

For Immediate Release  
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**Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey receives \$150,000 from  
The David and Lucille Packard Foundation to support Legal Immigration services in  
Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties**

**Watsonville, California** – Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey announces the receipt of a \$150,000 grant from The David and Lucille Packard Foundation. This grant will strengthen Catholic Charities’ Legal Immigration and USA Citizenship services to residents of North Monterey County, South Santa Cruz County and San Benito County, focusing primarily on the Pajaro Valley, Hollister and rural areas in these regions.

The funds granted will be used over two years to provide legal services to qualified families and individuals seeking legal immigration and U.S. citizenship. “We are grateful to Packard’s generosity; this grant will bring stability to people and families in our rural areas, especially as we outreach to immigrant men and women already working in our local economy”, said Jeraline Singh Edwards, Directing Attorney of the Legal Immigration and Citizenship Program.

Under the leadership of Directing Attorney Jeraline Singh Edwards, whose main office is in Watsonville and Jorge Sifuentes, Deputy Director in Salinas, the staff assists people of all backgrounds with quality immigration services at affordable costs. The Immigration Specialists are U.S. Department of Justice (D.O.J.) partially accredited and provide: consultations, adjustment of legal status, work authorization renewals, family based Visas, U-Visa/VAWA, applications for U.S. citizenship, DACA renewals, and other legal remedies. The staff also provides educational sessions about the immigration process and how to attain U.S.A. naturalized citizenship.

For the past 35 years, Catholic Charities has established a strong presence in the central coast counties and gained the trust of immigrants from all backgrounds and nationalities. This past year alone we helped people from 16 different countries! With this generous grant, we will be able to continue our work and expand our services to people working here whose primary language is Mixteco or another indigenous Mexican language primarily from Oaxaca.

Catholic Charities’ Legal Immigration and Citizenship program began in 1984 because of the need to serve the immigrant population working in agriculture and experiencing fraud from people calling themselves attorneys, or notaries/notary publics. They make false promises to assist with applications only to take significant amounts of their money and not process their applications correctly or at all. “Because of the history of this type of fraud in our region, and the continued need for this important service which helps create a stable economy, Catholic Charities’ Legal Immigration and Citizenship program is here to stay,” said Ana Ventura Phares, ED.

The Mission of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Monterey is to provide service to people in need, to advocate for social justice, and to call other people of good will to do the same.

For information or to donate, please visit [www.CatholicCharitiesDoM.org](http://www.CatholicCharitiesDoM.org) and like us on Facebook!

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