

# El Paso migrant shelter prepares for dramatic influx of new arrivals

Annunciation House is getting about 200 new arrivals every day.

EL PASO, Texas - Waves of new migrants, including families and unaccompanied children, continue to arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border daily, all while the Biden administration has repeatedly denied that there is a crisis.

In El Paso, local shelters are not only dealing with asylum-seekers under former President Trump's Migrant Protection Protocols program (MPP) but now, migrants from other Texas sectors too.

Annunciation House Director Ruben Garcia has helped shelter migrants in El Paso for the last 43 years. Lately, they're getting about 200 new arrivals daily. That includes 90 MPP asylum seekers, 10-40 immigration releases, and dozens of others who are now being flown in from overwhelmed communities in from the Rio Grande Valley.



Ruben Garcia, Director of the Annunciation House has helped shelter migrants in El Paso for the last 43 years. Lately, they're getting about 200 new arrivals daily. (Stephanie Bennett/Fox News)

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El Paso, Brownsville, and San Diego are the only locations processing MPP asylum-seekers.

“This may be the next 10 years, I think we’re going to see 1,000s of refugees from these countries arrive at our borders, I think we’re going to see that and I think we’re going to have to deal with that and I hope that we, as a country of migrants, ... are going to deal with these people that arrive at our border in a humane way,” said Garcia.

Garcia says all of the migrants at his four shelters are tested for COVID-19 before they are allowed into his facility. If they test positive they’ll then quarantine in local hotels organized by the city’s Office of Emergency Management. Currently, only MPP arrivals are tested by immigration officials.

“They’re all tested within 24 hours of them entering. So the test is very, very current and that’s MPP. All of the plane people and all of the local releases are not tested. Border Patrol does not have the testing capability. So when they come to us, they have not been tested,” said Garcia. “We’ve been certified to do testing here.”



Garcia says they are currently operating four shelters around town and have the ability to expand if more migrants arrive. (Stephanie Bennett/Fox News)

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Garcia says most of their migrants stay for only 24 to 96 hours before they're placed with family or friends across the U.S. They will then wait for their immigration court proceedings there.

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"We would ask you, is there someone here in the United States, that is able to receive you ... and so then we call them and we say, 'Look, your family member's here, we now need you to go and purchase them a bus ticket or a plane ticket, so that they can go with you, immigration will then change the venue of your immigration case so that your cases docket is in with an immigration court in the geographical area so that you can then go to your hearings,'" said Garcia "Ninety-nine point nine percent of all of these families have someone to receive them."



Garcia says all of the migrants at his four shelters are tested for COVID-19 before they are allowed into his facility. If they test positive they'll then quarantine in local hotels. (Stephanie Bennett/Fox News)

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Biden administration officials have repeatedly insisted that the borders are closed because of the pandemic and agents continue to expel migrants to Mexico under

Title 42. Garcia says some of the families who have flown here to El Paso from southern Texas are also being exported back to Mexico through Juarez.

Still, thousands of people are making illegal crossing attempts.

Garcia says they're expecting more arrivals to come, but for now they're ready and can expand, even to other states if need be. That's what they've done in the past.

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"As the numbers go up, we expand and we reach out, for example, we'll open up hotels and we'll house people in hotels, but more importantly, we reach out to other groups, primarily churches," said Garcia.

Garcia emphasized that asylum is not guaranteed automatically. All of these people, both the legal MPPs and illegal crossings must have their cases wind through immigration courts and they could still be deported back to their home countries.

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Stephanie Bennett joined Fox News in 2019 as a multimedia reporter based in Phoenix, Arizona.

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