



Forging brighter  
futures



Catholic  
Charities  
USA®





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# Generosity that generates hope

## Providing a lifeline to people in need

The Catholic Charities network serves more than 15 million people each year in communities all across the United States. Catholic Charities clients face just about every challenge you can imagine, but they all have one thing in common: in their moments of greatest need, they know they can rely on Catholic Charities for holistic support and a roadmap to health and stability.

This is only possible thanks to your generosity. As one of our most impactful supporters, you enable Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) to offer assistance to local Catholic Charities agencies facing critical challenges – and you fuel innovative solutions to complex problems, empowering our network to serve more people in need in even more effective ways.

This impact report represents a snapshot of the types of families, individuals and communities that are forging brighter futures with the help of Catholic Charities. Thank you for all you do for your brothers and sisters in need.





# Everyone deserves a place to call home

## Responding to widespread suffering

Rates of homelessness and, in particular, chronic homelessness are on the rise across the United States. As one of the nation's leading providers of emergency shelter as well as affordable housing, the Catholic Charities network's support of homeless families and individuals has never been more critical.

In every corner of the country, Catholic Charities agencies offer services that combat homelessness, from shelters and permanent supportive housing to food pantries, financial assistance, budget coaching and case management services that address a host of underlying causes. At the same time, several initiatives spearheaded by CCUSA have the potential to bolster the country's battle against homelessness in large-scale, sustainable ways.



An ambitious pilot project, the **Healthy Housing Initiative** (HHI) combines the housing placement and case management ingenuity of Catholic Charities member agencies with the primary care and behavioral health expertise of mission-aligned hospitals and healthcare providers to reduce chronic homelessness. Now in its fifth year, the pilot program has generated very promising results across five cities – Detroit, Las Vegas, Portland (Oregon), St. Louis and Spokane – suggesting that the HHI model has the potential to significantly reduce chronic homelessness while also generating cost benefits for hospital systems and insurers. Researchers from Delaware State University are conducting a formal evaluation of the program and its viability to impact homelessness nationwide.

Launched in 2022, CCUSA's **Affordable Housing Gap Loan** pilot program is another innovative initiative that has yielded compelling initial results. A severe lack of affordable housing is one of the leading causes of homelessness nationwide. While a solution to this problem – building more housing – seems obvious, the extreme costs of new housing construction make this a challenge in every community. That's where the Gap Loan program comes in. By providing "gap financing" in the form of low-interest loans, CCUSA helps Catholic Charities agencies overcome funding challenges and put shovels in the ground on new affordable housing projects. The early success of this program – with projects underway in Phoenix, Detroit, Spokane, Richmond, Oklahoma City, Yakima, Portland (Oregon) and Springfield (Missouri) that will result in more than 700 new affordable housing rental units – already has led to an expansion, meaning even more communities will benefit in the coming years.

Addressing a challenge as far-reaching as our country's homelessness crisis also requires legislative action. For that reason, CCUSA this year launched a set of **homelessness advocacy forums** around the country to train local leaders in federal-level advocacy and unearth local policy solutions. Hosted by CCUSA in Oakland, Tampa, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Phoenix, these gatherings bring together Catholic Charities agencies, community officials and representatives from local, state and federal agencies to reflect on challenges and analyze successes. The collective wisdom, best practices and innovative solutions developed at these convenings will help guide the crafting of bipartisan, federal legislation that we hope will be introduced in 2026.



# Providing meals with a focus on nutrition and dignity

## Modern, healthy approaches to food distribution

No service area is more central to the work of Catholic Charities than food and nutrition. In a given year, roughly half of all clients who seek out a Catholic Charities agency do so to receive a warm meal or fresh groceries. For many, food and nutrition support is a gateway to other critical services, as Catholic Charities case managers uncover underlying challenges in need of support.



While the vital importance of food and nutrition services is a constant, our approach to this work is evolving in a variety of exciting ways. Currently, CCUSA is implementing a national hub-and-spoke model, setting up vast food storage centers in key locations around the country so that food items can be shipped quickly to agencies as the needs arise. These food storage facilities represent much more than brick and mortar warehouses; they will allow CCUSA to identify key intersections among our agencies' work and scale and multiply the impact of the Catholic Charities network, eventually also storing and deploying important goods related to other areas of service.

In tandem with this innovative approach to storing and distributing food at scale, CCUSA has encouraged Catholic Charities agencies around the country to take an innovative approach to the type of food offered to clients and the manner in which clients receive it. Across the network, roughly 50 percent of agencies either currently operate or are developing healthy, **client-choice food pantries**. These facilities place a significant emphasis on fresh produce and other nutritious offerings, and they allow clients to shop with dignity and choose the groceries that best meet the needs of their families.

In some areas, the produce offered at these client-choice pantries is actually grown by Catholic Charities. Many agencies now operate **community gardens**, farming initiatives that grow healthy, local fruits and vegetables. From Louisville to Anchorage and in many communities in between, these gardens, which are among the network's fastest growing programs, provide quality offerings for Catholic Charities food pantries, generate income for clients through farmers markets and other distribution opportunities and employ local workers.



# Offering a hand-up to struggling families

## Creating opportunities that help families survive and thrive

Virtually every service offered by Catholic Charities agencies benefits families in need. From a family that lost its home in a hurricane to a father whose mental health struggles are causing pain for his children, families in crisis turn to Catholic Charities in a wide variety of ways.

Some recent network-wide initiatives spearheaded by CCUSA are particularly designed to provide stability to families facing emergency circumstances, and others are created to promote pathways to sustainable, long-term success.

CCUSA's **Helping Hands Program** helps families facing unexpected challenges to navigate the chaos and come out stronger on the other side. These family disruptions come in many different forms:



A medical emergency that makes it impossible for one or both parents to work.



A broken-down car that prevents a father from driving to work or taking his children to school.



A mother fleeing domestic violence in need of a new, safe place to live.

In these cases, Catholic Charities agencies can offer short-term, emergency funds that stabilize families and prevent them from falling into homelessness or other distressing circumstances. Along with these grants, families receive holistic support to chart a clear path forward that will help them avoid falling into the same trouble again. In the first half of 2024, 20 Catholic Charities agencies received and distributed Helping Hands funds to hundreds of families in need.

While Helping Hands focuses on emergency assistance and short-term stability, the **Innovation Challenge** programs provide opportunities for families to set themselves up for long-term flourishing. Last year, the Innovation Challenge called on Catholic Charities agencies to create new, innovative initiatives in the field of workforce development. Ultimately, CCUSA awarded \$2.5 million in funding to nine agencies – three winners and six finalists. Armed with this funding, those projects have launched enhanced economic opportunities for families across these nine communities. In Spokane, one of the winning projects makes it easier for disabled adults to find meaningful employment without losing access to benefits. In Rapid City, another winning program helps single parents achieve greater financial and emotional stability through educational certificate programs and wraparound support services aimed at ending generational poverty.

All of these innovative programs, along with the rest of CCUSA's workforce development efforts, exist to help families build valuable skills for the future, with a focus on helping low-income individuals find and keep jobs that pay a living wage and offer a path for growth and success.



A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, seen in profile, holding a baby. The woman is looking towards the right, and the baby is looking towards the camera. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the textures of their clothing.

# Where mothers can expect holistic and fundamental support

## Helping new mothers stay out of poverty

For more than a century, the Catholic Charities network has supported new and expectant mothers around the country. Some services Catholic Charities agencies offer to mothers are fundamental: confirming that a woman is expecting; distributing diapers, wipes, car seats and baby clothes; offering parenting classes and early childhood education. Others are more comprehensive, including full medical care, behavioral health counseling, home visits, housing or adoption services.

Over the past several years, due to the expiration of some pandemic-era benefits and changing laws in states around the country, the need for these all-important services has grown significantly. As Catholic Charities agencies aid expectant and new mothers at even higher rates, CCUSA is launching a pilot program to study how best to set mothers and families up for long-term success.

The **Lifting New Mothers Out of Poverty** initiative aims to learn from and expand successful agency programs that serve new mothers living in or on the cusp of poverty. The thesis behind the program is that Catholic Charities' supportive case management can tangibly improve the lives of these women and their children, providing pathways out of poverty and hope for their futures. The project – beginning soon in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas – will measure the impact of a specific case management and wraparound services system at a cohort of agencies and quantify their ability to bring mothers to a state of financial and emotional health. Clients' financial wellbeing scores and other factors will be assessed at program intake, after one year in the program, and then again 18 months after enrollment.

The goal of the pilot program is for at least 70% of clients to achieve financial wellbeing (the ability to absorb financial shocks and crises without living paycheck-to-paycheck) and resource stability (no longer needing assistance with basic needs). If these two measures are met, the odds are much higher that a new mother and her family will thrive.

Of course, part of this program and the network's broad service to expectant and new mothers also is a focus on helping set fathers on a path to success as well. Catholic Charities employs a two-generation approach to lifting and keeping children out of poverty; the more we can help parents succeed and flourish, the greater the odds that their children will lead healthy, fulfilling and safe lives.





# Honoring and accompanying neighbors as they age

## Holistic care for seniors in need

Seniors face a variety of challenges and confront new physical and financial limitations as they get older. For some, family and other support systems help them adjust and manage their care. For so many others, Catholic Charities agencies are there to ease their transitions, provide important resources and treat them with care, concern and love.

## One key way the Catholic Charities network supports seniors throughout the country is through housing.

Our country's affordable housing crisis impacts all demographics, and our aging neighbors are acutely affected as housing prices rise even as their personal and physical limitations grow. Catholic Charities agencies offer seniors safe, affordable places to live – sometimes in settings that also provide holistic case management and wraparound services tailored to their needs.

## Acquiring and preparing healthy food can also become increasingly challenging for older Americans, so many Catholic Charities agencies run Meals on Wheels or other food distribution services.

These programs focus on bringing nutritious, ready-made meals directly to seniors to promote their health and protect those who are homebound or physically limited from the risk of injury or hunger.

The Catholic Charities network also provides low-income seniors with financial support, from assistance paying for a utility bill or medications to help accessing SNAP, Medicare and other important benefits.

Knowing that engagement and interaction are critically important to seniors' wellbeing, Catholic Charities agencies also organize programs in which staff and volunteers regularly check in on lonely or isolated seniors through phone calls and home visits.



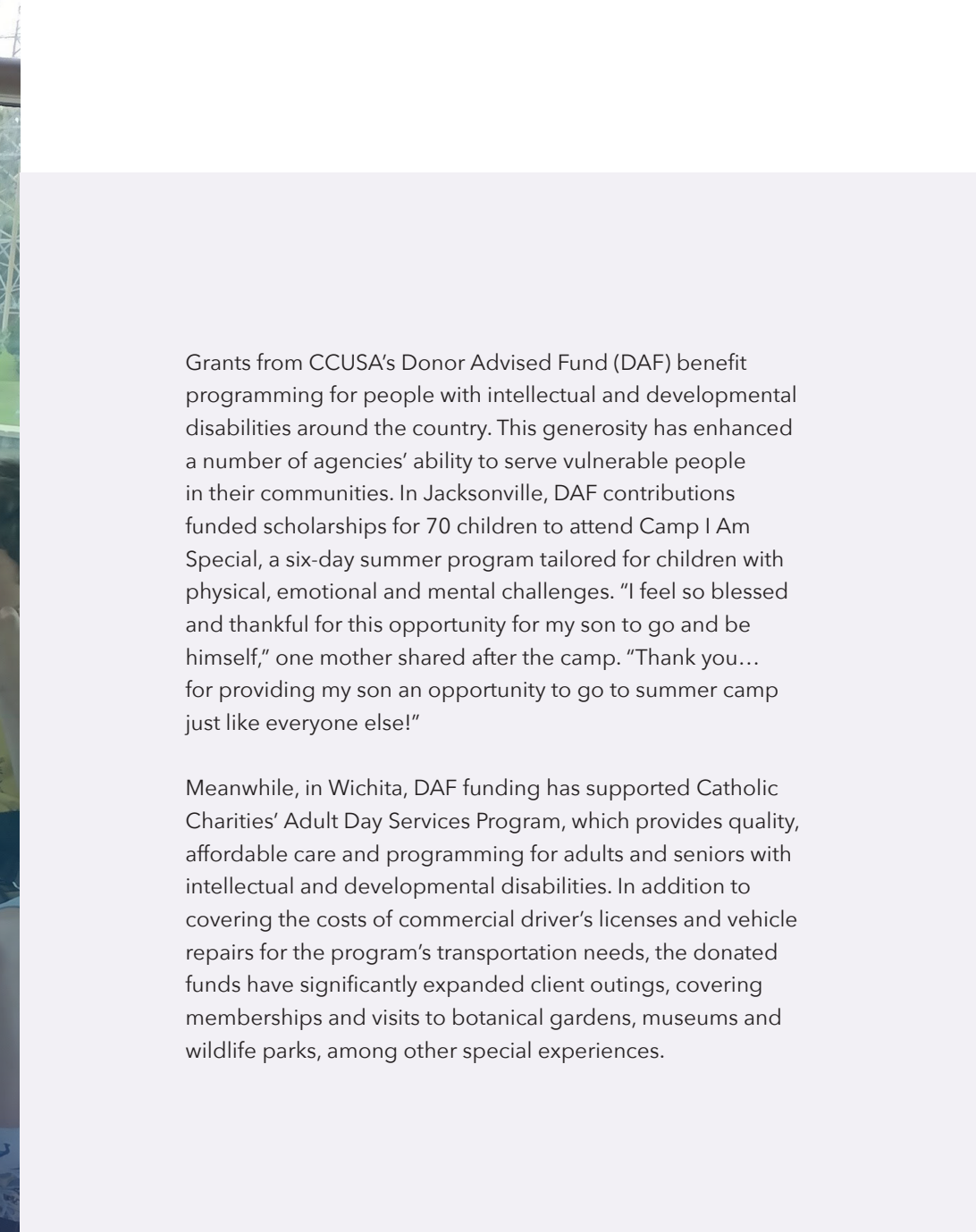




# Spreading joy and opportunities

## Supporting adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities

With the conviction that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, Catholic Charities agencies across the country serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The ages, specific needs and levels of independence of these clients vary widely, but in all cases, Catholic Charities agencies treat them with dignity, care and love. Recently, CCUSA created a new national community of practice that brings together Catholic Charities staff who serve this population to share best practices and confront common challenges.



Grants from CCUSA's Donor Advised Fund (DAF) benefit programming for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities around the country. This generosity has enhanced a number of agencies' ability to serve vulnerable people in their communities. In Jacksonville, DAF contributions funded scholarships for 70 children to attend Camp I Am Special, a six-day summer program tailored for children with physical, emotional and mental challenges. "I feel so blessed and thankful for this opportunity for my son to go and be himself," one mother shared after the camp. "Thank you... for providing my son an opportunity to go to summer camp just like everyone else!"

Meanwhile, in Wichita, DAF funding has supported Catholic Charities' Adult Day Services Program, which provides quality, affordable care and programming for adults and seniors with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In addition to covering the costs of commercial driver's licenses and vehicle repairs for the program's transportation needs, the donated funds have significantly expanded client outings, covering memberships and visits to botanical gardens, museums and wildlife parks, among other special experiences.







# Recovery and healing in the wake of disasters

## Lifting up reeling communities

As the official domestic relief agency of the Catholic Church in the United States, CCUSA responds to more than 60 significant disasters each year, from hurricanes and tornadoes to wildfires and earthquakes. When a disaster strikes a local community, Catholic Charities is there to help families regroup and rebuild in the immediate aftermath and, even more importantly, throughout the long-term recovery efforts.



From flooding in Iowa, wildfires in New Mexico, tornadoes in Oklahoma and more, 2024 is on pace for a record number of disasters. Through the first six months of the year, CCUSA distributed more emergency disaster funds than in any prior year, and hurricane season is just beginning.

Against this backdrop, CCUSA continues to innovate to make our network's response to disasters even more efficient, impactful and effective. One key advancement has been the introduction of regional **Disaster Response Academies (DRAs)**, intensive trainings held in geographically diverse, high-risk areas throughout the country. With two DRAs already completed in San Jose and Houston and two more scheduled in Fall River and Louisville, CCUSA soon will have trained more than 400 disaster case managers at Catholic Charities agencies from other communities. In concert with our annual **Applied Institute for Disaster Excellence**, the national disaster training CCUSA holds each fall, these academies will ultimately allow the network to deploy highly trained Catholic Charities staffers from around the country to supplement local agency staffing and expertise when major disasters strike.





# Providing empathy and critical support

## The Catholic Charities network responds to rising mental and behavioral health challenges

According to the *Mental Health in America* survey, 51 percent of all families in the country have experienced a serious mental health crisis. Mental and behavioral health struggles often lead to other significant challenges, from unemployment to homelessness to deteriorating physical health. With the seriousness of these issues in mind, Catholic Charities agencies all around the country offer holistic mental and behavioral health support to clients of all ages and backgrounds, often bringing comfort and hope to families experiencing the most difficult moments of their lives.

A few years ago, a mother whose son had committed suicide came to CCUSA looking to make an impact on other families facing mental health crises. Her son had been very involved in and supported by his parish, but most members of his community lacked the background or training to recognize the warning signs that could have saved his life. The mother approached CCUSA hoping to invest in possible solutions.

Out of her generosity and concern for others, two highly successful pilot programs were launched. The first, **Whole Hearted**, is a parish-based trauma-awareness resource that equips parish communities and individuals to better identify signs of trauma among parishioners. While not intended to be used in place of clinical therapy with licensed professionals, Whole Hearted informs participants of trauma's impact and how to begin to move forward from it, both mentally and spiritually. Whole Hearted is expanding to more and more parishes across the country and offering new resources, including the introduction of a version specifically for young adults.

**Hope Chatbot**, the other project, is an AI-driven tool that helps clients manage everyday stress and anxiety and promotes self-care practices. Hope is available to more than 10,000 clients and agency staff across the 14 Catholic Charities agencies that currently offer the service. Since the launch of the program, more than 2,430 crises that included mention of suicidal ideation were immediately escalated to a live crisis counselor who offered support and guidance. In all, more than 700 referrals have been made from Hope to Catholic Charities counselors.



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The mission of Catholic Charities USA is to provide service to people, families and communities in need, to advocate for justice in social structures and to call the entire church and other people of good will to do the same.

[CatholicCharitiesUSA.org](https://www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org)