



# Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families Interim Progress Report

May 31, 2023

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# I. Introduction

The Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families (Task Force) submits this interim report on the implementation of Executive Order 14011 (E.O. 14011), *Establishment of Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families*.<sup>1</sup> As of May 16, 2023, the Task Force has facilitated the reunification of 705 children with their parents in the United States and made behavioral health services available to those families. Between March 17, 2023, and May 16, 2023, the Task Force made noteworthy progress in the following areas:

- Reunified 53 children with their parents or legal guardians.
- Received 171 registrations of families on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov). Of the 171 families that registered, approximately 68 separated children were referred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive reunification support services. The eligibility of the remaining 103 registered families could not be immediately determined and remain under review with the Task Force.
- Provided an additional 186 *Ms. L*.<sup>2</sup> class members with behavioral health case management services and 128 *Ms. L*. class members with behavioral health assessments and treatment, in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- In March and April 2023, contacted 45 previously unreachable families outside of the United States and registered 46 separated families on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov) through the Department of State's (DoS) Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration's (PRM) project with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). From its inception in September 2021 to its conclusion in April 2023, the project reached 1,109 families and registered 947 families on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov).
- Maintained public awareness of the family reunification process in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador through the PRM-funded, UNHCR-implemented "Communicating with Communities" (CwC) information campaign.
- In April, Task Force staff traveled to El Paso and met with Office of Field Operations (OFO) officers and U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) agents to continue learning about the operational realities involved when processing families encountered by U.S. Border Patrol agents along the border and by CBP officers at ports of entry.
- As of May 1, 2023, transitioned the operation of the Help Desk<sup>3</sup>, which provides free information and assistance to separated families, from KIND to IOM to ensure the continued

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<sup>1</sup> 86 FR 8273 (Feb. 5, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> *Ms. L v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, No. 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal) (Feb. 26, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Department of Homeland Security, [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) Help Desk | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](https://www.dhs.gov).

availability of support to families with questions regarding their eligibility for reunification services or in need assistance during the reunification process.

- Continued its work to identify and, as appropriate and available, collect contact information for American citizen children and their noncitizen parents or legal guardians who were separated by DHS between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021.

## II. Executive Order Language

On February 2, 2021, President Biden signed 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 the 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 the 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 toward completing the directives set forth in President Biden’s Executive Order 14011. During this reporting period, the Task Force received 171 registrations from potentially separated families, reunited 53 children with their parents or legal guardians, connected 186 *Ms. L.* class members with behavioral health case management services, and provided 128 *Ms. L.* class members with behavioral health assessment and treatment in coordination with SAMHSA. During this reporting period, the Task Force reached an important milestone, successfully completing more than 700 family reunifications. In April, Task Force staff visited the Southwest border to continue learning about the operational realities involved in processing families encountered by U.S. Border Patrol and CBP officers at ports of entry. As of May 1, 2023, Help Desk operations transitioned from KIND to IOM to ensure the continuation of support to families who have questions regarding their eligibility or need assistance during the reunification process. Additionally, the Task Force continued its work to identify and, as appropriate and available, collect contact information for U.S. citizen children and their noncitizen parents or legal guardians whom CBP separated between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021. These collective 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, 171 families registered with the Task Force website, [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://together.gov/juntos.gov), bringing the total number of registrations to 2,386 families. Eligible registrants were referred to IOM to complete the parole request process and, if appropriate, schedule travel to the United States. As of May 16, 2023, the Task Force has referred a total of 925 separated children whose families live outside of the United States and 557 separated children whose families live in the United States to IOM for assistance. The Task Force also continues to run a Help Desk to support individuals in need of assistance during the reunification process. The Help Desk is available Monday through Friday from 10 am to 6 pm MDT; contact information can be found on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://together.gov/juntos.gov).<sup>4</sup>

During the reporting period, the Task Force continued its work – which started nearly a year ago – to identify American citizen (AMCIT) children who were potentially separated from their noncitizen parents between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021. The Task Force’s plan to reunify separated AMCIT children consists of four phases: (1) identify potentially separated AMCIT children through a review of DHS and U.S. Government (USG) databases, (2) gather contact information for those identified, (3) perform outreach to all identified children, and (4) facilitate reunification as legally appropriate. The Task Force is completing the first phase and will begin gathering contact information for the identified AMCIT children and their families during the next reporting period.

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<sup>4</sup> DHS, “FRTF - Help - FRTF Home.”  
[https://form.together.gov/frtf/?id=frtf\\_help&sys\\_id=fa4336441be27410f50d84cae54bcb52&lang=eng](https://form.together.gov/frtf/?id=frtf_help&sys_id=fa4336441be27410f50d84cae54bcb52&lang=eng).

## Administering Behavioral Health Services for Reunified Families

Between June 10, 2022, and May 16, 2023, through a contract with the service provider, Seneca Family of Agencies, SAMHSA directly notified 624 *Ms. L.* class members (parents only) of the availability of behavioral case management and behavioral health services, and the program's 24/7 Hotline has answered 612 calls. Additionally, SAMHSA has provided 1,042 class members (parents only) with behavioral health case management services and provided 681 class members (parents and children) with behavioral health assessments and treatment (individual and family therapy). Between October 2022 and January 2023, forty-three of these class members (parents only) received parenting support and participated in psychoeducational groups. Forty-five class members (parents only) received parenting support and participated in psychoeducational groups from February 2023 to May 2023. Fifty-seven class members (parents only) currently residing outside the United States have accepted pre-reunification counseling services for their children in the United States since this service launched in October 2022. The pre-reunification counseling services were delivered to the children. Since the USG began delivering this service through the time of this report, fifty-seven children have received at least one pre-reunification counseling session. Overall, the USG has provided 1,514 class members with behavioral health assessments and treatment.

## Locating Families and Explaining Reunification Options

On April 30, 2023, the DoS/PRM project with UNHCR and KIND concluded its outreach efforts. From March 1 to April 30, 2023, the project contacted 45 separated, previously unreachable families outside the United States and provided them with information about the reunification process. During that same period, the project registered 46 families on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov/juntos.gov). In its entirety, the project reached 1,109 families through direct contact and registered 947 families on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov/juntos.gov).

KIND's implementing partner, Justice in Motion (JiM), also concluded its on-the-ground searches for families that could not be reached through other means on April 30, 2023. These efforts resulted in successful contact with 483 separated parents, all of whom were referred to KIND to receive information about the reunification process, and many of whom registered on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov/juntos.gov).

On May 1, 2023, KIND transitioned Help Desk operations to IOM. Although the hours of operation changed to 10 am to 6 pm MDT, all other aspects of the Help Desk – including the phone number – remain unchanged and the Help Desk continues to provide support to families with questions about the process, registration assistance, and referrals to other project partners as needed. Between November 10, 2021, and April 30, 2023, the KIND-operated Help Desk assisted over 1,020 callers. Between May 1, 2023, and May 16, 2023, the IOM-operated Help Desk assisted 124 callers. In total, the Help Desk has assisted 1,144 callers.

## Maintaining Public Awareness

Through the end of the DoS/PRM project on April 30, 2023, UNHCR maintained public awareness through its Communicating with Communities (CwC) campaign, including through

social media posts and banners and posters displayed on UNHCR mobile units and at community centers across four core countries: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Public awareness efforts included anti-fraud messaging as a key focus. Social media posts also messaged about the transition of Help Desk operations from KIND to IOM as of May 1, 2023. UNHCR's CwC campaign has now concluded, and the Task Force will pursue future public awareness efforts.

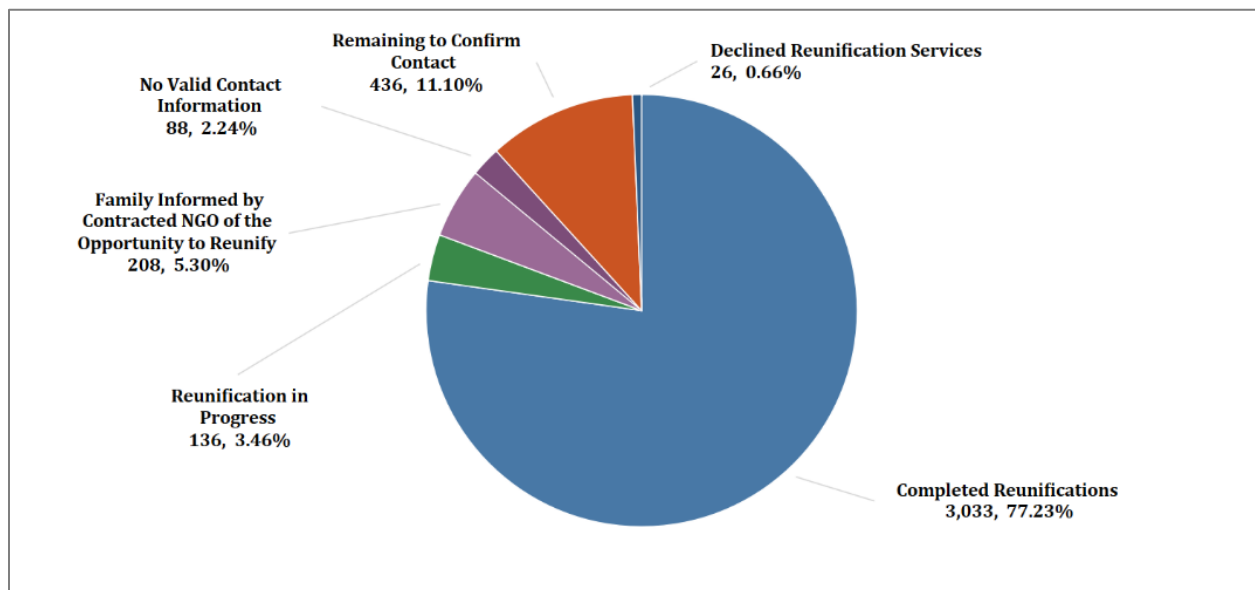
## Settlement Negotiations

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 May 16, 2023, the Task Force has identified 3,927 children within the scope of E.O. 14011,<sup>5</sup> and, by closely coordinating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and attorneys representing the separated families, has reunified 705 children with their parents. Prior to the establishment of the Task Force, 2,328 children were reunified, bringing the total number of known completed reunifications to 3,033. As of May 16, 2023, 136 children were in the process of being reunified by the Task Force.<sup>6</sup> Of the remaining children, 208 had been informed of their eligibility to be reunified, 88 were without valid contact information, 436 were pending confirmation of contact, and 26 declined reunification services. However, the Task Force believes, based on information exchanged through the *Ms. L.* joint status reports, that approximately 204 of these children may have already 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 data with partners. Given ongoing litigation, the Task Force does not directly contact separated families and relies on the *Ms. L.* Class Counsel to verify contact information.

Figure 1: Status of Contact with Separated and Reunified Families by Child  
(As of May 16, 2023)



Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L.*<sup>7</sup> and *Ms. J.P.* litigation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The number of in-scope separations can increase or decrease over time due to the Task Force's continuous efforts to refine and improve its data and tracking of prior family separations.

<sup>6</sup> Please see Appendix, Figure 1 for a comparison of reunification data reported in this report with the reunification data reported in the January 29, 2023, Interim Progress Report.

<sup>7</sup> *Ms. L v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, No. 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal) (Feb. 26, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> *J.P. v. Sessions*, No. 2:18-cv-06081 (C.D. Cal) (Nov. 5, 2019).



## V. Update on Parole Requests

The Task Force continues to use DHS's parole authority under section 212(d)(5)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit separated families, on a case-by-case basis, to enter and remain in the United States for purposes of reunification and to receive access to services. As of May 16, 2023, approximately 4,824 individuals (separated children, parents, and additional family members) have filed parole requests with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) through the Task Force process. The average processing time from registration to travel to the United States (if the parole request is approved) for the last two reporting periods is 61 days and the overall average processing time is 161 days.<sup>9</sup> Processing times vary due to the complex nature of the remaining cases and the need for additional coordination with IOM and USCIS.

IOM continues to support separated families with in-country processing, including assistance in completing parole requests to be filed with USCIS and, if parole is authorized, obtaining required travel documents, such as passports and exit visas. During this reporting period, IOM's processing queue includes 78 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 11 families in the United States to IOM to inform them of their ability to request parole in place and to assist them with the filing process.

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<sup>9</sup> 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 <sup>10</sup>	May 31 Report <sup>11</sup>	Jul. 31 Report <sup>12</sup>	Sep. 30 Report <sup>13</sup>	Nov. 30 Report <sup>14</sup>	Jan. 29 Report <sup>15</sup>	Mar. 31 Report <sup>16</sup>	May 31 Report <sup>17</sup>
<b>In Scope for Task Force Support</b>	3,843	3,843	3,851	3,855	3,811	3,923	3,925	3,927
<b>Total Reunifications</b>	2,331	2,521	2,634	2,766	2,837	2,896	2,969	3,033
<i>Reunifications Prior to Task Force Establishment</i>	2,184	2,261	2,269	2,279	2,291	2,297	2,317	2,328
<i>Task Force Reunifications</i>	147	260	365	487	546	599	652	705
<b>Remaining Children Without Confirmed Reunification<sup>18</sup></b>	1,512	1,324	1,217	1,077	958	1,008	942	868
<i>In Process for Reunification</i>	373	331	276	191	178	152	164	136
<i>Remaining to Confirm Contact</i>	931	808	764	719	486	557	478	436
<i>Family Informed by Contracted NGO or Legal Counsel of the Opportunity to Reunify</i>	-	-	-	-	136	166	186	208
<i>No Valid Contact Information</i>	208	185	177	167	158	133	94	88
<b>Declined Reunification Services</b>	-	-	-	-	16	19	20	26

Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L*<sup>19</sup>. and *Ms. J. P.*<sup>20</sup> 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 may increase and decrease from one report to the next, which should not be interpreted as a lack of progress. 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.

<sup>10</sup> Data as of March 17, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Data as of May 17, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Data as of July 14, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Data as of September 14, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Data as of November 18, 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Data as of January 17, 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Data as of March 16, 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Data as of May 16, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> *Ms. L v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, No. 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal) (Feb. 26, 2018).

<sup>20</sup> *J.P. v. Sessions*, No. 2:18-cv-06081 (C.D. Cal) (Nov. 5, 2019).

Since its establishment, the Task Force has tracked various metrics to capture the work behind identifying separated children, reaching, and informing families 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 to reunify separated families.

Figure 2: Additional Family Reunification Datasets

<b>Task Force by The Numbers</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Average hours required to contact and register a separated family<sup>21</sup></b>	20
<b>Number of families registered on <u><i>Together.gov/Juntos.gov</i></u> to reunite &amp; receive support services<sup>22</sup></b>	2,386
<b>Number of additional household members qualified for IOM support services<sup>23</sup></b>	2,381
<b>Average number of families reunified each month since September 2021<sup>24</sup></b>	35.25

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<sup>21</sup> Data from KIND

<sup>22</sup> Data from Together.gov/Juntos.gov website for December 19, 2021, through May 16, 2023

<sup>23</sup> Data from FRTF Case Management System as of May 16, 2023

<sup>24</sup> Data from FRTF Case Management System as of May 16, 2023