



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun L. Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 10, 2021

TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force

FROM: LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)

SUBJECT: Meeting Minutes – November 10, 2021

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: January 12, 2022
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: 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

1. Selena Webster-Bass, Founder/ CEO, Voices Institute LLC.

Healing the Wounds of Refugee Trauma

- Trauma: the emotional response from an event, series of events, or circumstances that are interpreted as harmful or life threatening and have the potential to result in lasting negative effects on one's physical, mental, social emotional or spiritual well-being
- Refugee Trauma: While in their country of origin, refugee families and their children may have experienced traumatic events or hardships including: Violence, War, Lack of food, water, and shelter, Physical injuries, Torture, Forced labor, Lack of medical care, Loss of loved ones, and/or Disruption in or lack of access to schooling
- Core Stressors for Refugees: Traumatic Stressors, Resettlement Stressors, Acculturation Stressors, and Isolation Stressors
- Recognizing and healing wounds of racial trauma: Affirmation and acknowledgement; Making space for race; Racial storytelling; Validation; Process of naming; Counteract devaluation; and Rechanneling the rage
- Offer social, emotional, and environmental support
- L.E.A.R.N Model
 - a) L – Listen with empathy and understanding to the client's perceptions of the problem
 - b) E – Explain your perceptions of the client's problem
 - c) A – Acknowledge and discuss the differences and similarities of perceptions of the client and the provider
 - d) R – Recommend resources
 - e) N – Negotiate agreement, treatment, care plan
- Bridging Faith Communities and Behavioral health
 - a) Collaborate: Partner with culturally responsive behavioral health providers for referrals and in promoting mental health and wellbeing
 - b) Cope: Offer faith, hope, and cultivate resilience by assisting in creating alternative narratives
 - c) Connect: Provider prayer, sacred texts, and social supports to those struggling with mental health challenges and trauma

- d) Commune: Provide concrete supports to reduce gaps in meeting basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, masks) and transformational supports to assist in physical personal, financial, and professional transformation
 - e) Avoid demonizing those struggling with trauma and viewing as mental health challenges as “personal weakness”
2. Laura Goodwin, Case Manager, FSCJ Workforce Recovery Training Program
FSCJ Fast Track Construction Program
- Hurricane Irma 2017 caused over 85 million in damages to the city of Jacksonville, due to the event funding was made available to prepare for the next disaster.
 - FDOE created Rebuild Florida Workforce Recovery Training Program
 - Trains Floridians in the construction trades necessary to support disaster recovery efforts www.RebuildFlorida.gov
 - FSCJ offers 3 classes for free to students who qualify for the Fast-Track Construction Program:
 - a) Intro to Basic Construction Skills
 - b) OSHA 30
 - c) HAZWOPER 40
 - For qualified individuals the grant program includes the cost of workforce instruction, books, certifications toolbelts, and materials
 - To Qualify: Must be 18 years old or older and must be authorized to work in the U.S.
 - How does it benefit refugees?
 - a) Free to those who qualify
 - b) Equips them to be in the workforce
 - c) Places them in the workforce

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 17 placement and had 3 career ladder in the last month.
 - Youth Program is currently serving 12 clients and have started after school tutoring
 - Mentoring Program have 20 mentees
 - R&P received 78 arrivals so far this for FFY 2021-22
- **Catholic Charities Bureau (Anna Lindler, Associate Director):**
 - R&P has received 137 refugees so far this for FFY 2021-22
 - Match Grant: 132 individuals will be enrolled in the program during this quarter

- ESOL: Classes are On-line due to the pandemic concerns
 - ❖ 130 new intakes,
 - ❖ Attendance in refugee specific classes:132
 - ❖ For the upper-level classes (vouchers to FSCJ), they had 49 voucher referrals
- **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**
 - Increase in Cubans filing for Asylum for work permits
 - Increase in Haitian parolees' TPS applications
 - 41 intakes in October for legal status
 - Had 4 Afghans applying for EADs
- **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](#)
- Contact Center: <https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter>
- Tampa Asylum office has opened and will cover Jacksonville area as well. It will have 150 officers in this location
- Continue pushing Community awareness TPS for Haiti and Venezuela

ACHA

- No Updates

FSCJ ESOL

- They are finishing up the A & B sessions
- Offering support class along with the OSHA class in January 2022
- New classes start in January 2022, registration is open
- They are currently offering both on-line and f2f classes

YMCA

- Thanksgiving Potluck for Refugees and Immigrants will be on November 20, 2021 at Dupont YMCA at 12 to 2 pm.

- 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

- The Family links (international reunification) program is still in operation and accepting referrals

Center for Language & Culture (CLC)

- No Updates

UNF

- Continuing Partnerships for interns

Beyond 90

- No Updates

CareerSource

- Getting an influx of participants being referred from DCF
- They are partnering with the literacy alliance for ESOL
- They are partnering with LSS for life skill classes and resume prep classes
- In need of more community service opportunities

NEW ISSUES/ ACTIONS TAKEN

David Draper, Community Liaison Supervisor

- 1.) Afghans are eligible for services ORR policy release on 09/30/21
- 2.) Tallahassee, Tampa, Miami, and Jacksonville have seen Afghan arrivals
- 3.) Cuban and Haitian arrivals are presenting different eligibility documents
- 4.) Expect R&P arrivals to also increase in the coming months