STATE OF CALIFORNIA - HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

GRAY DAVIS, *Governor*

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

August 2, 2000

REFUGEE COORDINATOR LETTER NO: 00-20

To: County Refugee Coordinators

Please be advised that the next Refugee Coordinators' meeting has been scheduled as follows:

Date: AUGUST 28, 2000

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

San Francisco Airport Marriott
1800 Bayshore Highway
Burlingame, California

Phone: (800) 228-9290 or (650) 692-9100

Instructions: Take US-101 S. to MILLBRAE Ave. Turn SHARP LEFT onto E. MILLBRAE Ave. Right onto Bayshore Hwy. The hotel is on the left.

For your convenience, a copy of the draft minutes for the last meeting is enclosed for your review.

Please submit all agenda items for the upcoming August meeting. Address or fax your agenda items to:

Mr. Jay Nelson
Refugee Programs Branch
California Department of Social Services
744 P St., MS 6-646
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX (916) 654-7187

If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Jay Nelson at (916) 654-0703.

Sincerely,

ROBERT A. BARTON, Chief
Refugee Programs Branch

Enclosure

Minutes
County Coordinators Meeting
June 29, 2000

Alan Meyer of Language Line Services gave a presentation on the interpretation services provided by this company. He also showed a video of how the services work. There are presently 140 languages available. Anyone interested in contracting for this service can contact him.

- Tony Lam, City Councilman for Westminster in Orange County, introduced himself and discussed some of the problems of the Vietnamese community in Westminster. He would like to identify some practical ways of addressing these problems and is willing to participate in helping to solve the problems. He invited everyone to sit down with him at his restaurant and seek solutions.

- Mr. Moreno of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) discussed the issue of public charge in Los Angeles County. There is a fear in the refugee community that public charges may lead to deportation. DPSS is conducting community outreach to educate people on this issue and attempt to dispel fears about it.

- Janet Sandlin reported that the RPB needs to obligate a surplus of administration fees by September of this year. The guidelines for spending these monies will follow those of RESS funds. Janet asked the counties for input and suggestions on how they would like to see the funds expended. Some of it will be used to fund a forum on aging and a best practices model for elderly services. The remaining amount of approximately $400,000 should be spent on unmet needs such as translation services, distribution of materials, and mental health initiatives to form linkages at the local level. Other suggestions included services for victims of domestic violence, funds for refugee awareness days, and for the augmentation of existing services. Long Nguyen noted that the latter proposal will eliminate the need for counties to put the contract out for bid. A handout on the proposed amount for each county was provided and Janet invited counties to submit their ideas to her.

- Janet Sandlin announced that the Refugee Women's Network Conference in Atlanta would like representatives from California to attend their conference. Each county can submit one name as a potential candidate to attend. Financial support for those selected to attend might be administered through the Office of Community Relations.

- Phyllis Iwasaki discussed the proposed allocations for RESS and TA funding. She noted a decrease of approximately $3.9 million and $1.3 million respectively for the coming year. The state has submitted public comments to ORR and final allocations are expected to be released in August. There was some concern among counties that their funding may decrease further if is determined that Los Angeles County's

caseload numbers are higher than the number submitted. Josie Marquez said she did not expect that to happen.

- Long Nguyen gave a review of the ORR staff visit to Sacramento County. Gayle Smith and Kathy Do visited seven program sites and met with SETA (Sacramento Employment and Training Agency), county welfare, and agency staffs. An important issue to be addressed is the problem of referrals from the county welfare office to SETA for the processing of refugee clients. ORR was very pleased with their visit and impressed with the county refugee program.

- Janet Sandlin stated that an ACL regarding new regulations on asylees will be sent out.

- Thuan Nguyen stated that there are 27 workshops presently planned for the Refugee Information Exchange Conference in August. The Women's Leadership Training Conference was attended by approximately 230 people. Thuan said she received a lot of positive feedback from the attendees. She wants to try to continue the conference annually but will need assistance in identifying locations that do not charge a fee for usage of their facility.

- Phyllis Iwasaki discussed the elderly discretionary grant. Local agencies have been appraised of the RPB's MOU with the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). A new monitoring tool is being developed that will improve reporting of CBO and AAA collaboration activities. The need for translated materials was also raised.

- Janet Sandlin reported that there are new updates on the RPB web site. Information is now available on the RPB Annual Report, Customer Survey, and Crime Prevention. There will also be a new page that lists the providers in each county.

- Long Nguyen raised the problem of refugee coding by the INS. Kim Chi Trieu said she would contact an INS representative to clarify the coding.

  John Tran reported on their successful Refugee Awareness Day. Approximately 400 people attended the festivities which included cultural shows and a variety of foods. He reported on the lengthy process of DMV applications for those refugees without a birth certificate.

- Josie Marquez reported that ORR will visit Los Angeles County during the week of July 24th.

- Karen Hart reported that ORR will visit San Francisco County in August. She stated that local providers need to get on the list to receive WIA (Workforce Investment Act) funds. San Francisco County needs a new leader for their forum meetings They are also planning to relocate their office in January of next year

- Bryan Nazereth reported on San Diego County's successful Refugee Awareness Day.

- Dolores Mejia stated that she will be having a meeting the following week to discuss program funding. Reduced funding may force her to cut services at a time when she is beginning to see progress in assisting hard to serve refugees. She is looking for funds to help new CBOs in getting started and will be applying for small grants to assist in this effort.

- Kim Chi Trieu reported that Santa Clara County's Job Fair was a big success. Nine hundred and seventy-eight people registered and 30 employers attended. The employers were very pleased with the result-- some noting that they hired many people on the spot. They also requested having 2 job fairs a year, but Kim Chi said that it would be very difficult to conduct another one.

- The next County Coordinators Meeting will be held at the Refugee Information Exchange Conference on **August 28th from 10:00 to 12:00.**