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DATA BRIEF

September 2026 | OEI-07-24-00370

In 2024, ORR's National Call Center Connected Children with Supports and Services



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Why OIG Did This Review

In fiscal years 2023 and 2024, approximately 213,000 unaccompanied alien children were released from [ORR's](#) care to sponsors in the United States. ORR's National Call Center (call center) is a helpline available for children and sponsors that provides assistance with safety concerns and access to resources.

What OIG Found



Child Safety Reports: OIG reviewed all potential child safety concerns reported to the call center between January 1, 2024, and June 30, 2024. We found:

- The call center received nearly **2,000 reports** of potential child safety concerns, representing approximately **1,800 released children**.



Response: We reviewed the call center's actions to respond to and follow up on reported safety concerns regarding children running away or experiencing abuse/neglect, or trafficking concerns, for a sample of cases. Call center responses may vary on the basis of the needs of the child and/or sponsor. We found that the call center:

- Made efforts to contact children in **70%** of cases and reached children in **61%** of those cases; the call center indicated that it lacked children's contact information for most cases in which it did not attempt contact.
- Conducted risk assessments in **80%** of cases in which the call center spoke with children.
- Made referrals (e.g., to law enforcement) for investigation or support in **82%** of cases.
- Offered information on resources and community services in **30%** of cases.



Follow-up Calls: Although follow-up was not required during the review period, the call center may conduct a follow-up call to determine whether any additional actions are needed. The call center conducted follow-up in **42%** of cases.

What OIG Concludes

The call center took a variety of actions to connect children with potential safety concerns to resources, most commonly through referrals to law enforcement and other entities. We encourage ORR to use these findings to support its efforts to improve children's post-release safety.

Office of Refugee Resettlement's National Call Center

The Office of Refugee Resettlement. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) provides care to children who arrive at the border unaccompanied until they can be released to parents, family members, or other adults (referred to as sponsors) within the United States.^{1, 2} After children's release from care, ORR conducts follow-up with children to help support their safety.³

The National Call Center. ORR's National Call Center is a helpline that provides a range of assistance to children released from ORR care (also referred to as released children), their parents, or sponsors in need of support.⁴ Released children may contact the helpline if they feel unsafe or need assistance with court processes, and sponsors may contact the helpline to request community resources or to report family problems. Other individuals may also contact the helpline on behalf of released children or sponsors. The call center's services are provided by a contractor.



The National Call Center is responsible for taking actions to address callers' inquiries or concerns. Assistance from the call center is tailored to the needs of the caller and may include:

- connecting released children and their sponsors with local resources (e.g., educational support, legal services, or medical care);
- developing a child safety plan;⁵
- reporting safety concerns to ORR, local law enforcement, child protective services, and/or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; or
- referring victims of human trafficking to the Office on Trafficking in Persons.⁶



Although it was not required during our review, the call center may conduct a follow-up call to determine if any further actions are needed.⁷

The contractor that was operating the call center during our review period, January 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024, was replaced with a new contractor on December 15, 2025.

Methodology

We reviewed all potential child safety concerns reported to the National Call Center between January 1, 2024, and June 30, 2024, regarding released children.⁸ We selected a random sample of 250 reports made during our review period that indicated potential safety concerns regarding released children running away or experiencing abuse/neglect or trafficking concerns (cases). For these sampled cases, we reviewed the actions the call center took in response to the reported concerns and any follow-up. The statements presented in this report apply to all cases within our scope.

This evaluation did not assess the appropriateness of actions taken by the call center to respond to sampled cases.

FINDINGS

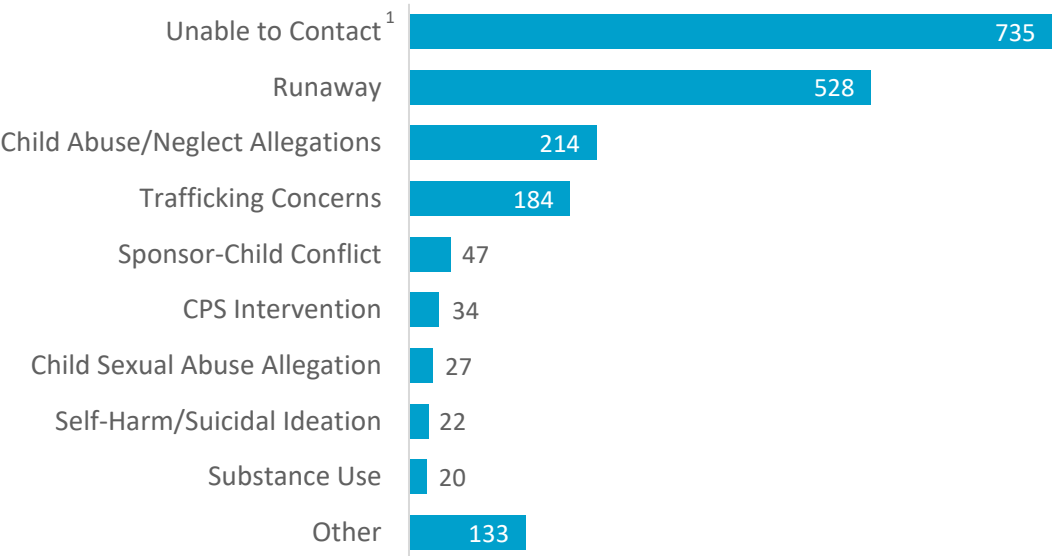
PART 1: Review of Child Safety Reports

We reviewed all potential child safety concerns reported to a former contractor for the National Call Center during the first 6 months of 2024.⁹ The majority of children referenced in these reports were released to sponsors in 2023 or 2024. Overall, approximately 213,000 children were released from ORR’s care in fiscal years 2023 and 2024.^{10, 11, 12}

The National Call Center received nearly 2,000 reports of potential child safety concerns over 6 months in 2024

Between January 1, 2024, and June 30, 2024, the National Call Center received 1,944 unique reports indicating potential child safety concerns after children were released from ORR’s care.¹³ These safety concerns represented approximately 1,800 released children. The most common safety concern reported to the call center was ORR representatives being unable to make contact with children during post-release follow-up.¹⁴ The next most frequent concern related to children running away.

Exhibit 1. Safety concerns reported to the National Call Center after children were released from ORR care (n=1,944)



Source: OIG review of ORR National Call Center data, January–June 2024. CPS=Child Protective Services.

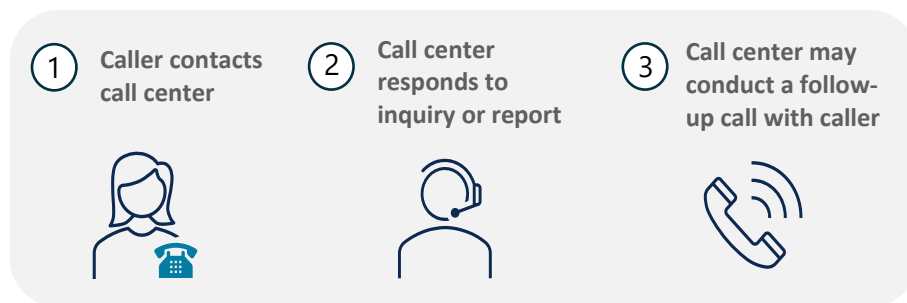
¹ OIG reviewed reports in this category and found that it includes instances in which ORR representatives were unable to successfully contact children during Safety and Well-Being Follow Up Calls and other post-release follow-up activities conducted by ORR representatives.

PART 2: Review of Response and Follow-up Calls for Select Safety Concerns

We reviewed a random sample of 250 reports made to a former contractor for the National Call Center during the first 6 months of 2024 which indicated three types of potential safety concerns for released children—running away, experiencing abuse/neglect, or experiencing trafficking. We reviewed the steps the call center took to respond to each reported concern, including the call center’s initial response to the call and any follow-up calls to determine whether the concern was resolved.

The call center responses may vary on the basis of the needs of the child and/or sponsor. Although it was not required during our review, the call center may conduct a follow-up call to assess whether additional actions would help address the callers’ concerns.

Exhibit 2. Overview of National Call Center actions



Source: OIG review of ORR National Call Center actions.

The National Call Center made efforts to contact children in 70 percent of cases and reached children in 61 percent of these cases

The National Call Center attempted to contact children in 70 percent of cases in which the initial caller was not the released child;¹⁵ the call center succeeded in reaching children in 61 percent of these cases. This contact serves as an important opportunity to learn about children’s experiences and connect children with needed resources.

In more than half of the cases in which the National Call Center did not attempt to contact children (62 percent), the call center noted that it lacked contact information for those children.¹⁶ For example, the call center described cases in which children had run away and did not have cell phones. For the other cases (38 percent), the call center did not provide a reason why it did not attempt to contact the children.^{17, 18}

The National Call Center frequently conducted safety screenings when it spoke to children

In cases in which the National Call Center spoke with children, it frequently conducted screenings to assess children's safety.¹⁹ These actions are conducted on a case-by-case basis according to the needs of the child.



Risk Assessments. In 80 percent of cases in which the call center spoke with children, it conducted risk assessments. These assessments identified potential safety concerns and determined children's access to necessities such as housing and a reliable caretaker.



Trafficking Screenings. In 50 percent of cases in which the call center spoke with children, it conducted trafficking screenings. These screenings identified children experiencing trafficking risk factors and children in need of trafficking-related support or services.



Safety Plans. In 30 percent of cases in which the call center spoke with children, it provided children with personal safety plans which included resources and information to address reported concerns.

Connecting with children provides the call center an important opportunity to assess children's needs. However, the call center is able to take actions (e.g., report cases to law enforcement) and connect callers with resources in cases in which the call center does not reach children directly.

The National Call Center referred 82 percent of cases to various entities for additional investigation or support

For 82 percent of cases, the National Call Center made referrals to at least one other entity. Referrals are made on the basis of the nature of the case; the call center is required to make reports to child protective services, law enforcement, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), when appropriate.²⁰ The call center also refers cases of suspected trafficking to the Office of Trafficking in Persons (OTIP). Most frequently, the call center referred cases to local law enforcement and child protective services for further support.

The reasons for referrals differed greatly. For example, the call center frequently contacted law enforcement when children were no longer living with their sponsors. In other cases, the call center contacted child protective services regarding children who were not enrolled in school or reported experiencing neglect in their homes. In situations in which children were reportedly working, the call center made referrals to OTIP.

54%

of cases were referred to local law enforcement. Law enforcement can conduct local investigations to address child safety concerns.

44%

of cases were referred to child protective services. Child protective services can take steps to protect children in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect.

30%

of cases were referred to NCMEC. NCMEC can assist with distributing posters that alert the community about a missing child and provide assistance to law enforcement.

24%

of cases were referred to OTIP. OTIP can provide case management services and resources to individuals who have experienced human trafficking.

In some cases that were referred to outside entities, the outside entities declined the National Call Center's referrals. Entities declined referrals for various reasons, including a lack of jurisdiction, cases not meeting their criteria, and requiring referrals to be made in person.

The National Call Center offered children and other callers information on resources and community services in 30 percent of cases

In 30 percent of cases, the National Call Center provided children and other callers with information on local resources and services. The call center is responsible for connecting children and other callers with support in their community to help address their needs. During our review period, common types of resources included legal support, educational support, and additional post-release services (e.g., case management support).²¹ See below and on page 8 for case examples of resources provided to children.

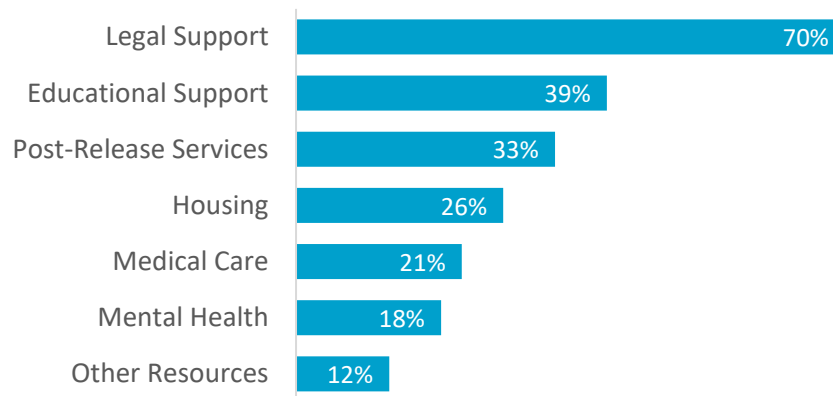
Case 1

A released child called the National Call Center to request assistance with changing his address after moving to live with another family member. The child received a referral for post-release services and information about emergency shelters and food pantries. During a follow-up call 5 months later, the child confirmed that he was still getting post-release services and reported that he was doing well. The call center also provided the child with legal resources during the follow-up call.

Case 2

A released child called the National Call Center to report abuse from his sponsor, who was his brother. The call center provided resources for emergency food assistance and conducted a conference call with an emergency shelter resource. The call center reported the case to child protective services and local law enforcement. After conducting a follow-up call, the call center also provided resources via text for healthcare, legal resources, emergency shelter, dental care, therapy, and GED enrollment, along with several safety plans.

Exhibit 3. Types of information on resources and community services provided to children and other callers, in cases in which information was provided (n= 76)



Source: OIG review of ORR National Call Center case files for cases in January–June 2024. See Appendix A for the associated 95-percent confidence intervals.

The National Call Center conducted follow-up calls in 42 percent of cases

In 42 percent of cases, the National Call Center placed a follow-up call with the caller and/or child to determine whether additional support was needed. Although ORR policy did not require the National Call Center to conduct follow-up calls during our review, these calls can serve as an important opportunity to address any outstanding concerns, mitigate any continued safety risks, and connect children or callers with any additional support.

CONCLUSION

ORR's National Call Center is an important resource for released children and sponsors in need of support. We found that a former contractor for the call center took a variety of actions to connect children to safety resources. Specifically, we found that the call center staff frequently conducted screenings when they spoke to released children, referred most cases to other agencies for additional investigation, and provided information regarding community resources to many children and callers. Additionally, we found that the call center staff conducted follow-up calls for some cases, connecting children with additional supports. We encourage ORR to use these findings to support its efforts to improve children's post-release safety.

METHODOLOGY

We requested and analyzed data on all calls that the call center received during our review period, January 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024. We determined the number of unique reports indicating a potential child safety concern after children were released from ORR care and calculated the frequency of each concern. We did not verify safety concerns indicated in these cases.

From the calls indicating a potential concern, we sampled 250 random cases associated with children (1) running away, (2) experiencing abuse or neglect, and (3) experiencing trafficking concerns. These select concerns represent 48 percent of all potential safety concerns in the first 6 months of 2024. We requested all data and documentation regarding actions the National Call Center took to respond to these 250 sampled cases. We reviewed all actions the call center took in response to these sampled cases. For the same sample of cases, we also determined whether the call center conducted a follow-up call after its initial response to a concern, before closing out a case. We did not evaluate the appropriateness of actions taken by the call center.

Our sampling methodology allows us to estimate the findings to all cases within our review (i.e., children running away or experiencing abuse/neglect or trafficking concerns). See Appendix A for point estimates and their 95-percent confidence intervals.

Limitations

The documentation provided by the National Call Center appeared to be comprehensive; however, it is possible that call center staff may have taken actions that were not documented in its case management system. Therefore, this evaluation may underestimate the extent to which the call center took steps to respond to a case.

Standards

We conducted this study in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* issued in 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: The National Call Center's Response and Follow-up Actions for Select Safety Concerns

Exhibit A-1: Estimates and confidence intervals for efforts to contact children

Metric	Number of Cases	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
Made efforts to contact children*	152 of 217	70.0%	63.6%–75.8%
Successfully reached children, in cases in which contact was attempted	92 of 152	60.5%	52.5%–68.0%
No contact information for child (in cases in which contact was not attempted)**	40 of 65	61.5%	49.2%–72.6%
No explanation given (in cases in which contact was not attempted)**	25 of 65	38.5%	27.4%–50.8%

*This metric does not include the 33 cases in which children made the initial call to the National Call Center.

**The 95-percent confidence interval for this estimate exceeds 10 percent in absolute precision.

Source: OIG review of ORR National Call Center case files for cases in January–June 2024.

Exhibit A-2: Estimates and confidence intervals for children contacted and safety screenings conducted

Metric	Number of Cases	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
Total number of children call center spoke with	125 of 250	50.0%	43.8%–56.2%
Conducted risk assessment (for children call center spoke with)	100 of 125	80.0%	72.0%–86.1%
Conducted trafficking screening (for children call center spoke with)	62 of 125	49.6%	40.9%–58.3%
Provided safety plan (for children call center spoke with)	38 of 125	30.4%	22.9%–39.1%

Source: OIG review of ORR National Call Center case files for cases in January–June 2024.

Exhibit A-3: Estimates and confidence intervals for referrals to other entities

Metric	Number of Cases	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
Referred to local law enforcement	136 of 250	54.4%	48.1%–60.5%
Referred to child protective services	111 of 250	44.4%	38.3%–50.7%
Referred to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children	74 of 250	29.6%	24.2%–35.6%
Referred to the Office of Trafficking in Persons	61 of 250	24.4%	19.4%–30.1%
Referred to one or more outside entities	205 of 250	82.0%	76.7%–86.3%

Source: OIG review of ORR National Call Center case files for cases in January–June 2024.

Exhibit A-4: Estimates and confidence intervals for information on resources and community services

Metric	Number of Cases	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
Provided referral or resources for legal support	53 of 76	69.7%	58.5%–79.0%
Provided referral or resources for educational support	30 of 76	39.5%	29.1%–50.9%
Provided referral or resources for post-release services	25 of 76	32.9%	23.2%–44.2%
Provided referral or resources for housing	20 of 76	26.3%	17.6%–37.4%
Provided referral or resources for medical care	16 of 76	21.1%	13.3%–31.7%
Provided referral or resources for mental health	14 of 76	18.4%	11.2%–28.8%
Provided other referral or resources	9 of 76	11.8%	6.2%–21.3%
Provided any resources or referrals	76 of 250	30.4%	25.0%–36.4%

Source: OIG review of ORR National Call Center case files for cases in January–June 2024.

Exhibit A-5: Estimates and confidence intervals for follow-up calls

Metric	Number of Cases	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
Follow-up call conducted	104 of 250	41.6%	35.6%–47.9%

Source: OIG review of ORR National Call Center case files for cases in January–June 2024.

ENDNOTES

¹ ORR, [ORR Unaccompanied Alien Children Bureau Policy Guide](#), Introduction, Feb. 27, 2025. Accessed on Apr. 28, 2026.

² Unaccompanied children are minors who have no lawful immigration status in the United States, are less than 18 years of age, and do not have a parent or legal guardian available in the United States to provide care and physical custody. ORR, [About the Unaccompanied Alien Children Bureau](#), May 14, 2025. Accessed on May 20, 2026.

³ ORR representatives conduct a Safety and Well-Being Follow Up Call or provide Post-Release Services to children following their release from ORR's care. The purpose of this follow-up is to determine whether the child is still residing with the sponsor, is enrolled in school, and is safe, and to provide support for children transitioning into their new communities. ORR, [ORR Unaccompanied Alien Children Bureau Policy Guide](#), Aug. 8, 2025, sections 2.8.4, Dec. 18, 2025, and 6.1, Jan. 13, 2025. Accessed on Mar. 16, 2026, and May 18, 2026.

⁴ ORR, [Office of Refugee Resettlement National Call Center](#), December 2025. Accessed on May 20, 2026.

⁵ Safety plans include information and/or resources to address children's potential safety concerns. The National Call Center creates safety plans for children or sponsors experiencing domestic violence, child abuse or neglect, self-harm, placement disruption, and human trafficking.

⁶ The National Call Center also conducts Safety and Well-Being Follow Up Calls, as needed, with released children and their sponsors.

⁷ ORR reported to OIG that, as of August 2026, its current contractor for the National Call Center, Hendall, is required to conduct follow-up calls with a sponsor and/or child when it is notified that a child missed immigration court. Additionally, the contractor is required to create and execute follow-up procedures for any caller with whom a safety plan has been created.

⁸ For the purpose of this evaluation, safety concerns reflect any scenario in which a "Notification of Concern" was associated with a case. A Notification of Concern is used to document and notify ORR of certain concerns that arise after a child is released from ORR care and custody. ORR, [ORR Unaccompanied Alien Children Bureau Policy Guide](#), Aug. 8, 2025, section 6.8.6, Aug. 15, 2025. Accessed on Mar. 16, 2026.

⁹ Addressing safety concerns is a subset of inquiries to which the call center responds. Between January 1, 2024, and June 30, 2024, the National Call Center fielded and engaged in more than 64,000 contacts, including inbound and outbound calls, emails, and texts.

¹⁰ 212,804 children were released from ORR's care in fiscal years 2023 and 2024.

¹¹ ORR, [Unaccompanied Alien Children Released to Sponsors by State](#), April 2026. Accessed on Apr. 22, 2026.

¹² Federal fiscal years run from October 1 to September 30. For example, the Federal fiscal year 2023 was October 1, 2022–September 30, 2023.

¹³ Inquiries and reports to the National Call Center were often associated with multiple calls. This number does not reflect the total number of inbound and outbound calls associated with an inquiry or report.

¹⁴ ORR representatives conduct a Safety and Well-Being Follow Up Call or provide Post-Release Services to all children following their release from ORR's care. This category of reports includes instances in which ORR representatives were unable to succeed in contacting children during Safety and Well-Being Follow Up Calls and other post-release follow-up activities. ORR, [ORR Unaccompanied Alien Children Bureau Policy Guide](#), Aug. 8, 2025, sections 2.8.4, Dec. 18, 2025, and 6.1, Jan. 13, 2025. Accessed on Mar. 16, 2026, and May 18, 2026.

¹⁵ This percentage excludes 33 cases in which children made the initial call to the National Call Center.

¹⁶ The estimated percentage exceeds 10 percent in absolute precision.

¹⁷ The estimated percentage exceeds 10 percent in absolute precision.

¹⁸ Call center staff were not required to document the reason they did not contact a child.

¹⁹ The call center spoke with children in 50 percent of all cases, including instances in which the child initiated the call.

²⁰ For the 18 percent of cases that were not referred to an outside entity, we did not assess whether a referral should have been made.

²¹ ORR's Post-Release Services are offered by ORR-funded providers and assist unaccompanied alien children with transitioning into their new communities. Services may include virtual check-ins, case management services, or intensive in-home engagements. ORR, [ORR Unaccompanied Alien Children Bureau Policy Guide](#), Aug. 8, 2025, section 6.1, Jan. 13, 2025. Accessed on Mar. 16, 2026.

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Office of Inspector General

Public Affairs

330 Independence Ave., SW

Washington, DC 20201

Email: Public.Affairs@oig.hhs.gov