



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun L. Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17th, 2021
TO: Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: David Draper, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: April 14th, 2021, Task Force Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: Wednesday, Jun 09th, 2021
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Location: Microsoft Teams or TBA

Contact: David Draper
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E-Mail: David.Draper@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Orlando 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 thirty to thirty-five 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 at the local, state and national level, request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, discuss refugee service needs and explore solutions to those needs. Meeting participants 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!

400 W. Robinson Street, S1111C, Orlando, Florida 32801

ORLANDO AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

This meeting was held through Microsoft Teams. Approximately 38 people were in attendance. David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, represented the Florida Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services (RS) Program; Rosa Chaves, Community Liaison for the Central Region, was also present. Everyone introduced themselves and the agencies that they represented.

Special presentation

- **Jenna Grambort - Trial Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice.** Provided an overview on Refugees' and Asylees' Right to Work and civil rights.
- **Anne Packham, MPH - Marketplace Project Director, Primary Care Access Network** provided information on affordable health insurance options for Floridians.

GENERAL UPDATES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anne Packham, Marketplace Project Coordinator informed the task force that special open enrollment is taking place from February 15 through May 15.

- **Vesna Bozic, USCIS Community Relations Officer**, informed the task force that Temporary Protected Status (TPS) will be available to Venezuelans soon (they should register by 9/5/21). Those with TPS may apply for employment authorization.
- **Felipe Sousa-Matos - City of Orlando, Multicultural Affairs**, announced that Ramadan Mubarak starts on Tuesday April 20th, 2021. On Tuesday, they will have a panel on Civil Rights. They will also host an annual Iftar dinner at the city of Orlando on May 3rd at 6:30 PM.
- **Fatima Ait Rami - Islamic Center of Orlando, Outreach Director**, announced 600 vaccines will be provided at their center. No registration is required. She will also share a flyer for their Iftar Dinner.
- **Wellington Ovalle – Department of Labor Federal Investigator**, is working with the community to protect workers. They are open to give presentation in the community. They continue to work with the Haitian Consulate.

- **Lourdes Mesias - Statewide Director Refugee Services Lutheran Services of Florida**, announced that with the new funding from the Department of State, they will be starting a Reception and Placement Program in Orlando. They anticipate resettling Congolese, Central Americans, and Burmese.
- **Sandra Algarin – Community Health Centers**, is providing vaccinations (clients must provide an ID).
- **Michael Holbrook – Catholic Charities Director**, stated that they are still seeing a significant increase in refugee arrivals. EAD issues are still impacting their clients.
- **Shaimaa Elawdan – Catholic Charities – ESL Program Manager Adult Education**, states that the adult education program is also seeing an increase in participants. They are expanding options for English classes.

David Draper, Department of Children and Families Refugee Services Community Liaison Manager encourages task force members to check the DCF COVID-19 webpage for updates on changes to services/benefits. Statewide, Cuban and Haitian arrivals have increased.

NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday June 9th, 2021

Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Location: Virtual Microsoft Teams

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