

SF-CAIRS Meeting Notes

July 10, 2019 – 9am– 11am

Host: SF Department of Public Health –Newcomers Health Program
25 Van Ness Ave. #70/basement level
San Francisco, CA 94102

Welcome & Introductions – *Cristy Dieterich (SF-DPH/Newcomers Health Program), Diane Landino (SF-ORR office), Gustavo Rivas (Arriba Juntos), Nina Sachdev (USCIS), Grace Lau (Refugee Transitions), Ari Jones (Oasis Legal Services), Michaela Nee (USF student), Andy Beetley-Hagler (SF-HSA), Colleen Kauth (Bay Area Legal Aid), Edie Castellou, (Social Worker-SF Public Defender's office), Petrina Grube (St. James Episcopal Church, Faith in Action), Nikki Mobini & Jadma Noronha (Tahirih Justice Center), Adoubou Traore (African Advocacy Network)*

Partner Presentations:

SSI CalFresh Expansion

Colleen Kauth (pronouns: she/her/hers) Staff Attorney | Economic Justice Unit
Bay Area Legal Aid | Alameda County Regional Office
1735 Telegraph Ave. Oakland, CA 94612 T: 510-250-5207

BALA provides Free legal advice on: Housing, Family Law, Veterans Project, Youth Justice, Re-Entry Project, Public Benefits, Health Access, Consumer Protection.

Changes to CalFresh rolling out to various counties.

As of June 1 everyone on SSI is eligible for CalFresh.

Gross income within 200% FPL – see slide

Medical expense deductions for clients on SSI - see expanded list, anything a medical provider says is needed, that is not covered by MediCal. See verification form: [CF 31](#)

Dependent Care deduction- includes support care for individual

Housing Deduction for all renters, and excessive rent

Fraud warning – civil level can impact immigration status. If a client receives a Program Integrity Division (PID) letter investigations can start. “trafficking food stamps” cannot spend or receive cash back as this is an overspent. If client is in this situation then request legal representation.

30 day processing window for CalFresh. Contact Colleen if application goes past 30 days.

- Use the online calculator to see if client is receiving correct allotment. [LSNC CalFresh Calculator](#)
- Any changes to family composition
- Special rule for Disabled/Elderly – can split the family in two for separate beneficiaries

Able-Bodied Adults without dependents: about 20% of eligible subject to 3-month time limit on aid during a 36-month time period. **See slide.**

Federal rule will impact those who qualify and clients may need to submit exemptions to remain on benefits.

Counties can decide to exempt certain groups of individuals for now.

Must provide work activity each month – pay stubs, letter, etc.

Counties are busy and have errors and backlogs, anticipating people discontinuing benefits due to potential Public Charge changes in July.

Asylum Seeker Process & Services

Adoubou Traore, Director, - African Advocacy Network (AAN)

3106 Folsom St. San Francisco, CA 94110 / Phone: 415-503-1032

Alameda county – “recurring issues” meetings. Contact Colleen for info.

If problems with benefits – request and Administrative Hearing and will be retroactive.

7/27 AAN event – SF African BBQ- performances, 100+ people. GG Park. See flyer.

African immigrant Community is increasing in the Bay Area, including more women than in the past. Since 2009 serving wide range of African and Caribbean/African diaspora, LGBT community support. Immigration and Legal services. Staff 4 accredited reps. French, Tigryian, Amharic, Spanish, English, Haitian-Creole, Arabic, and more. Serve all Northern California.

Team: Removal Defense attorney and Legal Team takes affirmative cases.

Africans coming across the US/Mexico border, coming on long journeys and subject to detention. Trauma experiences of many clients, confusing immigration process.

Mental health resources/referrals available.

All cases need psychological evaluations to support cases.

Some Africans are unaware of asylum option, some trust info by word of mouth, those who have been in US longer, encouraged to lie by community members. Please caution and provide AAN as resource - Cultural Competency and understanding to support clients.

Consultation fee \$30. Sliding Scale, some no-fee. No one is refused services.

Limited post asylum services. Clients want accompaniment to services, programs, due to denial of benefits.

Backlog of asylum cases.

21 day rule for asylum office for new arrivals, which is short time to collect documents and also leaves many others pending.

Refer all cases, Uvisas, DV, from Central America.

Announcements, Follow-ups, Events:

- SF-ORR updates: Diane Landino, Regional Representative-Office of Refugee Resettlement / 415-437-8471 –Grants/funding have been released. please reach out if you have ORR questions.
- USCIS updates: Nina Sachdev, Community Relations Officer- supporting accredited representatives, open to questions.

- Asylum stats: 325,000 affirmative cases pending
 - SF 29,000 cases pending
 - Staffing increased to handle backlog
 - Interpreter policy – asylum applicants must bring interpreter, but if they are not qualified then applicant was rescheduled. As of May, instead of rescheduling the appointment the policy allows the interpreter/monitor to provide interpretation.
 - If there are interpreter issues/concerns, please bring up to officer immediately to stop session, ask for supervisor if needed.
 - Freedom of Info Act requests – ability to do online now for current account holders/applicants. Future will be no account required.
 - July 18th – USCIS/Community Organization quarterly meeting, no rsvp needed.
- Nor-Cal Asylum Orientation -. Friday –**7/26/19** 1:15pm. 75 Hawthorne St. SF
 - If you are not accompanying a newly granted asylee please email cristy.dieterich@sfdph.org to be added to the security list.

Networking & Meeting Evaluation

Evaluation questions with responses:

* What topics or panel would you like to see presented for future meetings?

[Network Opportunities](#)

*Are there community partners or agencies who could add to or benefit from the network of SFCAIRS?

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

[Intro to CalFresh and resources.](#)

[Learning more about other agencies](#)

Send group emails to: sf-cairs@googlegroups.com

2019 Quarterly SF-CAIRS Meetings: Jan 9, Apr 10, Jul 10, Oct 9

Next meeting: Wednesday, Oct 9, 2019– 9-11am

Location: 25 Van Ness Avenue, Basement level

SF-CAIRS Mission

SF-CAIRS aims to serve San Francisco Bay Area asylee, immigrant and refugee communities and its service providers by:

Expanding knowledge and access to health, employment, social, education and legal services;

Supporting advocacy efforts through coalition-wide networking, information sharing, cross-referrals and community education; and,

Identifying and addressing challenges faced by immigrants at personal and societal levels