



**State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families**

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Mike Carroll**  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** October 31, 2017  
**TO:** Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** October 13, 2017 Meeting Minutes

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### **THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:**

**Date:** December 8, 2017  
**Time:** 10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.  
**Location:** [Miami Dade College](#)  
[Wolfson Campus](#)  
[200 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, RM. 3410-5 Miami, Florida 33128](#)  
**Contact :** **Lourdes Leconte**  
**Office :** (786) 257-5173  
**Cell:** (305) 401-3374  
**E-Mail :** [Lourdes.Leconte@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Lourdes.Leconte@myflfamilies.com)

This task force has been active in the Miami area for many years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and mutual assistance associations. An average of about twenty-five to thirty people attend these meetings on a regular basis. The purpose of these meetings is to increase awareness of the refugee populations, share best practices, build collaborations between agencies, spot trends in refugee populations, characteristics or movements, help create good communication among service providers; get informed about upcoming community events, request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, etc., at the local, state and national level; discuss refugee program service needs and possible solutions to meeting those needs. Meeting participants also receive updates, information and clarification on new federal and state regulations and policy changes pertaining to refugees.

If there are any issues that you would like to include in the agenda, please contact me at the above address.

***I look forward to seeing you at the meeting!***

401 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite N-812 Miami, Florida 33128

**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 13, 2017**

**ATTENDEES:**

Kerry, Allen; Gloria, Alonso; Sabine, Balmir-Derenoncourt; Bajic, Bojan; Connie, Perez Borrow; Jackie Carrion; Dasiely, Cruz; Maria, Diaz; Vanessa, Fernandez; Gledy, Oiht; Caroline, Culbreth, Miriam, Garcia; Emilie, Goeser; Juan, Lopez; Silvia, Lopez; Maria, Rodriguez; Marie, Philogene; Daniel Felipe; Cristobal, Perez; Veronica, Rodriguez; Oscar, Rivera; Lilliam, Sorzano; Maureen, Porras; Luisa, Sanchez; Evelyn, Soto; Ana Maria, Teixeira; Carmen, Torres; Ileana, Vallejo; Zoraida, Ballestas; Niurka, Duncan; Angelica, Urbina; Christopher, Bryant; Alina, Garcia; Sheryl, Lafrance; Maria, Ortega; Ulises, Pacheco; Alyssa, Oquendo; Michelle, Godoy; Kristen, Bloom; Ana Maria, Texeira;

**INTRODUCTION:**

Cristobal Perez, DCF Refugee Services Program Analyst welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**Kristen Bloom**, Director, Syrian Refugee English Tutoring Program, provided an overview of the program. “What started as a way to help has become so much more. Our Syrian family is now considered to be our family. They have adopted us as much as we have adopted them. We spend lots of time together, playing with the children, eating the best Middle Eastern food we’ve ever had, talking, watching TV. Every chance we get, we are together. There is so much happiness and laughter and yes, sometimes serious talks as they share pieces of their brave journey. Through our conversations, the English improves constantly. “

Currently, this volunteer program is assisting 19 Families in Miami-Dade and Broward, it has 45 tutors and counting. They go into the home and provide informal lessons with no defined curriculum, but the goal is English language acquisition, by teaching how to communicate and to navigate life in the U.S. The program seeks to build community by teaching refugees about life in the U.S., but also learn about the refugee and connect families to resources and advocate for them. Tutors accommodate their schedule to meet the refugee’s individual needs. The tutors are the eyes and ears of this new program and they alert the program of any concerns/issues.

**Ulises Pacheco**, from DHSMV shared some important updates and changes taking place with Driver licenses and ID cards. Starting in August 2017, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will begin issuing a new, more secure Florida driver license and ID card. By the end of December 2017, the new credential will be available at all service centers throughout Florida and online. Previous driver license and ID cards will still be in use alongside the new credential until replaced or phased out.

**REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:**

- The implementation of the budget reduction throughout the state.
- The termination of the Cuba/ Haitian grant.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

- End of the year gathering will be at the Knife requested overwhelmingly by the participants

**REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATE** (*Sent via E-Mail in August and September*)

- CDC Hurricane Safety Information: 11 Languages
- Important! Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP)

**Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM**

**SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – AUGUST 2017**

**South Florida VOLAG Consortium  
August 9, 2017**

**Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Email</b>
Niurka Duncan	FDOH	<a href="mailto:Niurka.duncan@flhealth.org">Niurka.duncan@flhealth.org</a>
Lourdes Leconte	DCF/RS	<a href="mailto:Lourdes.leconte@myflfamilies.com">Lourdes.leconte@myflfamilies.com</a>
Silvia Lopez	CMG	<a href="mailto:Silvia.lopez@communitygrp.com">Silvia.lopez@communitygrp.com</a>
Ana Maria Teixeira	IRC	<a href="mailto:anamaria.teixeira@rescue.org">anamaria.teixeira@rescue.org</a>
Jose Sanchez	CWS	<a href="mailto:jsanchez@cwsglobal.org">jsanchez@cwsglobal.org</a>
Oscar Rivera	CWS	<a href="mailto:orivera@cws.global.org">orivera@cws.global.org</a>
Jackie Carrion	Catholic Charities	<a href="mailto:jcarrion@ccadm.org">jcarrion@ccadm.org</a>
Carmen Torres	LIRS	<a href="mailto:ctorres@lsfnet.org">ctorres@lsfnet.org</a>
Gustavo Diaz	Youth Co-op/USCRI	<a href="mailto:gustavo.diaz@ycoop.mail.org">gustavo.diaz@ycoop.mail.org</a>
Veronica Rodriguez	Youth Co-op/USCRI	<a href="mailto:veronica.rodriguez@ycoop.mail.org">veronica.rodriguez@ycoop.mail.org</a>

**Refugee Services:**

Lourdes Leconte, DCF Refugee Services Liaison shared with the resettlement agencies of a communication that was sent to service providers regarding reduction of funding with the loss of Cuban Haitian Social Services Set-Aside funding for next fiscal year. One critical program that will close is the Jackson Health and Special Medical cases for Cuban/Haitians. This valuable resource will end on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

DCF contractual services are streamlining programs and focusing on career laddering programs, to help strengthen the skill capacity of newly arrived refugees.

**Refugee Health:**

Niurka Duncan, Florida Department of Health Miami Dade County, informed the resettlement agencies of the significant drop of newly arrived clients they are seeing for initial health screenings. They are averaging 20 people per day, where at the same time last year, it was roughly 200. Currently, staff is contacting all entrants that arrived within July 2017, to make sure that screening and immunizations have been started. The Health Department has gone back to normal operating hours of Monday-Friday, from 7:30am to 5:00pm. There is no longer a late shift.

**Parolee Orientation Program:**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Cuban</b>	<b>Haitian</b>	<b>Left the county</b>
<b>July 2017</b>	190	136	54	
<b>YTD Jan-June</b>	<b>1658</b>	<b>1188</b>	<b>470</b>	

Oscar Rivera, Church World Service, informed the resettlement agencies of a new partnership with the Florida Department of Health. Working together, POP is providing information to eligible clients at the Health Department, to capture the number of Cuban/Haitians arriving to the community. This new

outreach effort started in July. One thing noted, most of clients that are going to the Health Department, have already been to DCF or to one of the RAs and are receiving services.

Parolee Orientation Program (POP) continues to discuss possible solutions to make sure clients are being informed of the services available to them in the community. Possible solutions include redesigning information flyer that is given to folks entering under Family Reunification visa program. Community Access partner is also willing to accept orientation information to be given at their locations.

**Reception and Placement Program updates**

Agency	July 2017	FY 2017 YTD
CC	0	7
CWS	0	82
EMM		25
IRC	0	52
LIRS	3	35
Youth Co-Op	0	20
World Relief		26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>247</b>

Discussion on refugees without bonafide relationships not entering the country. Currently, resettlement agencies waiting for cases that do have US ties to be allowed to travel. Everyone is in a holding pattern.

**FY 18 Reception and Placement future**

Discussion of Refugee program for FY18 ensued. Agencies continue to have same projections as submitted to State during consultations.

**Matching Grant Program updates**

Agency	June 2017	FY 2017 YTD	NEW FY 17 SLOTS ALLOCATED-revised July 2017
CC	21	339	520
CWS	92	465	650
EMM		114	<b>CLOSED</b>
IRC	25	482	650
LIRS	16	334	483
Youth Co-Op	90	890	1115
World Relief		78	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>2702</b>	

Discussion on current MG numbers. Agencies were given the go ahead to continue enrolling to new allocated numbers. Agencies will reach between 89-90% of previously approved MG slots for the south Florida region. Agencies continue to await for proposed budget for FY18, proposal is due to ORR on August 31<sup>st</sup>. MG program will be reduced by 30% for FY18, but the per cap will be increased to \$2500.

Discussion also revolved around the remaining MG slots across the nation. The low number of MG candidates being enrolled is worrisome to the agencies. All agencies are conducting outreach efforts to be able to complete the assigned quota for South Florida area. There are roughly still 908 slots to fill by end of September. ORR is providing key exceptions to enrollment past 30 days of Cubans who are being released from detention centers. Agencies encouraged to request exceptions.

### **CAM Program updates**

Agencies continue to see a decrease in people inquiring on CAM application process. No applications filed by any agency.

### **Other items:**

- Community Consultations-  
Agencies continue to discuss strategies to involve a broader range of community stakeholders.
- Open position:  
CMG is expanding to Tampa area.  
CMG has open positions at Access sites in Miami.  
New list with managers provided.
- Next meeting scheduled:  
Sept. 13, 2017 at 2pm, location CWS offices

## **LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – OCTOBER 2017**

### **MIAMI AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE**

#### **Immigration and Legal Issues Sub Committee**

#### **Minutes for the meeting on October 4, 2017**

By Lucio Perez-Reynoso

**Attendees: Berta Cassidy, Oscar Alvarez, Yanelys Garcia, Amelia Ramirez, Miriam Garcia, Lourdes Leconte, Dayelis Orozco, Gloria Alonso, Lucio Perez-Reynoso**

The Immigration Subcommittee Meeting was held on October 4, 2017 at the offices of American for Immigrant Justice (AIJ). Berta Cassidy provided the USCIS updates and Gloria Alonso provided the Miami Asylum Office updates, and answered questions.

- **USCIS FIELD OFFICER CLOSED:** 4 USCIS Miami District Field Offices in South Florida were closed at Noon on Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup> before Hurricane Irma and after the Hurricane the whole week. Kendall Office closed almost two weeks. **Miami and Hialeah Field Offices:** Applicants who had their interviews scheduled during dates we were closed to the public will be issued new interview notices by mail and should receive them by the last week of October. All applicants will be seen by the end of November. **Oakland Park Field Office:** Applicants who had their interviews scheduled during dates we were closed to the public will be issued new interview notices by mail and should

receive them by mid-October. All applicants will be seen by the end of October. **Kendall Field Office:** Applicants who had their interviews scheduled during dates we were closed to the public will be issued new interview notices or will be contacted by telephone by mid-October. All applicants will be seen by the end of October

- **FINGERPRINTS:** The Application Support Center will automatically mail new appointment notices to applicants.
- **INFOPASS:** For these appointments scheduled during dates we were closed; they need to make new appointments.
- **DACA:** Tomorrow is the last day USCIS will accept DACA renewals.
- **FORM I-765:** Applicants will have the option to apply for a Social Security Number while applying for EAD on the new I-765 (dated 7/17/17). The Form will have this option. A Stakeholder Teleconference to discuss this option will be on October 18, 2017; please register if you want to participate.
- **MIAMI ASYLUM OFFICE:** The scheduled interviews during dates the Office was closed will be re-scheduled and notify.
- The Asylum Office hired 12 new officers this month.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday November 1, 2017 from 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM at the office of Church World Services (CWS): 1924 NW 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Miami, FL 33126**

## EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – OCTOBER 2017

### EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

#### October 2017

- ❖ REVEST successfully began classes for the current cycle on September 6, 2017 and we currently have over 2800 students registered for VESOL classes in our four Centers. The term will end December 20, 2017. Regarding the Spring term 2183 (January 10-April 28 2018) 29 Orientation Sessions are scheduled. About 1,020 students will be tested using the Pre-CASAS placement test. 86 classes are programmed for the Spring Term.
- ❖ REVEST continues registrations for the Fall 2177, which began on August 28th, 2017, and we have already served around 100 new students.  
We have recently held individual and group vocational retraining sessions for advisors, with the participation of CE coordinators, who continually help us expand our knowledge about the new changes in the MDC Information System.

- ❖ Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors Sept. 28, 29 2017. Topics included establishing a Florida I.D. to assist in establishing Florida residency, professionalism in the workplace, and strategies to enhance the interactive classroom.
- ❖ REVEST celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month on Oct. 4, 2017 at Wolfson Campus, Miami Dade College. REVEST students showcased their talent through song, dance and speech. A great time was had by all and great appreciation for all of the contributions from our multicultural community.
- ❖ The REVEST program has been downsized as a result of a 23% budget cut from the Federal government (Office of Refugee Resettlement). This cut represents \$1.6 m per year. One of the four centers is closing as of 12/31/2017. The West Dade Outreach Center closing is located at 9708 S.W. 24 St., Miami, FL.
- ❖ This budget reduction will impact approximately 1,000 new students to be accepted into the program this year. Attempts will be made to relocate close to 900 students currently enrolled at the West Dade Outreach Center to one of the other remaining REVEST centers. Over 35 positions, including instructional and support services personnel, will be eliminated. All other Refugee Service providers in the State have also been affected (i.e. SAVES from MDCPS, Youth Coop, Career Source, Catholic Charities, etc).
- ❖ The total SAVES Program enrollment as of September 26, 2017, was 2,683. Of these, 814 are new students to the program and 237 are 16 to 18 youngsters enrolled in the SAVES GED in Spanish Program. Graduations were held at the end of the term. This program has proven to be an excellent alternative for refugee youth that would otherwise not make it in the regular high school programs. Students are graduating and continuing to study English and choosing a career pathway either through vocational/technical training or transitioning to MDC.
- ❖ The current trimester began on August 21, 2017 and ends December 22, 2017. The next trimester begins on January 9, 2018 and ends April 6, 2018.
- ❖ Students ready for vocational/technical courses not offered at their current schools are being issued vouchers for books and tuition at Baker Aviation and Miami Lakes Technical Colleges. There are 42 students enrolled at these schools.
- ❖ SAVES works closely with the M-DCPS marketing department to reach out to the community and disseminate information about the SAVES programs. SAVES is currently advertising via newspaper, radio, career fairs, and opening of school meetings. New SAVES Website and Marketing Video for M-DCPS



technical colleges are available through the following links: [www.savesdadeschools.com](http://www.savesdadeschools.com) and <https://youtu.be/pttdZJ5ssLw>.

- ❖ The GED in Spanish SAVES program is available in 8 schools around Miami Dade County: 1) Hialeah-Gardens SHS, 2) Westland Hialeah SHS, 3) Hialeah Adult Education Center, 4) Hialeah-Miami Lakes Adult Education Center, 5) Miami Springs Adult Education Center, 6) Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College, and 8) Miami Coral Park Adult Education Center. It is also offered at 9) Booker T. Washington and 10) Miami Jackson Senior High School where the student population is the unaccompanied minors. Another school (TBA) in the south end of the county will soon offer the SMA program.
- ❖ New SAVES success stories, which highlight the achievements of some of our students, have been uploaded to the SAVES website ([www.savesdadeschools.com](http://www.savesdadeschools.com)). In addition, two success stories posters were published and they are displayed throughout the county.
- ❖ If you have any questions about our program, you can call us or visit the SAVES website at [www.savesdadeschools.com](http://www.savesdadeschools.com).

**REFUGEE HEALTH CLINIC REPORT – OCTOBER 2017**

None

**EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – OCTOBER 2017**

None

**USCIS UPDATE – OCTOBER 2017**

**USCIS Miami**

**October 2017 Update**

❖ **Post-Hurricane Irma Updates**

**Interviews:**

- Miami and Hialeah Field Offices – Customers who had their interviews scheduled during dates we were closed to the public will be issued new interview notices by mail and should receive them by the last week of October. All applicants will be seen by the end of November.
- Oakland Park Field Office - Customers who had their interviews scheduled during dates we were closed to the public will be issued new interview notices by mail and should receive them by mid-October. All applicants will be seen by the end of October.
- Kendall Field Office – Customers who had their interviews scheduled during dates we were closed to the public will be issued new interview notices or will be contacted by telephone by mid-October. All applicants will be seen by the end of October.

**Infopass:**

- Customers who had Infopass appointments scheduled during the dates we were closed to the public will need to reschedule their appointments. We are doing our best to expand availability of Infopass appointments and accommodate the increased demand. Your patience is appreciated.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Type of Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
October 4th	4:00 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	South Dade Regional Library, 10750 SW 211 St. Cutler Bay, Fl.
October 5th	5:00 - 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	Shenandoah Branch Library, 2111 SW 19th St. Miami, Fl.
October 10th	4:00 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	West Dade Regional Library, 9445 Coral Way, Miami, Fl.
October 10th	5:00 - 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	California Club Branch Library, 700 Ives Dairy Rd. Miami, Fl.
October 11th	3:00 - 5:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Coral Reef Library, 9211 Coral Reef Dr., Miami, Fl.
October 16th	1:00 - 4:00 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Kendall Driver's License Center 11735 SW 147th Ave. Suite #23, Miami, Fl.
October 16th	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Doral Branch Library, 10785 NW 58 St. Doral, Fl.
October 17th	10 am - 2:00 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Stephen P. Clark Government Center, Lobby, 111 NW 1st St. Miami, Fl.
October 17th	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Tamarac Branch Library, 8701 W. Commercial Blvd. Tamarac, Fl.
October 18th	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	West Regional Library, 8601 W. Broward Blvd. Plantation, Fl.
October 19th	4:00 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Kendale Lakes Branch Library, 15205 SW 88 St. Miami, Fl.
October 19th	5:00 - 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	Arcola Lakes Branch Library, 8240 NW 7th Ave. Miami, Fl.
October 23rd	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Miami Lakes Branch Library, 6699 Windmill Gate Rd. Miami Lakes, Fl.
October 24th	12:30 - 3:30 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Mall of the Americas Driver's License Center, 7795 W. Flagler St., Suite #82C, Miami, FL
October 24th	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	North Regional/Broward College Library, 1100 Coconut Creek Blvd. Coconut Creek, Fl.
October 25th	10:30 am - 12:30 pm	Naturalization Information Session	Weston Branch Library, 4205 Bonaventure Blvd. Weston, Fl.
October 25th	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Miramar Branch Library, 2050 Civic Center Place, Miramar, Fl.
October 30th	5:30 - 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	Northwest Regional Library, 3151 University Drive, Coral Springs, Fl.

**Fingerprints:**

- Application Support Centers (ASC) will automatically mail new ASC appointment notices to customers.

**US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico:**

- The USVI and San Juan Field Offices are closed until further notice. If you have clients who relocated from the US Virgin Islands or Puerto Rico to the South Florida area, please have them complete Form AR-11 to update their address.

**Please note:** USCIS offers immigration services that may help customers affected by Hurricane Irma. We encourage you to take a look at the attached document for customer service self-help tools and resources.

- ❖ **Updated Application for Employment Authorization** - Based on a new information-sharing partnership between USCIS and the Social Security Administration (SSA), foreign nationals in certain categories or classifications can now apply for work authorization and a social security number using a single form – the updated Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. The revised USCIS form includes additional questions that allow applicants to apply for a Social Security Number or replacement card without visiting a Social Security office.

- ❖ **Upcoming Outreach Sessions**

Below is a listing of our upcoming outreach sessions and events. These sessions are free and open to the public. If you need additional information, please contact – [Berta.m.cassidy@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Berta.m.cassidy@uscis.dhs.gov)

- ❖ **Upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies**

Below are scheduled dates for administrative N-400 naturalization ceremonies and the corresponding field offices where the ceremonies will take place (unless otherwise listed). Please note that although these dates are current on the date of issuance of this update, the dates are subject to change without notice.

- Miami Field Office –
  - October 13, 20 and 27
- Hialeah Field Office –
  - October 21 and 28
- Kendall Field Office –
  - To be determined
- Oakland Park Field Office
  - October 20 and 27