

**Promising Practices:  
REVEST Program  
Miami Dade College**

Established in 1999, The Refugee/Entrant Vocational Educational Services Training (REVEST) Program is a comprehensive program of adult instructional credit and non-credit courses, designed to improve the employability of eligible clients. The program was created to serve the English language and vocational training needs of adult refugees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, political asylees, victims of severe forms of trafficking, and Amerasians in Miami-Dade County.

The REVEST Program also provides its students with academic assessment, long-term advisement, referrals to other service agencies; including legal services; employment referrals; transportation and childcare subsidies, and assistance with the translation and evaluation of foreign earned credentials (up to \$300). All services, including books and training tools (such as uniforms and equipment), are free for eligible students.

The REVEST Vocational ESOL program serves as a stepping stone to semi-skilled interim or alternative careers. It serves 3,000+ students per term and is an intensive English language training program (16 weeks per term) that prepares clients for employment and self-sufficiency. Graduates are referred to placement agencies.

**Name of Community College:** Miami Dade College  
(<https://www.mdc.edu/>)

**Title of Program:** Refugee/Entrant Vocational Educational Services Training (REVEST) Program  
(<https://www.mdc.edu/revest/>)

**Type of Program:** Adult education and workforce training for refugees

**Primary Division(s) or Department(s) involved:** REVEST Program

**Populations Served:** Refugees and Political Asylees

**Immigration status required:** Refugee, Asylee, Lawful Permanent Residents

**1. Need for Program:**

In existence since October 1999, the REVEST Program was created to serve the English language and vocational training needs of adult refugees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, political asylees, victims of severe forms of trafficking, and Amerasians in Miami-Dade County.

## **2. Program Description:**

The REVEST Program is a comprehensive program of adult instructional credit and non-credit courses, designed to improve the employability of eligible clients. The REVEST Program also provides its students with academic assessment, long-term advisement, referrals to other service agencies; including legal services; employment referrals; transportation and childcare subsidies, and assistance with the translation and evaluation of foreign earned credentials (up to \$300). All services, including books and training tools (such as uniforms and equipment), are free for eligible students.

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## **3. Specific Population Served:**

Any individuals who are eligible for refugee services according to state and federal regulations and who require these services. Services are contingent upon clients being employed or engaged in job-seeking efforts through employment agencies. Clients include refugees of all nationalities:

Clients include:

- Refugees and asylees of all nationalities
- Cuban/Haitian entrants, including parolees and asylum applicants
- Amerasians
- Certified victims of trafficking
- Lawful permanent residents who adjusted from prior refugee, entrant, or asylee status

Client Characteristics:

Due to Miami's geographic location to the Caribbean islands, most participants in the program are from Cuba and Haiti. The program has served more than 65,000 clients to date. In the academic year 2017-18 alone, REVEST enrolled more than 4,500 students, whose origins are largely from Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela. In this same period, REVEST issued some 3,000 bus passes for students who need help with public transportation.

## **4. Goals and Objectives:**

The goal of the REVEST Program is to provide students with educational and support services. This includes English language training, Adult Basic Education, and Vocational Instruction. The objective is for students to accomplish their personal, academic, and professional goals.

## **5. Outcomes:**

As noted, more than 65,000 students were served since the program's inception in 1999. The objective mentioned above is accomplished as evidenced by furthering the student's education, developing their technical and employability skills, and assisting them to move towards economic self-sufficiency and effective resettlement. Seventy-seven percent of students who enrolled in English-language training courses have completed these courses successfully and 86% of those taking vocational courses have also successfully completed their courses. More than 300 students completed a full course of study in phlebotomy, private security, or information technology, affording them a direct entry into the workforce.

The most popular vocational paths for REVEST participants include:

- Accounting Operations
- Administrative Assistant
- Business Supervision & Management
- Customer Assistance
- Legal Secretary
- Network Support Services
- P.C. Support Services
- Real Estate
- Massage Therapy
- Medical Assisting
- Medical Coder/ Biller
- Pharmacy Technician
- Phlebotomy
- Practical Nursing
- Security Guards

## **6. Collaboration:**

Client referrals and partner networks are our best recruitment and publicity instrument. The network of service providers under the Office of Refugee Services funding includes SAVES, South Florida Work Force, Catholic Charities, Church World Service, Youth Coop and Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, Inc., St. Thomas University Law School, Lutheran Services, and Miami Dade Public Schools etc.

## **7. Success Factors:**

A very comprehensive approach to academic advisement, combined with high levels of social work, and focused on the needs and specifics of the population to be served; an intensive curriculum developed based on the objectives of language acquisition and development of employability skills; support from Office of Refugee Services and Miami Dade College.

## **8. Challenges:**

The REVEST program has transitioned to a remote working and online instruction environment from the early stages of the effect of COVID-29 pandemic. Thanks to our staff and support from MDC, our VESOL and Vocational Training classes have continued uninterrupted since March. MDC has contributed tremendously by providing laptops to students in need. Our classes continue to be updated and adjusted to the use of new platforms. Our funding source, the Office of Refugee Services, has also been very supportive with other programmatic adjustments such as, a revision to testing and promotion of students policies, revision of program expenses and deliverables, penalty fees, etc.

All adjustments took place in accordance with FL Governor Ron DeSantis' Public Health Emergency Declaration 20-51 due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), and in accordance with Executive Order 20-52 and its impact on State contracted services, as well as Department of Education, issued Emergency Order 20-01.

#### **9. Funding and Sustainability:**

The REVEST program is in the process of contract negotiation and signature for another year of funding with the Office of Refugee Services, Department of Children and Families in Florida. As it's been a regular practice for over 20 years, contracting for program services takes place on a yearly basis.

More information on REVEST and other immigrant education and workforce development programs at Miami Dade College is included in [Working Toward An Equitable and Prosperous Future For All: How Community Colleges and Immigrants Are Changing America](#) (Rowman & Littlefield and American Association of Community Colleges, 2019). Also available on [Amazon](#).

#### **10: Contact Information:**

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