# San Mateo County Immigrant Forum

**Meeting Notes**

**9/21/2023**

1. **Welcome & Introductions: Carolina Salinas**
   1. Thank you to all for joining us on Zoom. The Immigrant Forum will be held virtually until further notice.
   2. Happy Hispanic/Latino/a/x Heritage Month! Participants shared favorite Hispanic Heritage Month traditions and celebrations.
   3. Present at today’s meeting:
      1. Carolina Salinas, OCA
      2. Sarah Feldman, OCA
      3. Jesse Castro, USCIS
      4. Nicoletta Kelleher, BHRS ODE
      5. Emily Beach, Job Train
      6. Sharon Ranals, City of SSF
      7. Nimsi Garcia, Cañada College
      8. Megan Gosch, OCA
      9. Monserrat Garcia Juarez, IIBA
      10. Emely Garcia, Catholic Charities
      11. Vanessa Castillo, CORA
      12. Romina Kim, KARA
      13. Ligia Andrade Zuniga, SMUHSD
      14. Alison Kamhi, ILRC
      15. Martin Marquez, Skyline College
      16. Sharon Ranals, City of SSF
      17. Gloria Cahuich Gonzales, SMC Health
      18. Stephanie Perez, Catholic Charities
      19. Lisa Marie Sparks
      20. Josue Revolorio, Multicultural Institute
      21. Lianna Chen ,CCS
      22. Niambi Clay, SMC Office of Education
      23. Iliana Solis, BHRS
      24. Pablo Baeza Breinbaur, Oasis Legal Services
      25. Sylvia Navarro, LIBRE Project
      26. Paola Mora Paredes, College of San Mateo
      27. Mitch Eckstein
      28. Natalie Meltzer, SMC CCS Program
      29. Rocio Vega, Redwood City PAL
      30. Sammi Truong, Newcomer Health Program
   4. Next meeting will be Thursday, October 19th, at 10:00am.
2. **Legal Updates: Alison Kamhi, Legal Program Director, ILRC**
   1. DACA Decision: A Texas district court judged has ruled that DACA is unlawful. While this is an unfortunate ruling, it does not change anything in practice at this time. Folks who have not applied for DACA still cannot be processed, those who have DACA still have it and can continue to renew and apply for work authorization and parole for travel.
      1. This new DACA decision will be appealed to 5th circuit appellate court and likely to the Supreme Court.
      2. ILRC has [these DACA FAQs](a.%09https:/www.ilrc.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions-daca) available.
   2. Immigration Court Rule: a 2020 rule, referred to as the Death to Due Process rule, took authority away from immigration and appellate judges to limit the time people have to file in court and which made it harder for people in immigration court. DOJ has proposed to rescind this rule.
   3. Public Charge: The Department of State, like USCIS has done, has changed its definition of public charge back to a much narrower definition. This removes barriers to visas for individuals seeking visas who may use safety net programs.
   4. The Department of State has partnered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to provide assistance to stateless individuals (people who don’t have a country of nationality).
   5. HEAL Act: This initiative, which stands for Healthy Economies Adapting to Last, is a California budget program that provides 5 million dollars for job growth to towns and cities that close immigration detention centers.
3. **USCIS Updates: Jesse Castro, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, USCIS** 
   1. TPS has been extended for El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua and the Sudan for an additional 18 months.
   2. Texts Before Calls: many folks dealing with the USCIS Contact Center have trouble answering callbacks and, having missed the callback from USCIS, must go through the whole process again. With USCIS’s new Texts Before Calls process, an individual waiting for a call back gets a text message 30 minute before the callback asking if they are available. If they say no, there will be another attempt later in the day to text and then call. If the individual does not respond to the text, the call goes through.
   3. Online Appointment Requests: USCIS has created the option of requesting an in-person appointment through an online request form instead of through the contact center. The appointment request still must be adjudicated by an officer to see if it merits an in-person appointment.
4. **Undocumented Community Centers / Dream Centers**
   1. UCC’s are dedicated to social justice and racial equity. They support the undocumented community and advocate to break down barriers in the three colleges and beyond. Skyline, Canada, and College of San Mateo all offer Undocumented Community Centers to their students.
      1. Over the last decade, this work supporting immigrant and undocumented students has become institutionalized and has received dedicated space and staff.
      2. Pandemic related relief funds: there was a lot of conversation about whether this funding was available to undocumented folks. This brought a coalition together naturally in response to this funding, and the coalition has since been leveraging power in the district to push along new programs.
      3. Current coalition goals include advocacy for student leadership, outreach and recruitment, resource realignment.
   2. Centers and Programs: What do UCC’s look like?
      1. Centers offer one on one student support: help with applications and admissions process, paperwork and documentation, financial aid, AB540, residency reclassification, helping students who are seeking asylums, non-resident fee waivers, support with financial aid resources, California Dream Act, accessing scholarship, legal support, and resources.
      2. Centers offer students a space to feel comfortable, there is study space, computers, printers, space to hang out and play games.
      3. SparkPoint Food Pantry at Skyline and Canada college: students can access groceries through the UCC’s.
      4. Unlocking Futures Fellowship: hands-on/experiential learning, professional dev and networking, mentorship, enrichment seminars.
      5. Undocu-Student Action Week: Starts Oct 16. Webinars, events, activities, programs.
      6. Legal Clinics: partnership with paralegal instructor and attorney, Maria Segarra.
         1. Free immigration legal consults: UCC’s link students to free, confidential immigration legal services.
         2. Offered to students, parents, family members, friends.
         3. Weekly hours provided at Skyline and Canada College on Wednesdays.
         4. Immigration consultations, reviewing documents, referrals.
         5. Consultations are virtual, free, and confidential.
         6. Legal clinic in partnership with SparkPoint is open to the community, <https://tinyurl.com/canlegalclinic>
      7. CSM partnership with IIBA
         1. The Immigration Institute of the Bay Area was established in 1918. They have offices throughout the Bay Area.
         2. Community Colleges Immigration Services Program offers free services for students, staff, and faculty:
            1. Legal consults to screen for relief.
            2. DACA renewals
            3. Family based petitions
            4. Naturalization/citizenship applications
            5. Advance Parole
            6. Removal of conditions (conditional LPR)
            7. Other forms of humanitarian relief
            8. Access via <findyourally.com> (this is available in Spanish)
            9. It’s important for students to have an immigration relief screening especially if they are DACA recipients.
            10. Every community college in California has legal services available!
      8. Education Code 76140 allows non-resident students taking 6 units or less at a CA community college to pay in-state tuition rate rather than the international student fee.
         1. EC 76140 expands access to eligibility of [SB 68/AB540](https://immigrantsrising.org/wp-content/uploads/Immigrants-Rising_SB-68-Quick-Guide.pdf), which makes in-state tuition available to undocumented students and “non-immigrant” status holders who meet educational and residency requirements.
         2. Under EC 76140, students can access these benefits more quickly and at a lower cost.
         3. The EC 76140 expansion in San Mateo County community colleges is a local policy, but offers courses to students living anywhere in California.
         4. Dual enrollment programs exist for undocumented students to take college classes for free while enrolled in high school, but this program is specifically for students who are no longer in high school.
      9. SB 893 is a free college initiative. This expands affordable education access for SMC residents. This is for individuals who don’t qualify for aid via Dream Act or FAFSA. Criteria includes that students must have a qualifying educational goal and demonstrated financial need.
         1. Undocumented students demonstrate financial need by:
            1. Route 1: Qualifying for AB 540 Affidavit, Applying to California Dream Act Application, Qualifying for the California College Promise Grant.
            2. Route 2: Qualifying for the 6 or Fewer Units Non-Resident Tuition Fee Waiver.

Able to enroll in 6+ units

Able to qualify for levels 1 &2

* + - 1. Level 1: Covers enrollment fees.
      2. Level 2: covers additional fees, transportation, tech, and textbooks.

1. **Office of Community Affairs (OCA) Updates**
   1. We celebrated Welcoming Week last week with events at Friendship Park, several libraries, and a screening of The Donut King. We are so thankful to our partners for making this week possible! If folks are interested in partnering to further expand Welcoming Week next year, we would be delighted to collaborate.
   2. The San Mateo County Commission on the Status of Women is researching the gender wage gap and wants to hear from women throughout the county about their financial experiences. [This survey](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScvqgRdPLwKnaJevUS3YhgGmZJ0H4f7mVY6yw_91M7P1jGiNQ/viewform) is available in English and Spanish and is open to all SMC women.
2. **Agency Update Roundtable**
   1. Kara (grief support) Spanish Services upcoming events:
      1. September 23: [“My Grief from Afar” workshop (Mi Duelo a la Distancia)](https://kara-grief.org/events/taller-mi-duelo-a-la-distancia-23/)
      2. [General grief group (grupo general de duelo)](https://kara-grief.org/events/grupo-de-apoyo-para-el-duelo-otono-2023/): starting September 28 weekly.
      3. [Grief support group for spouse loss (pérdida de pareja/cónyuge](https://kara-grief.org/events/grupo-de-apoyo-para-perdida-de-pareja-2023/)): starting October 5 weekly.
   2. LIBRE Project: booked until the end of the year for appointments for immigration relief. However, still encouraging calls. Some spots are held for emergency needs.
   3. Sana Sana: Hola a todes! Let's continue to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month at our 10 Year Anniversary of the Sana Sana Colita de Rana Health Forum on Saturday, Nov. 4 at the SSF High School!!! To host a resource table, please email Carolina Salinas: csalinas@smcgov.org OR fill out [this survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BMRJPDT).
   4. Parent Project: Fall 2023 of Parent Project has begun! Still some limited spots available. Details [here](https://www.smchealth.org/post/parent-project-r).
   5. Youth Advisory Group: promoting a smoke free San Mateo County. Looking for about 10 students throughout the county to participate. Calling SMC YOUTH to participate in the SMC Tobacco Advisory Group! Application is due next Monday, September 25. Please share this opportunity with YOUTH! <https://tinyurl.com/SMCYAG-Apply>
   6. Job Train is hiring for a Spanish-Speaking Employment Specialist to join their South San Francisco JobTrain team. Find the job posting [here](https://jobtrain.applytojob.com/apply/W2MkDxGZGz/Employment-Specialist-North-San-Mateo-County-Career-Center-Spanish-Fluency-Preferred?source=Our%20Career%20Page%20Widget.).