

Frequently Asked Questions



How enCircle Works

EnCircle's Connection with the Lutheran Church

Is enCircle connected to Lutherans?

YES. Our legal name is Lutheran Family Services of Virginia, and we do business as enCircle. We were founded as an orphanage in 1888 by a Lutheran pastor in Salem.



Rev. William S. McClanahan

Do you have to be Lutheran to work here or receive services from us?

NO. We were founded by Lutherans because their faith led them to care for people who needed extra help in their communities. We continue our mission to make the world a more loving place, for people of all faiths or no faith. We changed our name to enCircle five years ago to make it clear that our circle is wide, and all are included.

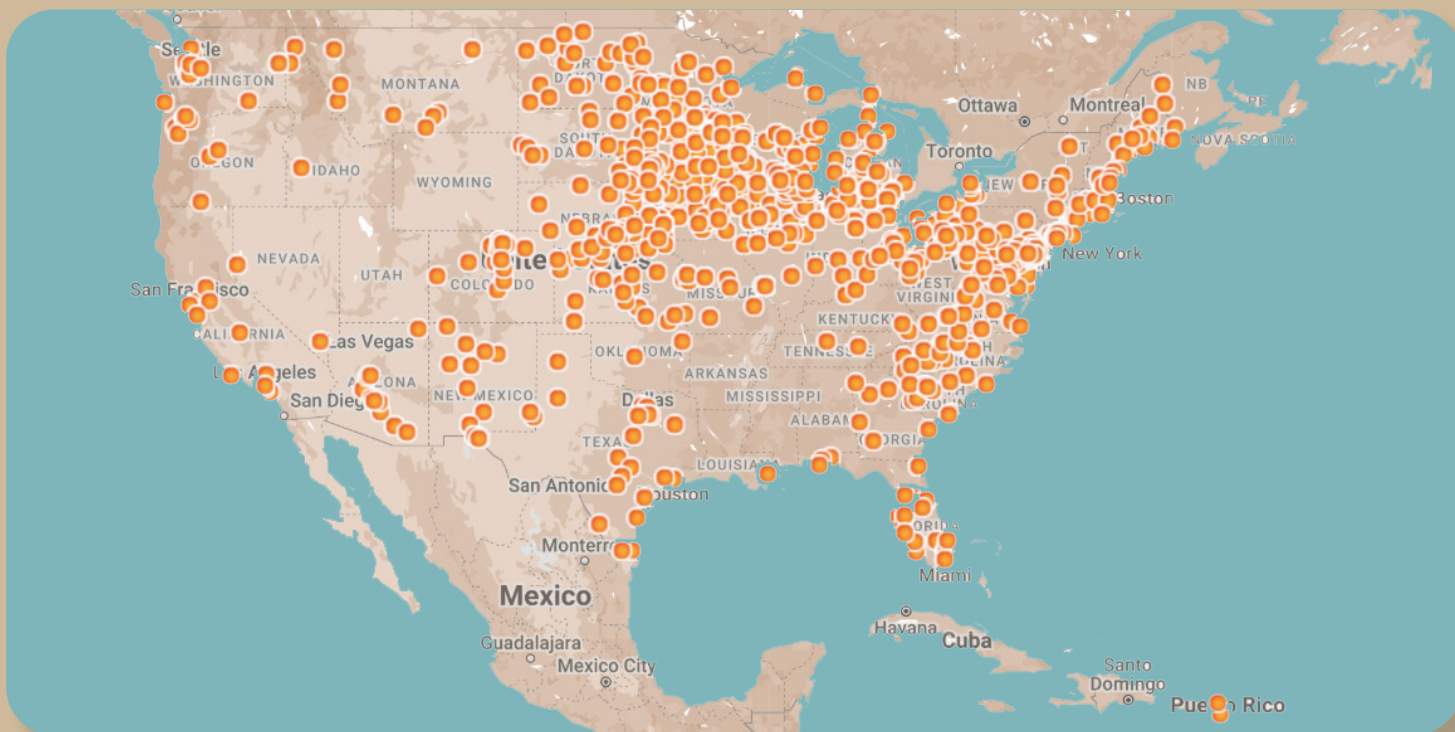
Are we still connected to Lutheran churches?

YES. We are a proud mission partner of the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Many churches across Virginia support our programs with donations, such as food for our Minnick students and holiday gifts for children in our Foster Care programs. The Bishop of the Virginia Synod sits on our Board of Directors, and half of our board members are Lutheran, according to our bylaws, but we operate as an independent nonprofit organization.



Are there other Lutheran-affiliated organizations like ours in the country?

YES, we are in great company! EnCircle is part of a large network of Lutheran social ministry organizations linked through the national nonprofit Lutheran Services in America (LSA). This network of 300 organizations serves 6 million people across 1,400 communities in the U.S. Lutheran-affiliated organizations serve seniors, people with disabilities, children and families, veterans, immigrants and refugees.



Do Lutheran-affiliated organizations manage their money ethically?

YES. Recently, accusations have been made on social media that Lutheran nonprofits are laundering money or making illegal payments to refugees and immigrants. These claims are completely FALSE. Our peer organizations that were targeted have grants directly with the federal government to serve legally admitted refugees and immigrants. EnCircle is a subcontractor on federal grants that Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services) receives to serve unaccompanied children. We all are required to have annual audits that give full transparency to our financial activities. Our grants through Global Refuge allow us to serve children who are migrating to this country, legally seeking asylum and reunification with family.