



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Chad Poppell**  
Secretary

## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 29, 2021  
**TO:** Members of the Palm Beach Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Miriam Rosario (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** January 22, 2021, Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** March 18, 2021  
**Time:** 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
**Location:** TBA  
**Contact:** Miriam Rosario  
**Office:** (561) 227-6722  
**Cell:** (561) 459-6098  
**E-Mail:** Miriam.rosario@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Palm Beach area in the past few years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and volunteer groups. An average of about twenty to twenty-five 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!*

Southeast Region - Circuit 15  
111 South Sapodilla Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

## **PALM BEACH AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The meeting was held via Teams Meeting, Miriam Rosario (MR), Southeast Community Liaison represented the DCF, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Miriam thanked all for their participation. The meeting was called to order and participants were asked to sign in the chat to introduce themselves, services, and the agency they represented. Miriam reminded all the Refugee Task Force meetings comply with no political statements.

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

The special presentation on Early Head Start and Child Care Community Partnership was presented by Raquel Leonard, Early Head Start Family Advocate, Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc. Early Head Start 6 weeks to 3 years, Head Start 3 years to 4 years old, Migrant or Seasonal Head Start 6 weeks to 4 y/o. On School readiness 6 weeks to 13 y/o, Low income families working or going to school at least 20 hrs/week. Always recruiting and serving families with: Children ages 6 weeks to 3 Yrs. Old, Families who live in the following areas: West Palm Beach, Riviera Beach, Lake Worth, Delray Beach, Belle Glade and Pahokee. Families with income below the 100% of Federal Poverty Level. Automatically Eligible Families: Recipients of Public Assistance (SSI/TANF), Experiencing Homelessness, Children in Foster Care and Recipients of Public Assistance (SSI/TANF). Eligibility Priority Children who have a special need, disability concern, or a diagnosed disability (IFSP) and Teen parents. Many additional services at no cost such as Comprehensive Services, Engaging Activities, Full Day, year-round services, Family and Community Services, Parent Committee and Policy Council Opportunities, Community Resources, Inclusive Services and settings for Children with Disabilities, Mental Health Services, Dental Services, Nutritious Foods and School Readiness, Formula, Wipes, diapers and Healthy meals. For more information about Early Head Start You may apply online: <https://www.elcpalmbeach.org/early-head-start-parents> and/or questions by calling: 561-412-2203. If interested in receiving their Flyers Raquel Leonard can be reached at: Raquel.Leonard@elcpalmbeach.org or at 561) 514-3377.

### **NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN**

Sindy De Leon, Programs Employment Supervisor, Youth Co-OP, Inc. (YCI) (CRS). Sindy did the presentation covering all data for the Palm Beach County Survey Local Job Market Survey and discussed and answered all members questions. The copy of the Power Point presentation was also distributed. Florida total arrivals for FFY20 are 5,409. Palm Beach County had served 495 arrivals for 2020. The countries of origin of clients most served are Cuba (131), Haiti (295), Colombia (33), Venezuela (9), El Salvador (7) and other (20). For the past year YCI built great relationship with staffing companies and private employers. These companies support our clients by contracting our clients even if they don't speak English very well or have transportation. These employers have demonstrated consideration for our clients by trying to offer them positions near their home. Fastest PBC growing occupations are in the nursing area. YCI top employers are USCRI and Holiday Inn Hotel, average salary \$15.86 and \$12.86 respectively. During the year 2020 YCI Employment Program placed 478 clients, averaging a salary of \$10.90 per hour. Popular industry placement is in services specially assemblers and housekeeping services. Vocational Services and higher pay jobs are available to those mastering the English language. YCI can be reached at: 2112 S. Congress Ave. Palm Springs, FL 33406, Phone: 561-964-1693.

**GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Palm Beach County Behavioral Health Coalition:** Alexa Lee provided updates on Mental Health resources and free teaching to the community. She invited all to pass on the information to those students k-12 on the Media Poster drawings contest. Drug Prevention Media Contest. Create a poster, video PSA or lip sync video on vaping or underage drinking prevention. See the website for details or contact me with questions [www.pbcBusPoster.org](http://www.pbcBusPoster.org). Open to any student in PBC in K-12th grade. Alexa indicated they partner with the school district on the contest but encourage for all to please share! share! share away! And you may share about the Mental Health First Aid too with the schools too because we partner with them on that as well. Mental Health First Aid class in Creole and Spanish offered for free. Please email or call Alexa at 561-301-9975 or email [alexalee@pbcbhc.org](mailto:alexalee@pbcbhc.org) . Additional information: [www.pbcBusPoster.org](http://www.pbcBusPoster.org)

Patrice Schroeder, MA, Community Relations Specialist, **211 of PBC**. Patrice provided updates on the 211. Pat indicated that 211 HelpLine Celebrating 50 Years! Invited all to the Inter-Agency Network PBC (IAN) first Tuesday of each month 9 am via zoom. The group participation in one of Palm Beach County's oldest "community-wide" networking groups. Pat provided information on "Help Me Grow (HMG)" was launched April of 2015 and is part of a national program that is designed to identify children at-risk for developmental, behavioral, or social challenges. This program is designed to support questions and concerns of families, while providing access to resources and supports. HMG connects families with free or low-cost community programs for health and developmental services. Parents and caregivers of young children (0 – 8 years) who live in Palm Beach, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie or Indian River Counties are eligible to participate in the Help Me Grow program. There is no charge to participate in the 211 Help Me Grow program. The Center for Disease Control has a FREE app to track your child's milestones in English and Spanish! Free Development Screening for Children 0-5. To help a child you know obtain Help Me Grow's resources, just call 2-1-1 and tell the specialist you are interested in the program. We will ask you a series of questions to help understand the needs of your family to find you the best-matched services to support your child's health and well-being. All your answers remain confidential.

Pat also informed on the seniors over 60 Sunshine resources. Also 211's Elder Crisis Outreach program helps connect vulnerable seniors to critical services and their Sunshine daily calls to seniors is now expanding to give a daily call to caregivers of all ages. 211's MYFLVET program provides peer to peer support to veterans and also helps the veteran and their families find resources and services. Miriam reminded all to update or add their organization to the 211 system for outreach and proper referrals from 211. Please email your request to participate to [patrice.schroeder@211pbtc.org](mailto:patrice.schroeder@211pbtc.org). She can be reach at Tel: (561) 383-1149 or Email: [patrice.schroeder@211pbtc.org](mailto:patrice.schroeder@211pbtc.org)

Javier Ortolaza, Specialist - Guidance Services, **Welcome Center, Department of Multicultural Education updated on the PBC School District**. The Welcome Center at the School District of Palm Beach County welcomes families of new K-12 students whose first language is not English or who were born or attended school outside of the United States. The goal of the center is to support these students and their families by facilitating a smooth transition to Palm Beach County schools. The center will help with the registration process and ensure students are enrolled in their zoned school. The school district has this link that can help all with distant learning resources. The families will be provided with services such as: appropriate grade level placement, interpretations, evaluation of school transcripts, advising students on recommended course selections, Free Immunization (Call for upcoming dates).

Regarding hotspot this link will guide you with the private sectors are providing for families. The PB School District was able to distribute devices. Call for appointment or Email Student Registration or call (561) 434-8065, For Immunization Appointments, call (561) 625-5180. He can be reach at Office: 561-434-8065 PX – 48065, Cell: 561-707-1100.

**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC);** Ellaine updated on EEOC. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, transgender status, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. he laws apply to all types of work situations, including hiring, firing, promotions, harassment, training, wages, and benefits. Due to the current health situation, EEOC's Field Offices have temporarily stopped conducting in-person intake interviews. If they had previously scheduled in-person intake appointment, appointment will be changed to a telephone interview. The office will not accept walk-ins at this time. Visit the EEOC Public Portal (<https://publicportal.eeoc.gov/>) to schedule an intake appointment by telephone. The system can also be accessed by going directly to our website at <https://www.eeoc.gov/>.

**Council on American Islamic Relations: Wilfredo A Ruiz,** introduced himself and the organization he represented. CAIR is available to help any person in the community regardless of any religious affiliation. You can contact Wilfredo at: 305-502-6749 [wruiz@cair.com](mailto:wruiz@cair.com)

**Jerome Hill, Program Operations Administrator, Agency Health Care Administration (AHCA),** reported on updates. Offices are fully virtual operational, and all calls are provided with services and referrals as needed. ACHA highlighting current guidance related COVID-19 testing for the elderly or individuals with a serious underlying medical condition. COVID-19 testing should be considered in individuals 65 or older or individuals with a severe underlying medical condition who have new onset lower respiratory track disease or pneumonia, either the inpatient or outpatient setting. Florida continues to have the highest percentage of vaccines administered to seniors 65 and older, with vaccinations in that age bracket accounting for nearly 65% of total vaccinations in the state. Please see [http://ahca.myflorida.com/docs/17719\\_COVID19\\_Testing\\_Criteria\\_for\\_the\\_Elderly\\_Flyer.pdf](http://ahca.myflorida.com/docs/17719_COVID19_Testing_Criteria_for_the_Elderly_Flyer.pdf)

**PBSO Gang Prevention Coordinator, Marcia Bahia,** updated and indicated PBSO is offering anti-bullying to k-elementary, gang / crime prevention & lifetime of consequences to youth, and parents against gangs to adults. Currently virtual workshops. You can reach Marcia at: [bahiam@pbso.org](mailto:bahiam@pbso.org).

**Marta Roque, Career Sources Palm Beach County** updates reports on services provided to refugees, specially waiver under TANF and approved SNAP. Refugee eligible can always volunteer to do community hours event during COVID-19 and waiver.

**Palm Beach County Library System-** Maribel de Jesus, Multicultural Outreach Services Librarian at the Palm Beach County Library System. PBCLS are currently running a pilot program offering a Civics Exam Study Group via Zoom. This pilot program currently has students who participate in the English Exchange services. This is providing them with an opportunity to practice for the 2020 Civics Exam portion of the Naturalization Exam. At this time

it is a pilot program, but we plan to offer it to the general public as soon as we have all the details worked out. We will share the information when we begin offering to the general public. Other services been offered is the Food Bank help with the SNAP benefits application; <http://www.pbclibrary.org/food-service-program>. Maribel informed on the “

United Way is offering free Tax preparation services by appointment only. Information available on their website. Taxes | United Way of Palm Beach County ([unitedwaypbc.org](http://unitedwaypbc.org))

Taxes | United Way of Palm Beach County United Way of Palm Beach County's Taxes Filed Free Campaign partners with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to provide free, confidential, and secure preparation and e-filing of tax returns to [unitedwaypbc.org](http://unitedwaypbc.org).”

**Dept of Health (DOH)-** Merlene Ramon, PHD. DOH is working with Health Care District on the waiting list however DOH continue to provide vaccines on those on the list. Vaccine Administration Site is Mid County Senior Center at 3680 Lake Worth Rd Palm Springs, FL 33661

**Sandra Perez from Catholic Charities Diocese of Palm Beach.** We have a new OVC Housing Grant for Victims of Human Trafficking. We will be able to provide rental assistance or transitional housing from 6 to 24 months to domestic and foreign born VOTs.

**Church World Service (CWS)-**Carlos Naranjo reported on **Match Grant updates for CWS.** Due to COVID-19 many new arrivals have reported loss of jobs or reduced hours. Those clients are served and help locate new jobs special during approved beyond the 180 days. MG clients are also referred to Vocational courses, ESOL classes, Health, Legal services, and many needed community resources.

**Cristina Veltri, Coordinator, Project Transition,** updated on the spring and fall sessions. Students are participating by choice Classes are both remote learning and in classroom. Depending on their need student can switch from evening to day classes. PR/BC has incentive new program where student can borrow a lap to enroll in classes and can keep if they re-register for next semester. Virtual classes are most popular; however, the challenges are the computer skills needed. Students are eager to learn English languages and basics computer skills. Cristina Veltri Adult Ed ESOL Palm Beach County can be reach at; [cristina.veltri@palmbeachschools.org](mailto:cristina.veltri@palmbeachschools.org)

**Claudia Arce, ESS/DCF reported on ACCESS** maximum allotments increases to 15%. SSA administration is providing fewer appointments. The Social Security Administration offices throughout the country are open for very limited services such as 1st time SSN cards where and in-person interview is required or when specific paperwork than cannot be mailed or wet signature is required, etc. As of right now there is no further information as to when the re-openings are going to occur.

**Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division ;** Camacho, Teresita from WHD, she indicated she is in representation Ariel. Any question or claims please contact: Point of contact for the Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division is Ariel Rivera Maldonado, email: [RiveraMaldonado.Ariel@dol.gov](mailto:RiveraMaldonado.Ariel@dol.gov), Phone Number is 305-270-5574.

**RS Updates:**

**Ileana Bustelo, Deputy Director, RS/DCF** provided updates on DCF Refugee Services. Ileana encouraged task force members to check the DCF Covid-19 webpage for programmatic updates and updates to benefits.

Miriam Rosario, Thanked and wish all a wonderful day!

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Next Meeting: Friday, March 19, 2021**

Time: 10:00AM to 12PM

Location: Due to the pandemic via TEAM Meetings TBA.

**Contact:** [Miriam.Rosario@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Miriam.Rosario@myflfamilies.com) Phone: (561) 227-6722  
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