



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 28, 2022
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario (RS)**
SUBJECT: January 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: March 18, 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 Palm Beach 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

PALM BEACH AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held via a tele conference call 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 meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services, and the agency they represented. Approximately 35 people joined the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt, MSW, Program Coordinator, Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services (FCST) provided an 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.

Youth Co-OP, Inc. YCOOP-PBC: Jesus Garcia YCOOP Programs Coordinator informed as Maylin Cortez is now promoted as the new Supervisor of YCOOP programs. Maylin Cortez offered a power point presentation analyzing the employments services and Job market Analysis and Trends of the refugee population. Youth Co-Op, Inc. employment services team is constantly examining the labor market within the South Florida region to determine changes in the labor force hiring trends. YCOOP 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. Youth Co-Op, Inc. 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). YCOOP discussed job retention, average salary and most placements and employers in Palm Beach County. Fastest Growing Occupations in Palm Beach County 2020-2028 is restaurant and cooks. 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), Donald Jarrell | Community Relations Officer present on USCIS updates. Afghan nationals paroled into the United States on or after July 30, 2021, due to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan are eligible for the certain fee exemptions and streamlined processing. Please visit their website <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/contact-us> or contact Jarrell, Donald Don Jarrell | Community Relations Officer | DHS | USCIS | Tampa, Fort Myers & West Palm Beach, at Donald.Jarrell@uscis.dhs.gov. Information and links shared with members.

Department of Health-Broward County (DOH): Merlene Ramnon PhD, MPH, MSN, RN, Community Health Promotion and Education Director, updated report as RS Health Clinic has two nurses' practitioners handling the influx of refugees. Average 16 full assessment per day. All appointments are following the DOH protocols. Many referrals are provided to community resources such as, COVID & Flu vaccines, infection control screening, children's school vaccine. Department of Health will be hosting a Drive thru Baby Shower Items at the American Lung Association /Quantum Foundation to provide baby items to pregnant and women who have infants. the event will be on Friday, Dec 3, 2021 at 2:00 to 4:00pm. For information regarding eligibility and services please see the Florida Department of Health Refugee Health Program website.

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO): Marcia Bahia, M.S., Gang Prevention Coordinator, not present however submitted her updates and information regarding the Gang prevention Summit was cancelled due to pandemic numbers increasing. The educational event was scheduled for 4/30/2022 at PB Lakes HS and help over 600 youth. As in previous years all refugee youth are invited. For additional information please contact Marcia at bahiam@pbsso.org

Palm Beach County Library System (PBCLS): Jayme Bosio, Government Research Services PBCLS provided information regarding all free services. Library services in PBC now open for in person resources and access to all the branches and hours of operations. The Wellington Branch reopen and soon the Lantana Branch offering many in person services and activities to refugees. The Palm Beach County Library also has the Food Bank at the library to help with SNAP and Access Florida applications <http://www.pbclibrary.org/food-service-program>.

Mandel West Palm Beach City Library: Tara Moreno, Multicultural Coordinator Librarian, reported the Mandel Library has ESOL classes now for beginner and intermediate, call 868-7730. Also, Food Bank of PBC is helping with the ESS/DCF Benefits application; at the library every Thursday from 10-3pm.

Church World Service (CWS): Oscar Rivera, Director CWS update on all CRS services including the new unaccompanied refugee minors and home study program in addition to their APA. From Broward RTF meeting, CWS Reception and Placement (R&P) Coordinator informed on their 200 assurances for travel under the R&P. CWS received 86 individuals and 40 families, some in Broward and mostly in PBC. The Afghan some arrived in Miami area served under the Afghan Program (APA). Matching Program (MG) is enrolling for parolees and asylees. Employment Authorization Document (EAD) continues to be a challenged for Cuban and

Haitian, impacting the MG Employment program. CWS has created and welcome new partnership for housing services.

Career Sources of PBC County (CSPBC); Marta Roque, TANF Sr. Career Consultant
Refugee Unit informed on the high volume of client been referred to CSPBC. The CSPBC-TANF program continue to partner with Youth COOP in assisting new families with children with employment and meaningful activities. [www.mroque@careersourcepbc.com](mailto:mroque@careersourcepbc.com)

211 Helpline Palm Beach and Treasure Coast: Patrice Schroeder provides information on the immediate service for those in need within Palm Beach, Martin, St Lucie, Okeechobee and Indian River Counties. 211's advocacy programs are still up and running & available. Help Me Grow provides growth/developmental/behavioral health screenings for children 0-8 yrs. The Special Needs Helpline supports and assists families and caregivers of children with disabilities (0-22 years) in finding needed services. Also 211's Elder Crisis Outreach program helps connect vulnerable seniors to critical services. Caregivers can also access 211's Caregiver Project offering support and guidance for those adults that are family caregivers for another adult. 211's MYFLVET program provides peer to peer support to veterans and helps the veteran and their families find resources and services. 211 is available by dialing 2-1-1 or texting zip code to 898211, 24/7. Online chat also available at 211palmbeach.org from 10am to 8pm. Calls to 211 feature multilingual capabilities. Patrice Schroeder, informed that people can access 211 Online Resource Directory that includes hundreds of local, state and national programs and services at www.211palmbeach.org click on "Get Help Now". Patricia invited those interested in attending the InterAgency Network of PBC with a wide variety of service providers attending email: patrice.schroeder@211pbt.org Also if you provide services to the people of the Glades- you may wish to attend the Glades Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH) use same email. Patrice reminder all organizations to update the 211 Database: email your agency info or updates (changes etc.) to judi.hechtman@211pbt.org

Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency, Southeast Region (ESS/DCF)-: Claudia Arce, ESS/DCF, Program Office's representative reported an increase in new arrivals with a variety of immigration documents not as previously seen. Some cases have the parole expired however they can still be eligible for RS. These documentations require various processes for eligibility verification. All applications are handled on a case-by-case basis. Additional information can be located at DCF website; myflflorida.com. Claudia also introduced Ms. Ernsth Moise as the new member in the Senior Human Services Program. Ms. Moise and Claudia are going to work with the refugees together. Please when you send an email to Claudia regarding issues with clients that needs to review or any other questions please copy Ms. Moise as well. Ernsth can be reach at Ernsth.Moise@myflfamilies.com and Claudia can be reach at claudia.arce@myflfamilies.com

Miriam thanks all for the sharing these valued resources and reminded members to update their organization services in the Microsoft Teams (MST) chat for all to have access to the resources and contacts. Refugee task forces meetings will continue virtual via Microsoft meetings until further notice. Miriam thanks all and wish them a safe and healthy holiday season.

RS Contracted providers:

Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS); Gladys Sanchez, CWS update on CRS services including the challenges of new cases with a longer wait time to obtain EAD. CRS is been very busy with increases of new arrivals processing intake and increases in case management. CRS orientations are offered mainly via phone services. CRS continue to provide referrals to adult education and services in the community. Gladys stated biggest challenges are getting the ESS/DCF (SNAP and benefits) ACCESS applications appointments on time. The Food Bank of PBC (FBPBC) is helping CRS with appointments three times a week at the CWS site. Miriam informed of reaching out to other ACCESS Partners including FBPBC other sites (such as PBC Library, WPB City Library, YCOOP) or refer clients to the DCF office directly and clients to ask for supervisor assistance if help is needed. Natalia Patino, Supervising Attorney at Church World Service, updated reported on the CRS Legal Services and Miami.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov and ICE-ERO-MIA-MMO-ScheduleAppt-SMB@ice.dhs.gov. If one of your clients is going to change address, please ask them to email ICE their new address. ICE is emailing clients their Notice to Appear as well as new ICE appointments.

Palm Beach County Schools/ Adult Education; Sherrie Bedwell, Director, Dept. of Adult & Community Ed., submitted her updated report on the Registration starts January 5, 2022 for Adult Education with the Palm Beach County School District. Classes begin January 18th and continue until April 14, 2022 for the Winter Term. AM & PM Classes available in Literacy, ESOL, CCR & ABE/GED. Sites are offering; Adult ESOL & ABE/GED in hybrid. sherrie.bedwell@palmbeachschools.org

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, March 18, 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