



# Interim Progress Report

Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families

*July 31, 2023*



Homeland  
Security



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

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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 July 16, 2023, the Task Force has facilitated the reunification of 745 children with their parents in the United States and made behavioral health services available to those families. Between May 17, 2023, and July 16, 2023, the Task Force made noteworthy progress in the following areas:

- Reunified 40 children with their parents or legal guardians.
- Received 164 registrations of families on [Together.gov](https://www.together.gov)/[Juntos.gov](https://www.juntos.gov). Of the 164 families that registered, approximately 48 separated children were referred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive reunification support services. The eligibility of the remaining 116 registered families could not be immediately determined and remain under review with the Task Force.
- Provided an additional 266 *Ms. L.*<sup>2</sup> class members with behavioral health case management services and 102 *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 June, Task Force leadership and staff traveled to El Paso and the Rio Grande Valley and met with CBP - Office of Field Operations (OFO) officers and U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) agents to continue learning about the operational realities involved when processing family units and groups who are encountered by CBP officers at Ports of Entry (POEs) and those encountered by USBP agents along the border, between POEs.
- Continued its work to identify and collect any available contact information within federal government databases, for American citizen children and their noncitizen parents or legal guardians who were separated by DHS between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021.

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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).

## 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 164 registrations from potentially separated families, reunited 40 children with their parents or legal guardians, connected 266 *Ms. L.* class members with behavioral health case management services, and provided 102 *Ms. L.* class members with behavioral health assessment and treatment in coordination with SAMHSA. In June, Task Force leadership and staff traveled to El Paso and the Rio Grande Valley and met with CBP - OFO officers and USBP agents to continue learning about how CBP and USBP process family units and groups who are encountered by at and between POEs. These collective efforts continue to provide support to eligible families, who were separated during the previous Administration, as they come forward while also identifying ways to avoid the possibility of future, unnecessary family separations.

#### Supporting Separated Families When They Come Forward

During this reporting period, 164 families registered with the Task Force website, [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov/juntos.gov), bringing the total number of registrations to 2,557 families. Eligible registrants were referred to IOM to complete the parole request process and, if appropriate, schedule travel to the United States. As of July 16, 2023, the Task Force referred a total of 979 separated children whose families live outside of the United States, as well as 563 separated children whose families live in the United States, to IOM for assistance. The Task Force also continues to run a Help Desk that supports individuals who need 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://www.together.gov/juntos.gov).<sup>3</sup>

A year ago, the Task Force began its work 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) provide an opportunity to reunify. During this reporting period, the Task Force continued to make progress in this effort by reviewing and identifying eligible cases and gathering any available contact information for the identified AMCIT children and their families from existing federal record databases. This work will continue in the next reporting period.

#### Administering Behavioral Health Services for Reunified Families

Between June 10, 2022, and July 16, 2023, through a contract with the service provider, Seneca Family of Agencies, SAMHSA directly notified 897 *Ms. L.* class members (parents only) of the availability of behavioral case management and behavioral health services, and the program’s

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<sup>3</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).

24/7 Hotline has answered 697 calls. Additionally, SAMHSA has provided 1,218 class members (parents only) with behavioral health case management services and provided 723 class members (parents and children) with behavioral health assessments and treatment (individual and family therapy). Between October 2022 and January 2023, 43 of these class members (parents only) received parenting support and participated in psychoeducational groups; 77 class members (parents only) received parenting support and participated in psychoeducational groups from February 2023 to May 2023; and 25 class members (parents only) 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. Since the USG began delivering this service through the time of this report, 25 children have received at least one pre-reunification counseling session. Overall, the USG has provided 1,556 class members with behavioral health assessments and treatment.

## Locating Families and Explaining Reunification Options

Since May 1, 2023, IOM has been operating a Help Desk to provide support for callers and explain reunification options. Between May 17, 2023, and July 16, 2023, the IOM-operated Help Desk assisted 205 unique callers amounting to 1,528 phone calls. Although the Task Force's arrangement with KIND has ended, Seneca Family of Agencies continues outreach to families in the United States and the Task Force is currently working to re-establish international outreach with additional partners to continue efforts to reach families that may be eligible for reunification services. Since the Help Desk was founded in 2021, the Help Desk has assisted 1,349 unique callers.

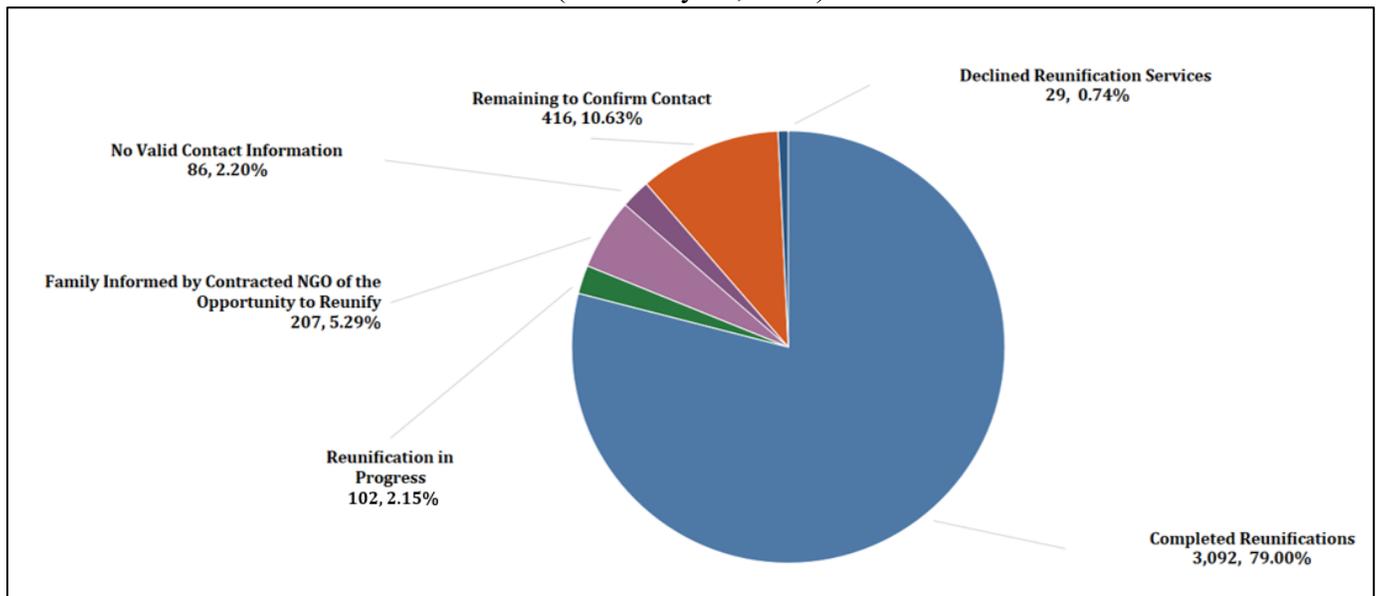
## Settlement Negotiations

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 July 16, 2023, the Task Force has identified 3,932 children within the scope of E.O. 14011,<sup>4</sup> and, by closely coordinating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and attorneys representing the separated families, has reunified 745 children with their parents. Prior to the establishment of the Task Force, 2,347 children were reunified, bringing the total number of known completed reunifications to 3,092. As of July 16, 2023, there are a total of 102 children in the process of being reunified by the Task Force.<sup>5</sup> Of the remaining children, 207 had been informed of their eligibility to be reunified, 86 were without valid contact information, 416 were pending confirmation of contact, and 29 children declined reunification services. However, the Task Force believes, based on information exchanged through the *Ms. L.* joint status reports, that approximately 197 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.

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



Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L.*<sup>6</sup> and *Ms. J.P.* litigation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</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>5</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>6</sup> *Ms. L v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, No. 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal) (Feb. 26, 2018).

<sup>7</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 July 16, 2023, approximately 5,104 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 (120 days) is 63 days and the all-time average processing time is 165 days.<sup>8</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 51 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 16 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>8</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                                     | Jul. 31, 2022 Report <sup>9</sup> | Sep. 30, 2022 Report <sup>10</sup> | Nov. 30, 2022 Report <sup>11</sup> | Jan. 29, 2023 Report <sup>12</sup> | Mar. 31, 2023 Report <sup>13</sup> | May 31, 2023 Report <sup>14</sup> | Jul. 31, 2023 Report <sup>15</sup> |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>In Scope for Task Force Support</b>  | 3,851                             | 3,855                              | 3,811                              | 3,923                              | 3,925                              | 3,927                             | 3,932                              |
| <b>Total Reunifications</b>   | 2,634                             | 2,766                              | 2,837                              | 2,896                              | 2,969                              | 3,033                             | 3,092                              |
| <i>Reunifications Prior to Task Force Establishment</i>                                 | 2,269                             | 2,279                              | 2,291                              | 2,297                              | 2,317                              | 2,328                             | 2,347                              |
| <i>Task Force Reunifications</i>  | 365                               | 487                                | 546                                | 599                                | 652                                | 705                               | 745                                |
| <b>Remaining Children Without Confirmed Reunification<sup>16</sup></b>                  | 1,217                             | 1,077                              | 958                                | 1,008                              | 942                                | 868                               | 811                                |
| <i>In Process for Reunification</i>   | 276                               | 191                                | 178                                | 152                                | 164                                | 136                               | 102                                |
| <i>Remaining to Confirm Contact</i>   | 764                               | 719                                | 486                                | 557                                | 478                                | 436                               | 416                                |
| <i>Family Informed by Contracted NGO or Legal Counsel of the Opportunity to Reunify</i> | -                                 | -                                  | 136                                | 166                                | 186                                | 208                               | 207                                |
| <i>No Valid Contact Information</i>   | 177                               | 167                                | 158                                | 133                                | 94                                 | 88                                | 86                                 |
| <b>Declined Reunification Services</b>  | -                                 | -                                  | 16                                 | 19                                 | 20                                 | 26                                | 29                                 |

Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L*<sup>17</sup> and *Ms. J. P.*<sup>18</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>9</sup> Data as of July 14, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Data as of September 14, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Data as of November 18, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Data as of January 17, 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Data as of March 16, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Data as of May 16, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Data as of July 16, 2023.

<sup>16</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>17</sup> *Ms. L v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, No. 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal) (Feb. 26, 2018).

<sup>18</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>19</sup></b>         | 20            |
| <b>Number of additional household members qualified for IOM support services<sup>20</sup></b> | 2,480         |
| <b>Average number of families reunified each month since September 2021<sup>21</sup></b>      | 34            |

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<sup>19</sup> Data from KIND

<sup>20</sup> Data from FRTF Case Management System as of July 16, 2023

<sup>21</sup> Data from FRTF Case Management System as of July 16, 2023