



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Chad Poppell**  
Secretary

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 07, 2021  
**TO:** Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** December 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** February 12, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite N-812 Miami, Florida 33128

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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; Angeliqe 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

**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 2019 Labor Market Report for the region. At the request of the attendees an electronic copy is attached to the minutes for sharing purposes.

Representatives from most of the Refugee services providers took turn sharing the accomplishments, the challenges faced during 2020 and their hopes for the coming year. Providers shared: The ongoing situation with Covid-19 situation has a devastating impact on the community our clients included. 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 is affecting providers locally. Providers continue to remain hopeful, that things will change for the better in the coming year and they will be able continue to work helping the refugee population in our community.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

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

**Meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM**

**LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – OCTOBER 2020**

**Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee**

**Legal Subcommittee Meeting October 21, 2020**

**Agenda**

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

**Attendees:**

- Danielle Befeler – Americans for Immigrant Justice
- Angela Vazquez - CWS
- Berta - USCIS
- Christine – St Thomas
- Frances Rivera - CBP
- Icanate – Inelda Canate from Jackson Health System
- Megan Humphreys - AIJ
- Michael Silva - CBP
- Natalia Patina - CWS
- Timothy Drahovsky – Lutheran Services
- Viviane Saide – Minority Help
- Phone number – Maria Pena - CWS
- Iphone
- Brad – CLS
- DClaros
- Alexandra Yaya
- Maureen Porras
- Pastora Iris de Jesus
- Jorge Vielman

**USCIS – Berta and Roketa:**

- Fee waiver rule that was supposed to go into effect October 2 has a preliminary injunction in place
  - o Accepting current editions and current fees
  - o Guidance currently in place to adjudicate forms
    - Fee waivers still valid
- Updates with biometrics:
  - o For biometrics appointments scheduled during USCIS closures mid-March to June 4<sup>th</sup>, will get one of two things:
    - New appointment
    - Receive a notice indicating reusing biometrics
  - o Call the 1-800 Number to reschedule biometrics
- Reminder of quarterly stakeholder meeting of district leadership providing updates and answering some pre-submitted questions
  - o Nov 10 from 11-12
  - o Email is [miaoutreach2@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:miaoutreach2@uscis.dhs.gov)
  - o Questions due by October 27

#### **Asylum Office - Maria Dominguez**

Could not make this meeting, but sent in notes, which Danielle will read at the end

#### **Amanda St Jean – EOIR**

Could not make this meeting

#### **CBP - Frances Rivera and Michael Silva**

- Flights from MIA slowly picking up
  - o FTL will be ramping up through to Dec. 1
  - o No international flights to West Palm or Tampa
  - o Orlando amount of international flights fluctuates every day
  - o Most countries are open, but subject to change depending on COVID numbers increasing
  - o Suggest checking CDC website or country's websites for travel restrictions or quarantine requirements for traveling to other countries
- Proclamation still in place, not lifted yet
  - o What was lifted was funneling airports
- Some passengers are being turned away at entry points because of inadmissibility's
  - o Sometimes have to wait a few days because no flights to country of origin for a few days
- Deferred inspection has been open
  - o Only appointments
- Global entry up and running with appointments

- Focusing on social media outreach to correct urban legends in community about traveling during the pandemic
  - o Suggest reaching out to consulate before travel to ask about COVID-19 regulations and guidelines (like if COVID tests are required at entry)
  - o Recommend seeing CDC or CBP website
- MIA is rolling out facial recognition pilot program in November
  - o Facial comparison
- Discourage port shopping to circumvent embassy requirements
  - o CBP can't advise in advance if you will be admissible or not
  - o If you stay less than 14 days in a country, may get taken off a flight or flight may not board you
- Cuba has no new limitations or instructions on travel
  - o Same as the restrictions in place since 2016 on what you can bring over
- No policy change regarding LPR remaining outside of the country for more than 6 months
  - o If travelers are stuck and have documentation showing they haven't abandoned LPR status, then should be fine
  - o Only travelers still stuck are in Venezuela (border open with Colombia) and Cuba border closed (but accepting tourists from Europe)
  - o If re-entry permit is expired, may be sent to embassy to renew it

#### **Asylum Office - Maria Dominguez (Danielle reading notes)**

- For specific case information please email [Miami.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Miami.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov)
- Public asylum stats will be coming out in October and will be shared
- USCIS application fees for I-589s preliminarily enjoined
  - o Current editions and fees in place
- Changes on final rule for I485 fees for asylees (look below on shared information)
- Temporary interpreter rule effective through March 22, 2021

#### **Additional Questions:**

- Any news from EOIR?
  - o IJs on rotating schedules until 12/4 but may be expanded after that
    - Mander substituted by Midgley
    - Torreh-Bayouth may be reassigned or rescheduled
    - Rodriguez de Jongh substituted by Herman
    - Nettles covered by Rivera Ortiz
  - o No MCHs through 12/4
    - Getting rescheduled for same time next year

#### **Shared Information**

Federal Register/Vol. 85, No. 149 / Monday, August 3, 2020 / Rules and Regulations (correction to Final Rule)

See section III.G.11.c. Form I-485 Reduced Fee for Asylees and new 8 CFR 106.2(a)(17)(ii):

On August 3, 2020, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a final rule to amend DHS regulations to adjust certain immigration and naturalization benefit request fees charged by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and make certain other changes. In this rule, we are correcting four technical errors--Effective October 2, 2020. (DHS Rule on 8/17/2020)

(17) *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, Form I-485 –Most permanent residence applications.* For filing an application for permanent resident status or creation of a record of lawful permanent residence: \$1,130.

(ii) *Asylees* For the first Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, filed by individuals who have paid the \$50 fee for Form I-589 and are subsequently granted asylum based on that Form I-589: \$1,080.

(iii) *Refugees and Special Immigrants.* There is no fee if an applicant is filing as a refugee under section 209(a) of the Act or for applicants for Special Immigrant Status based on an approved Form I-360 as an Afghan or Iraqi Interpreter, or Iraqi National employed by or on behalf of the U.S. Government or Afghan National employed by the U.S. Government or the International Security Assistance Forces (“ISAF”).

## EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – DECEMBER 2020

### EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Dec. 11, 2020

- Although it has been a challenging year, REVEST/Miami Dade College remains proactive and working hard to meet all deliverables. We continue offering hybrid classes as well as on-line only courses according to student and faculty needs. The current Fall term runs Sept. 1 – Dec. 18, 2020. Spring 2021 Term will run from January 6 to 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.
- 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 Spring 2021 Term from January 6 to April 30, 2021. So far around 550 VESOL students have been enrolled program wide in this current Term of Fall 2020, and around 600 are going to be enrolled for Spring 2021. Although COVID 19 has had an impact in our students approximately 150 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 200 vocational registrations so far in the current fall term ending in December. Likewise, we have already processed a considerable number of new registrations for the Spring 2021 beginning in January. 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 2020-1 started on August 24, 2020 and will end on December 18, 2020. The total enrollment as of December 8, 2020 was 705. This total includes 104 newly enrolled and 29 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), General Education Development (GED), Success Management Academy (SMA) GED in Spanish, and a wide range of vocational/technical programs. The SMA GED in Spanish is offered at eight 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.
- Translation and validation services continue to be offered to eligible students. During this trimester (2020-1), twelve students received these services. 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, Technical College, 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 is being 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 [saves@dadeschools.com](mailto:saves@dadeschools.com)
- A Zoom meeting will be held in the near future (January 13, 2021) with SAVES District staff and school contacts 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](mailto:gilfelicia@dadeschools.net)
- You can reach the SAVES District office by e-mailing Dr. Felicia Gil at [gilfelicia@dadeschools.net](mailto:gilfelicia@dadeschools.net)

#### EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – DECEMBER 2020

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



RET Programmatic  
Slides- LMI Report 2

Commented [LL1]:



**USCIS UPDATE – DECEMBER 2020****USCIS Miami & Caribbean District  
November & December 2020 Update****Revised Naturalization Test**

USCIS announced plans to implement a revised version of the naturalization civics test. The civics test is administered to applicants who apply for U.S. citizenship and is one of the statutory requirements for naturalizing. Applicants who apply for naturalization on or after December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, will take the updated version of the test. Those who apply before December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, will take the current version of the test.

**For further information, please visit [The 2020 Version of the Civics Test page](#).**

**USCIS ASL and Braille Disability Updates**

USCIS is pleased to announce enhancements that make our services more accessible for members of the public with disabilities.

A 15-minute [video about the naturalization process](#) is now available in American Sign Language. The video provides information on general eligibility requirements, filing an application, the naturalization interview, and the Oath ceremony.

For naturalization applicants, USCIS can offer the English reading test in braille. Hardcopy study materials are also available in braille. To request braille-related or other accommodations, members of the public should use the [online accommodations request form](#) or call the Contact Center at 800-375-5283 (TTY 800-767-1833).

Through the [Citizenship Resource Center](#), individuals can access and print large-print versions of the Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test, Civics Questions for the 65/20 Exemption, the Reading Test Vocabulary and the Writing Test Vocabulary. Individuals can also access text-only versions of these materials for use with screen enlargers, screen readers, refreshable braille displays, and most other accessibility products.

For more information about USCIS and our programs, please visit [uscis.gov](#) or follow us on Twitter ([@uscis](#)), YouTube ([/uscis](#)), Facebook ([/uscis](#)), and Instagram ([@USCIS](#)).

**DHS Proposes to Curtail Work Authorization for Aliens with Final Orders of Removal**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [announced](#) a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) that would limit discretionary work authorization for aliens who have final orders of removal and who have been temporarily released from DHS custody on an order of supervision (OSUP).

The [NPRM](#) will be published on Nov. 19, 2020 and the comment period will close 30 days later on Dec. 21, 2020.

**More Information**

To review the entire NPRM, including an overview of the proposed changes and instructions on how to submit comments, visit the [Federal Register](#).

For more information on USCIS and our programs, please visit [uscis.gov](#) or follow us on Twitter ([@uscis](#)), YouTube ([/uscis](#)), Facebook ([/uscis](#)) and Instagram ([@USCIS](#)).