

# Family Separation and Reunification Webinar



*we are one family under God*



**Lutheran Immigration  
and Refugee Service**

October 5, 2018

USCCB

# Speakers & Agenda

❖ **Ashley Feasley**

*Director of Policy, USCCB/MRS*  
afeasley@usccb.org

❖ **Dawnya Underwood**

*Director for Children and Family Services, LIRS*  
dunderwood@lirs.org

❖ **Katie Kuennen**

*Associate Director of Children's Services, USCCB/MRS*  
kkuennen@usccb.org

❖ **Celina Marquez**

*Family Separation Case Coordinator, USCCB/MRS*  
mrsconsult\_cmarquez@usccb.org

- Family Separation & Required Reunification
- LIRS & USCCB Involvement
- Helping Separated & Reunited Families: 2017 and Beyond
- Data Findings
- Data Management & Ongoing Services
- Case Example
- Resources & Engagement
- Talking Points for Congress

# Family Separation & Required Reunification

- April 6, 2018—Department of Justice (DOJ) [announcement](#) of a “zero-tolerance policy” for unauthorized border crossings
- June 21, 2018—[Executive Order](#) on family separation issued by President Trump
- June 26, 2018—[Preliminary Injunction](#) on family separation and reunification
- Required reunification:
  - Phase 1 Families (children under 5)
    - July 10, 2018
  - Phase 2 Families (children 5-17)
    - July 26, 2018

# LIRS & USCCB Engagement

- Federal government contacted USCCB/MRS & LIRS to assist with family reunification
- However, government did not provide any of the funds used in the reunification of the families
- 15 reception sites to serve Phase 1 families
- 5 reception sites to serve Phase 2 families

# Helping Separated & Reunited Families: 2017 and Beyond



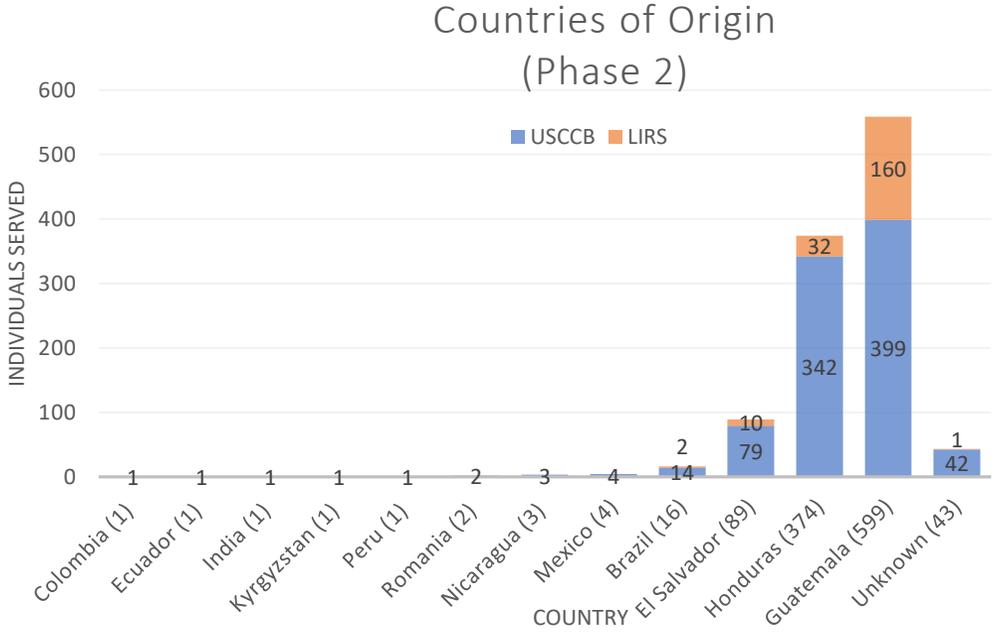
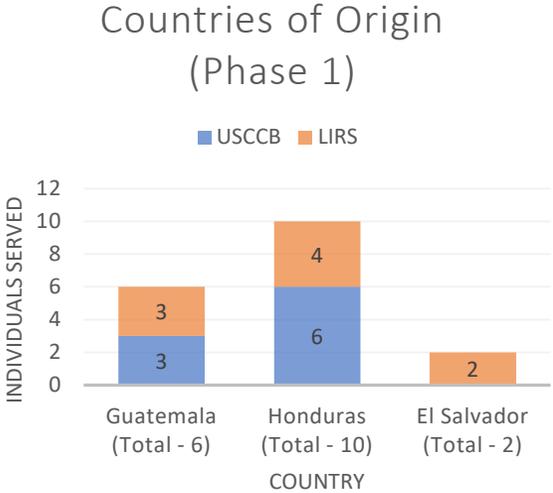
**Lutheran Immigration  
and Refugee Service**



USCCB

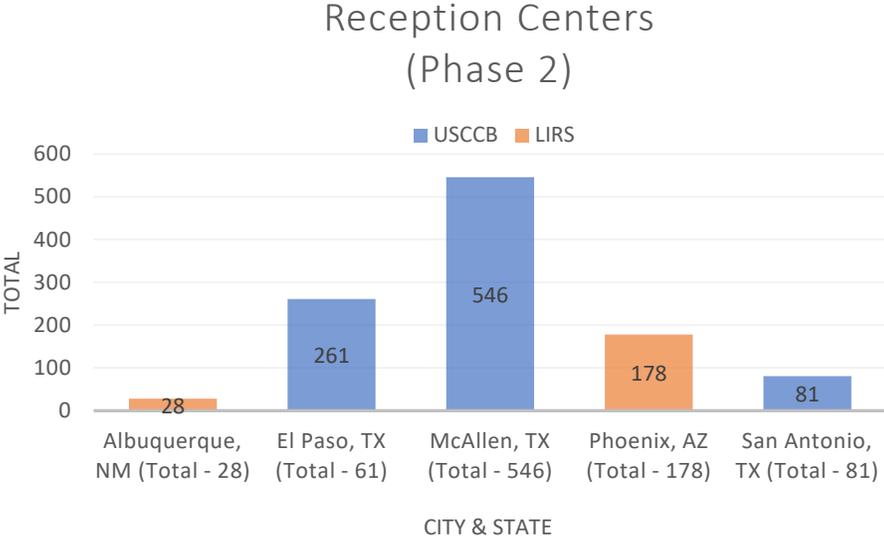
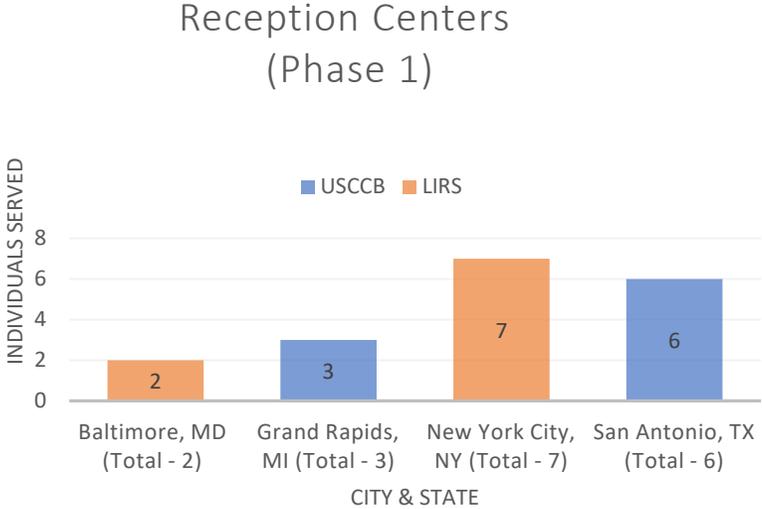
# Data Findings

**\*DATA FINDINGS HAVE BEEN UPDATED. PLEASE SEE [PUBLISHED REPORT](#) FOR GRAPHS AND NUMBERS.**



# Data Findings

**\*DATA FINDINGS HAVE BEEN UPDATED. PLEASE SEE [PUBLISHED REPORT](#) FOR GRAPHS AND NUMBERS.**



# Case Management Services for Reunited Families

- Community-based social services in final destination
- Short-term case management support
- Core services include:
  - Legal
    - Connection with legal service providers
    - Education and Legal Orientation
    - Education on DHS requirements
  - Social Services
    - Mental health/counseling
    - Medical/Health
    - Education school enrollment
    - Safety Monitoring (home visitation) to promote well-being, placement stability, and family strengthening
    - Linkages to community resources

# Trends, Challenges, Best Practices

- **Trends:** Families overall willingness to understand and comply with requirements
- **Challenges:** Transportation, trauma impact, material needs of clients
- **Best Practices for Service Providers:**
  - Building local/regional partnerships to support families
    - Private/corporate partnerships
  - Identify community resources
  - Addressing transportation needs
  - Addressing material needs of families

## Case Example

Cristina,\* a 12-year old girl from El Salvador, fled her country with her father to the United States in early 2018 to escape violence and seek safety and protection in the United States. With the “zero-tolerance” policy in effect, she and her father experience the trauma of separation at the U.S./Mexico border upon apprehension by U.S. Border Patrol. Christina and her father experienced an 88-day period of separation before they could establish initial contact. Cristina reported that she was told her father would be deported to El Salvador, and her father reported that he was encouraged to sign deportation paperwork, being told that his daughter would be adopted and there was no possibility of reunification.

Ultimately, father and daughter were able to reunite and passed through one of USCCB/MRS’ reception sites. Currently, they reside with family in the Los Angeles area and are receiving social service support through Catholic Charities of Los Angeles. Christina’s social worker reports that Cristina continues to experience trauma and separation anxiety; she was initially fearful of going to school as she did not want to be separated from her father again. Catholic Charities is working to support the family in connecting with counseling services to address this issue. Despite the ongoing effects of this trauma, Cristina is doing well academically. The family has been connected with immigration legal services providers and are closely engaged with their attorney. They have expressed an eagerness to ensure compliance with all DHS and immigration reporting requirements.

– Story provided by Catholic Charities of Los Angeles (\*Name changed to protect client confidentiality).

# What Can You Do to Help?

## Resources and Engagement

### ➤ **LEARN MORE**

- Read and share our backgrounders on:
  - “Catch and Release” and Family Separation
  - FAQ on the Flores Settlement Agreement
  - Background on the Executive Order
- Read our report which includes additional data and key recommendations
- Take a look at our charts detailing the proposed bills to Congress
- **MEET WITH LAWMAKERS**—Urge your members of Congress to support humane solutions to family separation

# Talking Points for Congress

## ➤ **Maintain Protections for Unaccompanied and Accompanied Children**

- Congress should reject proposal that would under the Flores Settlement Agreement. These protections are critical to ensure the adequate care, custody and release of immigrant children in DHS and ORR custody. Proposals to limit Flores and allow for prolonged detention of accompanied children is particularly concerning given the long-term trauma that detention can cause children.

## ➤ **Reject Proposal to Expand Family Detention**

- Holding children in family detention continues to be inhumane and has long-lasting negative consequences. The American Academy of Pediatrics reported that detained children experience developmental delay, poor psychological adjustment, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and other behavioral problems. Even brief stints in detention can lead to trauma and lasting mental health risks.
- Utilizing family detention for those that do not present flight or safety risk is also an unnecessary use of limited DHS resources

## ➤ **Increase Funding for Alternatives to Detention**

- Congress should support proven and cost-effective alternatives to detention for arriving families seeking protection. These are programs like the Family Case Management Program, which cost only \$36 per day and had a compliance rate of over 99% for immigration court proceedings

## ➤ **Provide Funding for Post-Release Services for Separated Families**

- Given the trauma they faced, Congress should appropriate funding for post-release services for separated and reunified families, as well as separated children being reunified with sponsors