



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. We envision a world in which children's rights and well-being are protected as they migrate alone in search of safety.

KIND will achieve our vision by:

- Ensuring that no child appears in immigration court without high quality legal representation
- Advancing laws, policies, and practices that ensure children's protection and uphold their right to due process and fundamental fairness
- Promoting in countries of origin, transit, and destination durable solutions to child migration that are grounded in the best interests of the child and ensure that no child is forced to involuntarily migrate.

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.

How does KIND help?

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 **574** 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.

Policy, Advocacy, and Communications: 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.

International:

- **Central America Family Reunification and Reintegration Initiative:** Launched in late July 2018, KIND will help locate parents separated from their children and who were deported to Central America without their children, and provide them with vital legal, social, and psychosocial services. The initiative will also include facilitating transnational reunification for children seeking to reunify with parents, referring parents and families to attorneys in the United States to represent them with civil rights and other legal claims, as well as to mental health services. It will also help families who have been reunified and deported but have significant protection concerns or other needs.
- **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.
- **Sexual and Gender-based Violence:** KIND released two reports on child migrants and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV): [Childhood Cut Short: Sexual and Gender-based Violence Against Central American Migrant and Refugee Children](#) and [Neither Security nor Justice: Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Gang Violence in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala](#) to help identify protection gaps and promote solutions. KIND and local partners work to combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Guatemala through services for survivors, violence prevention programs, workshops for boys and girls in schools, and leadership programs for adolescent girls.
- [Kids in Need of Defense UK](#) has laid the groundwork for a pro bono network in the United Kingdom based on our U.S. model. Our local law center partners are training private sector pro bono attorneys, establishing referral arrangements, and developing a case management system to help young immigrants.

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 and have the highest rates of femicide with near total impunity.

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

More than 240,000 unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children have come since 2014. Their number peaked in In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, with more than 68,000 child arrivals. After a drop, their numbers are increasing again. More than 41,000 came in FY 2017. As of August 31, 2018 more than 45,704 have come in FY18.

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

More than 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 over **28,000** attorneys and over **10,000** paralegals, and law students and been referred over **17,300** 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 \$7 in pro bono services, reaching over **\$284 million** in pro bono attorney support from 2009-2017.

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.

Where is KIND?

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.

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 I help?

- [Donate](#) to support protection of children
- [Volunteer](#) to help KIND
- Spread the word online to increase understanding of and compassion for these children.
[Facebook](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Instagram](#)