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Topic | Speaker | Publication | Location | Date

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ABOUT STATE | POLICY ISSUES | COUNTRIES & REGIONS | ECONOMICS, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT | ARMS CONTROL & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY | CIVILIAN SECURITY & DEMOCRACY | PUBLIC DIPLOMACY & PUBLIC AFFAIRS | ASSISTANCE & DEVELOPMENT

Home » Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights » Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration » Releases » Fact Sheets » Fact Sheets 2014 » In-Country Refugee/Parole Program for Minors in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras With Parents Lawfully Present in the United States

## In-Country Refugee/Parole Program for Minors in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras With Parents Lawfully Present in the United States

Fact Sheet

BUREAU OF POPULATION, REFUGEES, AND MIGRATION

November 14, 2014

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE and U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

The United States is establishing an in-country refugee/parole program in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to provide a safe, legal, and orderly alternative to the dangerous journey that some children are currently undertaking to the United States. This program will allow certain parents who are lawfully present in the United States to request access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for their children still in one of these three countries. Children who are found ineligible for refugee admission but still at risk of harm may be considered for parole on a case-by-case basis. The refugee/parole program will not be a pathway for undocumented parents to bring their children to the United States, but instead, the program will provide certain vulnerable, at-risk children an opportunity to be reunited with parents lawfully resident in the United States.

Applications for this program are initiated in the United States. Beginning in December 2014, a parent lawfully present in the United States will be able to file Department of State form DS-7699 requesting a refugee resettlement interview for unmarried children under 21 in El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras. Under certain circumstances, if the second parent resides with the child in the home country and is currently married to the lawfully present parent in the United States, the second parent may be added to the child's petition and considered for refugee status, and if denied refugee status, for parole. Form DS-7699 must be filed with the assistance of a designated resettlement agency that works with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration to help resettle refugees in the United States. The form will not be available on the Department of State website to the general public and cannot be completed without the assistance of a Department of State-funded resettlement agency. These resettlement agencies are located in more than 180 communities throughout the United States. When the program is launched, the Department of State will provide information on how to contact one of these agencies to initiate an application.

Once a form DS-7699 has been filed, the child in his/her home country will be assisted through the program by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which manages the U.S. Resettlement Support Center (RSC) in Latin America. IOM personnel from the RSC will contact each child directly and in the order in which the forms filed by lawfully present parents have been received by the U.S. Department of State. IOM will invite the children to attend pre-screening interviews in their country of origin in order to prepare them for a refugee interview with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DNA relationship testing will be required to confirm the biological relationship between the parent in the United States and the in-country child. After the IOM pre-screening interview but before the DHS interview, the lawfully present parent in the United States will be notified by IOM via the resettlement agency about how to submit DNA evidence of the relationship with their claimed child(ren) in El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras. If DNA relationship testing confirms the claimed relationship(s), IOM will schedule the DHS refugee interview.

DHS will conduct interviews with each child to determine whether he or she is eligible for refugee status and admissible to the United States. All applicants must complete all required security checks and obtain a medical clearance before they are approved to travel as a refugee to the United States. IOM will arrange travel for the refugee(s) to the United

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
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States. The parent of the child will sign a promissory note agreeing to repay the cost of travel to the United States. Approved refugees will be eligible for the same support provided to all refugees resettled in the United States, including assignment to a resettlement agency that will assist with reception and placement, and assistance registering children in school.

Applicants found by DHS to be ineligible for refugee status in the United States will be considered on a case-by-case basis for parole, which is a mechanism to allow someone who is otherwise inadmissible to come to the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. In order for the applicant(s) to be considered for parole, the parent in the United States will need to submit a Form I-134, Affidavit of Support, with supporting documentation to DHS. An individual considered for parole may be eligible for parole if DHS finds that the individual is at risk of harm, he/she clears all background vetting, there is no serious derogatory information, and someone has committed to financially support the individual while he/she is in the United States. Those children and any eligible parent considered for parole will be responsible for obtaining and paying for a medical clearance. An individual authorized parole will not be eligible for a travel loan but must book and pay for the flight to the United States. Parole is temporary and does not confer any permanent legal immigration status or path to permanent legal immigration status in the United States. Parolees are not eligible for medical and other benefits upon arrival in the United States, but are eligible to attend school and/or apply for employment authorization. Individuals authorized parole under this program generally will be authorized parole for an initial period of two years and may request renewal.

It is anticipated that a relatively small number of children from Central America will be admitted to the United States as refugees in FY 2015, given the anticipated December launch and the length of time it takes to be processed for U.S. refugee admission. Any child or parent admitted as a refugee will be included in the Latin America/Caribbean regional allocation of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, which is 4,000 for FY 2015. If needed, there is some flexibility within the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program to accommodate a higher than anticipated number from Latin America in FY 2015.

[Back to Top](#)

[Blog](#) | [What's Now](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Subject Index](#) | [Search](#) |  | [Share](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Email this Page](#) | [Video](#) | [Photos](#)  
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[Daily Press Briefings](#)  
[Public Schedule](#)  
[Press Releases & Special Briefings](#)  
[Remarks, Testimony by Senior Officials](#)  
[Translations](#)  
[Key Policy Fact Sheets](#)  
[Reports and Publications](#)  
[International Media Engagement](#)  
[Photo Gallery](#)  
[Foreign Press Center](#)  
[Satellite](#)  
[Email Subscriptions](#)  
[RSS News Feeds](#)  
[More...](#)

**Travel**

[Passports](#)  
[Visas](#)  
[Travel Information](#)  
[Emergency Services](#)  
[Intercountry Adoption](#)  
[Parental Child Abduction](#)  
[Foreign Per Diem Rates](#)  
[More...](#)  
**Careers**  
[Foreign Service Officer](#)  
[Civil Service Officer](#)  
[Foreign Service Specialist](#)  
[Civilian Response Corps](#)  
[International Organizations](#)  
[Student Programs](#)  
[USAJobs: Working for America](#)  
[More...](#)

**Business**

[Business Support: Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)  
[Office of Global Partnerships](#)  
[Commercial and Business Affairs Office](#)  
[Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts](#)  
[Trade Policy and Programs](#)  
[Country Commercial Guides](#)  
[Defense Trade Controls](#)  
[Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization](#)  
[Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#)  
[Service Contract Inventory](#)  
[More...](#)

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[Remarks](#)  
[Travel](#)  
[Photos](#)  
[Biography](#)  
[More...](#)  
**Youth and Education**  
[Discover Diplomacy](#)  
[Global Youth Issues](#)  
[Diplomatic History](#)  
[Office of Overseas Schools](#)  
[Exchange Visitor Program](#)  
[Fulbright Program](#)  
[Student Career Programs](#)  
[Youth Exchange Programs](#)  
[U.S. Diplomacy Center](#)  
[Intercountry Adoption](#)  
[Parental Child Abduction](#)  
[More...](#)

**About State**

[Mission Statement](#)  
[ODDR](#)  
[Organization Chart](#)  
[Budget](#)  
[Department of State by State](#)  
[Rules and Info Collection](#)  
[Partner With State](#)  
[Senior Officials](#)  
[Alphabetical List of Bureaus and Offices](#)  
[Advisory Groups](#)  
[Biographies](#)  
[Plans, Performance, Budgets](#)  
[Open Government Initiative](#)  
[No FEAR Act](#)  
[Inspector General Hotline](#)  
[U.S. Embassies and Other Posts](#)  
[U.S. Mission to the United Nations](#)  
[More...](#)

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