

Unaccompanied Children: Resources for Newcomer Youth in California



COMMUNITY JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Bethany[®]

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Community Justice Alliance +
Bethany Christian Services**
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- 03 **Opportunities for educational and
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Bethany's goal is to reunite kids with loved ones and help adjust to their new homes.

Bethany's post release services include support for:

- **Education**
- **Physical and mental health**
- **Legal assistance**
- **Religious or spiritual access**
- **Social connection**
- **Safety**



COMMUNITY JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Community Justice Alliance is a legal services 501(c)(3) nonprofit comprised of attorneys, social services staff, and healers.

We serve California's Central Valley (Sacramento to Fresno) by representing undocumented Californians in immigration court, connecting indigent residents to resources, and engaging in bold thinking around narrative change and healing.

A subset of our legal and social services involves unaccompanied undocumented children.

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN



Homeland Security Act, 6 USC § 279(g) defines an unaccompanied child as one who at the time of apprehension by immigration authorities has:

- No lawful immigration status, under the age of 18, and
- Has no parent or legal guardian in the U.S., or
- Without a parent or legal guardian in the U.S who is available to provide care and physical custody

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

The reasons for children fleeing to the United States:

- **Severe economic insecurity**
- **Community violence**
- **Abuse and neglect**
- **Family reunification**
- **Gang violence**
- **Economic/educational opportunities**

A study done by the UNHCR, showed that 58% of all the unaccompanied arriving in the U.S. would raise potential international protection needs.

According to the same study, there are significant gaps in the existing protection mechanisms currently in place for these displaced children.



F Y 2023

Data source: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data>

77,473
unaccompanied children
have been released since
October 2022.

California has received
7,843 unaccompanied
children since October,
the third highest
concentration in the
nation.

2,910
Los Angeles County

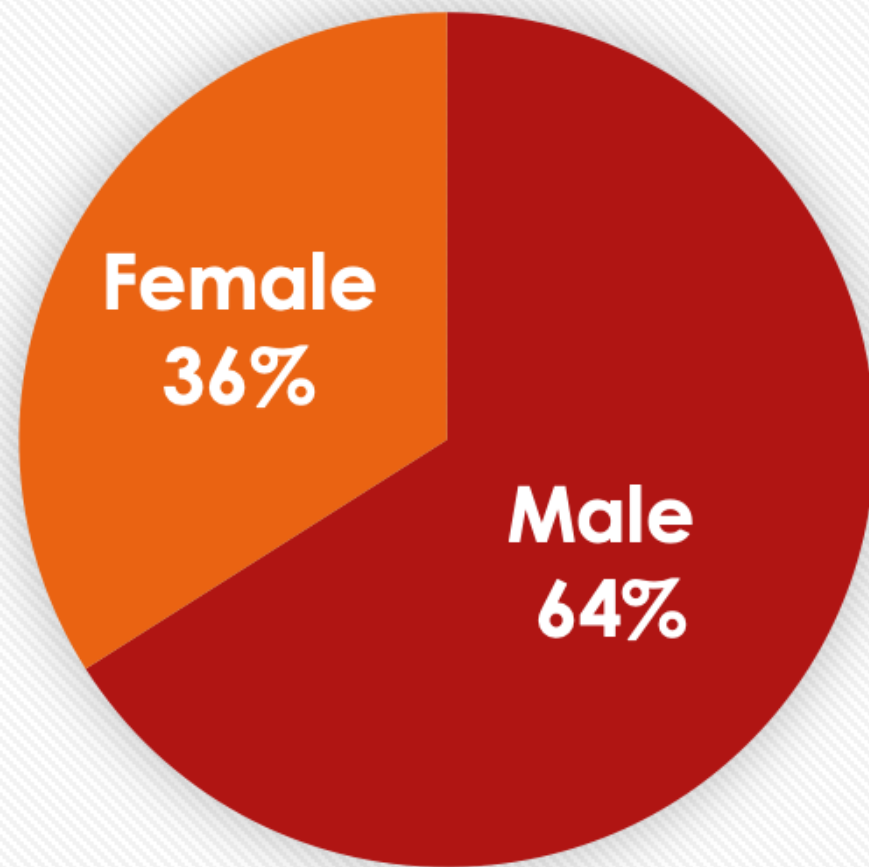
628
Alameda County

700+
Central Valley counties
(aggregated)

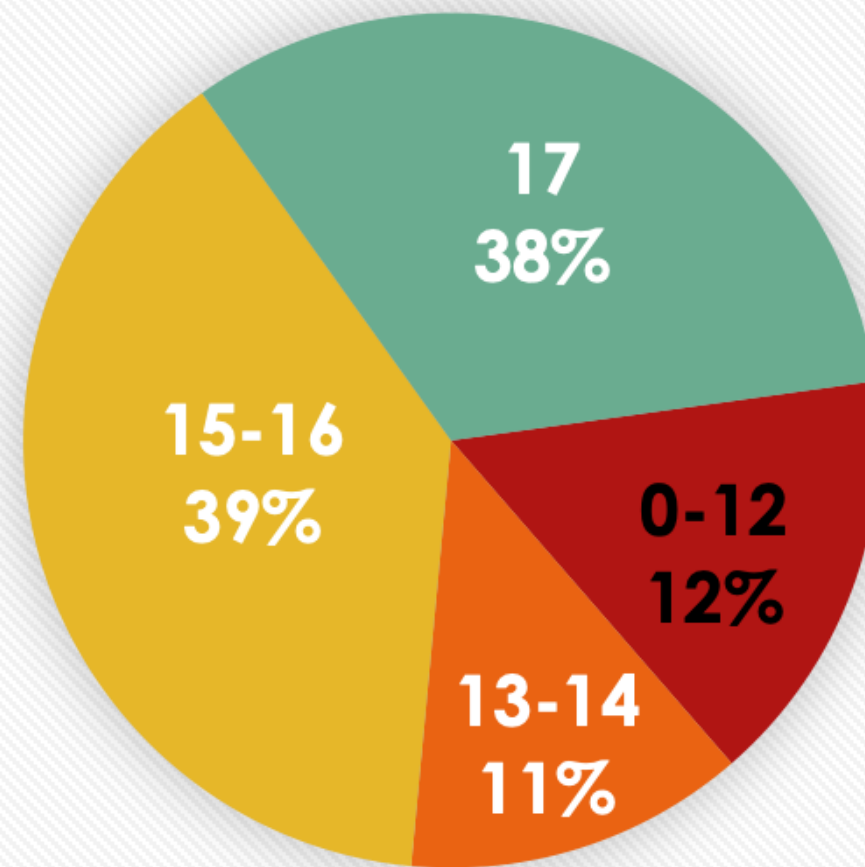
FY 2022

Data source: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data>

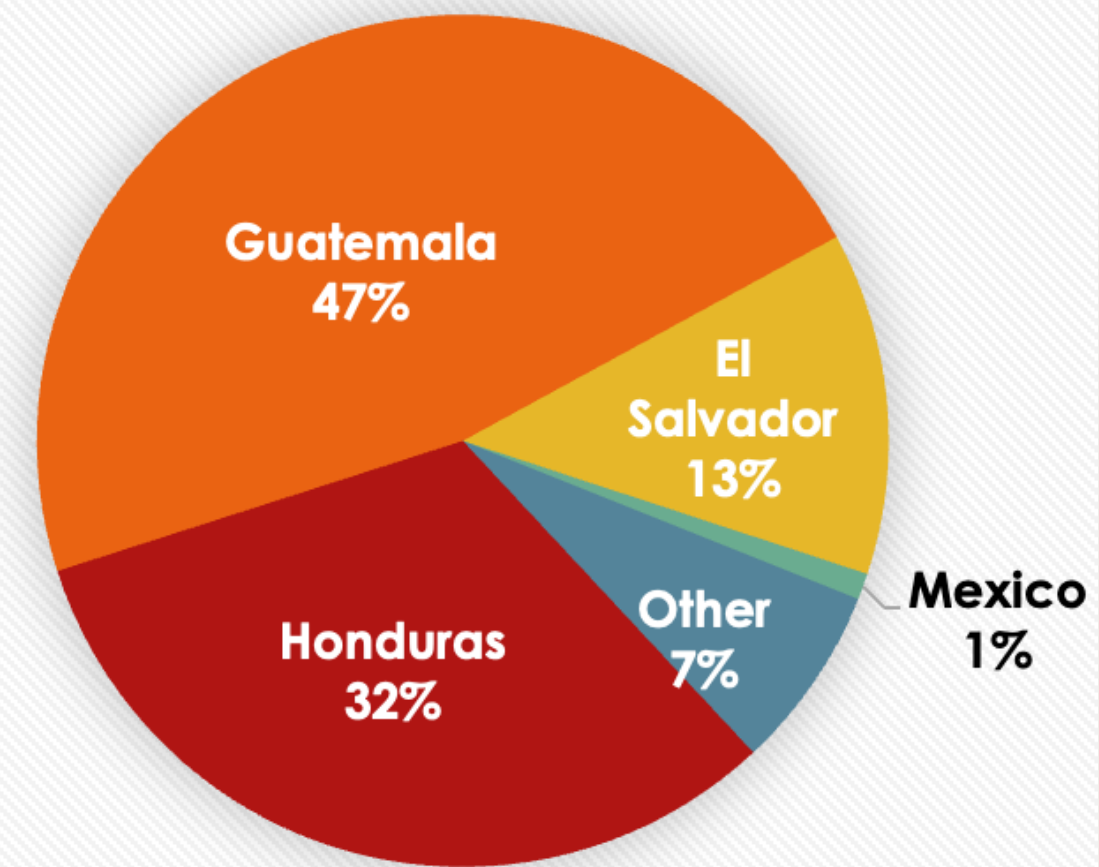
**Gender
FY2022**



**Age
FY2022**



**Country of Origin
FY2021**



THE JOURNEY

ENTERING THE UNITED STATES

APPREHENSION BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

DETENTION IN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION FACILITY
(72 hours max)

DESIGNATION AS UC --> TRANSFER TO HHS OFFICE OF REFUGEE
RESETTLEMENT ("ORR") SHELTER

RELEASE TO SPONSOR OR LONGTERM FOSTER CARE OR
UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINOR PROGRAM, if eligible



IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (ICE)
COMMENCES REMOVAL ("DEPORTATION") PROCEEDINGS
(note: children do not have a right to a gov't provided attorney.)

So, what happens now?

A NEW HOME: WHAT NOW?

Unaccompanied children released into California are left to navigate a host of new challenges.

Undocumented = not work authorized

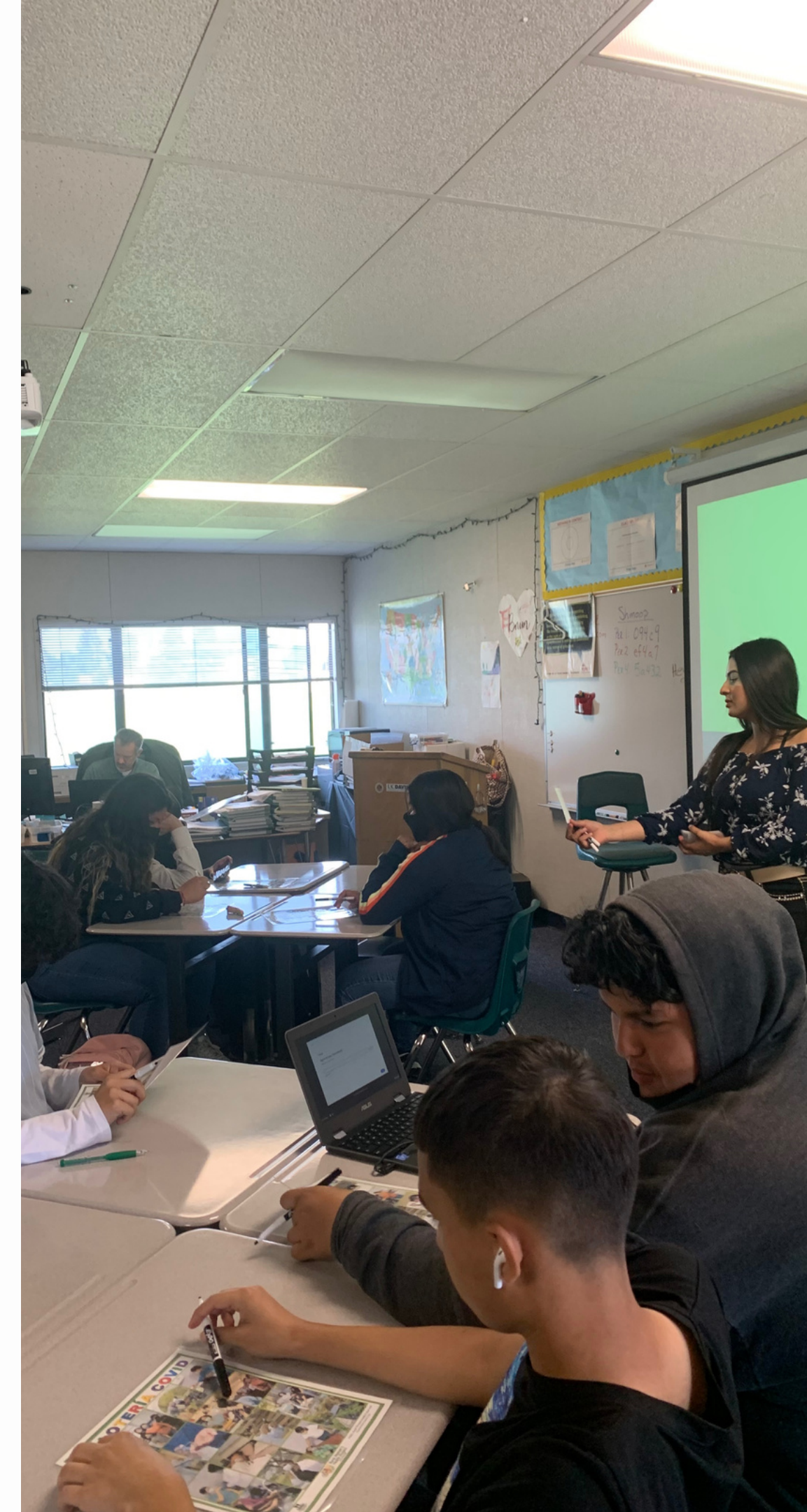
Unaccompanied undocumented youth may be seeking employment to make ends meet. In some circumstances, they are in exploitative living situations and forced to work. Due to immigration status (lack thereof), they are not work authorized.

Unmitigated trauma/ mental health needs

Culturally and linguistically mental health support is difficult to source. We are seeing an uptick in feelings of isolation and suicidal ideation with minimal intervention supports.

Education

Youth may need to navigate vaccinations for school enrollment, transportation to attend, and language access.



PROGRAMS TO KNOW

California Department of Social Services

Opportunities for Youth
CalNew

Children's Holistic Immigration Representation Project
UUM Legal Representation/ Removal Defense Projects



resources

A Toolkit for Unaccompanied Youth

Toolkit

www.cjaca.org/resources





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