

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Migrant Arrivals and Advocacy Efforts

DATE: September 13, 2021

The City's Government & Public Affairs Department will provide an update on the migrant arrivals and our advocacy efforts.

Background

In July 2021, the number of migrants released at the Texas-Mexico border increased significantly. As a result, we saw a surge in migrants transiting through San Antonio. Arriving migrants were being directly transported to the San Antonio International Airport and Greyhound Bus Station by multiple agencies. During this initial increase, there was a lack of coordination by federal officials with the City of San Antonio and local nonprofit partners. This resulted in logistical challenges for the City and nonprofit partners to effectively provide coordinated services. In addition, this practice also created operational challenges at the Airport and public health and safety concerns.

From April through July, the number of individuals arriving at the airport totaled 11,703. In August, that number totaled 10,012. Individuals were arriving primarily from the Border Patrol's Del Rio Sector.

In response to this increase, faith-based partners opened a daytime respite center to divert and assist migrants without travel plans from the airport and bus stations. The City provided daily onsite staffing at the airport to assist migrant travelers and Catholic Charities increased overnight sheltering capacity. Today, most arriving individuals depart on the same day, those receiving hotel sheltering assistance depart within 48-72 hours of arrival.

In early August 2021, GPA became engaged to help improve communication and coordination with federal entities, such as the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), U.S. Homeland Security,

and regional border entities. GPA coordinated various calls for the Mayor, the City Manager and City staff with Del Rio CBP Sector and U.S. Homeland Security (DHS) officials to discuss the impact of migrant arrivals and make the following requests: improve regional coordination between CBP, COSA, and nonprofits and for COVID testing to be done prior to migrants being released by CBP regional sectors. Additionally, GPA engaged Congressional members and federal consultants in advocacy and communication actions.

These advocacy efforts helped improve coordination to better predict and manage migrant arrivals and facilitate communication with local nonprofit partners. Discussions with DHS officials are ongoing.