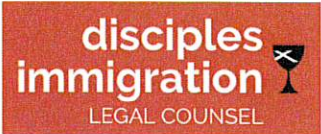


September 2021 Report for Week of Compassion Board of Directors



“Do Not Come”

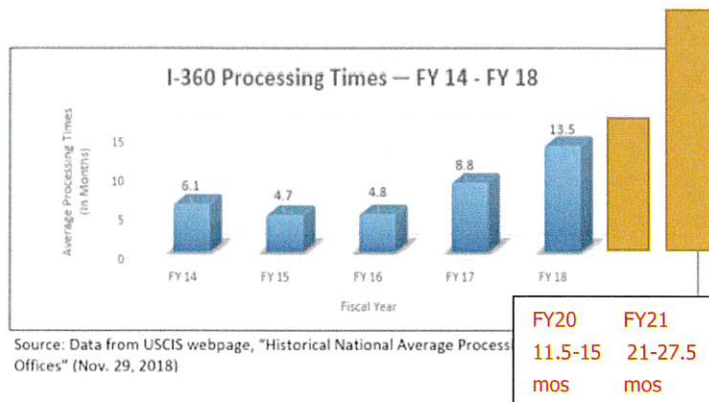
Like many, you were probably appalled to have seen the unbelievable images of the Border Patrol “rounding up” Haitians near Del Rio, Texas. Like me, you may be tired of hearing the three words titled above. They have been uttered repeatedly by officials from three different administrations as the worldwide refugee crisis deepens due to climate change, political instability, violence, natural disasters, etc. Perhaps we could agree that these issues are best met with compassion and dignity rather than repeated threats, mass removals, and political rhetoric? (If you have not already done so, please check out and join RIM’s Invitation to Welcome Refugees.)

Unfortunately, the refugee crisis is not the only part of our immigration system that is in tatters. Due to the Covid pandemic, the State Department shut down or severely limited services in most of the consulates worldwide. The State Department is responsible for visa processing and some parts of the refugee resettlement process. The agency is now severely understaffed, and capacity has yet to be rebuilt because reopening is still challenging as the majority of the world outside of the U.S. and Europe has yet to receive vaccinations. The State Department’s dysfunction was also seen in the final days of the Afghan evacuation as those who were most vulnerable and needed evacuation were left behind due to background check and visa processing delays. All together, the backlogs continue to grow, and it will take years to eliminate the current backlogs unless direct, purposeful action (i.e. funding) is made available.

The backlogs are not confined to visa processing overseas; they exist for immigration processing within the U.S. as well. There is not currently a case category that I have that will take less than one year to process. That means that a case that I file today will not be adjudicated for at least one year, which causes enormous uncertainty, anxiety, and paralysis for those awaiting decisions, which affect their rights to be with family, to work, and to travel.

Currently, one of the worst backlogs is the Special Immigrant Religious Worker Visa, on which many of our Disciples pastors rely. My oldest case has now been pending for 16.5 months.

Section from Tana’s April 2019 Report w/ 2020 & 2021 added for comparison



The latest challenge is crisis-level processing delays at U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). Long waits have always been a problem within immigration, but the intentional delays we are seeing now are particularly alarming. I currently have several green card cases pending over one year and clients desperate to escape from the purgatory of waiting and putting their lives on hold.

The current stated processing time is 21-27.5 months. In another year – *if* we have a decision by then – we will then apply for the next step, which has a current stated processing time of anywhere from 9 to 39 months, depending upon the Service Center which receives it. These processing times will inevitably increase because the process I describe here uses the same form and processing as the SIV Afghan visas that you have likely heard about on the news. Can you imagine waiting for 2-5 years to know concretely whether you will stay in the US, be able to work, be able to travel, and be able to live with your family?

Empathy for immigrants and refugees is the highest that it has been in years. Disciples all over the country are stepping up in amazing and incredible ways. Please keep it up! Immigrants and refugees need your voice, your advocacy, and your support; thank you in advance. Finally, thank you always for your support which enables me to assist in opening doors, eliminating barriers, and bringing people together.

Peace and blessings,
Natalie Teague
Immigration Legal Counsel

Celebrating Quality, (sadly) Not Quantity, in Outcomes

- Despite the southern border being closed to land crossings, Immigration Legal Counsel managed to negotiate successful entry for two adult daughters in Mexico to visit and reunite with their US citizen mother on her deathbed. The family had been separated for over a year since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. The mother passed within days of their arrival. The daughters' consolation at being able to say goodbye to their mother was indescribable. May she rest in peace.
- After pending for 4.5 years (in a case originally filed by Tana in Spring 2016), a U visa application for a victim of crime was approved. Unfortunately, there are only 10,000 U visas available per year, with a backlog of 270,000 applications pending, so this family must now wait until a visa number becomes available. In the meantime, work permits have been approved, which have opened incredible doors for this family. This case was a particular win due to a tricky Request For Evidence to which ILC responded over the summer.

Where was ILC this spring and summer?

Here are some of the notable events in which Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel was able to contribute and participate over the past five months:

- Joined Disciples Justice Ministries monthly meetings, including a prayer hour the day following the Derek Chauvin verdict with Rev. Terri Hord Owens, etc. 04/2021
- Attended Human Trafficking Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminar 5/2021
- Attended "Trauma-Informed, Anti-Racist Approach to Legal Advocacy" CLE 5/2021
- Attended "Introducing WHOLE Disciples: Resources for Domestic Violence Victims" 5/2021

- Co-Moderator of Religious Worker Immigration Attorney Monthly Meetings on case strategy and litigation updates regarding I-360 Religious Worker Petition processing delays 5/2021 – P
- Participated in Religious Worker Immigration Attorney strategy session led by US Conference of Catholic Bishops in tandem with multiple other faith groups and denominations 6/2021
- Shared space and presented whole afternoon session for Disciples Peace Fellows Orientation, including the preparation of follow-up materials to be used throughout summer 5/2021
- Attended American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) annual conference virtually 6/2021
- Participated in "Disciples Leaders Respond to July 16 DACA ruling" livestream 7/2021
- Prepared and presented detailed one hour DACA self-help workshops in English and Spanish following the Texas federal court decision 7/2021
- Spoke on Obra Hispana's Contigo Friday conversations with Rev. Lori Tapia 7/2021
- Participated as panelist in "Facing Brokenness" summer series focused on "The World" 8/2021
- Supported and attended RIM's Faithful August Recess Advocacy Monday sessions 8/2021
- Attended Racial Equity Summit 2021 online 8/2021
- Presented at Disciples Home Missions workshop during Disciples Virtual Gathering, moderated the DHM chatroom all morning, and attended full event (link available on virtual conference platform) 8/7/2021
- Staffed Afghanistan Legal Hotline, organized by Human Rights First during the final days of the evacuation 8/26-28/2021
- Led worship portion of monthly DHM Staff Meeting 8/2021
- Attended International Refugee Assistance Project's Legal Training for Volunteer Attorneys on SIV and P1/2 visas to build capacity to assist and/or represent vulnerable Afghan refugees 8/2021
- Attended "Using Trauma Science to Successfully Support Asylum Seekers" CLE 9/2021
- One of 15 nonprofit attorney invitees to Engagement Session with USCIS Director Ur Jaddou 9/2021
- Participated in (my alma mater) Elon Law Review's "Reparations: Restorative Justice for Racial Disparities" Symposium 09/2021
- Attending Disciples Ecumenical Climate Ambassador Virtual Training 9/2021
- Volunteering with American Immigration Council Immigrant Justice Campaign's Legal Orientation & Intake project for those ensnared in the MPP/Remain in Mexico program 10/2021 – P
- Volunteering with Project Afghan Legal Assistance (PALA) and through AILA membership to assist Afghan refugees with virtual legal orientation sessions, screenings, and trainings for non-immigration attorney volunteers 10/2021 – P
- Continuing coffee/tea Zoom sessions to deepen connections with colleagues
- Routine legal update CLE's as immigration law is constantly evolving and changing

**Immigration Counsel
Data for this Period:**

**Full Service Legal
Representation**

**Brief Legal Services &
Consultations**

May - Sept. 2021	35	27
Countries of Origin of those Served:	United States, Mexico, Samoa, South Korea, India, China, Guatemala	United States, Mexico, Jamaica, South Korea, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mongolia, Germany, Pakistan, Philippines, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Afghanistan, India

Words of Gratitude:

The work of Immigration Legal Counsel is critical to, and so appreciated by, those advised and represented. Here are some words of gratitude from clients this summer:

"Primero que nada quiero decirte que Dios te bendiga. Un millón de gracias que hiciste por nosotras. No sabes lo agradecido que estoy. Muchas gracias por este favor tan grande, nunca lo olvidare."

"First of all, I want to tell you God bless you. Thanks a million for what you did for us. You cannot know how grateful I am. Thank you very much for this great favor, I will never forget it."

-- Thank you note received from a client in June 2021

"Muchas gracias por su gran esfuerzo en ayudarnos, la verdad estoy muy agradecido con usted y espero algún día devolverle ese gran favor que nos hizo. Cuídese mucho y Bendiciones."

"Thank you very much for your incredible effort in helping us. The truth is that I am very grateful to you, and I hope to return this great favor that you did for us one day. Take good care of yourself and blessings."

-- Thank you note received from a client in Sept. 2021

Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel
Proposed Budget 2022

	Actual 9/30/2021	Proposed Budget 2022
Income		
Disciples Home Missions	27,500.00	37,245.00
Week of Compassion	6,667.00	10,000.00
Support from General Ministries	1,000.00	2,500.00
Total Income	<u>35,167.00</u>	<u>49,745.00</u>
Expenses		
Salary	31,490.00	43,245.00
Travel	65.99	3,000.00
Supplies and Insurance	3,129.81	3,500.00
Total Expenses	<u>34,685.80</u>	<u>49,745.00</u>



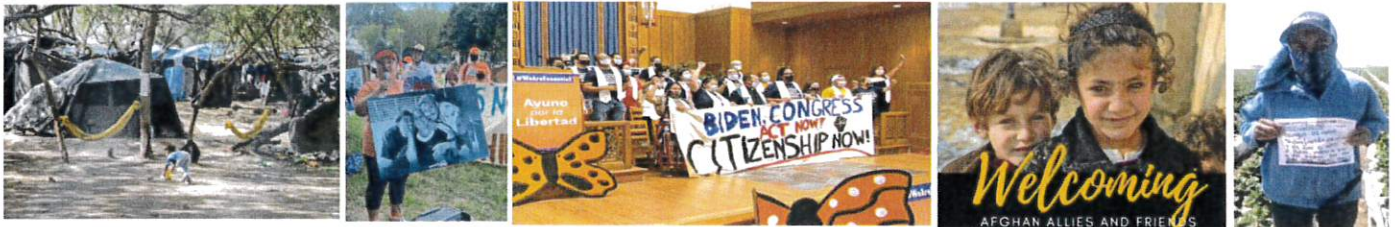
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries

RIM Report to WOC Board, mid-April 2021 through September 2021
by Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, RIM Director

Supporting Seasons of Welcome for Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Immigrant Neighbors!

The wisdom writer of Ecclesiastes observed: *“To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven...a time to plant, and a time to reap...a time to break down and a time to build up”* (Ecclesiastes 3:1-3). Such a promise could be made, he knew, because he believed in a God of permanent, committed, and constant refuge; one whose love and justice infused meaning into the cycles of life. Far too often, however, immigrant and refugee communities have experienced repetitions of hopelessness, insecure policies, and only temporary solutions and opportunities. Despite efforts to plant gifts in the U.S., and to break down the traumas of their past, many are met by resistance and barriers.

Instead, RIM’s ministries during the time period of mid-April through September of 2021 have continued to encourage **seasons of welcome** for refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrant neighbors. RIM is grateful to WOC for your support, and requests Disciples to continue to join in the following ways to build and celebrate seasons of welcome:



- **Restrengthen Refugee Resettlement Structures**—for refugees like Raees, an Afghani refugee father, who was one of only 11,804 allowed to resettle in 2020 fiscal year. “Please restore the US refugee program so others like my family who have been waiting many years may have a chance to live,” he urges. Hear more from Raees in this [faith video](#), and see [faith resources here](#) & [here](#) to honor global refugees & rebuild the US refugee program to its former strength!



Prior to the fall of Afghanistan in mid-August, as faith partners we were encouraging the US to [resettle 125,000](#) refugees again next year. However, following the devastating fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban and the anticipated arrivals of up to 85,000 Afghan refugees throughout the US over a short time period in the months ahead, the goal has now been revised to 200,000 refugees for the new 2022 fiscal year. [See our faith alert here](#). We believe this goal is

attainable—as the US resettled over 208,000 refugees in the year following the fall of Saigon in the mid 1970s.

This summer, for World Refugee Day 2021, RIM provided a variety of resources for congregational use to promote worship planning, advocacy, and refugee celebrations. Many resources are compiled here: [Disciples Refugee Welcome Sunday and World Refugee Day: June 20th](#) and here: [Planning Resources for Refugee Welcome Sunday](#). Congregations were also able to find and Download our Disciples 2021 Refugee Welcome Sunday Worship and Planning Resources Toolkit from the site [here](#); including worship resources, a sermon starter, refugee themed prayers, stories of Disciples work with refugees, a Children’s Sermon, game, top advocacy actions to take now to support refugees and asylum seekers, and much more!

RIM likewise offered a [Disciples 2021 “Top 5 Actions” Toolkit](#) to Support Refugees, as well as a collective [Faith Partners World Refugee Day 2021 Toolkit](#)—containing Refugee Voices, Welcome & Resettlement Opportunities, Faith Community & Partner World Refugee Day Resources, Worship Materials, and Refugee Advocacy Resources. For the first time ever, RIM gathered together ecumenical partners to offer a first-ever multi-faith partners “Virtual Refugee Worship” for World Refugee Day, which was held on Monday, June 14th, from 7-7:30 p.m. Persons [signed up here](#) to receive the link to join—and invited others to join!

As we move through Fall, ALL CONGREGATIONS are strongly encouraged to attend our national CWS partners [“Together We Welcome!” conference](#), with learning tracks for Asylum, Refugee Resettlement, Advocacy, and Climate’s impact upon migration. A fourth learning track about Afghan Assistance will likewise be offered. Cost is only \$25 for those who register before October 7th—so [REGISTER HERE!](#) The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a co-sponsor, RIM’s Director, Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, is on the ecumenical planning team, and we are praying to have a strong turnout of Disciples ready to welcome!



Together We Welcome: A National Faith Gathering to Strengthen Support for Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants
NOVEMBER 7-11 | 6-9PM EDT



• **Welcome Afghan Refugees—**

(Middle above: AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)—Families evacuated from Kabul, Afghanistan, walk through the terminal before boarding a bus after they arrived at Washington Dulles International Airport, in Chantilly, Va., on Friday, 8/27/2021 and on Right: Image from Dar Al-Hijrah at late Aug. Supplies gifts in Falls Church, VA.)

We continue to mourn the tragic fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban, grieve the loss of US soldiers and Afghan residents in attacks during evacuations, & pray that as many remaining allies and vulnerable Afghans seeking escape may find pathways to safety even following the official withdrawal date of US forces.

As evacuated Afghan refugees are processed at international bases, brought to the US through Dulles Airport, and fully vetted through military bases such as Fort Lee in Virginia, Fort Bliss in Texas, Fort Dix in New Jersey, Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, Camp Atterbury in Indiana and more, we continue to multiply our efforts as Disciples to Welcome Refugees. We invite your congregation to join this movement of hope, as you:

- SIGN UP at: <https://bit.ly/DisciplesRefugeeInterest> to indicate your or your church's interest to assist (or share work you are already doing!) to welcome Afghan refugees. Disciples RIM will follow up to help link you with best resources in your area, and with other interested Disciples!
- Questions? Contact Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, RIM Director, at: ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org, 202-957-7826 (text or call), or on Twitter: @StanleyRea, & Like Us on Facebook at: <http://bit.ly/RIMFacebook>
- [SIGN UP](http://bit.ly/RIMWRAP) to Receive updates from Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries: <http://bit.ly/RIMWRAP>
- CONSIDER APPLYING FOR AN [AFGHAN ASSISTANCE MINI-GRANT FROM WOC](#) of \$500-\$2,000 to support your congregation's outreach with Afghan refugees in your area!
- WATCH & SHARE [THIS VIDEO](#) on YouTube and [THIS VIDEO](#) on FaceBook from Rev. Terri Hord Owens, GMP, re: Afghan Welcoming, and WATCH [THIS VIDEO](#) from Week of Compassion about Your Compassion at Work Supporting Afghans.
- VIEW HERE OUR [AFGHAN REFUGE & WELCOME WEBINAR](#) with Week of Compassion & Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries

What Vision Can Help Guide Our Work?

Resettling refugees invites us to:

- enter sacred space
- recall Jesus' life
- offer holy welcome
- encounter "angels unawares"

See Our Disciples SACRED Refugee Response Toolkit

at: <https://bit.ly/SACREDRefugeeResponse>

SEEK GOD'S VOICE & Leading: Scripture, Prayer, Discernment

ASK what is most needed locally: Resettlement Agencies, Team Rubicon, Red Cross

CONNECT with partners: Churches/Region, Veteran, Muslim/Interfaith, & Community Groups

RAISE YOUR VOICE: Advocate to Congress/Administration, Op-Eds, Preach, Tell Friends

EXPLORE & EXPLAIN: Culture, Food, Community Values, Interpret, Share Your Story

DONATE: Week of Compassion "Refugees", Local Resettlement Efforts

What Else can Disciples DO as Congregations & as Regions to Help?

- EXPLORE HOW TO CONNECT through recent "RIM WRAP" Refugee & Immigration Alerts about Afghanistan [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).
- SEE CWS LEARNING RESOURCES at this [YouTube Link](#), [Afghan Welcome page](#), and [Learn More](#) page. Here is the link to [CWS Welcome Home Campaign](#) – which allows community members to rally friends and family through social media to raise rental assistance and provide a safe landing place for our Afghan friends.
- [TAKE ACTION](#) to urge safe and [ongoing pathways of escape](#) for remaining US citizens, Afghan military allies and vulnerable communities still seeking routes to fleeing dangers under the Taliban. See resources [here](#) about how to support, protect, and advocate for our allies. [Urge Welcome for Afghan neighbors here](#).
- [SEARCH HERE](#) for a map (see image below) of local affiliate offices of the nation's nine approved refugee resettlement organizations nearest to your area, and [FIND HERE](#) a state by state directory of resettlement offices.
- PRAY for U.S. veterans who worked with Afghans for years and are experiencing trauma since Afghanistan's takeover and recent deaths at the airport last week. PRAY for U.S. military who are a part of Operation Allies Refuge who have offered their services in this time of lifesaving evacuations and assistance. Remember the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255. And PRAY especially for Afghan families who have endured multiple traumas and are seeking hope now to rebuild their lives. Download an Interfaith Prayer Toolkit [here](#), and stay tuned for more opportunities to join together in prayer!
- KNOW U.S. VETS WHO SERVED WITH AFGHAN ALLIES?: Let RIM's Director know, as we're gathering stories of U.S.-Afghan partners! Email: ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org.
- HELP FRIENDS & FAMILY STILL IN AFGHANISTAN: [Afghan Evacuation, HRF: Resources](#), Evacuate Our Allies: [Resources](#), USCRI: [Resources for Afghan Allies](#), Afghan American

Foundation: [Afghanistan Emergency IDP Fundraising Organizations August 2021](#), GIWPS: [How to Save the Lives of Afghan Women](#), Women's Regional Network: [Women Globally Working to Protect Afghan Women](#), [CWS Afghan Resources](#), KAMA DC's Detailed listing of [Resources for Persons Living in Afghanistan](#), Vital Voice Emergency Fund: Contact Saba Ghori at sabaghorivitalvoices.org, Open Society Foundations: [Open Society Announces a \\$10 Million Emergency Fund for Afghan Civilians in Peril](#), U.S. Department of State: [Repatriation Assistance Request](#), IRAP also offers chatbots which offer information through Facebook Messenger and Telegram. To talk to the chatbot, [add @irapchatbot on Telegram](#) or [message them on Facebook](#). Then, type "hello" as your first message. The chatbot will respond to you and ask questions about your situation.

- o ASSIST AFGHANS WITH HIGHER ED NEEDS: EMail to: info@presidentsalliance.org
- o RAISE YOUR VOICE PUBLICLY FOR WELCOME to build awareness and support for your faith welcome for Afghan refugees and allies. Feel free to use/adapt [RCUSA's press statement from August 16th](#), [this digital toolkit](#), [this messaging guidance](#), [this social media guide](#), or [this rapid response toolkit](#) for sample social media posts, graphics, talking points, and more.
- o VOLUNTEER to help Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries mobilize Disciples around the country to respond. Remote options available! Email: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org. RIM is compiling resources for each Region, to be available soon via googledoc & updated as new resources and events emerge. Stay tuned!
- o AND ALWAYS...

LOCALLY HELP REFUGEES THROUGH YOUR NEAREST REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT ORGANIZATION!!

There are 9 state department approved refugee resettlement agencies in the U.S.; six of which are faith based. Disciples of Christ has a long-term partner relationship with Church World Service, which has 24 offices throughout the US! RIM also works closely with all other resettlement agencies—and encourages Disciples to work with resettlement offices located nearest to them. For Afghan resettlement, the State Department allows for congregations to sponsor if within 100 miles of a resettlement office.

SEARCH this map <https://rcusa.org/get-involved/volunteer/#map> to find local affiliate offices of the nation's nine approved refugee resettlement organizations nearest to your area, and FIND a state by state directory of resettlement offices

at: [https://www.wrapsnet.org/documents/R&P%20Affiliate%20Directory%20\(Updated%20May%202021\).pdf](https://www.wrapsnet.org/documents/R&P%20Affiliate%20Directory%20(Updated%20May%202021).pdf)



Find Region Specific Afghan Resources Below—& Check Back Here for More to Be Added Soon!:

Arizona Region: <https://bit.ly/AZRegionAfghan>

Capital Area Region: <https://bit.ly/DisciplesCapitalAreaAfghans>

Indiana Region: <https://bit.ly/INRegionAfghan>

Oregon Region: <https://bit.ly/ORRegionAfghans>

Pennsylvania Region: <https://bit.ly/PARegionAfghans>

Southwest Region: <https://bit.ly/SWafghan>

The 9 State Department Approved Refugee Resettlement Organizations Include:

Church World Service: <http://www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/index.html>

Episcopal Migration Ministries: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/emm>

Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.: <http://www.ecdcus.org>

HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society): <http://www.hias.org>

International Rescue Committee: <http://www.rescue.org>

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service: <http://www.lirs.org>

U.S. Committee for Refugee and Immigrants/USCRI: <http://www.refugees.org>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee

Services/USCCB: <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/>

World Relief: <http://www.wr.org>



- **Grow Pathways to Citizenship**--for DACA recipients like Marta. In front of the White House on the 9 Year Anniversary of DACA of June 15th, Marta reminded us that “DACA is not enough! Immigrants who have been essential workers throughout the pandemic need permanent protections; for Dreamers, TPS recipients, farmworkers, and more.” In recent months, RIM has joined in leadership with multiple faith organizations, such as Faith in Action and Interfaith Immigration Coalition to support immigration reforms that have been awaited for nearly 30 years. Faith partners, together with black, youth/young adult, Asian and Latinx-led immigrant organizations, have formed the [“We Are Home” network](#), which has held constant but covid-safe actions throughout 2021 both in DC and around the US.

Events such as rallies in honor of Immigrant Moms lifted up the contributions of immigrants both for families and for all of society. Another event for women Essential Workers highlighted economic benefits of female essential workers. Another key effort in support of citizenship during this report period was a summer, weeks-long [Fast for Freedom](#) from June until early July; where immigrant faith and community leaders traveled to DC to fast, worship, and meet daily and directly with elected leaders about their fears and hopes for citizenship. RIM staff helped organize this event, encouraged congregations to [take action](#) to urge for pathways to citizenship, and assisted with recruitment and leadership of multiple daily prayer services in support of fasters.

In partnership with the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, RIM staff developed prayer resources, and hosted a series of “Pathways Prayers for Citizenship” each Monday during August. Each week highlighted personal voices and testimonies of farmworkers, TPS and DACA recipients, and immigrant essential workers seeking pathways to citizenship. See a short video compilation of these testimonies [here](#), and access bi-lingual prayers and actions you can take in this [Pathways Prayers Toolkit](#). RIM Director likewise spoke on the Interfaith Immigration Coalition’s Citizenship webinar on July 27th and [“Faith Voices Call: Citizenship for All”](#) webinar

on September 20. See this [Toolkit for Faithful Fall Actions](#) to educate and assist your congregation's work for citizenship.

Until Congress finalizes votes related to Pathways to Citizenship (through the budget reconciliation process which is seeking to include citizenship provisions), FIRM continues to invite Disciples to participate in weekly "[Friday Faith on the Phones](#)," in partnership also with the NAKASEC, a Korean and other Asian immigrant-led education and empowerment organization.

- Also, as an additional way to honor farmworkers beyond our work for citizenship, RIM's Director continues to serve on the Executive Committee of the Board of National Farm Worker Ministries, which is now 50 years old. RIM is working to put together an "online history review" of Disciples work with farm workers; on this occasion of the 50 year anniversary since the incorporation of the National Farm Worker Ministry, where RIM serves on the board. Please, if you know of s/heroes among Disciples (like Garnett Day!) who have helped lead through the decades in this area, please let Sharon know, by email contacts to: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org

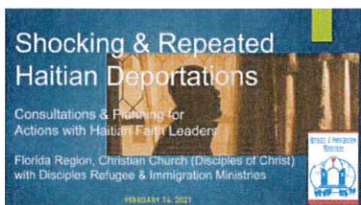


- **Restore Humane Asylum Opportunities**—for migrants seeking protections like Benson from Kenya, who fled threats to his life to seek asylum, but instead of being welcomed was detained for 14 months through an incarceration system he realized was “crafted to be as difficult as possible to deport as many as possible.” Though often feeling hopeless, he said “I found my hope by using my time in detention to help others also seeking protection to not give up.”

During the time period of this report, RIM has worked consistently to encourage Disciples to learn about and advocate humane asylum policies through prayers and public actions. In June, RIM encouraged faith partners and congregations to sign on to this [Faith Leader Letter](#) that outlined many of the human consequences of policies such as Title 42 upon immigrants. During the final week of July, which marked the 70th Anniversary of the [1951 Refugee Convention](#) that forms the principles of welcome for both refugees & asylum seekers, RIM helped lead an ecumenical "[Restoring Welcome](#)" event at the White House on July 28; urging for an end to harmful Title-42 policies and the restoration of asylum opportunities—legal under US and international humanitarian laws—at ports of entry. See the Press Release about the event [here](#).

As Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries continued to encourage the Administration to lift the blocks to asylum seekers implemented during the pandemic, we invited congregations to use our faith resources to [plan a Faith Asylum Vigil using this toolkit](#), [take action to welcome asylum seekers](#) with dignity, and [learn here about refugee resettlement and advocacy](#). Thanks to Rev. Allison Lanza, who helped two Kansas City youth groups conduct an asylee welcome vigil while on a ministry work trip in Texas in late July, as a part of "Connect Ministries" in Fort Worth. Watch their vigil [here](#), and share photos of your own group's actions with RIM at: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org. Learn even more about how you can [Welcome with Dignity](#) to see how you can help restore the legal right for persecuted persons to seek asylum protections in the U.S.

As RIM reported previously, perhaps the most pernicious recent asylum practice has been the “[Title 42](#)” order, which was implemented on March 20, 2020 and has since been used to [cruelly and repeatedly expel migrants](#) who were trying to seek protections, and instead return them to the very nations from which they fled. Title 42 bypassed U.S. and international laws guaranteeing asylum by pressuring the CDC to introduce an [order](#) to deny asylum seekers access to protections. Most especially, Title 42 has been [disproportionately used](#) to deepen traumas against black African and Caribbean asylum seekers—especially Haitians and Cameroonians and Haitians. For example, the Haitian deportation [flight](#) on April 29th was the [32nd](#) since Feb 1 of this year; meaning over 1700-2000 Haitians—mainly families with children—have been deported through Title 42, even though “[USCIS believes that Haitians returned to Haiti may face harm upon return to Haiti.](#)”



RIM previously [wrote lengthy comments](#) to resist the Title 42 policy and also [other asylum restrictions](#) imposed under the previous administration. However, by just before this report period, in March, DHS Secretary Mayorkas of the current administration had already returned [more Haitians than Trump did in all of FY 2020.](#)

In early February, RIM had hosted a training for Disciples Haitian clergy and communities in Florida and the Northeast, along with Rev. Terri Hord Owens and National Convocation leader Rev. Yvonne Gilmore (see image above.) RIM likewise encouraged congregations to participate in a Black Immigrant Advocacy Week of Action to end deportations in early February.

But beginning in mid-September, as deportation and expulsion flights multiplied further under Title-42 policies (including 55 deportation flights to Haiti during the time period of September 19-30!), the discrimination felt by black Haitian refugees ignited moral outrage of Haitian Disciples Pastors; who called RIM’s Director multiple times in late September for partnership in advocacy. Rev. Dr. Samuel Nicolas, Pastor of Evangelical Crusade Disciples of Christ congregation in Brooklyn, NY and President of the Haitian Evangelical Clergy Association, participated in a [Press Conference](#) in Brooklyn, engaged days later in civil disobedience on the Brooklyn bridge, and participated in urgent legislative calls and visits with Senator Schumer, Congresswoman Yvette Clark, and City Council leaders.

Rev. Nicolas said his group was “saddened and disappointed” with the treatment that Haitian migrants are being subjected to in Del Rio, Texas. “This treatment is cruel and barbaric,” he continued, saying “no asylum seeker should be treated with such indignity. We pray that our local, state and federal authorities will act swiftly to correct this horrific situation.” Since just September 19, 57 deportation flights of Haitians have transported Haitian migrants to Haiti and to Mexico; even though many of them had fled Haiti after the earthquake of 2010.

In solidarity with our Haitian Disciples leaders, RIM and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition wrote and circulated this Faith Leaders Letter to End Title 42. Then, on September 29th, Rev. Nicolas selected a Haitian faith representative from the NY Haitian Evangelical Clergy Network to speak with RIM Director Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea at an End Title 42 and Restore Asylum Vigil outside the White House. See Press Release [here](#), and watch the September 29th event [here](#). Raise your voice through [this faith alert for asylum restoration and end to Title 42](#) here.

Questions? Contact: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org, [@StanleyRea](#), or on [Facebook](#)

Refugee and Immigration Ministries
Proposed Budget 2022

	Actual 9/30/2021	Proposed Budget 2022
Income		
Contributions and Honorariums	7,529.00	6,500.00
Week of Compassion	43,333.00	65,000.00
Disciples Home Missions	18,313.00	26,276.00
Total Income	69,175.00	97,776.00
Expenses:		
RIM Director Salary	64,772.00	92,876
Travel	308.00	4,000
Telephone	597.00	800
Office and Postage	648.00	100
Total Expenses:	66,325	97,776

(Expenses over Income)