



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 23, 2021
TO: Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario (RS)**
SUBJECT: September 16, 2021, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: November 18, 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 welcome 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 45 people called and join in the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Ed Garnier, Care Coordinator Supervisor, ESS, DCF provider overview presentation on the new Care Coordination Program (CC). Ed was very excited to review Care Coordination Program, the eligibility requirements for participation and how you can be a part of this process assisting our common population group that face limitations in the community which affects them adversely and assist us in creating an equitable environment for them to thrive in. The Care Coordinator staff is now call Care Navigators (CN) and offers resources throughout the SER. The goal of the Care Coordination program is to reduce the number of families in crisis. We aim to do this by focusing on what we have identified is our target population which consists of individuals who are impoverished between the ages of 18 and older that are either receiving benefits or meet the qualification to be in receipt of benefits and require crisis intervention. Early engagement with our target population, by assessing their needs and practicing interventions helps reduce instability in the household and lifetime dependency on assistance programs. Once completion of the assessment, the Care Coordinator will complete a care plan and identify community partners that has available resources to be an asset to the participant in eliminating their barriers. A copy of the completed Care Plan will be provided to the participant. Care Coordinators complete weekly contacts with the participants to ensure that there are no new barriers or emergencies that require immediate intervention. CN stay connected with participants via emails, phone calls, email text messaging, mail, and monthly face to face that will be starting soon now that DCF lobbies are opened. All referrals and self-referrals are welcome. A short video on the Care Navigators was watched on Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity and the Power Point Presentation was shared with all members via email.

Renée Rivers, Community Engagement Manager, Aunt Bertha provided an overview presentation on MyFloridaMyFamily, the Aunt Bertha (AB) Resources. Their mission is to connect all people in need and the programs that serve them as it's too hard to navigate the system and Aunt Bertha is trying to make it easier. MyFloridaMyFamily .com is an online directory of free and reduced cost services. DCF's preferred method for client referrals, free to those looking for help, free for nonprofits to manage their programs. MyFloridaMyFamily website is connecting FL Families to needed services is powered by Aunt Bertha. Aunt Bertha is here in FL and anywhere and anytime across the U.S. and is private and secure. The tool is easy to use and is meant to help those in need and the organizations that serve them. The Aunt Bertha platform was designed to empower Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to actively take part in the nationwide social care network that AB've been building since 2010. Through partnership with the DCF, it was created the MyFloridaMyFamilywebsite. One of the main ways CBOs can join this network is by creating

a free account and claiming their programs. The social care network built at Aunt Bertha is the strongest, most-utilized, and most-trusted social care network in the country. An organization that claims its programs on the platform not only actively joins this robust network, but also unlocks access to a free toolkit to manage their program(s) through the platform. The network data can also be used for CBO in identify community needs and create analytical reports. Renée offered one on one virtual presentations to those organization interested. Please reach her at rrivers@auntbertha.

The Overview on Broward College's Job Corps Scholars Grant Program was cancelled by Tanya Blake, Support Specialist.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Roketa Mansfield and Berta Cassidy, Community Relations Officers (CRO), USCIS, Miami and Caribbean District, participated. Roketa Mansfield provided USCIS updates: Effective Oct. 1, 2021, applicants subject to the immigration medical examination must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before the civil surgeon can complete an immigration medical examination and sign Form I-693, Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record. This guidance applies prospectively to Form I-693 signed by civil surgeons on or after Oct. 1, 2021. The Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization, released on July 2, 2021, calls for a community-based approach to encouraging the roughly 9 million lawful permanent residents eligible for naturalization. <https://www.state.gov/countries-areas/afghanistan/> <https://www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome>. USCIS Extends Evidence of Status for Conditional Permanent Residents to 24 Months with Pending Form I-751 or Form I-829. The Department of Homeland Security has announced the automatic extension of TPS designations for El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Sudan. TPS beneficiaries from these six countries will retain their status, provided they continue to meet all the individual requirements for TPS eligibility. The automatic extension of TPS-related documentation includes Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) through Dec. 31, 2022. Please join the Haiti TPS, Virtual Information Session, In Haitian Creole, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on Tuesday, October 19th at 2-3PM for a virtual information session on Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Haiti presented in Haitian Creole. Learn what TPS is, how you qualify, and how to file an application. No registration is required. Join from the link and email USCISOrlandoCommunityRelations@uscis.dhs.gov to receive the link. Join by phone: 415-527-5035 US Toll (meeting number 2764 276 9667). Information was also provided on the USCIS Expands Partnership with Social Security Administration and the Afghan Nationals on Parole Into the United States. Email Roroketa.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. Appointments by calling 954-467-4700 Ext. 4550. Migdalia stated that 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 or 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.

Broward County Library (BCL): Vonda Ward Bryant, Learning Services Coordinator, Broward County Library provided information regarding all free services. Including the Broward County Library NEA Big Read. The NEA is a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts and Arts Midwest that provides grants to libraries and other organizations to conduct a variety of activities around a chosen book. The book *The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir* by Thi Bui. This beautifully illustrated and emotional story is an evocative memoir about the search for a better future and a longing for the past. Exploring the anguish of immigration and the lasting effects that displacement has on a child and her family, Bui documents the story of her family's daring escape after the fall of South Vietnam in the 1970s, and the difficulties they faced building new lives for themselves. The book chosen is *The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir* by Thi Bui. This book shares the story of several generations of Vietnamese immigrants. The story that is similar to so many that we serve through the organizations within the Broward Area Refugee Taskforce. Broward County Libraries are open to the public Monday - Friday 10 am - 6 pm at most locations. Regionals are open two nights a week until 7 pm and Saturdays. Go to our website at www.broward.org/Library for library locations, hours, online events and resources. BCL offer English and Citizenship classes online. BCL also offer a plethora of other resources online. BCL only have 8 Career Online High School scholarships left if you know someone who needs a high school diploma please send them to Broward.org/Library/Education and select Career Online High School (COHS). Go to Broward.org/Library for access to all the above and library branches and hours of operations. Visit www.broward.org/library for updated information.

Agency for Health Care Administration, Jerome Hill – Program Operations Administrator – AHCA Doral – Bureau of Medicaid (RPAAHCA) offered the updates. Reminded also that AHCA is the fiscal agent and financial function of the Medicaid and DCF is responsible for the eligibility criteria.

Children Services Council of Broward (CSCB) - Danielle Bachelder indicated during the Broward Refugee Task Force, feel free to get the Family Resources Guide for Broward. As you know is in 3 languages and is very resourceful. Danielle reported on their updates and invited all organization to order the Family Resources Guide available in three languages Free to all families. Up to 200 physical copies can be picked up, via prior arrangement, at the Children's Services Council. Please get in touch with Andrew Leone aleone@cscbroward.org or Danielle Bachelder dbachelder@cscbroward.org to arrange a drive-by pick-up. To obtain more than 200 copies, don't hesitate to get in touch with Dina @ Kessler Creative: dkessler@kesslercreative.com

Church World Service- Carlos I. Naranjo, Resettlement Program Coordinator, Church World Service provided presentation regarding their resettlement programs and supports on the intention to increase the refugee and to grant admission to asylum seekers at the borders, Central America Minors and Afghans individuals. CWS has create capacity for the anticipated high number of refugees that will arrive in FY22. For questions on the programs please email CWS-HQ at:

AfghanPlacementAssistance@cwsglobal.org, Please, refer all local APA inquiries to CWS Miami: (305)774-6770; cnaranjo@cwsglobal.org; rrojas@cwsglobal.org

Human Trafficking -Theresa Kennedy, DCF Regional HT Coordinator reported on the Along with the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking and its partners, Attorney General Ashley Moody is pleased to announce the 2021 Human Trafficking Summit will be held virtually on Tuesday, October 5, 2021.

U.S. Department of Labor / Wage and Hour Division- Ariel G Rivera Maldonado with the U.S. Department of Labor / Wage and Hour Division provided updates on their resources.

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

Refugee Services Program (RS/DCF) – David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, RS/DCF, informed the task force that the Miami Comprehensive Refugee Services contract was awarded to Youth C-Op. He also informed the task force that SNAP benefits will increase on October 1 for all recipients. The increase in SNAP benefit will happen automatically. Recipients do not need to do anything to receive this increase.

RS Contracted providers:

Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS); not present and no update reports. The CRS/CWS/Broward telephone number is 954-689-6466.

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, November 18, 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