



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Chad Poppell**  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** October 25, 2019  
**TO:** Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** October 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes

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### **THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:**

**Date:** December 13, 2019  
**Time:** 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon  
**Location:** Miami-Dade College  
Building 8, Room, Room 8525  
300 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite N-812 Miami, Florida 33128

**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 11, 2019**

**ATTENDEES:**

Kerry Allen; Marielisa Amador; Balmir-Derenoncourt Sabine; Ileana Bustelo; Diego Castro; Monica Farias; Lissette Fernandez; Martha Ferrer; Emilie Goeser; Maria Gonzalez; Andrea Gordon; Sheria Goodman; Maria Hernandez; Sylvia Lopez; Dorothy Martin; Elmer Morales; Sergio Mora; Eduardo Morras; Ulises Pacheco; Maria Penha; Cristobal Perez; Yeen Perez; Maria Penha; Sandrina Portillo; Luz Reyes; Edgar Tobon; Carmen Torres; Leydi Sosa; Evelyn Soto; Carmen Torres; Ibis Valdes; Ileana Vallejo; Sandra Sierra; Paige Patterson-Hughes; Sol Fauve; Paulina Velez; Paula Sobrego;

**INTRODUCTION:**

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

**PRESENTATION:**

**Maria del Carmen Ortega**, Public Affairs Specialist South Florida Area Director's Office for the Social Security Administration, gave a presentation titled: Social Security: "With You Through Life's Journey". For more than 80 years, Social Security has helped secure today and tomorrow by providing benefits and financial protection for millions of people throughout their life's journey. Social Security touches the lives of every American, both directly and indirectly. The information that was received, encouraged the audience to think about all the ways Social Security has been linked to their life – and the lives of their loved ones. The presenter says that each person must earn a certain number of credits to qualify for Social Security benefits. The number of credits each person needs depends on the age when they apply and the type of benefit application. She encouraged each person to read "When to Start Receiving Retirement Benefits" fact sheet in its entirety.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

- End of the Year celebration

**REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATE** (*Sent via E-Mail in August and September*)

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** December 13, 2019

**Meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM**

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**SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – AUGUST 2019**

**South Florida VOLAG Consortium**  
**None**

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**LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 2019**

**Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee**  
**Minutes for August 7, 2019**  
**Held at Americans for Immigrant Justice**

Submitted by Brad Ginter

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**Attendees: Roketa Mansfield, Michael Silva, Kristie Padron, Marueen Porras, Maria Penha, Adonia Simpson, Megan Humphreys, Arno Lemus, Miriam Garcia, Dorothy Martin, Marie Jean, Mariana Martinez, Viviane Saide, Brad Ginter**

**USCIS** - Roketa Mansfield

USCIS is in the process of updating the test given to applicants for naturalization at their interview. The test is given to measure applicants' knowledge of U.S. civics. It is anticipated that the revision will be completed by December 2020.

USCIS is accepting applications for grants for agencies wanting to help individuals to prepare for the civics portion of the citizenship application. The deadline is coming up soon for agencies to apply. (One or two agencies indicated that they were interested in competing for those funds.)

Roketa distributed copies of the updated (7/19) list of the DOJ Recognized Organizations operating in the Miami District of USCIS.

**CBP** - Michael Silva

Michael advised the subcommittee that the Department of State is allowing Venezuelans who are unable to renew their passports (which is generally the case at this time) to travel on an expired passport for five years. This will be permitted on a case-by-case basis. [Michael agreed to provide more detailed information--see below.]

**Information raised by members**

The Miami EOIR is one of two immigration courts which are participating in a pilot program to make the courts more efficient and to reduce costs. People attending their first master calendar hearing watch a 28-minute video explaining the immigration court process. So far, the video may only be in Spanish, but eventually may be in 20 languages. Also, the court now uses telephonic interpretation instead of in-person interpreters for all master calendar hearings. Those who are in court regularly see that there are many kinks that need to be worked out before this can be implemented nationwide.

*From Michael Silva, re: Extension of Validity for Venezuelan Passports*

On June 7, 2019, Venezuelan interim President Guaido signed a decree extending the validity of previously issued Venezuelan passports for an additional five years past their printed date of expiration.

Consular posts are recognizing this extension of validity for visa issuance and other consular purposes; CBP will likewise recognize the passports covered by this decree as having been extended and valid for admission to the United States as long as the traveler is otherwise admissible.

For Venezuelan passport holders who have already been issued a passport extension (*prorroga*), the validity of their passport shall be determined by adding five years of validity to the expiration date granted by the extension.

Venezuelans who are not in possession of a passport, or whose passport has not be rendered valid by the decree, may be able to travel with a visa attached to a Form DS-232, but must be granted the appropriate waiver and be admissible to the United States.

**EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 2019**

**2019 REFUGEE TASK FORCE**

**EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

**Oct. 11, 2019**

- REVEST is already enrolling students for the upcoming second Mini Term of Fall 2019 from October to December 2019. So far around 878 VESOL students have been enrolled program wide in this first part of Fall 2019, and around 700 are going to be enrolled for the second Mini Term 81.2 for Fall Term 2019. Approximately 200 students have been projected to test in the next Orientation Sessions throughout these months.
- The REVEST Program has been able to process 1175 vocational registrations for the contract year ending in August 2019. So far, we have around 300 vocational registrations for the Fall 2197. 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 Oct 3, 2019. All CASAS testing procedures were reviewed with instructors to ensure a successful testing session. CASAS testing is taking place Oct. 7-11, 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 now using the ECASAS computer-based test. We are very proud of the hard work of our determined faculty and especially our students.

1. REVEST continues to offer 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.
- The total enrollment in the SAVES program during trimester 2019-1 that started on August 19, 2019 and ends on December 20, 2019, was 1,195. This number included 415 new students and 48 students (16–18 yrs. old) enrolled in the Success Management Academy (SMA) SAVES GED in Spanish program during that trimester. The next academic trimester begins on January 6, 2019.
2. A SAVES District meeting will be held on November 20, 2019. Important information will be discussed with the school staff. Please advise if you would like to attend and share your program and services with us.
3. SAVES is beginning implementation of new initiatives to increase student enrollment and retention during the 2019-2020 Contract year:
  1. Collaboration with M-DCPS to implement an aggressive campaign to market the SAVES program. Fence and roll-up banners, flyers, Vocational Course Directory, pencils, pens, rulers, lanyards, and notebooks were distributed to SAVES schools to promote the program.
  2. Utilize the following FOCUS reports: a) List of students with three+ (3+) absences; b) List of students withdrawing; and c) List of students reaching 70 hours of ESOL instruction for testing. Case management follow up and results are reported to the SAVES District office bi-monthly.
  3. Featuring the SAVES program in the Real News Adult/Technical Colleges and Educational Opportunity and Access newsletter. See it at <https://www.careerinyear.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/KG-REAL-NEWS-Sept-2019-Edition-F-3.pdf>
  4. The SAVES voucher program is very successful and is being expanded to include all M-DCPS adult and technical schools. The program provides opportunities for students to

benefit from ESOL and vocational courses in the schools that are most convenient to them. Students and school personnel frequently share with the SAVES district office the excellent job opportunities offered to the students as they complete their vocational courses in areas of avionics, road technician, air conditioning, CDL, automotive technology, computer system, information technology, medical assistance, dental assistance, and others.

5. Graduation ceremonies were held for SMA students in Adult and Community Education/Technical Centers in June 2019. About 48% of the students in the SMA graduated in June 2019.
6. The first SAVES degree translation and evaluation meeting will be held on October 15, 2019. SAVES will provide this service for SAVES students with: 1. Four years university degree or higher 2. An Associate Degree, and 3. A High School Diploma.
7. The Culinary Arts Program at Robert Morgan Education Center and Technical College was recognized by District 9 School Board member at the Awards of Distinction Ceremony and Lindsey Hopkins Technical College was recognized with the Distinguished Partner Award by the University of Florida for improving nutrition of low-income families.
8. Fifteen new vocational classes were opened for five vocational courses at SAVES schools. SAVES students had the opportunity to train in additional areas of interest that enhance their opportunities to complete programs leading to gainful employment.
9. M-DCPS Superintendent recognized Lindsey Hopkins Technical College for their initiative to have a Shop Prom Boutique to make possible for underprivileged students to shop for needed clothing at no cost to attend prom activities. Over 2,000 students have benefitted from this program.
10. If you have any questions about our program, you can call us or visit the SAVES website at <http://saves.dadeschools.net>

<b>EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – OCTOBER 2019</b>
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None

**USCIS UPDATE – OCTOBER 2019**

**USCIS Miami & Caribbean District  
October 2019 Update**

- ❖ **USCIS Awards FY 2019 Citizenship and Assimilation Grants** – On September 26, 2019, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced the award of nearly \$10 million in grants to 41 organizations that prepare lawful permanent residents (LPRs) for naturalization. The grants also aim to promote prospective citizens’ assimilation into American civic life by funding educational programs designed to increase their knowledge of English, U.S. history, and civics. Located in 24 states, these organizations will receive federal funding to support citizenship preparation services for LPRs through September 2021.

Click [here](#) to read more about the FY 2019 Citizenship and Assimilation Grants and to view a listing of grant recipients.

- ❖ **USCIS Public Charge Final Rule** – On August 14, 2019, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published the Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds final rule that codifies regulations governing the application of the public charge inadmissibility ground under INA section 212(a)(4).

Click [here](#) to read more on the Public Charge Final Rule.

❖ **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](mailto:Berta.M.Cassidy@uscis.dhs.gov) or [Roketa.F.Mansfield@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Roketa.F.Mansfield@uscis.dhs.gov) .

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Type of Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
October 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2019	6:00 – 7:30 pm	Naturalization Information Session	Kendall Branch Library 9101 SW 97 Ave Miami, FL 33176
October 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2019	6:30 – 7:45 pm	Naturalization Information Session	Northeast Dade – Aventura Library 2930 Aventura Blvd. Aventura, FL 33180
October 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	3:00 – 5:30 pm	USCIS Information Desk	California Club Branch Library 700 Ives Dairy Road Miami, FL 33179
October 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Hispanic Heritage Resource Fair	Ana G Mendez University, 15201 NW 79 Ct. Miami Lakes, FL 33016

October 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	1:00 – 4:00 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Miami Central Driver's License Office 3721 NW 7 St. Miami, FL 33126
October 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	10 am – 2:00 pm	Health and Resource Fair for Veterans and Seniors	Gould's Park 11350 SW 216 Street, Miami, FL 33170
October 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	10:30 am – 12 noon	Naturalization Information Session	Palm Springs North Library 17601 NW 78 Ave #111, Hialeah, FL 33015
October 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2019	12:30 – 3:30 pm	USCIS Information Desk	Mall of the Americas Driver's License Center 7795 W. Flagler St. Suite #82C Miami, FL 33126

❖ **Upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies**

Below are scheduled dates for upcoming administrative N-400 naturalization ceremonies and the corresponding field offices where the ceremonies will take place (unless otherwise listed). 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** – October 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>
- **Hialeah Field Office** - October 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>
- **Oakland Park Field Office** - October 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>
- **Kendall Field Office** - October 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>