



East Bay Refugee Forum

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, December 15, 2015, 10:00-12:00

Catholic Charities of the East Bay, 433 Jefferson Street, Oakland, CA 94607

Present: New Oww (Community Health for Asian Americans), Phan Fong (Child Care Links), Sadaf Siddiq (Alameda County Social Services Agency), Paulene McCarthy (4 C's), Ola Alani (Red Cross), Ashenat Mamuye (Red Cross), Lauren Finke (Red Cross), Alyson Jessee (EBRF member), Nicole Germanov (Refugee Transitions), Charles Jackson (African Advocacy Network), Sean Kirkpatrick (Community Health for Asian Americans), Beatrice Lee (Diversity in Health Training Institute), Jack Tyler (Diversity in Health Training Institute), Nina Berman (International Rescue Committee), Elaine Bautista (Alameda County Department of Public Health), Laorea Vaudreuil (Refugee Transitions), Dusty Cooper (The Bread Project), Madeline Bailey (International Rescue Committee), Marya Skotte (International Rescue Committee), John Tang (The English Center), Jessee Peck (CDPH-ORH), Lauren Markham (OIHS/OUSD), Yosief Tedros (CHAA intern-Eritrean Community), Niran Ghaley (CCEB), Hana Toma (CCEB), Michael Goldberg (Laney College), John Tran (retired CRC), Maggie Montalvo (The English Center), Rahim Aurang (Bay Area Immigrant and Refugee Services), Nate Dunstan (OUSD RASAP Program), Michael Assefaw (Community Health for Asian Americans), Yonas Woldeab (Eritrean Community), Christine Lemonda (IRC), Marisa Ramos (CDPH/ORH), Blythe Raphael (EBRF)

Coordinator Updates

- The list serve will be on vacation for 12 days from 12/23-1/3.
- The website will be down for maintenance for two weeks in January.
- It was another busy year with over 625 messages sent to members, connections made to bring essentials to new arrivals through various agencies (such as hundreds of jackets), trainings for service providers on DV and sensitive delivery of services to LGBT refugee/asylees, presentations for service providers on new arrival populations (several on Afghanistan), Refugee employment and refugee health overviews, and lending assistance to resolve numerous systems access or other issues for new arrivals throughout the year.
- EBRF seeks very part time contract administrative assistant (max. 6 hours per month). Position will be open for application until January 1, 2016
- EBRF website seeks a web designer to update and overhaul the site which is now more than 4 years old. Position will be open for application until January 1, 2016.
- The website will include refugee arrival data (request has been made to USCIS for number of asylees in Alameda County) as well as a new feedback form that will allow the Steering Committee to take a coordinated and proactive approach to on-the-ground issues as they arise as well as highlight successes and best practices. The form will be available at Forum meetings as well as in digital format on the website:

What immediate issue(s) would you like to see addressed by the Steering Committee?

What outcomes would you like to see as a result of your feedback to the committee?

Please share a best practice.

Please highlight any successes whether they be your own, that of your staff, or a new arrival refugee or asylee community member.

Resettlement Agency Arrivals:

In addition to the numbers reported from the resettlement agencies, the Oakland Unified School District Refugee and Asylee Student Assistance Program reports that the numbers of Unaccompanied Minors from Central America are once again skyrocketing. OUSD had predicted a steady stream of 20 enrollees per month. They have received 30 in the first ten days of December. The CAM (In-County Processing Program) required that a child who is applying in the home country have a refugee claim and have a parent in the U.S. who is documented in order to be eligible for the program. Staff report that in the first round of CAM applications, only 3/90 were granted permission to come to the U.S. through the CAM Program. Many children being served by the district are in unstable households and the needs are extremely HIGH for basics to include shelter in some cases.

The EBRF publically thanks Lovella Barney for her efforts to raise funds (over \$4,000) for gift cards to CVS and the supermarket for those students who are identified as in highest need as well as for the purchase of warm jackets for this child population.

International Rescue Committee Arrivals Oct. 1-Dec. 10, 2015

IRC Oakland	Afghanistan	Bhutan	Burma	China	Dem. Rep. Congo	Eritrea	Iraq	Nepal	TOTAL
TOTAL	108	1	16	1	2	2	2	1	132

	Adult Females	Adult Males	Minor Females	Minor Males	TOTAL	% Female	% Male	% Adults	% Minors	School Aged Children
TOTAL	29	49	26	28	132	41.67	58.33	59.09	40.91	23

New arrivals from Afghanistan account for 82 % of current IRC arrivals, followed by Burma at 12%. The office has had more arrivals than expected due to 23 individual SIV cases who have not come as planned cases from IOM but are in precarious situations and in need of all direct reception and placement services. IRC is able to accommodate these cases. There are no Syrians in the pipeline. The only Syrian cases seen by IRC are LGBT individual cases.

Jewish Family Community Services of the East Bay Arrivals Oct. 1-Dec. 10, 2015

JFCS	Afghanistan	Columbia	Iran	Iraq	TOTAL
TOTAL	48	2	2	6	58/140 projected

New arrivals from Afghanistan account for 83% of current JFCS-East Bay arrivals, followed by those from Iraq at 10%.

Catholic Charities of the East Bay Arrivals Oct. 1-Dec.10, 2015

CCEB	Afghanistan	Burma	Eritrea	Iran	Iraq	Pakistan from Thailand	TOTAL
TOTAL	61	2	1	1	5	5	74/100+ projected

New arrivals from Afghanistan account for 82% of CCEB arrival. CCEB has already served 74% of its projected arrivals for the entire FFY. Among the 74 resettled, there are 12 school-aged children.

Overview of childcare programs for CalWORKS families: *Phan Fong, SSA CalWORKS Program Director, Childcare Links and Paulene McCarthy, SSA CalWORKS Program Supervisor, 4c's of Alameda County.*

- For a complete summary of childcare programs available as a supportive service for CalWORKS cash aid (Stage 1) and non-cash aid (stage II and stage III) families, please see handout attached to meeting notes.
- This type of childcare is offered as a Parental Choice Program in which the parent chooses who will be the childcare provider. Numbers to call to obtain a full list of providers are on the flyer. *In addition, family members may register to be the designated paid child care provider.*
- Providers, with the exception of relatives who can provide a birth certificate showing family relation, are required to submit a Trustline application for background checks in order to be considered as paid childcare providers
- Refugees rarely have birth certificates so potential relative caregivers will have to go through the Trustline process.
- Services are given to two parent families in which one is enrolled into Welfare-to-Work and the other stays at home with children upon request to the Social Services Agency. The second parent (if exempt from Welfare –to-Work requirements) must have in their W-T-W plan the request for supportive services childcare and a form which states they are VOLUNTARY EXEMPT from W-T-W but enrolled into classes such as English as a Second Language.
- The average wait time to get access to Stage 1 childcare is 2-3 weeks (discounting December when offices are not fully staffed).
- Proof of enrollment into classes and named childcare provider will help expedite the process of potential approval for supportive services of childcare.
- Non-cash aid clients (such as those who have already exhausted their CalWORKs cash aid or who are on Match Grant) must access services through the CAP Program (see flyer for details). CAP is run according to wait list and securing childcare will likely take longer than those who are in Stage I child care supportive services.
- Translation and Interpretation are issues in obtaining childcare as is degree of confidence by the client as well as provider in caring for children and interacting with parents of different cultures who may not speak English. All types of childcare are currently severely underutilized by new arrival refugees to include the option of having a paid relative child caregiver. Note, there is no minimum qualification of hours that a parent who is VOLUNTARY EXEMPT from W-T-W has to complete each week in order to be eligible to sign up for childcare supportive services. (15 hours ESL would be an acceptable example of need, if stated in the plan to assist the client to obtain fluency). Getting requested need recorded in the SSA client plan is the first essential step.

Election of new steering committee members

- According to the Bylaws, in order to vote an agency or individual advocate must be in good standing with membership dues as well as attending 4/6 general forum meetings per year. A master attendance record is available.
- One vote per agency. A quorum of 9 agencies (or agencies plus individual advocates) is required to be present.
- The quorum was fulfilled for this vote with IRC, BAIRS, CHAA, Red Cross, OUSD, DPH, SSA, CCEB, RT, AAN, SSA, Eritrean Youth for Change.
- All candidates ran uncontested for the open seats. There is one additional seat open in the new year for an ECBO/Emerging Leader

- Results: The EBRF welcomes back Sean Kirkpatrick and welcomes new Steering Committee member Yonas Woldeab (Eritrean Community Representative), Ballav Poudyel (Refugee Employment Specialist), and Jack Tyler (Refugee Employment Specialist).
- Please see the ballot (attached to meeting note email for fuller candidate qualifications and the strengths each brings to the Steering Committee).

Update on AB86 Regional Consortium and Funding: *Jack Tyler, EBRF Education Chair. Email: jackatyler@gmail.com*

- EBRF members are highly encouraged to visit the website: naca.net for updates on the North Alameda Consortium proposal which stems from two years of work by five work groups and regards funding for adult education programs in CA. The Consortium specifically calls for ECBO and CBO representation at the table to develop plans for funding programs such as ESL and VESL in Alameda County.

Agency announcements

- **The English Center** is now enrolling for its next 8 week session for the NCLEX and NCLEX-PN review for nurses with a start date of 1/12/2016-3/3/2016. Admissions and Testing along with English Center Orientation are mandatory for new students. Costs: Tuition \$380 per session, application fee \$25, materials approx... \$65. International students pay a regular part time fee. In addition to test preparation with a basic review of nursing, medical surgery, pharmacology, mental health, care of the child bearing family, pediatrics, community health and leadership and EKG, the program offers career counseling and work experience placements for eligible students (full flyer attached to meeting notes) Contact The English Center (510) 636.6700 for more information
- **The English Center and Diversity in Health Training Institute** are jointly offering a several Healthcare Career Pathways Programs. Courses are designed to help those who have health care experience or interest to develop a pathway to reach career goals. Tuition is free with a small fee for materials. Assistance is given to develop a plan for practicing in the profession or finding an alternative career in healthcare, assist in licensing and job search, learning vital communication skills, employment coaching, and support for career advancement. See flyer attached to meeting notes for full details. Healthcare Career Exploration begins 2/2/2016, Career Navigation on 3/1, job readiness on 3/1 and work experience in April. *Contact Fatima Aineb (51) 708-3484 or Rebecca Clayton (510) 836-6700 ext. 125 for more information.*
- **The Red Cross Bay Area Chapter** will send out a survey shortly regarding how to potentially improve outreach efforts regarding Restoring Family Link program for family members who may be separated due to natural disaster, political turmoil, or war.
- **CHAA** asks members to *Save the Date* on March 13, 2016 for a Celebration of International Women's Day (men welcome too!). The location is To Be Determined.
- **African Advocacy Network** wishes to thank Kathy Ahoy and the EBRF for connection to donations for much needed winter jackets for their asylee community members.
- **OUSD Oakland International High and the Refugee and Asylee Student Assistance Program** seeks assistance for leads in meeting the critical housing needs of Unaccompanied Minors from Central America who face unstable or complete loss of housing and are without any family or community resources to draw upon (other than the school district). Contact Nate Dunstan, Email: Nathaniel.dunstan@ousd.k12.ca.us or Lauren Markham, email: laurenmarkham@oaklandinternational.org

**The EBRF Thanks individual Steering Committee Members:
Laura Vaudreuil, Mai Quach and Michael Goldberg:**

"In recognition of your more than five years of outstanding service and leadership as an East Bay Refugee Forum Steering Committee Member. The Forum is grateful for your vision, guidance, and hard work towards helping the refugee and asylee communities of Alameda County.

Thank you for your enduring dedication and commitment to enhancing the quality of life for new arrival community members."

Huge thanks to Catholic Charities for continuing to host the EBRF in the coming year! Please note that we will switch to the **first** Tuesday, every other month.

Meeting Schedule for 2016:

February 2
April 5
June 7
August 2
October 4
December 6

Meeting Feedback:

Out of 5 total survey respondents, all agree or highly agree that presentations were useful, time was used effectively, and there was sufficient material covered at this meeting.

Topics that members would like to see presented in 2016 include: Covered California, Information on Family Reunification Programs from USCIS and Updates from USCIS, Cultural Presentations and Casemanagement 101 Basic Trainings, Future of Refugee Resettlement

Additional Resources Members would find helpful to the website: USCIS and USDOJ web links

General Comments: Time is being used much better. Good job moving things along. Please announce USCIS CBO meetings in SF District Field Office that occur quarterly to the CBOs., Inquiry as to whether the emails could be organized for committees to look at more closely as managing so many emails can be overwhelming and several great resources are not utilized and info. Is lost, Having a list of scheduled meetings is helpful, prefer a larger room where we can see who is in the room as the chairs are too high and block the view if you're sitting along the wall.