



**State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families**

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Esther Jacobo**  
Interim Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 4, 2013  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Debbie Ansbacher, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** July 10, 2013 Meeting Minutes

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### **THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:**

**Date:** September 11, 2013  
**Time:** 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.  
**Location:** Department of Children and Families  
5920 Arlington Expressway, Auditorium  
Jacksonville, Florida 32211  
**Contact:** Debbie Ansbacher  
**Office:** (904) 726-1540  
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**E-Mail:** Debbie\_Ansbacher@dcf.state.fl.us

This task force has been active in the Jacksonville area for many years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and mutual assistance associations. An average of about twenty-five to thirty people attend these meetings on a regular basis. The purpose of these meetings is to increase awareness of the refugee populations, share best practices, build collaborations between agencies, spot trends in refugee populations, characteristics or movements, help create good communication among service providers; get informed about upcoming community events, request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, etc., at the local, state and national level; discuss refugee program service needs and possible solutions to meeting those needs. Meeting participants also receive updates, information and clarification on new federal and state regulations and policy changes pertaining to refugees.

If there are any issues that you would like to include in the agenda, please contact me at the above address.

*I look forward to seeing you at the meeting!*

5920 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, Florida 32211

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Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

## JACKSONVILLE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

### **INTRODUCTION**

The meeting was held at the Department of Children and Families, 5920 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, FL 32211. Debbie Ansbacher, Community Liaison, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services Program. There were 20 people in attendance. After introductions, the meeting was called to order.

### **GUEST PRESENTATION:**

Andrea Spencer, ElderSource, Director of Communications gave a presentation on the services offered through ElderSource. The organization provides referrals to services for home delivered meals, energy assistance programs, applying for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits and many more programs for elderly and disabled. The ElderSource Helpline phone number is (904) 391-6699.

Liz Brown, American Red Cross, provided information on the Restoring Family Links program. The program provides international family tracing services which assists families with searching for relatives overseas. A listing was provided with the countries where there are conflicts. Included on the list were Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq and Sudan. Ms. Brown can be reached at (904) 246-1395 or [Liz.Brown@redcross.org](mailto:Liz.Brown@redcross.org).

### **REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE**

**Adult Education:** Michelle Karolak, Director of Refugee Resettlement, Catholic Charities reported 185 students are currently taking English classes. The students have an 80% pass rate. Students must be enrolled in a work program or be employed to attend the classes. Classes have open ended enrollment. All agencies were asked to help get their clients to attend classes regularly.

**Childcare:** Ron Viafore from the Early Learning Coalition explained that children whose Refugee Services funded childcare is due to end are assisted with getting on the School Readiness waitlist two months prior to the childcare eligibility expiration date.

**Youth:** Jerome Crawford, V.P. of Operations, Lutheran Social Services of NE Florida reported the Youth summer program was in its second session.

**Legal:** Nancy Hale, Director of Immigration Project, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, reported that the refugee project is noticing more Cubans arriving through the Visa Waiver (VW) program (at Bahamas port of entry or other ports of entry) because they are dual citizens of Cuba and Spain or another country where the VW is available. These VW entrants are like visitor visa (B1/B2) entrants in that they are not eligible for Refugee Services funded benefits (since they are not Cuban parolees) and can't apply for an Employment Authorization document (EAD) until they have been in the US one year and apply for their green card.

**Integration Assistance:**

- Jerome Crawford, Lutheran Social Services of NE Florida reported they have hired a Spanish speaking case worker.
- Molly Irazuzta, Catholic Charities reported the need for mental health/psychiatric services for clients with no insurance or Medicaid is a critical need.
- Molly also gave an update on meetings to explore assisting clients with starting an Alcoholic Anonymous group for the Burmese communities. The planning group is scheduled to meet again August 14<sup>th</sup> at 10am at Catholic Charities.
- Meg Young, World Relief, reported the Shands Total Care Clinic is now open for clients with Shands Cards to receive primary medical care. The phone number for the clinic is (904) 383-1040.

**GENERAL UPDATES**

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:** John Taylor Jacksonville USCIS announced a Stakeholder Meeting to be held on Thursday, July 18th, 2013 in the Administration Area of the Jacksonville Field Office. The meeting will include updates from the Jacksonville Field Office as well as updates on National USCIS issues. Attendees were asked to identify specific issues or questions to have addressed at the meeting. A call in number was also provided for those who cannot attend in person.

**ACCESS:** Sandy Beaumont, ACCESS Partner Liaison provided information on the new Authentication policy and questions clients will be asked upon recertification for benefits to prevent fraud. The new policy started August 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Duval County Public Schools, Center for Language and Culture:** Helena Gandell, Coordinator, Center for Language and Culture reported they are planning on hosting English classes for adults and are exploring ways to provide babysitting during the classes.

**Refugee Arrivals - October 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013:**

Catholic Charities	98 (18 Scheduled for July)
World Relief	306 (32 Scheduled for July)
Lutheran social Services	183 (3 Scheduled for July)

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, September 11, 2013  
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.  
Department of Children and Families  
5920 Arlington Expressway, Auditorium  
Jacksonville, Florida 32211

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