

June 21, 2011

State of Minnesota
County of Ramsey
District Court
Second Judicial District
The Honorable Kathleen R. Gearin, Chief Judge
Ramsey County Courthouse
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102



CATHOLIC
CHARITIES
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

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Minneapolis, MN 55403-2500

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**RE: State Government Shutdown
Civil Court File No. 62-cv-11-5203**

Dear Judge Gearin,

This is a letter submission provided on behalf of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis ("Catholic Charities") on the above matter. Catholic Charities serves approximately 37,000 vulnerable children, adults, and families in its programs for housing and emergency services, mental health, child care assistance, pre-natal health, senior services, and refugees and immigrants. Forty-five percent of our \$37 million annual budget is funded from government sources, including state government sources. Many of our programs have multiple sources of funding and we are required to meet various state licensing and other professional standards for the services we provide. In addition, state government contributed capital funding to many of our facilities, and we are required to serve the needs of those with special needs as a condition of the funding.

We are in the process of planning for a potential state government shutdown and analyzing its potential impact on our clients. Examples of programs Catholic Charities administers with state funds include:

- Group Residential Housing (GRH) is a state funded income supplement program of the Department of Human Services that pays for room-and-board costs for low-income adults who have been placed in a licensed or registered setting that serves 16,000 Minnesotans. Catholic Charities serves approximately 400 individuals in the GRH program, including many formerly homeless chronic alcoholics.
- The Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is a state funded rental assistance program of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency that serves approximately 2,100 Minnesota households. Catholic Charities administers approximately 100 rental assistance units for individuals and families, many for those who were previously homeless for long periods of time.
- The Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) is a state funded program of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency designed to keep families in their homes or rapidly re-house those who lose housing to prevent them from being homeless for long periods of time. Catholic Charities serves approximately 150 individuals and families through FHPAP.

Many of the clients of Catholic Charities rely on programs which Catholic Charities does not administer such as income support through General Assistance and state funded health care, and other clients receive services from other agencies for programs such as transit or child care assistance that we do not provide at all of our sites.

The potential impact of elimination of individual services which Catholic Charities administers on the "life, health, and safety" of our clients would be significant, and the compounding cumulative impact of a loss of several services could be severely debilitating. For example, we operate a child care development center in North Minneapolis for families who depend on our care so parents can work. Many of our families have been affected by the recent tornado and are confronted with multiple service reductions which could force families out of work, to leave children at home alone and put them in vulnerable situations, and otherwise make already challenging lives even more precarious.

We understand that the Court is contemplating the approval of a special master or otherwise establishing a process to determine which state government functions would continue during a shutdown. It is important that those living in poverty and vulnerable situations be represented in this process if this Court or a special master is to consider options that would affect services on which they presently rely.

Consequently, we respectfully request that the process to be established by the Court (1) allow for interested parties to present evidence on the direct impact of a reduction or elimination of specific services, as well as the cumulative impact of the reduction of or elimination of multiple services, on low income Minnesotans and those living in poverty; and (2) allow for third party providers with which state and local governments contract to provide state funded services to participate in this process and present evidence as well.

Catholic Charities will work with its clients, other nonprofit stakeholders, and public agencies to submit more comprehensive information as may be necessary during this process to facilitate decisions that protect the life, health and safety of vulnerable Minnesotans and those living in poverty, as well as the "security, benefit, and protection" of all of the people of Minnesota.

Please let me know if there is additional information that would be helpful to the Court.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Marx".

Tim Marx
Chief Executive Officer