponsor destinations. They could be here for 6 hours to 3 days, depending on their final sponsor destination (usually with a family member, friend, or non-profit).

Current Temporary Shelter Contingency Plans:

- Catholic Charities will be the lead on communication for the operation as this is an extension of what is done by the organization on a daily basis. Catholic Charities continues to work with their counterparts in El Paso as needed.
- OEM has worked with our VOAD Coordinator (Catholic Charities) and our community partners to see what assistance could be provided SHOULD numbers ever increase again at the border.
- Possible temporary shelter locations and food/clothing/other resource streams have/are being identified SHOULD it be needed. These shelters will not be used as a permanent housing solution and would be activated for up to 2 weeks at a time.

OEM and our local/regional/federal partners continue to standby and ensure a plan remains in place should we be called upon for this humanitarian effort. Should you have any questions please contact Maribel Martinez-Mejia, Emergency Management Coordinator at 817-392-6173 or via email maribel.martinez@fortworthtexas.gov

David Cooke
City Manager