



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Caroll
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 10, 2015
TO: Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force
FROM: Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: October 9, 2015 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: December 11, 2015
Time: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon
Location: Miami-Dade College
Building 3, Room, Room 3208-09
300 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132
Contact: Lourdes Leconte
Office: (786) 257-5173
Cell: (305) 401-3374
E-Mail: Lourdes.ALeconte@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 2nd Avenue, Suite N-812 Miami, Florida 33128

**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 9, 2015**

ATTENDEES:

Bojan, Bajic; Sabine, Balmir-Derenoncourt; Lilliam, Bervis-Cruz; Dina, Birman; Ileana, Bustelo; Jackie, Carrion; Berta, Cassidy; Milly, Cartelle ; Diego, Castro; Suzy, Cop; Jorge, Costas; Maria, Diaz; Maria, Dominguez; Maria Esparza; Monica, Farias; Martha, Ferrer; Miriam J., Garcia; Emilie, Goeser; Miryam, Haarlammert; Julio Iglesias; Alen, Janjus; Lourdes, Leconte; Silvia, Lopez; Andy, Soler; Guillermo, Luna; Dorothy, Martin; Carmen, Medrano; Charlande, Michel,; Maria, Miranda; Eduardo, Moras, Eduardo; Janet, Nichols; Erica, Perdomo; Cristobal, Perez; Marta, Pizarro; Marcela, Quintero; Christine, Reis; Maria, Rodriguez; Veronica, Rodriguez; Leidy, Sevilla; Luisa, Sanchez; Evelyn, Soto; Carmen, Torres; Ana, Knap; Beatriz, Andre; Reyneiro, Hernandez; Mohammed, Shekir; German, Silva; Luz, Reyes; Niurka, Duncan , Sonia, Davis; Yovi, Alvarez; John, Parsons; Normand, Rocha; Isabel, Afanador; Imelda, Moise; Captain Ifode

INTRODUCTION:

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

PRESENTATION:

Ana Knap, Social Worker, Project UP-START, Homeless Education Program Division of Student Services, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools provided a brief overview of the Project. UP-START is program that assists schools with the identification, enrollment, and attendance of students in homeless situations. Each school has a designated School Homeless Liaison to help identify students in transition as well as work with Project UP-START staff on services for the student. Upon enrollment in the Project, students will automatically receive free lunch. Students can apply for transportation through the Project if they live over two miles from their school. Families or school staff can make an appointment to pick up backpacks and school supplies for students enrolled in the program. Efforts are made to expedite psycho-educational evaluations for children who may be gifted or who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties. Due to the high transiency rate among this student population, many are not diagnosed for learning problems as they move from school to school. Project UP-START also works to increase advocacy on behalf of students through dissemination of information to school-based personnel on homeless issues and available community resources.

Additionally, the program has an after-school tutorial component that is designed to supplement the learning taking place in select shelter sites. Activities to promote a healthy sense of self and to strengthen academic competence are part of the tutorial sessions. The parental component brings participants into the tutorial sessions to learn ways to help their children with homework, to read, or to observe the learning taking place. Parental involvement meetings are scheduled on a regular basis to encourage academic success of students. The program has a store that offers free service to all students and families that are enrolled. Families can schedule an appointment all year round in order to pick up a variety of items from the store at no cost. The items have all been donated by community partners who want to help families in need.

Beatriz Andre, attorney for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Miami Office, provided a brief presentation about EEOC's outreach programs. She shared general information about the EEOC, its mission, the employment discrimination laws enforced by EEOC and the charge/complaint process. She also stated EEOC representatives are available on a limited basis at no cost to make presentations and participate in meetings, conferences and seminars with employee and employer groups, professional associations, students, non-profit entities, community organizations and other members of the general public. She invited participants at the meeting who are employers to take advantage of these services and provided her contact information.

REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:

- A representative from the ACCESS program office in Miami spoke briefly about Implementation of the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependent (ABAWD) Time Limits for Food stamps benefits as of January 1, 2016.
- Ileana Bustelo, updated the group about the referral project and the VOLAG and RS monthly presentation at the Asylum office, a start date is not yet set for this initiative.
- The presence of Yovi G. Alvarez, Congressional Aid to the Honorable Mario Diaz – Balart, , Loren Parra, Regional Director for US Senator Bill Nelson along with Mohammad S. Shakir, Director of Asian American Advisory board for the Miami-Dade County Commission were acknowledged.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Task force End of year celebration, overwhelming number of participants agreed to meet at a restaurant after the meeting on December 11 for the customary luncheon.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

- Volunteers needed for the planning of World Refugee Day 2016

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

- National Faith Symposium to be held in Orlando, October 13-14th.
- ORR Policy Letter 16-03: Restrictive Language on I-94s Issued to Certain Haitians
- Scam Alert Announcement about Fake USCIS Calls
- HHS Partnership Center Newsletter: Updated ACA Toolkit and Grant Writing Webinars
- Family Emergency Communication Plan - FEMA.gov
- USCIS Invitation: SAVE Case Check Enhancements
- Connecting LGBTI Refugees & Asylees.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – OCTOBER, 2015

SOUTH FLORIDA VOLAG CONSORTIUM

October 7, 2015

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

CCS- Jilma Ruiz
CWS- Jose Sanchez
EMM-Charlande Michel
IRC- Ana Maria Teixeira
IRC- Oasis Pena
LSF- Carmen Torres
LSF- Ada Ferrer
Youth Co-op-Veronica Rodriguez,
Youth Co-op- Gustavo Diaz
WR-Maritza Graibe

Guests

DCF- Lourdes Leconte
DCF- Erica Perdomo

The VOLAG meeting was held at MedPlan Access in Hialeah on 10/7/2015 at 2:00 PM
Jose Sanchez called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

The Minutes and New Agenda were approved and the following items discussed.

- ❑ **Lourdes Leconte- DCF- Refugee Services, Articles about the Cuban Refugees in the Sun Sentinel**

Lourdes asked participants for feedback and thoughts regarding three articles published by the Sun Sentinel about Cuban refugees. They articles criticized Cuban refugees receiving welfare benefits and traveling back to Cuba once they adjust to permanent resident status. Resettlement agencies agreed that the articles were published unfairly with anti-immigrant sentiment and they omit the positive impact of Cuban refugees in South Florida.

- ❑ **R&P Arrivals, issues and concerns. Quarterly Community Consultation Report**

During last quarter of FY2015, CWS resettled 22 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 5 refugees from Iraq and 3 refugees from Burma. The IRC resettled Syrians, Iraqis and Colombians refugees.

❑ **Matching Grant numbers – October 2014 – September 2015**

Case Type	MG ENROLLMENTS BY MONTH												YTD
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	Total
1. Refugees	12	39	17	35	11	14	33	18	51	35	15	24	304
2. Asylees			1	1	0	1	9	5	4		0	4	25
3. VOT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0		0
4. Parolees/Cuban Entrants	231	223	453	302	284	370	309	280	269	302	328	114	3466
Total	243	262	471	338	295	385	351	303	324	337	343	142	3795

❑ **Refugee arrivals – October 2014 – September 2015**

Agency	Clients
CWS	99
EMM	43
IRC	124
LIRS	66
USCCB	51
USCRI/YC	61
WR	78
TOTAL	522

❑ **Matching Grant enrollments FY2015, issues and concerns.**

Agencies reported delays in I-767 applications. EAD delays continued to be of the biggest challenges for resettlement agencies during last quarter.

Agencies reported delays in Child Care applications. The current application process is only via email and some agencies reported delays in getting initial appointments.

Agencies reported delays with refugee health screenings. Appointments for the initial physical examination and immunizations for refugee children are taking up to 90 days. Resettlement agencies will reach out to community partners to expedite these screenings.

❑ **CAM Program updates**

Agency	Applications Submitted
CWS	21 total since July
EMM	1
IRC	8
LIRS	6
USCCB	0
USCRI/YC	5
WR	5 applications – 6 interviews and 4 DNAs

❑ **Parolee Orientation (POP)**

During the month of September, the Parolee Orientation Program provided services to 502 Cuban entrants. The total number of parolees serviced YTD is 5913.

❑ **Resettlement Agencies Consortium Flyer**

The South Florida Consortium Flyer was revised with updated contact information.

❑ **Other Items/ announces**

Resettlement agencies and Refugee Services provided a presentation on programs and benefits available to refugees in Miami Dade County to Medplan ACCESS Site in Hialeah.

Next Meeting: Next VOLAG Meeting is scheduled on Nov. 4, 2015 at Community Medical Group located at 6100 Blue Lagoon Drive Suite #365 Miami, Florida 33126

Next VOLAG Meeting is scheduled on January 13, 2016 at IRC -730 NW 107 Ave. Suite 100 Miami, Florida 33172 at 2:00 PM

❑ **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – OCTOBER 2015

Immigration and Legal Issues Sub Committee

Minutes for meeting on October 8, 2015

By Miriam J. Garcia

Attendance: Haydee Canas, Berta Cassidy, Luz Castilla, Maria R. Dominguez, Miriam J. Garcia, Brad Ginter, Lourdes Leconte, Lia Lujan, Bruce Marmar, Dorothy Martin, Christine Reis, Alexandra O. Yaya.

The Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee meeting was held on October 8, 2015 at the offices of World Relief where Berta Cassidy provided the USCIS update and Maria R. Dominguez provided the Miami Asylum Office update, and they answered questions as follows

- **NEW FORM G-1450.** The purpose of the form is to pay for N-400 application with a credit card.
- **63/ 64 Million A#'s.** Some agencies have reported Cuban paroles issued in an A number commencing in 063 or 064 and subsequent EADs issued in an A number commencing with 208. USCIS is aware of the issue and is working to resolve it. It appears to be the result of a computer interface problem. For now, for those individuals having both an A 063 or 064 xxx xxx **AND** an A208 xxx xxx number, please make note of both numbers. For those who have only one A# (A063/ A064) for both the parole and EAD, USCIS is working to ensure that the A063/ A064 number is entered manually into the system, if it is not in the system already.
- **EAD's.** USCIS is working on researching and resolving the issue related to EADs sent to attorneys' offices instead of clients.
- **I-485 INTERVIEW WAIVER CASES and RFE's.** Berta informed the attendees that Bruce Marmar will be conducting a national training on Cuban Adjustment Act.
- **AUTOMATION OF I-94 FOR HFRP PARTICIPANTS.** Jose Castellano from CBP will receive an invitation from the Legal Subcommittee to participate in the November, 2015 meeting.
- **MOBILE INFOPASS.** USCIS will be at the Government Center on October 21, 2015 from 9 am to 2 pm piloting the new mobile infopass. It is going to work by appointment only and to be able to get an appointment applicants should go to www.miamidade.gov/advocacy.
- **EMMA.** USCIS is launching a virtual assistant called EMMA. People will be able ask EMMA questions and get visual and voice responses. USCIS is inviting the public to ask her questions so she learns more. The more you ask her, the smarter she will get. Access EMMA at www.preview.uscis.gov.
- **CITIZENSHIP PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.** This campaign is to raise the level of awareness of the rights, responsibilities, and importance of US citizenship, and the free citizenship preparation resources available to permanent residents and immigrant-serving organizations. This campaign is part of the White House Task Force on New Americans. The campaign offers, PSAs, widgets, brochures, and posters. If someone is interested in these materials, let Berta know.
- **TPS FOR HAITI.** Re-registration ends October 26, 2015.

- **MIAMI ASYLUM OFFICE.** Maria Dominguez informed the members that an update concerning the new initiative on the Asylum Benefits Orientation will be provided by Refugee Services at the Task Force meeting tomorrow. She also added a reminder regarding the monthly ASYLUM bulletin available on the USCIS website if anyone wants to check the prioritizing of asylum applications for interview scheduling.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2015 from 10:00 A.M. until 12:00 P.M. at the Offices of World Relief located at 2150 SW 8th Street, 2nd Floor, Miami, Florida 33135.

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – OCTOBER 2015

REVEST successfully began classes for the current cycle on September 9, 2015 and we currently have over 2900 students registered for VESOL classes in our four Centers. Included in the enrollment were over 800 new students. The term will end December 17, 2015.

The REVEST Program has been able to conduct registrations for over 270 Vocational students during the current contract year, which began in September. We have been able to process around 500 courses for the current Term Fall 2015-1.

Likewise, we are getting ready for the new registrations corresponding to the next College Term Spring 2015-2, within the following weeks.

REVEST will begin conducting new student orientation/testing sessions for the upcoming term starting October 19th – Dec. 11th 2015. So far, 50 orientation sessions are scheduled and about 1500 students will be tested using the Pre CASAS placement test.

Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors Sept. 24, 25 2015. Topics included establishing I.D. requirements for instate tuition residency, professionalism in the workplace, and strategies to enhance the interactive classroom.

Hispanic Heritage is being celebrated throughout all Miami Dade College campuses. A complete schedule of events is available on the Miami Dade College web site. REVEST will showcase talented students in the REVEST talent show on Oct. 21st at the Wolfson Campus MDC from 12:00-1:00 in the building 2 breezeway. All are invited to join and enjoy!

SAVES

The total SAVES Program enrollment as of October 5, 2015, is 3,761. Of these, 2,098 are new students to the program. The current trimester ends on December 17, 2015. The next academic trimester will begin on January 4, 2015.

The SAVES Program will close registration for the current term during the 1st week of November at all of its 14 centers. Students will have to wait until the next trimester to enroll

with SAVES. In the meantime, students are able to enroll in the regular ESOL program with MDCPS.

The program continues to improve the completion rate of its ESOL and AGE students. The completion rate for 2014-2 was 90 %. The goal for this academic year is to reach and surpass all our performance measures in contract.

A SAVES District meeting was held September 16, 2015. Important information and updates were discussed with the school staff.

Hispanic Heritage is being celebrated throughout MDCPS. From art to music to food, schools are showcasing how Hispanics have helped shape the United States.

New SAVES success stories, which highlight the achievements of some of our students, have been uploaded to the SAVES website (<http://saves.dadeschools.net>)

If you have any questions about our program, you can call us or visit the SAVES website at <http://saves.dadeschools.net>

REFUGEE HEALTH CLINIC REPORT – OCTOBER 2015

None

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – OCTOBER 2015

None

USCIS UPDATE – OCTOBER 2015

USCIS Miami

USCIS Miami

October 2015 Update

- **Help Us Test Our Virtual Assistant: Emma** - We're excited to introduce the test version of Emma, our latest customer-friendly innovation. Emma is a computer-generated assistant. When complete, she'll be able to help you navigate through the USCIS website and find answers to your questions.

To visit our test website and learn more about Emma, please visit:

<http://preview.uscis.gov/emma>

- **Pay Your N-400 Application Fee with Your Credit Card** - You may pay for your N-400, Application for Naturalization, using a credit card. There is no additional fee to pay with your credit card. The N-400 is the only form that can be paid for by credit card using the G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transaction.

To read more, please visit:

<http://preview.uscis.gov/forms/fingerprints/pay-your-n-400-application-fee-your-credit-card>

- **Office Construction** – In an effort to accommodate additional USCIS personnel, the Miami District is currently undergoing office construction to add additional office space to our existing field offices. Impact on the public should be minimal. As a result of the construction, our customers may be scheduled for an Oath Ceremony at a field office other than the field office where they were interviewed. We anticipate construction will be completed in early 2016.
- **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
 - **October 13, 2015 from 8:00 am – 12 noon** – USCIS Information Table at Miami Gardens Community Center located at 16405 NW 25 Ave. Miami, FL.
 - **October 14, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** - USCIS Library Information Desk at Doral Branch Library located at 10785 NW 58 St. Doral, FL.
 - **October 15, 2015 from 4:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Kendale Lakes Branch Library located at 15205 SW 88 St. Miami, FL.
 - **October 17, 2015 from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm** – Naturalization Information Session at Kendale Lakes Branch Library located at 15205 SW 88 St. Miami, FL.
 - **October 17, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at North Central Branch Library located at 9590 NW 27 Ave. Miami, FL.
 - **October 20, 2015 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Weston Branch Library located at 4205 Bonaventure Blvd. Weston, FL.
 - **October 21, 2015 from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm** – Infopass Mobile Services Event at Stephen P. Clark Government Center located at 111 NW 1st St. Suite 1004. By appointment ONLY. Please visit - <http://www.miamidade.gov/advocacy/> for further information.
 - **October 21, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Doral Branch Library located at 10785 NW 58 St., Doral, FL.

- **October 24, 2015 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm** – USCIS Information Session as part of the White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders at NANAY Community Center located at 659 NE 125 St. N. Miami, FL.
- **October 26, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:00 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Northwest Regional Library located at 3151 University Dr. Coral Springs, FL.
- **October 27, 2015 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Southwest Regional Library located at 16835 Sheridan St. Pembroke Pines, FL.
- **October 28, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Miramar Branch Library located at 2050 Civic Center Place, Miramar, FL.
- **November 3, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at International Mall Branch Library located at 10315 NW 12 St. Doral, FL.
- **Upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies** - Below are scheduled dates for on-site administrative N-400 oath ceremonies and the corresponding field offices where the ceremonies will take place. 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 9, 16, 23 and 30
 - Hialeah Field Office – October 24 and 31
(These ceremonies will take place on Saturdays at the Miami Field Office)
 - Oakland Park Field Office – October 9, 16, 21, and 23
 - Kendall Field Office – October 9, 16, 23 and 30