



# Interim Progress Report

Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families

*November 30, 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 November 14, 2023, the Task Force has facilitated the reunification of 775 children with their parents in the United States and made behavioral health services available to those families. Between September 16, 2023, and November 14, 2023, the Task Force made noteworthy progress in the following areas:

- Reunified 8 children with their parents or legal guardians.
- Received 119 registrations of families on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov). Of the 119 families that registered, approximately 36 separated children were referred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive reunification support services. The eligibility of the remaining 83 registered families could not be immediately determined and remains under review with the Task Force.
- Provided an additional 305 *Ms. L.*<sup>2</sup> class members with behavioral health case management services and in September, provided 53 *Ms. L.* class members with behavioral health assessments and treatment, executed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- Contacted 9 additional previously unreached families through HHS and Seneca Family of Agencies' outreach efforts, during this reporting period and a total of 89 families since the beginning of outreach in January 2023 and informed them of their potential eligibility to receive reunification support services. Additionally, Justice in Motion (JiM), by way of private funding sources, continues to conduct on the ground searches for eligible class members located outside the United States.
- Shared the contact information for eligible U.S. Citizen (USC) children with plaintiffs, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the *Ms. L* Steering Committee<sup>3</sup>.
- Saw an increase in registrations by 55 percent from September 17-23 in comparison to the weekly average since January 1, 2023, shortly after Executive Director Michelle Brané travelled to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to continue raising awareness about the Task Force and encourage families, who believe they may be eligible to receive reunification support, to register on [Together.gov](https://www.together.gov).
- On December 11, 2023, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California approved a settlement agreement between the parties in the *Ms. L v. ICE* class action lawsuit.

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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> The Steering Committee, created following the *Ms. L v. ICE* class action lawsuit, includes three nonprofit organization partners: Kids In Need of Defense (KIND), Justice in Motion and the Women's Refugee Commission, and the law firm Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP.

The settlement provides for continued reunification support for class members, provides certain non-monetary support to class members, and set forth standards to limit future separations.<sup>4</sup> To learn more about the settlement agreement and to read the U.S. District Court’s Order Approving the Settlement, please visit [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.dhs.gov/juntos).

- As of November 14, 2023, the Task Force has identified 4,227 children within the scope of E.O. 14011,<sup>5</sup> and, by closely coordinating with NGOs and attorneys representing the separated families, has reunified 775 children with their parents. The Task Force identified 2,372 children as reunified without assistance from the Task Force, bringing the total number of known completed reunifications to 3,147.

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Homeland Security, “Fact Sheet: Overview of Proposed *Ms. L* Settlement Agreement | Homeland Security” October 16, 2023, available at: <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2023/10/16/fact-sheet-overview-proposed-ms-l-settlement-agreement>.

<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.

## II. Executive Order Language

On February 2, 2021, President Biden signed E.O. 14011. The 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 E.O. 14011. During this reporting period, the Task Force received 119 registrations from potentially separated families, reunited 8 children with their parents or legal guardians, connected 305 *Ms. L* class members with behavioral health case management services, and in September, provided 53 *Ms. L* class members with behavioral health assessment and treatment in coordination with SAMHSA.

At the end of September, the Task Force, along with representatives from Seneca Family of Services, who provides behavioral health services to newly reunified families, travelled to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras and met with government officials, as well as partners and staff of local NGOs, indigenous groups, community leaders, and separated families to promote the communication of the Task Force’s reunification efforts. The Task Force listened to our partners about existing obstacles and concerns relating to family separations. The Task Force also raised awareness of the reunification process and encouraged separated families to come forward and register for reunification support on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://together.gov/juntos.gov) to enable the Task Force to provide them with reunification support and services. As a result, of these targeted efforts, the Task Force saw an increase of 55 percent in registrations in comparison to the weekly average since January 1, 2023. The Task Force remains committed to locating and informing eligible families about the option to reunify.

#### Supporting Separated Families When They Come Forward

During this reporting period, 119 families registered with the Task Force on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://together.gov/juntos.gov), bringing the total number of registrations to 2,471 families.<sup>6</sup> Registrants found eligible were referred to IOM to complete the parole request process and, if appropriate, schedule travel to the United States. As of November 14, 2023, the Task Force has referred a total of 1,046 separated children whose families live outside of the United States, and 619 separated children whose families live in the United States, to IOM for assistance. The Task Force also continues to support a Help Desk, operated by a third-party, 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://together.gov/juntos.gov).<sup>7</sup>

A year ago, the Task Force began its work to identify USC 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 USC children consists of four phases: (1) identify potentially separated USC children through a review of DHS and other 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 for those who are eligible. The

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<sup>6</sup> The number of families registered with the Task Force has decreased from previous reports due to the exclusion of duplicate registrations in the FRTF Case Management System.

<sup>7</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).

Task Force completed phases one and two. After reviewing all relevant government records, the Task Force identified 295 USC children who were separated from their noncitizen parents and legal guardians between January 17, 2017, and January 20, 2021, and would be eligible to receive reunification support through the Task Force. As of the date of this Report, the Task Force shared the names and any available contact information for these eligible families with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the *Ms. L* Steering Committee, and to its third-party partner in charge of conducting outreach.

## Administering Behavioral Health Services for Reunified Families

Between June 10, 2022, and November 14, 2023, through a contract with the service provider, Seneca Family of Agencies, SAMHSA directly notified 1,155 *Ms. L* class members (parents or legal guardians only) of the availability of behavioral case management and behavioral health services, and the program's 24/7 Hotline answered 799 calls. Additionally, SAMHSA provided 1,403 class members (parents only) with behavioral health case management services and provided 816 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. From February 2023 to November 2023, 218 class members (parents only) received parenting support and participated in psychoeducational groups. Additionally, since this service launched in October 2022, 10 class members (parents only) residing outside the United States have accepted pre-reunification counseling services for their children in the United States. Since the USG began delivering this service through the time of this report, 45 children have received at least one pre-reunification counseling session. Overall, the USG has provided 1,646 class members with behavioral health assessments and treatment.

## Locating Families and Explaining Reunification Options

On May 1, 2023, IOM assumed operation of the Task Force's Help Desk from Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). The Help Desk provides information to callers about eligibility for reunification support and assists with the reunification process. Between September 16, 2023, and November 14, 2023, the IOM-operated Help Desk assisted 261 unique callers, amounting to 953 phone calls. Additionally, Seneca continues to conduct outreach to families in the United States to inform them of their potential eligibility to receive reunification support services and JiM continues to search for potentially eligible families via private funding. The Task Force is currently working to re-establish support for international outreach through additional or existing partnerships.<sup>8</sup> Overall, the Help Desk has assisted 2,619 unique callers since its founding in 2021.

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<sup>8</sup> Task Force partner JiM continues searching for previously uncontacted individuals using private funding after its government-funded contract ended at the end of April 2023. JiM never stopped its on-the-ground searches outside the United States, even after the government contract expired. JiM remains committed to searching for class members in their home countries and informing them of the Task Force.

## Proposed Settlement in *Ms. L*

On October 16, 2023, the parties in *Ms. L v. ICE*, a 2018 class action lawsuit filed by the ACLU seeking injunctive relief relating to the separation of parents and children at the southwest border, submitted the proposed settlement agreement to the district court.<sup>9</sup>

On December 11, 2023, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California approved a settlement agreement between the parties in the *Ms. L v. ICE* class action lawsuit. The settlement provides for continued reunification support for class members, provides certain non-monetary support to class members, and set forth standards to limit future separations. To learn more about the settlement agreement and to read the U.S. District Court's Order Approving the Settlement, please visit [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov/Juntos.gov)

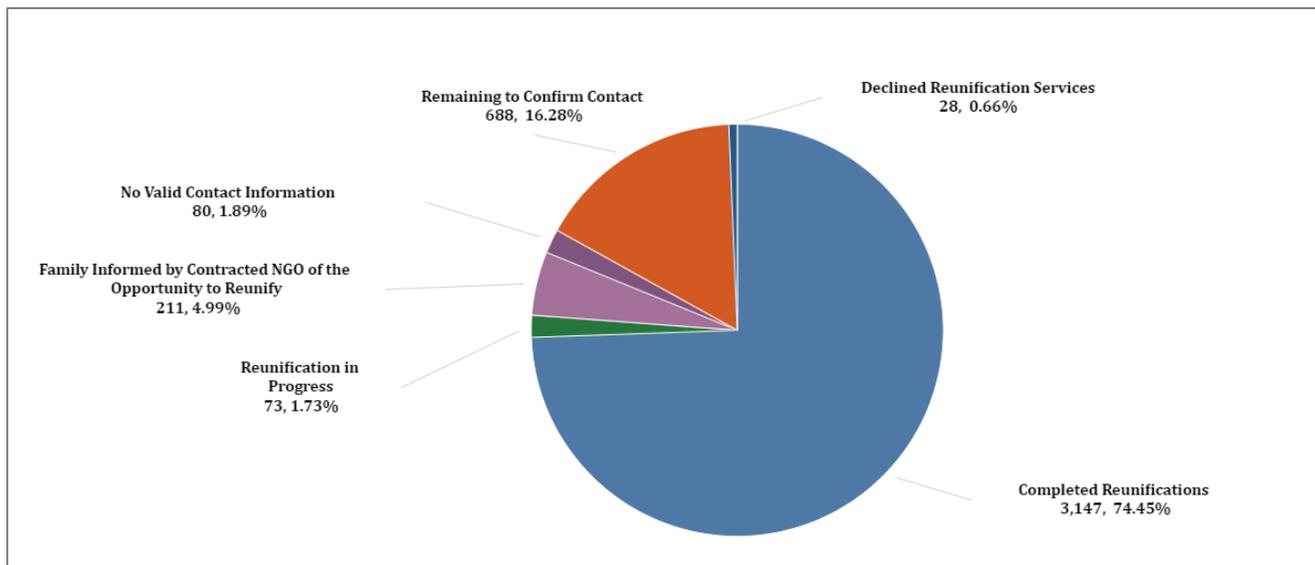
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<sup>9</sup> *Ms. L v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Settlement Agreement*, No. 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal) (Oct. 16, 2023), <https://www.together.gov/mslvice>

## IV. Update on Task Force Data

As of November 14, 2023, the Task Force has identified 4,227 children within the scope of E.O. 14011,<sup>10</sup> and, by closely coordinating with NGOs and attorneys representing the separated families, has reunified 775 children with their parents. The Task Force identified 2,372 children as reunified without assistance from the Task Force, bringing the total number of known completed reunifications to 3,147. As of November 14, 2023, there are a total of 73 children in the process of being reunified by the Task Force.<sup>11</sup> Of the remaining children, 211 have been informed of their eligibility to be reunified, 80 were without valid contact information, 688 were pending confirmation of contact, and 28<sup>12</sup> children declined reunification services. However, the Task Force believes, based on information exchanged through the *Ms. L.* joint status reports, that approximately 190 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 November 14, 2023)



Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L* and *Ms. J.P.* litigation.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</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>11</sup> Please see Appendix, Figure 1 for a comparison of reunification data reported in this report with the reunification data reported in previous Interim Progress Reports.

<sup>12</sup> In the July Interim Progress Report, the number of children who declined reunification services were reported as 29. In this reporting period, the number dropped to 28 because a family that had previously declined reunification services reconsidered and is now going through the reunification process.

<sup>13</sup> *J.P. v. Sessions*, No. 2:18-cv-06081 (C.D. Cal) (Nov. 5, 2019); The 295 families with USC children identified as potentially eligible are included in the “Remaining to Confirm Contact” category.

## V. Update on Parole Requests

The Task Force continues to rely upon 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 November 14, 2023, approximately 5,496 individuals (separated children, parents, and qualifying additional family members) filed parole requests with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) through the Task Force process. Of those 5,496 individuals, 991 are separated children who have since received parole through the Task Force process. This includes both separated children that were reunified with and without Task Force support. For both individuals in and outside the U.S., the average processing time from registration, applying for and receiving parole (after review by USCIS), and travel to the United States is 164 days.<sup>14</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 began assisting an additional 36 separated children including 6 families identified as already reunified in the U.S. and whom IOM will inform of the option to apply for parole in place.

Additionally, SAMSHA's partner, Seneca Family of Agencies, has subcontracted with Comunidad Maya Pixam Ixim (CMPI). CMPI is supporting Seneca with lending a cultural and indigenous lens to better support families with filling I-765 applications after having been granted parole. CMPI has Department of Justice (DOJ) accredited staff supporting eligible families with this process.

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<sup>14</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	Jan. 29, 2023 Report <sup>15</sup>	Mar. 31, 2023 Report <sup>16</sup>	May 31, 2023 Report <sup>17</sup>	Jul. 31, 2023 Report <sup>18</sup>	Sep. 30, 2023 Report <sup>19</sup>	Nov. 30, 2023 Report <sup>20</sup>
<b>In Scope for Task Force Support</b>	3,923	3,925	3,927	3,932	4,227	4,227
<b>Total Reunifications</b>	2,896	2,969	3,033	3,092	3,126	3,147
<i>Reunifications Without Task Force Assistance</i>	2,297	2,317	2,328	2,347	2,359	2,372
<i>Task Force Reunifications</i>	599	652	705	745	767	775
<b>Remaining Children Without Confirmed Reunification<sup>21</sup></b>	1,008	942	868	811	1,073	1,052
<i>In Process for Reunification</i>	152	164	136	102	85	73
<i>Non-USC Children Remaining to Confirm Contact</i>	557	478	436	416	405	399
<i>USC Children Remaining to Confirm Contact</i>	-	-	-	-	292	289
<i>Family Informed by Contracted NGO or Legal Counsel of the Opportunity to Reunify</i>	166	186	208	207	210	211
<i>No Valid Contact Information</i>	133	94	88	86	81	80
<b>Declined Reunification Services</b>	19	20	26	29	28	28

Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L*<sup>22</sup> and *Ms. J. P.*<sup>23</sup> litigation.

<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> Data as of July 16, 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Data as of September 15, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Data as of November 14, 2023.

<sup>21</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>22</sup> *Ms. L v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, No. 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal) (Feb. 26, 2018).

<sup>23</sup> *J.P. v. Sessions*, No. 2:18-cv-06081 (C.D. Cal) (Nov. 5, 2019).

The Task Force data are 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.

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. Figure 2 presents data indicative of 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>Number of families registered on Together.gov to reunite and receive support services<sup>24</sup></b>	2,471
<b>Number of additional household members qualified for IOM support services<sup>25</sup></b>	2,615
<b>Average number of families reunified each month since September 2021<sup>26</sup></b>	30

<sup>24</sup> Data from FRTF Case Management System as of November 14, 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Data from FRTF Case Management System as of November 14, 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Data from FRTF Case Management System as of November 14, 2023.