



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Caroll
Secretary

**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 14, 2015**

ATTENDEES:

Acevedo, Sylvia; Bajic, Bojan; Balmir-Derenoncourt, Sabine; Bervis-Cruz, Lilliam; Carrion, Jackie; Cop Suzy; Coto, Yolanda; Diaz, Gustavo; Farias, Monica; Garcia, Miriam J.; Gimenez, Carmen; Grogan, Patti; Jimenez, Raisa; Leconte, Lourdes; Lopez, Silvia; Luna, Guillermo; Marrero, Dasiely; Martin, Dorothy; McGroty, Randolph; Medrano, Carmen; Michel, Charlande; Miranda, Maria; Morales, Elmer; Moras, Eduardo; Munoz, Arnold; Parsons, John; Pizarro, Marta; Quintero Marcela; Rivera, Oscar; Rodriguez, Veronica; Sanchez, Jose; Sanchez Luisa; Scott-Lightfoot, LaQuanna; Soto, Evelyn; Torres, Carmen; Pamela Ford; Ringler, Elizabeth; Davis Sonia; Ulloa, Jazmin; Araya, Soledad; Blunt Christina; Marrero Dasiely; Juan Lopez; Inelda, Canate; Luz, Reyes; Daisy Bermudez; Marcel Ortiz; Sanders, Desiree; Faircloth, Nancy .

INTRODUCTION:

Lourdes Leconte, DCF Refugee Services Community Liaison for the Southern Region welcomed the task force members.

PRESENTATION:

Victoria Mallette, Director of the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust provided a brief overview of the Miami-Dade County Continuum of Care program. She said the program was created 20 years ago to respond to the homelessness issue that had been plaguing the county at the time. There were no meaningful funding, no identified plan to address the increasing problem and a loose-knit collection of social service agencies and faith-based organizations serving the homeless. There were little to no coordination among the system of services and no involvement by the private sector and business community in the downtown area. In 1992, the state legislature passed the Food and Beverage tax with 85% of the collection going into addressing homelessness and 15% to domestic violence. The county commission approved that same year a three-tiered "Continuum of Care" homeless housing/services system. As of January 2015, Miami Dade has counted only 1,007 homeless in its streets and there are no encampments. In 2014, nearly 13,000 adults and children were placed into housing by the program. The program is addressing homelessness today by building infrastructure to increase the supply of affordable housing, access to services, as well as people's incomes and creating a coordinated intake process with a guarantee that No family with minor children will sleep on the streets. The program also offers help to people at risk of being homeless, individuals with eviction notices and those who need help with relocation. These programs are handled geographically and after the central intake is done the team assesses needs & assists accordingly.

401 NW 2nd Avenue, Suite N-812 Miami, Florida 33128

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

Christina Blunt, Trainer at Feeding South Florida , provided a presentation about the program whose aim is to end hunger in South Florida by providing immediate access to nutritious food, leading hunger and poverty advocacy efforts, and transforming lives through innovative programming and education.

Pam Ford, MS, CRPS-A, Peer Services Manager South Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc., gave a quick overview about the Network whose goal is to implement and oversee the coordinated system of behavioral health care within the Miami-Dade and Monroe communities. The system enhances prevention, treatment and recovery services for those at risk of or who are suffering from mental health and substance abuse problems. It helps individuals and families who are suffering from mental illness and addiction issues by allocating public funding to purchase a system of care to meet their needs. The system operates through a network of providers that are contracted to provide treatment and services for adults, adolescents and families who need care for behavioral health problems.

REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:

Patti Grogan, RS Director gave a PowerPoint presentation and shared with the audience the ever evolving challenges the program is faced with serving refugees in South Florida. She spoke in detail about the challenges the program is faced with notably the exponential growth of population eligible for services, the decrease in funding, the change in refugee populations the program is used to serving, and the change in the political environment. She also mentioned the Haitian Family Reunification Program (HFRP) that is underway. USCIS will be conducting approximately 5,000 HFRP interviews annually. This category will be also eligible for services and reminded RS contracted providers to be mindful of this new population when they are making staffing decisions in their organizations. Patti is looking for input from the RS contracted providers and partners to meet these new challenges.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The RS referral Process in Miami Dade - Project
- 2016 World Refugee Day Activities in the Miami area

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

- National Faith Symposium to be held in Orlando, October 13-14th.
- New Florida Refugee Health Program Administrator
- RS VISTA Project position openings
- Tampa Bay Now Has the First Welcoming County in Florida
- Connecting LGBT Refugees and the Broader American LGBT Community
- Program Announcement 2015-20 Refugee I-94 Automation
- SAVE Case Check Enhancements

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

NEXT MEETING:

**Task Force Meeting, October 09, 2015 @ 10:00 a.m.
Miami Dade College Bldg. 3 Room 3208-09 300 NE 2nd Ave, Miami FL 33132**

SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – AUGUST, 2015

SOUTH FLORIDA VOLAG CONSORTIUM

August 5, 2015

ATTENDEES:

CCS- Evelyn Soto
CCS- Jackie Carrion
CWS- Jose Sanchez
CWS-Francisco Figueroa
EMM-Charlande Michel
LSF- Carmen Torres
IRC-Oasis Pena,
IRC-Ana Maria Teixeira
Youth Co-op-Veronica Rodriguez,
Youth Co-op –Gustavo Diaz
Youth Co-op- Bojan Bajic
WR-Guillermo Luna,
WR- Maritza Graive
WR- Saidenys Barrios

Guests

DCF-RS- Ileana Bustelo
DCF-RS-Erica Perdomo
DCF-RS- Lourdes M. Leconte

The VOLAG meeting was held at IRC on August 5th, 2015

Jose Sanchez called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

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

Ileana Bustelo talked to the group about the importance of cross training DCF Access Sites on social services available and referrals for Cuban and Haitian entrants. Resettlement agencies agreed that all Cuban and Haitian entrants should be first referred to CWS to receive initial orientations, and consequently, referrals to access benefits in Miami Dade County.

Resettlement agencies will participate in trainings with DCF ACCESS partners (Community Medical Group and Medplan) to streamline the referral process. Refugee Services will be notified with training dates and locations.

Ileana Bustelo spoke about how the media was presenting refugee issues to the community. She mentioned that journalists from the Sun Sentinel published few refugee stories in a negative way. Resettlement agencies agreed to be prepared to present and highlight the positive impact of refugee resettlement in South Florida.

Ileana Bustelo informed the group that Refugee Services provided the Sun Sentinel with information and data on refugee arrivals and an invitation to participate in Refugee Task Force meetings was also extended.

Lourdes Leconte informed the group that Miami Dade County is looking for stories of former refugees and asylees for a film that will project the positive impact of they have had in our community. Lourdes asked for clients that could be part of this project. The filming will be air in the County web camera.

Ileana Bustelo presented to the group a new initiative from USCIS- Asylum Unit. The project consists of orientations to Asylees at the Miami Asylum Unit with information on the benefits and services available. Orientations will be provided once a month and resettlement agencies will be part of the presentations on a rotating basis. Ileana Bustelo presented a draft of the presentation to the group and requested feedback before August 28th, 2015.

It was informed about the large number of refugees the Department of States is expecting to arrive during the last quarter of 2015. Resettlement agencies have used almost all MG slots for FY 2015 and they have requested additional numbers to ORR. Refugee Services is aware of the large amount of refugees expected to arrive during this coming quarter.

Ileana Bustelo provided information to the group about a pilot program at Miami Dade Public Schools to provide young adults with GED classes in a high school setting. RS is working in collaboration with Coral Park Senior High and the idea is to promote the initiative within the refugee population.

- ❑ **Matching Grant enrollments FY2015, MG Changes**
- Match Grant Enrollments**

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			265
2. Asylees			1	1	0	1	9	5	4				21
3. VOT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0
4. Parolees/Cuban Entrants	231	223	453	302	284	370	309	280	269	302			3023
Total	243	262	471	338	295	385	351	303	324	337			3309

□ R&P arrivals, issues and concerns – Oct. 2014 – Feb. 2015

Agency	Clients
CWS	84
EMM	40
IRC	104
LIRS	64
USCCB	50
USCRI/YC	58
WR	56
TOTAL	427

Agencies reported Colombians, Congolese and Syrians as new refugee populations receiving resettlement services in South Florida. The IRC informed that the Syrian Community in South Florida has been receptive and supportive with the families resettled.

World Relief raised concerns on the social security delays. Many elderly refugees applying for SSI have been waiting over three months due social security delays.

An invitation to Maria Diaz from Social Security will be extended.

□ CAM Program updates

- LIRS – 5 application and 2 have already interviews
- EMM- 2 applications completed and submitted
- WR - 30 submitted and 5 have already interviews.
- Youth Coop- 2 applications and 1 interview
- IRC -5 applications and 2 interviews.

CWS- 16 applications submitted

❑ **Parolee Orientation (POP)**

Parolee Orientation Program reported 570 arrivals during July, 2015. Year to date, January to July, 2015, POP has processed 3132 Cuban parolees.

❑ **Haitian Family Reunification Program.**

CWS informed that the HFRP is about to be operational. The first Haitians parolees are expected to arrive during the last quarter of FY2015.

Next Meeting

Next VOLAG Meeting is scheduled on September 2, 2015 at Catholic Charities- 7707 NW 2 Ave. Miami, Florida 33150- at 2:00 PM

IMMIGRATION & LEGAL ISSUES SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 2015

MIAMI AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE
Immigration and Legal Issues Sub Committee
Minutes for meeting on August 13, 2015
 By Miriam J. Garcia

Attendance: Haydee Canas, Berta Cassidy, Luz Castilla, Miriam J. Garcia, Brad Ginter, Patti Grogan, Lourdes Leconte, Lia Lujan, Dorothy Martin, Charlande Michel, Michelle Ortiz.

The Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee meeting was held on August 13, 2015 at the offices of World Relief. Patti Grogan, Director of Refugee Services attended the meeting and Berta Cassidy provided the USCIS update and answered questions as follows:

- **LOCAL OFFICE BUILD-OUT AND STAFFING.** USCIS Hialeah Field Office will start experiencing the build-out this week and the Naturalization room will be impacted. They will start scheduling applicants for Oath Ceremonies on Saturdays in the Miami Field Office. The Miami Field Office Director Anouchka Castro accepted a position with Headquarters. In her place they will have Conrad Zaragoza as Acting Field Office Director. The Kendall Acting Field Office Director will be Paul Buono.
- **BIA LISTING.** USCIS updated the local BIA listing.
- **DUPLICATE EAD's AND I-551's.** Due to a technical problem USCIS issued duplicate employment authorization cards and alien registration cards. USCIS will send instructions on how to return the duplicate card. It is very important to update the mailing

address. This technical problem created a backlog of one (1) week for EAD's and three (3) to four (4) weeks for I-551's.

- **HFRP (HAITIAN FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROGRAM).** USCIS reported that it is too early to anticipate the number of applicants who will be coming under this program in Florida. They want to remind that only petitioners who receive the invitation can participate in the program. Petitioners have to make sure to fill out the forms properly and to submit the appropriate fee for I-131 which is \$360.00 or the fee waiver request.
- **PROVISIONAL WAIVERS.** On 07/22/2015 USCIS published a proposed rule in the Federal Register that would expand eligibility for provisional waivers for unlawful presence and is seeking public comments until September 21, 2015.
- **RFE's.** Berta is requesting a list of cases where RFE's have been sent only to clients and not to attorneys or Accredited Representatives.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 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 – AUGUST 2015

Aug. 14, 2015

- REVEST is enrolling students for the upcoming term beginning Sept. 9 – Dec. 17, 2015. So far over 2250 ESOL students have been enrolled program wide and more are expected. Vocational training enrollment is ongoing.
- The REVEST Program has been able to conduct registrations for over 700 Vocational students during the current contract year that is about to finalize in August. During this period, which comprises MDC Terms Fall 2014-1, Spring 2014-2 and Summer 2014-3, we were able to process 1179 courses. Likewise, we have already started new registrations for the next College Term 2015-1, which will extend to the end of the month.
- As we prepare for the next contract year, REVEST is working on adding new courses and Programs to our list of Vocational offerings.
- Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors July 16th and 17th. All CASAS testing procedures were reviewed with instructors to ensure a successful testing session. CASAS testing is taking place Aug. 5th, 6th and 7th.

- REVEST staff and clients attended and participated in the World Refugee Day celebration at the Government Center on June 12, 2015, sponsored by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). This was a huge success with lots of important information available to clients and wonderful performances celebrating the resilience and strength of our clients. It was a very meaningful and uplifting event.
- World Refugee Day was a success at all REVEST centers. These events took on June 11th 2015. Students were invited to share their experiences and reflect on how they have adjusted to living in the United States. Much was learned and shared with great participation including all staff and clients. It was a great experience for all.
- REVEST continues negotiations on the new contract for the upcoming year.
- SAVES ended their 2014-3 trimester on July 29, 2015. In total, the program enrolled and rendered services to **3,169** students during the final trimester of the 2014-2015 academic year.
- The first trimester of the 2014-2015 academic year begins on August 24, 2015. All of the 16 SAVES school sites will open for registration on Thursday, August 20, 2015. The program expects to register and provide services to over 3,500 students next trimester.
- SAVES will continue offering evaluation and translation services to its students through Joseph & Silny. The next session will take place in mid-September. Students greatly benefit from these services since they facilitate the process of finding employment.
- New SAVES success stories, which highlight the achievements of some of our students, have been uploaded to the SAVES website (<http://saves.dadeschools.net>)
- Sponsored by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), a great celebration to observe World Refugee Day took place at the Government Center on June 12. From music, arts, and crafts to information tables and performances by refugee clients, it was a beautiful way to acknowledge all the refugees and asylees' contributions to our community.
- The next SAVES Program District Meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. at Hialeah-Miami Lakes Adult Education Center. Please contact our office if you are interested in attending and/or presenting.

- 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 – AUGUST 2015

None

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – AUGUST 2015

None

USCIS UPDATE – AUGUST 2015

USCIS Miami

USCIS Miami

August 2015 Update

- **USCIS Launches Citizenship Public Awareness Initiative** – Early last month, USCIS released a series of promotional materials as part of the Citizenship Public Education and Awareness Initiative. This media campaign builds on a similar effort from 2011 and is being launched under the umbrella of the Task Force on New Americans and President Obama’s executive actions on immigration.

To read more about this initiative and view products and materials, please visit:

<http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/organizations/citizenship-public-education-and-awareness-initiative>

- **Update for DACA Recipients Who Received 3-year Work Permits** - USCIS has accounted for over 99 percent of the approximately 2,600 identified invalid work permits requiring return. The recall only applied to SOME individuals who received a card after the Feb. 16, 2015, court order. There are approximately 108,000 individuals who have valid 3-year DACA work permits and do not need to return them.

To read more, please visit:

<http://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/update-daca-recipients-who-received-3-year-work-permits>

- **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
- **August 11, 2015 from 8 am – 12 noon** – USCIS Information Table at Miami Gardens Community Center located at 16405 NW 25 Ave. Miami, FL.
- **August 11, 2015 from 4:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at West Dade Regional Library located at 9445 Coral Way Miami, FL.
- **August 18, 2015 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Weston Branch Library located at 4205 Bonaventure Blvd. Weston, FL.
- **August 19, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** - USCIS Library Information Desk at Doral Branch Library located at 10785 NW 58 St. Doral, FL.
- **August 20, 2015 from 4:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Kendale Lakes Branch Library located at 15205 SW 88 St. Miami, FL.
- **August 24, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:00 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Northwest Regional Library located at 3151 University Dr. Coral Springs, FL.
- **August 25, 2015 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Southwest Regional Library located at 16835 Sheridan St. Pembroke Pines, FL.
- **August 26, 2015 from 1:00 – 5:00 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Homestead Branch Library located at 700 N. Homestead Blvd. Homestead, FL.
- **August 26, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Miramar Branch Library located at 2050 Civic Center Place Miramar, 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 – August 7, 14, 21, and 28

- Hialeah Field Office – August 7, 2015

Saturdays, August 15 and 29
(Will be held at the Miami Field Office)

- Oakland Park Field Office – August 14 and 21

- Kendall Field Office – August 7, 14, 21, and 28