

CAYUGA CENTERS UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM AT CORSICANA

What is Cayuga Centers?

Cayuga Centers' mission is to help children, families, and individuals to grow as independent, healthy productive citizens through quality counseling, residential and support services. We do this in partnership with those we serve as well as government agencies and other service providers.

Since 1852 we have heard and supported children, families, and individuals who have stumbled and need help taking the next step. We began as an orphanage, providing a home for children when their family members could not. We have evolved. We are a nationally recognized leader in research-informed treatment programs for youth and their families. We have developed family therapy and resiliency programs. We work with children and adults who have developmental disabilities. We support families and individuals experiencing mental health issues. We help infants who need early intervention in order to thrive. We are Cayuga Centers.

We aspire to be the best in what we do: bringing quality interventions and supports to those we serve - to improve their lives in measurable ways. As we strive to do this, we keep these competencies as the foundation for our work:

- We Demonstrate Team Work & Partnership
- We Deliver Results while Embracing Excellence and Efficiency
- We Lead with a Strong Belief in the Values We Hold at Cayuga Centers
- We Act and Lead with Human Sensitivity and Respect
- We Embrace Change, Innovation, and Opportunities

Cayuga Centers provides services in five key areas:

- Residential Treatment Center (Auburn, NY)
- Treatment Family Foster Care (Central NY, New York City, Palm Beach, FL, State of Delaware)
- Community Based Interventions (across Central and Upstate NY)
- Services for People with Developmental Disabilities (across Central and Upstate NY)
- Services for Unaccompanied Children (via foster care in New York City)

With the exception of our services for Unaccompanied Children, all other services are domestic services provided to U.S. cities, counties and states for their own citizens.

Who are the Unaccompanied Children?

They are children whose ages range from 0-17 who are from Honduras, El Salvador or Guatemala and who cross the border and enter the United States without a parent or guardian. For all practical purposes, they are here without any adult guidance or protection.

Before these children are placed in facilities like the one we hope to establish in Navarro County, the federal government will confirm their nationality. Before they arrive in Navarro County they will have also received initial health screenings so that any medical issues are identified before a child arrives. Quarantine protocols are in place for children who may have communicable diseases or who are unvaccinated. This is done to protect other children who are at the facility, facility workers, and the communities where the facilities are located. The average length of stay in the facility for each youth is approximately 35 days.

Since 2014, Cayuga Centers has never received a child not from Central or South America. Children from Mexico and Canada are immediately returned to their home countries, as they are from a contiguous country and therefore not eligible for rights as an Unaccompanied Child.

Why are children and families leaving their home countries?

Researchers consistently cite increased violence in this area of Central America as the primary motivation for recent migration, while identifying additional causes including poverty and family reunification. Several reports show:

- The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), citing 2012 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) data, highlighted that Honduras had a homicide rate of 90.4 per 100,000 people. El Salvador and Guatemala had homicide rates of 41.2 and 39.9, respectively (by comparison, the United States is 3.9 per 100,000 people).
- A 2014 analysis conducted by Tom Wong, a University of California-San Diego political science professor, compared the UNDOC data with data on unaccompanied children provided by CBP. Wong found a positive relationship between violence and the flow of children: "meaning that higher rates of homicide in countries such as Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala are related to greater numbers of children fleeing to the United States."
- Children from the Northern Triangle consistently cite gang or cartel violence as a primary motivation for fleeing.
- Research conducted in El Salvador on child migrants who were returned from Mexico found that 60 percent listed crime, gang threats, and insecurity as a reason for leaving.
- In a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) survey of 404 unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, 48 percent of the children "shared experiences of how they had been personally affected by the...violence in the region by organized armed criminal actors, including drug cartels and gangs or by State actors."

- Violence frequently targets youth. Recruitment for gangs begins in adolescence—or younger—and there are incidents of youth being beaten by police who suspected them of gang membership.

What are the United States' legal obligations?

The United States has entered into treaties with other countries to ensure the protection and safe passage of Unaccompanied Children. The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol provide:

- The United States may not return an individual to a country where he or she faces government persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

A separate treaty, known as the Convention Against Torture, prohibits the return of people to a country where there are substantial grounds to believe they may be tortured.

These treaties, plus other federal legislation, court decisions and consent decrees form the basis for the United States' obligations to Unaccompanied Children. Whether a specific child is entitled to asylum, or should be deported to the child's home country can be a complicated question to answer. But the resolution of these issues will not occur in Corsicana. These issues will be resolved in a court of law long after the child leaves Corsicana.

How would the presence of this facility affect our community?

The negative impacts on the local communities are minimal. Shelters are operated by non-profit organizations like Cayuga Centers, not the federal government. These shelters are consistently quiet and good neighbors in the communities where they are located. The positive impacts on the local communities are significant, as will be explained in more detail below.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement pays Cayuga Centers, who then provides all services for the children while they are in care at a shelter. This includes providing food, clothing, education, medical screening, and any needed medical care to the children. The facility will have physicians and physicians assistants on staff to provide routine treatment. Children spend approximately 35 days on average at the shelters and do not integrate into the local community. They remain under staff supervision at all times. The vast majority of the children will never leave the facility until they are transferred to their sponsor. If a child has to leave the facility, for medical treatment for example, they will be accompanied by staff at all times.

In operating a program for over two years serving these same children in a foster care setting, Cayuga Centers has never had a runaway or any type of police involvement with a child in care.

Will Corsicana be safe with these kids in it?

Yes. Many of these children are fleeing violent situations in their home country and choose to leave rather than join a gang or suffer ongoing violence and possibly death. They endure a long and dangerous journey to reach the border. When they are placed in a standard shelter, they are, as a rule, relieved to be in a safe and caring environment where they can wait for a sponsor to arrive to take custody.

These children do not have criminal backgrounds. These children do not integrate into or typically even enter the local community. They are not permitted to visit the local town or area attractions. Those few children who will leave the facility will do so because they need specialized medical care and treatment. And when they do, they will be accompanied by a staff member at all times. Each staff member is required to maintain visibility on children at all times and know the exact location of each child under their supervision.

Do these children pose a health risk?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes that most of the children arriving at U.S. borders pose little risk of spreading infectious diseases to the general public.

Countries in Central America, where most of the unaccompanied children are from (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras), have childhood vaccination programs, and most children have received some childhood vaccines. However, they may not have received a few vaccines, such as chickenpox, influenza, and pneumococcal vaccines. As a precaution, ORR is providing vaccinations to all children who do not have documentation of previous valid doses of vaccine. And, as mentioned above, they will undergo quarantine protocols before being released within the facility.

Children receive an initial screening for visible and obvious health issues (for example, lice, rashes, diarrhea, and cough) when they first arrive at Customs and Border Protection facilities. Onsite medical staff are available at Border Patrol facilities to provide support, and referrals are made to a local emergency room for additional care, if needed. Children must be considered "fit to travel" before they are moved from the border patrol station to an ORR shelter like the one we hope to establish in Navarro County.

Upon arrival, the children receive additional, more thorough medical screening and vaccinations, if necessary. If children are found to have certain communicable diseases, they are separated from other children and treated as needed. The cost of medical care for the children while they are in the facility is paid by the federal government. The facility will have a full health staff and provide almost all medical care. The cost of any medical care provided by Navarro County health care providers is also paid for by the federal government.

Are children who arrived as unaccompanied children ever enrolled in local schools?

No. While students are in our custody or shelters, they will not be enrolled in the local school systems. They are typically not in our facility long enough to be educated. When students are released to an appropriate sponsor, while awaiting immigration proceedings, they will enroll in local schools where their sponsors are located. We

anticipate at this time that the vast majority (90%) of the children who pass through our facility in Corsicana will reside with sponsors in states other than Texas.

What is the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA)?

The original Trafficking Victims Protection Act was signed into law in 2000 to address human trafficking concerns. It was subsequently reauthorized during both the Bush and Obama Administrations in 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2013.

The TVPRA of 2008, signed by President Bush, directed the development of procedures to ensure that if unaccompanied children are deported, they are safely repatriated. At the outset, unaccompanied children must be screened as potential victims of human trafficking. However, as described further below, procedural protections for children are different for children from contiguous countries (i.e., Mexico and Canada) and non-contiguous countries (all others). While children from non-contiguous countries are transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for trafficking screening, and placed into formal immigration court removal proceedings, Mexican and Canadian children are screened by the Border Patrol for trafficking and, if no signs of trafficking or fear of persecution are reported, may be summarily returned home pursuant to negotiated repatriation agreements.

What happens to unaccompanied children once they are in U.S. custody?

The majority of unaccompanied children encountered at the border are apprehended, processed, and initially detained by the Border Patrol. Unlike adults or families, though, unaccompanied children cannot be placed into expedited removal proceedings. Children from non-contiguous countries, such as El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras, are placed in standard removal proceedings in immigration court. The Border Patrol must transfer custody of these children to Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), within 72 hours, as described below. It is then that these children may be transferred to Navarro County for further processing and assignment to a sponsor.

This differs from how children from a contiguous country—Mexico or Canada—are treated. Children from contiguous countries are screened by a Border Patrol officer to determine if he or she is unable to make independent decisions, is a victim of trafficking, or fears persecution in his home country. If none of these conditions apply, the Border Patrol will immediately send the child back to Mexico or Canada through a process called “voluntary return.” This is carried out pursuant to agreements with Mexico and Canada that govern the return process.

Can unaccompanied children be released from custody?

No, they will not be released from our facility in Corsicana until they are placed with their sponsor, most of whom will be family members located in states other than Texas. The ORR seeks to reunify children with family members or release them to other individual or organizational sponsors whenever possible, on the grounds that children’s best interests are served by living in a family setting. The sponsor must agree to ensure that the child attends immigration court. Cayuga Centers must run required background checks and fingerprints on each sponsor, as determined by their familial connection and as required by the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Less than 10% of youth remain in the state where the program operates, in this case Texas.

As of May 2014, ORR reported that the average length of stay in its facilities was approximately 35 days and that about 85 percent of the children served are released to their sponsors while their deportation proceedings are in progress.

How can you ensure that you won't take Syrian or Middle Eastern children?

Navarro County will have a provision in its lease limiting the children placed in the Corsicana facility to children from Central and South America. In addition, this facility will be staffed with English/Spanish bilingual employees, and would not be able to provide services to children from non-Spanish speaking countries. In the two years Cayuga Centers has provided services to ORR, it never been asked to take a child from Syrian or any Middle Eastern Country. Nearly 100% of those served have been from Central America—2 children have come from South America.

How did Cayuga Centers learn about the Corsicana facility and why do you want to use that facility?

Although Cayuga Centers feels strongly that Unaccompanied Children are best served in foster care settings, we have been seeking a residential facility to provide for a larger program as there has been demonstrated in a larger facility. We were recently looking at potential facilities in other states when we learned of the Corsicana facility through a professional contact in Texas. As soon as we heard about the facility, we approached the leaders of Navarro County to learn more and begin discussions. Although we were met with a warm welcome, local officials have also asked many questions as part of their due diligence in understanding and considering the project.

The facility is attractive to Cayuga for a number of reasons. First, the facility can accommodate the number of children we anticipate serving and it also began as an orphanage. Cayuga Centers began as an orphanage in 1852, and we feel a strong connection with the Corsicana facility, which also began as an orphanage. Second, Corsicana is located within an hour of 2 major airports, which are needed to transport the children. Third, we will need to recruit a work force that, in part, speaks Spanish. It is easier to do that in Corsicana than in West Virginia, or other potential locations for this project.

Can we have more time to consider this project?

The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement requires all proposals to be submitted by August 1st, 2016. Unfortunately, Cayuga Centers has no authority to request a change of submission date on federal grant applications. So we will need an indication from local government before August 1 that it is willing to lease Cayuga Centers the property.

Can the federal government take over the facility?

No. The lease agreement is between Navarro County and Cayuga Centers and they are, therefore, the only entities that would have legal authority to the property. Although the program is federally funded, the government cannot and will not have the ability to take over the property.

What this project offers to Corsicana and Navarro County.

1. This will not cost the County or City anything. Cayuga Centers is not looking for local contributions or abatements of any kind or character.
2. Cayuga Centers will fund 100% of renovations to make the facility inhabitable in accordance with ORR guidelines. At this time, we estimate that capital investment will be between \$5-\$10 million. We have engaged a local contractor to help us obtain more exact numbers. When the lease ends, these permanent improvements will be turned over to the County or City at no cost.
3. Cayuga Centers will employ approximately 1,100 people when the facility is fully staffed and operating. The salaries for these jobs range from a minimum of \$35,000 for some jobs to in excess of \$100,000 for others. Some of the jobs will be available to people with GEDs and some jobs will require Master's Degrees. Although many staff will be required to be English / Spanish bilingual, there will also be jobs for English only speakers. We estimate the yearly payroll, when fully staffed, to be in excess of \$47,000,000.00, excluding benefits.
4. Cayuga Centers has agreed to use local vendors and suppliers whenever possible, so long as the prices for local goods and services are competitive with prices from other vendors. When fully operational, we anticipate that we will house 800 children at a time. Those children will need clothing, food and all the basic supplies necessary to live in a safe and sanitary environment. We will need office equipment, computers, household supplies, personal hygiene supplies, gas and oil for the vehicles, other furniture and equipment, recreational materials, maintenance and repair supplies, kitchen supplies and equipment and wide variety of other materials and services. We will need vehicles to transport the children, which we will purchase locally if they are available and competitively priced.
5. As mentioned above, Cayuga is open to establishing relationships with CISD, Navarro College and Navarro Hospital if they believe it would be beneficial. It will be up to them to investigate and decide if working with Cayuga would be helpful to them.

SUMMARY—None of the children will be released to the local population. The impact on the local economy will be significant—1100 jobs and the salaries for those jobs will greatly benefit the community. And the money spent using local vendors whenever possible will also stimulate the economy. Finally, the initial capital investment will be something that benefits this facility long after the lease expires. This project is going to go somewhere. It may be West Virginia, or some other state, but we would prefer it be in Corsicana.

How will local vendors / contractors be able to bid on supplying goods and services?

Cayuga Centers will solicit quotes from multiple vendors, where available, for goods and services. Should Cayuga Centers be awarded the federal funding to run the project, we will be compiling a list of those vendors. Where available and cost competitive, Cayuga Centers will do business with local vendors.