



## **San Diego Rapid Response Network Migrant Shelter Services | Location Overview/History**

*The following is an excerpt from Jewish Family Service of San Diego's upcoming white paper on San Diego Rapid Response Network Migrant Shelter Services. The full white paper will be linked here when available, as well as published on [www.rapidresponsesd.org](http://www.rapidresponsesd.org) and [www.jfssd.org](http://www.jfssd.org).*

Since October 2018 until today, the San Diego Rapid Response Network (SDRRN) Migrant Shelter Services' congregate shelter site has moved seven times, with most of the location transitions occurring within the first few months.

The first five shelter locations were temporary sites donated by faith-based organizations, churches and nonprofits across San Diego County – most of which were existing members of SDRRN or partner organizations. Each location included spaces for medical screenings and triage; congregate sleeping areas, bathrooms and showers; a kitchen and cafeteria/dining space; storage for donated clothing, shoes, toys, diapers and personal care items; office spaces for staff and volunteers; indoor and outdoor activity spaces; and more.

On January 29, 2019, after months of advocacy and outreach from shelter operator Jewish Family Service of San Diego (JFSSD) and SDRRN, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors voted to use the former empty County courthouse as a temporary migrant shelter to house families seeking asylum who had been released into San Diego by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The site (the shelter's sixth location) was leased to JFSSD for \$1 from March through December 2019 and was cost-free to the County, as JFSSD had secured funding through the State of California and private philanthropy to pay for the operation, maintenance and upkeep of the facility.

To ensure seamless shelter operations once the lease with the County expired, JFSSD and SDRRN continued their advocacy and outreach efforts with local and state government leaders to identify the seventh location. In January 2020, SDRRN Migrant Shelter Services moved into a state-owned facility, which served as the primary congregate shelter site until the COVID-19 pandemic led the shelter to transition to individual hotel rooms (see Shelter Operations). The state-owned facility was then converted into a travel center to increase capacity and provide a safe space for people who had a short-term wait before flying out to their final destinations. This location remains the travel center today and also now includes a congregate sleeping space.

### **Keeping Location Sites Private**

It is important to note that throughout the shelter operation, JFSSD and SDRRN have worked to keep each shelter location undisclosed. This is done out of an abundance of caution to ensure the comfort and safety of guests, staff and volunteers as the country continues to navigate increased anti-immigration and antisemitic rhetoric, as well as to protect guests fleeing from domestic and gang violence.

This protocol remains in place today, with JFSSD, SDRRN and their public relations representatives engaging in ongoing conversations with partners, media and other visitors to the shelter sites and travel center about the need for location anonymity.