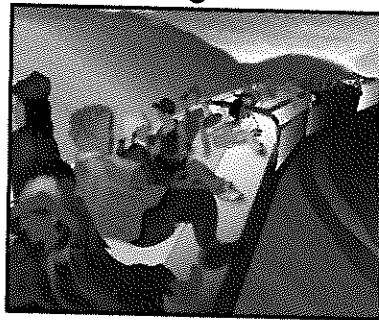


# UNACCOMPANIED IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

## The Journey:

Unaccompanied immigrant children come to the U.S. seeking safety, permanency and protection from community and family violence. They are fleeing humanitarian crises at home that leave them vulnerable to abuse, trafficking and violations of their human rights.

Their journeys can take days, weeks or months. Many ride atop 'The Beast,' a dangerous and fast moving cargo train not intended for passengers. Additionally, children will walk, swim across rivers, crawl through tunnels, hide in boats and be stuffed into cars or van. If they reach the border, they risk their lives crossing a vast desert where they are exposed to extreme temperatures, organized crime, wild animals and a treacherous landscape.



## Arrival or Apprehension

Children are apprehended by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security agents who take them into custody and initiate removal (deportation) proceedings against them. The U.S. is required to transfer unaccompanied immigrant children to the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within 72 hours. Due to their extreme vulnerabilities, ORR places them in shelters that specialize in caring for recently arrived immigrant youth.



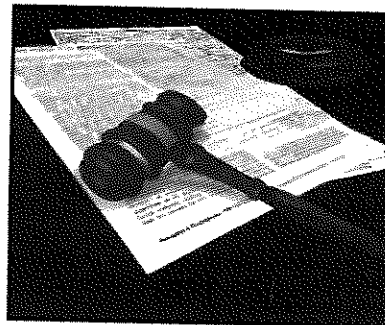
## Immigrant Children's Case Management Program

Many children are deemed by the ORR to be in need of social services due to extensive histories of abuse, trauma or neglect. These children are referred to the Immigrant Children's Case Management Program, provided by USCRI. ICCMP ensures the child's safety after reunification through the provision of in-home social services and linkages to education, legal, health, and mental health providers.



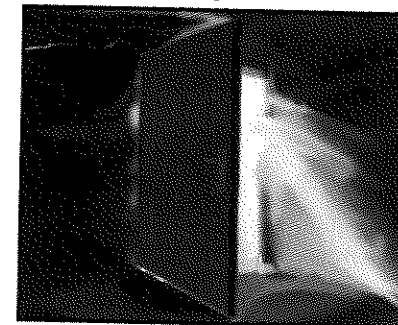
## Immigration Court

Unaccompanied immigrant children are not guaranteed legal representation in their immigration proceedings. It is difficult for them to not only relay their story of migration in court but also their need for protection from abuse and the risks they face if returned to their countries of origin.



## Office of Refugee Resettlement

These shelters are intended to provide children with a safe and appropriate environment while they are in government custody. Some children will be released to a family member who can serve as a temporary caregiver while their immigration case is decided. Other children will remain in ORR custody during this process.



# How does USCRI help unaccompanied immigrant children?

## **Legal Services**

Since 2005 USCRI has provided direct and pro bono legal services to unaccompanied immigrant children. We have served over 7,600 children and recruited more than 375 participating law firms. USCRI provides technical support to attorneys nationwide. USCRI also coordinates the Immigrant Children Lawyers Network (ICLN), hosting bi-monthly conference calls with attorneys and advocates throughout the country working on behalf of unaccompanied immigrant children.

Some unaccompanied immigrant children need protection from family and community violence in their countries of origin, and they may be eligible for different forms of protection in the U.S., which may include; asylum, for those who fear persecution; Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, for those who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by their parents; U nonimmigrant status, for victims of certain crimes; or T immigrant status, for victims of human trafficking.

It is critical that all children, regardless of immigration status, are treated humanely and afforded basic rights. Unaccompanied immigrant children must be guaranteed access to legal counsel. We as a nation must, at a minimum, grant these most vulnerable of victims the right to adequate legal representation and not apply the same requirements for legal representation as adults.

## **Immigrant Children's Case Management Program (ICCMP)**

USCRI provides ICCMP in partnership with agencies in the following states: California, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, Massachusetts, Missouri, North Carolina, and Texas, as well as the District of Columbia. USCRI is unique in that children who receive case management services are also eligible for its legal service program. USCRI has served more than 1,000 children to date.

ICCMP provides home studies for children who have been identified as especially vulnerable; any child with a disability, victim of human trafficking, or a victim of abuse whose functioning has been impaired as a result must receive a home study before a release decision can be made. After the home study, ORR decides if the child can be safely released to the identified caregiver. Some children may receive ICCMP without a home study if other risk factors are present:

- physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- neglect or abandonment
- lack of formal education
- medical condition
- disability
- pregnant/parenting teen-exposure to extreme community violence in their country of origin

ICCMP strives to ensure that families and children are in safe and stable placements and well connected to resources in their community.

For more information on USCRI's programs for unaccompanied immigrant children, contact us at (703)310-1130.

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