



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 20, 2022
TO: Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario (RS)**
SUBJECT: January 20, 2022, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: March 17, 2022
Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: TBA
Contact: Miriam Rosario
Office: (561) 227-6722
Cell: (561) 459-6098
E-Mail: Miriam.rosario@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Broward area in the past few years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations, and volunteer groups. An average of about twenty to twenty-five 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!

Southeast Region - Circuit 15
111 South Sapodilla Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

BROWARD COUNTY REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and Miriam Rosario, Southeast Region (SER) Community Liaison (CL), Refugee Services (RS) Program, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) facilitated the Refugee Task Force (RTF) meeting. Miriam thanked and welcomed all participants for calling in and joining the first meeting of the year. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services, and the agency they represented. Approximately 35 people joined the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Head Start/Early Intervention with Broward County Public Schools:

Sharonda Bailey - Director of Head Start/Early Intervention with Broward County Public Schools presented an overview on all the services and resources available thru the Head Start/Early Intervention with Broward County Public Schools. Early Head Start is in 5 schools and serves infants, toddlers, and pregnant mothers. The Head Start is in 50 schools and serves children ages 3 -5 years old. The Voluntary Pre-K is in 43 schools and serves children ages 4-5 years old who qualify for the State's VPK Certificate. The VPK can be full day time or summertime only. The summer VPK is in Seven (7) schools/Nine (9) classes. The families receive Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance, Parent Support for Application process. Broward County Public Schools and/or the case manager can assist the families to apply. The services area also includes for, Disabilities, Inclusion and Behavior Supports and Nutrition Counseling, Nursing Support for Families, Mental Health. Head Start Application Dates By Appointment Only. February 1 – March 16, 2022; Monday – Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Select Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (virtual). Please see www.browardschools.com/headstart-vpk. Ms. Sharonda D. Bailey contact at 754-321-1972.

Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services (FCST): Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt, MSW, Program Coordinator, Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services (FCST) provided overview and update presentation on the Survivors of Torture. Sabine was very excited to review their case management resources available to Palm Beach and Broward counties. Survivors of Torture is available to immigrant, including refugees and asylum seekers regardless of how long they are here in the country. They offered an inclusive program assisting with mental health issues and referrals to resources understanding their culture and communications, and individual needs. The FCST services covers PBC and Broward County in addition to Miami. Mental Health counseling and case management are services available for refugees and specially for the recent Afghan arrivals. Sabine offered an overview presentation for the next RTF meeting. She can be reach at Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt sabine.derenoncourt@gcjfcs.org. The Power Point Presentation was shared with all members via email.

Church World Service-CWS Broward: Reyne Corado, CRS Employment Program Manager, offered a power point presentation analyzing the employments services and Job market Analysis and Trends of the refugee population. CWS employment services team is constantly examining the labor market within the South Florida region to determine changes in the labor force hiring

trends. CWS evaluate the employers that are hiring, and a labor market survey is done to see if other employers within the same industries are also developing job opportunities and compare salaries. CWS also analyzes the State of Florida DEO unemployment figures to measure which industries are creating jobs to make sure our marketing and job developing activities are in line with today's hiring needs. Largest industry within the refugee population is manufacturing and average wage per hour is \$10.79 Due to the Pandemic is important to educate refugees families if they do so in jobs available, increases in salary to serve those with Employment Authorization documentation (EAD). CWS discussed job retention, average salary and most placements and employers in Broward County. Fastest Growing Occupations in Broward County are retail and health care services. CWS placed 392 clients, averaging a salary of \$13.05 per hour. Top jobs; packer and drivers. Top industries placing refugees are Amazon and Deliver Corporations. It's important for informed refugee to know all the benefits of been employed. A power point presentation was share with all members.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Berta Cassidy, Community Relations Officer (CRO), USCIS, Miami and Caribbean District, participated. Berta and Roketa Mansfield provided USCIS updates. During FY 2021 USCIS completed approximately 895,000 naturalization applications, conducted more than 52,000 video-facilitated interviews, and hosted more than 40,000 naturalization ceremonies. USCIS continues to promote and improve access to naturalization. Outreach in local communities with partnership such as the library branches. USCIS began accepting applications and renewals for TPS under new and/or extended designations for South Sudan, Burma, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen and Haiti.

US Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division (WHD): Ariel G Rivera Maldonado Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist– WHD Posted "A Recipe for Youth Employment Compliance in Restaurants" U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division invites you to join the Southeast Region for a special webinar to discuss child labor rules for employing youth in the food service industry. During this special one hour event we will provide participants with all of the necessary ingredients to understand child labor rules, rights and responsibilities for youth employment. Employers, parents, school officials, and employees are encouraged to attend. Rob Vaden and Ariel Rivera Maldonado will be hosting this lunch and learn webinar. Thursday, February 10th 12:00 p.m. EST. This event is free, but registration is required. Fill | Southeast Region Child Labor Lunch and Learn Webinar Join us for this free webinar to learn more about child labor rules and how they apply to the food service industry. Please provide your information below to register for the event.

Department of Health-Broward County (DOH): Many referrals are provided to community resources such as, COVID & Flu vaccines, children's school vaccine, WIC, dental services. For information regarding eligibility and services please see the Florida Department of Health Refugee Health Program website.

Broward County Library (BCL): Vonda Ward Bryant, Learning Services Coordinator Broward County provided information regarding all free services. Library services in Broward now open for in person resources and access to all the branches and hours of operations. Visit www.BCLS.org/library for updated information. Vonda reminded to encourage on virtual

citizenship classes, English virtual classes, online job search and eBooks. Libraries are open 6 days a week, including Saturdays.

Broward County Public Schools, Bilingual/ESOL Department Monica Nelsas - Parent Outreach Specialist. Broward County Public Schools, Bilingual/ESOL Department. Support all immigrant and bilingual families in our school system through the International Welcome Center. (754)321-2951 - monica.nelsas@browardschools.com

Church World Service (CWS): Carlos Naranjo, Reception and Placement (R&P) Coordinator informed on their 200 assurances for travel under the R&P, some in Broward and mostly in PBC. The Afghan some arrived in Miami area served under the Afghan Program (APA); 20 APA and 13 in Broward and 8 in PBC. Families are referred to DOH, School and ESOL. Matching Program (MG) is waiting on new slots and has extended to 6 months. MG enrolled 50 in Broward. Employment Authorization Document (EAD) continues to be a challenge for Cuban and Haitian, impacting the MG Employment program. CWS biggest challenge is housing and has created and welcome new partnership for housing services.

Career Sources of Broward County (CRSBC); no updates.

Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency, Southeast Region (ESS/DCF)-: Reminder of Ms. Moise and Ms. Arce are going to work with the refugees together. Please when you send an email to Claudia Arce regarding issues with clients that needs to review or any other questions, please copy Ms. Moise as well. Ernsta can be reach at Ernsta.Moise@myflfamilies.com and Claudia can be reach at claudia.arce@myflfamilies.com

RS Contracted providers:

Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS); Edele Firmin, CWS update on CRS services including the challenges of new cases with a longer wait time to obtain EAD. CRS continues to help recent arrivals, increases in Cuban and Haitians. Some families with small children's and pregnant are refer immediately to DOH. Concerns regarding delays on benefits approval and ESS/DCF referring people to CRS/CWS with RAP letters not eligible for RS. Ileana Bustelo, Deputy Director recommended to email to RS/DCF for Claudia Arce ESS/ACCESS to review. CRS continue to improve the client's self-sufficiency with case management, referrals and Employment orientations are offered mainly via phone services. All client walk-in are seen face to face.

Church World Service (CWS): CWS/Legal: David Claros, Managing Attorney, Church World Service. David Claros, update on legal services. CWS provides legal services on a pro-bono and low-cost basis. We have a state program in the Palm Beach office that allows us to provide additional pro bono services. Most of the services offered are concerning applications for asylum, adjustment, naturalization, EADs. Now that courts are open, motions to immigration court have increased almost to pre pandemic numbers. Many clients arriving with short term paroles, Notice to Appear and Order Release on Recognizance (ORR). Cubans not being issued traditional I-94 or interim paroles. However, Title 42 has kept many individuals from even expressing the need to file for asylum. Entrants being released with minimal documentation and many times without an NTA.

CWS also offers representation with USCIS, EOIR and ICE. Most new clients/recent entrants are offered appointments for orientations and then given appointments depending on their need. Every service is done via appointments, no walk-in services provided. With courts opening again, a larger group of individuals will need attorney representation in court. Representation will be essential, especially for individuals relying on an asylum as their only form of relief but will be cost prohibitive for most of our clients. CWS will be assisting Afghan entrants in filing their asylums.

Project RENEW: Jocelyne Martinez, Broward College/project RENEW (PR/BC) Director Adult Education provided updates. PR/BC has students' educational programs serving over 500 students. Enrollment/registrations are continuous. BC do registrations every day. PR/BC follows the College's academic calendar offering full-term classes every term: Fall term runs from September - December; Spring term January - May; and Summer term May-August.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Thursday, March 17, 2022**

Time: 10:00 AM to 12PM

Location: TBA

Contact: Miriam.Rosario@myflfamilies.com Phone: (561) 227-6722

David.Draper@myflfamilies.com Phone: (407) 317-7335