



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 16, 2021
TO: Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force
FROM: Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: February 12, 2021, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: April 9, 2021
Time: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon
Location: Via Teams
[Click here to join the meeting](#)
Contact: Lourdes Leconte
Office: (786) 257-5173
Cell: (305) 401-3374
E-Mail: Lourdes.Leconte@myflfamilies.com

This taskforce 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
FEBRUARY 12, 2021****ATTENDEES:**

David Draper, Lourdes Leconte, Iris Jackson, Even Sloop, Maria Dominguez, Evelyn Soto, Sonia, Arraut, Edgar Tobon, Carlos Naranjo, Ileana Vallejo, Eduardo Chavez, Paulina Velez, Luz Reyes, David Gilbert, Yeen Perez, Monica Farias, Osmin Bejerano, Sandrina Portillo, Duncan Sosa, Veronica Rodriguez, Emilie Goeser, Felicia Gil, Evelyn Trujillo, Leydi Sosa, Elaine McArthur, Elmer Morales, Nina, Roque, Sergio Mora, Carmen Torres, Paula Sobrero Stambuk, Faith Hurt, Sherry Capers, Viviane Saide, Emillie Goeser, David Claros, Krystina, Francois, Roketa Mansfield, Miriam Rosario, LeAndra Stafford, Nancy Faircloth, Eduardo Moras, Glenda Anton, Mitsouko Puente, Jackie Carrion, Ileana Bustelo, Janet Blair, Rosa Chaves, Andrea Gordon, Gretta Jimenez, Holly Merrick, Vesna Bozic, Priya Amilineni, Theresa Leslie, Cristobal Perez, Sandrina Portillo, Erica Perdomo, Darlean Patterson, Beatriz Lopez, Captain Ifode, Maria Gandul, Krystina Francois, Jenifer Fonseca, Gloria Darling, and Migda Cruz

INTRODUCTION:

David Draper, DCF Refugee Services Community Liaison Supervisor welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Even Sloop, Supervisory Immigration Officer, Fraud Detection National Security (FDNS) Directorate, UCIS:
 - a) FDNS Mission Statement is to safeguard the integrity of the nation's lawful immigration system by leading agency efforts to combat fraud, detect national security and public safety threats, and maximize law enforcement and Intelligence Community partnerships.
 - b) Essential functions: Detect, deter, and admiratively investigate immigration-related fraud; establish guidance and oversee processes for identify, reviewing, vetting, and adjudicating cases involving national security concerns; develop and implement efficient and effective security screening policies, programs and procedures; and service as primary conduit for information sharing and collaboration with law enforcement and the Intelligence Community.
 - c) Fraud Trends: CU7 marriage fraud schemes; Fee Waiver fraud; N-648 fraud; and Employment-based immigration fraud
 - d) Fraud Tips: FDNS investigates and processes fraud tips received from the public and other resources. To report suspected immigration fraud please visit: <https://www.uscis.gov/report-fraud/uscis-tip-form>
2. Iris Jackson, DNP, MBA, APRN, FNP-BC, Executive Health Nursing Director:
Information regarding COVID-19 testing and vaccine availability in our community
 - a) There is limited supply of the COVID vaccine in phase 1: Must be 65 yrs or older, frontline healthcare worker, reside or work in nursing home or ALF.
 - b) Pre-registration online is required www.miamidade.gov/vaccine
 - c) Must have an appointment to receive the vaccine

- d) State of Florida Locations: Marlin Stadium and Hard Rock Stadium are drive thru sites (Walk-ins will not be allowed)
- e) Expanding to 755 pharmacies: Publix, Walmart, Sam's Club, & Winn Dixie
- f) www.miamidade.gov/COVID can provide testing sites by zip codes and will also provide links for assistance (financial, housing, food, etc.)
- g) The State of Florida website: www.floridahealthCOVID19.gov features: Vaccine interactions, testing site locations for all counties, daily rate reports, etc.
- h) Please advise clients that if they test positive, Contact Tracers will call them from the following numbers (833) 917-2880, (833) 443-5364, & (850) 583-2419.
- i) Most phone centers have employees who speak Spanish or Creole and employees who speak a specific language is prevalent in different communities. They also have access to the language line.
- j) They also have an option for in-home testing and vaccinations if needed.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATE (*Sent via E-Mail in November and December*)

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – JANUARY 2021

**Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee
Legal Subcommittee Meeting January 21, 2021**

Agenda

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Each agency does a presentation**
 - a. USCIS**
 - b. Asylum Office**
 - c. EOIR**
 - d. CBP**
- 3. Next meeting date**

Attendees: 20

- Danielle Befeler – Americans for Immigrant Justice
- Brad Ginter – CLS
- Jorge Vielman – Mennonite center committee
- Megan Humphreys – AIJ

- Fausta Luna – CWS NYC
- Renzo Iparraguirre - CLS
- Natalia Patino – CWS
- Angela Vazquez - CWS
- Carrie Carranza
- Viviane Saide – MINORITY HEALTH
- Christine Reis – St Thomas
- Frances Rivera – CBP
- Kelly Chauvin - CWS
- Pastora Iris de Jesus
- Tim Drahovsky – Lutheran Services
- David Claros – CWS
- Maria Pena – CWS
- John Rico

Administrative Matters:

- We will be discussing a new date that may work for everyone
- Each of the agencies said that Wednesday mornings may not be the best

USCIS – Berta and Roketa:

Could not make this meeting

Asylum Office - Maria Dominguez

- Priority system: appointments that had to be rescheduled
 - o Taking longer than anticipated bc so many appointments from the beginning of COVID had to be rescheduled
- Going forward, may want to contact the Chair with questions beforehand and she can forward it to Maria to have ready before we meet
- Have office days and hours but need to have an appointment
 - o 730-5:30 M-F, only by appointment
 - o No walk-ins
- If you want to request an appointment, use fax number, which is better than calling
 - o 786-456-2910
 - o Miami.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov
 - o Do not put any PII (personal information, such as A# or SSN) in email unless contacted by person in office
 - Just put name of person
- If already went in and then obtained additional evidence, submit by email or fax
 - o If bring new evidence to interview that did not include application, difficult for officer bc need to look at it and won't be able to analyze it appropriately
 - o Don't have to submit country conditions information
 - Unless applicant directly mentioned in CC docs
- Temporary final rule regarding interpreter for AO interviews
 - o Sept 23, 2020 temporary final rule
 - o Requires certain asylum interpreters to use USCIS certified contact interpreters
 - o Now eliminated need to have interpreter

- 47 languages that will be automatically handled by monitors
 - Includes Kanjobal, Spanish, French, Creole, Arabic, Mandarin
- Rule will be active until March 22nd
 - May be subject to renewal

Questions:

- Brad had some questions about order of rescheduling priorities – new cases, rescheduled cases, and nunc pro tunc.
 - Maria said she would investigate it and follow up with the team

Amanda St Jean – EOIR

Could not make this meeting

CBP - Frances Rivera and Michael Silva

- Travel to US stays highly restricted
 - Travel restrictions from Schengen nations, UK, Brazil, Iran still remain in place
 - Exception USC and USC family members
 - Can travel to other country for 14 days
 - Can make request for exception at least 30 days in advance bc receiving high numbers of request
- CDC guidelines effective Jan 26 (in 5 days), anyone arriving to US will need to provide proof of negative antigen or PCR test no longer than 72 hours from departure
 - Airlines will have to confirm test before board
 - Will deny boarding to passengers who refuse to take test
- New administration, CBP OFO suspend initial enrollment to MPP in place
 - Anyone currently in Mexico that was processed to wait a date for removal proceedings, should remain in Mexico pending their proceedings

Upcoming date: February 16, 2021

- Berta said 2nd or 3rd Tuesday, 4th Thursday work well
- Amanda said Tuesdays or Thursday
- Maria says not Wednesdays or first week of month
- I will be sending out a Google Doodle with suggestions of maybe 2nd or 3rd Tuesday or 4th Thursday but there seemed to be a consensus on the call that the 3rd Tuesday worked well so we set that for the next meeting as of now
- May require some flexibility in the future if there are changes to agencies' schedules

Shared Information:

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2021**EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING****Feb. 12, 2021**

- REVEST/Miami Dade College continues to offer hybrid classes as well as on-line only courses according to student and faculty needs. The current Spring term runs Jan.6 – April 30, 2021. The majority of students and instructors remain on-line which is working very well. We are maintaining vigilance on all safety protocols and procedures. All in-person classes institute social distancing, mandatory mask, daily temperature check and screening questions. Miami Dade College will remain in Phase 2 of the [Pandemic Outbreak Recovery Plan](#) through the end of the summer term.
- All faculty attended a virtual faculty meeting Jan. 21,2021. Instructors and students continue giving positive feedback regarding the use of the virtual classroom as it allows for greater scope of access in a safe environment. Students are attending scheduled classes and participating in on-line learning through a variety of on-line resources including the BlackBoard learning management system, My-Lab (Pearson Education) and Burlington English. We are proud of our staff for the all their efforts to provide high quality learning at REVEST for all our students.
- REVEST is already enrolling students for the Summer 2021 Term from May 10 to August 20, 2021. So far around 530 VESOL students have been enrolled program wide in this current Term of Spring 2021, and around 550 are going to be enrolled for Summer 2021. Although COVID 19 keeps its impact in our students, approximately 100 students have been projected to test and enroll in the program throughout these months in our different Centers.
- The REVEST Program has been able to process over 150 vocational registrations so far in the current Spring term which began on January 6th, 2020. REVEST continues with a campaign initialized in September 2019 (Fall 2197) to increase vocational registrations. We have continued to provide our students with Vocational Training Orientations during each VESOL Mimi-Term to start informing them, since lower levels, about their training options. These ongoing presentations also focus on the requirements for each type of course/Program, including VESOL completion, TABE scores and the in-state status; and include information about employment projections, growth, and salaries as per a Labor market Analysis conducted by REVEST. In addition, the Vocational Coordinator attends Faculty meetings to discuss and develop strategies with the instructors to push the students' assimilation into vocational training, and the use of the vocational flyers in communicative activities. We continue providing training and advisement to advisors to be updated about changing procedures and system issues.
- REVEST continues to offer on-line ESOL and hybrid classes through scholarships at Community Education (Miami Dade College) Kendall and West Campus. Hialeah and

Wolfson centers are eager to serve clients. REVEST strongly urges all refugee service partners to refer any interested client to REVEST for services! Thank you for your support and partnership.

- The SAVES Trimester 2020-2 started on January 4, 2021 and will end on April 9, 2021. Next Trimester 2020-3 will begin on April 12, 2021 and will end on August 3, 2021. The total enrollment as of February 9, 2021 was 461. This total includes 104 newly enrolled, 172 vocational, and 18 SMA GED in Spanish students.
- SAVES students are participating in online classes, as well as hybrid mode to allow hands-on practice for some vocational courses. Students are enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Citizenship, General Education Development (GED), Success Management Academy (SMA) GED in Spanish, and a wide range of vocational/technical programs. The SMA GED in Spanish program is offered at eight (8) high schools for students 16-18 years of age.
- The SAVES District office is working with the SAVES school contact persons and their administrators to provide the support and help needed to ensure that all services to students are provided and that students are accessing the Distance Learning platforms to continue their education.
- The Contract Oversight Unit (COU) is currently conducting a virtual monitoring of the SAVES program. The program is projected to do well as it has done in the past.
- Preliminary negotiations for the SAVES new contract are underway. We look forward continuing serving refugees, asylees and Cuban and Haitian Entrants.
- Translation and validation services continue to be offered to eligible students. At this time, ninety-one (91) students have been referred for this service and eighty-six (86) have received the service so far. These services are provided to students who want to translate and validate their high school diplomas, associate degrees, and four-year degrees and higher, including licensing. Due to COVID 19, students report directly to Silny and Associates for services.
- SAVES continues to serve clients through 14 schools, where there are on site SAVES representatives, and three technical colleges, George T. Baker Aviation, Miami Lakes, and D. A. Dorsey through the voucher system. To better accommodate clients and reach out to prospective ones, the voucher program has been extended to all adult education centers and technical colleges in M-DCPS.
- SAVES continues to recruit clients through its massive marketing/advertising campaign that includes Spanish and Haitian radio spots and digital media in multiple platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). One of the main goals of the campaign is to reach out to refugees, asylees and entrants who are still within the five-year eligibility period and are not being served.

- The SAVES website has been updated for prospective clients to view the common eligible documents for the program, the benefits the program offers, and the list of contacts of all schools for easy access to the schools. Great student success stories are uploaded to the website for anyone to peruse. Visit our SAVES website at www.savesdadeschools.com
- SAVES students success stories from Linsey Hopkins, and The English Center Technical Colleges were featured in the Adult Education District Newsletter. A success story from North Miami Adult Center will be featured in the new edition.
- A Zoom meeting will be held on March 3, 2021 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM with SAVES District staff, school contacts, and other school personnel to give directions, review procedures, and establish priorities for the 2020-2021 school year. This mode will be used until it is safe to meet face-to-face. If anyone of you would like to present at the meeting, please contact the SAVES District office by e-mailing Dr. Felicia Gil at gilfelicia@dadeschools.net
- You can reach the SAVES District office by e-mailing Dr. Felicia Gil at gilfelicia@dadeschools.net

USCIS UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2021

USCIS Miami & Caribbean District FEBRUARY 2021 Update

Video Interviews - We are increasing our use of video technology at our asylum offices and field offices to conduct video interviews for immigration benefits, in addition to in-person interviews. Video interviews give us greater flexibility to process applications while decreasing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for employees and the public. Interviews at field offices may be conducted by video with an officer in one room and the applicant in another room. All interviews, whether in person or by video at the USCIS office, follow the same adjudicative process, and the format of the interview will not affect the outcome of the adjudication.

Mandatory Temperature Screening - All visitors to USCIS field offices will be required to screen their temperature using a touchless infrared thermometer. If visitors demonstrate a temperature of or above 100.4oF, they will be directed to leave the building and reschedule their appointment by contacting the USCIS Contact Center.

USCIS Extends Flexibility for Responding to USCIS Requests and Notices Issued Between March 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021 –

We will consider a response received within 60 calendar days after the due date set forth in the following requests or notices before taking any action, if we issued the request or notice anytime from March 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021:

- Request for Evidence;
- Continuation to Request Evidence (N-14);
- Notice of Intent to Deny;
- Notice of Intent to Revoke;
- Notice of Intent to Rescind;
- Notice of Intent to Terminate regional centers; and
- Motion to Reopen an N-400 Pursuant to 8 CFR 335.5, Receipt of Derogatory Information After Grant.

In addition, we will consider a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, or a Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (Under Section 336 of the INA), if:

- The form was filed up to 60 calendar days from the issuance of a decision we made: and
- We made that decision anytime from March 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021.

ASC Update - We are working to safely maximize appointment capacity at ASCs and are also reusing previously collected biometrics to conduct background and security checks when authorized by law. Based on capacity limitations unique to each ASC, we have not yet rescheduled all cancelled appointments. USCIS is scheduling approximately 10,400 appointments per day. Approximately 1.3 million applications were awaiting biometrics appointments as of mid-December. Applicants should continue to wait for an ASC appointment notice or a Form I-797, Notice of Action, from USCIS indicating that their previously collected biometrics may be reused.

Lockbox Update – As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, an increase in filings, current postal service volume and other external factors, you may experience a delay of four to six weeks in receiving your receipt notice after properly filing an application or petition with a USCIS lockbox.

What You Can Do If you have already filed your application and are waiting for your receipt notice, we appreciate your patience. We are working as quickly as possible to complete the intake of all filings.

You can take steps to decrease the time it takes us to process and send your receipt notice or find out the status of your case:

- [File online](#) (if this option is available for your form type) and receive immediate confirmation that we have received your form instead of waiting for the mail.

- Create a free [USCIS online account](#) and check the status of your case from your mobile device, anywhere, anytime using our [case status online tool](#); or
- Complete [Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance](#), and clip it to the front of your form when filing at a USCIS lockbox to request a text message and/or email when we accept your form.

I-90 receipt instead of extension stickers

Starting in January, we will replace the sticker that is currently issued to lawful permanent residents (LPRs) to extend the validity of their Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card (PRC or “Green Card”), with a revised Form I-797, Notice of Action. LPRs file Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card, when their Green Cards expire or are about to expire. The revised Form I-797 notice will serve as a receipt notice for the Form I-90.

When presented together with the Green Card, the revised Form I-797 notice will extend the Green Card’s validity for 12 months from the date on the front of the Green Card and will serve as temporary proof of the LPR’s status. This change ensures that LPRs with a recently expired Green Card will have documentation of identity, employment authorization, and authorization to return to the United States following temporary foreign travel.

N-400/N-600 photos - Although generally not required at the time of filing, in certain circumstances, photos may be requested of N-400/N-600 applicants. Applicants may wish to bring passport style photos to the interview, as it may avoid unnecessary delay.

REMINDER About Interpreters - If you are participating at an interview for [residency](#) or [citizenship](#) at one of our field offices, we request that you provide your own interpreter by phone at the time of your interview. Failure to do so, could result in a delay or rescheduling of your interview. This request is for individuals participating in interviews at Miami, Kendall, Oakland Park, Hialeah, San Juan, and U.S. Virgin Island Field Offices.

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File Online

Submitting your application online provides you with several benefits. Get helpful instructions and tips from USCIS as you complete your form using our secure online filing system, avoid common mistakes