



eastbayrefugeeforum.org

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## Meeting Notes

Tuesday, August 18, 2015, 10:00-12:00

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

Present: Naima Jameson (Alameda County Social Service Agency), Charlotte Bernsohn (Red Cross), Cristy Dieterich (SF Department of Public Health Newcomers Health Program), Dan Roisman (Alameda District Attorney), Lan Ngo (Alameda Health System), Sambo Ly (Refugee Health Screening Alameda Health System), Guenet Sebsibe (individual advocate), Sue Pon (Oakland Adult and Career Education), Sarah Jones (IRC), Marya Skotte (IRC), Dana Bustamante (IRC), Lydia Shrestha (Children's Hospital Oakland), Lila Katz (JFCS-East Bay), Sean Kirkpatrick (Community Health for Asian Americans), Laura Vaudreuil (Refugee Transitions), Hana Toma (CCEB), Zen Crowder (Alameda County Social Services), J Jimenez (Tandem), Kajal Shahali (Tandem), Elisabeth Lang (CCEB), Jennifer Tran (individual advocate from USC), Bowa Tucker (Office of Refugee Resettlement Region 9), Pat Pianko (Office of Refugee Resettlement Region 9), Jack Tyler (Berkeley/Alameda One Stop), Lawang Burhan (Afghan Community Advocate), Rafiullah Amini (Afghan Community Advocate), Sadaf Siddiq (Alameda County Social Services Agency), Marisa Ramos (California Department of Public Health Office of Refugee Health), Jessee Peck (California Department of Public Health Office of Refugee Health), Jacqueline Hom (CA Department of Social Service, Refugees Programs Bureau), Elaine Bautista (Alameda County Department of Public Health), Ballav Poudyel (Lao Family Community Development), Rahim Aurang (Bay Area Immigrant and Refugee Services), Nate Dunstan (Oakland Unified School District), Charles Jackson (African Advocacy Network of Dolores Street Community Services), Hisham Zawil (IRC), Nazia Ali-Prasad (California Department of Social Services Refugee Programs Bureau), Lisa Vang (California Department of Social Services Refugee Programs Bureau), Joe Pollakoff (California Department of Social Services Refugee Programs Bureau), Naomi Pease (Red Cross of Northern California)

### Coordinator Updates

- Refugee Awareness Event with documentary film screening of "The Refugees of Shangri-La" successful. Event raised \$3,000 for the establishment of a Neediest Cases Fund for Refugees and Asylees in Alameda County to fill gap in resources currently available should a family suffer a tragedy (such as death or disability of the breadwinner) and require rapid stabilization and not have other existing resources to draw from. Steering Committee will set terms of the fund to include qualifications/application and approval procedure by early 2016. The June 2016 Refugee Awareness Event will be back in San Antonio Park. The Forum is likely to hire a paid intern in the fall to help solicit sponsorships and raise in advance the roughly \$6,000 required to hold the event which annually now draws at least 700+ community members.
- July featured training given by the Organization for Refugee Migration and Asylum (ORAM) and hosted by JFCS-Est Bay. The EBRF brought together thirty-seven staff from seven different member agencies for a two day session designed to sensitize service providers to the unique background of refugees and asylees who are persecuted due to being LGBT and face certain challenges after resettlement. Link to ORAM website with materials:  
<http://www.oraminternational.org/en/>
- The Steering Committee (SC) held Part I of Strategic Planning for the EBRF in July. After the second session in which changes to the Bylaws will be enacted, there will be one or two member seats available (as members rotate off) for those who wish to serve on this all volunteer committee. Applications for the SC will likely be distributed at the October forum meeting as current members begin to rotate off.
- The October Forum meeting will feature an overview of new arrival health as well as some initial information on how providers can assist a new arrival in obtaining childcare.
- Medi-Cal Restricted Scope mis-coding or discontinuances continues to be a very large issue for refugees and immigrants in Alameda County (and the state). Service providers are asked to please

immediately out-refer such cases to: Marina Pantchenko, Attorney, Bay Area Legal Aid, 1735 Telegraph Ave, Oakland, CA email: [mpantchenko@baylegal.org](mailto:mpantchenko@baylegal.org) Phone: (510) 250-5283

Resettlement Agency Arrival Numbers from 10/1/2014-current time

**Catholic Charities of the East Bay Arrivals from 10/1/2014-current time**

<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>
<i>Afghanistan</i>	56
<i>Burma</i>	24
<i>Cuba</i>	1
<i>Ethiopia/Eritrea</i>	2
<i>Iran</i>	1
<i>Iraq</i>	20
<i>Pakistan</i>	6
<i>Syria</i>	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>114/150 projected</b>

**Children ages from 5 to High School:**

Elementary school: 15, Middle School 1, High School 7

CCEB notes that the overall arrival numbers are lower than expected.

**International Rescue Committee Arrivals from 10/1/2014-August 12, 2015**

<b>IRC Oakland Arrivals</b>	
<b>Total: Cases FY15 as of 8/12/2015 : 290/475 approved</b>	
<b>Africa : 28</b>	
<i>Somalia</i>	<b>8</b>
<i>Eritrea</i>	<b>13</b>
<i>Uganda</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Ethiopia</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>DRC</i>	<b>2</b>
<b>East Asia : 55</b>	
<i>Burma</i>	<b>53</b>
<i>China</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>N. Korea</i>	<b>1</b>
<b>Latin America/Caribbean : 7</b>	
<i>Cuba</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Colombia</i>	<b>6</b>
<b>Near East/South Asia: 200</b>	
<i>Iraq</i>	<b>20</b>
<i>Iran</i>	<b>12</b>
<i>Afghan</i>	<b>148</b>
<i>Syria</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Bhutan</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Pakistan</i>	<b>2</b>
<b>School Age (5 to 18 yrs)</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Geo</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>Free</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>SIV</b>	<b>146</b>

IRC reports that there are 15 arrivals in the pipeline for September but arrivals are lower than expected. IRC expects more arrivals from Eritrea. September is expected to be inordinately busy.

**\*Total IRC and CCEB Combined Arrivals Oct.1, 2014-August 2015**

Afghanistan	204
Bhutan	4
Burma	77
China	1
Columbia	6
Cuba	2
DRC	2
Eritrea	15
Ethiopia	2
Iraq	40
Iran	13
North Korea	1
Pakistan	8
Somalia	8
Sri Lanka	4
Syria	14
Uganda	3
<b>TOTAL COMBINED</b>	<b>404</b>

**Combined IRC and CCEB top three countries of origin are Afghanistan (50%), Burma (19%), and Iraq (10%) Followed by Eritrea (3.7%) Syria (3.5%) Iran (3%) Pakistan (2%), Somalia (2 %). Remaining collective 7% hail from all other countries listed in the combined agency arrival tables above.**

*\*IRC and CCEB are combined as both agencies predominately resettle new arrivals in Alameda County, while JFCS-East Bay mainly resettles new arrivals in Contra Costa County.*

**Jewish Children and Family Services-East Bay Arrivals from October 2014-August 26, 2015**

<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>
Afghan	68
Congo	1
Iranian	27
Iraq	3
Syria	1
Uganda	2
FSU (former Soviet Union)	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103/140 approved</b>

*New arrivals from Afghanistan comprise 66% of the JFCS-East Bay case load, followed by 25% from Iran with the remaining collective hailing from other countries listed in the table.*

*JFCS-East Bay expects 10-12+ arrivals in September. The agency exceeded the 90 new arrivals to be served this FFY and received state approval in June to serve additional clients (up to 140) through the end of the FFY.*

*Thirty of the 103 total arrivals are children (of those, 53% are under age of 5 years old).*

*The breakdown of school age children ages from 5 years to high School is: Elementary school: 10, Middle School: 3, High School 1.*

*JFCS-East Bay reports one very high needs pediatric medical case in addition to several adult cases of high medical acuity.*

*JFCS-East Bay continues to resettle new arrivals in Concord, Pittsburg, Antioch, Brentwood as well as some in Oakland, San Leandro and Hayward. Housing costs continue to rise in Contra Costa County.*

*Seven of the 103 total arrivals are LGBT. Six out of the seven LGBT have severe mental health issues (with behavioral health available in house by a licensed clinical psychologist trained in trauma informed care. One patient was out referred to IRC Center for Wellbeing.*

#### CA State Refugee Programs Bureau Announcements:

- RPB distributed fact sheets on “Human Trafficking and Crime Victims Assistance Programs and “Unaccompanied Undocumented Minors Legal Services Funding Program” (both attached to email with meeting notes here) Funding constraints prohibited RPB staff from travelling for the past several years but staff now anticipate being permitted to participate more on the local forum level.
- On December 8-10, 2015, the state will hold a CalWorks training conference in Anaheim which will incorporate a refugee component to target refugee related concerns throughout the state. For example, training will include 12 workshops on topics such as refugee health, starting and running community garden programs, trauma informed care for new arrivals, and affordable housing. The conference will include panels and general information as well as flexibility for attendees to choose among the different thematic sessions regarding refugee related programs to augment the core material for CalWORKS professionals. Nazia Ali-Prasad from the RPB will send the link forward once it is live in the next month for those who wish to register. Email: nazia.ali-prasad@dss.ca.gov
- The State Advisory Council (SAC) on Refugee Assistance and Services is currently undergoing some reorganization. Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in SAC meetings (coordinated by RPB staff Anupe Sandhu) via teleconference line so that local input, concerns and requests for assistance can be effectively funneled up to the state level. The next SAC meeting is set for Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. An invite will follow with call-in instructions for those who wish to participate. Stakeholders are welcome to email Anupe in advance with issues to be placed on the agenda for discussion or further discussion. Email: anupe.sandhu@dss.ca.gov

#### Update on Newcomer Center Proposal and Work Plan: Sean Kirkpatrick, Interim Executive Director, Community Health for Asian Americans (CHAA) Email contact: sean.kirkpatrick@chaaweb.org

- Health Care Services Agency gave initial funding for a draft position paper. Approximately 50 stakeholders combined attended the first three meetings last spring to provide input on the idea of a newcomer center for refugees and immigrants. A similar model currently exists in Vancouver with an operating budget of 25 million dollars annually. CHAA points to other centers such as the Youth Center in Alameda County with a dedicated pool of funding and envisions a public/private partnership to fund a center which would connect existing resources, provide augmentations, and address gaps for greatest collective impact in a co-location shared resource model. ORR notes that The White House Initiative will publish a toolkit for in September for cities who wish to strategically plan to meet the needs of their foreign born residents. Los Angeles is concurrently working on trying to address the issue with a newcomer’s center model.
- In Alameda county, work regarding a potential newcomer center is in response to the increasing diversity of the county’s population in which 1/3 of the population is now foreign born, previous needs assessments from Burma Refugee Family Network and the Bhutanese Community in California, county refugee plan work undertaken within the last three years, and ongoing work to try and increase language/system’s access for Limited English Proficient persons.
- CHAA calls for partner participation in the fall on two committees: a political strategy committee and a model design & sustainability committee (for feedback on perceptions of needs and what a center might hold and how it might be funded). The political strategy committee work will be informed and

driven by the position paper which exists as an open document for suggestions with an eye on taking the paper as a advocacy piece to the County Board of Supervisors by January 2016.

- Committee meeting announcements will be issued forum wide and members are encouraged to participate in order to ensure that the process moves forward. CHAA envisions a two year planning process in total.

#### [Service Overview and Referral for Individuals who face Domestic Violence \(DV\):](#)

*Sadaf Siddiq, County Refugee Coordinator and DV Program Manager of Alameda County Social Services Agency and Zen Crowder, Social Worker III of Alameda County Social Services. Email contacts: [zhines@acgov.org](mailto:zhines@acgov.org) and [ssiddiq@acgov.org](mailto:ssiddiq@acgov.org)*

- Brochure available in seven threshold languages to include Cambodian, Spanish, Mandarin, and Farsi distributed regarding scope of county services available (also attached to email containing meeting notes).
- Intake for DV cases is available on a walk-in basis at Eastmont, Hayward and North County offices or referral back through employment services county worker. Cases are continuously routed to quickly triage clients into the system, with back up workers available. Workers are trained to assess risk and as well as help clients plan strategies for ensuring personal safety (clients in need are referred to contracted agencies such as the Family Violence Law Center which specialize in DV cases for assistance for CalWORKS clients. Contractor will assist in matters such as filing restraining orders and obtaining shelter. In order to have the time necessary to address DV (legal appointments, etc.), clients may be exempted from CalWORKS Welfare to Work Activities as well have time on cash aid extended if needed. RCA cases receive the same services but are out-referred to a different agency on sub-contract to provide services than CALWORKS clients.
- State RPB notes that an Online CalWORKS Assessment Program (OCAP) tool with 250 questions to include a DV component will be mandated for all counties as part of the Employment Eligibility/ Intake for each individual beginning on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Prior to instituting the tool, the state wishes to address cultural and linguistic needs of couples (for example, it may not be culturally acceptable to interview a husband and wife separately).
- Lao Family staff inquire about availability of training for staff who assist families with members who have gambling and/or alcohol addiction as they often occur in tandem with DV. SE Asian communities are noted to suffer disproportionately. NICOS , a Chinese health Coalition leads trainings in San Francisco and is recommended as a possible education/training resource.
- One advocate notes need for better orientation during and post resettlement regarding the issue of domestic violence as some cultures, such those originating from the Middle East, may exclude female family members from mandatory cultural orientation in order to maintain exclusive control within the household. Resettlement response from IRC has been to enact home visits to ensure equal access to cultural orientation.
- Some DV is revealed during the refugee health screening process. Providers suggest that the best approaches are ones in which education about family safety and the legal system are embedded into programs to include those available on a community level. Triple P Parenting Education, Mommy and Me Programs which offer incentives for attendance such as diapers, or reading groups provide potential best practices for scaffolding supports into programs to help prevent cases (and immediate ensuing escalation into the justice system that occurs).

**Agency Program Highlight:** Red Cross "Restoring Family Links": *Charlotte Bernsohn, Volunteer Lead for Oakland RFL Program, Red Cross of the Bay Area and Executive Director for Red Cross Northern California Programs, Naomi Pease. Email: [charlotte.bernsohn2@redcross.org](mailto:charlotte.bernsohn2@redcross.org) Email: [naomi.pease@redcross.org](mailto:naomi.pease@redcross.org)*

- The International Red Cross and Red Crescent are recognizable for their work throughout the world in conflict zones, natural disaster sites, and humanitarian crises. The Northern California Red Cross is comprised of 16 counties and runs, among many programs, The Restoring Family Links Program. This program helps reconnect families who have been separated by migration. The Red Cross works in refugee camps as well as has access to detention centers and can relay messages, legal documents, photographs, etc free of charge between family members. Red Cross may also provide proof of detention. In addition, on-the-ground staff in many countries around the world respond to inquiries for well-checks of vulnerable community members (such as elderly) with whom family contact may have been lost. The Restoring Family Links services do provide inquiries following natural disasters (earthquake in Nepal for example) to connect Bay Area family to those abroad. Tracing cases prove the most difficult of all, some lasting years in length. Staff is available to present to staff such as new caseworkers so that information and the referral mechanism for clients is in place.

**Agency Program Highlight:** IRC "Center for Economic Opportunity": Sarah Jones, Financial Opportunity Center Program Manager, IRC. Email: [sarah.jones@rescue.org](mailto:sarah.jones@rescue.org)

- Program received funding from Annie E. Casey Foundation and has been running for 1.5 years. Open to all refugees and asylees who have been in the U.S. for six or more months, regardless of which agency served to initially resettle the client in Alameda or Contra Costa County. A high school diploma is not necessary to participate but clients must be stable enough to work on longer term economic stability.
- Program aims to expand employment services with financial literacy component in which clients receive advanced career coaching, help with budgeting, some limited scholarship funds for vocational training or re-certification purposes, planning for 2-3 year financial goals, and, through monthly workshops, learn to understand things such as loans and financial aid as well the concept of credit (to include teaching clients to understand credit scores and work on monitoring and improving personal credit). Agency program flyer attached to email with meeting notes. Sarah Jones serves as the point of contact for client referral into the program.

### **Closing Announcements:**

**Tandem Seeks Forum Member Partners:** Tandem offers literacy training and a book sharing program for families with school aged children. In addition to providing early learning supports, the regularly scheduled book bag exchange may service a dual purpose to provide a platform for agencies to bring families into other enriching programs in a culturally acceptable manner. Kajal Shahali and J Jiminez: email: [kajal@tandembayarea.org](mailto:kajal@tandembayarea.org) and [j@tandembayarea.org](mailto:j@tandembayarea.org)

**OUSD Refugee and Asylee Student Assistance Program (RASAP):** School for all OUSD students begins on Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. All schools are full for the year and staff expect a challenging year due to enrollment over district capacity. The RASAP Program has opened an additional Newcomers Program at Castlemont High School on 88<sup>th</sup> in order to serve needs of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who came as unaccompanied minors and now live deep in East Oakland. OUSD is now at 450+ unaccompanied minors enrolled into the district. Some are family re-unification but majority of boys and girls have come alone from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. Contact Program Specialist Nate Dunstan via email: [nathaniel.dunstan@ousd.k12.ca.us](mailto:nathaniel.dunstan@ousd.k12.ca.us)

**OUSD Family Literacy Classes:** Classes are embedded into school sites of : Lafayette, La Escuelita, Allendale, Fruitvale, Esperanza/Korematsu, and Coliseum College Prep Academy and are designed specifically to empower parents to support their children's academic success. The ESL curriculum is designed around the

school curriculum (for example, Lafayette is a STEM school and the curriculum is orientated around science and math learning supports. With the exception of Fruitvale, registration for free classes will occur on Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:45 or 9:00 am. Those at the Fruitvale site should enroll on August 31<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 am. Program Director email contact: sue.pon@ousd.org

**October's General Forum Meeting:** Focus on strengthening knowledge regarding child care services in Alameda County as well as an overview of new arrival health provided by the Director of Refugee Health Screening, Sambo Ly.

**Forum Congratulates:** Sambo Ly is a published author with release of her autobiography "All I Heard Was My Sorrow". Available on amazon.com, this book chronicles her remarkable life as a teenage survivor of Cambodia's genocides with proceeds donated to charity.

**General Forum Meetings for the remainder of 2015 are scheduled to meet from 10:00-12:00 at Catholic Charities of the East Bay on:**

October 20, 2015  
December 15, 2015

**Quarterly Community Consultations are calendared for:**

Q 4: July 1 - Sept 30, 2015

Wed. Sept. 9, 2015

Lead Agency: IRC: Karen Ferguson

Time: 10:00-12:00

Host Location: This will be a virtual meeting rather than in-person

Q 1: Oct 1 -Dec. 31, 2015

Thursday, December 10, 2015

Lead Agency: Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County: Theresa Samuel-Boko

Time: 10:00-12:00

Host Location: CCCC, 2625 Zanker Road, San Jose, CA 95134

Q 2: Jan 1- March 31, 2016

Wed., March 9, 2016

Lead Agency: IRC: Karen Ferguson

Time: 10:00-12:00

Host/Location: This will be a virtual meeting rather than in-person

Q3: April 1- June 30, 2016

Thursday, June 9, 2016

Lead Agency: Jewish Family and Children's Services-East Bay: Amy Weiss

Time: 10:00-12:00

Host/Location: JFCS-East Bay, 1855 Olympic Blvd. # 200, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Q 4: July 1-Sept. 30, 2016

Friday, Sept. 9, 2016

Lead Agency: Catholic Charities of the East Bay: Sister Elisabeth Lang

Time: 10:00-12:00

Host/Location: CCEB, 433 Jefferson Street, Oakland, CA 94607

*\* Quarterly Community Consultation reminders will be issued to stakeholders in advance via the various regional list serves and/or host agency. All meetings will have teleconference capability.*

