



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2022
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario (RS)**
SUBJECT: March 18, 2022, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: May 20, 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 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. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services, and the agency they represented. Approximately 35 people were on the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Cultural Considerations for Afghan Refugees and Resettlement”: Dr. Adam Silverman, Technical Lead, Senior Subject Matter Expert, and National Security Consultant, Helios, Global Inc. The presentation was given by Dr Adam Silverman, who currently serves as technical lead, senior subject matter expert, and national security consultant with Helios Global, Inc and specializes in cultural considerations for strategy, policy, and operations. Dr Silverman gave a presentation on Cultural Considerations Regarding Afghan Refugees & Resettlement. Questions and answers were addressed, and the PowerPoint presentation will be share.

Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc.: Rachel Mondesir, Community Engagement Manager, - (ELCPBC) Provided a presentation on the Learning the Signs of Appropriate Child Development and the importance of acting early. The PowerPoint presentation is available. Rachel invited all families that would be able to participate and are asking for you to invite them to join. As this is a pop-up play time, they won't have opportunities to hear from other agencies. Opportunities organizations can join ELC with. Email or please call 561-514-3300 or email rachel.mondesir@elcpalmbeach.org for more information or to share information with your staff or families.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Jarrell, Donald Don Jarrell | Community Relations Officer presented USCIS updates on Afghan nationals and Ukrainian paroled into the United States. 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. Please see links; <https://www.uscis.gov/outreach/upcoming-national-engagements/citizenship-promotion-for-special-immigrant-juveniles-t-and-u-nonimmigrants-and-vawa-self>. Also: <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/secretary-mayorkas-designates-afghanistan-for-temporary-protected-status> and <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/secretary-mayorkas-designates-ukraine-for-temporary-protected-status-for-18-months>

Department of Health-Broward County (DOH): Merlene Ramnon PhD, MPH, MSN, RN, Community Health Promotion and Education Director, gave a report on the RS Health Clinic and handling the influx of refugees. 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, Marcia Bahia PBSO bahiam@pbsso.org are offering workshops on crime/gang prevention & Lifetime of Consequences, and Anti-Bullying. Great for kids, teens, parents, and providers. For additional information please contact Marcia at bahiam@pbsso.org

Palm Beach County Library System (PBCLS): Maribel DeJesus, Multicultural Librarian PBCLS provided information regarding all free services. Library services in PBC are now open for in person resources and access to all the branches and hours of operations. 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>.

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. 211 Resource Guides also located at <https://211palmbeach.org/publications-reports>. Just Call (866) 882-2991. Patrice reminded all organizations to update the 211 Database: email your agency info or updates (changes etc.) to judi.hechtman@211pbtc.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 previously seen. Claudia encourages all clients to be referred to the DCF Services Center and not to delay the application as the RS benefits are time limited. Additional information can be located at DCF website; myflflorida.com.

Refugee Services Program (RS/DCF) – Ileana Bustelo, RS Deputy Director updated on RS/DCF. Florida has experienced an increase of new arrivals in categories mostly from Cuba and Haiti. RS is monitoring as we continue with new developments.

Refugee task forces meetings will continue virtual via Microsoft meetings until further notice. Miriam thanks all for their collaboration and sharing all their resources.

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. Francisco Figueroa, Program Administrator, CWS reported on the high increase of new arrival especially Cuban and Haitian. CRS is experiencing increases of new arrivals processing intake and increases in case management. 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. **Natalia Patino, Supervising Attorney** at Church World Service, updated reported on the CRS Legal Services.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, May 20, 2022**

Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Location: TBA

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

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