



Frequently Asked Questions

What is KIND?

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) helps unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children who come to the United States without parents or legal guardians seeking safety. KIND does this in three ways:

- 1) **Pro bono representation:** Our core mission is to ensure that unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children in the United States are represented by pro bono attorneys in their deportation proceedings. Immigrants, regardless of age, are not appointed attorneys. It is nearly impossible for children to navigate the U.S. immigration system without an attorney. KIND has more than 400 law firm, corporate, law school, and bar association partners that have agreed to represent unaccompanied children pro bono. This has enabled us to assist thousands of children, an extraordinary contribution from the private sector. KIND staff attorneys also represent children free of charge.
- 2) **Public education:** KIND educates policymakers, including members of Congress, the Administration, federal agencies, the public, and media about unaccompanied children, the dangers they face, and their protection needs. KIND also works to empower the children themselves to share their experiences and become their own advocates. Through this work, we have advanced significant reforms to ensure that children have access to due process and that their rights are protected.
- 3) **Regional work:** Return and Reintegration—KIND recognizes that not all unaccompanied children are eligible to stay in the United States under U.S. immigration law. KIND works to ensure that those children who are returning to their country of origin do so safely and can access opportunities. KIND has partnered with nongovernmental organizations in Guatemala and Honduras to help returning children receive the social services in their communities. Services include: family reunification assistance, psychosocial support, access to medical care, food, housing, clothing, access to education and job skills training, and youth and community programs.

Lawyers for Children in Central America—To help children in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala apply for the U.S. Central American Minors (CAM) program, which allows children with parents in lawful status in the United States to apply for refugee protection in their home country, KIND has partnered with Arnold & Porter LLP to provide pro bono legal services to children with pending CAM claims. Children applying to CAM have been

navigating the system alone since there is no right to counsel in interviews and no one to support them in the process.

Sexual and Gender-based Violence—KIND is conducting an assessment of the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among immigrant and refugee children from Central America throughout their journeys to better understand the systems in place to protect migrant children affected by SGBV, as well as gaps in protection. The goal of the assessment, which will be released in mid-2017, is to increase understanding of this little-known issue and help inform the creation of effective programming to help child survivors.

KIND has 10 field offices across the United States: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, Newark, New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington DC. We also have sub-offices in Fresno, CA and Falls Church, VA, and an affiliate program in the United Kingdom.

Who does KIND help?

KIND helps immigrant and refugee children who come to the United States without a parent or legal guardian. Most are fleeing pervasive narco-trafficking, human trafficking, and gang violence in Central America—El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala—from which their governments cannot or will not protect them. Others are fleeing severe abuse including sexual and gender-based violence, which includes rape, sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and forced or early marriage. A number have been abandoned or have lost their caregivers. The children range in age from toddlers to teenagers. The large majority of children KIND serves are from Central America, but KIND has been referred children from 70 different countries.

Why are unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children coming to the United States?

The primary driver is brutal and pervasive gang and narco-trafficker violence and human trafficking in the Northern Triangle of Central America. El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala are among the most violent countries in the world. El Salvador unseated Honduras as the most murderous country in the world in early 2016.

- El Salvador is one of the deadliest countries outside of a war zone, with the highest murder rate in the world of more than 108 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015.
- Honduras has a murder rate of about 57 murders per 100,000 inhabitants.
- El Salvador and Guatemala have the world's highest homicide rates among children and adolescents.
- More than half of those killed in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in 2015 were under 30 years of age.
- El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have among the highest female homicide rates in the world.
- Children from Central America referred to KIND describe harrowing violence and shocking incidents of extreme cruelty. KIND is seeing younger and younger children, and more

girls, who had been raped or sexually assaulted, often numerous times, and more gang sexual violence against boys.

How many unaccompanied children have been coming to the United States in recent years?

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016¹, a total of 59,692 unaccompanied children arrived in the United States, according to Customs and Border Protection, the second highest annual total. This is 33 percent higher than FY 2015 (39,970) and 13 percent lower than FY 2014 (68,541), the year of the historic surge.

Why do unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children need pro bono attorneys?

About 60 percent of unaccompanied children in the United States—tens of thousands of children—do not have lawyers in immigration court. Unaccompanied children with attorneys are five times more likely to gain U.S. protection while only one in ten unaccompanied children without attorneys win their cases. Without due process, the United States risks sending children that deserve protection back to grave harm where their well-being, and even their lives, may be in danger.

How does KIND and its pro bono public-private partnership model work?

KIND recruits volunteer lawyers from top law firms, corporations, law schools, and bar associations and provides them with training, mentoring, and other resources to represent children. No immigration experience is necessary. KIND pro bono attorneys work directly with children to help them build their cases, gain valuable courtroom experience, learn new skills, develop expertise in a unique area of law, and can change the course of a child's life. KIND has trained more than 17,000 attorneys and been referred more than 14,000 unaccompanied children since opening its doors in 2009. KIND also represents a limited number of cases in-house. For every dollar of donor support, KIND leverages \$5 in pro bono services.

We also welcome non-lawyers as volunteers. They can assist with translation or country conditions research, host events to raise awareness of our work, organize in-kind contributions such as toy drives, or offer other critical forms of support.

When was KIND founded?

KIND was founded in 2008 by the Microsoft Corporation and UNHCR Special Envoy Angelina Jolie to ensure that no child stands alone in court, and opened its doors in January 2009.

How can you help?

- Donate to support protection of children.

¹ October 2015 – September 2016.

- Volunteer with KIND.
- Spread the word to increase understanding of and compassion for these children.
- Tell your members of Congress to co-sponsor the *Fair Day in Court for Kids Act* and the *Secure the Northern Triangle Act*.
- Tell your members of Congress to support federal funding for unaccompanied children's legal services and U.S. foreign aid to Central America to address the root causes of the extreme violence.

For more information, visit: <http://www.supportkind.org/en/get-involved>

You can also email KIND at info@supportkind.org