**Minutes of the San Diego Refugee Forum Meeting**

Date: Tuesday, August 16, 2022

Location: Zoom meeting

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Attendees:

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| Abel Mucyo, Upwardly Global |
| Alexis Burnstan, UCSD TASET Project |
| Aliaa Al-Tabatabaee, Somali Family Service |
| Alison Borel, Alliance for African Assistance |
| Allie Clerget, Home for Refugees |
| Ana Morales |
| Anchalee Gaffney, IRC Community Sponsorship |
| Anne Fosselman, El Cajon Valley HS Community Ctr |
| Annie Dunlap, COSD Community Health |
| Anthony Dramani, UPAC |
| Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary |
| Brett Hall, CHIP Community Health Improvement Program, SD County Suicide Prevention Council |
| Carol Crisp, PCG |
| Carol Lewis, El Cajon Collaborative |
| Cipriano Vargas, Office of Sup. Lawson-Remer |
| Claire Enemark, United Women of East Africa, SD Refugee Communities Coalition |
| Clint Carney, Survivors of Torture Intl |
| Clyde Williams, A Better Life Together |
| Constantin Zand |
| COSD Office of Border Health |
| Cynthia To, SD County Community Health |
| Daria Tomsky, IRC Youth Program |
| Ejazul Haq Aziz, Somali Bantu |
| Elissa Hill, Somali Family Service |
| Emily Stocking, SAY San Diego |
| Farida Erikat, PANA |
| Francis, Somali Bantu Assn. |
| Frank Pancucci, SDWP |
| Giselle Barajas, Jewish Family Service, Resettlement |
| Graciela Mendoza, CDPH Binational Border Health |
| Hassan Abdirahman, Somali Family Service |
| Hawi Abdulkadir, Somali Family Service |
| Henri Migala, International Relief Teams |
| Iliana Salas, Crawford Community Connection |
| Jean Saito, First 5 First Steps |
| Jesse Daner |
| Jessica Hernandez, East Region Adult Ed |
| Jessie Du Pre, SDUSD Children & Youth in Transition |
| Juan Estrada, Molina Healthcare, Community Engmt |
| Judy Amaro, PCG |
| Karina Ortega, IRC ESAVN |
| Kathleen Dang, Rep. Jacobs |
| Kathryn LaPointe, Church of the Brethren |
| Khatira Sarferaz, SDRCC, UWEAST Health Worker |
| Kristen Lowther, SAY San Diego |
| Lauren DeVietro |
| LB |
| Lenda Hanna, SD County Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs |
| M Mustafa Faizi, Somali Family Service |
| Magdalene Skinner, First 5 First Steps |
| Marc Marconi, CDPH |
| Martha Salmeron, Crawford Community Connection SAY San Diego |
| Mary Joy Cunningham, IRC MSW Intern |
| Minda Schweizer, Home for Refugees USA |
| Mireya Mateo Gomez, CDPH Binational Border Health |
| Moyosore Buari, United Women of East Africa, SD Refugee Communities Coalition |
| Navid Zamani, License to Freedom |
| Naz Ali, CDSS/RPB |
| Nazira Adieva, County Office of Equitable Communities CAP |
| Neil Hovland, SD Unified School District Family Engagement |
| Officer Homayoun Nabizadeh, SDPD Comm. Relations |
| Peaceful, UPAC |
| Rahmo Abdi, PANA |
| Rayan Kaskos, IRC, Employment |
| Renae Bryant |
| Renee Nasori, Grossmont College |
| Riley Pinto |
| Rita Shamoon, CALWORKS job developer |
| Rola Kojok, COSD Community Health |
| Rose Pelligrini, Safe Families for Children |
| Ross Fackrell, IRC Resettlement |
| Sandra Candler, FACE Dept., Cajon Valley Schools |
| Sol Godinez, IRC Emergency Resources Coordinator |
| Suzie Saephan, CDSS/RPB |
| Tania Rivera, IRC Emergency Resources Coordinator |
| Waheed Haidari, CEO Afghan Community Culture Center |
| Yama Meerzada, CDPH Binational Border Health |
| Zoe Murphy, IRC Resettlement |

**Meeting facilitator**: Hassan Abdirahman, Chair

**1. Greeting and introduction of attendees** Hassan Abdirahman, Chair

79 attending, including 18 new

**2. Treasurer’s report** Carol Lewis, Treasurer

The Forum welcomes and thanks two new members: American Red Cross and Home for Refugees USA. It’s getting to be late in the year, but we are still encouraging organizations and agencies to become members of the Forum. Members are eligible to vote in Forum elections and decisions and to run for office. They provide funding for Forum task force projects and add to the strength of the Forum as an advocate for refugees. Members are listed on the SDRF website with a link to their organization.

This year we are making it easier to join by once again offering the option of mailing in a check (see membership form at website). You can also pay online through Paypal on the SDRF website <http://www.sdrefugeeforum.org/members.html>

You can send checks to: Carol Lewis, Little House Family Resources, 131 Avocado Ave., El Cajon CA 92020. Fees are $35 annually for individuals/small agencies and $70 for organizations. Membership forms can be found online at http://www.sdrefugeeforum.org/



Carol can provide an invoice if you want one. Contact Carol at [carol.lewis@elcajoncollaborative.org](mailto:carol.lewis@elcajoncollaborative.org)

**3. Resettlement updates** Lenda Hanna, San Diego County Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

The report on the county’s July arrivals is being prepared and will be distributed soon.

Agencies and advocates are invited to attend an information-gathering session being held by County HHSA Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs on August 24. It will help OIRA learn more about the needs and priorities of the community. A flyer for the session will be sent out to the SDRF distribution list. For more information please email: hhsa.communities@sdcounty.ca.gov

**4. Task force updates** Task Force Chairs/representatives

Employment

Carol Crisp and Renee Nasori reported:

The Employment Task Force will join forces with Grossmont College in sponsoring a job fair event on Wednesday, October 26. Interpreters will be available. More information on this will follow. There will also be a refugee job fair in the spring.

Grossmont College’s job skills training is open to the public. Its aim is to prepare job seekers for employment.

Rayan Kaskos of IRC reported:

IRC is working with Welcome US in planning a job fair September 9-10. Transportation and interpreters will be available. Flyer coming out next week.

Health

Cynthia To reported:

The Medi-Cal Registration maps for the Mid-City/City Heights and El Cajon areas have been updated. They identify service providers that can help clients get set up with Medi-Cal, and are accompanied by a chart listing services the agencies provide. The various agencies offer capability in over a dozen languages. See the SDRF website Resources tab to see the new maps <http://www.sdrefugeeforum.org/medi-cal-registration-maps.html>

Mental Health

Claire Enemark reported:

The task force has not met for a couple of months. Their priority continues to be their main project of creating a resource list of culturally competent mental health providers. More members are needed to carry out projects. Contact Bethlehem Wolkeba, bethlehemw@jfssd.org

Resources

The Forum website’s Resource tab is a great place for task forces to post information they would like to share with the community. It really lends itself to this function and is or will be used by the Health, Asylum, Mental Health task forces and other for this purpose. If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see up there, contact Bob Walsh at [bwalsh48@cox.net](mailto:bwalsh48@cox.net)

Bob announced that a list of our valued task force volunteers is forthcoming, and thanked them for the important work they do for the community on behalf of the Forum.

**5. Presentation 1: Home for Refugees USA**  Minda Schweizer, Executive Director

Home for Refugees USA is a faiath-based organization based in Orange County CA. They are active in the Los Angeles Refugee Forum ane would like to expand their activity into San Diego.

The organization seeks to establish collaborative relationships between faith groups and community groups and refugees to help refugees feel at home in their new communities. We do this through training and coaching Community Sponsorship Teams, which we call Home Teams. Home for Refugees USA partners with Refugee Resettlement Agencies and community or academic organizations to resettle refugees. Our purpose is to offer support to help refugees relieve their sense of loss and help them regain independent and self-sufficient living as they create their new home in the US.

Home Teams help refugees set up their new home, access public benefits, find doctors, enroll children in school, facilitate job searches, and carry out other common resettlement tasks. They aim to promote friendship with the refugees they are helping.

HFR partners with resettlement agencies in assisting refugee clients. They also are working to sponsor Ukrainian families through Community Sponsorship Hub Sponsor Circles, Welcome.US, and the U4U Program through the U.S, State Department.

For more information, contact Minda Schweizer at [m.schweizer@hrfusa.org](mailto:m.schweizer@hrfusa.org)   
Website: www.homeforrefugeesusa.org

**Presentation 2: Vaccination Partnership Programs** Marc Marconi, CA Dept. of Public Health

Marc is the Regional Program Manager, Border Region, of the state COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. He presented and explained two vaccination programs being offered in California by the California Dept. of Public Health that involve partnering with local organizations to support COVID-9 vaccination.

1. Neighborhood Partnership Program

This is a project of the state COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. Its purpose is to support neighborhood and grassroots organizations in their efforts to provide messaging to the community about COVID-19 vaccinations by offering them small contracts ($1,000-$5,000). It aims to help groups with the COVID-19 vaccination outreach or education work they may be doing or might like to take on. Its focus is on messaging on safe practices for the prevention of COVID-19 and on the importance of vaccinations.

NPP funding is available for projects through the end of this year only, and all projects should be applied to by November 1st, 2022. Unlike a grant, the funding cannot be applied retroactively, and projects must be applied to and approved prior to implementation.

Eligible organizations include:

* Groups that serve as trusted messengers in their communities
* Community-based organizations
* Faith-based organizations
* Neighborhood associations
* Service clubs

Required supporting documents:

* W9
* Business license or 501(c) IRS letter
* Insurance certificate

Examples of community projects:

Table

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NPP funding applications should be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to your anticipated project start date. Funding should be spent on a project that falls under one of the following 3 priority areas: COVID-19 vaccination awareness raising, COVID-19 vaccination and creativity projects, or COVID-19 vaccine clinic support.

Let Marc know if you have any questions. He hopes that organizations will apply to the NPP. For specific questions on the NPP, please direct them to: [partnership@rhainc.com](mailto:partnership@rhainc.com) .

2. Vaccination Clinic

This project is aimed at extending vaccination services into underserved areas of the state. Local organizations can apply to be a host site for a vaccination clinic. Mobile vaccination units may also be requested. Host sites provide space, basic site facilities and parking for 7-10 hours. They help with promotion and provide for interpretation needs as appropriate. Clinic teams provide chairs, tables, and signage. They are fully staffed with nurses and offer Moderna vaccines. There is an expectation that a minimum of 50 vaccinations would be administered at the clinic.

Another resource we have to offer with COVID-19 vaccinations is a free mobile COVID-19 vaccination opportunity known as the Mobile Clinic Blitz (MCB). These mobile vaccination units offer free COVID-19 vaccinations to eligible community members 6 months old and above. This includes first, second, booster, and pediatric doses. We not only provide the medical staff, vaccines, and all needed items, we will also look to offer a free food truck. The free food truck is an additional incentive to vaccination that offers free food to all community members who receive a COVID-19 vaccination at that clinic, that persons immediate family, and clinic staff. We also will provide phone banking support to the immediate area to help book appointments.

Additionally, through our partnership with the BIDS program at the Office of Binational Border Health (OBBH), we may be able to offer $20-$25 gift card incentives to individuals who received a COVID-19 vaccination, as well as testing services. These extra incentives are not guaranteed, but we do our best to provide them when we can.

There are some caveats in order to qualify for and request these mobile units. These include:

* Clinic must be at least 6 hours in length, 8 hours max
* We can do a 5 hour clinic under special circumstances only
* Not all zip codes are eligible so the requesting organization should verify with me directly if their zip code qualifies first
* Currently, we can only schedule these through September 30th, 2022, and dates to book up
* Host should work with me directly to identify an available date prior to requesting
* A minimum of 50 COVID-19 vaccinations of any kind should be expected to be administered
* 250 square feet of indoor space for the mobile vaccination team to utilize
* The teams can conduct an outdoor clinic but have the right to cancel, with or without notice, due to heat or weather.
* Access to WiFi and electricity requested
* Access to ADA accessible restrooms required
* An on-site point of contact for day of clinic and a logistics point of contact prior to clinic
* These can be the same person

If there is interest in hosting an MCB the host should contact me at least 3 weeks prior to the proposed clinic date to verify zip code eligibility and date availability. Our mobile vaccination teams are shared throughout Southern California and dates do fill up. All 7 days of the week are available from 9am-8pm.

Information on the two programs was distributed by Marc to the SDRF distribution list on August 16 after the meeting. Please see the informational flyers disseminated. For more information on the NPP and to apply, go to VA58partnerships.com. For questions, contact Partnership@rhainc.com. For more information or to submit an application to be a Vaccination Clinic site host, contact Marc R. Marconi,

Regional Program Manager, Border Region, COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force at 619-240-0928 or

Marc.Marconi@CDPH.CA.Gov

**6. Community announcements**

Rahmo Abdi, PANA

PANA is having a tenant protection Ordinance (TPO) rally on Saturday, September 17th from 12:00pm to 3:00pm. For more details, contact Rahmo Abdi at rahmo@panasd.org .

Brett Hall, CHIP Community Health Improvement Program, SD County Suicide Prevention Council

- Suicide Prevention Council monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 23rd from 10:00 am-11:30 am via Zoom. Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86245631916?pwd=Z0h2TEtndFY0Mno5M1QzdGp4eWU3dz09 Meeting ID: 862 4563 1916, Passcode: spc2022

- CHIP QPR Training will be held on Friday, August 26th from 10:30am-12:00 pm via Zoom. Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0oc-msqDoqG9ZR0LEiPgJVeEq6Yzy2WC28

Henri Migala, International Relief Teams

I am helping East County Magazine, which gets 10 million hits each month, to pursue a grant to report, over a year, on the issues related to refugees in San Diego. We need information for the grant, such as: are we (the US, state, county) handling the refugee resettlement process correctly? What could be improved? What would it take to "fix" it? If you have thoughts or ideas, please contact me. Henri Migala 619.403.6295 hmigala@hotmail.com

**7. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the July 19 minutes were approved.

**Adjournment**: Hassan Abdirahman, Chair, 11:30 a.m.

**Next Meeting**: September 20, 2022

Minutes recorded by Bob Walsh, Secretary