



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Shevaun L. Harris**  
Secretary

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 25, 2021  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** March 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

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**THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:**

**Date:** May 12, 2021  
**Time:** 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.  
**Location:** TBD  
**Contact:** LeAndra Stafford  
**Office:** (904) 485-9540  
**Cell:** (904) 524-1316  
**E-Mail:** Leandra.Stafford@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Jacksonville area for many years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations, and mutual assistance associations. An average of about twenty-five to thirty people 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!***

5920 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, Florida 32211

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

## JACKSONVILLE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

### INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held via teleconference. LeAndra Stafford, Community Liaison, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program and facilitated the meeting. There were 26 people in attendance on Microsoft Teams virtual meeting and identified themselves in the chat section. David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, as well as several DCF staff was also in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants identified themselves by agency.

### GUEST PRESENTATION

- 1.) Laura Cook, Refugee Services Program Manager, Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida

#### *Jacksonville Job Market Analysis*

- LSS employment services placed 227 clients in FY20.
- 52% of clients were male and 48% were female.
- Some refugees have occupational experiences prior to coming to the US, including students, laborers, farmers, and Housewives/ self-employed.
- The top hiring companies are Beaver Street Fisheries, Coach, Amazon, and Crown Products.
- The average wage is \$11.27 for clients hired through employment services, the highest placed wage was \$20 and lowest placed wage is \$8.46.
- The top occupations of clients placed in FY20 were: Production Worker, Laborer, Warehouse Worker, and Housekeeper.
- The fastest growing occupations are: Cooks, Personal Care Aids, Massage Therapists, Food Prep and Serving, and Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks.

- 2.) Elaine McArthur, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Miami District

#### *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

- EEOC is a federal agency responsible for ensuring equal employment opportunity through federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination against individuals in a protected class.
- Protected Categories: Religion, Race, Sex/Pregnancy/LGBT, Color, National Origin, Age, Disability and Genetic Information
- Employers who employ 15 or more individuals must adhere to the federal law prohibiting employment discrimination and EEOC oversight.
- EEOC and IER can overlap in the jurisdiction with national origin. EEOC handles the cases with 15 or employees and IER handles the cases with 14 or less employees.

- 3.) Liza Zamd, Senior Trial Attorney U.S. Dept of Justice Civil Rights Division-Immigration and Employee Rights Section

#### *Refugees' and Asylees Right to Work*

- Calls can be done anonymous through hotline, language services are available, Mon – Fri 9 am – 5 pm ET

- ❖ Employer 1-800-255-8155
- ❖ Worker 1-800-255-7688
- Some hotline examples are: Background checks, Banks, Citizenship requirements, E-Verify/SAVE, DMV or badging, Social Security Numbers, Unfair documentation practices, and Form I-9 issues
- Usually IER can resolve issues with making a phone call to resolve the issues informally with interventions
- Citizenship Status Discrimination examples; Hiring, Firing, Recruitment, or referral for a fee
- With certain exceptions usually employers can't advertise "U.S citizenship only" employment, IER can assist with determining the difference between US person (refugees and asylees are included in this category) or US citizen
- National Origin discrimination include: Hiring, Firing, Recruitment, or referral for a fee, IER investigates national origin claims that fall outside the EEOC's jurisdiction (usually 4-14 employees)
- National origin examples are English skills, Ancestry, Clothing, Country of Birth, Name, Accent

### **REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE**

- **Lutheran Social Services (Laura Cook, Refugee Services Program Manager):**
  - **CRS Summary**
    - ❖ Lutheran Social Services (LSS) continues to operate. They are adhering to social distancing guidelines.
    - ❖ All providers are open and being creative in reaching out to their clients either by video, phone or by face to face with social distance measures
    - ❖ They are working on subcontract site audits
  - Employment: LSS made 17 placements in the last month, 2 people enrolled into the career laddering program
  - Youth Program is currently serving 26 clients and completed 10 walkin assessments for Feb.
  - TA- free transportation to vaccine sites. Outreach materials in various languages coming soon! Anyone can use REDI Ride for a FREE door to door service to vaccine sites. Appointment must be made 2 hours before you would like to get picked up. Free transportation on buses to vaccine sites.
  - The food pantry is now open 5 days per week 10 am – 12 pm for those in need. Feeding Northeast Florida will do a big food give away on 11/20/20
- **Catholic Charities Bureau (Anna Lindler, Associate Director):**
  - Match Grant: 6 MG open cases with a total of 27 individuals. 5 are self-sufficient and 1 family is currently looking for a job.
  - Reception & Placement (R&P): 4 RP open cases - total 19 individuals; SS application being processed at the Port of entry for both SIV and Refugee; RP & MG clients receiving food from CCB Food Pantry.
  - Tier Case Management Program: 13 new cases which is 2 Tier 3 cases and 11 Tier 1 cases; Current case status 15 Cases with 9 Tier 3 cases and 6 Tier 1 cases

- ESOL: English classes are being offered online
  - ❖ Had 84 students in virtual classes.
  - ❖ February update - 14 new intakes completed; 194 guidance & retention; 21 enrolled refugees; 6 LCP; 19 tested
  - ❖ Testing is conducted on Thurs and Fridays at CCB
  - ❖ Have classes in AM & PM but with technology class available times are flexible
- **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**
  - No Updates
- **Early Learning Coalition (ELC):**
  - No Updates
- **Department of Health (DOH)**
  - The Refugee clinic is still open and seeing refugees for vaccinations. Conducting Refugee Services 2 days (Mon & Wed) per week will increase when arrivals increase.
  - DOH is still providing COVID testing Tues- Fri at the refugee clinic location
  - Would like the community partners to educate the refugees in the importance of cooperation with the clinic concerning COVID status.
  - COVID vaccine locations: The main state site is at Regency Mall. Federal pop up sites located at Gateway Mall and Normandy Senior Center will close and move to another location in the city.
  - Please encourage all to answer calls from 904-253-1850. There are a lot of spam calls, but DOH will allow them to call us at 904-253-1850.

## **GENERAL UPDATES**

### **United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

- Venezuelans now have Temporary Protected Status (TPS) which is different from asylum. TPS status “stops the clock” on the requirement to file for asylum with one year of arriving in the United States, if the one-year clock as not already expired. Anyone from Venezuela can file for TPS (Form I-821) effective March 9, 2021 to Sept 5, 2021. It’s a 180- day registration period.
- With the filing of Form I-821, you can also request an Employment Authorization (EAD)
- The Jacksonville Field Office Director, Lisa Bradley will become the temporary Acting Field Director for Orlando until Sept 2021. The Jacksonville office will rotate supervisors in her absence.

**ACHA**

- ACHA has a new Secretary Simone Marstiller after Shevaun Harris leaves to head DCF
- Individuals should call the helpline with any concerns regarding the Healthcare Marketplace or Medicaid (#1-877-254-1055)
- The staff is teleworking but still available to assist customers Monday – Thursday Hours: 8 am – 5 pm

**FSCJ ESOL**

- No Updates

**YMCA**

- They continue to provide support services. Clients are being seen on site with social distance practices/ precautions
- They are assisting clients with benefits, food stamps, school enrollments for families over 5 years or immigrants
- They also provide Basic English Classes and Citizenship Classes in the evenings
- They are providing food pantry three days per week, with a concentration to assist residents in the Dupont area, however, all are welcome to get food
- Started English and Citizenship classes, the classes will be smaller due to pandemic

**Red Cross**

- No Updates

**Center for Language & Culture (CLC)**

- No Update

**UNF**

- No Update

**Beyond 90**

- They have finalized the merger between them and Project for Healing
- They will now have support services and a wellness center
- They will have an upcoming open house for their new location, TBD

**NEW ISSUES/ ACTIONS TAKEN**

David Draper, Community Liaison Supervisor

- 1.) Information on DCF's response to COVID-19 can be found on the DCF website.
- 2.) DCF has a new Secretary, Shevaun Harris, she comes from ACHA
- 3.) Office of Refugee Resettlement also has a new Director, Cindy Huang
- 4.) There is an anticipation of an increased number of arrivals