



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 26, 2019
TO: Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force
FROM: Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: February 26, 2019 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: April 12, 2019
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
FEBRUARY 08, 2019**

ATTENDEES:

Kerry Allen; Marielisa Amador; Sabine Balmir; Berta Cassidy; Diego Castro; Maria Dominguez; Monica Farias; Martha Ferrer; Felicia, Gil ; Emilie Goesser; Maria Hernandez; Elmer Morales; Sergio Mora; Eduardo Morras; Cristobal Perez; Yeen Perez; Marie Philogene; Christine Reis; Edgar Tobon; Sol Fauve; Roketa Mansfeld; Regina Bernadin; Michelle Ramirez; Mariadee Ortega; Lourdes Pesante; Dorothy Martin; Ibis Valdes; Eugenia Nechyparenka; Krystina Francois; Natalia Patina; Luz Reyes; Maria Rodriguez; Grace Toapanta; Yadira Bello; Sandrina Portillo; Constance Williams; Sandra Sierra .

INTRODUCTION:

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

PRESENTATION:

Krystina François, Executive Director, Miami Dade County Office of New Americans (ONA) – She provided an overview of the Program and Services offered. This office is part of the Dade County’s Mayor initiative to help the vast immigrant population that makes up this community. The goal of the program is to make naturalization and immigration services accessible, offer information that inspires trust and embodies good government. It is a Win-Win-Win - Citizenship is good for families, business and our community. There are areas of opportunity for ONA to develop new programming and partnerships to address the barriers LPRs are facing. Given the recent changes in USCIS regulations and internal policy, there is a backlog in processing naturalization applications and increased scrutiny. It offers Free community events for legal assistance to LPRs, study materials, and screening for fee waivers. Free weekly classes to prepare for the naturalization interview, application assistance and financial coaching. It also provides Financial Coaching, Lending Circles, Micro-Loans; Information Sessions On-Site Application Assistance; Supporting Business and Entrepreneurs.

Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt, MSW Program Coordinator, Florida Center for Survivors of Torture, Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services. – She stated (Gulf Coast JFCS) is a non-sectarian, community-based, Florida not-for-profit that has been serving Floridians for 58 years. The Organization’s vast array of programs serves diverse populations including all ages, faiths, cultures, and lifestyles, including: Individuals with Behavioral Health Challenges with the tools necessary to function well in society; Unemployed Non-Custodial Parents with the employment skills to find jobs, support their families and be better parents; Refugees and Survivors of Torture with basic services that support them to successfully adapt to life in America; Elderly and Disabled citizens with support services enabling them to live independently, safely and with dignity; Jewish Families with services that connect them to the Jewish community and improve their lives; and Children in need with intensive support to ensure stability, safety and well-being. Each individualized service is based on research, evidence-based/best practices and trauma-informed care principles for a positive impact on the social determinants of health in the communities served.

The agency's mission: Inspired by Jewish values, we protect the vulnerable and help people achieve fulfilling lives by empowering individuals and strengthening families.

REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

- Volunteers and help needed for the planning of World Refugee Day 2019
- Outreach plan to the Venezuelan Asylees in the area; what are we doing ?

REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATE (*Sent via E-Mail in January and February*)

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2019
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South Florida VOLAG Consortium

None

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2019

Immigration and Legal Issues Sub Committee

Minutes for the meeting on February 6, 2019

By: Maria Rodriguez

Attendees: Berta Cassidy, Maureen Porras, Adonia Simpson, Danielle Befeler, Amelia Ramirez, Brad Ginter, Miriam J. Garcia, Lourdes Leconte, Dorothy Martin.

The Immigration Subcommittee Meeting was held on February 6, 2019 at the office of American for Immigrant Justice. Berta Cassidy provided USCIS updates, followed by questions.

USCIS

N-648: USCIS has issued policy guidance on the updating and clarifying filing procedures and adjudication of the Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions (Form N-648).

Policy Highlights

- Clarifies filing requirements for Form N-648, including that the form must be submitted with the naturalization application.
- Clarifies that USCIS may consider a late filing if there is a credible explanation.
- Clarifies that an officer may find an N-648 insufficient if there is a finding of credible doubt, discrepancies, misrepresentation or fraud as to the applicant's eligibility for the exception.
- Clarifies that applicants may decline the English and civics test or discontinue the interview when an officer determines the Form N-648 is insufficient, but this will count as a failed attempt to pass the English and civics requirements.

This policy is effective on February 12, 2019

MIAMI ASC OFFICE: Be advised that the Miami ASC office will be relocating at the end of February 2019. The new location will be at: **1620 NE 163rd Street, North Miami Beach, FL 33162.**

ONLINE FEE CALCULATOR: USCIS has launched a new Online Fee Calculator to assist members of the public in calculating the correct fee amount to include when filing their forms with USCIS at an agency lockbox facility. To use the online fee calculator, visit uscis.gov/feecalculator.

N-600 & N-600K: Can now be filed online. Applicant must create USCIS account.

ASYLUM CASE STATUS: Asylum applicants case status checks can now be done online.

INFO-PASS (MIAMI DISTRICT OFFICES): As of March 18, 2019, the self-schedule Info-Pass will end. Applicants/Attorney must call the 1-800# or use the online tools. The 1-800# representative will be scheduling the info-pass, if you require one.

If someone has a travel emergency, they must call the 1-800# to schedule an appointment.

SERVICE CENTER EMAILS: Please be advised the emails to the service center are no longer available.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at American for Immigrant Justice, 6355 NW 36th Street, Suite 201, Miami, FL 33166, from 10:00 am to 12:00 PM. [Office is located inside the Televisa Building]

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2019**2019 REFUGEE TASK FORCE
EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING****Feb. 8, 2019**

- REVEST is enrolling students for the upcoming second Mini Term of Spring 2193 from March 11 to May 3, 2019. So far around 1000 VESOL students are enrolled program wide in this current Mini Term 79.1 Spring A, and around 700 will be enrolled for Spring B Term 2193. Approximately 250 students have been scheduled to test and more orientations are planned.
- The REVEST Program has been able to process almost 650 vocational registrations for the contract year. We continue providing training and advisement to advisors to be updated about changing procedures and system issues. We are planning presentations by other MDC departments on career options.
- Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors Jan. 17, 26, 2019. All CASAS testing procedures were reviewed with instructors to ensure a successful testing session. CASAS testing is taking place Feb. 19-23, 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.
- 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 new mini-term system. We are also monitoring students receiving scholarships in the Kendall and West Miami Dade College sites. REVEST is proud of all involved in creating a smooth transition to this new system.
- In the SAVES Program, current trimester (2018-2) started on January 7, 2019 and will end on April 12, 2019. The total enrollment in the SAVES program during this trimester is 1,173. This number includes 366 new clients and 72 Success Management Academy (SMA) GED clients, 16 – 18 yrs. old.
- The next trimester (2018-3) will begin on April 15, 2019 and will end on July 31, 2019. We are asking every provider to refer clients to the SAVES program. We offer English

for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), General Basic Education, and a wide range of vocational/technical programs.

- The SAVES program continues to serve clients at 14 schools where SAVES representatives are housed. Two other schools, George T. Baker Aviation and Technical College and Miami Lakes Educational Center and Technical College, accept SAVES vouchers for referred SAVES clients. Eligible SAVES clients can take advantage and the opportunity to attend classes and complete a vocational program that can lead to a successful career.
- SAVES continues 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, and opening of school meetings. The Marketing Department printed flyers in Spanish and Haitian-Creole for SAVES to distribute. SAVES would like to ask meeting participants to take some flyers to distribute to their clients. If additional copies are needed, arrangements can be made to pick-up some more at the SAVES district office.
- SAVES schools administrators and SAVES school contacts are engaging in a machine marketing campaign to recruit students. They participate in open-houses and distribute flyers to the public at supermarkets, churches, and community agencies. They present at students' orientation and go on the public announcement system to promote their schools and the SAVES program. Many schools participate in the Viernes Culturales that is held at Calle Ocho the last Friday of every month. The English Center often rents a booth to display and distribute flyers to the festival participants. Other places visited by the English Center are churches, Publix supermarkets, and Career Technical and Small Business Conferences. The English Center also frequently published articles in newspapers and social media to promote the SAVES program. The articles are available at <http://miamidiario.com/gemma-carillo> and <http://diarolasamericas.com/gemma-carillo>.
- The SAVES Success Management Academy (SMA) program for students 16-18 years old continues to be implemented in seven SAVES locations. New procedures were established for 2018-2019 school year to ensure more student/parent involvement, empowerment, and participation. These procedures are paying huge dividends with higher completion rates and students' participation in higher education and vocational classes.
- SAVES continues to collaborate with other agencies in the community to provide additional services to the clients. At the SAVES District meeting held on January 30, 2019, Ms. Paulina Velez, manager of Youth Services, Youth Co-Op, was invited to present at the meeting. Also present at the meeting from Youth Co-Op were: Michelle Ramirez, Lisette Fernandez, Rosy Rodriguez, and Sonia Tobon. We appreciate their collaboration and the additional services and benefits they offer to SAVES students.

- SAVES Students' success stories are shared at the SAVES District meetings and published in the SAVES website www.savesdadeschools.com. We invite you to read them.
- The next SAVES District meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, 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 – FEBRUARY 2019

None

USCIS UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2019

USCIS Miami & Caribbean District February 2019 Update

- ❖ **Applicants Can Now Request Certificates of Citizenship Online** – Applicants can now complete and file Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship, and Form N-600K, Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322 online. Forms N-600 and N-600K are part of the growing number of documents that USCIS has made available for easy and convenient online filing. This list includes:
 - Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card;
 - Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings;
 - Form N-400, Application for Naturalization; and
 - Form N-565, Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document.
- ❖ **Online Case Status Feature for Asylum Applicants** – Applicants who have a pending affirmative asylum application with USCIS can now check the status of their applications online at uscis.gov/casestatus. Only asylum applicants with an application pending with USCIS will be able to use this new feature to check their case status online. It will not cover defensive asylum applicants whose cases are pending in immigration court. Previously, asylum applicants could only check their case status through an asylum office in person or by phone, fax, or email. This enhancement is a part of our overall modernization efforts to provide a more efficient and effective user experience.

- ❖ **Application Support Center (ASC) Move** - Application Support Centers, often called ASCs, offer fingerprinting services, usually after filing USCIS forms. ASC offices in our district have been co-located at our field offices, however, starting in December 2018, ASCs in our district began moving off-site, beginning with our Oakland Park ASC. The Miami ASC will be moving to an off-site location toward the end of February 2019. Kendall and Hialeah ASCs are expected to move sometime later this year. Please refer to the address on the ASC appointment notice for further information.

❖ **Outreach Sessions**

Below is a listing of our upcoming outreach sessions and events that will take place during the month of February. These sessions are free and open to the public. If you need additional information, please contact – Berta.M.Cassidy@uscis.dhs.gov.

Date	Time	Type of Event	Location
Feb 5 th , 2019	5:30 – 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Tamarac Library 8701 W. Commercial Blvd. Tamarac, FL 33351
Feb 6 th , 2019	4:00 – 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	South Dade Regional Library 10750 SW 211 Street Cutler Bay, FL 33189
Feb 7 th , 2019	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	Shenandoah Branch Library 2111 SW 19 St. Miami, FL 33145
Feb 11 th , 2019	5:30 – 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	West Regional Library 8601 W. Broward Blvd. Plantation, FL 33324
Feb 12 th , 2019	4:00 – 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	West Dade Regional Library 9445 Coral Way (SW 24 St) Miami, FL 33165
Feb 12 th , 2019	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	California Club Branch Library 700 Ives Dairy Road Miami, FL 33179

Feb 19 th , 2019	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	USCIS Information Desk	Stephen P. Clark Government Center 111 NW 1 st Street Miami, FL 33128
Feb 19 th , 2019	6:00 – 7:30 pm	Naturalization Information Session	Southwest Regional Library 16835 Sheridan Street Pembroke Pines, FL 33331
Feb 21 st , 2019	4:00 – 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Kendale Lakes Branch Library 15205 SW 88 Street Miami, FL 33196
Feb 21 st , 2019	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Library Information Desk	Arcola Lakes Branch Library 8240 NW 7 th Avenue Miami, FL 33150
Feb 25 th , 2019	6:30 – 7:45 pm	Library Information Desk	Lauderhill Towne Centre Library 6399 W Oakland Park Blvd. Lauderhill, FL 33313
Feb 26 th , 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
Feb 26 th , 2019	5:30 – 7:30 pm	Library Information Desk	Miramar Branch Library 2050 Civic Center Place Miramar, Fl. 33025

❖ 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 – Feb 8th, 15th, and 22nd**
- **Hialeah Field Office - Feb 9th and 23rd**
- **Oakland Park Field Office - Feb 15th and 22nd**
- **Kendall Field Office - Feb 15th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd, 25th and 26th**