



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Shevaun L. Harris**  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** August 16, 2021  
**TO:** Members of the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Lourdes Leconte, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** August 13, 2021, Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** October 8, 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 attends 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

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## MIAMI-DADE REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 13, 2021

### ATTENDEES:

David Draper, LeAndra Stafford, Ileana Bustelo, Emilie Goeser, Silvia Lopez, Yeen Perez, Veronica Rodriguez, Alicia Sante, Jamie Everett, Dr. Cheryl White, Lucy Tucker, Samantha Francois, Miriam Johana Garcia, Yeen Perez, Dian Gomez, Elmer Morales, Tamara Aparicio, Roketa Mansfield, Maria Avila, Berta Cassidy, Connie Perez-Borroto, Diana Gomez, Marianne Lobo, Jackie Carrion, Eduardo Chavez, Sonia Arraut, Virginia Yarce, Leydi Sosa, Diana Gomez, Christine Reis, Beatriz Lopez, Jaime Cruz, Sylvia Acevedo, Puente Mitsouko, Eduardo Chavez, Gretta Jimenez, Yvette McDonald, Jackie Carrion, Monica Farias, Elaine McArthur, Edgar Tobon, Evelyn Soto, Eduardo Moras, Martha Ferrer, Carlos Naranjo, Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt, Diego Castro, Faith Hurt, Veronica Rodriguez, Renee Rivers, Lourdes Pesante, David Brown, Sandy Ala, Miriam Rosario, Migda Cruz, Abdul Rauf Khan, David Brown, Sonyetta Everett, Gisela Rhodes, Dr. Felicia Gil, Maria Avila, Diego Castro, Jorge Fernandez, Andrea Gordon, Cristobal Perez, Erica Perdomo, Gloria Darling, Jenifer Fonseca, Priya Amilineni, Theresa Leslie, and Rosa Chavez

### INTRODUCTION:

David Draper, DCF Refugee Services Community Liaison Supervisor welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

### PRESENTATIONS:

1. Samantha Francois & Tamara Aparicio, Senior Human Services Program Specialist, Florida Department of Children and Families, Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency:  
*DCF Care Coordination Program (Phase 3)*
  - a) The Department of Children and Families, Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency is excited to announce our Care Coordination program in the Miami- Dade Region. Which is phase 3 of the program.
  - b) Our Care Coordinators will assist customers One on One to help them identify and overcome barriers so they can be self-sufficient. With the help of our partners, we aim to help members of our community attain economic independence.  
The Southern Region has 18 care coordinators:
    - **OMC II (North) has 9**
    - **OMC II (South) has 9**
  - c) The referred client must live in the Monroe or Miami-Dade County.
  - d) The referred client must be receiving SNAP and/or TANF benefits for at least 6 months and no more than 21 months.
  - e) The referred client must be between 18 and 59 years old.
  - f) The referred client must indicate they would like to participate in the program and are willing to meet with a Care Coordinator.
  - g) Clients that have been determined **disabled** and therefore unable to work will not be included in the program. However, clients that have a **temporary disability** and **will be able to return to work will be included on a case-by-case basis.**
  - h) Our Care Coordination Senior Clerk (Senior Clerk) will screen the referrals to ensure the clients referred meet the eligibility criteria. Once the client has been

deemed eligible then they will be assigned to a Care Coordinator. The Care Coordinator will then contact the client to schedule a meeting within (2) business days of receiving the referral.

- i) During the initial meeting, the Care Coordinator will complete an assessment to identify the client's primary barriers. Once the assessment is completed and barriers have been determined a Care Plan will be created. The Care Plan will contain the barriers that the client sees as preventing them from becoming self-sufficient, as well as the steps and services needed to remove those barriers.
  - j) Each Care Plan will be written based on the unique barriers and needs of each client. However, the goal will always be the same of becoming economically self-sufficient, no longer in need of or reducing their dependence on SNAP and/or TANF benefits. Then the Care Coordinator will determine what services are available in the community to eliminate the client's barriers.
  - k) Our Care Coordinators goal is to improve our clients experience of receiving government assistance and to help reduce per capita costs in the process. For this program to be successful it is going to require many moving parts: Internal and external partnerships-Economic Self-Sufficiency, Adult Protective Investigations, Child Protective Investigations, and our community partners.
  - l) At any given time, the client can request to no longer participate in the program. There is no penalty, should the client have a change of heart at any given time they can come back to the program. However, a new assessment will be required. The only way a client will be discharged from the program is if: the client fails to cooperate with the program and if the client is no longer receiving benefits.
  - m) The outcome achieved will be success, opportunity, and future self-sufficiency
2. Renée Rivers, Community Engagement Manager, Aunt Bertha, The Social Care Network  
*My Florida My Family Overview*
- a) Why use MyFloridaMyFamily?
    - It's an online directory of free and reduced cost services
    - It is DCF's preferred method for client referrals
    - It is free to those looking for help
    - Free for the nonprofits to manage their programs
    - It is powered by Aunt Bertha
  - b) Reasons to use MyFloridaMyFamily
    - It's an open network, that can be accessed anywhere and anytime across the U.S.
    - Private and Secure: HIPAA and FERPA complaint and HITRUST Certified
    - Flexibility: the tool is easy to use and meant to assist those in need and the organizations who serve them
  - c) The Social Care Network
    - Seeker: Individual searching for services
    - Helpers: Navigate to resources, identify programs
    - Community-Based Organizations (CBOs): Providing services to Seekers and the community
3. Alicia Sante, Director of Programs, Youth Co-Op  
*Comprehensive Refugee Services Program*

- a) Starting 10/01 Youth Co-Op will be the lead agency for Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS) in Miami-Dade County.
  - To coordinate comprehensive services to foster self-sufficiency for refugees and new entrants and their families
  - The CRS model is to integrate key services in collaboration with other services and community organizations
- b) Key service areas for the CRS
  - Refugee Services (RS) Assessments
  - Employment Services
  - Youth Services
  - Mentoring Services
  - Care Coordination/ Tiered Case Management
  - Child Care Services
- c) RS Assessment:
  - In- depth Comprehensive Assessments: For new client participating in R&P, Matching Grant programs, and resettled refugee clients
  - Additional assessments: Walk-in, RS Follow-up, and Returning Client
- d) Tiered Case Management:
  - Youth Co-Op will be responding to the most critical needs of specific refugee clients by providing 3 tiers of case management to address barriers to self-sufficiency
  - The tiers of case management will be based on the hours recommended by the RS assessment
- e) Employment Services:
  - Focuses on assisting refugees to achieve self-sufficiency through employment
  - Pre-employment services include orientation, counseling, employability skills training, resume preparation assistance and job placement service for eligible refugee clients
  - Career laddering services include career planning, job placement services, and On-the-Job Training opportunities
- f) Youth Services:
  - Focuses on promoting academic success through different services such as tutoring and academic support to avoid social disconnection and prevent school dropouts. The program offers 2 different service pathways:
  - Academic Pathways: Youth refugees 16-18 years old, helps eligible clients to remain in school and earn a degree
  - Career Pathway: Youth Refugees 16-19 years old, helps eligible clients to transition to jobs in their chosen career through vocational training and /or unsubsidized employment
- g) Mentoring Services:
  - Focuses on promoting social engagement and educational/vocational development
  - Youth ages 15 to 24
  - Connects youth with mentors for guidance and as role models
  - Offers individual and group mentoring

## h) Child Care Services:

- Service is offered for children eligible refugees enrolled in the employment or adult training programs
- Services is offered through a vouchersing system

**ANNOUNCEMENT:****REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATE** (*Sent via E-Mail in July and August*)

**Meeting adjourned at 12:01 PM**

**LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 2021****Immigration and Legal Issues Subcommittee  
Legal Subcommittee Meeting January 21, 2021**

- Need to find a solution to work permit issue; not being able to apply for large portion of population
- There is a lot of misinformation out there about work permits and why they don't qualify
- The clients are misunderstanding the communication notices because it states the application was accepted but its being misinterpreted as they were approved for the work permit.
- There is also a lot of misunderstanding about the N400 and continuous residence requirements. An applicant for citizenship can't be out of the country more than 180 days in any 12-month period. This doesn't necessarily mean Jan – Dec only but 12 consecutive months beginning with any months (e.g. Jun-May or Feb – Jan).
- Immunization courts are very backed up and information requests are not being processed as they should be.

**EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 13, 2021****2021 REFUGEE TASK FORCE  
EDUCATION APRIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
(Aug. 13, 2021)**

- REVEST/Miami Dade College continues to offer hybrid classes as well as on-line only courses according to student and faculty needs. Instructors and students continue giving positive feedback regarding the use of the virtual classroom. 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. REVEST (Miami Dade College) will offer in person classes starting in the Fall term (Sept.1. -Dec. 17, 2021.) We are proud of our staff for all their efforts to provide high quality learning at REVEST for all our students.

- All faculty attended a virtual faculty meeting Aug. 12, 2021. Instructors are preparing to return to in-person classes beginning Sept. 1, 2021. Most students and instructors currently remain on-line which is working very well and enhances enrollment options. We are maintaining vigilance on all safety protocols and procedure and we are awaiting any updates as Miami Dade College prepares for resuming in-person classes.
- REVEST currently has more than 396 students attending this Summer 2021 Term. We already have students for the Fall 2021 Term from Sept. 1 to Dec. 17, 2021. So far around 560 VESOL students have been enrolled program wide in this current Term of Summer 2021, and around 550 are going to be enrolled for Fall 2021. Although COVID 19 keeps its impact in our students, approximately 132 new students have been projected to test and enroll in the program throughout these months in our different Centers.
- 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 and partnership.
- The REVEST Program has been able to process over 160 vocational registrations so far in the current Spring term about to end. Likewise, we have already begun registrations for the next Term beginning on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and we have registered over 30 new students.
- 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 congratulates Youth Coop on assignment of contract of Comprehensive Refugee Services and we will continue to work together to achieve all goals.
- The SAVES Trimester 2020-3 started on April 12, 2021 and ended on August 3, 2021. The total enrollment as of August 3, 2021, was 549. This total includes 57 newly enrolled and 17 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. 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.
- Trimester 2021-1 will start on August 23, 2021 and will end on December 17, 2021. Plans for 2021-2022 are for SAVES students to attend classes in-person. An Online Academy will be available for SAVES students who do not feel comfortable attending classes in person.
- Students are enrolled in ESOL, ABE, SMA GED in Spanish, and a wide range of vocational/technical programs.
- Translation and validation services continue to be offered to eligible students. These services are provided to students with high school diplomas, associate degrees, and four-year degrees and higher, including licensing. Students will continue to report directly to Silny and Associates for services.
- SAVES continues to serve clients through distance learning (and hybrid mode) offered at 14 schools and three technical colleges, George T. Baker Aviation, Miami Lakes, and D. A. Dorsey, where eligible students receive services through vouchers. To better serve our clients, the voucher program has been extended to all adult education centers and technical colleges in M-DCPS.
- SAVES is engaged in a massive marketing/advertising campaign to reach refugees, asylees and entrants who are still within the five-year eligibility period and are not being served. This campaign includes having the school contact personnel reach out to students via email and telephone, SAVES website, Spanish and Haitian radio, and digital media in multiple platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This campaign is yielding good results for recruiting, registration, re-enrollment, and retention.
- SAVES District personnel and school contacts follow up with students to ensure that they are accessing the Distance Learning platform. Information is gathered on students who are participating in online classes, as well as those students who did not re-enroll. Students enrolled are being monitored on absences, withdrawals, and attendance hours. Those who did not re-enroll are contacted and offered help to motivate them to continue their education. School contacts follow up with students who are close to reach the 70 instructional hours to ensure they posttest.

- More information is being uploaded to the SAVES website for students to access all the services and benefits of the program. New SAVES Student Success stories are uploaded, and congratulation letters are sent to the schools to be forwarded to the students. Visit our SAVES website at [saves@dadeschools.com](mailto:saves@dadeschools.com)
- SAVES District Representatives Dr. Felicia Gil and Ms. Natalie Diaz presented the New Administrators SAVES Orientation on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at Miami Springs Adult. The objective of the orientation was to familiarize the new Assistant Principals of SAVES schools with the SAVES program to be able to assist the principals in implementing the program. Introducing them to the program, what it offers, benefits and services and goal will facilitate the implementation of the SAVES program
- SAVES District Staff Members Dr. Felicia Gil and Ms. Fei Daniel presented the School Clerical Staff Orientation on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, at Miami Sunset Adult. The objective was to familiarize the attending adult education registration staff with the SAVES program since they are the first points of contact for new students. Introducing them to the program, what it offers, what questions to ask new students and how to identify prospects and referring them to SAVES School Contacts will help SAVES recruit new students.
- The first in person SAVES District Meeting since COVID19 was held Wednesday July 7, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. with SAVES District staff and school contacts at Hialeah Miami Lakes in the Media Center. Masks were worn by all attendees and social distancing was practiced in accordance with CDC guidelines. Recruitment methods, data reports, billing information and more were discussed in detail. All attendees received folders with handouts and electronic copies of all information for further review and future reference.
- You can reach the SAVES District office by e-mailing Dr. Felicia Gil at [gilfelicia@dadeschools.net](mailto:gilfelicia@dadeschools.net)

<b>USCIS UPDATE – AUGUST 13, 2021</b>
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**USCIS Miami & Caribbean District  
AUGUST 13, 2021 Update**

- TPS extended for Haiti 08/03/21-02/03/23, applicants can now file online
- An extension on limited registration for TPS, applicants can also file online
  - Venezuela till 09/09/22
  - Syria till 09/30/22
  - Burma till 11/25/22



- To reschedule Biometrics a written request will no longer be accepted they must reschedule through the contact call center
- Mask are required in the office
- There is an updated adjustment of status application (485). Now with the application they can request from social security an unrestricted SSN at the same time.
- USCIS is doing a lot of TPS outreach and requested assistance in getting the word out to providers and community so they can partner with them in getting the word out.
- In September, its Constitution week so they are building citizen type events around it. The information is located on the website in the Outreach link

Links shared

<https://www.uscis.gov/outreach/upcoming-national-engagements/temporary-protected-status-tps-for-haiti>

[Federal Register :: Extension of Initial Registration Periods for New Temporary Protected Status Applicants Under the Designations for Venezuela, Syria, and Burma; Correction to the Notice on the Designation of Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status and Implementation of Employment Authorization for Venezuelans Covered by Deferred Enforced Departure](#)

[Federal Register :: Designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status](#)

[Application for Temporary Protected Status | USCIS](#)

[Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\) Webinar | USCIS](#)  
(Webinar Aug 25<sup>th</sup>, 2pm – 3 pm)

[Upcoming Local Engagements | USCIS](#)