

Interim Progress Report

Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families

November 29, 2022



Homeland
Security



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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	1
II.	Executive Order Language	2
III.	Recent Progress and Ongoing Efforts.....	3
IV.	Update on Task Force Data.....	6
V.	Update on Parole Requests	7
VI.	Appendix.....	8

I. Introduction

The Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families (Task Force) submits this interim report on recent progress of the implementation of Executive Order 14011 (E.O. 14011), *Establishment of Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families*.¹ As of November 18, 2022, the Task Force has facilitated the reunification of 546 children with their separated parents in the United States and provided these families with access to behavioral health services. Between September 10 and November 18, 2022, the Task Force made noteworthy progress in the following areas:

- An additional 170 potentially eligible families registered with the Task Force on *Together.gov/Juntos.gov*. Of those families, approximately 96 separated children have been referred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive assistance in obtaining reunification support services.
- Provided an additional 175 class members with behavioral health case management services and 154 with behavioral health assessment and treatment in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- Partnered with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to update the instructions for completing the Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, for beneficiaries requesting humanitarian parole and parole in place (PIP), and the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, in order to better support applications by eligible families.
- Contacted 56 previously unreachable families outside of the United States and registered 57 separated families reached to date on *Together.gov/Juntos.gov* through the Department of State's (DoS) Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration's (PRM's) project with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). In total, this project has reached 893 families and registered 750 families since its inception in September 2021.
- Continued with the third ("maintenance") phase of the PRM-funded UNHCR-implemented "Communicating with Communities" (CwC) public information campaign, including the further dissemination of radio broadcast and Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) audio recordings in Mayan languages.

¹ 86 Fed. Reg. 8273 (Feb. 5, 2021).

II. Executive Order Language

On February 2, 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14011 (E.O. 14011). The Executive Order requires regular reports to the President, including:

- (i) an initial progress report no later than 120 days after the date of this order;
- (ii) interim progress reports every 60 days thereafter;
- (iii) a report containing recommendations to ensure that the Federal Government will not repeat the policies and practices leading to the separation of families at the border, no later than one year after the date of this order; and,
- (iv) a final report when the Task Force has completed its mission.

III. Recent Progress and Ongoing Efforts

The Task Force continues to make progress completing the directives set for it through the President's E.O. During this reporting period, the Task Force received 170 new registrations from potentially separated families, 59 parents or legal guardians have been reunited with their children, and 175 previously reunified families are receiving behavioral case management services. The Task Force coordinated with USCIS to update the I-131 and I-765 guidance to minimize delays in parole determinations for separated families. These efforts continue to encourage families to come forward for support while bringing the Task Force closer to its goal of providing all eligible separated families with the opportunity to reunify.

Supporting Separated Families When They Come Forward

In this reporting period, 170 potentially eligible families registered with the Task Force website, [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov/juntos.gov), bringing the total number of registrations to 1,880 families. Eligible registrants were referred to IOM to complete the parole request process and, if appropriate, schedule travel to the United States. As of November 18, 2022, the Task Force has referred a total of 862 separated children of families living outside of the United States and 385 separated children of families living in the United States to IOM for assistance.

Administering Behavioral Health Services for Reunified Families

Between June 10, 2022 (when the new behavioral health contract began) and November 15, 2022, SAMHSA has directly notified 259 class members of the availability of behavioral health services. Under its existing contract with Seneca Family of Services, a non-profit service provider, SAMHSA has provided 624 class members with behavioral health case management services and provided 307 class members with behavioral health assessments and treatment. This includes the 175 additional class members provided with behavioral health case management

services and 154 families provided with behavioral health assessment and treatment during the reporting period of September 10, 2022 and November 18, 2022.

Locating Families and Explaining Reunification Options

From September 12 to November 6, 2022, the DoS/PRM project with UNHCR and KIND contacted 56 separated families located outside of the United States that were previously unreached and provided them with information on the reunification process. The project registered 57 families on *Together.gov/Juntos.gov*. Since its start on September 15, 2021², the project has reached 893 families through direct contact and has registered 750 families. KIND estimates that it takes approximately 20 hours per family to make contact, answer questions, and register families on the website. However, outreach becomes more challenging as time passes, as contact information for families on file becomes outdated and less reliable.

In addition, KIND's Help Desk continues to spend a significant amount of time supporting the large number of registered families with their ongoing questions. The Help Desk has now assisted over 700 callers. KIND continues to make steady progress reaching, informing, and registering families with known contact information, which is provided to KIND by the *Ms. L. Steering Committee* and the Task Force. The Task Force regularly conducts searches of available government data systems for any new contact information to provide to the Steering Committee, and KIND will be initiating phone outreach to these families and continue to do so for the remainder of the project.

UNHCR also continues to work with KIND on targeted outreach with Justice in Motion (JiM). JiM conducts on-the-ground searches for families KIND is unable to reach by remote means. From September 2021 to October 31, 2022, JiM successfully reached 344 of the 495 separated parents referred to them from the project's start. JiM continues to search for the remaining 151 parents. JiM assisted many of those 344 families register with the Task Force, and all were referred to KIND to provide information about the reunification process and answer questions.

Maintaining Outreach Efforts to Promote Public Awareness

In the last 60 days³, UNHCR continued its CwC campaign across four core countries: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. While the main phases of the CwC campaign to disseminate both print and digital materials were completed, UNHCR continued to leverage additional opportunities for focused, targeted public outreach.

On October 19, UNHCR Guatemala launched a 22-day intensive radio campaign across seven regional radio stations in Huehuetenango, the home of many separated parents. A total of 1,848 radio spots were aired during this period. The radio spots will broadcast two messages: (1) to raise general awareness of the reunification program and how to register, and (2) to caution on fraud and exploitation prevention. These messages were aired in Spanish and three Mayan languages (K'iche', Mam, and Q'anjob'al).

² Data as of November 6, 2022

³ Data as of November 8, 2022

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

During this reporting period, UNHCR El Salvador concluded its three-month, two-wave SMS campaign in September. The automated text messages were sent to those who were separated from their family members at the U.S.-Mexico border and directed them to learn more by clicking on a link to *Juntos.gov* embedded in the message. The second wave of text messages reached 140,000 cell phones, and analytical tracking reported over 1,500 unique clicks on the *Juntos.gov* link.

The CwC campaign is also reaching separated parents outside the PRM-funded project's targeted direct outreach efforts through KIND and JiM. KIND found that 18% of all individuals who called the Help Desk independent of targeted outreach efforts were eligible separated parents and, assisted them in registering for reunification support. Additionally, KIND recently published a series of FAQ videos for parents in K'iche', with Mam and Q'anjob'al to follow.

Settlement Negotiations

The Task Force continues to consult with the Department of Justice, which remains engaged in confidential settlement negotiations with the plaintiffs in the *Ms. L.* litigation.

IV. Update on Task Force Data

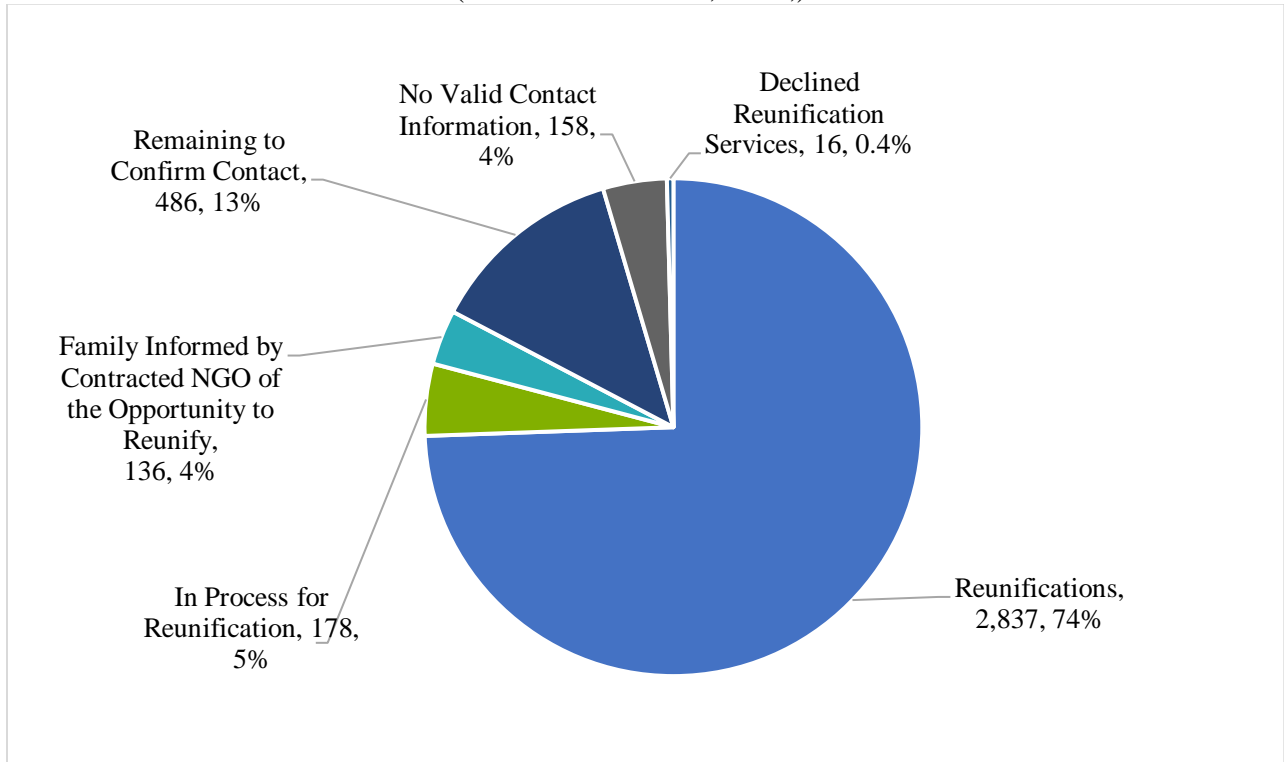
As of November 18, 2022, the Task Force has identified 3,811 children within the scope of E.O. 14011.⁴ By closely coordinating with NGOs and attorneys representing the separated families, the Task Force has reunified 546 children with their parents. Prior to the establishment of the Task Force, 2,291 children were reunified, bringing the total number of known reunified children to 2,837. As of November 18, 2022, there are 178 children in the process of being reunified by the Task Force.⁵ There are also an additional 780 children for whom the Task Force has not confirmed reunification with their parents and who are not currently in the process of being reunified; however, the Task Force believes, based on information exchanged through the *Ms. L.* joint status reports, that approximately 387 children have been reunified with their parents in the United States. The Task Force continues to work towards improving its data knowledge and expanding its ability to verify reunifications. Given ongoing litigation, the Task Force does not directly contact separated families and relies on the *Ms. L.* Class Counsel to verify this information.

⁴ The number of in-scope separations can increase or decrease over time due to the Task Force's continuous effort to refine and improve its data and tracking of prior family separations.

⁵ Please see Appendix, Figure 1 for a comparison of reunification data reported in this report with the reunification data reported in the September 14, 2022, Interim Progress Report.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Figure 1: Status of Contact with Separated and Reunified Families by Child
(as of November 18, 2022,)



Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L.* and *Ms. J.P.* litigation.⁶

⁶ *J.P. v. Sessions*, No. 2:18-cv-06081 (C.D. Cal) (Nov. 5, 2019).

V. Update on Parole Requests

The Task Force is using the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) parole authority to permit separated families, on a case-by-case basis, to enter or remain in the United States for purposes of reunification and to receive access to services. As of November 18, 2022, approximately 3,592 individuals (separated children, parents, and additional family members) have filed parole requests with USCIS through the Task Force process. The average processing time from registration to travel to the United States is 143 days.⁷

IOM continues to support separated families with in-country processing, including assistance in completing the parole request to be filed with USCIS and, once parole is approved, obtaining required travel documents, such as passports and exit visas. During this reporting period, IOM's processing queue includes 7 active cases of separated children and their families, including previously reunified families, with the majority being in Guatemala.

In the last 60 days, the Task Force referred 34 families who were already in the United States to IOM to inform them of their option to request parole in place.

⁷ The processing times for each case vary greatly depending on a family's personal circumstances.

VI. Appendix:

Figure 1: Updated Family Reunification Task Force Data for Separated Children

Data Tracking Separated Children and Reunifications	Mar. 31 Report ⁸	May 31 Report ⁹	Jul. 31 Report ¹⁰	Sep. 30 Report ¹¹	Nov. 30 Report ¹²
In Scope for Task Force Support	3,843	3,843	3,851	3,855	3,811
Children Identified as Returned to Home Country	385	385	389	316	310
Parents Identified as Returned to Their Home Country	1,643	1,643	1,650	1,581	1,622
Total Reunifications	2,331	2,521	2,634	2,766	2,837
<i>Reunifications Prior to Task Force Establishment</i>	2,184	2,261	2,269	2,279	2,291
<i>Task Force Reunifications</i>	147	260	365	487	546
Remaining Children Without Confirmed Reunification¹³	1,512	1,324	1,217	1,077	958
<i>In Process for Reunification</i>	373	331	276	191	178
<i>Contact Information Available but Not Reached</i>	931	808	764	719	486
<i>Verified Recent Contact and not in Progress¹⁴</i>	-	-	-	-	136
<i>No Confirmed Contact Information Available and Reunification Status Unknown</i>	208	185	177	167	158
Declined Reunification Services¹⁵	-	-	-	-	16

Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L.* and *Ms. J.P.* litigation.

The Task Force data is continuously changing due to various efforts that include reviewing USG datasets, contacting separated families, and learning about previously unknown family separations, and previously unknown family reunifications. As a result, numbers will increase and decrease from one report to the next, which should not be interpreted as a lack of progress.

⁸ Data as of March 17, 2022.

⁹ Data as of May 17, 2022.

¹⁰ Data as of July 14, 2022.

¹¹ Data as of September 14, 2022.

¹² Data as of November 18, 2022.

¹³ This number does not include cases that may have reunified on their own without the Task Force's knowledge – including those reflected in the *Ms. L* Joint Status Report.

¹⁴ This data point is a new addition to the Interim Progress Report and will be included in future reports.

¹⁵ This data point is a new addition to the Interim Progress Report and will be included in future reports.

Deliberative and Pre-decisional

Learning about the status of separated families brings the Task Force closer to achieving its mandate to identify all separated children and enable and facilitate the reunification of all eligible families.

Figure 2: Additional Family Reunification Datasets

Since its establishment, the Task Force has tracked various metrics to capture the work behind identifying separated children, reaching and informing the family about reunification, and providing families with support services throughout the reunification process and once they have arrived in the United States. Below are numbers representing some of these efforts to highlight the complexity of the work and the level of effort required to reunify a separated family.

Task Force By The Numbers	Totals
Average hours required to contact & register a separated family	20
Number of unique visits to <i>Together.gov/Juntos.gov</i>¹⁶	52,901
Number of families registered on <i>Together.gov/Juntos.gov</i> to reunite & receive support services	1,844
Number of children in parole in place process	73
Number of children in humanitarian parole process	724
Number of additional household members qualified for IOM support services	1,841
Average number of families reunified each month since September 2021	39

¹⁶ Data as of October 9, 2022