



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott  
Governor

Mike Carroll  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** August 25, 2017  
**TO:** Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** August 11, 2017 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** October 13, 2017  
**Time:** 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.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

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**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 11, 2017****ATTENDEES:**

Kerry, Allen; Gloria, Alonso; Sabine, Balmir-Derenoncourt; Regina, Bernadin; Ileana, Bustelo; Sherry, Capers; Berta, Cassidy; Dasiely, Cruz; Gustavo, Diaz; Maria, Diaz; Miriam, Garcia; Emilie, Goeser; Juan, Lopez; Silvia, Lopez; Dorothy, Martin; Maria, Miranda; Sergio, Mora; Cristobal, Perez; Veronica, Rodriguez; Amanda, St. Jean; Jose, Sanchez; Luisa, Sanchez; Evelyn, Soto; Ana Maria, Teixeira; Carmen, Torres; Ileana, Vallejo; Daniel, Felipe; Zoraida, Ballestas; Duncan, Sosa; Angelica, Urbina; Chris, Henry; Jenifer, Lange; Michelle, Ramirez; Paulina, Velez; Daisy, Bermúdez; Captain, Ifode; Maria, Ortega;

**INTRODUCTION:**

Lourdes Leconte, DCF Refugee Services Community Liaison for the Southern Region welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**PRESENTATION:**

Amanda St Jean, Regional Public Information Officer, Office of Communications and Legislative Affairs, Executive Office for Immigration Review, U.S. Department of Justice in Miami provided an overview of the Executive Office for Immigration Review. The goal of the Office is to adjudicate immigration cases by fairly, expeditiously, and uniformly interpreting and administering the Nation's immigration laws. the functions of EOIR are essentially apolitical and doesn't arrest or detain, it doesn't set immigration policy and is not part of DHS/ICE. EOIR has three components: the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge (OCIJ); the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) and the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer (OCAHO).

OCIJ decides whether foreign-born individuals, who are charged by DHS with violating immigration law, should be ordered removed from the United States or should be granted relief or protection from removal and be permitted to remain in this country. DHS initiates removal proceedings when it serves the individual with a charging document, called Notice to Appear (NTA), and files the NTA with one of EOIR's immigration courts.

The immigration court then schedules a removal hearing, referred to as a "master calendar" hearing (there may be one or multiple), followed by an "individual" hearing, where both parties present the merits of the case.

At the conclusion of the case, the immigration judge usually issues an oral decision, but on occasion will issue a written decision sometime after the hearing. An individual's first hearing before an immigration judge varies by location. In the detained setting, time from the DHS filing of a charging document with the immigration court to a first hearing is an average of approximately three weeks; in a non-detained setting, that average is approximately 12 weeks.

The BIA is EOIR's appellate component. BIA is the highest administrative body for interpreting and applying immigration laws; which primarily decides appeals of immigration judge decisions. Certain BIA decisions that the BIA designates as precedent decisions apply to immigration cases nationwide.

OCAHO hears cases that relate to 1) Employer sanctions for illegal hiring of unauthorized workers, 2) Document fraud, and 3) Unfair immigration-related employment practices. Unlike criminal courts, respondents in immigration court are not authorized attorney representation at taxpayer expense (except for special situations like respondents found to be mentally incompetent or unaccompanied children).

EOIR's Office of Legal Access Programs oversees a number of initiatives to help ensure that respondents understand their rights and have access to no-cost or low-cost representation, if it is available in the community. EOIR also works to assist free legal clinics at local law schools, local non-profits, and attorneys who wish to volunteer a portion of their time as pro bono counsel. EOIR's immigration courts are open daily to the public, with limited exceptions. EOIR's Office of Communications and Legislative Affairs would be delighted to coordinate your visit.

**REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:**

Ileana, Bustelo, RS Deputy Director, provided a brief update about the program.

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

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

- Volunteers are needed for the planning of an activity for the 2017 Welcoming Week September 15-24. No one answered the call

**REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATE (*Sent via E-Mail in June and July*)**

- USCIS Announces Citizenship and Integration Grant Opportunities Invitation to Negotiate
- ACF's Look Beneath the Surface (LBS) Funding Opp. Announcement

**Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM**

<b>SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – JULY 2017</b>
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**South Florida VOLAG Consortium  
July 5, 2017**

**Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Email</b>
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>
Jackie Carrion	Catholic Charities	<a href="mailto:jcarrion@ccadm.org">jcarrion@ccadm.org</a>
Evelyn Soto	Catholic Charities	<a href="mailto:esoto@ccadm.org">esoto@ccadm.org</a>
Carmen Torres	LIRS	<a href="mailto:ctorres@hotmail.com">ctorres@hotmail.com</a>
Gustavo Diaz	Youth Co-op/USCRI	<a href="mailto:gustavo.diaz@ycoop.mail.org">gustavo.diaz@ycoop.mail.org</a>
Bojan Bajic	Youth Co-op/USCRI	<a href="mailto:bbajic@ycoop.mail.org">bbajic@ycoop.mail.org</a>

Special Guest: N/A

**Reception and Placement Program updates**

Agency	June 2017	FY 2017 YTD
CC	0	7
CWS	12	82
EMM		25
IRC	1	52
LIRS	0	32
Youth Co-Op	2	20
World Relief		26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>244</b>

Discussion on current situation and the effect of SCOTUS decision. Discussion on the meaning of bonafide relationships and agencies tie to allocated clients. Agencies are not “bonafide” relationship. Both State Department and DHS are looking for “strong US Tie Relationship” so documentation proving tie is needed.

SIV recipients continue to be allowed entry. They are not counted in the refugee ceiling of 50,000. As of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 48856 refugees had entered the US. It is estimated that refugee ceiling will be reached by July 12<sup>th</sup>, if not sooner. Agencies continue to discuss office restructuring amid uncertainty of refugee program hold of 120 days.

FY 18 Reception and Placement future

Discussion of Refugee program for FY18 ensued. Uncertainty tied to both the US Supreme Court ban review taking place in October, along with Presidential Determination numbers.

Agencies continue to have same projections as submitted to State during consultations. Additional information regarding advocacy campaigns revolving around refugee program are pending.

**Matching Grant Program updates**

Agency	June 2017	FY 2017 YTD	NEW FY 17 SLOTS ALLOCATED-revised June 2017
CC	0	318	468
CWS	37	373	546
EMM		114	CLOSED
IRC	11	457	637
LIRS	54	318	483
Youth Co-Op	92	802	1115
World Relief		78	CLOSED
TOTAL	194	2460	

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 wait for proposed budget for FY18. Discussion also revolved around freeze of refugee program, and the remaining MG slots across the nation. Further guidance is expected from agencies national offices regarding unused slots. Distribution of new MG program referral percentage completed, to compensate for the closure of two MG affiliates.

**CAM Program updates**

Agencies noted a decrease in people inquiring on CAM application process. Uncertainty as to cause. No application filed by any agency in June.

**Parolee Orientation Program updates**

Month	Total	Cuban	Haitian	Left the county
June 2017	136	76	63	
YTD Jan-June	1468	1052	416	

POP continues looking for a way to work together with Refugee Health Clinic and DCF access sites to capture all the Cuban/Haitian entrants seen in the community. Inquiry was sent to Havana Cuban Interest Section regarding referral inclusion into visa package. Information provided that referral is put in the visa package, along with having notice in the lobby area for any visa recipient to take.

Other items:

- **Community Consultations-**

Agencies continue to discuss strategies to involve a broader range of community stakeholders.

- **Open position:**

CWS position open in Palm Beach Office.

- **Next meeting scheduled:**  
Aug 9, 2017 at 2pm, location CWS offices

<b>LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 2017</b>
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None

<b>EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 2017</b>
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**EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**  
**August 11, 2017**

- REVEST is enrolling students for the upcoming term beginning September 6, 2017 and ending December 22, 2017. So far over 3000 ESOL students have been enrolled program wide. Approximately 1250 have been tested and more orientations are planned. So far, 36 Orientation sessions have been scheduled. For current Cycle 74 the enrollment is 2173, and for Cycle 75 is around 3055.
- The REVEST Program has successfully finished vocational registrations for the current Term Summer 2175, thus completing the current contract year with the highest quantity of registrations in the Program's existence. We have been able to serve over 700 students registered in around 1300 courses until August 2017.
- REVEST has already started CCC and CTEC registrations for the Fall 2177 beginning on August 28th, 2017, and we have already served over 60 new students. We continue to hold Vocational retraining sessions for advisors based on the new changes in the MDC Information System.
- Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors July 27,28, 2017. All CASAS testing procedures were reviewed with instructors to ensure a successful testing session. CASAS testing is taking place Aug. 9,10,11, 2017. We expect completion rates to remain steady. All REVEST students were trained to use scantrons and employ basic test-taking skills. We are very proud of the hard work of our determined faculty and especially our students.
- World Refugee Day was celebrated on Wednesday, June 14, at Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus. Festivities included presentations, a panel discussion, and a concert that highlighted the contributions of refugees to this nation. Refugee services organizations were present to assist and provide information. We would like to thank all involved that made this special event possible.
- The total SAVES Program enrollment as of June 23, 2017, was 4,246. Of these, 1,503 are new students to the program, and 429 (100 more students than last meeting) 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 next trimester begins on August 21, 2017 and ends December 22, 2017. Schools are open for registration.
- Vouchers – Students that are ready for vocational/technical programs that are not offered at the current school they are attending (i.e., Baker Aviation, Miami Lakes Tech College) are being issued vouchers for books and tuition.
- Marketing/Student Orientations – SAVES is working closely with the M-DCPS marketing department to reach out to the community and get the word out on our programs. We are currently advertising via newspaper, radio, career fairs, opening of schools meetings, renovated website, etc.
- SAVES preliminary performance results for term 2016-2 (January 9 - April 7, 2017) are as follows: PSAV OCPs earned: 63% - (45% contract requirement) - ELI Completers: 64% - (40% contract requirement) - ELI LCP's earned: 51.24% - (40% contract requirement). SAVES surpassed all contract goals. We are very proud of these results and most of all for our students' achievements and performance.
- The GED in Spanish program continues to grow and is now available in 10 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, 7) Southridge Senior High (Palmetto Adult); 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. Total combined enrollment (SAVES and Non-SAVES youth) is over 600 students. 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 (<http://saves.dadeschools.net>). 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 <http://saves.dadeschools.com>

<b>REFUGEE HEALTH CLINIC REPORT – APRIL 2017</b>
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None

<b>EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – APRIL 2017</b>
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None

**USCIS UPDATE – APRIL 2017**

**USCIS Miami**  
**July 2017 Update**

❖ **REMINDER - Haitian TPS Re-Registration Period Ends Soon –**  
Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for eligible nationals of Haiti has been extended through Jan. 22, 2018. Current beneficiaries must re-register by July 24, 2017.

❖ **New I-485 –** USCIS has revised Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status. The new edition is dated 6/26/17. Beginning August 25<sup>th</sup>, USCIS will only accept the new edition and will no longer accept earlier versions of the form.

To read more - [https://www.uscis.gov/news/news-releases/uscis-introduces-redesigned-form-green-card-applicants?utm\\_source=homepagebanner&utm\\_campaign=gscrollout](https://www.uscis.gov/news/news-releases/uscis-introduces-redesigned-form-green-card-applicants?utm_source=homepagebanner&utm_campaign=gscrollout)

**Please note:** You are NOT required to submit Form I-693, Report of the Medical Examination and Vaccination Report at the time you file your adjustment application, but may do so if you wish. Because of the time-limited validity of Form I-693, you may choose to submit your Form I-693 after you file your Form I-485. You may also submit Form I-693 in person at an interview in a USCIS field office, if an interview is required. By waiting to submit Form I-693, you may avoid having to repeat the immigration medical examination.

❖ **Local Leadership Update -** Beginning July 17<sup>th</sup>, Linda Swacina will serve as the USCIS Acting Southeast Regional Director for 120 days. During this timeframe, Steve Koch will serve as the Acting District Director and Eileen Lopez-Tome will serve as Acting Deputy District Director of the Miami and Caribbean District.

❖ **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)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Type of Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
July 10th	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Doral Branch Library, 10785 NW 58 St. Doral, FL.
July 11th	4:00 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	West Dade Regional Library, 9445 Coral Way, Miami, FL.
July 11th	6:00 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Weston Branch Library, 4205 Bonaventure Blvd. Weston, FL.



July 11th	5:00 - 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	California Club Branch Library, 700 Ives Dairy Rd. Miami, FL.
July 17th	1:00 - 4:00 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Kendall Driver's License Center 11735 SW 147th Ave. Suite #23, Miami, FL.
July 17th	5:30 - 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	Northwest Regional Library, 3151 University Drive, Coral Springs, FL.
July 18th	10 am - 2:00 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Stephen P. Clark Government Center, Lobby, 111 NW 1st St. Miami, FL.
July 20th	4:00 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Kendale Lakes Branch Library, 15205 SW 88 St. Miami, FL.
July 20th	5:00 - 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	Arcola Lakes Branch Library, 8240 NW 7th Ave. Miami, FL.
July 24th	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Miami Lakes Branch Library, 6699 Windmill Gate Rd. Miami Lakes, FL.
July 25th	12:30 - 3:30 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Mall of the Americas Driver's License Center, 7795 W. Flagler St., Suite #82C, Miami, FL
July 25th	6:00 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Southwest Regional Library, 16835 Sheridan St. Pembroke Pines, FL.
July 26th	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Miramar Branch Library, 2050 Civic Center Place, Miramar, FL.

❖ **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 –
  - July 21 and 28
- Hialeah Field Office –
  - Saturday, July 15 and Saturday, July 29
- Kendall Field Office –
 

Please note: Kendall Field Office Ceremonies in July will take place at the Hialeah Field Office – July 13, 20 and 27
- Oakland Park Field Office
  - July 28<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup>