



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 18, 2021
TO: Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario (RS)**
SUBJECT: November 18, 2021, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: January 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 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 35 people joined the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Emily Hackerson, Director of Products and Services provider overview presentation on the Upwardly Global organizations resources. Emily was very excited to review the various resources: Job Coaching & Skilling Program, Jobversity by Upwardly Global is a technical assistance initiative in which we deliver our digital learning tools and Public Platform which open access to a curated set of self- paced job search and skill-building tools via our online learning platform. Upwardly Global's (UpGlo) is to lift immigrant professionals, including refugees and asylum seekers, out of underemployment into thriving wage jobs that align with their skills and education. They build an inclusive, future-ready workforce that embraces the skills of immigrant and refugee professionals. Upwardly Global's introductory and free online learning pathway, "Journey to a Job," to master 5 critical steps in the U.S. Job Search, including how to create an American-style resume and licensing requirements for specific careers. Upwardly Global offers job search tools for immigrant job seekers. Additional resources understanding the culture and communication, interview skills, licensing requirements and Afghan Job Seekers: Public Portal Resource. The Power Point Presentation was shared with all members via email.

Tanya Blake, Youth Career Coach Grant Support Specialist, Broward College, introduced the Broward College's Job Corps Scholars Grant Program. Their mission is to connect all students with the grant with the certification program. The program helps students with resume writing, scholarships, employment and connect to resources in the community. Refugee's students can also benefit of the grant. The Overview on Broward College's Job Corps Scholars Grant Program will be introduced in detailed during the next by task force meeting Tanya Blake, director.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Berta Cassidy, Community Relations Officers (CRO), USCIS, Miami and Caribbean District, participated. Berta and Roketa Mansfield provided USCIS updates information on How to contact the USCIS Center Chat: Distribute later by email; the latest revision of our local listing of U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Recognized Organizations attached. These are non-profit organizations with permission to practice immigration law through Accredited Representatives. This information may also be found on the DOJ website at: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognized-organizations-and-accredited-representatives-roster-state-and-city>.

Department of Health-Broward County (DOH): 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.

Broward County Library (BCL): Vonda Ward Bryant, Learning Services Coordinator Broward County provided information regarding all free services. Library services in Broward now open for in person resources and access to all the branches and hours of operations. Visit www.BCLS.org/library for updated information. Vonda reminded to encourage high school students to apply for the scholarship grant still available. Over 147 students have graduated with the help of these services.

Church World Service (CWS): Carlos Naranjo, Reception and Placement (R&P) Coordinator informed on their 200 assurances for travel under the R&P. As of today, 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. Oscar Rivera, Director CWS update on all CRS services including the new unaccompanied refugee minors and home study program in addition to their APA.

Survivors of Torture (FCST): Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt, MSW, Program Coordinator From the Florida Center for Survivors of Torture, Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services provided updates regarding their benefits. 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.

Career Sources of Broward County (CRSBC); no updates.

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

Refugee Services Program (RS/DCF) – David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, RS/DCF. David mentioned that SNAP benefits increased nationwide, and arrivals have increased statewide over the last few months. Florida has experienced an increase of new

arrivals from Cuban, Haiti, and Afghanistan. He explained that the most recent ORR Policy Letter made Afghans with humanitarian parole eligible for refugee services and benefits.

RS Contracted providers:

Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS); Jeanette Alban, CWS update on CRS services including the challenges of new cases with a longer wait time to obtain EAD. CRS employment staff continue to call previously clients to offer vocational and career ladder services and improving the client's self-sufficiency. Employment orientations are offered mainly via phone services.

ST. Thomas University, Human Right Institute (STHRI); Christine Reis Esq. | Director of the Human Rights Institute, St. Thomas University. The legal program has been filing for clients however there is a backlog mostly due to delays in immigration services approvals. Employment Authorization documents (EAD) have big delays. The new arrivals presenting many different immigrations documents, some without Alien numbers and in one family composition one member may have parole and not the rest of the family's members. Cristine reminder to email to ICE communications to request Alien number. Many new arrivals require appointment with ICE however ICE has backlogs. These is creating lots of filling and legal work, especially asylum applications. STHRI is also referring those not been able to be served to other certified legal services provider for additional help with filing for parole.

Project RENEW: Jocelyne Martinez, Broward Colle/project RENEW (PR/BC) Director Adult Education provided updates. PR/BC has students' educational programs serving over 500 students. Enrollment/registrations are continuous. BC do registrations every day. PR/BC follows the College's academic calendar offering full-term classes every term: Fall term runs from September - December; Spring term January - May; and Summer term May-August.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 20, 2022

Time: 10:00 AM to 12PM

Location: TBA

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