



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun L. Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 27th, 2022
TO: Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: David Draper, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: April 13th, 2022, Task Force Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: Wednesday, June 8th, 2022
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Location: Microsoft Teams or TBA

Contact: David Draper
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This task force has been active in the Orlando 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 thirty to forty people attends 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 at the local, state, and national level; request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, discuss refugee service needs and explore solutions to those needs. Meeting participants 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!

400 W. Robinson Street, S1111C, Orlando, Florida 32801

ORLANDO AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

This meeting was held through Microsoft Teams. Approximately 47 people were in attendance. David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, represented the Florida Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services (RS) Program; Rosa Chaves, Community Liaison for the Central Region, was also present. Everyone introduced themselves and the agencies that they represented through the chat in Microsoft Teams.

Special presentation

- **Joe Mathews – Strategic Account Executive, LanguageLine Solutions** provided an overview of phone interpreter services provided by LanguageLine Solutions. He provided general guidance on using interpreter services and information on delays for certain languages.

GENERAL UPDATES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Donald Jarrell, USCIS Tampa District S23 Community Relations Officer, gave an update on USCIS. They have been delivering virtual presentations on relevant topics to the general public. LPR renewals and citizenship applications are taking approximately 10 to 13 months. Fees for all applications are on their web page. The Ukrainians TPS final rules have not yet been published in the Federal Register.
- **Natacha Wyllie – Haitian American Art Network, Inc. Executive Director** announced their Health fair on Saturday April 23, 2022. They will provide free Covid-19 vaccines and free testing.
- **Laquita Moore – DOH Orange County Nursing Supervisor TB and Refugee Health** informed the task force that they are currently working to recruit two nurses. They hope to bring them onboard soon. They have hired a new case manager.
- **Kevin Baker – DOH Seminole County Program Manager** informed the task force that they have seen an increase in walk-in clients and clients referred from Catholic Charities. They currently have 19 refugees pending scheduling. They have appointments scheduled through the month of April. They are currently fully staffed and are seeing refugees Mondays and Wednesdays unless a client makes a special request for a specific date.

- **Lisette Plaud-Morales – DOH Osceola County, Human Service Program Specialist FBCCP/Refugee/Epidemiology Program** informed the task force that they have seen an increased number of walk-in refugees. Appointments are provided within 2 to 3. Refugees are being seen on Mondays and Thursdays.
- **Lancy Leveille – Marketplace Health Insurance Navigator (PCAN Primary Care Access Network)** gave updates on enrollment and are able to assist individuals with marketplace enrollment during specified times. The current navigator staff speak English, Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Portuguese, Russian, and Ukrainian.
- **Sandra Algarin – Community Health Centers - Outreach & Marketing Lead** reminded the task force of their care center in Bithlo. At the center they have a pharmacy, a pediatric center, and family care. They also receive Covid-19 testing kids which they can share with community organizations.
- **Josie Medina – Orange County Public Schools** let the task force know that they are offering workshops for immigrant parents. They are also offering English classes. There is also an OCPs Parent Academy on May 21.
- **Minnie Cardona – Seminole County Public Schools** let the taskforce know that they provide services and support for students and their families. Last Saturday (April 9) they conducted a family leadership event.
- **Katria Haines-Jenkins – Bethany Christian Services – Executive Branch Director** let the task force know they have not yet received any refugee referrals. However, they are preparing to welcome new refugees soon.
- **Monica Araujo – Catholic Charities – CRS Program Manager**, informed the task force that they continue to receive many Cuban individuals and families. They also have been receiving larger Haitian families. Catholic Charities is still waiting on Employment Authorization for many of the Cubans that applied for Temporary Protected Status. EADs are taking 6 to 8 months. The Mentoring and Youth programs have seen higher participation recently among Cuban youth. During the summer there will be more activities. Catholic Charities continues to refer clients to DOH (currently a waiting list). They are also referring clients to DOH Osceola County when appropriate. CC is looking to hire a case manager, a new employment specialist, and an ESOL instructor. Catholic Charities has also seen three Ukrainian families with humanitarian parole. Although they are not eligible for refugee services, Catholic Charities connected them with other resources in the community. Catholic Charities reported that the Social Security offices are open to public.

- **Alexandra Garnier-Mercier, Alzheimer and Dementia Resource Center – Brain Bank Program Manager** let the task force know that if there is a refugee client with memory issues, the caregiver can call the center and ask for tests and resources for that individual. They provide workshops for caregivers and teach them how to care for their family members. They are hoping to offer training in Spanish soon.
- **David Draper, Department of Children and Families Refugee Services Community Liaison Manager** announced that the administration did commit to welcoming up to 100,000 Ukrainian arrivals. The process has not yet been formalized and Ukrainians are not currently eligible for refugee services or benefits. Also, certain Ukrainians will be eligible for temporary protected status when that is made available. David also mentioned that Afghans have been resettled throughout Florida through the Afghan Placement and Assistance Program (APA). Most of these Afghans were not resettled in Orlando. Cuban and Haitian arrivals continue to increase statewide. Most of this population is not immediately eligible for employment authorization (which is a significant challenge to resettlement).
- **Lodia Rojas – DCF ESS Supervisor** informed the task force that they are dealing with a backlog of applications and are processing them as quickly as they can.
- **Liliana Zuluaga – DOH Orange County Refugee Health Case Manager** introduced herself as the Refugee Health Case Manager.
- **Nicola Roberts – Career Source Central Florida** informed the task force of applications for summer youth programs. Applications will open on March 1 for youth ages 16-19.

NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday April 13th, 2022

Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Location: Virtual Microsoft Teams

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