

**Evaluation of the justice AmeriCorps (jAC)  
Legal Services for Unaccompanied Children Program**

**CONSENT FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW  
For young people under 16 years of age who have a parent or legal guardian**

**WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE DOING**

The Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) is a private nonprofit organization that does research and works with government and other organizations to improve the justice system. Vera has been asked to study the Legal Services for Unaccompanied Children Program, and the organizations that provide those legal services, such as the one where your child's lawyer works.

**WHAT WE ARE ASKING OF YOU**

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, he/she will be interviewed for about 60 minutes. We will ask questions about his/her understanding of immigration court and what he/she may have learned from his/her lawyer about his/her legal case. For example, the child will be asked if he/she has been to immigration court, and what the people in the court do. He/she will be asked how talking to the attorney may have helped, and what he/she may have learned about ways children can win their cases and be legally allowed to remain in the U.S. He/she will NOT be asked about his/her previous migration experiences, your family, other personal issues or anything bad that may have happened to him/her.

Vera will also collect information about the legal services program from the organization that is providing your child with an attorney and from court records of cases of unaccompanied children who go through immigration proceedings. The information will be put together with the information we collect from interviews with children like yours who have lawyers.

**KEEPING YOUR INFORMATION PRIVATE**

The information Vera collects about your child will be kept private. No personal identifying information, such as your child's name or specific details of your child's case, will be shared with anyone outside the evaluation team. Personal information will not be shared with the government, the immigration judge or other people at this organization. Your child's name will not be kept with notes from the interview. Nothing from the interview with your child's name will be shared outside of team working on this project.

We may have to tell the authorities, if your child says any of the following:

- 1) information about committing a crime,
- 2) your child is going to harm himself/herself, or
- 3) he/she or another child is being abused.

This consent form expires one year from the date noted above. Vera staff to initial when page is completed: \_\_\_\_\_

We will NOT ask your child questions about these things.

### **WHAT WE PLAN TO DO WITH THIS INFORMATION**

We are going to speak with about 50 children and use what we learn to find ways to improve the legal services program for children. At the end of the evaluation, a report will be written and given to the funder of the program so that they can make the program better. The report will not include your child's name or any specific details about your child. It will only cover general information from all the interviews. Information about your child will be destroyed once we write the report. Vera expects this study to end by September 28, 2016.

### **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PARTICIPATE**

Your child does not have to talk with us. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your child will continue to receive legal services no matter what you decide. Your decision to allow your child to participate or not participate will not affect your child's legal case or result in any special benefit or loss of benefit to your child. Vera will not tell anyone what you decide. If you decide to allow your child to be interviewed, your child may still refuse to answer any question he/she does not want to answer. Your child may also decide to stop participating at anytime.

### **RISKS**

There are some risks that Vera tries to make sure do not happen, but you and your child should know what they are before you agree your child can talk with us.

- 1) There is a small risk that some questions asked during the interview will make your child feel upset or uncomfortable. Remember that your child does not have to answer those questions. Your child can skip the questions, take a break or stop at anytime.
- 2) There is a very small chance that information about your child could be accidentally disclosed to someone outside the evaluation team. However, this is unlikely to happen because Vera will take precautions to keep your child's information out of sight in locked cabinets and in secure computer files.
- 3) We want to talk with your child in a private room, but there is a risk that what your child says might be disclosed by someone else present at the interview, such as a staff person at the organization where you receive legal services. For this reason, it is important not share sensitive information that your child does want repeated.

Information about your child cannot be demanded (subpoenaed) by the immigration court, because the information collected in this study is protected by federal law.

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## **BENEFITS**

Your child will not receive any direct benefit by participating in this study. The researchers from the Vera Institute cannot advocate on your or your child's behalf. However, what your child says may help us learn how to improve the legal services available to unaccompanied children. Because we appreciate your child's willingness to be interviewed, your child will receive a gift card in the amount of \$25 for his/her participation.

## **WHO IS PAYING US TO DO THIS**

This evaluation is funded by the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) in cooperation with the Corporation for National and Community Services (CNCS).

## **PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT**

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid control number from the Office of Management and Budget. Under the PRA, forms and instructions are created that are accurate, can be easily understood, and which impose the least possible burden on you to provide us with information. The estimated average time to review and complete this collection is 90 minutes. If you have comments regarding this estimate, or suggestions for making this collection simpler, you can write to the Executive Office for Immigration Review, Office of the General Counsel, 5107 Leesburg Pike, Suite 2600, Falls Church, Virginia 20530.

## **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS**

If you have questions at any time about this study, you or your child may contact either of the two people below at the Vera Institute of Justice:

Laura Simich  
[lsimich@vera.org](mailto:lsimich@vera.org)  
212-376-3176

Annie Chen  
[achen@vera.org](mailto:achen@vera.org)  
212-376-3168

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU AGREE**

1. YOUR CHILD DOESN'T HAVE TO DO THIS.
2. YOUR CHILD'S NAME WILL NOT BE USED IN ANY REPORT.
3. YOUR CHILD WILL RECEIVE A GIFT CARD FOR PARTICIPATING.

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**We will give you and your child a copy of the information just read to you.**

**CONSENT FOR YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW**

By allowing your child to talk with us following the reading of this information, you have consented for your child to participate in the interview. If you do not agree and have decided you do not want your child to participate in the interview, you can leave now.

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