

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/promoting-justice-for-unaccompanied-children>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

For the past year and a half, I've been directing the Unaccompanied Children Pro Bono Pilot Project (UCPBP) at Vera. UCPBP, which began in 2005, is a collaborative effort among Vera, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), and 11 nonprofit legal service providers to offer legal information and pro bono legal representation to unaccompanied children who are facing removal (deportation) while in federal custody.

Vera recently published [a four page project summary](#) that provides an overview of the UCPBP's services and key accomplishments. The project summary answers several of the questions that I am often asked, such as who are unaccompanied children and what are the nonprofit legal service providers funded to provide? It also has a map of the 33 ORR shelters that our current legal service providers serve.

Although we've a long way to go to ensure that every child in removal proceedings has an attorney, I'm proud that the UCPBP is bringing legal information and resources to children in the justice system. In its first three years, the project provided 14,000 children with know-your-rights orientations, legal screenings, pro bono legal representation, and other services. As I continue to direct the UCPBP, my hope is that we are able to ensure access to justice to even more unaccompanied children.

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