

Refugee Child Welfare Advisory Committee
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
July 2, 2014

Attendees: Vesna Vila, Oscar Herrera, Sokho Eath, Neeru Kanal, Angelica Quintero and Laila Hajoo by phone

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review & Approve meeting notes of April 2, 2014
3. Neeru provided a brief update: Over the last 5 or 6 years, UAC's are entering the U.S. in higher numbers. It was 14,000, then 25,000 and this year it is already at 52,000 and anticipate it will be 60,000 before the end of the year.

The budget is very stretched and monies allocated for the refugee programs may actually be going to assist with UAC's. Services for refugees such as cash assistance, medical assistance is still available. However, social services, and employment services have been reduced by 58%.

Other discussions are occurring in respect to how, when or whether or not DHS becomes involved with UAC's. A Latino community stakeholder meeting will occur with CW Director, Lois Day. Ideas and concerns expressed at this meeting will be considered as DHS makes decisions.

Refugee Stakeholder Committee Update: The DHS Refugee program and community partners, have made an effort to start the Refugee Stakeholder Committee again. Efforts in the past were not successful however the group has started up again. New people have been attending and are committed. In a way to keep the momentum, the group conducted a needs assessment and will take a few of the ideas and work on them. Three subgroups have been developed in the areas of Elder foster care, mental health, and education. The committee has met three times so far.

It was expressed that community leaders unanimously are concerned with issues/barriers that prevent families from becoming self-sufficient and mental health is a big concern. A contract with Multnomah Mental Health allows for services to be provided.

Foster Parent Training to Refugee families in D2: Kellie Barber and others met with Djimet Dogo in an effort to develop a plan to provide foster parent training to families so that they can be available to provide foster care. There are three dates set to provide information and training. This is in response to a request made by the African communities.

4. **Oscar Herrera** shared that his position has been more defined within OEMS as the Equity Manager. Essentially it is about looking at access of services for families. Assessing disparity in regard to why families may not access services due to lack of respect, staff attitudes. Forums are being developed and repeated across the state. A calendar is also being developed that will track forums and other community engagement activities.

OEMS continues to work on work force development; language access and policy that mandate access in the language preferred by the individual and testing the proficiency of bilingual staff.

The Diversity Conference will be on September 16th and 17th. Attendance of staff is based on the number of slots allotted. However, 2 weeks before the conference, registration will be open so that staff can use the slots not being used by others.

5. RCWAC website

<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/Pages/RCW-Advisory-Committee.aspx>

Adjourn

Next quarterly meeting is scheduled on October 1, 2014