



Wed, September 14 from 12-1:30pm at the SF Foundation

Welcome & Introductions – 20 attendees representing 15 agencies (see scanned attendee list)

**\*\* Guest Panel: Immigrant Rights and Current Issues**

**Angela Chan, Attorney, Asian Law Caucus- Secure Communities and the TRUST Act**

[www.asianlawcaucus.org](http://www.asianlawcaucus.org) [angelac@asianlawcaucus.org](mailto:angelac@asianlawcaucus.org)

ALC programs and service include: immigration law, housing, employment, criminal and civil rights and serve thousands of clients per year.

**Overview of Secure Communities/ “S-Comm”**, program of ICE “S. Comm” started in 2008 and is a fingerprint sharing program. How it works: Local police make an arrest and conduct a fingerprint scan that is run through the California Department of Justice and the FBI for a criminal background check. What is new with S-Comm is that the FBI now shares that fingerprint data with ICE to conduct a civil immigration background check. ICE runs the fingerprints through their IDENT fingerprint system, which looks for match within 45 minutes of submission and then transmits the results back to local police. If there is a match, ICE issues an ICE detainer (also known as an ICE hold) to request that local police hold the person for transfer into ICE custody. S-Comm started April 2009 in CA and now is in every county in CA (activated in SF in June 2010).

**Impact** – heavy on undocumented immigrants, but can impact someone with green card because database is not updated. 5% Former LPR, US citizens are in the DB and held in custody. Levels include: 1, 2, 3 and non-criminal record. ICE says their focus is on level 1/“aggregated felonies” level but over 120,000 people have been removed from the US and 74% of them do not have criminal records. 44,000 deported in CA – highest in US. TX 28,000.

It is a mass deportation program, not a focus on just criminals despite the promo.

There are many stories of removal proceedings when people are calling police for help, such as in DV situations, and arrests of street vendors without criminal backgrounds.

S-Comm makes ID and removal much faster and makes police immigration authorities.

**Action - The TRUST Act (AB1081-Ammiano)** allow counties to opt in or out of S-Comm. For the protection for victims of crime and juveniles, guarding against racial profiling, uphold basic rights to be treated innocent until proven guilty.

AB1081 has been turned into a two year bill. It will be amended in January 2012 and then will move through the state senate to the governor’s desk likely early in the year. Community push needed to make the case to Gov Brown that S-Comm harms public safety. Washington DC was able to opt out of the program. Massachusetts, New York, and Illinois Governors all asked to not participate in the program. As a result, ICE is not turning on S-Comm in any additional counties in these states for now. Attorney General Kamala Harris and/or Gov. Brown have the ability to make this same request on behalf of California. For more information on the TRUST Act, visit [www.asianlawcaucus.org](http://www.asianlawcaucus.org) or [www.uncoverthetruth.org](http://www.uncoverthetruth.org).

**Ana Perez, Executive Director, Central American Resources Center (CARECEN)**

[www.carecensf.org](http://www.carecensf.org)

Goals are to inform, train, advocate and collaborate to build political power for Latino immigrants. CARECEN has 5 programs that serve 7000 immigrants per year. Programs include: immigration legal services, including U-visas for Latinos and immigrant children, Youth Violence Prevention, Health Promotion (obesity, healthy living, nutrition education, outreach presentations), Civic Engagement & Community Organizing for immigration reform. In response to the Anti-Immigrant Movement in America, CARECEN aims to inform clients about immigration issues and engage the community in actions and policies. CARECEN is also a member of SFILN – SF Immigrant Legal

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email to : [SF.CAIRS@gmail.com](mailto:SF.CAIRS@gmail.com)

and Educaiton Network, promoting access to social and legal services, civic engagement and reunification of families for all immigrants.

**Adoubou Traore, Program Director, and Joe Sciarrillo, Paralegal/Case Worker, African Advocacy Network** [www.aansf.org](http://www.aansf.org)

ANA works on public education, direct services, advocacy and policy reform on behalf of African and Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the Bay Area. ANA is also a central location for social, housing and legal services, as well as a network to promote the culture, arts and identity of Africans in the Bay Area. Exact numbers of Africans living in the Bay Area are unknown due to lack of data collection (census for example) but estimates are 8,000 Africans and 5,000 Afro-Caribbean born immigrants in SF. Many immigrants have faced a long journey from Africa to the US and often plan to only stay in the US for a short time to make money and send it home. Through their programs and partnerships, AAN helps immigrants learn their rights, finances and banking systems, employment, and access to services and promotes the awareness of and benefits and rights of citizenship, computer literacy classes, health education and health access. AAN provides the face and voice for the community to tell their stories and find networks for community support. Through collaborators, AAN provides Legal Services, Translation and Interpretation services, Promotion of Art and Culture, Financial Literacy to all Africans in the Bay Area and has capacity of 11 languages. AAN looks to collaborate with other agencies to bring more services and collaboration.

**Yawo D Akpawu - Head of Student Services at UC Berkeley, Dept of Mechanical Engineering.**

Yawo shared his refugee/immigration story. He never dreamed that he would immigrate to the US, but it sometimes “just happens”. In 2005 he was a human rights activist at risk, and left a wife and 3 children in Togo, spent a few months in Ghana then came to the U.S. His plan was to study and then go back to Ghana, but the risk to his safety was too great. He didn't know where to start with U.S. re-settlement. Lucky he had a friend/former Peace Corps Volunteer, who helped him obtain his asylum status with the help of a civil rights lawyer. It was a quick four month process, mainly because he had all papers and documentation necessary for the legal process. Not everyone is aware of the importance or has access to their complete paperwork nor do they have someone helping them, which makes the process much longer.

**Challenges:** Learning English, making emotional connections, feeling isolated. Yawo is grateful for the programs that helped him transfer his skills in the U.S. He faced rejection from many job application until he finally got his first 1-month assistant job at USF. This first job started his job history in the US. Without that start it's very difficult to get any notice.

**Advice to other immigrant job seekers:** Be willing to start over, capitalize on your skills from back home, use your skills and build up to success. Yawo gives much gratitude to Eva, who saw him not as just a client but made a personal connection that gave him confidence to interview for jobs.

**Advice to Community and Service Providers:** Acknowledge that people already have skills; they just need someone to be patient, pay attention and guide them in the right direction with a human connection. Most immigrants appreciate telling their story. Ask someone what their background is!

**Introduction: Contractor State License Service – Juan Carlos Arbelaez and Mary Birch**

[www.MakeMeAContractor.com](http://www.MakeMeAContractor.com) Email: [juanc@cslscorp.com](mailto:juanc@cslscorp.com)

CSLS helps new and experienced immigrants obtain their contractor's license. Juan himself was a refugee in 2002 and *therefore* understands the experience of having skills, but also the need for ESL, and *the necessity of having someone willing to help* to transfer those skills *and put them to use* in the U.S. If someone has experience in construction, plumbing, electrical, landscaping *or related work*, they can receive help to apply for a contractor's license by entering the two month Contractor State License Service program.

Requirements: legal status to work, verification of education/skills they had in country of origin (verification can come from country of origin or someone in U.S. to verify through affidavit, pass a background check, and

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pass the exam). The Contractor State License Service helps with preparation to pass the exams and set up a bond. Participants are able to attend the classes with an interpreter and the same interpreter can translate for them during their final exam with the Contractors State License Board. With a license one work for someone else or start their own business. There is a \$15,000 fine if caught working without contractor's license *and of course the threat that ICE will revoke their refugee status*. CSLS covers all counties in CA and are WIA funded (work investment act).

**Immigrant/Social Justice Issue:** - ESL programs are being cut because those who need it “don't have a voice”. Advocate for ESL classes. Share any free/low-cost ESL resources on the listserv: [sf-cairs@googlegroups.com](mailto:sf-cairs@googlegroups.com)

Agreement to move SF-CARIS meeting time: **12:15-1:45pm**

### **Agency updates, current initiatives, events, announcements etc.**

Upwardly Global has upcoming 2-day workshop in San Jose. They are looking for volunteers to mentor job-seekers to practice networking, interviewing etc. They are especially looking for healthcare professionals. See website [www.upwardlyglobal.org](http://www.upwardlyglobal.org)

African Advocacy Network –announcement of a theater play: “Lanyee” about African immigration that includes drumming, dancing. Duniya Dance and Drum Company and the African Advocacy Network present: Dance Mission Theater Friday, September 30-Saturday, Oct 1, 8pm, Sunday, Oct 2, 6pm -\$15 adv/\$20 door. [http://africanadvocacynetwork.org/AAN/News\\_Events.html](http://africanadvocacynetwork.org/AAN/News_Events.html)

CEO Women- Creating Economic Opportunities for Women:– helps immigrant and refugee women establish successful livelihoods, link ESL and networking skills and provides business training skills workshops in Oakland and San Jose. Free child care is offered during the program. [www.ceowomen.org](http://www.ceowomen.org)

International Institute of the Bay Area – Providing Citizenship Program 2 times per week. Free ESL instruction. Special consideration is given for low-income, seniors. [www.iibayarea.org](http://www.iibayarea.org)

American Red Cross – Restoring Family Links – Helps to connect with family members in countries and disaster areas. ARC is looking to outreach to vulnerable communities about their Tracing/Messaging services. Call or email for more info or presentations: 415-427-8064, [ARCtrackingBayArea@usa.redcross.org](mailto:ARCtrackingBayArea@usa.redcross.org)

Sunset Tobacco Project – is looking to reach out to assisted living facilities to educate about second hand smoke, policies etc. If you have a connection with a facility, please contact Linette Escobar: [lescobar@bacr.org](mailto:lescobar@bacr.org)

Meeting Evaluation – see results below

**Next meeting: Wednesday, November 9th 2011 – 12:15-1:45pm**

### **SFCAIRS Meeting Evaluation:**

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## San Francisco Coalition for Asylee, Immigrant and Refugee Services

N=12

Meeting Date: Sept 14, 2011

Format	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The time of the meeting was convenient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	75%	25%
The location of the meeting was convenient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	8%	59%	33%
The length of the meeting was appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	66%	33%
Time was used efficiently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	42%	58%

\* What topics or panel would you like to see presented for future meetings? (If you know of a speaker on a specific topic, please provide the speaker's name and contact information if possible.)  
Service provider panels are extremely valuable. I would like speakers from further outland of Bay Area (South Bay).

More time for one-on-one discussion – working groups?

\* Are there other community partners or agencies who could add to the work of SF CAIRS?

If yes, who?

Several API, Cambodian Community Center, Vietnamese coalitions etc.

Bay Area Medical Academy.

AMEMSA (coalition, ask Aboudou)

\* What did you enjoy most about today's meeting?

Broad representation of immigrant community. Able to connect!

The experience and sharing resource info.

Testimonies and information given.

It was very informative (by ALL agencies)

Great panel!

Learning more about the needs of immigrants in our community.

Personal stories.

The diversity of the panel.

Learning about different agencies.

S-comm updates

Panel of speakers, including successful refugees

\* Please share any additional comments:

I hope to become more involved.

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Please keep working hard to reach out to those in need – we are all here on this earth to learn from one another.

Well organized, thank you!

Maybe a little less on the agenda.

A community calendar would be great

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