

HOW CAN YOU HELP RESPOND TO THE MIGRATION CRISIS?

DONATE

In addition to taking action through this [Jesuit Conference/Jesuit Refugee Service USA alert](http://bit.ly/1rRDTvd) (<http://bit.ly/1rRDTvd>) in support of vulnerable Central American children, families, and other refugees, there are many ways to get involved through advocacy or by volunteering with our interfaith partners across the country.

Help the US Bishop's Migration and Refugee Services Foster Care program by making a tax-deductible contribution. If you are in New York, Florida, or Washington, DC, make your donation [online](#).

Residents of other states should visit the [National Catholic Fund for Migration and Refugee Services](#).

FOSTER CARE

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) department of Migrant and Refugee Services and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) are the two agencies in the United States that provide foster care services to unaccompanied refugee minors and unaccompanied alien children.

Unaccompanied refugee minors (URM) are individuals who are under age 18, entering the United States as a refugee unaccompanied by either a parent, an adult relative willing to serve as the child's guardian, or an otherwise legally qualified guardian.¹ As refugees, URM are legal immigrants admitted with appropriate documentation and having been thoroughly adjudicated by the Departments of State, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees.

Unaccompanied alien children (UAC) is a legal term defined by the Homeland Security Act of 2002 as "children who have no lawful immigration status in the United States; have not attained 18 years of age; have no parent or legal guardian in the United States; or no parent or legal guardian in the United States is available to provide care and physical custody."² Central American children who have crossed the United States' southern border fall under this category although we prefer not to reference them by such dehumanizing language. Unlike unaccompanied refugee minors (URM), whose cases have already been adjudicated and who have already been determined to be refugees, children who are fleeing their home countries and seeking safety in the United States must navigate a complicated legal system to have their status determined. They have not yet been determined to be refugees or asylees, though many have legitimate claims to asylum and refugee protections.

For more information about foster care services for unaccompanied immigrant children:

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: please call or email migratingchildren@usccb.org, 202-541-3081.
- [Foster Care for Unaccompanied Refugee & Immigrant Children](http://www.usccb.org/about/children-and-migration/upload/URM-FAQ-s.pdf): <http://www.usccb.org/about/children-and-migration/upload/URM-FAQ-s.pdf>

¹ <http://www.ilw.com/immigrationdaily/news/2008.0602-crs.pdf>

² <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/who-we-serve-unaccompanied-alien-children>