



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Shevaun L. Harris**  
Secretary

## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021  
**TO:** Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** David Draper, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Task Force Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** Wednesday, Aug 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
**Time:** 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon  
**Location:** Microsoft Teams or TBA

**Contact:** David Draper  
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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 47 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

- **Robert Vaden - Community Outreach & Resource Planning Specialist, and Ariel Rivera Maldonado Community Outreach & Resource Planning Specialist US Department of Labor - DOH, Wage and Hour Division – WHD** Provided and overview on the Department of Labor and the “Essential Workers, Essential Protections”
- **Lourdes Mesias - LSF Statewide Director Refugee Services, Lutheran Services Florida** Provided and information about the new LSF Reception and Placement Program in Orlando.

### GENERAL UPDATES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Laurie Stern – Executive Director Bethany Christian Services**, announced that they will be partnering with World Relief to open a Resettlement and Placement Program (R&P) in Orlando. They plan to resettle 75 individuals during Federal Fiscal Year 2022, They anticipate resettling Congolese and Central Americans.

- **Vesna Bozic, USCIS Community Relations Officer**, informed the task force that Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Venezuelans will become available on July 15, 2021. There is currently not start date for Haitian TPS. The USCIS Orlando Field Office will have a new director coming in at the end of the month.
- **Anne Packham, Marketplace Project Coordinator** stated that open enrollment for those that do not have healthcare was extended to August 15, 2021. Their organization is receiving additional funds and will be hiring new healthcare navigators.

- **Felipe Sousa-Matos - City of Orlando, Multicultural Affairs**, announced that H.O.L.A. will be assisting Venezuelans that need assistance with TPS. They also announced a mobile bus that will help provide vaccines in various Orlando neighborhoods.
- **Margarita Manon – UCF Marriage and Family Institute, Recruitment Specialist Lead, Project Harmony**, discussed their program which provides relationship education for couples. They have online and in-person activities (in both English and Spanish).
- **Pastor Gabriel Ipasu – Africans Family and Community Outreach AFCCO**, let the task force know that together with Summit Church, they will celebrate World Refugee Day on June 19, 2021, with an event at Englewood Community Park.
- **Shaimaa Elawdan – Catholic Charities – ESL Program Manager Adult Education**, stated that the number of clients continues to increase, and all programs are working at full capacity.
- **Monica Araujo – Catholic Charities – Case Management Lead**, informed the task force that since March this year, the number of clients continues to increase and they (Catholic Charities) plan to open on Saturdays twice a month in order to assist a greater number of clients. Also, they have had challenges getting appointments with the Social Security office.
- **David Draper, Department of Children and Families Refugee Services Community Liaison Manager** DCF Refugee Services stated that the current administration has committed to 62,000 arrivals for the remainder of this federal fiscal year. However, likely delays in background checks may decrease the number. During the next federal fiscal year, it is expected that the new cap on arrivals will be 130,000.

**NEXT MEETING**

**Date:** Wednesday Aug 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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

**Location:** Virtual Microsoft Teams

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