



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Esther Jacobo
Interim Secretary

**MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 14, 2014**

ATTENDANCE:

Ileana Bustelo, Hiram Ruiz, Adria Dilme-Bejel, Ozaharis, Berta Cassidy, Yolanda Coto, Edith Garcia, Kelly Browne, Emilie Goesser, Raquel De La Huerta, Melodie Kinet, Gustavo Diaz, Shandra Ferrer, Elmer Morales, Diego Castro, Jose R. Lauzurique, Edgar Tobon, Miriam Garcia, Edilia Romeu, Miriam Vinas Garcia, Digna Diaz, Nancy Lledes, Marie Guillaume, Mabel Hernandez, Lourdes Leconte, Silvia Lopez, Veronica Rodriguez, Guillermo Luna, Dorothy Martin, Laquanna Scott-Lightfoot, Charlande Michel, Carlos Paz, Martha Pizzaro, Oscar Rivera, Jose Sanchez, Maria Rodriguez, Leydi Sosa, Mano Novoa, Carmen Torres, Krystina Francois, Felicia Gil, Marie Philogene, Maria Dominguez, Rose Roberts, Martha Ferrer, Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt, Guillermo Denacimiento, Mary Jane Gonzalez-Cruz, Alvaro Vargas, Melodie Kinet, Lourdes Casteñeda, Judith Delgado, Judith Rubio, Amy Guadalupe, Gabriella Valle, Aileen Esparra, Eduardo Murgado, Melida Gonzalez, Diana Aldana, Edy C. Vasquez,

INTRODUCTION:

Adria Dilme and Lourdes Leconte from the Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services welcomed the task force members.

PRESENTATIONS:

Raquel M. de la Huerta, FBI Miami Division, and her team did a presentation on Genocide / War Crimes /Torture Program. Currently, The FBI's Genocide War Crimes Unit (GWCU) leads the Bureau's efforts to investigate violations of four primary U.S. human rights statutes: genocide, torture, war crimes, and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Domestically, this unit conducts concurrent reviews of mass atrocity incidents. Globally, its focus is on the apprehension of internationally indicted war criminals. The FBI addresses all leads to identify any U.S. nexus to these war criminals and other perpetrators and provides support to other U.S. agencies and international partners in pursuit of human rights violators. This unit is conducting a lot of outreach activities to inform the public of their presence and their readiness to assist because, publicly provided information plays a vital role in FBI human rights investigations. Their various field offices around the country and their numbers of overseas legal attaché offices around the world receive information on human rights violations and violators based on the

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statutes they cover. The FBI is uniquely positioned to address broader jurisdictional and geographical matters. Through its legal attachés around the world, the FBI is able to investigate leads, uncover evidence, pursue perpetrators, and coordinate with our international law enforcement partners. In general, the FBI will initiate a human rights investigation when the perpetrator or victim is a U.S. person or the perpetrator is located in U.S., regardless of their nationality. The FBI is seeking to engage the population, providers of services and clients to help them bring perpetrators of human rights atrocities to Justice.

Mélodie Kinet, MPH, MBA - Founder and Executive Director, of the asylum solution, provided an great overview of her organization and the wonderful work they are doing in the community. This program specifically targets the pocket of asylum seekers who are survivors of torture, there is a usual 3-year average wait time for their applications to be processed, and this waiting process often strips this already vulnerable population of what is left of their potential for human dignity and mental health improvement. To help bring a solution to the plight of this special population, her organization came up with a special program called The Asylum Solution @ Dirt Therapy Farm, it is a social enterprise created to address the healthcare access barriers faced by torture survivors seeking asylum. Because asylum seekers, unlike refugees, are often legally prohibited from seeking employment, they are unable to access health and legal services, which aggravates the physical and mental health condition of torture survivors. Dirt Therapy projects to be a community-support agriculture farm where asylum-seeking torture survivors can benefit not only from the therapy of growing things, but also from the sales of their produce through free access to health and legal services on site. Clients will farm communally under the guidance of a farm manager, and benefit from community, while the produce is sold and revenue is invested back into operational costs of providing comprehensive mental health and legal services. Miami has a substantial population of torture survivors seeking asylum here, primarily from Colombia and Venezuela, but also, most recently, coming from Syria. This population is still invisible in many ways, and this project aims to raise awareness and integrate them here. The project currently has a site donated for AS@DT by Little River, in addition to partnerships with attorneys from VIDA and private practices, who have agreed to donate pro-bono hours to The Asylum Solution clients' complex case needs. The organization is currently in the process of writing an MOU with the Florida Center for Survivors of Torture, so clients from the center can be referred to Asylum Solution with administrative procedures. Eligibility criteria to join the program is still open, it looks to start with a pilot, backed by Awesome Foundation soon with a targeted group of 30 participants.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Gilda Ferradaz named DCF's Southern Region Managing Director
- DCF ACCESS store front in Hialeah Opens 4410 West 16 Avenue, Bay 41, Hialeah, Florida 33012
- World Refugee Day June 20, 2014
- Congratulations to the REVEST program on their 15 Years Anniversary

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

- USCIS grant opportunity for stakeholders
- Services for Victims of Human Trafficking Grant - US Dept of Justice
- Mar 19 USDOL Equal Employment Opportunity Symposium Davie, Florida
- BVRC - National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2014
- Enrolling Immigrant Families in the Marketplace –Webinar
- SSA service delivery changes
- Latinos and the Health Insurance Marketplace Webinars in Spanish and English
- Webinar on Helping Families That Include Immigrants Apply for Coverage
- Pacific Interpreter Long Wait Time Alert// John Boudreau
- "Ask Four" - Health Insurance Options
- Faces of Resettlement Toolkit now available

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 A.m.

NEXT MEETING: **April 11, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.**
 Miami-Dade College Wolfson Campus
 500 NE 2nd Avenue Building 3 Room 3208-09 Miami, FL 33132

SOUTH FLORIDA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES MINUTES – MARCH, 2014
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March 5, 2014

ATTENDEES:

(CCS) Evelyn Soto
 (CWS) Jose Sanchez
 (EMM) Charlande Michel
 (LSF) Carmen Torres
 (IRC) Oasis Pena
 (WRC) Gloria C. Mozarriegos
 (Youth Co-Op) Veronica Rodriguez

Guest:**Community Medical Group, Silvia Lopez****Miami Dade County Public Schools - Pedro Artega, District Supervisor Title 1 Administration.****DCF - Lourdes M. Leconte, Community Liaison**

The VOLAG meeting was held at Catholic Charities-Refugee Programs office on March 5, 2014 located at 7707 NW 2nd Ave. Miami, Florida 33150.

Evelyn Soto called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Minutes from previous meeting were approved and Evelyn informed us that they have been submitted to the Refugee Coordinator already.

The New Agenda was approved and the following items discussed:

Guest Speaker: Silvia Lopez (Community Medical Group) came to inform us about some the changes that are occurring already with new health plans, some of the plans that were mentioned are: Ameri-Group, Molina, Coventry, Sunshine, Unites, Stay well, Simply, Vista. Community Medical Group will be working with nine of the ten health plans that won the bid in Miami-Dade County. They will not be working with Humana. As of July 1st, 2014, MediPass will no longer be a plan. She explained that once Medicaid is approved for clients, they have 30 days to choose a plan. And after choosing a plan, they have 90 days to change plans, before the plan gets lack. Community Medical Group also informed us that they are expanding their Clinic services and doctors.

Silvia also explained that if the Medicaid extension happens, 19 – 64 years old population can possibly receive an extension based on special conditions. Extended Medicaid eligibility will be based on income. Community Medical Group will not be a navigator for the Obama Care nor will work with the market place insurance.

HMO now will be providing more services such as dental, vision, but preventive and very basic. The months ahead more information will be available related to all these issues.

Guest: Pedro Artega (MDPS)

All VOLAG representatives presented our services to Mr. Artega, including the programs, population and demographics information. Mr. Artega explained that he is part of the Title 1 Program for Miami Dade Public Schools. Title 1 provides additional funds according with families' income. They cover from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Other programs such free tutoring, school materials and even private schools tuitions. He suggested that we can establish a Cooperative Agreement with Miami Dade County Public School to be able to provide extensive information and services to our beneficiaries. Resettlement Agencies raised many questions related to school enrollment criteria's, especially for those refugees that are 16 and over and want to enroll in regular classes. In addition, Mr. Artega informed the School Board has translations services in varied languages through public relations department. He also spoke about special programs for the youth population between ages 16-19 years old during school hours through SAVES. He will be getting back to us with more information during our next meeting.

☐ **Parolee Orientation (POP)**

There were 253 parolees processed in February 2014 of which 21 left Miami Dade County.

☐ **Match Grant Enrollments**

YEAR TO DATE Oct 1, 2013-Feb 28, 2014

Agency	YEAR PROJECTIO N	Trafficked Person/SI V	Entrant s	Asylee s	Refugee s	Tota l
Catholic Charities/USCCB	505	0	153	2	31	186
CWS	475	0	154	5	56	215
EMM	350	0	95	2	41	138
IRC	675	1	146	4	129	280
LSF	303	0	71	0	46	117
WR	180	0	29	0	12	41
USCRI / YC	1210	0	457	2	38	497
TOTAL	3698	1	1105	15	353	1474

☐ **R&P Arrivals**

YEAR TO DATE Oct 1, 2013-Feb 28, 2014

Agency	#CLIENTS
Catholic Charities/USCCB	74
CWS	64
EMM	47
IRC	49
LIRS	50
WR	29
USCRI / YC	100
TOTAL	413

☐ **Other Items / Announcements**

- PRM Monitoring Visit week of March 10th, 2014.
- Agencies that will have monitoring visit are the following: Youth Co-Op, World Relief, Lutheran Service, IRC, CWS, EMM

- Carmen Torres from Lutheran shared ORR Conference call with Faith Hur. She informed that amongst some of the changes, now the Consultation will be by Region. South Miami is part of Region 4.
- IRC shared their experience with Broward DCF Office, Lourdes recommended that we assist clients with the Access Application online, or work with an Access Partner in Broward County. Office Visits to DCF are only by appointments.
- Edith Garcia from Health Department - will be rescheduling to attend one of the upcoming VOLAG meetings.
- IRC will be contacting the Office of Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart to schedule a visit and present the VOLAG services in the Community.
- IRC announced that Ana Maria Teixeira is the new Resettlement Manager
- Evelyn Soto suggested that VOLAG meetings be held on a monthly base in order to comply with the consultation requirements from DOS.

Next VOLAG Meeting is scheduled on Wednesday April 9th, 2014 at Lutheran Services.

❑ **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned

IMMIGRATION & LEGAL ISSUES SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES – MARCH 2014

MIAMI AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE
Immigration and Legal Issues Sub Committee
Minutes for meeting on March 13, 2014
By Miriam J. Garcia

Attendance: Haydee Cañas, Berta Cassidy, Luz Castilla, Yolanda Coto, Nancy Denis, Maria R. Dominguez, Miriam J. Garcia, Brad Ginter, Marie Guillaume, Modesto Hernandez, Marie Jean, Lucio Perez-Reynoso, Amelia Ramirez, Christine Reis.

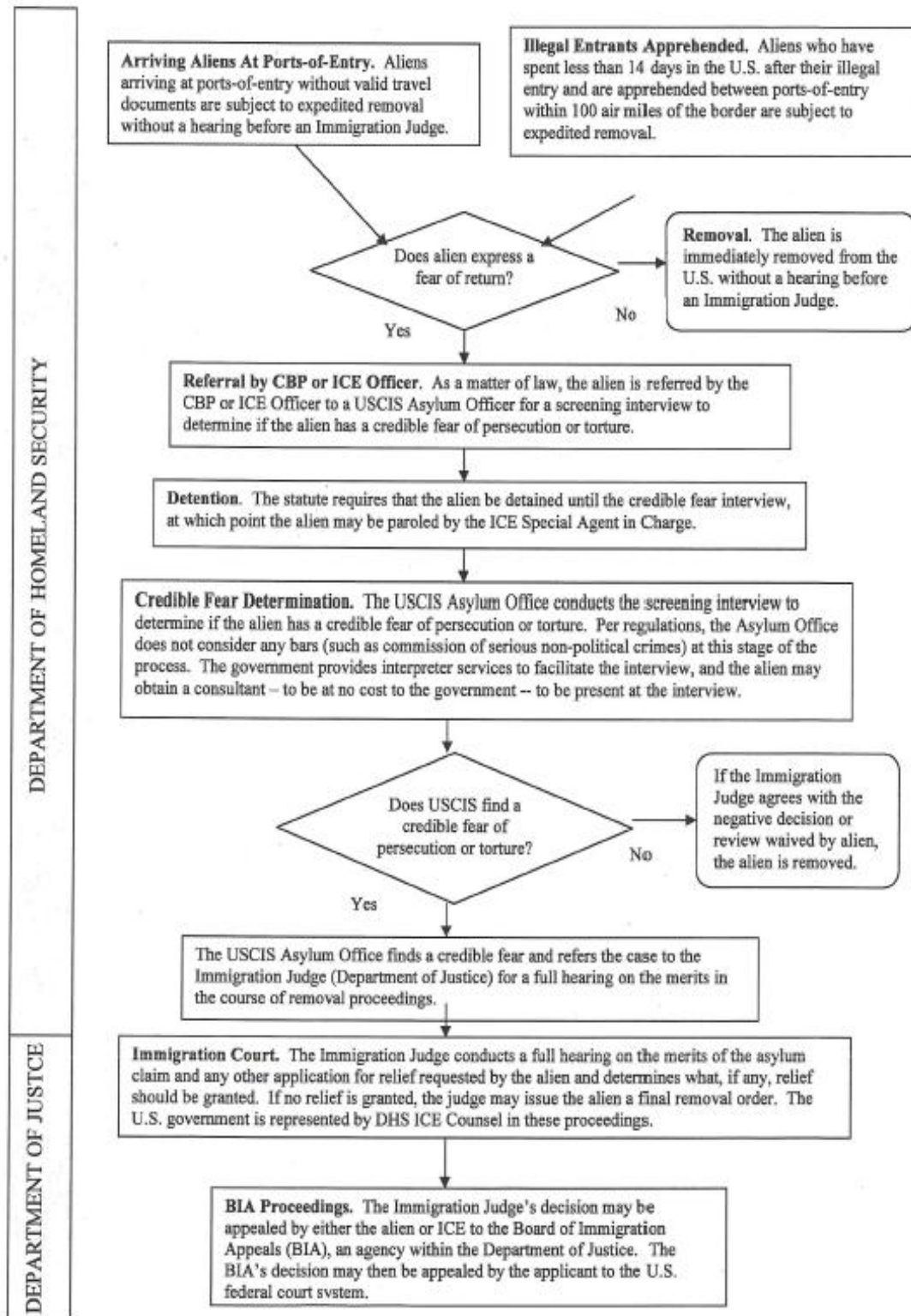
The Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee meeting was held on March 13, 2014 at the offices of World Relief where Berta Cassidy provided the USCIS update and Maria R. Dominguez provided the Miami Asylum Office update, and they answered questions as follow:

- **VENEZUELA.** USCIS is aware of rumors regarding possible TPS and Asylum for Venezuelans due to the situation in that country. Refer persons to the USCIS.GOV website to confirm any information.
- **HAITI TPS.** It has been extended for an additional 18 months through January 22, 2016. The re-registration period runs from March 3, 2014, through May 2, 2014. USCIS is inviting interested parties to participate in a stakeholder teleconference on Wednesday, March 19, 2014 from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. to discuss the TPS extension for Haitians.
- **USCIS STAFFING UPDATES.** Andrew Davidson, Kendall Field Office Director. Eileen Lopez-Tome, Chief of Staff, Miami District Office. Devon Perkiss, New Section Chief for Miami Field Office. Roberto Cintron, Section Chief for Hialeah Field Office.

- **INFOPASS.** Berta encouraged members to utilize the infopass system. If after using an infopass appointment the problem continues, then she may be contacted but make sure that a G-28 is on file.
- **MIAMI ASYLUM OFFICE**—At the February subcommittee meeting, participants requested the Miami Asylum Office to have an update on the Credible Fear (CF) procedures and a flow chart to illustrate the process. Maria R. Dominguez presented the update on CF procedures and provided a copy of the CF Flow Chart. (See attached). She also advised that the general public can send status inquiries regarding their cases to the Miami Asylum Office public email: Miami.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov. However, due to confidentiality issues, she strongly recommended to observe the contact information provided on the Customer Service Profile. (See attached).

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 10, 2014 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.

**U.S. ASYLUM PROCESS FOR INDIVIDUALS ARRIVING AT PORTS-OF-ENTRY AND
CERTAIN ILLEGAL ENTRANTS APPREHENDED WITHIN 100 AIR MILES OF U.S.
INTERNATIONAL LAND BORDER**



EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – MARCH 2014**February 14, 2014**

- The total SAVES Program enrollment as of February 11, 2014, is **3,660**. Of these, **1,606** are new students to the program. The current trimester ends on April 17, 2014. The next academic trimester will begin on April 21, 2014.
- Currently, we are still registering and enrolling students in the ESOL and AGE programs. Enrollment into ESOL classes will close next week to ensure students have sufficient time to posttest.
- SAVES continues offering evaluation and translation services to its students through Joseph & Silny. The last session was held on January 28. Over 40 students were served. The next session is scheduled for April 10, 2014. Students greatly benefit from these services since they facilitate the process of finding employment.
- New SAVES success stories, which highlight the achievements of some of our students, have been uploaded to the SAVES website (<http://saves.dadeschools.net>)
- SAVES is pleased to report that the program continues to improve the completion rate of its ESOL and AGE students. For the first time ever, the ESOL completion rate has reached and surpassed its performance measure in contract with a 72 percent completion rate. This improvement is the result of new initiatives, student accountability and commitment to the program, career pathways orientations, data-driven instruction, case management, and continuous follow up.
- The next SAVES Program District Meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 12, 2014 from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. at Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center. Please contact our office if you are interested in attending and/or presenting.
- If you have any questions about our program, you can call us or visit the SAVES website at <http://saves.dadeschools.net>

Maria Miranda

Instructional Supervisor, SAVES Program

SAVES PROGRAM

Lindsey Hopkins Building G, Room 162

750 NW 20 street

Miami, Florida 33127

305-548-3046

REFUGEE HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – MARCH 2014

No report

USCIS UPDATE – MARCH 2014

The following update was provided by Berta Cassidy.

**- USCIS Miami
March 2014 Update**

· Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Eligible Nationals of Haiti –Temporary Protected Status (TPS) has been extended for eligible nationals of Haiti for an additional 18 months through January 22, 2016. Current Haitian beneficiaries seeking to extend their TPS status must re-register during a 60-day period that runs from March 3, 2014 through May 2, 2014. To read more, please visit - <http://www.uscis.gov/news/temporary-protected-status-extended-haitians-0>

· REMINDER - Revised Form N-400 – As part of its form improvements initiative, USCIS has revised Form N-400, Application for Naturalization. Customers may continue to use previous versions of the form for a 90-day transition period. On Monday, May 5, 2014, USCIS will no longer accept older versions of Form N-400.

To read more, please visit - <http://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/uscis-revises-form-n-400-application-naturalization>

· Spanish Language Engagement – On Wednesday, April 9, 2014, from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm USCIS will conduct a national Spanish language Enlace session via Google+ Hangout as part of an ongoing series of public engagements. This free session is an opportunity for Spanish speakers to engage with us in their own language.

To read more about this engagement, please visit - <http://www.uscis.gov/outreach/enlace-conversation-uscis>

· 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 .

➤ Ø 3/28 from 10 am – 4 pm

USCIS Information Desk at the West Dade Regional Library located at: 9445 Coral Way, Miami, Florida 33165

➤ Ø 4/4 from 1 pm – 3 pm

USCIS Naturalization Information Session at Pembroke Pines Library located at: 955 NW 129 Avenue, Pembroke Pines, FL 33025

➤ Ø 4/12 from 10 am – 12 noon

USCIS Naturalization Information Session at West Dade Regional Library located at: 9445 Coral Way, Miami, Florida 33165

➤ Ø 4/22 from 7 pm – 9 pm

USCIS Naturalization Information Session at Pentecostal Tabernacle located at: 18415 NW 7 Ave. Miami, Fl.

➤ Ø 4/23 from 5 pm – 7 pm

USCIS Information Desk at the West Dade Regional Library located at: 9445 Coral Way, Miami, Florida 33165

· Upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies - Below are scheduled dates for 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 – March 28
April 4, 11, 18, and 25

Hialeah Field Office – March 28
April 11

Oakland Park Field Office – March 28
April 22, 25 and 30

Kendall Field Office – March 28
April 4, 11, 18, and 25