

**What is the primary goal of this ministry?**

The primary purpose of this ministry is to provide humanitarian aid to legal asylum seekers who have come from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and are on their way to their sponsors in various parts of the country. ICE releases families to the streets of Tucson and other cities without money, housing, transportation or the ability to make phone calls.

We offer a safe environment which provides a comfortable place to sleep, warm and nutritious food, the opportunity for children to play and unwind, and the ability to communicate with loved ones back home and sponsors around the country. All of this enables these families to take the next step on their journeys, usually within 2-4 days.

**What specifically have we accomplished through this ministry so far?**

We have provided these services to close to 600 people in the time that our shelter has been open. This includes infants, toddlers, children, teens, and adults. This is a tremendous accomplishment. In addition, we have been one of the most efficient shelters in Southern Arizona, helping people move quickly to their sponsors' homes. This is important for their legal cases as well as often reuniting them with family already in the United States.

In addition, many of our volunteers report that this has been a powerful part of their spirituality during this time. We are being transformed by helping others.

**Is a migrant ministry now the main focus of Rincon's mission?**

The migrant ministry is one of Rincon's programs. In addition to educational and social programs, we do many things to help those in need, such as making sandwiches for the homeless, supporting programs for people with HIV/AIDS in Arizona, creating comforting shawls, visiting the sick and more. We also focus on the environment with our Creation Care ministry. It is our hope that providing shelter services on a regular basis means that the program operates less on an emergency basis and more as part of our overall ministry.

**How does this impact Rincon's hospitality program?**

The impact on our hospitality program will be positive—we will use the same volunteers for evening and overnight coverage for both programs. Our hospitality guests have helped create this plan and will be invited to volunteer with the program. We value their leadership.

**Are we able to get enough volunteers, donations, and funds to support this ministry?**

Yes, we have been blessed by incredible generosity on the part of our members, friends, and the wider community. The scaled-down shelter described in this proposal will require fewer volunteers and resources than what we were providing in the fall, ensuring that we can readily meet these needs on an on-going basis. We have sufficient money in the bank to fund this program for six months even if we did not receive any other donations. However, people

continue to contact us to find out how they can donate to this program, so we anticipate receiving additional resources.

It is important to recognize that these are dedicated gifts that can only be used for a migrant shelter, not for other church expenses.

We suggest the following budget for the first 6 months of operations:

| Item                             | Amount    |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Personnel                        |           |
| Shelter Manager salary           | 9,000     |
| Employment expenses (taxes etc). | 2,000     |
| Infrastructure                   |           |
| Building repair                  | 250       |
| Insurance                        | 320       |
| Equipment                        | 1,000     |
| Cleaning                         | 1,200     |
| Utilities                        | 3,000     |
| Supplies                         |           |
| Food                             | 4,800     |
| Office/Bath supplies             | 600       |
| Transportation                   | 1,000     |
| Stipends (for migrants)          | 1,800     |
| Training                         | 200       |
| Miscellaneous/unplanned          | 1,000     |
| Total                            | \$ 26,170 |

### What is being done to ensure proper security and safety?

Rincon UCC follows the Safer Church guidelines of our denomination. (see [http://www.ucc.org/ministers\\_safe](http://www.ucc.org/ministers_safe) and [http://www.ucc.org/children\\_safety-and-protection-of](http://www.ucc.org/children_safety-and-protection-of) for details). We carry appropriate insurance and have budgeted an increase in costs for coverage of the migrant shelter (see above).

In addition, we have an alarm system from Central Alarm, which includes a key pad with buttons to call the police and fire departments, and two portable fobs which contact Central Alarm and then the police. We have also investigated, and would implement, a visit from the Tucson Police Department to assess our situation and make safety recommendations, which they do routinely with community organizations. We are also looking into an extension of the fencing on the side of the property. We have also read the recommendations from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for communities of faith (<https://www.fema.gov/faith-resources>) and will implement these as appropriate.

Finally, one of the reasons we are moving the shelter to the back of the property is to create more space between the parking lot/front of the church, and our guests (especially the children). This buffer area will increase safety.

### **Who would oversee the shelter program?**

The Ad Hoc committee's work will be done following the vote on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. All the members of the Ad Hoc committee have agreed to serve on an initial oversight committee, with several responsibilities:

- Create a new oversight committee, with opportunities for additional people to get involved
- Convene a meeting of those interested in volunteering to provide information, training, and ways to volunteer
- Support the Personnel Committee in hiring a new staff person

The Shelter Manager, supervised by the Pastor, would be responsible for the day to day running of the shelter. This person will be hired following the standard church procedures, like any other staff member.

### **What about spiritual care?**

We have consulted with other shelters, pastors who work with immigrants, and clergy within our congregation about this. Most programs do not provide any kind of spiritual care and recognize that our guests have immediate physical needs that they must address first. Our guests are just with us for a few days and we believe that offering them a safe and supportive environment is the best gift we can give them at this time.

Our plan is to create an on-call list of clergy willing and able to offer support for those who request it; we already have some volunteers. We are also looking into including an altar in one of the public rooms that would have rosaries, Bibles and prayer books in Spanish (and other languages as appropriate) for those who wish to pray.

We are also making plans for a blessing of the shelter when it opens.

### **Are those we are serving in this country legally?**

All our guests in the migrant shelter are legally seeking asylum in the United States. They are in the beginning stages of a process which will hopefully end with their permanent legal residency in this country.

### **Are our guests able to leave our property?**

Yes, they are free to come and go as they wish. We are simply offering them hospitality.

### **What are the key changes we would make in the future?**

This time of reflection and planning has enabled us to make a number of changes. The main changes would be:

- The hiring of a staff person to manage the logistics of the shelter;
- A smaller shelter that operates on a regular basis, allowing us to focus more on the needs of each guest and making it easier to plan for food, transportation and other needs;

- Designating specific areas for the shelter that allow greater safety and privacy for our guests, without interfering with church programming;
- Specific job descriptions for various aspects of shelter management and new policies to ensure greater safety for volunteers and guests;
- Other enhancements, such as bilingual information sheets for volunteers and guests.