



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 14, 2020
TO: Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force
FROM: Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: December 13, 2019 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: February 14, 2020
Time: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon
Location: Miami-Dade College
Building 8, Room, Room 8525
300 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132
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
DECEMBER 13, 2019**

ATTENDEES:

Bojan Bajic; Sabine Balmir; Osmin Bejerano; Dina Birman; Ileana Bustelo; Eduardo Chavez; Diego Castro; Lillian Coto; Gustavo Diaz; Martha Ferrer; Diana Formoso; Maria Fernanda Garcia; Emilie Goeser; Andrea Gordon; Lourdes, Leconte; Sergio Mora; Eduardo Morras, Arnold Munoz; Carlos Naranjo; Maria Penha; Erica, Perdomo; Cristobal, Perez; Yeen Perez; Maureen Porras; Maria, Rodriguez; Veronica, Rodriguez; Luz Reyes; Evelyn Soto; Edgar Tobon; Carmen, Torres ; Sandra Sierra; Cesar Carpio; Gabriela Perez; Sheria Goodman;

INTRODUCTION:

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

PRESENTATION:

Lilian Coto, CSSF SNAP Program Coordinator/Disability Navigator for CareerSource South Florida did a great job presenting the 2018 Labor Market Report for the region. At the request of the attendees, she shared an electronic copy of the presentation, which is attached to the minutes. Representatives from most of the Refugee services providers and Local resettlement agencies took turns sharing their accomplishments, the challenges faced during 2019 and their hopes for the coming year. Providers shared: Refugee and Cuban Parolee arrivals continue to be fewer than anticipated. Delays in processing at USCIS have also impacted the number of refugees participating in the Matching grant as well as the RS employment programs. Uncertainties regarding the Refugee program at the national level are affecting providers locally.

After the meeting, thirty members converged to the Knife restaurant for the celebratory end of the year luncheon. Community Medical Group provided some Door prizes to attendees.

REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:

ANNOUNCEMENT:

- Volunteers are needed for the planning of World Refugee Day 2020

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – NOVEMBER 2019**Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee****Minutes for November 6, 2019****Held at Church World Service**

Submitted by Brad Ginter

Attendees: Berta Cassidy, Roketa Mansfield, Sonyetta Everett, Maria Penha, Megan Humphreys, Arno Lemus, Christine Reis, Miriam Garcia, Lourdes Leconte, Jorge Vielman, Maria Catalina, Marie Jean, Iris De Jesus, Viviane Saide, Brad Ginter

USCIS - Berta Cassidy

Personnel changes: Miami District Director Linda Swacina has retired and has been replaced by acting District Director Ron Rosenberg. Deputy DD Steve Koch is back at his position in Miami. The new Miami Field Office Director is Kurt Vicha.

TPS has been extended until January 4, 2021, for current holders of TPS from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Sudan.

Due to multiple court injunctions, USCIS is unable to implement the public charge grounds of inadmissibility that were to take effect on October 15, 2019. Therefore, the new I-485 which was required, beginning on that date, cannot be used and will be rejected. Applicants for adjustment should continue to use forms dated 7/15/19 or 12/13/17.

The N-400 has been updated. The form edition dated 9/17/19 must be used, beginning 12/16/19.

Up to now, an applicant for a fee waiver could use the I-912 or could make the request in an alternate format. Beginning on December 2, 2019, the I-912 must be used to request a fee waiver, and the 10/24/19 edition must be used. The new edition eliminates federal means-tested benefits as a basis for a fee waiver. The old form, which allows use of means-tested benefits (in addition to an income or financial hardship basis, which continue), can be used only until 12/1/19.

As of October 24, 2019, the same document is issued for re-entry permits and refugee travel documents, rather than having different kinds of documents, as was the case before.

Berta and Roketa are still trying to resolve the problem raised last month about the Memphis Field Office denying EAD's for parolees located here in south Florida.

[N.B.: Subcommittee members report that clients have problems with judges at the EOIR because of these denials.]

Information, Issues raised by members

Members report that people Released On Recognizance are coming into agencies with EAD's

which were granted (c)(18), as if they had an order of supervision.

Parolees are being issued EAD's with an effective date after their parole expires, good for 1-2 years. This has been identified as a training issue and is apparently being corrected. First-time applicants for EAD's have the option of requesting a Social Security card at the time they fill out their I-765. Members report that although most clients receive their SS card without a problem, perhaps 5-10% don't receive the SS card. Berta needs examples to elevate this issue.

The G-28 gives an applicant for an EAD or green card the option of having the card mailed to the applicant's representative rather than the applicant's unsafe mailing address, but USCIS sometime sends it directly to the applicant anyway. This is an occasional, but ongoing, problem. Berta has been asked to look into this.

There is a new I-589 form (9/10/19 edition), which must be used, as of 12/23/19.

Members pointed out that adjudicators (for example, for I-485's, N-400's, I-589's) may look back at earlier interviews that an applicant may have had, even years earlier (at the border, at a consulate, or on another application), for inconsistent responses. Clients must be careful to answer truthfully and consistently. An example could be a person previously detained by DHS later failing to answer in the affirmative about having been detained. That person could be denied for fraud by an officer looking for a reason to deny, even though the applicant innocently misinterpreted the question.

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – DECEMBER 2019

2019 REFUGEE TASK FORCE

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Dec. 13, 2019

- REVEST is already enrolling students for the upcoming first Mini Term of Spring 2020 from January to March next year. So far around 1500 VESOL students have been enrolled program wide in this current Terms of Fall A & B, and around 800 are going to be enrolled for the first Mini Term for Spring Term 2020. Approximately 200 students have been projected to test in our next Orientation Sessions throughout these months in our different Centers.
- The REVEST Program has been able to process 1177 vocational registrations for the contract year ending in August 2019. There were 330 Fall registrations. We have begun

CCC and CTEC registrations for the Spring with 44 registrations so far. We continue providing training and advisement to advisors to be updated about changing procedures and system issues.

- Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors Dec. 5,6, 2019. All CASAS testing procedures were reviewed with instructors to ensure a successful testing session. CASAS testing is taking place Dec. 10 - 13, 2019. We expect completion rates to remain steady. All REVEST students were trained to employ basic test-taking skills. Our Wolfson and Hialeah Centers are using the ECASAS computer-based test. We are very proud of the hard work of our determined faculty and especially our students.
- REVEST is offering ESOL classes through scholarships at Community Education (Miami Dade College) Kendall and West Campus. This is allowing clients to be served by REVEST in a broader range of sites. Our current sites in Hialeah and Wolfson are also offering classes and we are ready to serve clients. REVEST is monitoring progress of our eight-week courses and our mini-term system. We are also monitoring students receiving scholarships in the Kendall and West Miami Dade College sites. Please continue to get the word out that REVEST is eager to serve the educational needs of our clients.
- REVEST continues to perform outreach activities with providers to enhance student enrollment as all Task Force members have faced similar challenges. REVEST is working to meet all deliverables but it is more difficult with circumstances of fewer clients applying in general. We will continue to work hard to meet all goals and wish all a great holiday season and a bright new year.
- The SAVES new trimester (2019-1) started on August 19, 2019 and will end on December 20, 2019. The total enrollment in the SAVES program is 1,277. This number includes 423 new clients and 52 Success Management Academy (SMA) GED in Spanish program clients, 16 – 18 years old.
- We are asking every provider to refer clients to the SAVES program. We offer English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), General Basic Education, SMA GED in Spanish, and a wide range of vocational/technical programs. We also provide degree translation and validation services for our students. We provide service for students with four- year degrees or higher, including licensing; associate degrees; and high school diplomas. For this contract year, we have already translated and validated documents for 80 students.
- The SAVES program continues to serve clients at 14 schools where SAVES representatives are housed. Three other schools, George T. Baker Aviation Technical College, Miami Lakes Educational Center and Technical College, and D. A. Dorsey technical College accept SAVES vouchers for referred SAVES clients. The voucher

program has been extended to all adult education centers and technical colleges in M-DCPS. Eligible SAVES clients can take advantage and the opportunity to attend classes to learn English and complete a vocational program that can lead to a successful career.

- SAVES continue to work closely with the M-DCPS Office of Public Relations, the Marketing Department, and SAVES schools to reach out to the community and disseminate information about the SAVES program. SAVES is currently advertising via mail-out, newspaper, radio, career fairs, opening of school meetings, and fence banners in every school.
- To continue to increase enrollments and retention, schools monitor student attendance and student withdrawals. Students are contacted upon their withdrawals from SAVES schools and offered alternatives, based on the reason for withdrawing from classes. SAVES schools administrators and SAVES school contacts continue to engage in an aggressive marketing campaign to recruit students by participating in open-houses and distributing flyers to the public at supermarkets, churches, and community agencies. They continue to present at students' orientation and the public announcement system to promote their schools and the SAVES program.
- The SAVES Success Management Academy (SMA) GED in Spanish program for students 16-18 years old continues to be implemented in seven SAVES locations. Schools are recruiting eligible high school students to attend the SMA program to receive their high school diploma.
- The SAVES SMA GED in Spanish program has been successful. Many students (16-18 years of age) graduated from the program. Students continue their education by enrolling in institution of higher education; others enrolled at SAVES technical colleges; and many join the workforce to take advantage of better employment opportunities.
- The Culinary Arts program at Robert Morgan Education Center and Technical College was recognized by School Board members at the District 9 Awards of Distinction Ceremony.
- Linsey Hopkins Technical College was recognized with the Distinguished Partner Award by the University of Florida for including the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in the curriculum because of its impact on low income families, adaptabilities, and usefulness.
- SAVES Students' success stories are shared at the SAVES District meetings and published on the SAVES website www.savesdadeschools.com. We invite everyone to read them.

- The next SAVES District meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2020, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at Hialeah-Miami Lakes Adult Education Center. Please let us know if you would like to attend and share any information with SAVES school personnel.
- If you have any questions about our program, you can call us at (305) 823-5020 or visit the SAVES website at www.savesdadeschools.com.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – DECEMBER 2019

Labor Market Report presentation by Lilian Coto, CSSF SNAP Program Coordinator/Disability Navigator, CareerSource South Florida



RET Programmatic
Slides- LMI Report 2

USCIS UPDATE – DECEMBER 2019

USCIS Miami & Caribbean District December 2019 Update

USCIS Proposes to Adjust Fees to Meet Operational Needs

The Department of Homeland Security published a notice of proposed rulemaking in the [Federal Register](#) to adjust the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Immigration Examinations Fee Account (IEFA) fee schedule.

Fees collected and deposited into the IEFA fund nearly 96% of USCIS' budget. Unlike most government agencies, USCIS is fee-funded. Federal law requires USCIS to conduct biennial fee reviews and recommend necessary fee adjustments to ensure recovery of the full cost of administering the nation's immigration laws, adjudicating applications and petitions, and providing the necessary infrastructure to support those activities.

The rule proposes adjusting USCIS IEFA fee schedules by a weighted average increase of 21% to ensure full cost recovery. Current fees would leave the agency underfunded by approximately \$1.3 billion per year.

The proposed fee rule accounts for increased costs to adjudicate immigration benefit requests, detect and deter immigration fraud, and thoroughly vet applicants, petitioners, and beneficiaries. USCIS last updated its fee structure in FY 2017, by a weighted average increase of 21%.

Outreach Sessions

Below is a listing of our upcoming outreach sessions and events. These events are free and open to the public. If you need additional information, please contact – Berta.M.Cassidy@uscis.dhs.gov or Roketa.F.Mansfield@uscis.dhs.gov .

Date	Time	Type of Event	Location
December 11 th , 2019	8:00 – 11:00 am	Naturalization Information Session (Spanish)	Municipio de Fajardo Biblioteca Ricardo S. Belaval Calle Iglesias esq. Garrido Morales, Fajardo, Puerto Rico 00738
December 18 th , 2019	1:00-3:00 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Miami Central Driver's License Office 3721 NW 7 ST Miami, FL 33126

❖ **Upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies**

Below are scheduled dates for upcoming N-400 naturalization ceremonies in our jurisdiction. Although these dates are current on the date of issuance of this update, the dates are subject to change without notice.

- **Miami Field Office** – Dec 6th, 13th*, and 20th
- **Hialeah Field Office** - Dec 13th* and 20th
- **Oakland Park Field Office** - Dec 13th and 20th*
- **Kendall Field Office** - Dec 6th, 13th*, and 20th
- **Charlotte Amalie, USVI** – December 20th (Judicial)
- **San Juan, PR** – December 12th (Judicial) and December 20th

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*A date when both administrative and judicial ceremonies will be held.