



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun L. Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 10, 2021
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: September 8, 2021, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: November 10, 2021
Time: 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Location: TBD
Contact: LeAndra Stafford
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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

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 video remote meeting. LeAndra Stafford, Community Liaison, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program and facilitated the meeting. There were 31 people in attendance on Microsoft Teams virtual meeting. Guests included: Lance Gambis, FBI. 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 in the chat box.

GUEST PRESENTATION

Patricia Emmanuelli, Advocate Coordinator, Women's Center of Jacksonville

Who Are We and What Services Are Available?

- The Women's Center is a certified rape crisis center and have been providing services for 26 years
- They serve as a rape recovery team for all genders; Services are available to survivors of all genders in Duval, Nassau, and Baker Co, whether they have chosen to report the crime to police
- They offer physical and forensic exams, advocacy, and other avenues of support like responding to a sexual assault at hospitals with an officer
- They offer co survivor and LGBTQ support groups
- They provide specialized advocacy and support for elder survivors (over the age of 50) of sexual, physical, emotional, and financial exploitation
- They are trained to work with young children, and they offer counseling for children 13 years and up and refer the younger children for other counseling services
- Have support groups in English and Spanish and have access to the Language Line. Also have counselors who speak Spanish. Everything is always confidential.

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 now open to the public and serving everyone
 - Employment: LSS made 15 placement and had 1 career ladder in the last month.
 - Youth Program is currently serving 10 clients and have started after school tutoring
 - Mentoring Program have 19 mentees
 - TCM served 50 clients

- R&P received 58 arrivals this year; Starting to receive Afghans under the Welcoming Allies Program, they have agreed to resettle 150.
- **Catholic Charities Bureau (Anna Lindler, Associate Director):**
 - CCB is getting back in the building and opening to clients by appointment only
 - CCB has a new Regional Director, Lori Weber
 - R&P has resettled 53 refugees this year. Currently have 6 cases open
 - CCB agreed to resettle 200 Afghans through the Welcoming Allies Program
 - They have received 4 truckloads of supplies from the Islamic Center (enough to be able to serve 50 people)
 - Match Grant: 9 open cases with 27 individuals (6 families), the job market is great and have been able to find jobs easily
 - ESOL: Classes will return to On-line due to the pandemic concerns
 - ❖ 122 new intakes, tested 141 clients (Testing is conducted on Thurs and Fridays at CCB)
 - ❖ In search for a teacher to fill an open position
 - ❖ Attendance in refugee specific classes: 120
 - ❖ For the upper-level classes (vouchers to FSCJ), they had 38 voucher referrals
 - ❖ GenPro Solar donated 70 laptops to CCB for their ESOL program along with a monetary donation to assist with internet services to clients who don't have access.
- **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**
 - No Updates
- **Early Learning Coalition (ELC):**
 - No Updates
- **Department of Health (DOH)**
 - No Updates
- **Duval DOH:**
 - No Updates

GENERAL UPDATES

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

- To reschedule appointments applicants, need to call 1-800-375-5283.
- For the latest news and updates on USCIS: [News | USCIS](#)
- There will be a virtual listening session (Public Charge making new rules)
- On 09/21/21, Jacksonville field office stakeholder Meeting at 10 am
- Continue pushing Community awareness TPS for Haiti and Venezuela

ACHA

- No Updates

FSCJ ESOL

- They have started the A session and is still registering for B session.
- Have 500 students registered to attend the sessions
- They are currently offering both on-line and f2f classes

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
- Will be celebrating Welcoming Week on Sept 18, 21 at the Williams Family YMCA from 10-2 pm. It will be international food tasting and games

Red Cross

- No Updates

Center for Language & Culture (CLC)

- No Updates

UNF

- No Update

Beyond 90

- Have expanded hours to Mon – Thurs 10 am – 5 pm

NEW ISSUES/ ACTIONS TAKEN

David Draper, Community Liaison Supervisor

- 1.) SNAP benefits increased nationwide
- 2.) Arrivals are increasing statewide over the last few months; expect R&P to also increase in the coming months