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Hispanic.Network@dhsosha.state.or.us

Hispanic Network  
Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2014

#### UPDATES

**New Chair/Co Chair:** Victor Salas, Washington County SSP, has replaced Valentino Correa as the Chair of the group. Marisol Escobar, Gresham SSP, is the new co chair.

**Statewide Diversity Conference:** Volunteers are needed to participate at the HispNet table during the Diversity Conference. The conference will be held in Salem on September 16 and 17. Volunteers are asked to sit at the vendor table and network with people at the conference. Volunteers are also asked to look at the HispNet website and brochure as this will tell you information that you may need to answer questions.

It was also clarified that if you are a volunteer at the table you are not taking up a slot at the diversity conference. There was confusion about this last year. Lisa has agreed to send an email out to all DM's letting them know that if someone is volunteering for the table that they are not taking a district slot.

If there are questions regarding the table or you would like to volunteer for a time, please get a hold of Valentino or Victor.

**Charter:** The HispNet Charter is complete! Please look for it on the website soon.

#### **Angelica Quintero: Child Welfare and International Issues**

Angelica presented the attached power point. She shared information about her role as ICC and the work she does to help Child Welfare workers across Oregon. A couple of important points from her presentation:

- DHS Child Welfare policy is not specific about returning children to the care of parent living in another country. The reason for this is that our reunification efforts are the same regardless of where the parent resides. Parents engage in services and have a home study completed so that we can assess their situation.
- Currently there are about 50-52 unaccompanied minors in Oregon but none of those minors are in DHS custody. The federal government is responsible for the children and is currently in the process of locating relatives pending immigration hearings.
- It is important to note that although a home study comes back from a foreign country recommending placement that does not mean that DHS will place the child. DHS and ultimately the court make the decision to place a child abroad.
- Child support payments can be sent to a foreign country. The parent would need to contact the US Embassy abroad and they in turn could forward the request to the right Child Support office.
- There is new policy that states that a step parent or the parent of a child's siblings is now able to be an adoptive resource.
- DHS Child Welfare only does adoptions with countries that have signed the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.
- There is no foster care or guardianship in other countries as there is no mechanism for DHS Child Welfare to monitor safety.
- Children in foster care are able to travel to other countries with their foster parents or relatives.
  - There is an approval process for this and Angelica must be notified of this at least 2-4 weeks before travel. There are many steps to follow and thus ample notice is important.
  - It's important to note that travel can be denied. It is required that staff look at the State Departments travel advisory website for any travel advisory warnings for the area being traveled to.
  - District Managers must also give their approval for travel.

When a child is placed with a parent in another country the DHS case closes on the date of placement. When a child is placed for adoption, the case stays open and is monitored by DIF, DHS and the court until the adoption is final.

- Relatives of children in care are able to be both a foster care placement resource and an adoptive resource even if they are not residing in Oregon lawfully.
- There is a criminal history check, training, and a home study just like with any other foster family.
- If a relative wants to be an adoptive resource there needs to be a staffing with Kathy Prouty. Some of the things considered are regarding the family's stability; what is the family's plan if they were to get deported; financial situation for the family, etc.
- If an undocumented relative in another states wants to adopt it is up to the other state on if they allow this or not.
- DIF is the social service agency in Mexico that DHS Child Welfare works with to get parents or adoptive home studies
- DHS has a process in place to establish paternity for alleged parents living in Mexico.



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### **Jose Ernesto: Consulado de Mexico**

Jose is currently working in the protection department at the Mexican Consulate, prior to that he worked in the corrections department.

- There are 75 Mexican Embassies around the world. The Mexican Embassy in the US is located in Washington DC.
- There are 96 Mexican Consular offices. The majority of those offices are located in the US. It is based on the population of citizens.
- The Portland Consulate office was established on July 15, 1996. The currently serve all of Oregon with the exception of Wallow, Baker, Union, and Malheur counties. Those counties are served by the Boise office.
- If by chance to call or go to the wrong consular office, they will refer you to the right office.
- Each office has a head consular that serves anywhere between 4-7 years.
- The Consulate is a mediator between DHS and DIF.
- It's important to remember that DHS's request goes to the consulate. The Consulate will then send the request to Mexico City, who then sends the request to the state who then sends it to the local offices. This is why it takes awhile to get a response at times.

- Parent search requests:
  - Need Full name. First, Middle, Last and second last name.
  - Place of Birth
  - Date of birth. Remember to always spell out the month. For example 12-Aug-1997 instead of 8/12/97.
  - If all of the above is not complete, Ernesto will hold the request until all is received.
  
- Ernesto will do an initial search of their data base. If something is found he will notify the worker.
- The majority of the services provided by the Consulate are free.



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## **Oscar Herrera- OEMS (handout?)**

Oscar did a brief overview of his position and what it entails.

There was a discussion around upcoming bilingual testing for workers who are currently receiving the bilingual differential. The plan is to roll out the testing within the next 6 months. There will be pre testing, trainings in branch, glossary of terms to help with studying and services available to staff to help with studying. The hope is that the role of workers who are bilingual will be better defined with the testing. There will be more information to come in the upcoming months.

It is very important that workers not use Google translate tool. Often times the translation is incorrect and workers are not catching this. This is also a liability issue. Please let all bilingual workers know this information.

## **Lisa Lewis:**

The remainder of the afternoon was spent on an activity where the group broke up into smaller groups. The subcommittee then worked with the smaller groups to come up with goals for the group to work on this coming year. As a larger group, we all had the opportunity to go around and look

at the goals and vote for the ones we felt were most important. Lisa will be typing up the goals and sending out to everyone.

Meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: November 13, 2014