



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 30, 2020
TO: Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force
FROM: Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: April 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: August 14, 2020
Time: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon
Location: Via teleconferencing
888-585-9008 Access code 951-031-034 #
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
APRIL 10, 2020**

ATTENDEES:

Marielisa Amador; Bojan Bajic; Sabine Balmir; Ileana Bustelo, Berta Cassidy; Eduardo Chavez; Diego Castro; Kerry Allen; Martha Ferrer; Monica Farias; Emilie Goesser; Maria Hernandez; Silvia Lopez; Dorothy Martin; Elmer Morales; Sergio Mora; Ulises Pacheco; Eduardo Morras; Cristobal Perez; Yeen Perez; Leydi sosa; Edgar Tobon; Carmen Torres; Natalia Duarte; Erica Perdomo; Evelyn Soto, Jacqueline Jimenez; Sandrina Portillo ; Diana Formoso; Maria Fernanda Garcia; Claudia Marquez; Fernando Reyes, Paula Sobrero; Paulina Velez; Sol Fauve; Peter Marin; Angelique Williams; Maria Arriaga; Adriana Calzada; Sheria Goodman; Dianelys Gomez; Rosaida Galano; Maria Negreas; Felicia Gil, Marie Philogene ; Oscar Rivera; Elaine McArthur; Sheryl White; Lucy Tucker; Lourdes Leconte

INTRODUCTION:

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

PRESENTATIONS:**DHSMV services available online:**

All Florida driver licenses, commercial driver licenses and identification cards set to expire in the next 30 days will be granted a 30-day extension beyond their current expiration date. The order extends the effective period of all driver licenses and identification cards that will expire between March 16, 2020, and April 15, 2020, for 30 days. It also waives the delinquent renewal fees during the extension period for these driver licenses and identification cards. Florida law enforcement agencies have received notification of these extensions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the national emergency declaration, the REAL ID enforcement deadline beyond the current October 1, 2020 deadline has been extended. The new deadline for REAL ID enforcement is October 1, 2021. The Department of Motor Vehicle has temporarily closed their customer service center or restricting access to DMVs from March 19 to April 19. This is subject to change. This action will preclude many people from complying, applying for and receiving their REAL ID. To replace or renew a license, customers can do it via the internet or over the phone with an automated process. A reminder: Immigrants renewing, replacing or applying for a new driver license or ID card in person must submit current USCIS documents before a REAL ID-compliant driver license or ID card can be issued. Also, it is very important the name assigned to the Social Security Number (SSN) match the name that will appear on the Florida driver license or ID card. Customers who have recently changed their name should update their records with the Social Security Administration before applying for a driver license or ID card.

REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:**ACCESS Program office ESS Updates:**

As of March 9, 2020, the governor issued an executive order declaring a state of emergency. Florida wants to ensure that clients continue to receive Cash, Food Assistance and Medicaid benefits while practicing social distancing. Recertification has been extended to October or November 2020. Policies and procedures have not changed but the program is using some flexibility to expedite the application process for some and extending benefits for others. Customer Service offices remain closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are still requesting work registration for Able Body individuals receiving Food stamp benefits. Interviews will not be conducted if all information for eligibility determination is already in the system. Food stamps beneficiaries that did not receive full allotment in March and April, will be issued additional benefits to bring them to the full benefit amount for their household.

Updates from Early Learning Coalition (Child Care): 99% of staff is currently working from home. We have no issues to report as of now. Some clients have kept their children at home. For clients that have had to change child care centers, ELC has been able to facilitate those changes. Currently, families receiving child care services will not have to pay weekly fees. If you have families in need of services, please refer them (305-646-7220). ELC remains open. ELC has several child care service providers that have reopened and has an agreement to provide free child care to first responders.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

- World Refugee Day 2020. As of right now, no refugee services provider or community partner has taken the lead on preparing for an event for World Refugee day this year.

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

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – APRIL 2020**South Florida VOLAG Consortium****Updates from VOLAG:**

The situation with COVID-19 has impacted the number of new clients getting into the Matching grant program. We are still providing services. We are getting people into jobs. Intakes are done virtually, and document processing is done electronically.

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 2020

None

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 2020**2020 REFUGEE TASK FORCE**

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**EDUCATION APRIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING (April 10, 2020)**

- REVEST, as well as all of Miami Dade College, has converted to remote learning for all classes. Instructors and students are using the virtual classroom as REVEST continues to offer services to our clients. 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 and students for the success of this transition to remote learning.
- REVEST students have requested and received laptop computers to assist with the transition to remote learning through Miami Dade College. We appreciate the support from MDC as this will greatly facilitate on-line learning.
- The current REVEST term that started March 9 will end as scheduled on May 1, 2020. REVEST will adhere to Miami Dade College schedule of a planning period from May,4 - May, 31, 2020. During this time there will not be classes, but we will be registering students, training all staff on updated procedures and planning next steps for our remote learning platform. The summer term will start June 1 through August 21, 2020.
- CASAS testing has been suspended as per DOE guidelines. REVEST will continue delivering on-line instruction and resume testing in conjunction with the reopening of the Testing department and Miami Dade College. As this date is undetermined, we are concerned about student performance on the CASAS test and how that may affect placement and promotion. We will work to try and mitigate any serious disruptions.
- REVEST phone lines and emails are open for referrals and we continue to develop the intake process for new registration. Please refer any clients in need of our services.
- REVEST continues enrolling students for Summer 2020 from June 1 to August 21, 2020. So far around 680 VESOL students are enrolled program wide in this current Term of Spring B, and around 680 are going to be re enrolled for Summer 2020. We are projecting to start an online tool to do our intakes and register students for next Term. So far, we have been receiving calls from interested students, but we are waiting for approval to start this process.
- - The REVEST Program has been able to process 279 vocational registrations so far in the current MDC term/Spring. REVEST continues with a campaign initialized in September 2019 (Fall 2197) to increase vocational registrations. We have continued to provide our students with information about our courses through the email or by phone during this remote work environment.
- The SAVES trimester 2019-2 started on January 06, 2020 and was scheduled to end on April 9, 2020 but was extended until April 30th. The total enrollment as of March 30, 2020 was 1,061. As you all know, schools are closed until May 1, 2020, with a strong

possibility that the schools will remain close for a longer period. M-DCPS has launched a platform to provide Distant Learning to continue the student's education at home, SAVES students are participating and the SAVES District office is contacting the schools to help them have SAVES students enrolled in Distance Learning.

- Students are enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), General Basic Education, and a wide range of vocational/technical programs. During the school year that started last August 2019, SAVES provided degree translation and validation services for 106 students. This service was provided to students with four-year degrees and higher, including licensing; associate degrees; and high school diplomas.
- The SAVES program, despite the closing of the schools, continues to serve clients through Distant Learning offered at 14 schools. SAVES District staff and school contacts are working from home contacting and supporting the students. Three schools, George T. Baker Aviation Technical College, Miami Lakes Educational Center and Technical College, and D. A. Dorsey Technical College have received SAVES vouchers and are serving referred SAVES clients via Distant Learning. The voucher program has been extended to all adult education centers and technical colleges in M-DCPS and will continue when schools resume.
- SAVES District personnel and SAVES school staff are working from home. District staff is working with the schools to gather information, such as:
 - Identifying students who are participating in Distance Learning, as well as those students who are not participating to be called for assistance
 - Identifying the technology used by those students to access Distance Learning
 - Stating the reason for those students who are not participant in Distance Learning
 - Identifying any issues brought up by the students to be resolved
- Distance Learning is a method of learning without being in a regular classroom. Classes are conducted over the internet in the comfort of the homes or wherever one has access to technology. Miami-Dade Public Schools offers Distance Learning for all its students and provides computers to students who do not have computers to access the platform. Students can access the platform and report their attendance. Almost all courses are uploaded into the platform
- Hourly teachers are devoting at least three hours within the course of instructional time to provide assistance, guidance, and support to students.
- SAVES District personnel and school contacts will follow up with students to ensure that they are accessing the Distance Learning platform.
- More information will be uploaded to the SAVES website for students to access all the benefits of the program.
- You can reach the SAVES District office by e-mailing Dr. Felicia Gil at gilfelicia@dadeschools.net

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – APRIL 2020

None

USCIS UPDATE – APRIL 2020**USCIS Miami & Caribbean District
April 2020 Update****Leadership Updates**

We would like to welcome Paola Moyano, our new Miami and Caribbean (MAC) District Chief of Staff. Ms. Moyano comes to our district having previously served as the Assistant Regional Director for resource management for the Western Regional Office as well as other positions within USCIS. Ms. Moyano joined the MAC District leadership team on March 29th, 2020.

We would also like to welcome Brett Rinehart, who will be joining our district as the Acting District Director on April 3rd, 2020. Mr. Rinehart is currently the Assistant Associate Director of the Field Operations Directorate Program Management Office (PMO). He previously served in the MAC District and the Southeast Region in various capacities and will be joining our district virtually, from his remote location in Northern Virginia. Once normal operations resume, Mr. Rinehart will transition to perform his duties on-site in Miami.

USCIS Office Closures

On March 18, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services temporarily suspended in-person services at its field offices, asylum offices, and application support centers (ASCs) to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). USCIS offices will begin to reopen on May 4 unless the public closures are extended further. Employees in these offices are continuing to perform mission-essential services that do not require face-to-face contact with the public.

USCIS will continue to provide limited emergency services. Please call the Contact Center for assistance with emergency services.

RFE, NOID, NOIR, NOIT and Appealable Decisions within AAO Jurisdiction

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced that it adopted measures to assist applicants and petitioners who are responding to certain Requests for Evidence (RFE) and Notices of Intent to Deny (NOID). This message clarifies that this flexibility also applies to certain Notices of Intent to Revoke (NOIR) and Notices of Intent to Terminate (NOIT) regional investment centers, as well as certain filing date requirements for Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion.

This flexibility applies to an RFE, NOID, NOIR, NOIT, or appealable decision within AAO jurisdiction and the issuance date listed on the request, notice or decision is between March 1, 2020 and May 1, 2020, inclusive.

Any response to an RFE, NOID, NOIR, or NOIT received within 60 calendar days after the response due date set in the request or notice will be considered by USCIS before any action is

taken. Any Form I-290B received up to 60 calendar days from the date of the decision will be considered by USCIS before it takes any action.

Wet Signatures

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced that, due to the ongoing COVID-19 National Emergency announced by President Trump on March 13, 2020, we will accept all benefit forms and documents with reproduced original signatures, including the Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker, for submissions dated March 21, 2020, and beyond. USCIS already accepts various petitions, applications and other documents bearing an electronically reproduced original signature. This means that a document may be scanned, faxed, photocopied, or similarly reproduced provided that the copy must be of an original document containing an original handwritten signature, unless otherwise specified. For forms that require an original “wet” signature, per form instructions, USCIS will accept electronically reproduced original signatures for the duration of the National Emergency. This temporary change only applies to signatures. All other form instructions should be followed when completing a form.

E-verify and Tentative Nonconfirmations

E-Verify is extending the timeframe to take action to resolve Social Security Administration (SSA) Tentative Nonconfirmations (TNCs) due to SSA office closures to the public.

E-Verify is also extending the timeframe to take action to resolve Department of Homeland Security (DHS) TNCs in limited circumstances when an employee cannot resolve a TNC due to public or private office closures.

To read more about what’s new with e-verify, please visit - <https://www.e-verify.gov/about-e-verify/whats-new>

USCIS Biometrics Reuse

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced that it will reuse previously submitted biometrics in order to process valid Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, extension requests due to the temporary closure of Application Support Centers (ASC) to the public in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This announcement is consistent with existing USCIS authorities regarding the agency’s ability to reuse previously submitted biometrics.

To read more, please visit: <https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/uscis-continue-processing-applications-employment-authorization-extension-requests-despite-application-support-center-closures>

COVID-19: Information for Students and Schools

As COVID-19 impacts international students and Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) - certified schools, SEVP is closely monitoring key developments and will provide further

information and important updates as necessary. SEVP's priority is ensuring that F and M students can make normal progress in a full course of study as required by federal regulations. Please consult U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) SEVP Program for information about international students.

To read about ICE SEVP adaptations for COVID-19, please visit –
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSICE/bulletins/2825873>
<https://www.ice.gov/covid19>

New Online Form for Reporting Fraud

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services launched a new online tip form to help the public provide the agency with information about immigration fraud. The new online form, available on the USCIS public website, prompts the form user for the information that the USCIS' fraud investigators need to investigate allegations of immigration benefit fraud or abuse.

To read more, please visit: <https://www.uscis.gov/news/news-releases/uscis-launches-new-online-form-reporting-fraud>

Outreach Sessions

The MAC Community Relations Program has suspended in-person outreach events until further notice. However, if your organization is interested in holding a virtual event, please contact Berta.M.Cassidy@uscis.dhs.gov or Roketa.F.Mansfield@uscis.dhs.gov to coordinate.