**How Can I Help?**

The following are some organizations seeking to help families and provide protection for those seeking asylum.

References to the following organizations providing assistance is for the information and convenience of the public, and inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by the Montgomery County Council.  These organizations have not been vetted by the Montgomery County Council.

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[Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project](https://asylumadvocacy.org/) works to prevent the deportation of asylum-seeking families fleeing violence. The group accepts donations and asks people to sign up for volunteer opportunities [here](https://asylumadvocacy.org/get-involved/).

[South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/immigration/projects_initiatives/south_texas_pro_bono_asylum_representation_project_probar.html) is providing free legal services to asylum seekers detained in South Texas.

[RAICES](https://www.raicestexas.org/) is a nonprofit that provides free and low-cost legal services to immigrant children, families and refugees in Texas. It’s accepting donations and volunteers at its website. In addition, the [#postcards4families campaign](https://www.facebook.com/donate/1088122154674162/) will donate $5 to RAICES for every postcard kids write to help the separated immigrant children.

[YWCA](https://www.ywca.org/) is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. The organization is encouraging individuals to take part in the Rally Against Injustice and Cruelty on June 30 and is accepting [donations](https://www.ywca.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/).

[The CARA Project](http://www.aila.org/practice/pro-bono/find-your-opportunity/cara-family-detention-pro-bono-project) is currently recruiting attorneys, law students and paralegals with experience in asylum work. The group asks [volunteers](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/dilleyprobonoproject) to be fluent in Spanish or willing to work with an interpreter.

[Kids In Need of Defense](https://supportkind.org/get-involved/) partners with major law firms, corporations and bar associations to create a nationwide pro bono network to represent unaccompanied children through their immigration proceedings. [Volunteers](https://supportkind.org/get-involved/) don’t need to have immigration law experience.

The El Paso-based [Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center](http://las-americas.org/) provides legal representation to immigrants who might not be able to afford it otherwise. It’s accepting [volunteers](http://las-americas.org/get-involved-2/volunteer/) and [donations](http://las-americas.org/get-involved-2/donate/).

[The Austin Bar Association Civil Right and Immigration Section](http://www.austinbar.org/event/responding-to-zero-tolerance-credible-fear-and-immigration-bond-hearing-training/) is coordinating training for pro bono attorneys to handle credible fear interviews for asylum seekers.

[Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley](http://catholiccharitiesrgv.org/HumanitarianRespiteCenter.shtml) shelters immigrants who've recently been released from U.S. Border Patrol custody.

[American Gateways](http://www.americangateways.org/) provides legal services and representation to separated parents. It's currently seeking [volunteers](http://www.americangateways.org/get-involved/) to represent detained parents who've been separated from their children.

[Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services](http://www.dmrs-ep.org/get-involved/) is the largest provider of free and low cost immigration services in West Texas and says it's the only organization in El Paso serving unaccompanied children.

[Justice for Our Neighbors](http://jfonhouston.org/) provides free and low-cost legal services to immigrant individuals and families in Texas.

[The Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights](https://www.theyoungcenter.org/) is looking for more child advocates to visit the immigrant children inside the detention centers weekly and accompany them to immigration proceedings. It is also [raising money](https://www.theyoungcenter.org/donate-to-the-young-center/) for advocates who will deal specifically with family separation cases.

[Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service](https://www.lirs.org/) is [raising money](https://secure2.convio.net/lirs/site/Donation2;jsessionid=00000000.app260a?df_id=3201&mfc_pref=T&3201.donation=form1&s_src=MA18F1&s_subsrc=LB01A) to provide immigrant children "immediate shelter and beds, medical services, counseling and therapy to help them deal with the trauma of family separation."

[Together Rising](https://togetherrising.org/) is [collecting money](https://app.mobilecause.com/f/tyb/n) that'll go to advocacy groups that are working to reunify immigrant children with their families.

[Comfort Cases](https://www.comfortcases.org/) is [raising money](https://www.crowdrise.com/donate/project/rob-scheer-comfort-cases/) to provide backpacks to the separated immigrant children. Each case will contain items such as blankets, pajamas, toiletries, a stuffed animal, a book, a journal and art supplies.

[Tahirih Justice Center](http://www.tahirih.org/) is providing free legal and social services to immigrant women and girls fleeing gender-based violence.

[Circle of Health International](http://cohintl.org/) has staffed a clinic caring for refugees and asylum seekers immediately upon their release. Their McAllen clinic is currently seeing upwards of 100 patients a day.

[The Office of Refugee Resettlement](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/unaccompanied-children-frequently-asked-questions) requires that all people who want to foster one of the unaccompanied immigrant children be fully licensed by their state. If you are not already licensed, the agency recommends contacting organizations such as United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.

If you are an attorney, you can sign up to provide pro-bono services [here.](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdo8pbEeOLfcgk20i3Cjobuk4SXBhi3hQ8JrzfUUvIpqWsM3w/viewform?c=0&w=1) Volunteers are also needed at Sacred Heart Church, [NETA](https://netargv.com/), [ProBAR](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/immigration/projects_initiatives/south_texas_pro_bono_asylum_representation_project_probar/immigrant_childrensassistanceprojecticap.html), and the [Texas Civil Rights Project](https://texascivilrightsproject.org/keepfamiliestogether-volunteer/), if you are in Texas or are willing to travel there.

If you wish to speak out publicly and encourage Congress to use its oversight authority to ensure separated families are quickly reunited, and oppose detention of children in inappropriate settings:

* the ACLU has a call tool specifically for [Senators](https://www.aclu.org/StopFamilySeparation).
* the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) has a call tool that directs calls, tweets, Facebook posts, and emails to all [Members of Congress](http://www.aila.org/takeaction#/47).

If you have further questions, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen’s office is available to assist you. You may contact his office at 301-545-1500.