Post release services are culturally sensitive and individualized to the special needs of each referred child. These services are provided by community-based agencies with expertise in family preservation, services for immigrants and refugees, culturally sensitive foster care, family counseling, domestic violence intervention, juvenile justice supervision and services for victims of trafficking. Our program employs an empowering family strengthening and kinship navigation approach to assist the children as they are integrated within their approved sponsor’s family.

Services are provided in over 168 cities throughout the nation. Frequent areas of service include Los Angeles, CA; Houston, TX; Miami, FL; Austin, TX; and Phoenix, AZ.

The USCCB Safe Passages Program is funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement. USCCB is composed of the Catholic Bishops of the United States.
Children’s needs include one or more of the following:

- Advocacy for School Enrollment
- Mental Health/Behavioral Needs
- Juvenile Justice History
- Pregnancy/Parenting
- Substance Abuse
- Medical/Developmental Needs
- Trafficking Concerns
- Sponsor Concerns
  - Criminal background concerns
  - Lack of relationship
  - Undocumented status
- Navigating the Immigration Process

Each year, thousands of unaccompanied, undocumented children are apprehended at our borders and through internal immigration enforcement. In fiscal year 2010, USCCB served undocumented minors from sixteen (16) countries.

Maria is an 11 year-old girl from Mexico. While living there, she was a victim of verbal and physical abuse by her alcoholic father. When Maria's mother learned of the abuse, she was desperate to bring her daughter to join her in the United States. As a result of the trauma Maria experienced, she struggled with feelings of anger and depression. She also had a history of self-harming behavior (cutting) and had made one past suicide attempt. In addition, Maria has been separated from her mother for the past five years, and would need time and support to strengthen their relationship.

Following reunification, the local worker connected Maria with individual therapy sessions to address her mental health concerns. The local worker also assisted with school enrollment, provided referrals to medical providers, and offered guidance on how to access these services in the community. She was able to identify the counseling department within her own agency as a resource through which Maria and her mother successfully engaged in family counseling.

The local worker also provided information to educate Maria’s mother on the warning signs of depression and self-harming behavior, in order to better prepare her to recognize these signs in the future. Lastly, the local worker connected Maria with a pro bono legal service provider to assess her options for legal relief. Maria is now emotionally stable and has established a healthy relationship with her mother.

*Name has been changed*