



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

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**David E. Wilkins**  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 20, 2013  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Debbie Ansbacher, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** March 13, 2013 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** May 22, 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  
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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!***

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

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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. Guests at the meeting were Hiram Ruiz, Director, refugee Services Program, and Yolanda Coto, Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services Program Senior Attorney. David Abramowitz, Regional Director for the Northeast Region of Department of Children and Families also participated part of the meeting. There were 35 people in attendance. After introductions, the meeting was called to order.

### **GUEST PRESENTATION:**

Susan Russo, Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ), gave a presentation on how to establish Florida residency for tuition purposes at FSCJ. Susan provided scenarios of documents that are acceptable as proof of residency and discussed the list of acceptable documents.

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

#### **Adult Education:**

Michelle Karolak, Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Director, reported there are 230 enrolled in English classes. The night classes are above capacity and they would like to expand the number of night classes. Susan Russo from FSCJ also reported their enrollment numbers are up.

**Childcare:** Chad Sykes-Burns and Ron Viafore from the Early learning Coalition attended the meeting. They emphasized the need for case workers to assist clients with choosing the best quality center for each child.

#### **Employment:**

Debbie Andelora, Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Refugee Employment Manager reported the program is fully staffed and is very busy with the high number of new arrivals. They will be focusing on job development and are also developing a pre-employment orientation with American work terminology to prepare clients for the workplace.

**Youth:** Kasey Guenther, LSS, Youth Program Coordinator reported the program is at full capacity. They are gearing up for the summer program for youth ages 8 to 18 who have not been in the summer program before.

**Legal:** Nancy Hale, Director of Immigration Project, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, reported the processing of Cubans applying for green cards is taking as long as 8 months. As a result, more people have to renew the Employment Authorization Document. Nancy reported there is

a new revised I-9 form with changes. There are webinars explaining the changes, and everyone involved in completing I-9's were encouraged to participate in the Webinars. They can be found on the USCIS Website at [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov). There was discussion on the increase in Cubans entering the U.S. through the borders of Texas and Canada.

### **GENERAL UPDATES**

**USCIS:** Katherine Baranowski and John Taylor announced the USCIS has an Open House scheduled for March 26, 2013 from 5-7pm at 4121 Southpoint Boulevard, Jacksonville, Florida 32216. At the Open House, there will be mock interviews, information on how to avoid immigration scams and tours. Those attending the open house must bring photo ID. Officers Baranowski and Taylor did a presentation to the youth program at Englewood High School in February which stressed how to have good moral character, described behaviors to stay away from and the need to register for Selective Service. All are requirements to obtain citizenship.

**2013 Refugee Services Consultation:** Everyone was encouraged to plan to participate in the Consultation to be held May 8-10, 2013 in Orlando at the Portofino Hotel. There are plans to include many refugees especially on May 9<sup>th</sup> for those within a couple of hours driving distance. Transportation is being coordinated for travelers from Jacksonville for the day.

**Duval Schools, Center for Language and Culture** Helena Gandell introduced Christine Dannke, the new Executive Director of ESOL for Duval Schools. Christine came from Miami-Dade County Public Schools from the Turnaround Schools program.

#### **Refugee Arrivals:**

Arrivals reported as of February 28, 2013:

Catholic Charities	58
World Relief	213
LSS	127
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>

March 2013(estimates):

Catholic Charities:	12
World Relief	26
LSS	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>

**ACCESS:** Sandy Beaumont, Community Partner Liaison, Department of Children and Families, reported the ACCESS Florida website now has links for Spanish, Creole and English languages.

**Three Rivers Legal Services:** Erica Shaffor, a strong advocate in getting refugees to use safe tax preparers, will be moving out of state. Three Rivers will be recruiting a replacement for Erica.

**Mental Health Services:** Christine Rothberg, Mental Health counselor to refugees provided the following information to be disseminated at the task force. The Program started in Mid February. Mental health services are available at all three resettlement agencies (World Relief, Catholic Charities, and Lutheran Social Services (LSS)). Christine has counseled over 20 clients. There are appointment openings at LSS on Wednesdays and at Catholic Charities on Fridays. Evening hours are available Mondays and Tuesdays at Quality Life Center. Contact Jaxrefugees@yahoo.com for a referral form or for additional details. There is no stipulation for time in the country for clients to be seen.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May 22, 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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