

# Migration Policy FAQs: February Recess 2024

## What is the ask?

We urge you to support funding to offer humanitarian relief and social services to asylum seekers and migrants in the Fiscal Year 2024 Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

- **\$800 million for the Shelter and Services Program:** The Shelter and Services Program supports faith and aid organizations offering immediate care to newly arrived asylum seekers.
- **\$20 million for the Case Management Pilot Program:** The Case Management Pilot Program provides mental healthcare, social services, and legal orientation programming for asylum seekers. The U.S. government should transition to a case management model and rein in immigration detention.
- **Embrace humane and practical border policies** and reject policies that would resurrect *Title 42*, the Remain in Mexico Policy, or border wall construction.

## Why should we invest in humane, sustainable migration practices?

- **Asylum seekers are not guaranteed necessities like food, shelter, and clothing** after they've been processed and released by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). Asylum seekers also lack access to mainstream services, benefits, and employment. Congress must recognize that ensuring refuge for communities fleeing persecution also means providing respite and care.
- For decades, frontline border aid communities and resettlement organizations have stepped up **when the U.S. government has failed to establish humane border reception**. Funding the Shelters and Services Program and community-based case management programs supports these communities and organizations as they continue the critical work of welcoming and supporting asylum seekers.
- **Case management programming is more humane and cost-efficient than immigrant detention** for individuals and families waiting for a determination on their asylum claim. During the Obama administration, the similar Family Case Management Program cost **\$36/day per individual compared to \$133/day per single adult in immigrant detention**.
- The **U.S. federal budget should reflect the United States' stated values of justice, liberty, and prosperity for all**. Quakers are called to "love thy neighbor, no exceptions." The Shelter and Services Program and the Case Management Pilot Program are smart, orderly, effective, and humane initiatives.

## Why does this issue matter?

- The UN Refugee Agency estimated that at the end of 2022, 108.4 million people would be globally displaced. That is roughly the populations of California, Texas, Florida, and New York combined. The U.S. government must meet the *full scope* of its legal commitment by protecting persecuted individuals.
- Coordinated and effective networks of shelters and respite centers play a critical role in the U.S. government's migration management response. These shelters often collaborate closely with immigration enforcement to ensure that migrants have access to basic services and a place to go after they are processed and released by CBP or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- Long term, asylum seekers receive little to no federal support and interact with the government chiefly through ICE check-ins, surveillance, and ankle monitoring programs. Community-based case management programs – that are not operated by ICE – help meet the needs of asylum seekers while honoring their human worth. We know these programs work: individuals in previous case management programs achieved a **compliance rate of over 99%** with immigration courts and ICE.

- These programs can shift our nation’s practice of responding to humanitarian needs with militarized resistance. For more than four years, the U.S. government has crafted policies that cast out at-risk individuals and families desperate for peace and safety. Migrants who survive an often dangerous and laborious journey to the United States encounter these harsh policies before even having the opportunity to present their asylum claim. They are immediately greeted at U.S. borders with hostile immigration enforcement and detention. Asylum seekers deserve a safe haven while their cases are pending.

## Why is this important right now?

The clock is ticking to finalize spending bill and law makers will soon make final funding decisions, including whether and how it will support these critical migration management programs. Congress must pass the FY 2024 Homeland Security Appropriations bill by March 8<sup>th</sup>. Your voice can make a difference!

## What general pushback can you expect from members of Congress?

**Pushback: Are these funding levels achievable in a divided Congress? What are the recent trends in funding and support?**

Response: It’s true that Congress is deeply divided on funding decisions and the issue of immigration, which is why legislators need to hear from their constituents about spending priorities right now. And we cannot allow policies that promise more human suffering and tragedy to pass. We must ensure humanitarian relief and welcome services funding for asylum seekers stay top of mind.

This isn’t a matter of resources; it’s about priorities. Congress is slated to *spend \$85 billion* dollars on military aid. Last year, Congress budgeted more than \$1 billion for detention centers. The House recently passed a FY24 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill that includes \$2 billion for a border wall. We must correct course. While the 118th Congress may present a challenge, progress is possible. We’re asking that a comparably small amount of money be invested in these pilot programs, which have proven more effective and financially sustainable. We’re going to make sure the final FY24 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill protects asylum seekers.

**Pushback: I am not on the appropriations committee; how can I impact the process?**

Response: Members of Congress who do not directly serve on Appropriations Committees still have a significant role to play in this process. For these accounts, they can privately express their support to Appropriations leadership and members of Appropriations Committees about these priorities and encourage support for these programs. They can tactfully build a coalition of colleagues to back these funding allocations and ensure leadership does not bring a bill to the floor that overlooks these programs. They can ask questions during committee hearings to stress the U.S. government’s excessive waste on militarized immigration enforcement with little focus on proven migration management solutions. A Member’s public support through statements, press, and media engagements is also very powerful.

**Pushback: Isn’t it too much of an investment to provide these services for people who have not been determined to have a successful asylum claim?**

Response: Seeking asylum is a legal and fundamental right in the United States. The U.S. government can’t have a functional asylum system if it doesn’t ensure there is a way for people to thrive and contribute to their communities while they transition to living in their new home. Nationwide investments in these services would allow asylum seekers and migrants awaiting a determination on their claims to find stability in the United States—with less strain on compassionate and generous border towns and interior communities.