

S.O  
Submit only

Testimony  
New York State Senate & Assembly  
Joint Legislative Hearing on Human Services  
Thursday, January 30, 2020

Submitted by Daniel Carinci  
Senior Policy Analyst  
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York

Good afternoon to the members of the New York State Senate and Assembly. I am Daniel Carinci, Senior Policy Analyst at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Catholic Charities as a contracting agency and provider of social services, and on the challenges we face entering the FY 2021 budget season.

The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York seeks to uphold the dignity of each person as made in the image of God by serving the basic needs of the poor, troubled, frail and oppressed of all religions. We collaborate with parishes, as well as non-Catholic and Catholic partners, to build a compassionate and just society. Through a network of administered, sponsored, and affiliated agencies, Catholic Charities delivers, coordinates, and advocates for quality human services and programs touching almost every human need.

**Sustaining & Strengthening Human Service Provider Agencies:**

New York engages a broad range of private non-profit agencies – large, small, faith-based and other – to meet critical human service needs. These partnerships are an efficient and effective use of public funds to meet the needs of millions of vulnerable New Yorkers. Increased funding constraints, redundant regulations and reimbursement redesigns seriously threaten the operation and facilities of these programs. New government mandates, such as minimum wage increases, are well-intentioned but not accompanied by contract increases that affect the entire human services sector, leading to agreements that do not fully fund the cost of providing vital services. Fortunately, there are positive signs, including the NYS Non-Profit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program and the Federal Office of Management and Budget guidance to states and cities on indirect cost rates for non-profits.

Catholic Charities has joined with FPWA, the Human Services Council, and over 400 nonprofit human services organizations as part of Strong Nonprofits for a Better New York, a coalition calling for increased State investment in the sector's workforce and infrastructure. As part of this coalition, we support the *3 for 5 Campaign*, which asks the Governor and legislature to commit to a three percent increase across rates and contracts each year for the next five years. This aligns with annual investment increases allotted to Medicaid and education.

**Affordable Housing & Homelessness:**

The critical shortage of affordable housing and the disparity between incomes and rents forces more New York families to pay a very high proportion of their income for housing. Many previously affordable apartments have moved toward market level rents, and those with low incomes and special

needs are particularly impacted by rising costs. State and local governments have important roles in addressing this crisis.

Catholic Charities supports increased shelter allowances for New Yorkers who are homeless or facing homelessness, and new housing support programs to prevent evictions and reduce shelter utilization, such as Home Stability Support Programs. Preserving housing maintains stability, reduces trauma, and is more cost-effective than placing families and individuals into shelters.

Catholic Charities is additionally thankful for the State's continued investment in the five-year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Initiative. Increased investment in combating New York's affordable housing crisis will further reduce the number of New York families and individuals on the street or facing eviction secure sustainable permanent housing.

### **Welcoming New Americans: Integrating Immigrants and Refugees:**

There is consensus that the United States immigration system is broken. Failure to fix the system has caused prolonged and difficult separation of families. It abets fraud and exploitation, creates fear and leaves many in uncertain shadows. Even in the absence of federal reform, New York State and its localities can do much to protect, welcome and integrate immigrants, through providing access to quality immigration legal services, assistance for learning English, civics and naturalization support and strengthening the New York State New Americans Hotline.

Catholic Charities focuses on the concrete needs of families, and especially children, and works with federal and state officials and localities to protect, welcome and integrate immigrants. Catholic Charities supports the New York Immigration Coalition's call for increasing the funding for immigration legal services from \$10 million to \$15.3 million, which would enable legal representatives from the Liberty Defense Project to increase access and bring vital legal, social and educational services to New York's immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.

Catholic Charities also supports additional investment in the New York State Enhanced Services to Refugees Program (NYSESRP), which will help resettlement agencies more fully serve current clients and help new arrivals contribute to New York's population growth and economic revitalization.

### **Strengthening Families; Protecting & Nurturing Children; Resolving Crises:**

Families face continuing challenges in their critical bedrock role in society. Stagnant wages, underperforming schools, rickety public transportation are constant obstacles facing low income working New Yorkers. Catholic Charities is encouraged by the Executive Budget's continued funding of Raise the Age to ensure that youth offenders receive necessary rehabilitation, educational and re-entry services, We support the reduced use of solitary confinement and advocate for the enhanced resources to support alternatives to incarceration, re-entry programs and higher education for inmates.

Catholic Charities additionally supports the expansion of the Empire State Child Credit, which will provide additional support for families who need it the most.