

# FAMILY DETENTION IS A FAILED POLICY



## KEY FACTS ABOUT FAMILY DETENTION

- The number of family detention beds is expanding from fewer than 100 to more than 3,700 beds between 2014 and 2015.
- Most detained families are seeking protection from life-threatening dangers, including gender- and gang-based violence. 88% of recently detained families passed “credible fear” screenings.
- More than 50% of children who entered family detention in 2014 were six years old or younger.

## AN ARBITRARY DECISION AT THE BORDER

Detention should only be used to mitigate public safety or flight risks, and only when other measures such as alternatives to detention (ATDs) could not mitigate those risks. Instead, families are currently detained 1) to fill available family detention beds and 2) to deter others from coming to the U.S. The decision is arbitrary, inhumane and has irreversible life-changing consequences for mothers and their children.

**DETAINED**

**RELEASED OR ATDS**

### TRAUMA

Detained families are fast-tracked for removal, despite seeking protection and asylum. Parents and children often experience depression, malnourishment, and further trauma.

### NO ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Families are not guaranteed counsel, and from detention it is especially hard to obtain a lawyer. Without one, it is often impossible to advocate for release or navigate a court case.

### COST OF FAMILY DETENTION

It costs \$343 each day to detain a single family member. Family detention costs well over \$300 million each year.



### SUPPORT AND CARE

Whether released or placed into ATDs, families may reunite with relatives and are more likely to access critical trauma-informed care and services.

### A CHANCE AT RELIEF

Families who are released have a much better chance to find a pro bono or low-cost lawyer to help them understand their case requirements and advocate for protection.

### COST OF RELEASE OR ATDS

The government could either release a family or use ATD programs at minimal cost.

### RETURN TO HARM

Many in detention are never released and unable to win their case. If deported, families return to the same trauma and life-threatening circumstances they desperately fled.



### FAIRNESS AND PROTECTION

Released families are more likely to find a lawyer and have time to prepare their case to be heard by a judge. If the judge grants asylum, families can start a new life in the United States.

**FAMILY DETENTION IS ARBITRARY, INHUMANE, AND EXPENSIVE. THERE IS A BETTER WAY.**

Find out more about alternatives to Family Detention: [womensrefugeecommission.org/end-family-detention](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/end-family-detention)

