

OFFICE OF MIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES AND LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICE RELEASE REPORT ON AGENCIES ASSISTING TRUMP ADMINISTRATION WITH FAMILY REUNIFICATION

October 17, 2018

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office of Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), released its report today, entitled *Serving Separated and Reunited Families: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward to Promote Family Unity*, which documents the work of Catholic and Lutheran agencies who assisted the Administration with reuniting separated families during the month of July.

Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Texas, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration, in a letter of introduction of the report states: "I am proud of the response of USCCB/MRS, LIRS and of our Catholic (in particular CCUSA and the Catholic Charities network) and Lutheran partners around the country, including my brother bishops, to be able to work with the Administration to provide support to these vulnerable families." He further states: "USCCB/MRS (in collaboration with 75 Catholic Charities agencies) and LIRS continue to provide assistance including helping families comply with their immigration obligations. I believe the recommendations made [in this report] are important and should be seriously considered in order to avoid pain and suffering in the future caused by the separation of families."

In July 2018, USCCB/MRS and LIRS assisted over 1200 families who were reunified after being separated due to the Administration's "Zero Tolerance" policy. The report highlights the work that was undertaken by Catholic and Lutheran partners on the ground and gives a unique data point regarding the separated and reunited families.

Resources and information about family separation and the report are available on the Justice for Immigrants website www.justiceforimmigrants.org. Included is a backgrounder on family separation and information about the current release practices of immigrant families at the U.S./Mexico border and their immigration compliance requirements.