



LINCOLN SOCIAL SERVICES QUARTERLY REPORT

October - December 2020

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PROGRAMS

Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska in Lincoln is comprised of five key program areas with each program encompassing multiple projects and services. Our five program areas, include:

- **Emergency Services:** Cash assistance, employment services, furniture delivery, and walk in services such as clothing, diapers, etc.
- **Food Pantry:** Food Pantry, Catholic School Food Market Program, breakfast and lunch programs, and the Sunday evening food truck
- **Immigration:** Assisting clients with immigration documents, and other forms of identification
- **Refugee Resettlement:** Welcoming new arrivals and secondary migrants, refugee employment services, New American Encounter, and Career Ladder
- **St. Gianna's Home for Women:** Housing for survivors of domestic violence, counseling referrals, and community-based learning opportunities for residents

Special Projects include: Random Works of Mercy, onsite English and Citizenship Classes, holiday programs, et al.



CREATING A CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

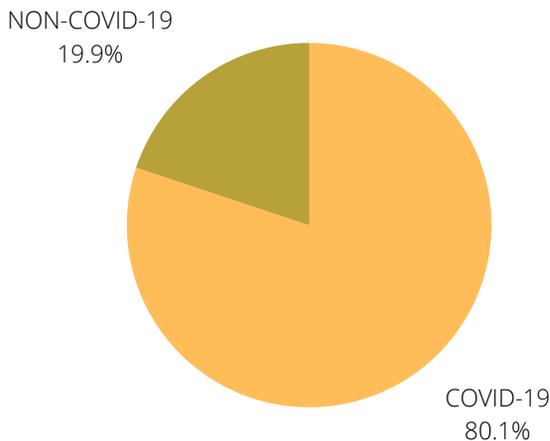


4th Class at St. Patrick's School in McCook

"The students made a huge difference in the lives of our residents [at St. Gianna's] and indeed the world by collecting personal items, toiletries, household goods and utensils, money, and—most importantly—prayers. These fourth-graders and their teacher are apostles of hope and compassion, and they are role models for all of us."

Reverend Justin Fulton
Southern Nebraska Register

EMERGENCY SERVICES



This chart indicates the percentage of households impacted by COVID-19.

Number of households provided cash assistance

108

Rental Assistance

\$104,900.23

Utility Assistance

\$10,497.85

Vehicle Assistance

\$2,244.26

Miscellaneous Assistance (childcare, medication, etc.)

\$6,090.34

Number of households provided furniture

78

Number of clients helped by our employment services

24

A 34 year old mother with four kids contacted our office seeking rental assistance. Her husband works in construction and due to the weather conditions his hours were cut. The family was falling behind in rent.

The father was struggling to find another job due to his physical disabilities. He was in an accident four years ago severely damaging his head and chest. His current employer is the only one who will give him a job with his current disabilities and he does not qualify for disability or other assistance due to his immigration status. The family has not applied for food stamps because they hope to apply for legal status someday and therefore are avoiding any government assistance, in case it counts against their request for naturalization.

The family's landlord is aware of their situation so, when it snows, her husband cleans the snow and she cleans outside the apartment building so they can get a discount on their rent. CSS was able to help this family pay for their January rent and help with food.

Marilu Cazares
Emergency Services Coordinator

WALK-IN EMERGENCY SERVICES



OCTOBER

- 215 households received diapers
- 369 individuals received food pantries
- 78 households received a gift card to shop at St. Louise Gift and Thrift store
- 32 households received gas vouchers

DECEMBER

- 169 households received diapers
- 376 individuals received food pantries
- 56 households received a gift card to shop at the St. Louise Gift and Thrift Store
- 11 households received gas vouchers

NOVEMBER

- 224 households received diapers
- 367 individuals received food pantries
- 34 households received a gift card to shop at the St. Louise Gift and Thrift Store
- 30 households received gas vouchers

HIGHLIGHT

"A family that had come to CSS a couple of months ago with our refugee resettlement case manager called for a food pantry. When they came in, I noticed none of them had winter coats. At that time, we didn't have any new ones left, but I offered what I could and apologized that they weren't as nice as what I would have liked to have given. They were so grateful and said that they were perfect. We were also able to include this family in our Adopt-A-Family program for Christmas."

Veronica Hotovy, Client Relations Specialist

FOOD PANTRY

In 2020, CSS formed a new partnership with **Nebraska Extension**.

To kick it off, we invited our food pantry volunteers to participate in a Master Health Volunteer Class taught by Emily Gratopp, Extension Educator for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. This 40 hour course deep-dived into discussions on health equity, social disparities, adverse childhood experiences, food safety, nutrition, and more.

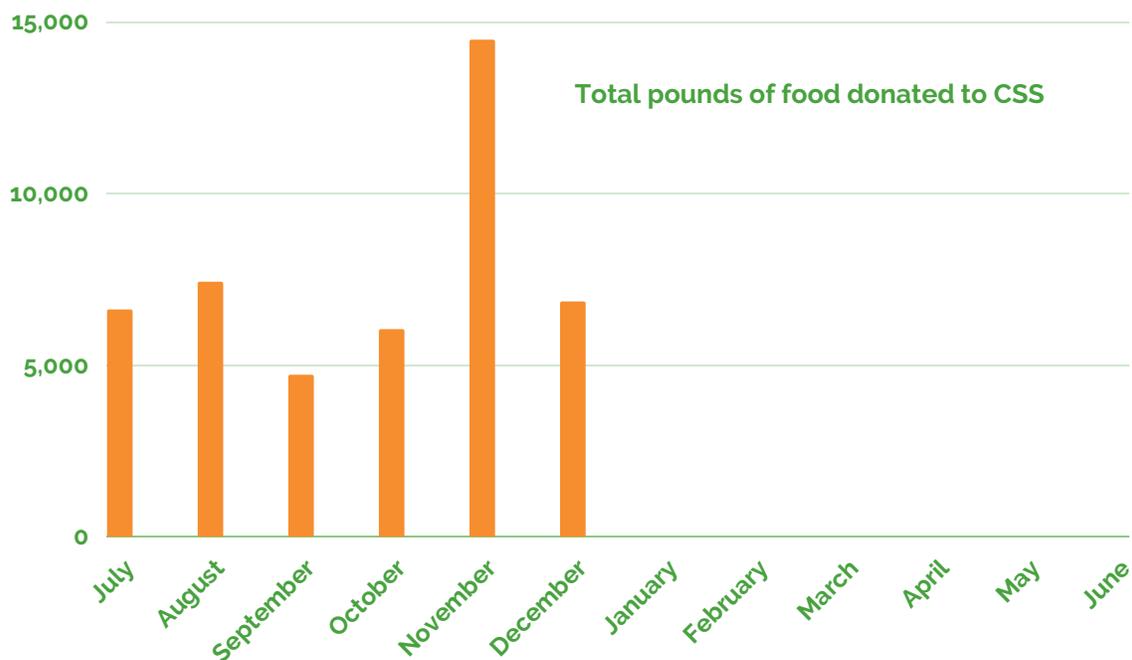
With a grant from Nebraska Extension, we **built a lean to greenhouse** on the southside of our downtown location. This will allow us to provide fresh vegetables to our clients all year round.

1,200 breakfast burritos
catered by **Chez SoDo**

2,535 sack lunches
prepared by
**Knights of Columbus
& CSS volunteers**

300 dinners
catered by **The Pasta Place**
in October and November

352 food pantries
provided to families at
**St. Teresa, St. Patrick,
and Blessed Sacrament**



A SOURCE OF PRIDE AND HEALTHY HOPE

We are humbled to be considered a nationwide resource for innovative food market practices.

In God's Infinite wisdom, He did not will that I would get married or have children or grandchildren. I'll admit sometimes that stings. Perhaps it is a desire to be proud that you are married to a beloved, loving spouse. Perhaps it is a desire to be proud of your son when you see him rip a double just inside the first-base line on a summer afternoon. Perhaps it is a desire to be proud of your daughter as you walk her down the aisle on her day of Holy Matrimony. Whatever it is He did not allow me those senses of pride.

That is okay.

He did, in His Infinite Wisdom, allow me to share in a tremendous source of pride—our employees, volunteers, clients, and benefactors of Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska. I could not be more proud of this agency and its people. We are turning heads not only in Lincoln, or the state of Nebraska—but indeed, we are turning heads across the country.

Earlier this month, Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska welcomed the University of Nebraska Extension and a film crew from Knoxville, Tenn., to our statewide headquarters in Lincoln.

The Nebraska Extension and film crew shot a training video to be used by food pantries across the nation based off of the new CSS Food Pantry model. They chose CSS as one of four filming sites nationwide and captured the best practices we have developed and accomplished in the past year.



Some of these new best practices include our transition from a distribution-only food pantry to a food market model highlighting client choice. We believe this is in accord with our Catholic understanding of the dignity of the human person. As opposed to being handed a set of groceries a client now chooses what they will eat. There is dignity in making a choice for one's own self. Along with this we have helped educate our clients about making good and nutritious decisions when selecting food. We have done this in cooperation with MyPlate, which is based off the USDA's Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

In accompanying clients in our enhanced food market, our volunteers get to understand the true needs of our clients. As they engage in conversation with clients as they shop for their foods, volunteers and clients become friends. Our new community partnerships, our increased educational components, and our central focus of giving hope to our clients in the love of Jesus Christ is being recognized locally and now even nationally.

We are humbled to be considered a nationwide resource for innovative food market practices. We are excited to offer our clients healthy and nutritious services. We are thankful to Almighty God for His blessings. And we are thankful to you for all of your spiritual and financial support. Together, we are bringing Hope in the Good Life to our clients locally and beyond in these United States.

Reverend Justin Fulton

Southern Nebraska Register
October 2020

IMMIGRATION

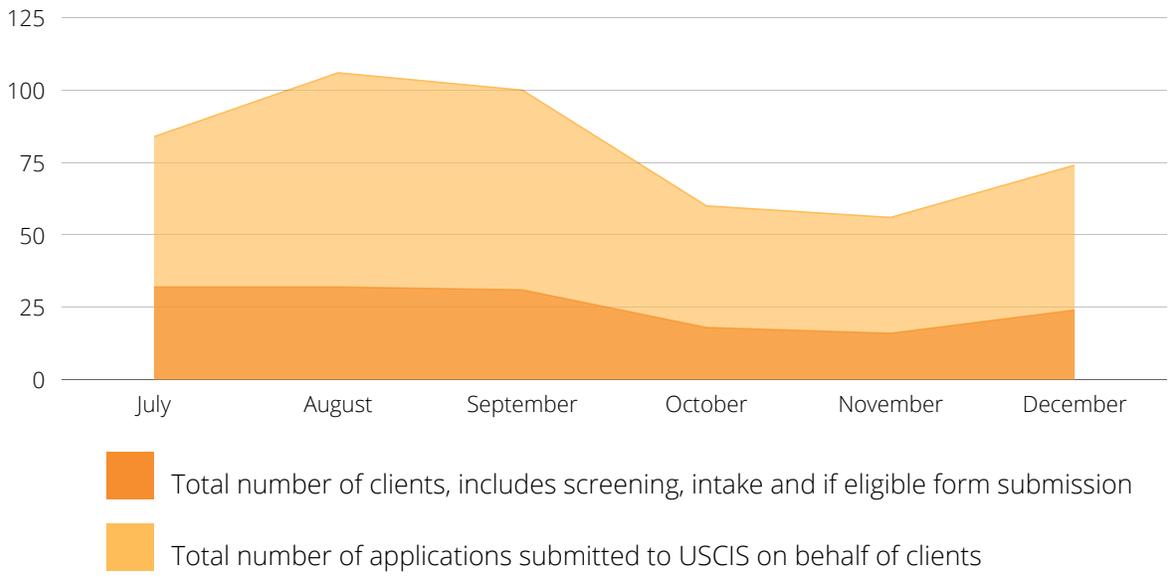
In October, in partnership with the Asian Community and Cultural Center and Lutheran Family Services, we received the **USCIS Citizenship Assimilation Program Grant** which provides citizenship education and naturalization services to legal permanent residents seeking to become U.S. citizens.

Did you know that as of 2014, there were 38,692 immigrants eligible for U.S. naturalization living in Nebraska?

It is a well-known fact that one of the greatest needs within our refugee and immigrant communities today is the need for affordable and reliable naturalization services.

CSS has been a Recognized Organization of the Office of Legal Access Programs (OLAP) with the Department of Justice (DOJ) since May 1999. Our Immigration Specialist, Drew Miller, meets with clients daily via Zoom or in person to review their eligibility for a variety of immigration benefits, including permanent residency, naturalization, work authorization, and family reunification.

Most recently, Miller won his appeal of an Affidavit of Relationship (AOR) case from Central America. In 2018, Trump rescinded this program that reunites family living in the U.S. with immediate family members still living abroad. The program was reopened in 2019. Our client, who was fleeing gang violence in El Salvador arrived to the United States with her daughter in December. They now live with family in Grand Island.



Forms include: Adjustment of Status (Green Card) (Form I-485), Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (green card) (I-90), U.S. Naturalization/Citizenship (Form N-400), Application for Certificate of Citizenship (N-600), Employment Authorization Document (Form I-765), Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (Form I-812D), Application for Fee Waiver (I-912)

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



This quarter, the CSS refugee department welcomed a family of seven from the Ukraine and one young man from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The long anticipated arrival of the Lytvak and Shevchuck families from the Ukraine culminated on the most joyful of occasions, Thanksgiving eve. More than twenty members of their extended family waited with open arms, and many tears to welcome brothers, cousins, aunts, and uncles to their new home in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was a beautiful experience, and one that 10|11 Now KOLN and KGIN was able to capture.

Our second arrival, Ubatu, from the Congo also experienced a joy-filled reunion, albeit unexpected.

For more than a decade, CSS has resettled only U.S. Tie cases, and just recently have we expanded our capacity to non-U.S. Tie cases. This means that arriving refugees do not already have family members living in or near Lincoln, and thus will rely more heavily on our services as they integrate. Ubatu was one such case.

However, just days after his arrival, he called his sister to inform her that he had arrived safely to America. They hadn't seen each other in years and it was on this phone call that he (and she) discovered that Ubatu was living just 60 miles away from her. Yes, his sister is living in Omaha. Can you imagine? What an incredible twist of fate that after having been separated for years without knowing when, where - or even if - they would ever be reunited, they found each other in Nebraska.

Continual trainings keep staff updated on critical services for our clients.

This quarter included:

- Medicaid Expansion + Health Safety Net;
- Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Family Self-Sufficiency Plan
- FY2021 Presidential Determination
- Reception & Placement Cooperative Agreement with USCCB
- Immigration Pathways
- Delivering Remote Cultural Orientation with USCCB
- USCCB Office of Resettlement Services Network Call
- SIIP Working Group Call

During this quarter, our staff continued to visit with residents to review their family action plan and safety plan.

Developed by our Resident Care Manager, the **Family Action Plan** is a proposed strategy or course of action that breaks down large, sometimes overwhelming goals or tasks into smaller, more manageable ones. It gives our residents a step-by-step path to keep them accountable and help them to succeed.

ST. GIANNA WOMEN'S HOMES

Notable Achievements & Highlights

- One resident completed her food handler's permit
- One resident purchased a new car
- One resident received a promotion at work
- One resident applied for disability with the help of Legal Aid
- One resident completed her first semester through an online program
- One resident completed classes to become an esthetician



How abuse continues even after she leaves...

Living at St. Gianna's does not protect the women all of the time. Her abuser might find her at the grocery store. Her abuser might break into her car and steal her ID and bank cards. Her abuser might manipulate the children to dislike and mistreat their mother. Her abuser might fight her in court because he has the financial means to do so.

At St. Gianna's, we focus on building her self-confidence and helping her stay on track with her goals knowing full well that most of the setbacks she will face are simply out of her control. Some abusers will stop, often times only when they have found another woman to abuse. But for many of our residents, they will always be looking over their shoulder. Pray for them.

**VOLUNTEERS:
WE COULD NEVER
FULFILL OUR MISSION
WITHOUT YOU!**

We had an average of **42 active volunteers** each month, who contributed a total of **1,098 hours of service** this quarter!

St. Louise Gift & Thrift Store
527 hours

Food Pantry
312 hours

Warehouse
82 hours

St. Gianna's
177 hours

CHRISTMAS 2020



Christmas at 2241 O Street looked a little different this year, but we were still able to bring a little joy to several hundred households across Lincoln. Here is how we did it with your support!

- 144 Households received Thanksgiving food baskets
- \$26,878 was collected in gift cards from Lincoln parishes
- 97 Families were adopted by Lincoln parishioners
- 155 Households received Christmas food baskets
- \$3,094.15 worth of items were purchased from our Amazon Wish List
- \$26,830.27 was donated via the CSS website "Holiday Giving"
- 18 individuals and organizations purchased gifts and/or made holiday goodies for the families at St. Gianna Women's Home in Lincoln
- 518 Kids received Christmas gifts purchased by the National Guard in partnership with KFOR's Operation Santa Claus



MEET THE SOCIAL SERVICES TEAM

Dignity
Integrity
Empathy
Trust
Sustainability

