

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



October 20, 2003

REFUGEE COORDINATOR LETTER NO. 03-27

TO: COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS

This letter confirms our next quarterly Refugee Coordinators meeting:

Date: Wednesday, November 5, 2003
Time: 10:00 – 2:00
Location: California Department of Social Services
Conference Room 697
744 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814
Phone: (916) 654-4356

Please find enclosed a copy of the minutes from the last meeting. Also attached is a map from the Sacramento Airport.

For those of you who will participate in the meeting by conference call, instructions will be provided to you a few days in advance.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Daniel Crawford
California Department of Social Services
744 P Street, MS 6-646
Sacramento, California 95814
Phone: (916) 654-5964
E-mail: Daniel.Crawford@dss.ca.gov

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
Thuan Nguyen
On October 21, 2003

THUAN NGUYEN, Chief
Refugee Programs Branch

Starting from: **A** Sacramento International Airport
SMF, Sacramento, CA

Arriving at: **B** 744 P St, Sacramento, CA 95814-6413

Distance: 11.7 miles Approximate Travel Time: 14 mins

Directions

	Start going towards the AIRPORT EXIT on AIRPORT BLVD - go 0.3 mi
2.	Continue towards SERVICE AREA B - go 0.3 mi
3.	Bear Right on CROSSFIELD DR - go 0.1 mi
4.	Turn Left on RAMP - go 0.3 mi
5.	Continue on AIRPORT BLVD - go 0.3 mi
6.	Take I-5 SOUTH towards SACRAMENTO/YUBA CITY - go 9.6 mi
7.	Take the Q STREET exit - go 0.3 mi
8.	Continue on Q ST - go 0.4 mi
9.	Turn Left on 8TH ST - go 0.1 mi
10.	Turn Left on P ST - go < 0.1 mi
11.	Arrive at 744 P ST, SACRAMENTO

When using any driving directions or map, it's a good idea to do a reality check and make sure the road still exists, watch out for construction, and follow all traffic safety precautions. This is only to be used as an aid in planning.

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COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS (CRC) MEETING ATTENDEES

July 24, 2003

The meeting was held at the headquarters of Orange County Social Services Agency in Santa Ana, and was presided over by Refugee Programs Branch Chief, Thuan Nguyen.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
Thuan Nguyen	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-3003
Janet Sandlin	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-1246
Steve Saucedo	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-2805
Adine Forman	Los Angeles County	(213) 738-2483
Etta Howard	San Diego County	(619) 338-2039
Roy Kim	Sacramento County	(916) 263-4335
Alette Lundeberg	Santa Clara County	(408) 278-6589
(by speaker phone)		
Dolores Mejia	Orange County	(714) 541-7874
Loan Pham	Orange County	(714) 245-6050

Thuan Nguyen opened the meeting with introductions, and then the following items were discussed:

Refugee Youth Initiative (RefugeeWorks)

With both RefugeeWorks' Jane Bloom and Rebecca Armstrong unable to attend, Janet Sandlin provided an update on the Initiative's activities. The progress has been good, with expanded activities being planned to include services to Russian and Southeast Asian youths in Sacramento County and Southeast Asian youths in Merced County.

Targeted Assistance (TA) Discretionary Grant

Thuan provided a status update on the State's TA Discretionary Grant application process for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2003, and mentioned that this might be the last time the state submits a single application for all proposals submitted by counties and service providers. She solicited suggestions from the coordinators about a process for future submissions. Suggestions ranged from:

- ◆ Building TA Discretionary funding into Refugee Employment Social Services (RESS) allocations .
- ◆ Direct funding from Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to counties, who would then solicit requests-for-proposals (RFPs); incorporating specific county needs into application specifications for resulting subcontracts; national disparity of the refugee population and the state-vs-state nature of the competitive applications might make direct funding preferable.
- ◆ Total funding to State, who would identify with counties specific needs for targeted funding throughout the state.

Thuan addressed some of these suggestions, mentioning that the difference of formulas used in RESS/TA Discretionary might make combining them impossible. If asylees are added to TA Discretionary services, it could increase allocations. She suggested the Coordinators provide the Refugee Programs Branch with their written suggestions.

MEDS Numbers, Refugee Coding and Impact on RESS Allocations

Janet opened a discussion on a proposed change in the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) coding of refugees who attain citizenship, and attempts to capture this data for policy purposes. She mentioned that ORR bases allocations to the states for RESS and TA Formula on arrival data, not MEDS data. RESS allocations to the counties are based on MEDS data. However, the MEDS data used is the number of aided refugees who have been in the country 60 months or less. Since a refugee must

be in the country at least five years to become a citizen, there would be no effect on county allocations. Points brought up in the discussion included:

- ◆ Whether cases would remain few in number in the future.
- ◆ Whether or not such cases remain coded as refugee, if there will be any use for the data, and if this might also change in the future.
- ◆ If cases are not counted as refugees but continue on MEDS, was it due to their attaining citizenship.
- ◆ A need for some historical data and other states' experiences, due to County Board of Supervisors requests and reference to it.

Refugee Arrivals

Thuan provided the discouraging illustration how arrivals have declined this year, with ORR estimating just over 14,000 nationally, and a Los Angeles Times article putting the total slightly higher at around 17,000. California has so far received about 2,200 arrivals, compared to over 4,200 at this time last year. Discussion included:

- ◆ The limited amounts of Liberians expected, and the restricted circumstances that they would come under.
- ◆ The possible and long-expected arrivals of an estimated 8,000 Somali Bantus, with San Diego receiving a few hundred for resettlement.

Other ORR Funding

Thuan announced that the proposed RESS funding levels were now in the Federal Register, with Elderly Discretionary levels for FFY 2003/04 expected by September 30. The proposed RESS funding was about \$7.3 Million this year, a decrease by about 10 percent. Offsetting this decrease somewhat would be increases in set-aside/discretionary funding for asylees and victims of trafficking. Alette Lundeberg reminded everyone of how fiscal adjustments made earlier this year to offset overages in previous years would impact county allocation figures.

County Refugee Services Plans

Steve Saucedo announced that the Refugee Coordinator Letter (RCL) requesting the annual County Refugee Services Plans has not been sent out and is being delayed, due to the delays in federal allocation announcements. The significant impact of the allocations on the formulation of the plans necessitated the RCL's delay until their announcement.

Summit Status

Thuan announced that RPB's 2003 Summit (formerly Refugee Information Exchange Conference) has been tentatively set for December 3-5 in Santa Clara, and the contract for this event is currently being negotiated. Various cost cutting measures have been implemented, such as the wider use of e-mail to save on postage and reliance on county refugee personnel to help with logistics, workshop topics, speaker selections, etc. Coordinators all graciously offered such suggested offerings such as: ORR Asylee Data Information, the impact of the United States Homeland Security Department's "Liberty Shield" (asylee detention) program, and a renewed effort to secure the services of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugee's Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie (cinema's "Lara Croft"). (**Note: The Summit has since been cancelled due to the effects of the State Budget deficit.**)

Training on Trafficking Victims

Janet Sandlin announced that the Southern California training session was tentatively set for September 26 in Orange County, with the participation of the Legal Aid Foundation, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) and the Partnership for Trafficking Violence Services (Orange County). Janet expressed the RPB's gratitude for the work these organizations are doing in Orange and San Diego Counties, sentiments which Etta Howard and Dolores Mejia echoed. (**Note: This training session has been postponed until early 2004.**)

Concerns were raised (particularly by Dolores and Alette) about the lack of support and critical information coming from ORR in this important area, with ORR staff often unavailable and unhelpful. Thuan urged counties to continue their input to RPB on this issue and pressure on ORR in this area.

County Reports

Among the discussion items:

- ◆ Sacramento County (Roy Kim) is awash in grant-writing (including the Workforce Investment Act, or WIA, California Rapid Response Assistance program).
- ◆ Orange County (Dolores) is also amidst proposal writing. Recent Refugee Day went nicely, despite the pressure of program cutbacks.
- ◆ San Diego County (Etta) is running Refugee Leadership sessions, with funding to seven Mutual Assistance Associations for Interpretive/Language Services. Meetings continue between County and Catholic Charities' Comprehensive Refugee Resettlement Collaborative (CRRC, their administrative arm of their Wilson/Fish alternative). The County Forum has expanded to include Faith-Based groups and employers.

- ◆ Los Angeles County (Adine Forman) is very busy writing grant proposals for additional funding. Hectic activity sometimes means some applications are abandoned due to short timelines and complexities. Cuts in funds and arrivals have providers concerned, and basically have them choosing between their two biggest programs (REP and RITE) for priority. The County Department of Public Social Services' (DPSS) demand that service providers supply DPSS with staff in exchange for DPSS granting them additional funding for case management is also complicating matters.
- ◆ Santa Clara County (Alette) is also amidst funding problems. Services are focusing on lots of refugee youths. Refugees there are suffering a n 8 percent unemployment rate. Their recent Refugee Day was a success. With staff losses a reality for them, they can empathize with RPB's woes in this area as well. They want to continue all-county involvement in coordinator meetings, even if they rotate regions with absentees participating by phone.

Closing Remarks/Announcements

Roy relayed concerns about the need to make the requirements for use of RESS Discretionary/Set-Aside funds (Healthy Marriages) more flexible, particularly with their impact on other programs and staff. The other coordinators agreed.

Thuan stated that RPB would be seeking input from Coordinators about the structure and locations of future meetings, to ensure their continued participation in the Quarterly County Coordinators' Meetings in the face of fiscal difficulties.