



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

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Mike Caroll**  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** July 28, 2016  
**TO:** Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** April 8, 2016 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** August 12, 2016  
**Time:** 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon  
**Location:** Miami-Dade College  
Building 3, Room, Room 3208-09  
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 task force 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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**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 08, 2016**

**ATTENDEES:**

Sylvia, Acevedo; Bojan, Bajic; Sabine, Balmir-Derenoncourt; Ileana, Bustelo; Jackie, Carrion; Berta, Cassidy; Milly Cartelle; Jorge, Costas; Maria Dominguez; Aileen, Esparra ; Maria, Esparza; Monica, Farias; Miriam J. Garcia; Felica, Gil; Carmen, Gimenez; Emilie, Goeser; Lourdes, Leconte; Julio Iglesias; Alen, Janjus; Silvia, Lopez; Guillermo, Luna; Dasiely, Marrero; Dorothy, Martin; Carmen, Medrano; John, Parsons; Yeen, Perez; Oscar, Rivera; Erica, Perdomo; Cristobal, Perez; Marcela, Quintero; Veronica, Rodriguez; Luisa, Sanchez; Rosaida, Galano; Ruth Valenzuela; Peggy, Cadeaux; Sherry Capers; Pamela, Agudelo; Jorge, Guzman; Kerry M., Allen; Annette, Alvarez;; Anderson B., Gay; Clerda, Cajuste; Carlos, Narranjo; Michelle, Godoy; Patricia, Ferreira; Jilma, Roiz; Amber, Gamarra; Lilian, Sorzano; Ruth Valenzuela , Ileana Vallejo; Veraliz Cotto; Rosaida Galano; Oscar Willumsen; Ashley Janousek; Beatriz Borja; Zoraida Ballestas; Maria A. Ramos; Dan Itus Briggs; Luz E. Reyes; Niurka Duncan; Jenny Lange; Pastor Alan Holt; Dr. Cheryl White; Alberto Ortega; Norma Arizmendi; Erick Brito

**INTRODUCTION:**

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

**PRESENTATION:**

There were no presentations at this meeting. The meeting was recorded by WFSU-TV / The FLORIDA Channel. Providers had very little to discuss. The ACCESS Program Office, the VOLAG Consortium, USCIS, the Legal Service Sub Committee, Adult Education Sub Committee all provided a general update

**REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:**

- Ileana Bustelo, Deputy Director Refugee Service Program shared some update on the ABWAD policy with regards to the Refugee population, the work around process to identify these cases is not yet completed, but the program office is working on the matter.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

- Volunteers are still needed for the planning of World Refugee Day 2016

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

- USCIS Invitation: Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, 03/16/2016

**Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM**

**SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – APRIL 2016**

**SOUTH FLORIDA VOLAG CONSORTIUM**

**April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES:**

- CCS- Jackie Carrion
- CWS- Jose Sanchez
- EMM-Charlande Michel
- LSF- Yazmin Ru
- LSF- Erick Brito Bambos
- IRC-Oasis Pena,
- IRC-Ana Maria Teixeira
- WR-Guillermo Luna,
- WR- Saidenys Barrios
- Youth Coop- Bojan Bajic
- Youth Coop- Veronica Rodriguez

**Guests : Erica Perdomo DCF-Refugee Services**

The VOLAG meeting was held at Church World Service on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
 Jose Sanchez called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Agenda were reviewed and approved.  
 Minutes from last meeting were approved and submitted to the State in March.

Youth Coop shared with the group an email received from ORR that indicates that non Cuban born children from both Cuban national parents are eligible to receive ORR benefits including the participation in the Matching Grant program as long as they reside in the same household with their parents. Refugee Services mentioned that those non Cuban born children remain ineligible to receive benefits with the State such as Medicaid, Cash and Food stamps.

**Items discussed.**

- **R&P arrivals, issues and concerns –Quarterly Community Consultation Report. And 2017 Abstract.**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Clients</b>
CWS	49
EMM	22
IRC	45
LIRS	12
CCS	9
USCRI/YC	5
WR	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>163</b>

VOLAG reported refugee arrivals to be very slow. Agencies reported that most of refugees arriving are without US ties and are coming from DRC, Colombia, Eritrea, and Cuba. Agencies reported very low numbers of Cuban refugees arriving comparing to past years.

CWS reported last minute cancelations of refugee families scheduled to arrive due to the inability to obtain exit permits from countries of refuge and due to medical reasons.

Jose Sanchez raised concerns with the Refugee Health Assessment program in Miami Dade in regards to the appointments given to refugees to receive the initial medical screening and additional follow ups. Some of the refugees have been scheduled to receive the services on Saturdays, others at 7:00 am and some others are scheduled late appointments to see pediatricians.

Jose Sanchez will be contacting the Refugee Health Assessment Program and will report the outcomes in the next meeting. Participants reported the same concerns.

- **Matching Grant enrollments FY2016**

Case Type	MG ENROLLMENTS BY MONTH												YTD
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	Total
<b>1. Refugees</b>	22	7	21	23	14	15							<b>102</b>
<b>2. Asylees</b>		11	2	4	8								<b>25</b>
<b>3. VOT</b>						1							<b>1</b>
<b>4. Parolees/Cuban Entrants</b>	313	374	320	318	305	390							<b>2020</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>406</b>							<b>2148</b>

- **CAM Program updates**

WR reported over 100 applications filed under the CAM Program. WR has received about 10 refugee children, most of them with paroles and ineligible to receive refugee resettlement assistance.

**Parolee Orientation (POP)**

Jose Sanchez (CWS) reported that Cuban and Haitian parolees arriving through the family reunification program are receiving the flyer with the information about the CWS and USCCB Parolee Orientation Program (POP) in Havana and Porto Prince respectively.

Jose Sanchez reported the numbers for the POP:

March 2016: 297 Cuban parolees – 32 migrated out of the State and 29 out of Miami Dade County.

March 2016, 124 Haitian parolees – 79 migrated out of State and 34 out of Miami Dade County.

YTD – Cuban Parolees – 672  
Haitian Parolees – 228

### **Asylum Office Power Point Presentation schedule**

Resettlement agencies have been participating in the presentations at the Miami Asylum Unit with the DCF Office of Refuge Services. DCF – RS attends all the sessions and resettlement agencies attend on a rotating basis. May: WR, June: Youth-Coop and July: CWS. Jose Sanchez reminded everyone to report the inability to attend ahead of time in order to find a back up agency to guarantee VOLAGs' participation.

- **Other Items / Announcements**

**Charlande Michel from EMM** raised a concern with DMV regarding the delay for non-Cuban refugees that have applied for their Driver License. These clients are not receiving proof of applications and their process is taking longer than usual. She will elevate a complaint to a supervisor and will report the outcome back to the group during next meeting.

**Jackie Carrion from Catholic Charities** announced their new Health Grant available for Parolees, Asylees, Cuban Entrants, and Victims of Human Trafficking. They are going to provide 4 hour sessions on Health, Mental Health and support groups. They are willing to provide these trainings at individual agencies if requested as long as the group of participants is larger than 20.

**Ana Maria Teixeira from IRC** also announced the ICM (Intensive Case management Program) available for single parent, mental health, victim of gender-based violence, LGBTQI, elderly, unaccompanied minors, Congolese, or secondary migrant. (Information flyer was provided at the meeting).

**Guillermo Luna from WR** – announced WR New Address – 2742 SW 8 St. Miami, Florida – the phone number is the same.

- **Next Meeting: May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at IRC 730 NW 107 Ave. Miami, Florida 33172 – Valet parking at Building 760 is complementary.**

## LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 2016

**MIAMI AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE**  
**Immigration and Legal Issues Sub Committee**  
**Minutes for meeting on April 7, 2016**  
By Miriam J. Garcia

**Attendance: Oscar Alvarez, Berta Cassidy, Veraliz Cotto, Nancy Denis, Patricia M. Ferreira, Miriam J. Garcia, Brad Ginter, Arno Lemus, Dorothy Martin, Amelia Ramirez, Alexandra O. Yaya.**

The Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee meeting was held on April 7, 2016 at the offices of Church World Service, Inc. (CWS) where Berta Cassidy provided the USCIS update and Veraliz Cotto provided the Miami Asylum Office update, and they answered questions as follows:

- **CITIZENSHIP AND INTEGRATION GRANT OPPORTUNITY.** A reminder that USCIS is accepting applications for two competitive funding opportunities under the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program for fiscal year 2016. Applications are due by April 22, 2016. For further information, please visit [www.uscis.gov/grants](http://www.uscis.gov/grants) .
- **EMMA.** USCIS launched Emma, their computer-generated virtual assistant in English in December, 2015. They are getting ready to launch Emma in Spanish. They are looking for volunteers to take a few minutes to ask Emma USCIS-related questions in Spanish. To start chatting with Emma visit their [Spanish preview site](#), click on “Haga una pregunta” link in the upper right corner and ask your question using key words, phrases or full sentences in Spanish.
- **BIA LOCAL LISTING UPDATE.** Notify Berta of any changes by Friday, April 8, 2016.
- **CHANGE OF VENUE TO HOLD FUTURE MEETINGS.** All members who were present at the meeting came agreed to hold the Legal Subcommittee meetings on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) Wednesday of the month alternating venues every other month with Church World Service and Americans For Immigrant Justice.
- **MIAMI ASYLUM OFFICE.** The Miami Asylum Office did not have any updates to announce. Participants were reminded the Affirmative Asylum Scheduling Bulletin can be accessed at: <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/affirmative-asylum-scheduling-bulletin>. The listed priorities in the bulletin remained the same. Participants asked questions on various items regarding the asylum process such as the Asylum clock and expedited interviews. Detailed information was provided on these items.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 4, 2016 from 10:00 A.M. until 12:00 P.M. Location TBA.

<b>EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 2016</b>
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## **EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

**April 8, 2016**

- REVEST is enrolling students for the upcoming term beginning May 11 and ending Aug. 27, 2016. So far over 2900 ESOL students have been enrolled program wide and more are expected. Approximately 1400 have been tested and we expect to test 240 additionally. Demand continues to grow for an opportunity to receive VESOL and Vocational classes.
- The REVEST Program has steadily continued to increase the number of vocational registrations, so much so, that the demand of requests has exceeded our budget. Consequently, we have successfully begun new registrations for the Summer Term (2015-3), and they will extend to the end of our contract year in August. Our staff receives ongoing training sessions as a way to improve the process and be up to date with the new challenges.
- Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors March 24 and 25, 2016. All CASAS testing procedures were reviewed with instructors to ensure a successful testing session. CASAS testing is taking place April 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016. We expect high completion rates.
- The total SAVES Program enrollment as of April 1, 2016, is 4,465. Of these, 2,674 are new students to the program and 257 are 16 to 18 youngsters in the six SAVES centers offering the GED in Spanish Program. The current trimester ends on April 21, 2016. The next academic trimester will begin on April 25, 2016.
- SAVES performance results were published by DCF for the fall term 2015 1. SAVES surpassed all contract goals. We are very proud of these results.
- A SAVES District meeting was held on March 30, 2016. Important information was discussed with the school staff. Next SAVES District meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2016.
- Ms. Marisol Martin and Ms. Paulina Velez from Career Source South Florida attended the SAVES District meeting held on March 30, 2016. They shared information on additional benefits and services available for the SAVES students. Ms. Sonia Granados from Catholic Charities also attended the meeting and provided information related to unaccompanied refugee minors. SAVES is collaborating with Career Source and Catholic Charities to share information and bring additional benefits to SAVES students. We would like to thank them for their presentations.
- SAVES is collaborating with the Miami-Dade College REVEST program to assist students who completed their GED and are interested in pursuing a college education. M-

DC will provide counseling services to students to help them with registration, applying for financial aid and mapping their career goals. M-DC counselors visited Miami Coral Park Adult Education Center and met with 21 youngsters 16 to 18 years old in the GED in Spanish program. The counselors provided assistance on completing a college application, courses available, requirements, counseling, and application for financial aid. They are scheduling visits to Miami Springs and Hialeah-Miami Lakes Adult Education Centers in the near future for the same purpose.

- A Degree Translation/Validation session will be held on April 12, 2016. Twenty three (24) students have been scheduled to attend the session to receive this service. The next Degree Translation/Validation session will be held on May 26, 2016
- New SAVES success stories, which highlight the achievements of some of our students, have been uploaded to the SAVES website (<http://saves.dadeschools.net>)
- If you have any questions about our program, you can call us or visit the SAVES website at <http://saves.dadeschools.net>

#### REFUGEE HEALTH CLINIC REPORT – APRIL 2016

None

#### EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – APRIL 2016

None

#### USCIS UPDATE – APRIL 2016

##### USCIS Miami

##### April 2016 Update

**REMINDER - Citizenship and Integration Grant Opportunity** - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is now accepting applications for two funding opportunities under the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program. These are competitive grant opportunities for organizations that prepare permanent residents for naturalization and promote civic integration through increased knowledge of English, U.S. history and civics. The two programs will provide up to \$10 million in grants for citizenship preparation programs in communities across the country. Applications are **due by April 22**.



For additional information on the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program for fiscal year 2016, visit [www.uscis.gov/grants](http://www.uscis.gov/grants)

To apply for this funding opportunity, please visit - [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

### **Help Emma Learn Spanish**

¿Habla español? If yes, then we have some exciting news to share with you! Here at USCIS, we've been training "Emma," our computer-generated virtual assistant, to speak Spanish so you can easily find what you need on our Spanish website.

We officially launched Emma in English in December 2015. Now we're getting ready to deliver the same innovative service to our Spanish-speaking customers. But first, we need your help building Emma's knowledge-base in Spanish.

We're looking for volunteers to take a few minutes to ask Emma USCIS-related questions in Spanish. To start chatting with Emma:

- Visit our [Spanish preview site](#).
- Click the "Haga una pregunta" link in the upper right corner.
- Ask your questions using key words, phrases or full sentences in Spanish.

**Upcoming Outreach Sessions** – Below is a listing of our upcoming outreach sessions and events. These sessions 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)

- April 11<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:30 pm – Library Information Desk at Doral Branch Library, 10785 NW 58 St. Doral, FL.
- April 12<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 -10:00 am – Information Desk at Miami Gardens Community Center, 16405 NW 25 Ave. Miami, FL.
- April 12<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 – 7:30 pm Library Information Desk at West Dade Regional Library, 9445 Coral Way Miami, FL.
- April 14<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 – 7:00 pm – Library Information Desk at Arcola Lakes Branch Library, 8240 NW 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. Miami, FL.
- April 16<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 12 noon – Naturalization Information Session in Spanish at Kendale Lakes Branch Library, 15205 SW 88 St. Miami, FL.
- April 19<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 2 pm – Information Desk at Stephen P. Clark Government Center, Lobby, 111 NW 1<sup>st</sup> St. Miami, FL.
- April 19<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 -7:30 pm – Library Information Desk at West Regional Library, 8601 W. Broward Blvd. Plantation, FL.
- April 20<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:30 pm – Library Information Desk at North Regional Library, 2455 NW 183<sup>rd</sup> St. Miami, FL.

- April 21<sup>st</sup>, from 4:00 – 7:30 pm - Library Information Desk at Kendale Lakes Branch Library, 15205 SW 88 St. Miami, Fl.
- April 25<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:30 pm – Library Information Desk at North Regional/ Broward College Library, 1100 Coconut Creek Blvd. Coconut Creek, Fl.
- April 26<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:30 pm – Library Information Desk at Tamarac Branch Library, 8701 W. Commercial Blvd. Tamarac, Fl.
- April 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:30 pm – Library Information Desk at Miramar Branch Library, 2050 Civic Center Place Miramar, Fl.
- May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5:30 – 7:30 pm – Library Information Desk at International Mall Branch Library, 10315 NW 12 St. Doral, Fl.

**Upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies** - Below are scheduled dates for on-site administrative N-400 oath ceremonies and the corresponding field offices where the ceremonies will take place. 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 – April 15, 22, and 29
- Hialeah Field Office – April 16 and 30
- Kendall Field Office – April 8, 15, 22, and 29
- Oakland Park Field Office – April 22 and 29
- ❖ April 22<sup>nd</sup> - An additional Special Ceremony will be held at Sugar Pines Preserve