

CA Bishops Ask Governor to Increase Aid to Undocumented and Low-Wage Workers during Pandemic

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California's Catholic Bishops have asked Governor Gavin Newsom to increase aid to undocumented and low-wage residents of the state "because the virus doesn't know the difference between someone who has the right legal documents and those who do not."

Pope Francis, on Easter Sunday, spoke to the world and urged solidarity in this moment of crisis. He asked all governments "to recognize that the equal and fundamental human dignity of every human person -- not economic class or status of documentation -- must be the central principle of forging assistance programs in this moment of crisis."

Governor Newsom has already extended stimulus aid to California residents who do not have legal status and the Bishops have asked him to go further as the pandemic continues to wreak havoc on California, the nation and the world.

Last week, [Governor Newsom said](#) the state is creating a \$125 million disaster assistance fund for undocumented Californians, who have not benefited from expanded unemployment or the federal stimulus. Approximately 150,000 undocumented adult Californians will receive a one-time cash benefit of \$500 per adult with a cap of \$1,000 per household.

In their letter today, the Bishops asked the Governor to:

- Expand State Disability Insurance (SDI) eligibility to workers unemployed as a result of COVID-19 but ineligible for Unemployment Insurance (UI);
- Send payments of \$1200 to all Californians who qualified for the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) last year or this year, as well as to any filer who used an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) and meets the same income levels as the CalEITC;
- Permanently expand the CalEITC to include ITIN filers;
- Ensure that COVID-19 treatment (not just testing) is covered under Emergency MediCal;
- Expand no-cost or low-cost hotel options to workers who are essential to maintaining California's food supply; and
- Make more money available to food banks and school districts to expand their capacity to get food and information about new relief programs to families in need.

In their letter, the Bishops pointed out that extending assistance to all residents during the pandemic is necessary to prevent the spread of the virus. Many undocumented migrants tend our fields and produce the agricultural products that sustains much of the nation. By extending protection to people without permanent status, the governor "will help to protect ALL Californians."

Follow updates on how California dioceses are responding to the pandemic and a daily summary of the Governor's COVID-19 briefings on our special [Coronavirus resource page](#).