



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 10, 2015**

ATTENDEES:

Aldana, Diana; Bajic, Bojan; Balmir-Derenoncourt, Sabine; Bervis-Cruz, Lilliam; Birman, Dina Dr.; Bustelo, Ileana; Carrion, Jackie; Cartelle, Milly; Chavez, Eduardo; Delgado, Manny; Dilme-Bejel, Adria; Dominguez, Maria; Esparra, Aileen; Farias Monica; Ferrer, Martha; Figuerora, Francisco; Garcia, Edith; Garcia, Miriam J.; Gil, Felicia; Goeser, Emile; Gabriel Jacqueline; Grogan, Patti; Haarlammert, Miryam; Iglesias, Julio; Janjus Alen; Leconte, Lourdes; Lopez, Silvia; Martin, Dorothy; Martins, Damaris; Medrano, Carmen; Michel, Charlande; Perez, Cristobal; Perez, Yeen; Quintero Marcela; Rodriguez, Veronica; Silva German; Torres, Carmen; Ruth, Valenzuela; Vallejo, Ileana; Yarce, Virginia; Ramirez, Yolanda; Beatriz Andre; Melissa Jaramillo; Hassel Lopez; Raymond Grovie; David Brown; David Ocasio; Juan Lopez; Arnaldo Martinez; Prudent, Pamela; Amanda Swewall; Amada Perez; Danilo Franklyn; Monica Banaman; Tatiana Perrino; Leidy Sevilla;

INTRODUCTION:

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

PRESENTATION:

Melissa Jaramillo, Manager, Community Outreach for the Step Up For Students program provided a brief overview of the program. Step Up For Students was created to help alleviate the enormous educational challenges faced by children in Florida who live in or near poverty. The program provides Tax Credit Scholarships to students in K-12 who come from low-income families. These scholarships allow the students to consider a participating private school or an out-of-district public school that may better suit their individual needs. This program is aimed at helping the students who often are at the greatest disadvantage in modern education. Nearly 70 percent of the scholarship students are African-American or Hispanic. The scholarship helps to cover private school tuition and fees and other expenses, such as books, transportation, uniforms and etc....

The scholarship amount varies according to grade, county and disability, but the average amount for most students in 2015-16 is \$10,000. Students with the most severe disabilities are eligible for a higher scholarship amount. The scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and can be transferred to other eligible schools if the student moves within the state, or simply wants to attend a different Step Up partner school.

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

Amanda Perez and Danilo Franklyn from the USCIS office provided a presentation on Immigration Scams and the Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (UPIL).

Amanda said many people offer help with immigration services but unfortunately, not all are authorized to do so. The term unauthorized practice of Immigration law (UPIL) refers to the provision of legal advice and or representation by anyone not authorized to do so. Legal advice may include something like how to answer questions on your immigration forms and what option a petitioner may have. While many of these unauthorized practitioners mean well, all too many of them are out to rip you off. This is against the law and may be considered an immigration services scam. Individuals or organizations engaged in the unauthorized practice of immigration law may also be involved in other deceptive activities, including maintaining websites that resemble to USCIS.Gov, selling USCIS forms, applying for benefits on behalf of people ineligible for benefits etc. UPIL can affect anyone. Lack of knowledge about the immigration system makes it easier for someone to fall prey to scams. If you need help filing an application or petition with USCIS, be sure to seek assistance from the right place, and from people that are authorized to help. Going to the wrong place can delay your application or petition and cost you unnecessary fees.

USCIS wants to combat immigration services scams by equipping applicants, legal service providers and community-based organizations with the knowledge and tools they need to detect and protect themselves from dishonest practices. USCIS has partnered with several government agencies to identify resources that can help individuals avoid immigration services scams. One must also beware of Telephone Scams, in most instances, scammers will be posing as USCIS personnel or other government official and request personal information. There are also the Notarios, these individuals were attorneys in their home countries. They are mostly from Latin America, but in the US notarios are notary publics, people appointed by state governments to witness the signing of important documents and administer oaths. Notarios, are not authorized to provide any legal services related to immigration.

You can always report scams to the Federal Trade Commission. You may also file a complaint in your state. Everyone is encouraged to report scammers and reporting scams will not affect one's immigration application or petition. Also, many states allow you to report scams anonymously. Please help stop the unauthorized practice of immigration law by standing up to scammers and reporting them.

REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATE:

David Brown and Ruth Valenzuela from the Department of Motor Vehicle provided clarification on requirements to obtain a no fee Florida ID.

The Department of Motor Vehicle has several programs in place to issue identification cards at no cost. Categories of individuals that may qualify can be homeless, disable veterans and those who are at or below the poverty level. Some in our refugee population may qualify with the latter. Customers who provide proof indicating their income is at or below 100% of the federal Poverty Level are eligible to apply for an original replacement or renewal identification (ID) card at no charge. The applicant must provide the poverty level certification copy of a tax return or

proof of enrollment in ACCESS benefits .The same Standard issuance requirements for a Florida Identification card are not waived for this group however.

Patti Grogan, the new Refugee Services (RS) Director addressed the taskforce and gave the audience a background of her beginning with the refugee Services Program. She spoke enthusiastically about the program and the goals she has set forth for it, for one expansion of the relationship with colleges and universities in the Miami area. She gave examples of flourishing relationships in other parts of the state and the realization that have come as a result. She mentioned the coordination and structure of referrals among the RS providers in Miami Dade. Some providers have voiced that an informal process exists and maybe we can build on that to create a formal process. Adria has started working on a process. She is currently visiting providers to understand and collect information on their referral system and doing brief interviews with them. Another possible process would be to interview refugees as they arrive to see the system and referrals from their perspective: how hard is it to navigate? What works?

The second goal in her plan is to address issues related to older refugees/high school students. She said the program receives about 2,900 kids throughout the state with the majority of them in Miami Dade. She would like the program and youth providers to partner with the universities in the area and set up programs to help these kids succeed.

Her third goal is to address the issue related to refugee women and labor. The program will be looking at the disparities that may impede refugee women from accessing the Adult Education program, the workforce, and achieve economic self-sufficiency. The director is looking for input from the RS providers and partners to meet these new goals.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- World Refugee Day 2015 Work Group Meeting date is to be determined.
- The Center for Survivors of Torture will have a workshop on Program Building and how to access nontraditional funding by looking at different funding sources in a relevant interactive model on April 27th and 28th at University of Miami.

REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATE (Sent via E-Mail in March and April)

- ORR funding opportunity - discretionary grant for the Refugee (IDA) Program
- Refugee/ Torture upcoming conference in Miami
- ACF's blog focusing national attention on our recent consultation
- Restoring Our Kids Report
- Invitation to Negotiate – Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program in Miami-Dade County – ITN # SNR15K02
- 2015 Federal Poverty Level Changes and Updated Consolidated Need Standards
- EEOC Public Meeting for Immigrant, Refugee, Migrant and Farmworker Advocates
- New Deputy Director for Refugee Services
- Register for our Refugee Leadership and Engagement Webinar

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

MEETINGS:

**Friday June 12, World Refugee Day Celebration
@ Stephen Clark Miami Dade County Government Center
111 NW 1st Street Miami FL
Task Force Meeting, August 14, 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 – APRIL, 2015

South Florida Resettlement Agencies Consortium

Attendees:

CWS-Jose Sanchez

CCS-Jackie Carrion, Evelyn Soto

EMM-Charlande Michel

LSF-Carmen Torres

IRC- Ana Maria Teixeira

Youth Co-op-Veronica Rodriguez, Borjan Bajic, Guatavo Diaz

WR-Guillermo Luna, Martiza Graibe

Guests:

Mame Fatou Gueye-Ndoye-IOM POE Supervisor Miami

The Resettlement Agencies meeting was held at IRC on May 6th, 2015

Mame Fatou informed:

IOM seen decrease in arrivals from Cuba, but noticed higher numbers in other populations nationwide. She is expecting projections from Havana for FY16 in the next few weeks. Syrian projections are increasing.

Refugees coming out of Havana are mostly single cases. Congolese clients are arriving along with Syrians. East Asia numbers also low. Colombian cases coming out of Quito are fewer than before. They are still seeing Cuban sit down cases and split cases. Ms. Fatou is putting together statistical report regarding split cases and sit down cases which needs to be sent to RSC Havana. Some cases have been recalled the travel package, but IOM is not aware why.

IOM has opened offices in CAM countries already Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Guillermo Luna has alerted of possible new wave of minors traveling during the summer, who will not wait for CAM program application.

CWS hosting people from USCIS/Cuban Interest section on May 7th.

Announcement: Guillermo Luna WR is retiring within the next few weeks. His last day will be May 31. Replacement coming from Fort Worth, Texas, his name is John Parsons who is been working with WR for 35 years.

Match Grant Enrollments

FY2015 MG Enrollments by Clientele Population

Client Type	Enrollments by month and client type												YTD
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	Total
1. Refugees	12	39	17	35	11	14	33						161
2. Asylees	0	0	1	1	0	1	9						12
3. Victims of Trafficking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						0
4. Cuban Entrants	231	223	453	302	284	370	309						2172
Total	243	262	471	338	295	385	342	0	0	0	0	0	2345

MG proposal- there is an increase of 10, 000 slots for FY16. Budget has not been approved yet. RAs in consultation with Head Quarters are looking into capacity and ability to raise match for additional numbers. Concern was how to raise the match.

RP Arrivals, issues and concerns – Oct 2014-April 2015

All offices in Miami are very slow in arrivals.

CWS	57
EMM	29
IRC	75
LIRS	44
USCCB	36
USCRI/YC	50
WR	42
Total	276

CAM Program Updates

- CWS has seen 6 cases, filed 2
- EMM, evaluated 3, only 1 eligible
- WR , 16 filed, 1 DNA already
- IRC has filed 2

Outreach is being done by several of the agencies. Youth Co-op in Palm Beach reached out to Guatemalan center.

CWS is meeting with three consulates Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to outreach for CAM beneficiaries.

POP

April 392 YTD 3309

Issues/announcements

EAD delays continue. Regardless of payment or fee waiver. There have been issues with the post office.

Delay in SS cards still continue.

EMM has 3 positions available, RP Case Management, Job Developer and Immigration Specialist.

Next Meeting

June 3, 2015 at Lutheran Services at 2:00pm

Adjournment

IMMIGRATION & LEGAL ISSUES SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES – MARCH 2015

Immigration and Legal Issues Sub Committee

Minutes for meeting on April 9, 2015

By Miriam J. Garcia

Attendance: Yolanda Coto, Miriam J. Garcia, Yanelys Garcia, Brad Ginter, Marie Jean, Dorothy Martin, Lucio Perez-Reynoso, Amanda Sewall, Alexandra O. Yaya.

The Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee meeting was held on April 9, 2015 at the offices of World Relief where Amanda Sewall. District Congressional Lead covered for Berta Cassidy and provided the USCIS update and answered questions as follows:

- **STAKEHOLDER MEETING ON HAITIAN FAMILY REUNIFICATION PAROLE (HFRP) PROGRAM.** The meeting took place on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at the USCIS Miami Field Office. There were a lot of concerns regarding petitioners misplacing or losing the approval notices, copies of which must be included in the packet going to NVC after receiving the invitation to participate in the program. NVC will be accepting a screenshot from the USCIS check status page where it is stated that the case has been approved in lieu of the approval notice. NVC will modify the invitation letter to highlight this issue. USCIS will hold another stakeholder meeting on this topic on Thursday, May 7, 2015. Location TBD and Maura Nicholson will again be a special speaker.
- **Q FLOW.** This is a program USCIS is using in Hialeah and Oakland Park Field Offices and it is on the first stage. Applicants who come for interview will be called in by a

number and not by their names. Applicants cannot hand in their interview appointment letter earlier than 15 minutes of their scheduled time. USCIS wants to make sure applicants don't wait too long from checking in to calling them for an interview.

- **TRANSFER OUTS.** USCIS has a huge workload and will start transferring pending cases to different offices to be adjudicated. The cases that will be transferred are pending I-129F, I-140, I-485, I-821D together with I-765.
- **ELIS.** Form I-90 is now available on Elis for electronic submission.
- **USCIS CITIZENSHIP AND INTEGRATION GRANT PROGRAM.** USCIS is inviting to participate in a teleconference on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 from 2 to 3:30 pm to discuss the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the fiscal year 2015 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program. All applications are due by May 15, 2015.
- **DAPA AND EXPANSION OF DACA.** A federal court has issued a preliminary injunction preventing USCIS from accepting requests for DAPA and expansion of DACA. Advise people to be aware of immigration scams.
- **I-765 APPROVAL NOTICE TO ATTORNEYS.** USCIS found out there was a glitch on one of two systems.
- **FORM G-28.** There is a new edition of this form dated 03/04/2015 which consists of 4 pages and includes 2 boxes that allows applicants to check if they want their notices to go to their attorney of record or accredited representative and/or to send any secure identity documents to the business address of their attorney of record or accredited representative. On 04/13/2015 USCIS will accept only the 03/04/2015 edition. USCIS will not accept editions dated 02/28/2013 or earlier on or after 04/13/2015.
- **EOIR29 NOTICE TO APPEAL.** They will have a new edition soon.
- **TPS LATE RE-REGISTRATION.** Beneficiaries who are eligible to re-register for TPS but did not file their applications before the deadline for their re-registration period, USCIS reminds them to follow the guidance on USCIS web page. They must submit a letter that explains their reason for filing late with their application.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 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 – APRIL 2015

REVEST is enrolling students for the upcoming term beginning May 6 and ending Aug. 22, 2015. So far over 2790 ESOL students have been enrolled program wide and more are expected. Demand continues to grow for an opportunity to receive VESOL and Vocational classes.

During the current Term (Spring Term / 2014-2), REVEST has been able to process registrations for over 300 new vocational students in over 600 training courses. In addition, we are successfully working on the new registrations for CTEC and CCC courses for the following Term (summer / 2014-3).

We continue working on the inclusion of new CWE courses and CCC Programs to our lists of Vocational offerings, which will provide our students with more options towards their professional and personal goals.

REVEST Faculty are being trained in the new learning management system (Black Board) at Miami Dade College. All REVEST classes are expected to migrate to the new system for the fall term starting in September, 2015.

Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors March 26th and 27th. All CASAS testing procedures were reviewed with instructors to ensure a successful testing session. CASAS testing is taking place April 8th, 9th and 10th, 2015. We expect high completion rates.

REVEST will begin contract negotiations shortly and is looking forward to continuous positive outcomes.

SAVES reports that as of April 6, 2015, total enrollment at its 16 school sites numbered 3,302 students. Of these, 1,674 are new students to the program. The current trimester ends on April 23, 2015. The next academic trimester (2014-3) will begin on April 27, 2015, and end on July 29, 2015.

SAVES is preparing for the summer term. Registration has begun for both Adult General Education (AGE) and Vocational classes. The program expects to register and provide services to about 4,000 students next trimester.

SAVES is proud to report that the program continues to improve its overall performance. Performance measure results are as follows:

Eighty Nine percent (89%) of clients attempting English Language instruction resulted in completion. This performance measure was surpassed by 49%.

Forty percent (40%) of English Language Instruction courses completed by SAVES clients resulted in a Literacy Completion Point (LCP). This performance measure was met.

Forty-seven percent (47%) of all vocational training courses ending for each SAVES client within the reporting period resulted in documented progress. This performance measure was surpassed by 2%.

This improvement is the result of new initiatives, student accountability and commitment to the program, career pathways orientations, data-driven instruction, case management, and continuous follow up.

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

The next SAVES Program District Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 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 – APRIL 2015

None

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – APRIL 2015

None

USCIS UPDATE – APRIL 2015

USCIS Miami

May 2015 Update

Fiscal Year 2015 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program - On April 1, 2015, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) began accepting applications for the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, a competitive grant funding opportunity for organizations that prepare permanent residents for naturalization and promote civic integration through increased knowledge of English, U.S. history and civics. USCIS will offer up to \$10 million in competitive funding for citizenship preparation programs in communities across the country.

This funding opportunity is for public or non-profit organizations that prepare permanent residents for citizenship by offering both citizenship instruction **and** naturalization application services. **Applications are due by May 15, 2015.**

To read more about the FY 2015 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program -

<http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/citizenship-and-integration-grant-program>

Form I-90 is Now Available in USCIS ELIS - The [Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card](#) is now available in the [USCIS Electronic Immigration System \(USCIS ELIS\)](#). USCIS ELIS is an online, account-based system that allows you to submit and view certain immigration benefit requests and receive electronic notification of decisions and real-time case status updates.

To read more about ELIS - http://www.uscis.gov/uscis-elis?utm_medium=email&utm_source=announcement&utm_campaign=limited_introduction

To get started on ELIS - <http://www.uscis.gov/uscis-elis/log-uscis-elis>

- **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.

- **May 8, 2015 from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm - Public Service Recognition Week Event.**
Kendall Field Office Open House taking place at 14675 SW 120 St. Miami, FL. In addition to USCIS, the Miami Passport Agency, the Social Security Administration, the Driver's License Office (Bureau of Credentialing Services), and the Miami-Dade County Elections Department will participate in this event.
- **May 14, 2015 from 4:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at West Dade Regional Library located at 9445 Coral Way Miami, FL.
- **May 19, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at the Miami Beach Regional Library located at 227 22nd St. Miami Beach, FL.
- **May 19, 2015 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Weston Branch Library located at 4205 Bonaventure Blvd. Weston, FL.
- **May 20, 2015 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm** - USCIS Library Information Desk at Doral Branch Library located at 10785 NW 58 St. Doral, FL.
- **May 21, 2015 from 4:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Kendale Lakes Branch Library located at 15205 SW 88 St. Miami, FL.
- **May 26, 2015 from 6:00 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at the Southwest Regional Library located at 16835 Sheridan St. Pembroke Pines, FL.
- **May 27, 2015 from 1:00 – 5:00 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Homestead Branch Library located at 700 N. Homestead Blvd. Homestead, FL.
- **May 27, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Miramar Branch Library located at 2050 Civic Center Place Miramar, FL.
- **May 27, 2015 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** – USCIS Library Information Desk at Northwest Regional Library located at 3151 University Dr. Coral Springs, 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 – May 8, 15, 21, 22, and 29
 - Hialeah Field Office – May 15 and 29
 - Oakland Park Field Office – May 8, 15, 22 and 29
 - Kendall Field Office – May 8, 15 and 22