



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 19, 2021
TO: Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario (RS)**
SUBJECT: July 15, 2021, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: September 15, 2021
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 meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services and the agency they represented. Approximately 40 people called and join in the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Stated -HUD laws cover all renters, regardless of immigration status, HUD does not ask about their immigration status. HUD does education and outreach for renters and landlords to understand and exercise their rights. HUD does education and outreach for tenants to increased compliance. They focus on the refugee community and how HUD services and their relationship with the real estate market can collaborate for the best of all refugees. Some of the topics specifically cover; how to protect the rights of the essential renters who are keeping the country moving during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, by preventing evictions and providing certainty on the eligibility criteria, this action will prevent homelessness and unstable housing among an already vulnerable population.

- HUD's action keeps families together. With today's action, HUD asserts its strong commitment to immigrant rights and preventing family separation.
- HUD's action bolsters fair housing efforts. Today's action reduces the possibility of using eligible immigration status as a pretext for discrimination against individuals based on their race and national origin. refugees' clients. HUD outreach materials regarding refugee/asylee issues was distributed. The information about their program that was just started in South Florida, was disseminate. These are extremely important topics for the refuge population (and our refugee task force members). Training to agencies' staff was offered. In addition to the flyers and the Power Point Presentation was share to the task force members. t answered several questions from the members and shared there contact information; @dol.gov.

ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN**GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Berta Cassidy, Community Relations Officer (CRO), USCIS, Miami and Caribbean District, participated. USCIS updates:

- Rescheduling Biometric Services Appointments by Phone.
- Citizenship Instruction and Naturalization Application Services: This opportunity will fund public or nonprofit organizations that offer both citizenship instruction and naturalization application services to lawful permanent residents. USCIS expects to award 33 organizations up to \$250,000 each for two years through this opportunity. Applications are due by July 16, 2021.
- Refugee and Asylee Integration Services Program: This grant opportunity will provide extended integration services with a focus on individualized programming to former refugees and asylees to attain the skills and knowledge required for successful citizenship. It will also provide other services that foster a sense of belonging and attachment to the United States. The

program has expanded eligibility to include lawful permanent residents who were admitted or entered the United States as Cuban or Haitian entrants or individuals admitted on a Special Immigrant Visa. Applications are due by July 16, 2021. USCIS expect to announce award recipients in September 2021.

Berta, shared her contact information Office: 305.762.8211, Cell: 786.351.9497 and email; roketa.f.mansfield@uscis.dhs.gov

Department of Health-Broward County (DOH): Migdalia Diaz Nieves, MAS, Office Operations Supervisor II, TB/Hepatitis, Refugee Coordinator, Florida Department of Health-Broward County RS Health Clinic reported they have seen an increase in new arrivals. Most of Broward's new arrivals were Cuban and Haitian entrants and parolees. All walking's are accepted but appointments are strongly encouraged by calling 954-467-4700 Ext. 4550. Migdalia stated that so far in March they had 39 refugees and about 15 in April. The Refugee Health Program is a voluntary program that provides free health screening to eligible persons as designated by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. These screenings usually occur 30-90 days after the refugee arrives in the United States. For information regarding eligibility and services please see the Florida Department of Health Refugee Health Program web-site. Migdalia Diaz Nieves, MAS, Office Operations Supervisor II, TB/Hepatitis, Refugee Coordinator, DOH, is located at 2421 S.W. 6th Avenue, 1st Floor, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315. Office: (954) 412-7166 and email: Migdalia.Diaz-Nieves@flhealth.gov. The information regarding COVID vaccine is available at the DOH Broward website at <http://broward.floridahealth.gov>.

Broward County Library: Vonda Ward Bryant, Learning Services Coordinator, Broward County Library provided information regarding all free services. Including the USCIS presentation is hosted by Broward County Library. U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services Information Session, Temporary Protected Status (TPS)/Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Venezuela, Thursday, June 10th, 2021, 12:00—1:00 p.m. This Program in English. Registration required at: <http://broward.libnet.info/event/5126440>. Please send general questions by June 7th to learningservices@broward.org for this event. Also Wednesday, June 16, 2021:12:00—1:00 p.m. Program is in Spanish. This USCIS presentation required registration at: <http://broward.libnet.info/event/5126450>. Please send general questions by June 11th learningservices@broward.org for this event.

Go to Broward.org/Library for access to all of the above and library branches and hours of operations. Visit www.broward.org/library for updated information.

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. These documentations require various processes for eligibility verification. All applications are handled on a case by case basics. She reminded all applicants to upload their documentation with the DCF benefits application to help with the eligibility process. Claudia reported the latest regarding DCF stores front are open, however due to pandemic visiting an ACCESS Community Partner or filing online or calling the call center is encouraged. The Commercial/DCF lobby office will be closed for all clients. The store front is in Oakland is bigger. ESS eligibility worker still needs the Social Security Administration (SSA) verification application and SSA 2275 Form to document client's attempts to apply for none-working SS number. Additional information can be located at DCF website; myflflorida.com. Claudia can be reach at claudia.arce@myflfamilies.com

RS Contracted providers:

Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS); Oscar Rivera, Director, Church World Service spoke about their programs. The MG has been slow in enrolling new clients mostly due to delays in Employment Authorization documents (EAD). The EAD delays some are up to 8 months and is impacting all their employment programs. Church World Service (CWS) provided overview information on all their programs and the CRS. The CRS is assisting larger group of recent arrivals from Haiti and increases numbers of Cuban. Most of the new arrivals need help with the DCF application for benefits. The CWS/Broward telephone number is 954-689-6466 and the contact staff are:

Career Sources of Broward County (CRSBC); Jaime Corneally reported on their TANF program. TANF clients are now required to report for training and employable activities. CRS/CWS will work with Career Sources for work registration requirements. CRS/CWS will signed the DCF letter for those clients that require registration.

St. Thomas University Human Rights Instituted (STHRI)- Cristina Reis, Esq. Director stated many new arrivals with different types of documentation. These documents required additional reviews to ensure legal actions. Some new arrivals immigration documents do not have an Alien number and are not able to apply for public benefits. The EAD delays some are up to 8 months. Some of Entrants are only given these documents upon release and are asked to visit ICE to complete their processing. They are unable to access any services with these documents.

Church World Service, Legal Program (CWS); David Claros, Attorney Supervisor. The legal program has been slow in filing for clients mostly due to delays in immigration services. Employment Authorization documents (EAD) big delays.

Project RENEW/Broward College (PR/BC): Jocelyn Martinez, PR/BC Director Project RENEW & Project RECAP not present and email a note for no updates.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Thursday, September 16, 2021**

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