



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Caroll
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 10, 2016
TO: Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force
FROM: Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: December 11, 2015 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: February 12, 2016
Time: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon
Location: Miami-Dade College
Building 3, Room, Room 3208-09
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 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 2nd Avenue, Suite N-812 Miami, Florida 33128

**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 11, 2015**

ATTENDEES:

Bojan, Bajic; Sabine, Balmir-Derenoncourt; Dina, Birman; Isabel, Afanador; Jackie, Carrion; Milly, Cartelle ; Diego, Castro; Eduardo, Chavez; Suzy, Cop; Jorge, Costas; Sonia, Davis; Gustavo, Diaz; Maria, Diaz; Aileen, Esparra ; Maria, Esparza; Monica, Farias; Martha, Ferrer; Miriam J., Garcia; Felica, Gil; Emilie, Goeser; Patricia Grogan; Lourdes, Leconte; Silvia, Lopez; Guillermo, Luna; Dorothy, Martin; Carmen, Medrano; Maria, Miranda; Charlande, Michel; Maria, Miranda; Eduardo, Moras, Eduardo; Janet, Nichols; John, Parsons; Yeen, Perez; Erica, Perdomo; Cristobal, Perez; Marcela, Quintero; Christine, Reis; Maria, Rodriguez; Veronica, Rodriguez; Edilia, Romeu; Leidy, Sevilla; Luisa, Sanchez; Evelyn, Soto; Ileana, Vallejo; Andrea, Gordon; Angela, Hiciano; Shalimi, Agarwal; Paige, Patterson-Hughes; Rey, Starr; Belinda, Jeanty-Gauthier; Lesley, Salas; Captain, Ifode.

INTRODUCTION:

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

PRESENTATION:

Representatives from most of the Refugee services providers and Local resettlement agencies took turn sharing the accomplishments, the challenges faced during 2015 and their hopes for the year 2016

The resettlement agencies touched upon the challenges they face in resettling, larger number of refugees without US ties. For example housing in Miami is very expensive, it is almost impossible to find a decent place at a reasonable rate that a refugee upon entering the workforce not enough resources are available to meet the basic needs of ever increasing number of Cuban arrivals. Health department is experiencing delays up to 2 months, Employment 3 weeks to 1 month. In spite of all the uncertainties and the increasing number of arrivals all the providers have come to the conclusion they had a great year, they have served more people than ever and they are ready to face the challenges of the coming year with the resolution to make it an even better year than the last.

Patti Grogan, Director of Refugee Service briefly addressed the members, thanking them for the work they do day in, day out on behalf of the refugees.

After the meeting forty members converged to the Knife restaurant for the celebratory end of the year luncheon. Community Medical Group and Net Health Consult, provided some Door prizes to attendees.

REFUGEE SERVICES (RS) UPDATE:

- The presence of Shalimi Agarwal, Staff attorney at ACLU and Paige, Patterson Hughes DCF, Communications Director Southeast region were noted.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

- Volunteers needed for the planning of World Refugee Day 2016

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

- Refugee I-94 Automation Stakeholder Engagement Invitation.
- Linking Refugee Families with Early Learning Communities Webinar
- Refugee Health Updates
- HHS Grants Forecast Webpage
- AHCA Announces Express Enrollment for the Managed Medical Assistance Program
- Resettlement Coordinator Position Opening
- Immigrant Victims of Human Trafficking and other Crimes

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – OCTOBER, 2015

SOUTH FLORIDA VOLAG CONSORTIUM

November 4th, 2015

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

- CCS- Evelyn Soto
- CWS- Jose Sanchez
- EMM-Charlande Michel
- LSF- Carmen Torres
- IRC-Oasis Pena,
- IRC-Ana Maria Teixeira
- IRC- Garrett Campbell (Tallahassee)
- Youth Co-op-Veronica Rodriguez,
- WR-Guillermo Luna,
- WR- Maritza Graive
- WR- John Parsons

Guests

Silvia Lopez – Community Medical Group

Lourdes Leconte – DCF- Refugee Service

Erica Perdomo DCF-RS-

The VOLAG meeting was held at Community Medical Group – November 4th, 2015. Jose Sanchez called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

Silvia Lopez – Welcome everyone to Community medical Group and introduced part of the CMG Supervisors. Jose Sanchez informed the participants that at the end of the VOLAG Meeting, CMG staff would receive training on refugee services.

The Minutes and New Agenda were approved and the following items discussed.

□ R&P arrivals –October 2015

Agency	Clients
CWS	14
EMM	4
IRC	2
LIRS	5
CCS	4
USCRI/YC	0
WR	8
TOTAL	

Resettlement agencies reported refugee arrivals continued be slow during October 2015. LIRS reported Colombian cases, CWS have been resettling from Congo, Cuba and Iraq, and IRC has been receiving Syrian, Colombians, Iranian, and Iraqis. Some of the agencies have assured few Cuban cases. All of these populations are arriving as no US ties cases.

EMM informed us that she received an email regarding a CCS program (Pilot Program). The program provides case management assistance through co-sponsors (Community agencies that are not Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs) to clients within the 180 miles. EMM was asked by the National Office to return those pending cases that are over 180 miles radio to be re-assigned to CCS.

❑ Matching Grant enrollments FY2016, MG Changes

Match Grant Enrollments

Jose Sanchez (CWS) brought in to our attention that CCS and WR are notifying other resettlement agencies about MG enrollments. Agencies agreed to continue with the practice that shows the I-94 stamped to avoid duplication services.

IRC asked everyone about Matching Grant 120 day’s reports since EAD continue with delays. It was informed that reasons for such delays is the amount of Cuban entrants arriving to South Florida.

Case Type	MG ENROLLMENTS BY MONTH												YTD
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	Total
1. Refugees	9												9
2. Asylees													
3. VOT													
4. Parolees/Cuban Entrants	98												98
Total	107												107

❑ CAM Program updates

Only: WR – 11 cases (15 people)

Interviewed 7 cases – DNA parents 9 DNA children 5 and TYD: 93 people.

WR mentioned that some interviews were cancelled because the phone numbers for the families were not verified. Interviews will be rescheduled.

❑ **Parolee Orientation (POP)**

CWS reported services provided to 484 parolees in October (43 leaving Miami-Dade). January to October 4702 clients processed. It was also reported that many Cuban parolees arrived with electronic paroles. Most of them have been able to be printed. Others have been referred to deferred inspection to receive the parole printed.

❑ **Haitian Family Reunification Program.**

Lourdes Leconte informed everyone that Haitians parolees are already arriving, and some of them are not attending the Parolee Orientation Program at CWS. CWS reported that the first case attended the mentioned orientation and added that Haitian parolees are receiving the appointment referral for CWS at the American Embassy in Porto Prince.

❑ **Resettlement Agencies Consortium Flyer**

The flyer was approved and it is ready for distribution.

❑ **Other Items / Announcements**

- **Health Department** – Health Department delays are a high concern for those non-refugee clients. They are giving appointment for the end of December, and those with children in school age are encountering delays to enroll in school. Everyone agreed to reach out to the community partners that have medical centers and see if they can provide the physical to these children and charge Medicaid as soon as they get approved.
- **Child Care Application** – Jose Sanchez informed everyone that the new online referral system is properly working. The appointments are within a week.
- **EAD applications at private offices** – Lourdes Leconte requested from all the Voluntary Agencies that are processing EAD and are not in contract with DCF to submit their EAD applications to see where people are actually applying. Silvia Lopez informed us that they were informed that one of their employees was referring clients to those non-authorized immigration offices, and they started an investigation, and the result was that they had to terminate the employee. She informed everyone that CMG has no tolerance to those that do not follow their rules. She showed the form with all the legal and certified immigration offices that they are referring people to. She also asked us to report to her any incident regarding this matter, and they will take it very seriously.
- Lourdes Leconte also informed us about a new DCF program that will be effective January 1, 2016. The name of the program is **able body** and it is for those single employable ages 18 to 49. These population applying for SNAP or Food Stamps, must register with South Florida Workforce within ten days after receiving Food stamp assistance. Some of the exemptions are individuals with minor children participating in WT, people working 30 hours a week. South Florida Workforce will require an ABWAD to attend an orientation on career resources, perform job hunting, resume training attending ESOL, GED classes, as well technical courses, etc... a combination of activities or volunteering that would equate 80 hours a month. More information will be provided as they become available to the Voluntary Agencies. We raised our concern

regarding the MG program, and if those enrolled in MG will also be exempt. Lourdes informed us that for now, the only exempt are those that she mentioned.

- EMM has an open position for a job developer
- CCS has an open position for a job developer and possible a second job developer

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on December 9th, where everyone will be meet for a Christmas Brunch – Venue TBD

Next VOLAG Meeting is scheduled on January 13, 2016 at IRC -730 NW 107 Ave. Suite 100 Miami, Florida 33172 at 2:00 PM

□ Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – DECEMBER 2015

Immigration and Legal Issues Sub Committee

Minutes for meeting on December 10, 2015

By Miriam J. Garcia

Attendance: Haydee Canas, Berta Cassidy, Luz Castilla, Miriam J. Garcia, Marie Jean, Dorothy Martin, Carmen I. Paniagua, Amelia Ramirez, Christine Reis, Cassandra Suprin.

The Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee meeting was held on December 10, 2015 at the offices of World Relief where Berta Cassidy provided the USCIS update, and she answered questions as follows:

- **INTERVIEW NOTICES.** Miami District Field Offices will be scheduling less than the customary number of interviews in the month of December 2015 due to yearly file audits and application inventories.
- **EMMA.** Emma, the USCIS Virtual Assistant, is on the USCIS website. Emma is still learning and it will be a continuous process. USCIS is planning to expand Emma to Spanish and to mobile devices.
- **NBC AND INTERVIEW WAIVER CASES.** There were a number of interview waiver cases that were scheduled in error by NBC. They have identified the problem and are cancelling interviews by mail or by phone if the interview is within 10 days.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 14, 2016 from 10:00 A.M. until 12:00 P.M. at the Offices of World Relief located at 2150 SW 8th Street, 2nd Floor, Miami, Florida 33135.

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – DECEMBER 2015

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Dec. 11, 2015

- REVEST began conducting new student orientation/testing sessions for the upcoming term starting October 19th and will continue through Dec. 2015 and as needed. So far, 50 orientation sessions are scheduled and about 1500 students are being tested using the Pre CASAS placement test. All new students have been given registration appointments and enrollment is ongoing.
- REVEST is currently enrolling students for the upcoming term beginning Jan. 6-April 23, 2016. So far over 3200 ESOL students have been enrolled program wide and more are expected. There is a noticeable increase in demand as refugees to the region increases.
- The REVEST Program has been able to increase the number of vocational offerings for the current contract year (September 2015 to August 2016). New CCC Programs will be available in the fields of computers, technology and education. For the current College Term (Fall/2015-1) which will end next week, we have enrolled 317 Vocational students in almost 600 courses. Likewise, new registrations for the Spring Term 2015-2 have already begun, and we have already registered 60 new students in 139 new training courses.
- Hispanic Heritage was celebrated throughout all Miami Dade College campuses. REVEST showcased talented students in the REVEST talent show on Oct. 21st at the Wolfson Campus MDC from 12:00-1:00 in the building 2 breezeway. All thoroughly enjoyed the event!
- Faculty meetings were conducted with all REVEST instructors Nov. 19th, 20th 2015. . Topics included establishing I.D. requirements for instate tuition residency and preparation for CASAS testing program wide. Teachers continue to instruct clients on techniques such as preparing a resume, executing a job search and student preparation for job interviews. All CASAS testing procedures were reviewed with instructors to ensure a successful testing session. CASAS testing took place Dec. 4, 5, 6, 2015. We are expecting high completion rates.
- The total SAVES Program enrollment as of December 11, 2015, is 4,076. Of these, 2,406

are new students to the program and 239 are 16 to 18 youngsters in the six SAVES GED in Spanish Program centers. The current trimester ends on December 17, 2015. The next academic trimester will begin on January 4, 2016.

- The SAVES Program is pre-registering students for the next academic trimester 2015 2 at all of its 14 adult education centers. Students will begin classes on January 4, 2016.
- SAVES continues to meet and surpass all our performance measures. The goal for this academic year is to reach and surpass the performance measures established in the contract.
- A SAVES District meeting was held November 18, 2015. Important information and updates were discussed with the school staff. Next SAVES District meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2016.
- Hispanic Heritage was celebrated throughout M-DCPS. The Success Management Academy (SMA) at Hialeah-Miami Lakes Adult and Jose Marti Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy (MAST) hosted an Open House for parent, students and staff to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month on October 28, 2015. The open house was well attended and enjoyed by everyone. The program included the celebration of cultures from Honduras, Spain, Colombia and Cuba.
- SAVES students are taking advantage of vocational courses being offered at George T. Baker Aviation Technical College and Miami Lakes Educational Center & Technical College.
- 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 – DECEMBER 2015

None

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT – DECEMBER 2015

None

USCIS UPDATE – DECEMBER 2015**USCIS Miami****December 2015 Update**

- **Online Spanish Language Civics Practice Test** – USCIS has launched an [online Spanish-language civics practice test](#), joining the [English version](#) released earlier this year. The questions are presented in English with Spanish subtitles and focus on basic U.S. government and history topics. The goal is to help Spanish-speaking lawful permanent residents studying for the naturalization test with retaining the information and gaining a firmer grasp of English. The civics test is normally conducted in English; however, certain applicants may be eligible to take the civics test in the language of their choice due to age and time as a permanent resident, a disability, or other exceptions and accommodations.
- **USCIS Launches Virtual Assistant** - USCIS has launched a virtual assistant named “Emma” on [uscis.gov](#), allowing customers to quickly find accurate information. She answers questions in plain English and navigates users to relevant USCIS web pages. She is named after Emma Lazarus, whose famous words are inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty. You can access Emma on a desktop or laptop. Soon, she’ll be expanding to mobile devices, and her Spanish language capabilities will be arriving early next year. Check out Emma at [USCIS.gov](#) and click “Ask a Question” in the upper right-hand corner of the page.
- **Decreased Interview Notices in December** – Miami District Field Offices will be scheduling less than the customary number of interviews in the month of December due to yearly file audits and application inventories. Your patience is appreciated.
- **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** – December 11 and 29
 - **Hialeah Field Office** – December 15 and 18
 - **Oakland Park Field Office** – December 11 and 18
 - **Kendall Field Office** – Dec 10 and 11 at Everglades National Park, December 18 at the Kendall Field Office