

# Programs in Central America and Mexico

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) is the nation's leading organization advocating for the rights of unaccompanied migrant and refugee children. KIND was founded in 2008 to address the lack of legal services for unaccompanied children in the United States. Leveraging strategic partnerships with private law firms, each year we provide pro bono legal representation for over 5,000 children in U.S. immigration proceedings. Our programs in Central America and Mexico help ensure the safety and well-being of migrant children at every phase of their migration journeys and address the root causes of forced migration. Our goal is for children to be able to safely stay in their home communities so they are not forced to migrate to seek protection.

## Child Migrant Return and Reintegration Program

KIND recognizes that remaining in the United States may not be possible or preferable for all unaccompanied children. To ensure that those children who are returning do so safely, KIND developed its [Child Migrant Return and Reintegration Program](#). KIND partners with five community-based organizations in Guatemala and Honduras to help children receive vital services when they return to their communities, including mental health and medical care, education, job skills training, and ongoing case management. **The program has served over 500 children since 2015 and proven a successful model as most children who enroll do not remigrate during the reintegration services.**

## Gender and Migration Initiative

Recognizing that gender-based violence (GBV) is a leading driver of child migration, KIND launched a [Gender and Migration Initiative](#) in 2015, focused on preventing and addressing GBV against migrant children. In partnership with local organizations in Guatemala and Honduras, **the initiative has reached over 4,000 people, engaging children, youth, and community leaders in preventing GBV and increases access to protection and support for survivors.** For example, KIND partners with local organizations in Huehuetenango, Guatemala to train teachers and community leaders to better identify and support children who have experienced sexual abuse and works with partners in Tegucigalpa, Honduras to provide therapeutic programming to children who have experienced gender-based violence.

## KIND in Mexico

Since 2020, [KIND Mexico](#) has promoted the rights and protection of unaccompanied migrant children. In coordination with civil society and government officials, KIND provides accompaniment, legal advice, and legal orientation to unaccompanied migrant children in Mexico. To build local capacity, **KIND provides training to government agencies, international organizations, and NGOs on the U.S. legal system, international law, and best practices for working with unaccompanied children.**

## Central American Separated Families Reunification Project

Since 2018, KIND has led the effort to help locate parents who were separated from their children in the United States and then deported to Central America, and to assist them to identify and access reunification pathways. The [project](#) reunited children with their parents, and, building on KIND's existing relationships in the region, provided reunified families with mental health and social services to restore family bonds, as well as legal assistance identifying potential solutions for families with protection needs. After the Biden Administration established the Family Reunification Task Force in February 2021, KIND began an 18-month project to provide outreach, registration assistance and a telephonic Help Desk to over 2,000 beneficiaries. **Since June 2021, KIND has also represented or mentored over 250 cases of separated families seeking to reunify in the United States through humanitarian parole.**

## Central American Minors Project

In 2022, KIND began a project to help children in Central America reunify with their parents and legal guardians in the United States through the [Central America Minors \(CAM\) Program](#), by preparing and submitting CAM applications to U.S. resettlement agencies. **In the first 9 months of the project, KIND screened over 430 families for CAM eligibility and submitted over 200 CAM applications.** In 2023, KIND also began providing information, orientation and accompaniment to children and their family members navigating the CAM refugee interview process in Central America.

To learn more please contact [policy@supportkind.org](mailto:policy@supportkind.org).