



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 28, 2021
TO: Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force
FROM: Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: April 09, 2021, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: August 13, 2021
Time: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon
Location: Via Teams
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

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

**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 11, 2020**

ATTENDEES:

Sabine Balmir; Berta Cassidy; Eduardo Chavez; Diego Castro; Kerry Allen; Martha Ferrer; Monica Farias; David draper; Maria Dominguez; Inelda JHS; Maria Lobo, Lourdes; Miriam Garcia; Maria Ortega; Sheria Goodman, Kamalah Fletcher; Sherry Capers; Emilie Goeser; Maria Hernandez; Silvia Lopez; Elmer Morales; Sergio Mora; Cristine Reis; Eduardo Morras; Yeen Perez; Leydi sosa; Edgar Tobon; Carmen Torres; Sandrina Portillo; Diana Formoso; Maria Fernanda Garcia; Claudia Marquez; Fernando Reyes, Paula Sobrero; Paulina Velez; Sol Fauve; Roketa Mansfield; Peter Marin; Angelique Williams; Maria Arriaga; Adriana Calzada; Dianelys Gomez; Rosaida Galano; Maria Negreas; Oscar Rivera; Elaine McArthur; Sheryl White; Lourdes Leconte ; Myriam Garcia; Janet Catholic Charities; Sylvia Lopez , Iliana Vallejo; Nidia Arias; Christine Reis; Bajic Bojan; Christy Padron; Jamie Everett; Jenna Grambort

INTRODUCTION:

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

PRESENTATIONS:

- **U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Immigrant and Employee Rights Section Jenna Grambort, Trial Attorney,**

An overview on Refugees’ and Asylees’ Right to Work. This department protects the rights of Employee to work without fear of discrimination based on Citizenship Status, National Origin, Unfair Documentary Practices, Retaliation, Intimidation, Coercion and Threats.

- **Church World Service David Claros, Esq, Immigration Legal Services**

An overview of the TPS for Venezuelan, how to apply and who is eligible.

REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:

ACCESS Program office ESS Updates:

None

ANNOUNCEMENT:

None

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

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – AUGUST,2020

South Florida VOLAG Consortium

Updates from VOLAG:

None

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – MARCH 2021

**Legal Subcommittee Meeting
March 16, 2021**

Agenda

Introductions

Each agency does a presentation

USCIS

Asylum Office

EOIR

CBP

Next meeting date

Attendees: 23

- Danielle Befeler – Americans for Immigrant Justice
- Berta – USCIS
- Angela Vazquez - CWS
- Brad Ginter – CLS
- Catalina Yaya
- Inelda Lourdes – DCF Refugee Services
- Jorge Vielman – Mennonite center committee
- Leconte-Lourdes – DCF Refugee Services
- Liglesias
- Lucia Canizares - CWS
- Michael Silva - cbp
- MJean – American Friends Services Committee
- Christine Reis
- Natalia Patino – CWS
- Paula P
- Renzo Iarraguirre – CLS
- Timothy Drahovsky – Lutheran Services
- Viviane Saide – MINORITY HEALTH
- David Claros – CWS
- Miriam Garcia – St Thomas
- Christine Reis – St Thomas
- Roketa – USCIS
- ARamirez
- FLuna
-

USCIS – Berta and Roketa:

Roketa: Reverting to 2008 test

December 2020 new version came out, but recent policy changes reverted back to the 2008 test

Some will have a choice between the two tests

After April 18th, everyone will be taking the 2008 test

Public charge

USCIS stopped applying previous public charge rule to pending applications

Continue to apply the public charge rule in the following ways:

Totality of circumstances

1991 interim field guidance
And statutory requirements
TPS for Venezuela

Announced March 8, published March 9
Will remain in effect until Sept 9, 2022
DED and EAD for noncitizens in effect

Berta: doing outreach for Venezuelans bc there are many in our community, so if know of any organizations or particular groups who are interested in collaborating with us
Mostly doing virtual sessions
Info sessions for TPS

Questions:

Natalia: received rejection letter indicating USCIS not accepting DNA results anymore

Roketa: please send copy to Berta and I

Danielle: new I-485 bc of public charge?

Roketa: haven't heard of that yet

If received RFE or Notice of Intent to Deny solely bc of the public charge including I-944 due on or after March 9, 2021, don't need to provide that info

Timothy: TPS inconsistencies between website, instructions, and form itself

Berta: jotting down notes and would like to see inconsistencies side by side, can speak after the LSM

Brad: unlike previous TPS no longer have to fill out the I-765 if don't want EAD

Renzo: could Roketa repeat how long Venezuelan TPS will remain in effect and give a date on EAD

Roketa: will share in chat

Asylum Office - Maria Dominguez

Could not make this meeting, see shared information below.

EOIR - Amanda St

Could not make this meeting

CBP – Michael Silva

Flights remain low

Satisfactory departure case by case basis

Are investigating so if had ability and means to depart but didn't, take that into account
Venezuelan TPS

Some questions from attorneys, CBP not enforcing covid testing, up to airlines to enforce

Not questioning tourists if they are vaccine tourists

Upcoming date: April 20, 2021 at 10AM

Shared Information:

Shared by Frances:

Inbound International flights counts remain low

TPS for Venezuela granted by administration earlier this month.

Satisfactory Departure may be available for ESTA travelers from Cuba as flights remain restricted

Presidential Proclamations are still in place restricting travel from certain regions.

Shared by Roketa:

On Dec. 1, 2020, USCIS implemented a revised version of the civics test for naturalization (2020 civics test). Due to recent policy changes, some applicants required to take the 2020 civics test may now have a choice to take the 2020 test or the 2008 civics test. Please note that beginning on April 19, 2021, USCIS will only offer the 2008 civics test at the initial interview appointment regardless of filing date.

For more information, visit the [2020 Version of the Civics Test page](#).

- If you are taking the 2020 civics test, find study materials on the [Study for the Test \(2020 version\) page](#).
- If you are taking the 2008 civics test, find study materials on the [Study for the Test \(2008 version\) page](#)
- If you filed your Form N-400, Application for Naturalization on or after December 1, 2020 and before March 1, 2021, and are currently scheduled for your initial examination (interview) before April 19, 2021, you may choose to take the 2008 or 2020 civics test.

On March 9, 2021, the Seventh Circuit lifted its stay and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois' order vacating the Public Charge Final Rule went into effect. When the vacatur went into effect, USCIS immediately stopped applying the Public Charge Final Rule to all pending applications and petitions that would have been subject to the rule. USCIS continues to apply the public charge inadmissibility statute, including consideration of the statutory minimum factors in the totality of the circumstances, in accordance with the 1999 Interim Field Guidance that was in place before the Public Charge Final Rule was implemented. In addition, USCIS will no longer apply the separate, but related, "public benefits condition" to applications or petitions for extension of nonimmigrant stay and change of nonimmigrant status.

Public charge rule: <https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-processes-and-procedures/public-charge>

Important Updates Regarding the 2020 Version of the Civics Test:
<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship>

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/form-i-9-related-news/dhs-secretary-designates-venezuela-for-tps-implements-ded-for-venezuela>

Applicants and petitioners should not provide information or evidence related solely to the Public Charge Final Rule. That means that applicants for adjustment of status should not submit Form I-944, Declaration of Self Sufficiency, or any evidence or documentation required by Form I-944 when they file their Form I-485. Applicants and petitioners for extension of nonimmigrant stay and change of nonimmigrant status should not provide information related to the receipt of public benefits on Form I-129 (Part 6), Form I-129CW (Part 6), Form I-539 (Part 5), and Form I-539A (Part 3).

**EDUCATION APRIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
(April 9, 2021)**

REVEST/Miami Dade College continues to offer hybrid classes as well as on-line only courses according to student and faculty needs. Instructors and students continue giving positive feedback regarding the use of the virtual classroom. 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. Miami Dade College will be offering MDC LIVE courses shortly and students and instructors are scheduled to have access to Zoom through the Blackboard LMS. We are proud of our staff for the all their efforts to provide high quality learning at REVEST for all our students. The current Spring term runs Jan.6 – April 30, 2021. The upcoming Summer 2021 Term is from May 10 to August 20, 2021.

All faculty attended a virtual faculty meeting Feb. 25, 2021. This meeting included updated training with Burlington English to enhance student learning and utilize all on-line resources. The majority of students and instructors remain on-line which is working very well and enhances enrollment options. 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.

REVEST is already enrolling students for the Summer 2021 Term from May 10 to August 20, 2021. So far around 560 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 186 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.

The SAVES trimester 2020-2 started on January 4, 2021 and will end on April 9, 2021. The total enrollment as of April 5, 2021 was 530. This total includes 166 newly enrolled and 20

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. 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.

Students are enrolled in ESOL, ABE, SMA GED in Spanish, and a wide range of vocational/technical programs.

Translation and validation services continue to be offered to eligible students. During this trimester 2020-2, twenty-four students have already received these services. These services are provided to students with 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 distance learning (and hybrid mode offered) at 14 schools and three technical colleges, George T. Baker Aviation, Miami Lakes, and D. A. Dorsey, Technical College, where eligible students receive services through vouchers. To better serve our clients, the voucher program has been extended to all adult education centers and technical colleges in M-DCPS.

SAVES is engaged in a massive marketing/advertising campaign to reach refugees, asylees and entrants who are still within the five-year eligibility period and are not being served. This campaign includes having the school contact personnel reach out to students via email and telephone, SAVES website, Spanish and Haitian radio, and digital media in multiple platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This campaign is yielding good results for recruiting, registration, re-enrollment, and retention.

SAVES District personnel and school contacts follow up with students to ensure that they are accessing the Distance Learning platform. Information is gathered on students who are participating in online classes, as well as those students who did not re-enroll. Students enrolled are being monitored on absences, withdrawals, and attendance hours. Those who did not re-enroll are contacted and offered help to motivate them to continue their education.

More information is being uploaded to the SAVES website for students to access all the services and benefits of the program. New SAVES Student Success stories are uploaded, and congratulation letters are sent to the schools to be forwarded to the students. Visit our SAVES website at saves@dadeschools.com

The virtual Zoom Meeting was held Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. with SAVES District staff and school contacts. Recruitment methods, data reports, billing information and more were discussed in detail. Dr. Marie Phiogene was honored and recognized for her 22 years of dedication and contribution to the SAVES Program. She was an invaluable asset and all attendees participated in thanking her and wishing her the best for her retirement. All attendees received electronic copies of all information for further review and future reference.

You can reach the SAVES District office by e-mailing Dr. Felicia Gil at gilfelicia@dadeschools.net

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – APRIL 2021

None

USCIS UPDATE – APRIL 2021

**USCIS Miami & Caribbean District
March 2021 Update**

Miami and Caribbean District
(Miami, Hialeah, Oakland Park, Kendall, San Juan, USVI)

Community Updates

MARCH 2021



USCIS Reverts to the 2008 Version of the Naturalization Civics Test

Effective Mar. 1, 2021, USCIS will be reverting from the 2020 civics test to the 2008 civics test.

What you need to know:

Applicants who filed *before* Dec. 1, 2020 will continue to be administered the 2008 civics test;

Applicants who filed *on or after* Dec. 1, 2020, *and before* Mar. 1, 2021, will be administered their choice of either the 2020 or the 2008 civics test if their initial interview is conducted prior to Apr. 19, 2021. This includes re-exams and N-336 hearings held prior to Apr. 19, 2021; and

Applicants who file *on or after* Mar. 1, 2021, will only be administered the 2008 civics test regardless of their interview date.

**For more information,
see the
[Citizenship Resource
Center](#)**

**Virtual Information Sessions
Every 4th Thursday at 4:00 pm**

Spread the word about our virtual information sessions hosted by the California Club Library!
Patrons can meet with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Community Relation Officers to find out about naturalization, permanent residence and other immigration topics,
in addition to asking questions about benefits and filing.

Please register at <https://mdpls.org/branch-california-club>
to receive the meeting link information.

**PLEASE NOTE: We can only address general immigration questions.
Case specific questions will need to be addressed through the
Customer Contact Center.**

MARCH
**General Immigration
Information Session**
Thursday 4 pm — March 25th

APRIL
**Naturalization
Information Sessions**
Thursday 4 pm — April 22

RSVP your preferred date and time to:
<https://mdpls.org/branch-california-club>

Would you like to have us join your meeting or schedule your own information session for your students, clients, civic or other group? We're happy to join you! Contact either [Berta Cassidy](#) or [Roketa Mansfield](#) to discuss outreach opportunities.

Citizenship Educators

Learn New Teaching Techniques

[Guide to the Adult Citizenship Education and Content Standards and Foundational Skills](#)

[Building a Course Syllabus](#)

[Classroom Lesson Plans](#)

...and more at [USCIS Educational Resources](#)

Study Materials and Resources

[100 Civics Questions and Answers \(English\)](#)

[Multilingual Resources](#)

[Online Civics Practice Test](#)

[Locate a civics class in your area](#)

National news and events:

[New Edition and Filing Address for Form I-690, Application for Waiver for Grounds of Inadmissibility](#)

[USCIS Extends Flexibility for Responding to Agency Requests](#)

[USCIS Replaces Sticker That Extends Validity of Green Cards](#)

[President Biden Reinstates DED for Eligible Liberians](#)

Helpful Covid Reminders

We're working to keep everyone safe as we continue to provide face-to-face services to the public.

You may not enter a USCIS Field office if you: have any symptoms of COVID-19, including recently developed cough, fever, difficulty breathing, changes in smell or taste or fatigue (list is not all-inclusive); have been in close contact with anyone known or suspected to have COVID-19 in the last 14 days; have been instructed to self-quarantine or self-isolate by a health care provider, public health authority or government agency within the last 14 days; or are awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test. There is no penalty for rescheduling your appointment if you are sick.

To reschedule your appointment, call the [USCIS Contact Center](#) at 800-375-5283 (TTY 800-767-1833).

To reschedule your appointment with an asylum office, please follow the instructions in your interview notice.



- You may not enter the facility more than 15 minutes before your appointment (30 minutes for naturalization ceremonies).
- We will provide hand sanitizer at entry points.
- You must wear face coverings that cover both the mouth and nose inside USCIS facilities. We do not allow neck gaiters, bandanas, or masks with exhaust valves. If you do not have an acceptable face covering, we may provide one or ask you to reschedule your appointment.
- There will be markings and physical barriers in the facility; you should pay close attention to these signs to ensure you follow social distancing guidelines.
- You may also have to answer health screening questions before entering a facility.
- We encourage you to bring your own black or blue ink pens.



