

From: IFC - Letter from Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada
To: Monday, June 15, 2020 12:23:18 PM
Subject:
Date:

June 21, 2020

Interim Finance Committee
ATTN: Maggie Carlton, Assemblywoman, Chair
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4747
NVIFC-PublicComment@lcb.state.nv.us

BUDGET REDUCTIONS IRT HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Dear Members of the Interim Finance Committee,

On behalf of Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, I want to thank the committee for your hard work over the recent months in helping Nevadans face the myriad of challenges in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our organization recognizes the fiscal challenges that lie ahead for our state. With Nevada's businesses just beginning to resume after months of being closed and projected tax revenue shortfalls for the upcoming fiscal years¹, we realize budget cuts are on the table in order to balance the state's budget. **However, we're advocating for preserving the current funding level of the Health and Human Services budgets.** Recently, Governor Sisolak has requested agencies prepare for another 4% of budget reductions on top of the 5% he requested previously.² We agree with the governor that these reductions should "be made with an eye toward prioritizing state resources to protect health and safety of our citizens."²

Subsequently, we ask you to preserve current Health and Human Services spending because reducing these budgets will produce the opposite effects of protecting the health and safety of the most vulnerable Nevadans.

Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada has been providing essential services to Nevada's most vulnerable citizens for over 75 years. We operate the oldest "soup kitchen" in Reno, our St. Vincent's Dining Room and our St. Vincent's Pantry serves thousands of individuals each month in the Reno/Sparks community and across rural Nevada providing nutritious shelf-stable and perishable foods, pet food, and other basic items like toiletries, diapers and the like. We also offer intensive case management and emergency support services, including one-on-one advisement, rental assistance, employment assistance, and accredited immigration services locally and across rural Nevada. We also operate, in partnership with Washoe County Human Services Agency, Crossroads sober living community which houses over 100 men who are committed to choosing a different path in life. Crossroads alone has a multi-million dollar positive impact, reducing impact on law enforcement/criminal justice systems and reducing emergency room utilization. **Reductions in funding to human services programs that are creating effective solutions will only create larger negative financial impacts as other systems become inundated.**

Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada is an open door for everyone seeking hope and support. As an essential service provider, every program we operate has stayed open

throughout the COVID-19 crisis, and we maintained 100% of our 160 employees with their full pay and benefits. We continue to serve hundreds of individuals every day and continue to see a rise in demand for our services. We receive significant funding from the State, Washoe County and from the Federal Government. We implore you to maintain funding to agencies such as Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada who are the direct link, and safety net, to thousands who would otherwise go without food, basic needs items, rental assistance, access to professional case managers, behavioral and substance use counseling, and the other essential services that are critical to basic survival for individuals and families hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis.

We ask that prior to any state budget reductions, you initially investigate alternatives to cuts, such as diversifying our revenue structure and looking at changes to our current tax structure. Not all solutions result in drastically reducing funding for critical services and we'd appreciate your consideration of all options. During these challenging times, health and human services agencies, such as Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, will play a much larger and crucial role in supporting the most vulnerable Nevadans.

Once more, thank you for all of your efforts to support Nevadans during this time, and if there is any way we can further assist you in these endeavors, please feel free to reach me for assistance.

Respectfully,

Marie L. Baxter, M.Ed. CFRE

Chief Executive Officer

Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada & The St. Vincent's Programs

500 E. 4th St. Reno, NV 89512

PO Box 5099 Reno, NV 89513 (775) 322-7073 ext. 299471025

F: (775) 322-8197

mbaxter@ccsnn.org

www.CatholicCharitiesNorthernNevada.org

Together we respond to unmet human needs so all can thrive

1. <https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/largest-budget-deficit-state-local-revenue-projections-show-steep-shortfalls>

2. <https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/politics-and-government/nevada/nevada-faces-even-larger-budget-cuts-2038967/>