

San Mateo County Immigrant Forum
Meeting Notes
11/18/2021

1. Welcome & Introductions: Jennifer Llamas

- a. Thank you to all for joining us on Zoom. The Immigrant Forum will be held virtually until further notice

2. Refugee Resettlement Overview – Afghan Arrivals: Kathy Yang, CA State Refugee Coordinator, CDSS Office of Equity, Immigrant Integration Branch

- a. Overview of the resettlement process
 - California is one of the top 3 states housing refugees
 - World's biggest refugee crisis includes the countries of Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia
- b. Resettlement partners, including federal partners (e.g., Office of Refugee Resettlement), local resettlement agencies, refugee-serving non-profits, and county welfare departments
- c. Refugee Programs including Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Support Services, and Trafficking and Crime Victims Assistance Program (TCVAP), among others
- d. Afghan Resettlement, with greatest impact to Sacramento, San Diego, Stanislaus, Los Angeles, and Bay Area
 - Evacuations commenced July 30, 2021
- e. Challenges including limited housing options, delayed access to public benefits and school enrollment, and free immigration legal services
 - Emerging best practices include support from community and various government/nonprofit/philanthropic agencies, culturally responsive and in-language services/supports, and the activation of volunteer programs
 - Public benefit eligibility for Afghan arrivals – all eligible to receive federal and state benefits
- f. Resources available on Afghan Response dedicated website: www.cdss.ca.gov/afghan-arrival-response

3. USCIS Updates: Nina Sachdev, Community Relations Officer, USCIS

- a. Afghan arrivals information: <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/information-for-afghans>
 - Afghan nationals paroled into the United States on or after July 30, 2021 through Sept. 20, 2022, due to the humanitarian crisis:
 - Fee exemption for employment authorization, Form I-765, in eligibility category (c)(11)
 - Fee exemption for adjustment of status, Form I-485, based on Special Immigrant and biometrics and any associated Form I-601, Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility: <https://www.uscis.gov/green-card-for-an-afghan-employed-behalf-us-government>

- Biometrics for Afghan nationals will receive priority scheduling at application support centers to submit their biometrics
- Streamlined process for
 - Employment authorization, Form I-765
 - Adjustment of Status for Special Immigrants and associated waiver form, I-601
 - Asylum - The Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act includes a provision, specifically Section 2502(c), requiring USCIS to complete expeditious processing of asylum applications filed by Afghan nationals paroled into the United States on or after July 31, 2021. This includes conducting the initial affirmative asylum interview within 45 days of filing and, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, completing the final administrative asylum adjudication within 150 days of filing
- b. Reminder for Afghans who have approved I-360s or I-485s to update their address
 - Highly recommend updating the address online on uscis.gov "[change your address](#)", instead of mailing a paper AR-11
- c. T-visa, Human Trafficking updates to the policy manual: <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-3-part-b>
- d. The USCIS Contact Center Tip Sheet: <https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter>
- e. Reminder about local webinars and Naturalization Interview Prep Session every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month

4. Legal Updates: Alison Kamhi, Supervising Attorney, ILRC

- a. California invested \$20 million to community colleges for free legal services to undocumented students
 - This will help about 70,000 students
- b. Open for Comments:
 - [DACA NPRM](#) – comments were due November 29 to note how DACA program can be strengthened
 - [ILRC Alert](#)
 - [ILRC Crimes template](#)
 - [ILRC Organizational Comment](#)
- c. [Family reunification taskforce and application](#)
 - Biden Administration put a taskforce together to try to find family members separated at the border
- d. [Protected Areas memo](#)
 - "To the fullest extent possible" no enforcement action near protected areas
 - Includes schools, medical facilities, places of worship, places where children gather, social services institutions, disaster / emergency relief sites, funeral/other observance, protest
 - Limited exceptions on a case by case basis for national security threats, imminent harm, no safe alternative
 - One place not included is courthouses
 - [NILC Fact Sheet](#)
- e. BBB Act Passes the House

- The House has passed the reconciliation act with the immigration provisions intact – this includes parole program for up to 8 million people who can show they've been here since 1/1/2011. It will be a 5-year parole, allowed to be renewed once, until 9/30/2031
- The bill now moves to the Senate where it will likely see changes and Dems hope to pass it before the end of the calendar year

f. Q/A

Q: How long is it taking to process U visa or family petition applications?

A: There is a huge backlog, but there is backlog reduction funding and Bona Fide Determination which can provide people with employment authorization

5. SMC Strong Micro Food Grant Opportunity: Saba Bokharey, Management Analyst, County Manager's Office

- a. The Micro Food Grant Opportunity aims to help micro food businesses that have not received any assistance from the County Covid-19 relief programs in the past 12 months
- b. Application Evaluation Process:
 - Complete pre-applications (will be evaluated and determined for eligibility by geographic region)
 - Eligible pre-applications will be put into a pool (for selection by lottery)
 - Selected businesses will be contacted by County staff (for documentation & final determination of eligibility and certification by the evaluation committee)
 - Fully approved businesses will be provided to the San Mateo Credit Union Community Fund for disbursement of funds
 - Incomplete applications will NOT be processed, and ineligible applications will NOT be considered
- c. Pre-Application Opens on Friday, November 29th at 8:00 am
- d. Categories of Potential Applicants:
 - \$2,500 – cottage food operations
 - \$5,000 – caterers, food trucks and food carts
 - \$10,000 – commissaries or incubator kitchens
- e. What Types of Businesses DO NOT Qualify for the Grant?
 - The applicant's establishment has received or been approved for a grant from any of the following programs:
 - Small business relief program managed by Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, approved by the Board of Supervisors on October 20, 2020 (Resolution 077791)
 - San Mateo County Strong Fund Small Business Grant administered by the Community Fund, approved by the Board of Supervisors on November 10, 2020 (Resolution 077828)
- f. Q/A

Q: What is a cottage food operator?

A: Baking out of home, providing goods like jams, honey, or teas

Q: How do you define Microbusiness?

A: Small business operating out of home, food truck, or large kitchen being rented out

6. Choose Local SMC App, Amada Reyes, City Success Manager, Colu

- a. Choose Local San Mateo County is San Mateo County's new mobile app that engages the community and rewards users with "SMC Points", the county's new reward point system
 - Launched November 8, 2021
 - First 700 people to download and sign up get \$10 in app
- b. Gives businesses an exciting new way to attract more customers and increase revenues, while creating a more vibrant and connected San Mateo County
- c. Incentivizes resident to support and buy in local business
 - Get points when you shop local
 - \$1 = 1Point
 - Refer a friend, get extra \$10
 - Free to businesses, County is covering costs
- d. Q/A
 - Q: How long will the app be available?
 - A: There is no end date
 - Q: What kind of outreach methods are you doing?
 - A: Ambassadors are on the ground letting businesses know about the program
 - Q: Do you have to have all the points to pay for the whole transaction?
 - A: No, points are like a gift card

7. Office of Community Affairs Updates

- a. San Mateo County Sheriff no longer responding to ICE inmate transfer requests
- b. The Office of Community Affairs has been continuing our Spotlight Series event on the San Mateo County Facebook

8. Agency Update Roundtable

- a. **Oasis Legal Services:** received funding to provide free services directly to San Mateo County
- b. **Multicultural Institute:** 24 people attended the last vax clinic; upcoming fundraiser on 12/10/21 – *An Evening of Gratitude*
- c. **SMC Libraries:** in-person programming and ESL services
- d. **Catholic Charities:** New consultation phone line 650-720-8430; only taking affirmative cases, not removal defense
- e. **BHRS:** ACCESS hotline is taking 2-3 days to get back to people; Parent Cafes continue in Spanish twice a month in San Mateo and the Coastsides