

**San Mateo County Immigrant Forum**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**1/20/2022**

**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. USCIS Updates: Vilaysay “Sai” Phavisith, Community Relations Officer, USCIS**

- a. Encouraging everyone to sign up for automatic [e-gov delivery message](#) to receive updated guidance for national policy or procedures
- b. Updated guidance for O-1 nonimmigrant visas: <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-2-part-m-chapter-4>
- c. If your organization is a [recognized organization](#) by US Dept. of Justice and you have accredited representatives, you will be receiving an email from Sai asking about your current list of accredited representatives
  - A reminder that accredited reps are the non-attorneys who work for non-profits organizations and provide low-cost legal assistance to immigrants
- d. To assist SFR with their backlog of green card applications, several years ago, a few counties in SFR jurisdiction were reassigned to Sacramento Field Office. Those who were reassigned to Sacramento Field Office are now being returned to SFR for adjudications
  - This applies to the following counties: Napa, Sonoma, Contra Costa, and N. Alameda
  - No changes have occurred for cases that were sent to Fresno office
- e. Anyone who meets the criteria as a qualifying health care worker and has a work permit that is about to expire can request an expedite with USCIS
- f. SFR is interviewing the following dates of filings: N400 and I-485 FB cases filed Aug-Oct 2020 or earlier, I-751s end of 2019 and early 2020
- g. Anyone who is having difficulty getting an infopass appointment should attempt to contact the Contact Center 3x before reaching out directly
  - The limited slots for these appointments are because the waiting room that is used to do these appointments is also used for daily oath ceremonies
- h. Series of briefings for the local communities on how they can support the resettlement of Afghan arrivals
  - Many refugee resettlement agencies are struggling to resettle these Afghan arrivals and USCIS is asking local communities to step up if they can
  - Any organization that is assisting an Afghan arrival and is having issues with obtaining their work permits can contact [vilaysay.phavisith@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:vilaysay.phavisith@uscis.dhs.gov)
- i. All free USCIS webinars can be found here: <https://www.uscis.gov/outreach/upcoming-local-engagements>

**3. Legal Updates: Alison Kamhi, Supervising Attorney, ILRC**

- a. Immigration courts currently have the longest back log – over 1 million cases due to different reasons, including staffing and postponed COVID cases. Slow progression

- b. Pending application for U Visa before the agencies. Court cases have been dismissed or administratively closed
- c. Administration has asked for public input on how to prevent family separation (comment period closed January 25)

#### **4. Office of Community Affairs Updates**

- a. Next week on January 24 – new Immigrant Services Coordinator will start
- b. Gateways for Growth – OCA applied for a grant last year given by two national non-profits
  - We received a research report and technical assistance for a multi-sector 3–5-year strategic plan to elevate the lives of immigrants in SMC in all aspects of life including education, economic opportunities, safe communities, etc.
  - Will soon launch a survey addressed to immigrants that will help SMC cater to their needs – respondents will receive a \$10 incentive
  - Calling for your help in helping us promote the survey

#### **5. Agency Update Roundtable**

- a. Oasis
  - Current asylum program is at capacity – 2 months booked out. If it increases, then will begin a wait list. Open to discuss criteria
  - Other programs are still accepting people
- b. Red Cross
  - Taking responses with inquiries related to the typhoon in the Philippines but cannot take requests with the Tongan tsunami currently
- c. Puente
  - Completing taxes for community members is limited right now due to COVID. Remote until further notice

#### **6. San Mateo County Office of Sustainability Community 4Rs Grants Information Session: Esmeralda Cabrera, Resource Conservation Specialist II, Office of Sustainability**

- a. Objective is to help eligible organizations create and implement reuse, waste reduction, recycling, and composting programs in SMC
- b. Who can apply – government agency, any organizations, non-profit and profit organizations
- c. Projects are funded for 1 year – mini grants \$2,000- \$5,000 and Mega grants up to \$25k
- d. To be eligible must: address and provide solutions for diverting waste from being sent to landfill, increase 4r awareness aim for longevity
  - Examples of eligible projects- fix-it clinics, repair cafes, outreach programs, field trips, materials associated with improving or implementing redistribution program
  - For more examples of eligible and ineligible expenses, visit [www.4r](http://www.4r)

- e. Additional conditions to be aware of insurance requirements (mega grants only), State's prevailing wage requirement (both Mega and Mini), Previously awarded grantees can reapply! For more conditions visit <https://www.smcsustainability.org/4rs-grant>
- f. If interested in becoming a Grant Application Mentor, visit <https://www.smcsustainability.org/4rs-grant>

**7. Women Wanted in the Trades! Jessica Fontenot, Program Coordinator, Tradeswomen, Inc.**

- a. Tradeswomen, Inc. is one of California's first organizations for women in the trades. Focuses on outreach, recruitment, retention, and leadership development for women in blue-collar skilled jobs
- b. Aimed and catered to help women find an opportunity to provide for themselves and their families
- c. TWI's mission and goals are to:
  - Recruit more women into construction and related trades
  - Promote retention of women in the trades; and
  - Develop their capacity for leadership and career growth, on the job and in their uniforms
- d. Monthly workshops every second Tuesday of the month
- e. For more information, visit <https://tradeswomen.org/> or contact [jfontenot@tradeswomen.org](mailto:jfontenot@tradeswomen.org)