



City of El Paso Joins UNICEF USA's Child Friendly Cities Initiative

El Paso positioned to become the first border city in the U.S. recognized by UNICEF's global network dedicated to advancing child well-being

NEW YORK, NY / EL PASO, TX (November 12, 2025) — The City of El Paso, in partnership with the El Paso Community Foundation (EPCF) and UNICEF USA, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to officially begin its multi-year journey toward recognition as a UNICEF Child Friendly City — a global designation that reflects a community's deep commitment to placing children's rights and well-being at the heart of local decision-making.

Through this initiative, El Paso is positioned to become the first border city in the United States to earn recognition as a UNICEF Child Friendly City, joining a global movement of more than 3,500 municipalities in over 40 countries as well as a growing cohort of U.S. communities, including Houston, TX; Minneapolis, MN and Decatur, GA dedicated to creating safer, more equitable environments where every child can thrive.

"El Paso has always been defined by its spirit of care, a community that looks after one another across generations and across borders," said **Mayor Renard Johnson**. "This partnership reinforces our commitment to building a city that listens to and values the voices of our youth."

Through the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), El Paso will collaborate with UNICEF USA to gather insights from children, families, and community members to better understand local strengths and challenges affecting young people. The information will help shape a Local Action Plan for Youth, which will serve as a roadmap to ensure City programs, investments, and policies reflect the needs and aspirations of El Paso's children.

"UNICEF USA is thrilled to partner with the City of El Paso — a community celebrated for its vibrant Hispanic heritage and cultural richness — on its journey toward becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly City," said **Cristina Shapiro, Chief Strategy Officer and President of the Impact Fund for Children at UNICEF USA**. "As a proud Mexican American, I am honored to welcome El Paso to UNICEF USA's growing cohort of U.S. cities dedicated to prioritizing youth in local governance and decision making, and ensuring that every child can thrive."

The initiative builds upon the City's long-standing commitment to families and youth, strengthening collaboration across departments and with community partners. The El Paso Community Foundation will serve as the City's nonprofit partner, supporting community engagement, data collection, and program development.

"El Paso has always been very family-centered. Building our community around children makes perfect sense for our well-being, our welfare, and our economic development," said **Eric Pearson President and CEO of the El Paso Community Foundation**.

A steering committee of local leaders, known as *Para Niños*, will help convene civic, educational, and philanthropic partners to align efforts toward a shared vision to make El Paso the best place in the borderland to grow up.

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The City of El Paso and *Para Niños*, in collaboration with UNICEF USA, is hosting a two-day launch event on November 12 and 13 to celebrate the start of this effort, with local and national partners in attendance.

About the City of El Paso

The City of El Paso is dedicated to fostering a safe, inclusive, and resilient community that reflects the strength and diversity of the borderland. Guided by a deep commitment to families and youth, the City partners with local organizations, schools, and regional stakeholders to build a future where every child can thrive. Learn more at www.ElPasoTexas.gov.

For more information please contact:

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About the El Paso Community Foundation

Founded in 1977, the El Paso Community Foundation (EPCF) connects people, ideas, and resources to strengthen the borderland region. Through philanthropy, civic partnerships, and community engagement, EPCF advances initiatives that improve quality of life, expand opportunity, and promote equity for all El Pasoans. Learn more at www.epcf.org.

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About UNICEF USA

UNICEF USA advances the global mission of UNICEF by rallying the American public to support the world's most vulnerable children. Together, we are working toward a world that upholds the rights of all children and helps every child thrive. For more information, visit www.unicefusa.org.

About the Child Friendly Cities Initiative

Since its inception in 1996, [UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative](http://www.unicefusa.org) has been implemented in more than 3,500 municipalities and over 40 countries. The UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative is rooted in developing policies that protect, support and empower children and young people by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to shape their futures. This multi-year commitment is dedicated to centering the rights, needs, and voices of children and families in decisions made by the City.

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