

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



October 31, 2001

REFUGEE COORDINATOR LETTER NO. 01-22

To: County Refugee Coordinators

Please be advised that the next Refugee Coordinators meeting is scheduled as follows:

Date: Thursday, November 15, 2001
Time: 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Location: California Department of Social Services Training Center
815 S Street, Eureka Room
Sacramento, CA 95814

Note: Limited free parking is available in the rear of the building on a "first-come, first served" basis.

For your convenience, a copy of the draft minutes for the last meeting are enclosed for your review. Also enclosed is a map with directions from the Sacramento International Airport, courtesy of the Yahoo! Internet site.

If you have any suggestions for the agenda of the upcoming November meeting, please address, e-mail or fax them to:

Mr. Jay E. Nelson California Department of Social Services
Refugee Programs Branch
744 P Street, MS 6-646
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX: (916) 654-7187
Jay.Nelson@dss.ca.gov

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mr. Nelson at (916) 654-0703.

Sincerely,

THUAN NGUYEN, Chief
Refuge Programs Branch

Enclosure

COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS (CRC) MEETING ATTENDEES

August 29, 2001

The meeting was held at the San Diego site of the 2001 Refugee Information Exchange Conference, and was presided over by newly appointed 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
Phyllis Iwasaki	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-2387
Lenore Schmidt	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-2805
Steve Saucedo	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-5594
Daniel Crawford	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-5964
Jay Nelson	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-0703
Betts Smith	State DSS/RPB	(916) 654-0495
Ophelia Farrell	State DSS/RPB	(916) 653-8980
Laura Hardcastle	State DHS/RHS	(916) 323-1164
Sherry Hanna	State CDA	(916) 322-0783
Carmel Clay Thompson	ORR	(202) 401-9246
Gayle Smith	ORR	(202) 205-3590
Kathy Do	ORR	(202) 401-4579
Neil Kromash	ORR	(202) 401-5702
Jay Womack	ORR	(202) 401-5525
Jane Bloom	RefugeeWorks	(410) 230-2783
Jamie McLeod	RefugeeWorks	(408) 246-6155
Lorraine Cordeiro	RefugeeWorks	(978) 430-5787
Etta Howard	San Diego County	(619) 338-2039
John Train	Alameda County	(510) 728-7838
Mary Hoell	Contra Costa County	(510) 412-3237
Alette Lundeborg	Santa Clara County	(408) 278-6589
Michelle Malecki	Santa Clara County	(408) 441-5590
Phaivanh Khowong	Santa Clara County	(408) 278-6589
Dena Dickinson	Santa Clara County	(408) 792-5500
Dolores Mejia	Orange County	(714) 541-7874
Long Thai Nguyen	Sacramento County	(916) 263-3852
Tim Keenan	Sacramento County	(916) 874-9757
Michelle Malecki	Santa Clara County	(408) 441-5590
Karen Hart	San Francisco County	(415) 431-8700
An Tran	San Joaquin County	(209) 468-2061
Nancy Schou	Yolo County	(530) 669-2300
Pao Ly	Fresno County	(559) 453-6092
Christine Balbas	Fresno County	(559) 453-6543
Elzbieta M. Gozdziaak	RMHP, SAMHSA, USDHHS	(301) 443-2131
Mary Hoell	Contra Costa County	(510) 412-3237

Thuan opened the meeting, her first as Refugee Programs Branch (RPB) Chief, with introductions from the attendees, and with a particular acknowledgement to the representatives from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

Federal Update (ORR)

Carmel voiced her pleasure at having the opportunity to meet with and hear from county representatives for the first time in many years, and reviewed her own many years in refugee programs.

Gayle mentioned the advent of Nguyen Van Hanh as the ORR Director-Designee, with some details about his experience. She provided an overview of the national refugee program, touching upon the current ORR budget, pending grant and targeted assistance applications, and admission numbers including asylees and trafficking victims. Any new initiatives are on hold, pending discussions with the new Director-Designee and specific announcements of his vision and goals.

Kathy gave a report on her recent annual reviews of county programs, praising them and their service providers for their work, particularly in finding refugees employment and in their enhanced participation of women and/or secondary wage earners. She also gave a favorable early report on her review of San Diego's Match Grant (Wilson/Fish) program, which was underway at the time of the meeting.

Neil and Jay expressed their pleasure at attending the conference, and making a presentation on the subject of trafficking of refugees. They explained their activities in this new effort, such as the issuing of policies, their partnerships with other agencies, and the contacts with local programs. On this latter point, they reviewed their recent visit to Los Angeles County and the county's social service agency's efforts in the trafficking area.

Capacity Building/Technical Assistance Project (RefugeeWorks)

Jane gave a glowing status report of RPB's contracted activities with RefugeeWorks, including the number of participants in initial and follow-up sessions, some resulting corporate sponsorships of participants, and special praise for the County Refugee Coordinator's (CRCs) involvement. Specific coordinators were cited with "awards" for their particularly supportive roles. Jamie added some observations on the evolution of the kind of training that was offered to participants, and what type of activities were being recommended following the end of the contract in September. And she added her personal thanks for the opportunity to be part of the project. Betts added a reminder about the availability of video tapes of the offered training.

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Regulations (RPB)

Betts gave a status report on the formulation of the regulations, distributing a written summary on the important elements and changes. She gave the tentative

calendar on CDSS actions on the regulations and on the upcoming public hearings to be held in Sacramento and Los Angeles.

Refugee Health Issues (RHS)

Laura distributed (and provided an overview for) some extraordinary handouts her office created, including a detailed arrivals summary and a comprehensive demographic picture of the state's refugee population, derived from RHS' electronic Refugee Health Information System (RHIS). She mentioned that the murdered wife of accused mass murder Nikolai Soltys was one of the clients in the RHIS system, and a recipient of their information on domestic violence. She also provided useful listings of Refugee Health Assessment Program Coordinators and the current Refugee Preventive Health Program grantees. She gave a rundown on her office training on Collaborative Leadership, Program Evaluation and Medical Interpretation.

Roundtable (CRCs/CDA/ORR)

The customary roundtable discussion followed. In addition to the coordinators providing status reports on activities within their counties, they also mentioned the following items:

- Alette: Less staff (due to a 20% slash in their budget) is impacting Santa Clara's program; counties need to prioritize agenda items of importance (such as INS issues) at the state and national level, for advocacy purposes.
- Dolores: The need to respond to the unique problems of trafficking victims, asylees and torture victims; and the county's upcoming Refugee Mental Health Forum.
- Nancy and Long: Yolo and Sacramento's experiences in aiding Soltys and some of his unfortunate victims.
- Pao and Christine: Fresno's efforts to deal with a 14% cut in operating budget, their recent successful review by their Civil Rights Office, and progress on their program website.
- Karen, John and An all gave examples of local needs that require changes in the State and Federal refugee program. (e.g. state forms, allocation formulas, and the 60-month limitation for refugee services).
- Jay (filling in for the absent Josie Marquez) covered Los Angeles' spiraling caseload and its impact on the state.

Sherry added to the discussion with a rundown on resources available at the California Department of Aging (CDA) that can be of use to the counties, as well as some examples of what counties are doing in services to the aging. Laura offered some

encouragement to counties facing funding problems and mentioned some services her agency offers to programs despite their funding levels. Carmel and Gayle also provided some encouraging words to coordinators about future funding through the reauthorization of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), as well as a national perspective on the Soltys tragedy. Gayle also clarified current Federal procedures concerning asylees, and reviewed the present federal backlogs in the processing of asylum cases. Jane offered to make training available on the asylee process within her contracted services.

Closing Remarks/Announcements (RPB)

Thuan thanked the attendees for the participation, with a reminder that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 15, 2001 in Sacramento at the CDSS Training Center.