

San Diego Refugee Form Meeting Tuesday, 7/21/20 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

The meeting was held virtually via Zoom. Hosted by Mohammed Tuama, SDRF Chair.

Attendees:

Mohammed Tuama, SDRF Chair
Bob Walsh, SDRF Vice-Chair
Ross Fackrell, IRC and SDRF Treasurer
Abdi Abdillahi, County Refugee Coordinator
Carol Lewis
Elizabeth Jackson
JoAnn Legaspi
Nadia Moshirian Binderup
C Crisp
Vernita Gutierrez, Planned Parenthood
Jane Register
Tala Al-Rousan, UCSD
Giselle
Jessica Hernandez
Lizzie Edwards
Alexis Burnstan, UCSD
Jessica Mier, Representative Susan Davis's office
Lizzie Edwards
Nuny Cabanting
Sheryl Ashley, Cuyamaca College CalWorks
Nao Kabashima, Karen Association of San Diego
J. Schroer
Ann Vilmenay, County of San Diego
Sheryl Ashley
Monica Melgoza, County of San Diego Refugee Services

1. SDRF membership and financials

- No new members have joined recently. The ongoing virus situation may be a factor.
- Other: Forum Secretary Julie Germain has moved from Alliance for African Assistance to another job and has resigned as Forum secretary. The Forum officers agreed that the position would be filled at the next election.

2. Task Force updates

There were no updates from task forces: Advocacy, Asylum seekers, Domestic violence, Employment, Health. It was asked whether the task forces have been meeting. Mohammed responded that he is contacting them to find out.

3. Resettlement updates

Resettlement agencies:

- No representatives attending from Alliance for African Assistance, Catholic Charities.

- IRC

June: 4 refugee arrivals

July: 0

August: 14 expected, all SIV

- JFS

June: 1 refugee arrival, Afghanistan

July: 15 SIV, Afghanistan

Abdi, SD County:

With flight cancellations due to the virus, no more refugee arrivals are expected until the end of the year. There may still be Haitians and Cubans coming.

Summary of arrivals for San Diego County

<u>Totals</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>YTD FFY 2019-20</u>
Primary refugees	6	124
Secondary refugees	1	1
Asylees	0	19
Cuban/Haitians	4	272
Trafficking Victims	0	7
Special Immigrant Visa (SIV)	1	222

3. World Refugee Day

The WRD video, pulled together in a very short timeframe, was a success and well received by viewers. Many thanks to those who contributed and to all participants. Facebook shows 6,300 views, and there were more views on its postings on other agencies' websites. It can be viewed at the SDRF website and Facebook page.

Gift cards were mailed out to 30 recipients, who called in from as far away as Texas and Florida. No more e-mails are pending. If anyone has related expenses, please contact Ross.

4. The Refugee Day video was shown.

5. Update on the COVID-19 situation

Dr. Sayone Thihalolipavan, medical consultant for SD County Health and Human Services Agency, gave an update on the COVID-19 situation.

The virus is currently raging throughout the world. California is much affected, including increases in San Diego County. 24,000+ cases countywide, close to 500 deaths. Last Friday saw a record number of new cases. San Diego County is on the state's watch list. Schools will not be reopened.

One consequence is that other illnesses such as cancer could also be a concern as people are not getting regular medical services because of the pandemic. Persons who are ill with conditions other than COVID-19 should contact their doctor.

In California, work on a vaccine progresses. As for testing, there are challenges. Those who have symptoms should call their provider about being tested, or they may contact the County. Go to coronavirus-sd.com or 211sandiego.org to find the nearest county or state testing site. If no insurance, call 2-1-1. If someone has insurance (Medical) but doesn't have or doesn't remember their provider, they can call their insurance plan to get a doctor assigned.

As a community, we need to take public health measures. You can be contagious without having symptoms. Everyone should wear face coverings. Stay home if sick, avoid gatherings outside the home. Wash hands, wear face covering, keep physical distance is the only way to stop the spread of the virus. If you test positive but have no symptoms, you should stay home about 10 days. Also isolate within the family, separate from others. The County also has hotels where people can separate from others.

See County resources at coronavirus-sd.com, information and materials in many languages. And for other guidances.

The County needs contact tracers who are culturally sensitive to represent all communities, so that information flow is confidential, private, and does not affect immigration or asylum status. Please share job postings for tracers with our refugee community.

Several communities are more likely to be affected, especially the refugee community, who are engaged in essential businesses and service jobs, and are not able to work from home. If their work is affected, they will have trouble with expenses such as paying rent. There is no virus data specifically on the refugee community category, but data by area and zip code can give an indication.

6. Announcements:

Carmen of La Maestra announced the availability of services: financial assistance, and immigration assistance. Telephone: 619-972-4185

Renee of Grossmont College announced an Adult Reentry to Education event to be held Tuesday, August 4, 4-6pm. For exploring educational options and opportunities at the school. Summer 21st Century Skills workshops are still being held. Contact Renee at Grossmont College for course registration, etc.

Mohammed Tuama stated that, with the current virus situation, the Middle East Community has created a Facebook page for information sharing. It has 20,000 followers.

7. Closing

- The meeting minutes for June were approved.
- The next meeting will be held Tuesday August 18.
- The meeting adjourned at 12:00.

(Minutes taken by Bob Walsh)