**San Mateo County Immigrant Forum Meeting Minutes**

**December 21, 2023**

**In Attendance:**

Judith Guerrero, Coastside Hope

Sarah Dewitt-Feldman, Immigrant Services

Carolina Salinas, Immigrant Services

Adriana Perez Macias, Family Partner of Edgewood

Alison Kamhi, ILRC

Cara Galvis, Job Train

Ari Garcia, Puente

Corina Rodriguez, Puente

Iliana Solis, BHRS Family Partner - Shasta Clinic

Sylvia Navarro, Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County- LIBRE Project

Vanessa Castillo, CORA

Maru Rosas

Jill, Red Cross

Abdul Azim Zaher, California Department of Social Services

Emily Beach, JobTrain

Niambi Clay, SMC Office of Education

Jennifer Castro-Lara, Office of Community Affairs

**Welcome and Introductions**: Sarah Dewitt-Feldman

* 2024 forums to be held from 10:00am-12:00pm virtually (for now) on the following dates: 1/18, 2/15, 3/21, 4/18, 5/16, 6/20, 7/18, 8/15, 9/19, 10/17, 11/21 and 12/19
* Survey to help us improve and work on meaningful programming for 2024.

[Immigrant Forum Feedback - Google Forms](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12jrlpp4w2tycWWXhyRx8BAafF1gVEKj6Dzz884mT-xY/edit)

* Some feedback we have received so far includes How to help immigrants be job ready, how to find and retain employment, learn more about the safety net programs (Medi-Cal/CalFresh), learn more about local initiatives and members like virtual meetings better for their schedules.

**USCIS Updates**: Sai not available for December meeting

**Immigrant Legal Resource Center Updates:** Alison Kamhi

Congressional Level:

* Many have heard about the attacks on Asylum Protections at the border.
* ILRC understand the harm that these attacks can create.
* Andrew will give us the most up to date information at next month’s forum meeting. If you have community members asking you to help them with their immigration questions, best practice is to refer them to seek a legal provider to get a legal consultation. [The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County (legalaidsmc.org)](https://www.legalaidsmc.org/); [CRISP Collaborative — The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County (legalaidsmc.org)](https://www.legalaidsmc.org/crisp-collaborative) please see bottom of the page for numbers to contact AAPI Legal Outreach, Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigrant Services SMC, Coastside Hope, CLSEPA, ILRC, II Bay Area, La Raza Centro Legal
* There are lots of proposals to limit entry in the Southern border, to limiting asylum requests.
* For more on this update: [Biden Administration’s Willingness to Impose Harsher Restrictions on Immigrants to Gain Foreign Aid is Unconscionable | Immigrant Legal Resource Center | ILRC](https://www.ilrc.org/biden-admin-to-restrict-immigrants-for-foreign-aid)
* Other articles on this topic: [White House open to new border expulsion law, mandatory detention and increased deportations in talks with Congress - CBS News](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-white-house-congress-border-security-detention-deportation/)

Texas (Operation Lone Star):

* Border policing program created by Governor Greg Abbot, targets anyone who is suspected to be a migrant to be arrested and prosecuted.
* SB4 (3) is effective as of 2/6/24 which is a bill to increase the minimum prison sentence for the state offense in “smuggling of persons” to 10 years.
* SB4 (4) is effective as of 3/5/23 which is a bill that introduces three new state offenses; 1. Illegal entry from a foreign nation, 2. Illegal reentry by certain aliens and 3. Refusal to comply with an order to return to a foreign nation. It allows any peace officer to profile and detain individuals whom they suspect have entered the state between points of entry. The bill also gives magistrate court judges and criminal courts the authority to order individuals to return to a foreign nation and prosecute those who refuse to comply.
* This is a state law in Texas only, not in California but something to be mindful in what is happening in Texas.
* For more on Operation Lone Star: [Home | Endlonestar](https://www.endlonestar.com/) ,

 [ILRC Launches Travel Advisory Map in Texas Showing Which Counties Have Implemented Anti-Immigrant Policies | Immigrant Legal Resource Center | ILRC](https://www.ilrc.org/ilrc-launches-travel-advisory-map-texas-showing-which-counties-have-implemented-anti-immigrant)

**Farmworkers Advisory Commission:** Judith Guerrero, Chair, Executive Director Coastside Hope

* Farmworkers Advisory Commission promotes program and policies that address the unmet needs of farmworkers in San Mateo County.
* The commission has 10 members: **four** farmer workers, **three** community-based partners/organizations, **one** family member of a farmworker, **one** member who works in the agriculture industry and **one** San Mateo County Agricultural Committee member.
* First commission with Spanish to English interpretation.
* The commissions priorities established this year: Access to quality health care, educating/bring awareness to farmworkers basis worker rights and awareness on housing to the Southcoast (Pescadero).
* It is a commission to meet the farmworkers where they are and help them navigate the questions that they see where they work/live.
* Commission meets every other month.
* More information or previous minutes can be found here [Farmworker Advisory Commission | County of San Mateo, CA (smcgov.org)](https://www.smcgov.org/ceo/farmworker-advisory-commission)

**Immigrant Services updates: Carolina Salinas**

* Our office will be closed from 12/25/2023-1/2/2024.
* Please take some time to take the survey if you haven’t already. Please also share with other colleagues that attend the forum, so that we can better serve you in the new year!
* Please be aware of the Medi-Cal expansion toolkit and the new rules for all undocumented San Mateo County residents.

**Agency Updates:**

* Jill, Red Cross: Red Cross can help families who become separated at the borders relocate with Red Cross Restoring Family-International Services [Reconnecting Families | American Red Cross](https://www.redcross.org/about-us/our-work/international-services/reconnecting-families.html)

Contact for more info: Juliana.russellbustos@redcross.org

* Corina Rodriguez, Puente: Farmworker Convention March 17, 2024! More info to be announced, they will be featuring the great Dolores Huerta