KIDS IN NEED OF DEFENSE

Updated April 28, 2025

AVAILABLE PRO BONO CASES OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN & YOUTH

YOUTH IN ACTIVE REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS

Hugo* is a 14-year-old Spanish-speaking boy from Honduras. When he lived in Honduras he enjoyed school, especially his Spanish and math classes, but his family struggled with extreme poverty, and gangs in his area regularly used violence and coercion to force young boys to join their ranks. Hugo came to the U.S. for greater safety and opportunity, including to be able to continue his education, which he is not sure his family would be able to afford for him in Honduras. He currently lives with a foster family in **Tacoma,** where he is doing well in school and enjoys playing on the tennis and lacrosse teams. Another recent highlight for him was attending a Mariners game with his foster family. Hugo has applied for SIJ status, and is waiting for a final decision from USCIS on that petition. He is also in active immigration court proceedings, with his next master calendar hearing scheduled for May 1. Hugo needs pro bono counsel to appear with him in court and make arguments to the immigration judge about why the proceedings should be either terminated or administratively closed in order to await adjudication of the SIJS petition (and if it is approved, to wait until Hugo's priority date becomes current, and he is eligible to apply for a green card). He also needs pro bono help to explore whether he could file an application for asylum based on fears related to gang activity in his hometown in Honduras.

Maya* is a 24-year-old from El Salvador, who primarily speaks Spanish and also some English. Maya is a resilient young woman, who has overcome adversity and loss to pursue safety and her dreams of a better life. At the age of seven she was on a bus in El Salvador when shooters boarded and killed two people, causing her great trauma. At the age of 13, she was grabbed by gang members off the street, taken to an isolated location, and threatened with sexual violence. She escaped with ingenuity and bravery, but the gang members tracked down her family and threatened to kill her. Soon afterwards, she fled to the U.S., where she was able to reunite with her mother. Maya was able to attend school and gain some stability here and is about to become a new mom to a U.S. citizen child. She has lived in this country for a decade (currently in **Lynwood**), and needs a pro bono attorney to help make sure she reaches the finish line and obtains permanent residence and a chance at a durable sense of safety. Maya was granted SIJ status in 2022, and is still waiting for her priority date to become current so she can apply to adjust status and obtain a green card. Meanwhile, she is in immigration court proceedings that have been administratively closed, so there is no hearing currently scheduled. Maya needs a pro bono attorney to help monitor whether her case is scheduled for a hearing in immigration court, and to prepare for and accompany her to any hearings that might be scheduled. Maya also filed an application for asylum in 2015 and was interviewed by USCIS in 2019. Her asylum case was referred to immigration court, which means that if she is scheduled for a hearing, she will need help from her attorney to submit a supplemental asylum filing, prepare her for that hearing, and attend court on her behalf. Maya currently has work authorization pursuant to both her approved SIJS deferred action, and her pending asylum claim, and she will need assistance to renew her work permit(s).

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Sebastian* an 18-year-old male from Honduras who is currently placed with a foster family through the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) Program in the **Vancouver**, WA area. Sebastian has already been granted asylum, SIJS, and a T visa, and is eligible to adjust status to permanent resident. Sebastian lived in extreme poverty in Honduras, never attended school, and performed hard agricultural labor from a very young age. He was regularly beaten by his father. He was trafficked to the United States by men who intended to use him for forced labor, but the trafficking scheme was discovered while in custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and he was never released to his trafficker. Sebastian has a severe receptive and expressive language disorder. On October 23, 2020 an immigration judge (IJ) entered a removal order against Sebastian after determining that his T visa application (the only relief pending at the time) was not prima facie approvable. Sebastian's previous counsel appealed the decision to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), which reaffirmed the IJ's decision. Previous counsel then appealed to the Second Circuit, which remanded the case to the BIA. Previous counsel has since filed a motion with the BIA to rescind the removal order and terminate proceedings based on Sebastian's T visa, asylum, and SIJS approvals, and the motion remains pending. Sebastian needs pro bono representation to finalize his application for adjustment of status and to resolve his removal order at the BIA. Sebastian's traffickers used a false name when he entered the United States, and his parents registered his birth with the incorrect year, but USCIS has previously accepted evidence submitted to establish Sebastian's actual name and presumed date of birth.

Cristofer* is a 14-year-old boy from El Salvador who fled the country to escape threats from a local gang. He currently lives with his father and step-mother in **Renton**. His father came to the United States when he was about 5 or 6, but they maintained a relationship and Cristofer's father continued to provide financial support. In El Salvador he lived with his grandmother, because his mother's partner was abusive. Cristofer communicates with his mother, but she does not provide financial support. Cristofer has applied for asylum with USCIS. He has a master calendar hearing on November 7, 2025, but he can request termination of proceedings because USCIS has initial jurisdiction to decide his asylum claim. Cristofer needs a pro bono attorney to substitute representation on his asylum claim, help him apply for SIJ and represent him in Immigration Court.

Debora* is a 13-year-old girl from Haiti who speaks both Haitian Creole and Spanish. She is currently placed in foster care through the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) program in **Auburn**. Debora fled Haiti to escape gang violence perpetrated against her family and out of fear of future gender-based violence. She does not know who her father is, and she was mostly raised by various family members because she was not comfortable living with her mother and her mother's romantic partners. Debora is eligible for SIJ status, asylum, and temporary protected status (TPS). Previous counsel has already filed for asylum and TPS and those applications remain pending. Debora is represented by outside counsel in dependency proceedings, which should result in findings to support her SIJ application. She is scheduled for a master calendar hearing at immigration court on August 7, 2025 and may be able request termination at or prior to that hearing. Debora needs pro bono counsel to represent her in her pending asylum and TPS applications, support her dependency attorney and then apply for SIJS, and to represent her in immigration court.

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Angela* is a 16-year-old Spanish-speaker from Honduras. After her father died when she was five years old, Angela was raised by her mom, who worked hard to support her through working long hours in the fields cultivating beans. Angela helped her mom with that work, in addition to attending school, but her family struggled to have enough money to buy food, clothes, or things for school. Around the age of 13, Angela began to be harassed and threatened by men in her town, and pressured to get married, and had to be careful not to go out alone. There was a lot of gang violence in her town, and more than once Angela saw dead bodies that the gangs had left lying in the street outside her house. Angela had to stop attending school after sixth grade so she could work to earn money to support her family—work she describes as difficult and exhausting. Angela fled to the United States to escape the threat of gang violence, including the risk that she would be pressed into sexual servitude or a forced marriage, and to be able to further pursue her schooling. Angela currently lives with her cousin in **Federal Way**, where she is eager to attend high school, and would like to study science. Angela filed an application for asylum with USCIS in February 2025. She needs a pro bono attorney to monitor for and then prepare her for an asylum interview at the USCIS Asylum Office once one is scheduled. Angela is also in immigration court proceedings and has her next master calendar hearing scheduled for September 2028. She needs an attorney to monitor whether those proceedings are advanced at any point, and to appear with her in court as necessary, and potentially to seek termination of proceedings on the basis of the pending asylum application if that is determined to be the best strategic next step. Angela also needs pro bono counsel to help her file dependency proceedings and then assist her to apply for SIJ status.

Naomi* is a 17-year-old Spanish-speaker from Honduras. Naomi had a difficult childhood in Honduras. Her father abandoned her and her family soon after she was born, and her mother abandoned her when she was around 6 years old. Naomi then lived with her grandparents. The family lived in poverty and Naomi stopped attending school when she was around 11 years old because it was too expensive, and she instead began working as a caretaker for younger children. Naomi's grandparents relied on her income as they did not work very much themselves. Naomi traveled to the U.S. in 2023 because she had no one to support or provider for her in her home country. Presently, Naomi lives with a foster family in the **Tacoma area**. Naomi studies in high school and her dream is to graduate high school and gain a professional career. Naomi's immigration proceedings are active. Naomi is eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). She is scheduled for a master calendar hearing at immigration court on May 1st, 2025, and may be able to request termination at or prior to that hearing. Naomi is represented by outside counsel in dependency proceedings, which should result in findings to support her SIJS application. Naomi needs pro bono counsel to support her dependency attorney and then apply for SIJS, and to represent her in immigration court.

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Marcos* is a 17-year-old Spanish speaker from Honduras. Marcos lived with his parents in a rural area of Honduras. Marcos' father worked in agricultural work, and Marcos stopped attending school when he was around 11 years old to help his father in the fields. Devastatingly, the family's home and harvest were destroyed during a hurricane in 2019. Marcos and his family suffered in severe poverty after this. Marcos traveled to the U.S. and arrived near the end of 2024, seeking safety and greater opportunity. Presently, Marcos is living with a foster family through a Long-Term Foster Care Program (LTFC) and attending high school in the **Tacoma** area. Marcos was approved for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) but needs to wait until a visa becomes available before he can file for adjustment of status to get his green card. Marcos is also in active immigration court proceedings, with his next calendar hearing scheduled for June 5th, 2025. Marcos needs pro bono counsel to appear with him in court and make arguments to the immigration judge about why the proceedings should be either terminated or administratively closed to await adjudication of the SIJS petition (and if it is approved, to wait until Marcos' priority date becomes current, and he is eligible to apply for his green card).

Diego* is a 17-year-old Spanish and Mam-speaker from a small village in Guatemala. Diego's father left his mother before Diego was born. Diego was raised by his mother and has a positive relationship with her. His family struggled with extreme poverty, and Diego stopped attending school after the 6th grade because of the high cost. Diego instead began working in the fields and in construction to support himself and his family. Eventually, Diego made the decision to come to the U.S. when he was 16, seeking safety and greater opportunity. Presently, Diego lives with a foster family through a Long-Term Foster Care (LTFC) Program in the **Tacoma** area and attends high school. Diego is a very motivated student and is doing well in school. In his free time, Diego enjoys playing basketball, and started taking snowboarding lessons this winter. Diego is in active immigration court proceedings, with his next calendar hearing scheduled for May 1st, 2025. Diego is eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and needs a pro bono attorney to support him in obtaining state dependency before his 18th birthday which should result in findings to support his SIJS application. Once Diego obtains SIJS status, his pro bono attorney may be able to request termination of his proceedings before or during a future court hearing. His pro bono attorney ideally will also monitor until Diego's SIJS priority date becomes current and support him with his green card application.

Edgar* is a 17-year-old youth from Guatemala who speaks Mam and Spanish. Edgar grew up in a rural area in Guatemala. Edgar was raised by his mother, and his father died in a car accident when Edgar was a baby. Edgar began working in agriculture and construction when he was around 13 years old to support himself and his family. Edgar's family lived in poverty and when he was 14 he came to the U.S. for greater opportunity and to continue his studies. Edgar currently lives with a foster family in the **Tacoma** area and attends high school. Outside of school, he works part time at a restaurant, is taking driving lessons, and enjoys playing soccer. Edgar's immigration proceedings are administratively closed. Edgar is represented by outside counsel in dependency proceedings and has approved Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), and a C14 work permit. His pro bono attorney will need to determine best strategy for whether to file for termination of proceedings. His

pro bono attorney will also need to monitor the visa bulletin for when Edgar's priority date is current to apply for his green card.

Leonardo* is a 17-year-old Spanish speaker from Honduras. When Leonardo was two years old, he was abandoned by his mother and left to live with his father and paternal aunt. Leonardo's father passed away in 2019, leaving Leonardo under the care of his aunt who abused him physically, verbally and emotionally. When Leonardo was 13, his aunt put him to work in the coffee fields. About one year later, Leonardo traveled 5 hours by bus to reunify with his mother and lived with her for a while but she was unable to provide for him financially. In spring of 2024, Leonardo decided to travel to the U.S. in search of greater opportunity and stability. Leonardo asked a cousin to pay for his trip, but this cousin intended to exploit Leonardo into working to pay off his debt. Leonardo was determined to be a victim of trafficking by the Administration of Children and Families- Office of Trafficking in Persons. Presently, Leonardo lives with a foster family in the **Tacoma** area. He attends high school and is interested in becoming a trucker in the future. Leonardo has filed for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and is awaiting a response from USCIS. Leonardo immigration proceedings are active, and he is scheduled for a hearing in immigration court on May 1st, 2025. He may be able to request termination at or prior to that hearing. His pro bono attorney will need to monitor Leonardo's SISJ filing and, after it is approved, monitor the visa bulletin for when Leonardo's priority date is current to apply for his green card. Leonardo may also be eligible for asylum and a Trafficking (T) Visa; his pro bono attorney will need to further assess this.

Jesus* is a 16-year-old Spanish speaker from Mexico. Jesus lived with his mother until he was around 11 years old. Jesus' mother was very absent in his life, and he suffered physical and emotional abuse at the hands of several of her partners. When Jesus was 11, he went to live with his father. During this time, Jesus began using drugs which his father forbade. When Jesus was 14, he returned to living with his mom who consumed substances with him and neglected him. Jesus shuffled between his parents' homes for a while, and entered substance use treatment for a few months. At 14, Jesus' family members found him a job with the mafia. Jesus was trafficked by the mafia to perform labor including serving as a look-out and helping people cross the U.S. border. Jesus believed that if he tried to leave the mafia, he would be severely beaten or killed. Since arriving in the U.S., Jesus was determined to be a victim of trafficking by the Administration of Children and Families- Office of Trafficking in Persons.

Jesus' most recent arrival to the U.S. was in October 2024. Prior to this, Jesus had multiple previous entries to the U.S. in which he sometimes provided false names or adult birth dates out of fear that he would be sent to jail or returned to Mexican child protective services custody.

Jesus is currently living with a foster family and attending high school in the **Bremerton** area. Jesus' immigration proceedings are active, and he is scheduled for a hearing in immigration court on June 5th, 2025. Jesus is eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and asylum and may also be eligible for a Trafficking (T) Visa. Jesus' pro bono attorney will need to support him in obtaining state dependency before his 18th birthday which should result in findings to support his SIJS application. Once Jesus obtains SIJS status, his pro bono attorney may be able to request termination of his proceedings before or during a future court hearing. Jesus' pro bono attorney will need to support Jesus with filing an asylum claim, as well as exploring Trafficking (T) Visa eligibility.

His pro bono attorney ideally will also monitor until Jesus' SIJS priority date becomes current and support him with his green card application.

Omar* is a 17-year old from Guatemala. He grew up in a house made of earth and concrete with his four siblings and parents, who were farmers. Every day after school he worked for two hours with his father in the fields. Seeking better opportunities for education, as well as safety from violence in his community, Omar used his savings to make the journey to the U.S. last year. He currently lives in **Tacoma** and is seeking a pro bono attorney to help him pursue Special Immigrant Juvenile Status in Pierce County. He may also need assistance filing an application for asylum.

SIBLING GROUP OF TWO: MARION & JAVIER

Marion* is a 19-year-old youth from Mexico who is pursuing asylum and a U-visa. Marion has a 22-year-old-brother, Javier, who is also seeking asylum. Since their asylum claims are related, KIND is seeking to place both cases with one attorney or firm. They reside in **Pasco**. Marion and Javier first fled Mexico to the United States at the age of nine and eleven, after their family was targeted on account of their work in industries controlled by the cartels of Michoacan. Their father was a rancher and raised livestock in Michoacan. Ranchers in the region, including Marion and Javier's father, were forced to pay quotas to the cartel in power at that time, the Knights Templar. After an escalating dispute between the cartel and the ranchers' association, the siblings' parents fled Mexico for the U.S., leaving Marion Javier with an uncle, who lived in a different region of Michoacan. That uncle worked in the timber industry, which was also controlled by the cartel. The cartel put a "hit" out on Marion's uncle due to his resistance to the cartel's timber quotas, prompting Marion's uncle to flee Mexico with Marion and Javier. They were apprehended while crossing the U.S./Mexico border. Marion and Javier were placed in government custody as unaccompanied children before being released to their father in Washington. They applied for asylum as unaccompanied children before the Asylum Office. In 2018, their cases were denied by the Asylum Office and referred to the Immigration Court for de novo review. Both asylum claims remain pending before the Immigration Court, but the cases are now in different procedural postures. In 2018, at the age of thirteen, Marion was sexually assaulted by her father's co-worker. The family reported the incident to the police and the incident was investigated, but the perpetrator had fled the state. In 2020, Marion ran away from home. Her family later learned she had returned to Mexico with an adult male. She reentered the U.S. alone in 2021 and was placed in ORR custody as an unaccompanied child before being released to her father. Marion has applied for a U-visa on account of the assault, and the application is currently pending adjudication. Marion's removal proceedings are active and she has a master calendar hearing schedule for 6/26/25. Marion needs representation in Immigration Court for her asylum claim and before USCIS in her U-visa matter.

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Javier* is a 22-year-old youth from Mexico who is pursuing asylum. Javier has a 19-year-old sister, Marion, who is also seeking asylum. Since their asylum claims are related, KIND is seeking to place both cases with one attorney or firm. They reside in **Pasco.** Marion and Javier first fled Mexico to the United States at the age of nine and eleven, after their family was targeted on account of their work in industries controlled by the cartels of Michoacan. Their father was a rancher and raised livestock in Michoacan. Ranchers in the region, including Marion and Javier's father, were forced to pay quotas to the cartel in power at that time, the Knights Templar. After an escalating dispute between the cartel and the ranchers' association, the siblings' parents fled Mexico for the U.S., leaving Marion Javier with an uncle, who lived in a different region of Michoacan. That uncle worked in the timber industry, which was also controlled by the cartel. The cartel put a "hit" out on Marion's uncle due to his resistance to the cartel's timber quotas, prompting Marion's uncle to flee Mexico with Marion and Javier. They were apprehended while crossing the U.S./Mexico border. Marion and Javier were placed in government custody as unaccompanied children before being released to their father in Washington. They applied for asylum as unaccompanied children before the Asylum Office. In 2018, their cases were denied by the Asylum Office and referred to the Immigration Court for de novo review. Both asylum claims remain pending before the Immigration Court, but the cases are now in different procedural postures. Javier's removal proceedings were administratively closed in 2016 when his asylum application was pending with the Asylum Office, and have remained administratively closed since that time. Javier will need representation in his asylum claim before the Immigration Court once the government seeks to recalendar proceedings, which it may seek to do at any time.

SIBLING GROUP OF THREE: MARTA, THEODORE & ANNIE

Marta* is a 22-year-old Spanish-speaker from Honduras. She and her two siblings came to the U.S. as young children, seeking protection from violent gang members who threatened to kill their family. She has since found safety and stability in the U.S. during the nearly ten years that she has lived in this country, and is the loving mother of two U.S. citizen children. Marta filed for asylum in 2018 and has an immigration court status docket hearing coming up in the fall of 2025. She needs a pro bono attorney to prepare for and attend immigration court with her, both for status docket hearings and a hearing on the merits of her asylum case once it is scheduled. She and her siblings Annie and Theodore filed related asylum applications and are scheduled for court at the same time. It would be ideal for one pro bono attorney or team to represent all three siblings. Marta and her siblings reside in **Tukwila**, WA.

Annie* is a 15-year-old Spanish-speaker from Honduras. She came to the U.S. with her two siblings when she was just seven years old, seeking protection from violent gang members who tried to kill their uncle while they were present, and later threatened to kill their whole family. Annie as the youngest was particularly traumatized by this experience, and still talks about hearing the gunshots that night. She filed for asylum in 2018 and has an immigration court status docket hearing coming up in the fall of 2025. She needs a pro bono attorney to prepare for and attend immigration court with her, both for status docket hearings and a hearing on the merits of her asylum case once it is scheduled. She and her siblings Marta and Theodore filed related asylum applications and are scheduled for court at the same time. It would be ideal for one pro bono attorney or team to represent all three siblings.

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Theodore* is a 17-year-old from Honduras. He and came to the U.S. with his older and younger sisters when he was nine years old, seeking protection from violent gang members who threatened to kill their family. He has found safety and stability here since that time, enjoying school—particularly his math classes. Theodore filed for asylum in 2018 and has an immigration court status docket hearing coming up in the fall of 2025. He needs a pro bono attorney to prepare for and attend immigration court with him, both for status docket hearings and a hearing on the merits of his asylum case once it is scheduled. He and his siblings Marta and Annie filed related asylum applications and are scheduled for court at the same time. It would be ideal for one pro bono attorney or team to represent all three siblings.

COMPLEX CASES

Erik* is a 24-year-old youth from Guatemala who migrated to the U.S. in 2016 at the age of 14. He currently resides in **Seattle**. Erik is a talented musician and loves playing the guitar and writing songs. Erik's family is indigenous Maya and from the Huehuetenango region. As a child beginning at age 7, Erik worked in the fields harvesting coffee and bananas alongside his father. Erik's father would beat Erik and withhold food if he fell behind at work. Erik also witnessed his father beat his mother. He was forced to stop attending school at age 14 in order to work, and regularly worked 12-hour days. Erik migrated alone to the U.S. in 2016. He was apprehended near the U.S./Mexico border, determined to be an unaccompanied child, and was placed in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) before being released to the care of an adult brother in Florida. Erik's brother was unable to financially support him, so Erik could not attend school. He worked long hours doing landscaping. At age 15 while in his brother's care, Erik was arrested and charged with a juvenile sex offense, resulting in a delinquency disposition for felony battery. He was placed juvenile custody in Florida and completed a therapeutic program. Upon his release from state juvenile custody, Erik was referred to immigration authorities and was placed back in ORR custody in Washington, where he completed an additional therapeutic program. Upon aging out of ORR care, Erik lived with a host family in the Seattle area. He graduated from high school and received an Associate's in Arts degree. He is currently working to enroll in university to complete his Bachelor's degree and he has a U.S. citizen daughter. In September, 2024, Erik's application for Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR) was erroneously granted by USCIS. At the time of the grant, USCIS did not properly have jurisdiction because Erik was still in removal proceedings that had been administratively closed. Erik's KIND attorney has filed a motion to terminate his removal proceedings nunc pro tunc, which would have the effect of validating the USCIS approval of his LPR status. Erik also has an asylum case pending before the Asylum Office, which he may choose with withdraw if his removal proceedings and LPR status are successfully resolved. In addition to his juvenile delinquency offense, Erik has had two other arrests; one for driving under the influence and the other for physical control of a vehicle while under the influence – both dispositions remain pending. Erik's criminal matters do not make him ineligible for LPR status or asylum but will be considered as a matter of discretion. Erik needs representation in is removal proceedings and his asylum case. At this time he has no upcoming scheduled hearings while the immigration judge considers the motion to terminate.

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Martin* is a 23-year-old youth from Guatemala who currently resides in **Seattle.** Martin is indigenous Maya Mam from a mountainous region of the Guatemalan department of San Marcos. He migrated to the U.S. alone in 2016 at the age of 15 after his father died and his mother abandoned Martin and his younger siblings. Martin attended school until his father's death in 2014. After his father died, Martin stopped attending school in order to work and support his mother and siblings. That same year, his mother abandoned the family, leaving Martin alone with his siblings. Martin travelled to bigger towns to beg in the street or tell jokes for money. In 2016, he left his younger siblings in the care of his aunt and migrated alone to the U.S. in search of safety and a way to support his siblings. Martin fears returning to Guatemala due to the risk of forced conscription by his village leaders to fight for water rights. He turned himself in to border officials, was determined to be an unaccompanied child, and was placed in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) before being released to his Aunt in Tennessee. In 2018, Martin was referred back to immigration authorities and placed in ORR custody after he pled guilty to a juvenile sex offense involving another child in his Aunt's home. The circumstances surrounding Martin's plea are complex and raise compelling issues that call into question his culpability and raise due process that will continue to factor into the case strategy. Because the plea only resulted in delinquency disposition it does not make him ineligible for relief, but will be considered in his case as matter of discretion. After his release from juvenile custody in Tennessee, Martin was placed by ORR in Washington, where he completed a therapeutic program. KIND began to represent him in his immigration case. It was discovered that Martin had received an absentia removal order in 2017 after receiving ineffective assistance of counsel by an immigration lawyer hired by his Aunt to represent him. His proceedings reopened and the removal order was rescinded by KIND in 2019. Martin applied for and was granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status in 2019 and also filed an application for asylum as an unaccompanied child, which remains pending before the Asylum Office. Martin's application for adjustment of status has been filed with the Immigration Court, but his priority date has since retrogressed and is no longer current. He will need to apply to adjust status at a merits hearing with the Immigration Judge. Martin seeks representation in his removal proceedings to pursue adjustment of status and for his pending asylum claim before the Asylum Office. Martin has many positive equities and has been living and working in the community for several years. In addition to his juvenile delinquency adjudication, he has a reckless driving offense from 2023.

Cristian* is a 24-year-old Spanish speaker from San Salvador, El Salvador who resides in **Lakewood.** In El Salvador, Cristian lived with his mother, stepfather, and step siblings. His biological father left him at the age of five to seek asylum in the United States. In Cristian's city, gang members defend their territory very harshly. Cristian was often in gang territory while visiting relatives, attending school, running errands, and many other activities that involved leaving his immediate residential zone. Because of this, Cristian was a target for gang harassment. Cristian finally decided to flee to the U.S. when he was attacked at school by a group of gang-involved classmates that severely beat him up, kicking him in the face until he bled. They told him that if he came back to the territory where the school was located, he would be "finished." Wanting to still pursue an education and keep himself safe, Cristian decided to flee. Cristian traveled to the U.S. in 2016 when he was 16 years old. Cristian is a very gentle, cooperative, and warm young man who communicates well in English.

He is married to a U.S. citizen, and they have two U.S. citizen children. When Cristian was younger and dealing with the effects of trauma and rejection by his father, he turned to drugs and alcohol and incurred some related convictions including a Marijuana possession conviction that was since vacated. Today, he is doing well and is committed to supporting himself and his family. He has a work permit, and he is anxious to resolve his asylum case, his only form of potential immigration status. He and his wife have discussed the possibility of a family petition for Cristian, but they do not want to be separated for consular processing while their children are young. Cristian's asylum case was completely worked up for an Individual Hearing at Immigration Court, including briefing and declarations, but then DHS agreed to dismiss his removal proceedings prior to the hearing. Cristian needs an attorney to take over the case, update his asylum brief and filings to supplement his asylum application that is currently pending at USCIS, and seek an interview with the USCIS Asylum Office.

Julio* is a 25-year-old Spanish-speaker from Honduras. He came to the U.S. alone when he was 15 years old. Both of his parents were addicted to drugs and his dad disappeared when he was very young. Julio's mother and grandfather abused him physically. His grandmother was the only person who ever cared for him and provided him support. However, she was not able to provide for his basic needs due to her own limited means. When Julio was about 8 years old, he started selling fruit on the streets in order to help support his family, and when he was 9 years old he began living on his own on the streets. He lived and worked on the street for the next five or so years, until he began his attempts to enter the U.S. Julio currently lives in a permanent supportive housing program for adults in Seattle. After a few years of attending high school and seeking employment in Seattle, Julio's mental health began to decline which led to significant destabilization. While Julio is presently housed and engages in a consistent routine, he suffers from schizophrenia and is challenged in daily independent life skills such as caring for his personal hygiene, procuring and preparing food, and accessing services. Julio has been approved for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) but needs to wait until a visa becomes available before he can file for adjustment of status to get his green card. Julio has expressed an unwillingness to participate in review of his I-485 filing but has expressed willingness for a trusted third party to do this for him. His attorney may need to work with him to elect a third party as power of attorney for this purpose. Julio's removal proceedings are terminated. Julio also filed an asylum application in 2017 and may be scheduled for an asylum interview with USCIS at any time. At that point he will need help preparing a supplemental asylum filing and for someone to accompany him to that interview. Julio has also had some involvement with the criminal legal system. While the convictions should not make him automatically ineligible for asylum (or a green card based on SIJS), Julio's attorney will need to work with him to demonstrate strong evidence of his positive equities, and to present arguments to immigration officials regarding why Julio's convictions should not disqualify him from obtaining lawful immigration status and the safety and stability that he would so deeply benefit from after his early experiences of trauma. Julio would benefit from working with an attorney who can meet with him in the community at a youth drop-in program.

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Gustavo* is a 25-year-oldyear-old young man from El Salvador. Gustavo grew up in an abusive home, where he was regularly beaten by his father when he was drunk. He also witnessed domestic violence towards his mother. His mother later fled with Gustavo to his maternal grandmother's home. His father later abandoned Gustavo and has had no contact ever since. Additionally, Gustavo experienced targeted threats of gang violence in El Salvador as he lived and worked in rival gang territories. Gustavo traveled to the U.S. when he was 16 years old. Presently, Gustavo is living in the **Seatac** area with his mom who also migrated to the U.S. some years before him. Gustavo was recently evicted from his apartment after he had to stop working due to participation in an electronic home monitoring program. In the past, Gustavo has worked in construction. Gustavo has approved Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), and although his priority date was current as of the October 2023 visa bulletin, it is no longer current as of April 2025 due to unavailability of category. Gustavo worked with a PBA attorney in the past who likely filed an asylum claim with the immigration court, but not USCIS. Gustavo's proceedings have since been dismissed and he does not have an asylum filing pending at this time. Gustavo has had some involvement with the criminal legal system, including some matters that remain ongoing. Gustavo's pro bono attorney will need to evaluate potential re-filing of his asylum claim, considering Gustavo's ongoing criminal matters. Gustavo's pro bono attorney will also need to monitor the visa bulletin for visas to become available again, and file for Gustavo's green card, depending on the posture of his criminal case involvement.

TIME SENSITIVE: ASYLUM INTERVIEWS SCHEDULED IN MAY/JUNE 2025

KIND will prepare supplemental submission and submit a request to reschedule the interviews. KIND is seeking pro bono attorneys to attend the interview once re-scheduled and continue representation following a decision from the asylum office.

Francesca* is a 14-year-old youth from Venezuela whose primary language is Spanish. Francesca was raised by her mother and never knew her father, who abandoned the family when she was a baby. Francesca's mother is a Guyanese citizen, and they moved frequently between Guyana, Venezuela, and Colombia throughout Francesca's childhood. Francesca never attended school because she needed to work alongside her siblings in order to cover their basic needs. When she was 11-years-old, Francesca was the victim of sexual assault by her friend's adult brother. In 2023, Francesca migrated to the U.S. together with her sister, and she was separated from her sister when they were apprehended by immigration officials. Francesca was determined to be an unaccompanied child and placed in the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement(ORR). She remains in federally-funded foster care in the **Seattle** area. Francesca was granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and SIJS Deferred Action, and will eventually become eligible to apply for Lawful Permanent Residence. She was previously in removal proceedings which were terminated on account of her approved SIJS. Francesca has applied for asylum before US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and has been scheduled for an interview with an asylum officer on 5/6/25. She needs pro bono representation in her asylum case and application for permanent residence once eligible.

KIDS IN NEED OF DEFENSE

Updated April 28, 2025

Henry* is a 16-year-old youth from El Salvador. Henry migrated alone to the United States in 2024. Henry's brother was falsely accused of being a gang member, arrested and imprisoned without a trial in El Salvador, where he remains incarcerated. Henry is fearful that he will be targeted and falsely accused of gang involvement like his brother. He is also fearful of recruitment by gang members, as his peers are frequently targeted for forcible recruitment by gangs in his region. Henry is one of 13 children in his family. He worked in agriculture from a young age together with his family members. He filed his asylum application with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and was recently scheduled for an asylum interview with a USCIS asylum officer on 5/9/25. Henry is in need of time-sensitive pro bono representation in his asylum case before USCIS. Additionally, Henry would like to pursue Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and needs pro bono counsel to help him file a dependency petition in King County, and apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for SIJS. Henry is in a long term foster care program through the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the **Renton, WA** area. His removal proceedings are terminated.

Kevin* is a 16-year-old youth from El Salvador who migrated alone to the United States in 2023. Kevin's mother died from illness in 2020 when Kevin was just 11 years old. Prior to his mother's death, Kevin's father was physically abusive towards his mother. While still alive, Kevin's mother worked to provide for Kevin's basic needs and protect him from his father. But after his mother's death, Kevin's father kicked him out of the home and stopped providing care or support. Kevin thereafter lived on the streets and with informal caregivers. He began working in construction, hauling blocks and laminate sheets, and doing odd jobs for people in exchange for food. Kevin's town had a powerful presence of the MS-13 gang. MS-13 controlled movement of people throughout different neighborhoods and often engaged in shoot-outs with local police. MS-13 members sought to recruit Kevin. In one encounter, he was beaten in the head by a gang member when he refused the gang member's demand to help the gang. MS-13 members then came to the home of the family he was living with and demanded at gunpoint to take over the house. Kevin fled El Salvador together with the family he was living with. He migrated for several months and attempted to enter the U.S. in search of safety in December of 2023. He was apprehended by immigration officials, determined to be an unaccompanied child, and was placed in removal proceedings. Kevin is seeking both Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and asylum. He is the subject of pending dependency proceedings in King County dependency court. He filed his asylum application with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and has been scheduled for an asylum interview with a USCIS asylum officer on 5/9/25. His removal proceedings are terminated and he is located in the **Renton**, WA area.

Ben* spent his early years living with his mother and siblings in the mountains in Guatemala, and is a part of the Queqchi indigenous community. Ben enjoyed attending school and was able to complete seventh grade, while also helping his mom prepare food for their household and take care of his five siblings. When he was 14, Ben decided to come to the U.S. seeking opportunities to continue his education and provide for his family, as well as to be reunited with his father. While traveling through Mexico, Ben was kidnapped and held for ransom. His mother's only option was to borrow money from a local mafia group in order to free Ben, and now his family is being threatened with violence if they can't repay the money. Ben is afraid he will be harmed or killed if he returns to Guatemala. Ben was not permitted to reunite with his father, so he currently lives in long-term foster

care in Tacoma, where he attends high school. He previously submitted an application for asylum, and has been scheduled for an asylum interview on May 7, 2025. Ben needs a pro bono attorney to help him prepare for and attend that interview with him. He may also need counsel to explore a possible supplemental asylum claim based on his membership in an indigenous racial/ethnic group. Additionally, Ben would like to pursue Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and needs pro bono counsel to help him file a dependency in Pierce County, and apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for SIJS. His removal proceedings are terminated. Ben is located in the **Tacoma** area.

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING A PRO BONO CASE!