



**Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago Announces
New Strategic Plan to Enhance Core Programs and Deepen Impact**
Simplifying and realigning to meet today's needs

CHICAGO – (March 7, 2024) – Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago – the region's largest private human services provider – announces the launch of its Vision 2030 strategic plan and, with that, several decisions designed to realign its services for greater impact over the years ahead.

This week, Catholic Charities is notifying government funders that, beginning July 1, it will transition out of 75 government contracts that together fund 12 percent of its current operating budget.

“After careful evaluation and discussion, we have decided to reduce our footprint as a government contractor – in order to increase the time, attention and resources we devote to the services we are uniquely equipped to offer as a private humanitarian organization,” said Sally Blount, President and CEO of Catholic Charities. “Over the last decade, navigating the government services sector has grown more complex, and funding has not kept up with the high rates of inflation. That means that many contracts no longer cover their direct costs, much less the increasing costs of administering them.”

“We remain steadfast in our founding mission to serve people in need across Chicago, Cook and Lake counties – regardless of their faith, ethnicity, nationality, gender, or race – while adapting to the changing needs of our times,” said Blount. “Going forward, Catholic Charities will continue to serve the same populations and provide many of the same services but will do so with greater reliance on private funding.”

Catholic Charities will work closely with government and peer partners to minimize disruptions in service during the contract transitions, including setting up special helplines for the people affected by the changes. The contracts cover various services, from childcare and youth programs to behavioral health counseling, senior care, adult protection, veteran services, and call centers.

This announcement comes after a comprehensive, year-long, strategic planning effort undertaken by the Board of Directors and leadership in partnership with nonprofit expert The Bridgespan Group, thanks to the funding of a long-time donor. This planning came as the final step in a more than three-year journey, undertaken by the Board after Blount was recruited to be CEO, to strengthen Catholic Charities' governance, operations, and financial oversight.

“As a humanitarian organization that served non-stop during the COVID-19 pandemic, this was an important time for our Board and staff to reflect, learn, and re-imagine together,” said Michael Monticello, Board Chair. “Over the past year, we have come to understand that if we want to increase our impact over the years ahead, we must sharpen our strategic focus, while simultaneously reducing the time our staff spends navigating an increasingly complex and uncertain government funding environment.”

This decision means that over the coming months, Catholic Charities will reduce its staff by roughly 300 employees: 280 who work across the affected government contracts and 20 in related administrative areas.

“We announce these personnel decisions with a heavy heart and profound gratitude and respect for the contributions and many years of service given by each of these team members,” said Blount. “We will support them through advance notice, severance benefits, and assistance with job searches, including applying for open positions within our organization and our sister organizations (Mercy Home, Misericordia, and Maryville) and with our peer providers who will take over these contracts.”

Caring for the nearly 1,000 staff who will continue to provide essential programs and services is also a top priority. “Carefully balancing the needs of the people we are called and honored to serve with the needs of the amazing employees who serve them is critical to our mission,” said Blount.

“Our Board and staff remain committed to serving as our region's cornerstone partner, employer, and provider. We will continue to operate at a significant scale, between \$175-200 million annually, and provide essential programs and services across our three impact areas – immediate access to basic needs, children and family services, and seniors and housing – while preparing for the future needs of our region,” said Monticello.

Under the new strategic plan, Catholic Charities will pilot several new programs and expansions designed to increase services for low-income mothers and seniors across Cook and Lake counties. Through the Church's parish network, it will expand its community-based footprint on Chicago's south, west, and southwest sides. The Board also recently voted to open a new community center in the southwest suburb of Summit in Fall 2025 and to fund a standing Rapid Response Team – formalizing the crisis response capabilities created during the COVID-19 pandemic that have been further honed by collaborating with community and government partners to resettle 20,000 migrants over the past 18 months.

“Over the past four years, Catholic Charities' Board and leadership have undertaken an important strategic exercise – one that all organizations of substance must regularly do,” said Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago. “I laud them for their courage, vision and commitment to deepening the Church's impact on behalf of the region's most vulnerable.”

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