

San Francisco Coalition for Asylee,
Immigrant and Refugee Services

Co-Chairs: Clarisa Sanchez & Eva Iraheta

Coordinator: Cristy Dieterich

Secretary: Karina Almanza

SF-CAIRS Meeting

Wednesday, Sept 10, 2014 12:15 – 1:45pm

Host: Catholic Charities CYO – New Address:

990 Eddy Street San Francisco, CA 94109

Welcome & Introductions –*Eva Iraheta (SF-HSA), Mona Masri (IRC), Daisy Reyes (LEN Institute), Tania DuGeovskey (BACR), Efrain Sandoval (Arriba Juntos), Olga Radon (BACR), Lourdes Martinez (ILRC), Chelsea Lalancette (Catholic Charities), Grace Lau (Refugee Transitions), Nikka Rapkin (Sunset Project), Tiffany Crain Altamirano (ILRC), Samira Causevic (SFDPH/NHP), Amanda McArthur (Catholic Charities), Nora Goodfriend Koven (CCSF), Francisco Gonzalez (Catholic Charities), Karina Almanza (Catholic Charities)*

Reminder: members can send emails to group via: sf-cairs@googlegroups.com

Contact Cristy if you have any problems: cristy.dieterich@sfdph.org

SF-CAIRS Leadership planning and new Secretary: Karina Almanza (intro and role) – Eva

- Our new SF CAIRS Secretary is Karina Almanza, Karina is an Intern with Catholic Charities
- The SF CAIRS workgroup review the leadership roles of the co-chairs, coordinator, and secretary and assigned tasks. Our next workgroup meeting is scheduled for 09/17/14 at 10 am.
- We are working on planning an event for the next Quarterly Consultation meeting. The tasks so far for this event have been updated on the Google Drive spreadsheet. Planning of this event has been added as a priority to the spreadsheet. Other tasks not yet discussed or assigned include: Lunch logistics, a coordination meeting, an agenda, and thinking of other ways to recruit for the event.
- Recommendations from the workgroup are:
- Include short reports from members (4-5 minutes each) in the SF-CAIRS meetings in addition to the longer presentations.
- Have small group breakout sessions to discuss SF-CAIRS issues and get to know each other
- Have a networking meeting
- Encourage posting on the listserv
- Use the listserv to highlight services and organizations
- Market the website to the community
- Include a Q&A section for non-members on the website

Legislative Update:

Driver licenses/applicants – updates and info- Christopher Martinez

- AB60 was signed into law last October (2013 was the year of the immigrant, ushering in pro-immigrant legislation in CA!)
- Allows undocumented to apply for CA driver's licenses starting 01/01/2015
 - o People cannot apply beforehand, but can schedule appointments online before 01/01/15, but the actual appointment date must be post-01/01/15

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- People should start gathering documents
- o Avoid becoming victims of fraud, do not apply yet!
- o There will be community presentations in the future to help people learn about the process
- o Some people reporting that they paid \$5 for the handbook! The DMV handbook is free of charge, can be attained at a local DMV office or online:
 - § <http://apps.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/dl600.pdf>
 - You can find guidance to implementation here
 - o <http://apps.dmv.ca.gov/ab60/>
 - o <https://caimmigrant.org/dltoolkit.html>
 - List of documents are here
 - o http://apps.dmv.ca.gov/ab60/doc_req_matrix.pdf
 - o <https://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5009/images/AB%2060%20-%20List%20of%20Enumerated%20Documents.pdf>
 - More info will be shared with SFCAIRS as it becomes available

Brief training on Asylum and UAC updates:

Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) services www.ilrc.org

Lourdes G. Martinez, Staff Attorney

- Deportation System for Minors - the law provides for a special process to handle cases of minors who cross the border into the U.S.. This map provides a visual of what may happen to immigrant children in the immigration system, from apprehension, to detention, to Immigration Court, and to deportation: [View map](#)
- Mexican kids that come will be mostly turned around, because they are exempt from that process. Therefore, the only ones that are allowed to stay to ask for protection are those who show that they might be in danger if returned. However, other children (i.e. Central America) will go through the process dictated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA)
- Children are supposed to be held at the least restrictive facilities that also provide services and education. Afterwards, they're released to sponsor. In reality, they are being held in the same jails where other detainees are held (these are usually jails that house criminal inmates and that contract with the Dept. of Homeland Security to serve as immigration detention centers as well)
- Currently, the resources of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency in charge of deportation, are mainly focused on the children and families that have come across the border. The federal government's response to this humanitarian crisis has been similar to its response to the crisis of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. – focusing on deporting as many as possible.
- The law intends for UAC's to be fast-tracked through system. The immigration courts are overwhelmed with cases involving minors and are fast-tracking these cases.
- UAC could be eligible for relief from deportation, such as:
 1. **Special Immigration Juvenile Status (SIJS)** – if child was abandoned or abused, must be under 18 years of age, U.S. court must determine that it's not in their interest to return to their home country, immigration attorney will have to work with a family attorney for the family court portion
 2. **T (victim of trafficking) or U Visa (victim of crime)** after being present in the U.S. for sometime.
 3. **Asylum**

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- a. Asylum applicants must be eligible for protection for having a well-founded fear of facing persecution if they return home; however, the persecution must be based on one of five grounds: 1. Nationality; 2. Race/ethnicity; 3. Religion; 4. Political Opinion; 5. Membership in a Particular Social Group.
- b. The minors who have been overwhelming U.S. immigration authorities at the border and then at the other stages that follow come from situations that reflect the type of scenario asylum is supposed to address. For example, many of these kids come fleeing organized violence in the countries of El Salvador and Honduras that targets youth through force, threats, coercion and other tactics to force them to act as drug mules, sex slaves, assassins, etc. These youth are clearly fleeing persecution. However, the ground for their persecution is hard to prove. Particular social groups such as “youth resisting recruitment by gangs” are facing a lot of resistance from the courts and immigration officials who do not see this as a legitimate group facing persecution. See slides.
- c. Most children are coming from El Salvador and Honduras and it’s related to gang violence and drug trafficking (i.e. gangs trying to recruit children). Asylum might be complicated if they cannot prove group persecution based on religious, political, or social groups. Immigration might ask for more evidence and asylum might be denied unless they can prove that the child is part of a group that is being persecuted (e.g. family)Minors seeking asylum in immigration court are referred to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The Asylum Offices of the USCIS then process these applications.
- d. The area the San Francisco Asylum Office covers ranges from Bakersfield to Anchorage, Alaska; and it currently has 43 officers on staff (there are 350 asylum officers total). Through the month of October, the Asylum Office (AO) will focus on clearing up the backlog of cases so that its officers can focus on the incoming cases from Immigration Court and other affirmative cases filed by UAC’s (Unaccompanied Alien Children) and other minors.
- e. Adults filing asylum applications with AO can be expected to wait a year for their case to be reviewed, while minors and their lawyers are often not given enough time to prepare the best case possible.
- **Unaccompanied Immigrant Children Resources:** This chart is a compilation of links and summaries of available resources for anyone working with the Unaccompanied Minor population. This resource includes general information on working with and representing children, immigration options for UACs, practice advisories on different forms of relief, immigration consequences of delinquency, overview of the immigration detention and deportation process for immigrant children, legal know your rights for children, the intersection of child welfare and immigration, juvenile justice and immigration, and more: [View chart](#)
 - Immigration officials are feeling so overwhelmed by the crisis of what they refuse to refer to as “refugees” and they instead see as “illegal immigrants crossing the border” that they are responding by focusing on deportation. In addition to exempting Mexican children from special protections, the USCIS has also increased the standard they apply at the border in order to determine the likelihood that a person will be persecuted if forced to return home. This is called a “credible fear interview” and it is not supposed to be the stage at which a potential applicant for asylum proves their case. However, by increasing their standard to find that there is a “credible fear” of persecution, the USCIS is denying people the opportunity to enter the US to present a possibly valid asylum claim. This seems to be an effort motivated by lack of resources rather than by international legal standards regarding protection against persecution.

Notes from others attending meeting:

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- 2,000 children currently in San Francisco Rocket Docket courts, and 4,000 in all nine Bay Area counties. These are only the numbers reported for children that were apprehended by immigration, so the number might be higher if we take into account those who made it to their relatives and completely bypassed immigration.
- 150 new students have been reported to have enrolled in Mission High School.
- This fiscal year (ending September 30), there are an estimated 57,000 UAC and it's expected to quadruple next fiscal year.
- Number of children has decreased due to the summer heat.
- Might lose employment services because there's no budget. It will be submitted without one.
- When child is reunified, parent will need to find representation.

SF-CAIRS Member Highlight: Catholic Charities CYO and Tour – Christopher Martinez

5-Minute Member Snapshot series, Q&A:

Refugee Transitions- Grace Lau

- Refugee Transitions can provide home-based tutoring to serve high-need, low-income refugee, asylee and immigrant newcomers. RT tutor (whom are screened and trained) will visit the families in their home to help them navigate the system, help them with school work (e.g. tutoring homework, study CAHSEE exam etc.), and help parents with finding employment, or pass citizenship test.
- Families can expect to have a waitlist of 1-3 months, depending on location and tutor availability. Currently, we have a lot of volunteers who are Spanish speaking and can work with tutee at the Mission District.
- Please feel free to email to Grace at grace@reftrans.org to refer your client.

Announcements:

- CCSF Announcement: October 25, 9am-5pm— Training Opportunity: Interpreting in Health Care Settings. For students who are fluent in other languages (NOT Spanish and Mandarin/Cantonese), they would need to take a .5 units course, cost \$23. If interested in becoming a health care interpreter, they can take the 2 semester program, cost about \$1000 but fee waiver available for tuition.
- Catholic Charities Announcement: September 13, 1 Van Ness— Free Citizenship Fair. Please help to promote it.

Nor. Cal Refugee Resettlement Agency & Community Consultation update 10/23 10am-12pm – Eva

At the consultation Resettlement agencies share their figures for the number of refugees they help resettled in the quarter, as well as on-going health care concerns and resettlement challenges each agency faces.

The New Date: Thursday, October 23, 2014

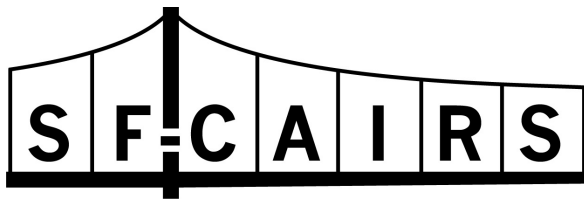
Time: 10 am to 12 noon

County Information Updates: by Eva Iraheta, Human Service Agency

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

- Meeting Evaluation Results: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-3NPQMY2L/>

-Additional Comments:

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 speakers name and contact information if possible.)

-public benefits for refugees + other immigrants (asylum, u-visa, etc)

-immigration driver's licenses for undocumented people

-Guest speakers from different ethnic communities about challenge/success

What did you enjoy most about today's meeting?

-get to meet with representatives from other agencies and learn about the asylee youth procedures

-everything-- thank you Catholic Charities!

-info about unaccompanied children

-The FYI on driver's licenses and refugee transitions work

-great info

-presentation

Please share any additional comments:

-Morning meetings would be easier. It would be good to get more agencies here!

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Next meeting: Wednesday, November 12, Location TBA 12:15 – 1:45PM

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