

How to Identify Youth

It is important to recognize signs that a foreign born child is not in an appropriate living situation and could be considered for the URM foster care program.

The following are some scenarios that may trigger consideration for the URM program.

Unaccompanied children who:

- ◇ are living with an adult who is not a legal guardian and who are experiencing abuse, neglect or may be in danger of abandonment by their caretaker.
- ◇ have been abandoned due to death or family breakdown.
- ◇ have run away or who “couch surf” from one friend or family member to another because the family or friend is unable to care for the child.
- ◇ have caregivers who are not much older than the minor.
- ◇ are exploited for labor in the home.

Determining if a child is eligible for long term foster care is a complex process. Please contact the voluntary agency on the back panel for assistance with this decision.

The URM programs are funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

How Can a Child Become Eligible?

A child who is not identified as eligible for the URM program abroad, must be reclassified once she or he arrives in the United States. Reclassification is an administrative process carried out by the federal government. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) makes the eligibility determination.

Determining if a child is eligible for long term foster care is a complex process. Please contact the national voluntary agency listed below for assistance with the following steps :

- ◇ Assessing eligibility.
- ◇ Assessing appropriateness of a URM placement versus local options. There are roughly 20 URM programs nationwide, and it is necessary to determine whether movement to a new community is in the child's best interest.
- ◇ Identifying and working with the local URM program to gather information and supporting documents necessary to prepare formal request.
- ◇ Tracking status of a request through state and federal government processes.

How Can We Help?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) have extensive experience working with foreign born populations. This experience includes coordinating the placement of children in URM programs.

Please contact USCCB or LIRS for assistance in helping foreign-born children, or for further questions.

USCCB - Migration and Refugee Services
Children's Services: 202-541-5409 / 541-3449
email: migratingchildren@usccb.org
<http://www.usccb.org/mrs.cshome>

Children's Services - LIRS
Phone: 410-230-2757
<http://www.lirs.org>



Do you work with a foreign born child?

Does the child need a safe and stable living environment?

The Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Foster Care Program may be able to help.

What are URM Programs?

Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) programs enable some foreign born children to access long term foster care. The program provides the child a family-like living environment in the community, with access to sports, recreation and school. Children are placed in licensed homes to ensure they have their needs met in a safe, stable and caring environment. While they must enter before age 18, a child may remain in the URM program until emancipation, which ranges from ages 20 to 23, depending on state regulations.

What Services are Provided?

When a child is part of the URM program, many services become available to her or him. These comprehensive services allow the child to develop and provide support in reaching self-sufficiency. Some of the services include:

- ◇ Placement in a living arrangement that addresses the individual's needs. While most children are placed in foster homes, some may be more appropriately placed in group homes or independent living.

- ◇ Medical and mental health benefits.
- ◇ Case management by a professional who has experience working with foreign born children. Often, the staff are bilingual and bicultural.
- ◇ Educational opportunities including support with school, English as a second language, life skills, job skills training, and/or assistance preparing for college.
- ◇ Cultural, religious, and recreational opportunities to help maintain a connection with the child's ethnic community and culture.



Please visit the following websites for more information on foreign born children and programs that serve them.

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/urm.htm>

<http://www.lirs.org>

<http://www.brycs.org>

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs.cshome>

Who is Eligible?

Foster care services, through the URM Program, are available for foreign born children who fall into the categories listed below.

These services are only available to children who do not have a legal guardian in the United States.

REFUGEE – Refugees in the United States are people who have received legal status as a refugee from the United States prior to resettling in this country.

ASYLEE – An individual who has been granted asylum through the United States immigration system.

CUBAN/HAITIAN ENTRANT - An individual granted parole status or granted any other special status subsequently established under the immigration laws for nationals of Cuba or Haiti, regardless of the status of the individuals at the time assistance is provided.

VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING - A person who has been subject to commercial sexual exploitation, domestic servitude or forced labor. Trafficking victims must be determined eligible for federal benefits by the Department of Health and Human Services.

For more detailed definitions, please access the following website:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/eligib.htm>