Newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children (Newcomers)

Montgomery County’s Response

September 29, 2021
Situation update - national

- **Arrivals**: The U.S. is expecting a 20-year high in the number of unaccompanied migrant and asylum-seeking children approaching the border. These young people are fleeing high levels of violence, crime, natural disasters, food insecurity and poverty. The majority (90%) are seeking to unify with family members in the United States.

- **Numbers**: More than 99,400 unaccompanied children crossed the U.S.-Mexico border between January and July. In March, the number of unaccompanied child arrivals was the highest on record (18,877).

- **Demographics**: The majority of unaccompanied children are from Guatemala (48%), Honduras (25%) and El Salvador (14%). 72% are over 14 years old and 68% are boys. Many newly arriving children from Guatemala are Native American, not Hispanic/Latino. They speak indigenous languages (for example, Mam, K’iche’, and Q’anjob’al) and many do not speak Spanish.

- **Not only unaccompanied children**: In addition to unaccompanied children, family units and single adults continue to approach the border in high numbers. Most continue to be pushed back under Title 42, although some families with children under age 7 have been allowed to enter the United States. Some children and adults cross the border undetected by immigration authorities and are not included in numbers reported by DHS/CBP or the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Southwest Border Encounters
2021

![Bar chart showing U.S. Customs and Border Protection Southwest Border Encounters for 2021, with data for unaccompanied children, family units, and single adults for each month from January to July.](chart.png)
Situation update – Montgomery County

• Montgomery County is a primary destination for unaccompanied children seeking to unify with families/sponsors.

• Between 2014-2021, Montgomery County was the 11th highest receiving county in the nation.

• Release numbers from border facilities have been low because case management has not been in place. ORR is working to expedite the release process and numbers of children released are expected to increase in the coming weeks and months.

• According to ORR, 841 unaccompanied children have been released to sponsors in Montgomery County between January and July, with an increase of 191 children between June and July.

• In addition to unaccompanied children released to sponsors in Montgomery County, an unknown number of children are arriving with parents or other caregivers. There is no mechanism to track the numbers of migrants and asylum-seekers arriving in each state or county.
## Unaccompanied children released to families/sponsors in our region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2021 through July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>1,168</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Georges</td>
<td>1,557</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>1,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax</td>
<td>1,318</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,365</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>3,165</td>
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Unaccompanied children released to families/sponsors in Montgomery County in 2021

841 unaccompanied children were released to families/sponsors in Montgomery County between January – July 2021
McClintock does not collect data on students’ country of origin. Students who arrived in the country unaccompanied and came through the ORR system are not obligated to show ORR documentation to McClintock. Therefore, the ORR numbers reported by McClintock may not be fully representative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Student Intakes 2017–2018</th>
<th>Number of Student Intakes 2018–2019</th>
<th>Number of Student Intakes 2019–2020</th>
<th>Number of Student Intakes/Cleared 2020-2021</th>
<th>Number of ORRs (with sponsors) 2020-2021</th>
<th>Number of Student Intakes/Cleared 2021-2022</th>
<th>Number of ORRs (with sponsors) 2021-2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>1104</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3215</td>
<td>4618</td>
<td>4530</td>
<td>1086</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>60</td>
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</table>
On July 22nd, the Montgomery County Council's joint Health and Human Services and Education and Culture Committee approved a $5.4 million supplemental funding request to support newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children, youth, and families.

A video of the County Council session is accessible [here](#). Background documents shared with the joint Committee are [here](#). The appropriation is [here](#).

DHHS is currently recruiting a Newcomer Coordinator.

MCPS will soon be recruiting a Transition Counselor for Newcomers.

The Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center will soon be recruiting a Legal Services Coordinator.
An interagency team comprised of county government and community stakeholders have worked together to develop an implementation plan. The plan includes the following action areas:

1. Communications
2. Navigation and case management (including health and mental health)
3. Education and school-based services
4. Legal services
5. Positive youth development and recreation
6. Anti-discrimination, public safety and trafficking prevention
Our goal: Newcomers receive welcoming messages in their own languages with timely and accurate information to help them access education, social services, and other supports.

Use range of media strategies to reach Spanish- and Mayan-speaking newcomers and receiving communities county-wide, building on the success and lessons learned from Salud y Bienestar. (Communications Shop)

Promote the Spanish-language hotline (301) 270-8432 linking to navigation and case management services. (CASA)

Promote the Spanish-language WhatsApp Group: (240) 447-1862. (Office of Community Partnerships)

Assess primary language preference and ensure Maya language access and cultural competency. (DHHS, MCPS, Office of Community Partnerships)
Our goal: Coordinate and implement a culturally proficient system of engagement via a “Navigation Network”, a team of community- and school-based partners who work together to ensure newly arriving migrant and asylum-seeking children and families/sponsors are provided needed support services.
CASA Hotline (301) 270-8432 will link to initial navigation services.

Subcommittee Co-Chairs:
Fresia Guzman, Identity 240.449.6977
Monica Martin, DHHS 240.777.1792
Tara Clemons, DHHS (Somatic Health Focus) 240.777.1116
Regina Morales, DHHS (Mental Health Focus) 240.777.1116
Our goal: Create an environment for newcomer students and families that is welcoming, and where their social emotional needs and trauma are addressed, so that they are available to learn and engage in the community.

- **International Enrollment Process** – Timely, welcoming and culturally sensitive enrollment in home school. *(International Admissions & Enrollment)*

- **Newcomer Orientation Plan** serving to make children feel welcome, make new friends, feel safe, included and able to navigate & learn in their new environment. *(Home Schools, Professional learning around best practices & newcomer curriculum.)*

- **Professional Learning for all Stakeholders** focused on what brings children to the U.S., what happens when they get here, and how do they end up in our classrooms? What type of education, if any, do they receive in ORR custody and how can we support these students when they enroll in our schools? *(Immigrant Connections)*

- **Access to English Language Development and grade level content curriculum** Newcomer students will access education that builds on their unique strengths and supports their development in ways that enables them to reach their full potential. Newcomers who need to develop English proficiency will receive instruction that addresses the simultaneous development of English proficiency and grade-level concepts and skills. *(Office of Elementary & Secondary Curriculum & Instruction)*

- **Community Building and Peer Engagement** *(Wrap around services, Peer Ambassador Program, Identity, CASA, Oyéme, Gilchrist Center, Linkages to Learning, Cultura Cura)*
Our goal: Provide comprehensive legal screenings, services and representation for unaccompanied children, families and/or sponsors through support to legal immigration service providers.

Hire a legal services coordinator, housed at the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center, to coordinate referrals, liaise with legal service providers, and develop/implement a public-private partnership to increase funding for legal immigration services.

Increase the capacity of legal service providers, all of which are currently at capacity. The County currently funds 4 legal service providers that provide both legal screenings and direct legal representation to people in deportation and removal proceedings at a total cost of $670,000. In July, the County Council appropriated an additional $250,000 to increase legal service providers’ capacity. These funds will be programmed through Gilchrist/Office of Community Partnerships.

Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center: (240) 777-4940

Ayuda, CASA, Catholic Charities, HIAS, Luminous, KIND
Our goal: Strengthen protective factors for newcomer children, youth and families.

• Increase the capacity of family reunification support programs. (Identity)

• Convene youth leadership conferences for newcomers. (DHHS/PYD/MCPS + community partners)

• Extend the hours at 5 high school Wellness Centers to facilitate targeted services and programs for newcomers, including behavioral health and family reunification support, legal orientation, and resource workshops. (DHHS/PYD + partners)

• Expand Imagination Stage’s Oyéme program in MCPS (reaching 6 schools/360 students). Oyéme uses evidence-based and culturally-sensitive arts programming to address trauma, build resilience, and support community. (Imagination Stage + MCPS)

• Increase the capacity of the Street Outreach Network (SON) (DHHS/PYD + MCPS)

• Expand Soccer4Change to include a middle school league – 6 boys and 4 girls teams, reaching 120 youth. (MCDR)
Our goal: Prevent and respond to public safety risk factors for newcomer children, youth and families.

Establish an interagency group to meet on a monthly basis to identify gaps or emerging needs for newcomer children or youth that are vulnerable to crime victimization.

This group provided general capacity-building training for MCPS and MCPD school security staff prior to schools reopening in August 2021.

DHHS/PYD, Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee, MCPD Community Outreach, MCPS School Security, States Attorney’s Office, and Identity

Meet with trafficking prevention providers, assess needs, design and implement human trafficking prevention/screening training for all stakeholders.

Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee and SAFE Center
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY CONTACTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DHHS Lead</strong></td>
<td><em>(Until DHHS Newcomer Coordinator hired)</em> <strong>Monica Martin</strong>, Administrator, Child/Adolescent School &amp; Community-Based Services, <a href="mailto:Monica.Martin@montgomerycountymd.gov">Monica.Martin@montgomerycountymd.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCPS Lead</strong></td>
<td><strong>Margarita Bohorquez</strong>, MCPS, Acting Director, Student, Family and School Services/International Admissions &amp; Enrollment, <a href="mailto:Margarita.i.bohorquez@mcpsmd.org">Margarita.i.bohorquez@mcpsmd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-committee chairs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Communications** | **Gillian Huebner**, DHHS part-time consultant, Gillian.Huebner@montgomerycountymd.gov  
Dr. Michelle LaRue, CASA, Director of Health and Social Services, mlarue@wearecasa.org |
| **Navigation, case management, health and mental health** | *(Until DHHS Newcomer Coordinator hired)* **Monica Martin**, Administrator, Child/Adolescent School & Community-Based Services, Monica.Martin@montgomerycountymd.gov |
| **Education and school-based services** | **Everett Davis**, MCPS, Acting Associate Superintendent, Everett.M.Davis@mcpsmd.org  
**Margarita Bohorquez**, MCPS, Acting Director, Student, Family and School Services/International Admissions & Enrollment, Margarita.i.bohorquez@mcpsmd.org |
| **Legal services** | **Yi Shen**, Office of Community Partnerships, Yi.Shen@montgomerycountymd.gov |
| **Positive youth development and recreation** | **Alex Arévalo**, DHHS, Positive Youth Development, Alex.Arevalo@montgomerycountymd.gov  
**Marhonda Williams**, MCDR, marhonda.williams@montgomerycountymd.gov |
| **Anti-discrimination, public safety and trafficking prevention** | **Luis Cardona**, DHHS, Senior Administrator, Positive Youth Development, Luis.Cardona@montgomerycountymd.gov  
**Jodi Finkelstein**, Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee, Jodi.Finkelstein@montgomerycountymd.gov |