

Interim Progress Report

Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families

April 22, 2024



Homeland
Security



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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*.¹

Since the last interim report was issued on November 30, 2023, parties finalized a settlement on December 11, 2023, in the class action lawsuit, *Ms. L. v. Immigration Customs Enforcement*, a lawsuit filed in 2018 seeking injunctive relief relating to the separation of parents and children at the Southwest border.² The Task Force will continue to facilitate the reunification of *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members who are, in general, certain parents or legal guardians and their children who were separated by the U.S. government at the U.S.-Mexico border between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021.

As of March 20, 2024, the Task Force has facilitated the reunification of 795 children with their parents in the United States and made behavioral health services available to those families. Between November 15, 2023, and March 20, 2024, the Task Force made noteworthy progress in the following areas:

- Reunified 18 children with their parents or legal guardians.
- Received 198 registrations of families on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov/juntos.gov). Of the 198 families that registered, approximately 173 separated children were verified as *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members and referred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive reunification support services. Class membership eligibility of the remaining 25 registered families could not be immediately determined and remain under review with the Task Force.
- Between January 1, 2024, and March 20, 2024, provided 584 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members with behavioral health case management services, and between October 1, 2023, and February 29, 2024, provided 118 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members with new behavioral health assessments and treatment, executed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- Successfully contacted 9 previously unreachable families through outreach efforts conducted by Seneca Family of Agencies (Seneca), a non-governmental organization partnering with SAMHSA, since the last reporting period, totaling 98 previously unreachable families from January 2023 through March 20, 2024, 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 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members located outside the United States.

¹ 86 FR 8273 (Feb. 5, 2021).

² *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 the Task Force to provide 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 198 registrations from potential *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members, reunited 18 children with their parents or legal guardians, connected 584 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members with behavioral health case management services, and provided 118 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members with behavioral health assessments and treatment in coordination with SAMHSA.

Supporting Separated Families When They Come Forward

During this reporting period, 198 potential *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members registered with the Task Force website, [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://together.gov/juntos.gov), bringing the total number to 2,650 registered families.³ The Task Force referred eligible registrants to IOM to complete the process of requesting parole into the United States for reunification and, if appropriate, schedule travel to the United States. As of March 20, 2024, the Task Force confirmed a total of 1,120 separated children as *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members and referred them and their Qualifying Additional Family Members to IOM for reunification support.⁴ The Task Force also continues to manage the IOM-operated Help Desk that supports individuals who need assistance during the reunification process. The Help Desk is available Monday through Friday from 11 am to 7 pm EST. Contact information can be found on [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://together.gov/juntos.gov).⁵

Administering Behavioral Health Services for Reunified Families

Between June 10, 2022, and February 20, 2024, through a contract with the service provider Seneca, SAMHSA directly notified 1,311 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members (parents or legal guardians) of the availability of behavioral case management and behavioral health services, and the program’s 24/7 Hotline answered 890 calls. Additionally, SAMHSA has provided 1,311 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members (parents) with behavioral health case management services and provided 934 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members (parents and children) with behavioral health assessments and treatment (individual and family therapy). Between October 2022 and January 2023, 62 of these class members (parents) received parenting support and participated in psychoeducational groups. From February 2023 to January 2024, 367 *Ms. L. Settlement Class* members (parents) received parenting support and participated in psychoeducational groups. Additionally,

³ 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.

⁴ Under the *Ms. L. Settlement Agreement*, a “Qualifying Additional Family Member” is an additional family member who is (1) a part of a *Ms. L. Settlement Class* member’s immediate household; or (2) can demonstrate one of the following familial relationships: a spouse (including a common law spouse) of a *Ms. L. Settlement Class* member; an unmarried child under the age of 21 of a *Ms. L. Settlement Class* member; a separated child’s biological sibling who is unmarried and under the age of 21; a separated child’s non-separated parent, stepparent, or legal guardian; a separated parent or legal guardian’s parent who is the primary caregiver for a minor child of a separated parent/legal guardian, or a separated child; and a separated child’s stepparent’s biological unmarried children under the age of 21.

⁵ DHS, “FRTF - Help - FRTF Home.”

https://form.together.gov/frtf/?id=frtf_help&sys_id=fa4336441be27410f50d84cae54bcb52&lang=eng.

since this service launched in October 2022, 18 *Ms. L.* Settlement Class members (parents) residing outside the United States have accepted pre-reunification counseling services for their children in the United States. Since the U.S. Government (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 1,764 *Ms. L.* Settlement Class members with behavioral health assessments and treatment.

Locating Families and Explaining Reunification Options

Between November 15, 2023, and March 20, 2024, the IOM-operated Help Desk assisted 492 unique callers, amounting to 2,034 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 searches independently of a government contract. The Task Force is currently working to re-establish support for international outreach through additional or existing partnerships.⁶ Overall, the Help Desk has assisted 3,244 unique callers since its founding in 2021.

Ms. L. Settlement Agreement

On December 11, 2023, the court approved and deemed effective the *Ms. L.* Settlement Agreement. It provides for continued support to reunify families who are *Ms. L.* Settlement Class members, sets forth standards to limit future separations, and provides certain non-monetary support to class members. Provisions of the Settlement will remain in effect between six and eight years after the effective date, depending on the support eligible class member may access and receive.

The *Ms. L.* Settlement Agreement defines *Ms. L.* Settlement Class membership to include parents or legal guardians and their children who were separated at the U.S.-Mexico border between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021. It presumptively excludes parents with specified criminal histories and individuals separated after June 26, 2018, because of a medical condition, concerns about the fitness of the parent, or active warrants for the adult. Individuals who believe they are *Ms. L.* Settlement Class members must register with the Family Reunification Task Force through the [Together.gov/Juntos.gov](https://www.together.gov/juntos.gov) website on or before the Final Registration Date (December 11, 2026) to receive confirmation of eligibility and access services.

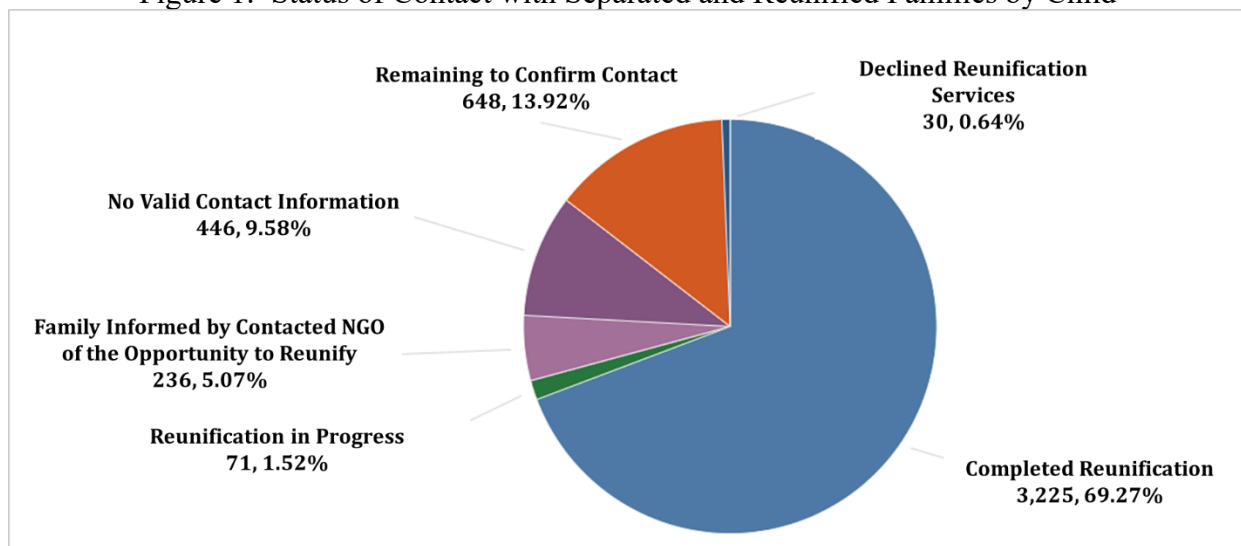
⁶ Task Force partner JiM continues searching for previously uncontacted individuals using private funding after its government-funded contract ended at the end of April 2023. JiM never stopped its on-the-ground searches outside the United States, even after the government contract expired. JiM remains committed to searching for Class Members in their home countries and informing them of the Task Force.

IV. Update on Task Force Data

As of March 20, 2024, the Task Force has identified 4,656 children within the scope of E.O. 14011,⁷ and by closely coordinating with NGOs and attorneys representing the separated families, directly facilitated the reunification of 795 children with their parents. The Task Force also identified 2,430 children as reunified prior to the establishment of the Task Force, bringing the total number of known completed reunifications to 3,225. As of March 20, 2024, there are a total of 71 children in the process of being reunified.⁸

Of the remaining 1,360 children without confirmed reunifications, the Task Force continues to press on to facilitate reunification. As of March 20, there were 236 families informed of their eligibility to be reunified, 446 without valid contact information to be reached by the Task Force, 648 still trying to be reached with valid contact information, and 30 children who declined reunification services. The Task Force believes, based on information exchanged through the *Ms. L.* joint status reports, that approximately 182 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 March 20, 2024)

Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L* and *Ms. J.P.* litigation.⁹

V. Update on Parole Requests

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ *J.P. v. Sessions*, No. 2:18-cv-06081 (C.D. Cal) (Nov. 5, 2019); the). The 340 families with U.S. Citizen (USC) children identified as potentially eligible are included in the “Remaining to Confirm Contact” category.

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 travel to and remain in the United States for purposes of reunification and to access designated services, as appropriate. As of March 20, 2024, approximately 6,050 individuals (separated children, parents, and their Qualifying 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) is 176 days.¹⁰ 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 173 separated children and their families, including previously reunified families. Since November 15, 2023, the Task Force referred 39 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.

VI. Appendix:

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

¹⁰ The processing times for each case vary greatly depending on a family’s personal circumstances.

Data Tracking Separated Children and Reunifications	Mar. 31, 2023 Report ¹¹	May 31, 2023 Report ¹²	Jul. 31, 2023 Report ¹³	Sep. 30, 2023 Report ¹⁴	Nov. 30, 2023 Report ¹⁵	April 16, 2024 Report ¹⁶
In Scope for Task Force Support	3,925	3,927	3,932	4,227	4,227	4,656
Total Reunifications	2,969	3,033	3,092	3,126	3,147	3,225
<i>Reunifications Prior to Task Force Establishment</i>	2,317	2,328	2,347	2,359	2,372	2,430
<i>Task Force Reunifications</i>	652	705	745	767	775	795
Remaining Children Without Confirmed Reunification¹⁷	942	868	811	1,073	1,052	1,401 ¹⁸
<i>In Process for Reunification</i>	164	136	102	85	73	71
<i>Non-USC Children Remaining to Confirm Contact</i>	478	436	416	405	399	357
<i>USC Children Remaining to Confirm Contact</i>	-	-	-	292	289	291
<i>Family Informed by Contracted NGO or Legal Counsel of the Opportunity to Reunify</i>	186	208	207	210	211	236
<i>No Valid Contact Information</i>	94	88	86	81	80	446 ¹⁹
Declined Reunification Services	20	26	29	28	28	30

Source: DHS and records related to the *Ms. L.*²⁰ and *Ms. J. P.*²¹ litigation.

The Task Force data routinely changes 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 as we continue to refine and improve our knowledge

¹¹ Data as of March 16, 2023

¹² Data as of May 16, 2023

¹³ Data as of July 16, 2023

¹⁴ Data as of September 15, 2023

¹⁵ Data as of November 14, 2023

¹⁶ Data as of March 20, 2024

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ The number of children without confirmed reunifications increased by 349 since the Nov 30, 2023 Interim Progress Report. These additional families were determined to be potential class members under the recently finalized *Ms. L.* Settlement Agreement. Since the Settlement Agreement became effective on December 11, 2023, outreach to these newly identified as potentially eligible families is currently underway by IOM.

¹⁹ The number of separated children without valid contact information increased by 366 since the previous Interim Progress Report because of the recently finalized *Ms. L.* Settlement Agreement. Outreach for these 446 cases is currently underway by Seneca.

²⁰ *Ms. L. v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, No. 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal) (Feb. 26, 2018).

²¹ *J.P. v. Sessions*, No. 2:18-cv-06081 (C.D. Cal) (Nov. 5, 2019).

about the separated and reunified families. 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 required in identifying separated parents and 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.