



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Shevaun Harris**  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 23, 2021  
**TO:** Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** **Miriam Rosario (RS)**  
**SUBJECT:** September 17, 2021, Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** November 19, 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](mailto: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 COUNTY REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING****INTRODUCTION**

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and Miriam Rosario, Southeast Region (SER) Community Liaison (CL), Refugee Services (RS) Program, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) facilitated the Refugee Task Force (RTF) meeting. Miriam thanked and welcomed all participants for calling in and joining the meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services, and the agency they represented. Approximately 45 individuals joined the call.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

Ed Garnier, Care Coordinator Supervisor, ESS, DCF provider overview presentation on the new Care Coordination Program (CC). Ed was very excited to review Care Coordination Program, the eligibility requirements for participation and how you can be a part of this process assisting our common population group that face limitations in the community which affects them adversely and assist us in creating an equitable environment for them to thrive in. The Care Coordinator staff is now call Care Navigators (CN) and offers resources throughout the SER. The goal of the Care Coordination program is to reduce the number of families in crisis. We aim to do this by focusing on what we have identified is our target population which consists of individuals who are impoverished between the ages of 18 and older that are either receiving benefits or meet the qualification to be in receipt of benefits and require crisis intervention. Early engagement with our target population, by assessing their needs and practicing interventions helps reduce instability in the household and lifetime dependency on assistance programs. Once completion of the assessment, the Care Coordinator will complete a care plan and identify community partners that has available resources to be an asset to the participant in eliminating their barriers. A copy of the completed Care Plan will be provided to the participant. Care Coordinators complete weekly contacts with the participants to ensure that there are no new barriers or emergencies that require immediate intervention. CN stay connected with participants via emails, phone calls, email text messaging, mail, and monthly face to face that will be starting soon now that DCF lobbies are opened. All referrals and self-referrals are welcome. A short video on the Care Navigators was watched on Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity and the Power Point Presentation was shared with all members via email.

Renée Rivers, Community Engagement Manager, Aunt Bertha provided an overview presentation on MyFloridaMyFamily, the Aunt Bertha (AB) Resources. Their mission is to connect all people in need and the programs that serve them as it's too hard to navigate the system and Aunt Bertha is trying to make it easier. MyFloridaMyFamily .com is an online directory of free and reduced cost services. DCF's preferred method for client referrals, free to those looking for help, free for nonprofits to manage their programs. MyFloridaMyFamily website is connecting FL Families to needed services is powered by Aunt Bertha. Aunt Bertha is here in FL and anywhere and anytime across the U.S. and is private and secure. The tool is easy to use and is meant to help those in need and the organizations that serve them. The Aunt Bertha platform was designed to empower Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to actively take part in the nationwide social care network that AB've been building since 2010. Through partnership with the DCF, it was created the MyFloridaMyFamilywebsite. One of the main ways CBOs can join this network is by creating

a free account and claiming their programs. The social care network built at Aunt Bertha is the strongest, most-utilized, and most-trusted social care network in the country. An organization that claims its programs on the platform not only actively joins this robust network, but also unlocks access to a free toolkit to manage their program(s) through the platform. The network data can also be used for CBO in identify community needs and create analytical reports. Renée offered one on one virtual presentations to those organization interested. Please reach her at [rrivers@auntbertha](mailto:rrivers@auntbertha). The Power Point presentation shared with all members.

**Health Council of Southeast Florida**, Nicola Chung, Community Health Program Manager  
Health Council of Southeast Florida (HCSEFL) provided a completed over view and updates on the resources and services in PBC. Improve the health of residents of the Palm Beaches and Treasure Coast by promoting access to quality health and human services. HCSFL is the region's leading advocate for optimal access to health care through using our collective knowledge, experience and commitment in health planning, research, and program development. One of 11 local health planning council: cover a 5-county services area: Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Okeechobee and Indian River. HCSEFL core funding focuses on health planning activities: Development of strategies to improve the health of the residents (CHA), Establishment of priorities for implementation (CHIP), Collect data and conduct analyses and studies related to health care needs in the region, with special focus on vulnerable populations, Partner with the state to plan for services at the local level for people living with HIV, Provide care coordination for individuals living with HIV, Promote public awareness of community health needs, Advise and assist state and local governments on the development of health plans, Identify local resources for assisting the uninsured and underserved population with health coverage needs. The Power Point presentation shared with all members via email. [nchung@hcsef.org](mailto:nchung@hcsef.org) | 561.440.0164

### **GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**, Don Jarrel, Community Relations Officers (CRO), USCIS, Miami and Caribbean District, participated. Roketa Mansfield provided USCIS updates: Effective Oct. 1, 2021, applicants subject to the immigration medical examination must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before the civil surgeon can complete an immigration medical examination and sign Form I-693, Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record. This guidance applies prospectively to Form I-693 signed by civil surgeons on or after Oct. 1, 2021. The Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization, released on July 2, 2021, calls for a community-based approach to encouraging the roughly 9 million lawful permanent residents eligible for naturalization. <https://www.state.gov/countries-areas/afghanistan/> <https://www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome>. USCIS Extends Evidence of Status for Conditional Permanent Residents to 24 Months with Pending Form I-751 or Form I-829. The Department of Homeland Security has announced the automatic extension of TPS designations for El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Sudan. TPS beneficiaries from these six countries will retain their status, provided they continue to meet all the individual requirements for TPS eligibility. The automatic extension of TPS-related documentation includes Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) through Dec. 31, 2022. Please join the Haiti TPS, Virtual Information Session, In Haitian Creole, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on Tuesday, October 19th at 2-3PM for a virtual information session on Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Haiti presented in Haitian Creole. Learn what TPS is, how you qualify, and how

to file an application. No registration is required. Join from the link and email USCISOrlandoCommunityRelations@uscis.dhs.gov to receive the link.

Join by phone: 415-527-5035 US Toll (meeting number 2764 276 9667). Information was also provided on the USCIS Expands Partnership with Social Security Administration and the Afghan Nationals on Parole Into the United States. Email: Donald.Jarrell@uscis.dhs.gov

**Department of Health-Palm Beach County (DOH):** Jill Rubin, RN,BSHA, Florida Department of Health- RS Health Clinic reported they have seen an increase in new arrivals. Most of new arrivals were Cuban and Haitian entrants and parolees. Appointments by calling 954-467-4700 Ext. 4550. Many referrals are provided to community resources such as, COVID & Flu vaccines, children's school vaccine, WIC, dental services. For information regarding eligibility and services please see the Florida Department of Health Refugee Health Program website OR CALLING 561-514-5307.

**U.S. Department of Labor / Wage and Hour Division-** Ariel G Rivera Maldonado, Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist, U.S. Department of Labor / Wage and Hour Division with the U.S. Department of Labor / Wage and Hour Division provided updates on their resources. Ariel was excited to share new collaborations with the PBC System Library. DOL provided various workshops, including the EMPLEO alliance. EMPLEO addresses the concerns of recent immigrants who are not familiar their workplace rights and responsibilities in the U.S. Many immigrants have concerns that reach across agency or organizational lines, or have multiple issues. By using this cooperative approach to resolve overlapping or multiple issues, EMPLEO can reduce instances of callers being passed along from one agency to another without receiving appropriate assistance. The EMPLEO program has Spanish-speaking volunteers trained by the partner organizations that can and do assist workers. The number is:1-877-55AYUDA (877-552-9832).

**PBC County Library (PBCL):** Maribel De Jesús, Multicultural Outreach Services Librarian Palm Beach County Library System, provided information regarding all free services. Anyone needing to learn English can access the page, create a free account and attend classes offered by an instructor. The Adult Literacy Department is collaborating with the Florida Literacy Coalition to promote this service. Call 561-233-2783 or pbclibrary.org/español Go to PBCLS.org/Library for access to all the above and library branches and hours of operations. Visit [www.PBCLIBRARY.org/library](http://www.PBCLIBRARY.org/library) for updated information.  
<http://events.pbclibrary.org/events/digital-activities/hispanic-heritage-month-2021>

<http://www.pbclibrary.org/food-service-program>

**Mandel Public Library** - Tara Moreno, Multicultural Liaison Librarian, Mandel Public Library of West Palm Beach reported that, ESOL classes are available at the Mandel Public Library - have ESOL classes starting up again in October. Call 868-7730 for assessment. Community IDs are happening here the 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 10am-4pm. Food Stamp Assistance is here Thursdays 9:30-3:30, available in English and Spanish and Q'anjob'al. And many cool events, like for Hispanic Heritage Month. [www.mycitylibrary.org](http://www.mycitylibrary.org). Tara's is 561-868-7723, [tmoreno@wpbcitylibrary.org](mailto:tmoreno@wpbcitylibrary.org)

**Agency for Health Care Administration, Jerome Hill** – Program Operations Administrator – AHCA Doral – Bureau of Medicaid (RPAAHCA) offered the updates. Reminded also that AHCA is the fiscal agent and financial function of the Medicaid and DCF is responsible for the eligibility criteria.

**PBC Sheriff's Office-** Marcia Bahia PBSO, PBC Sheriff's Office bahiam@pbso.org reported and updated on the Gang Awareness & Lifetime of Consequences workshops for adults, youth, and agencies that conduct home visits.

**Human Trafficking -**Theresa Kennedy, DCF HT Regional Coordinator reported on the Along with the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking and its partners, Attorney General Ashley Moody is pleased to announce the 2021 Human Trafficking Summit will be held virtually on Tuesday, October 5, 2021.

**211 PBC & Treasure Coast-** Patrice Schroeder reported on the 211 HelpLine Celebrating 50 Years! In addition to the helpline & crisis line work, 211's advocacy programs are still up and running & available: Help Me Grow, Special Needs Helpline, Elder Crisis Outreach, Sunshine daily calls, Caregiver Support Project & 211's MYFLVET program. 211 is available by dialing 2-1-1 or texting zip code to 898211, 24/7. Online chat also available at 211palmbeach.org from 10am to 8pm. Families in need of growth & developmental screenings for their children- 211 Help Me Grow staff can do these over the phone. It is free-with multi languages available. dial 211 or visit Services on line at 211palmbeach.org Patrice Schroeder Email: patrice.schroeder@211pbtc.org 561-383-1149.

**Early Head Start Program/Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County.** Raquel Leonard, Family Advocate, Early Head Start Program/Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County. Wanda Figueroa, Early Learning Coalition, Palm Beach County provided updates on the ELC program that serves children from 6 weeks-3 years old around WPB, Delray Beach, Riviera Beach and Bell Glades. ELC give priority to those families in high need, experiencing homelessness, children with disabilities and foster children. Please, feel free to reach out to me, Email is raquel.leonard@elcpalmbeach.org. Number is 561-514-3377. Raquel Leonard, Family Advocate, Early Head Start Program/Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County.

Wanda Figueroa, Early Learning Coalition, Palm Beach County. wanda.figueroa@elcpalmbeach.org 561-231-5590

**Coalition Independent Living Options Inc-** Provided updates regarding the upcoming virtual presentation on Domestic Violence and People with Disabilities on October 7, 2021 at 10am till 11am. Contact lcusack@cilo.org Laura Cusack.

**Church World Service-** Frank Figueroa, Program Administrator, Church World Service provided presentation regarding their supports and services helping the new arrivals and on the intention to increase the refugee and. CWS has create capacity for the anticipated high number of refugees that will arrive in FY22. For questions on the CRS programs please email CWS-HQ at, please, refer all local ffigueroa@cwsglobal.org

**Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency, Southeast Region (ESS/DCF)-:** Claudia Arce, ESS/DCF, Program Office's representative reported an increase in new arrivals with a variety of

immigration documents not as previously seen. These documentations require various processes for eligibility verification. All applications are handled on a case by case basis. She reminded all applicants to upload their documentation with the DCF benefits application to help with the eligibility process. Claudia reported the latest regarding DCF stores front are open, however due to pandemic visiting an ACCESS Community Partner or filing online or calling the call center is encouraged. The Commercial/DCF lobby office will be closed for all clients. The store front in Oakland is bigger. ESS eligibility worker still needs the Social Security Administration (SSA) verification application and SSA 2275 Form to document client's attempts to apply for non-working SS number. Additional information can be located at DCF website; [myflflorida.com](http://myflflorida.com). Claudia can be reached at [claudia.arce@myflfamilies.com](mailto:claudia.arce@myflfamilies.com)

**Health Council of Southeast Florida (HCSF)**- Tammy Thomas, Director of Programs Email: [tthomas@hcsef.org](mailto:tthomas@hcsef.org) . HCSF are hiring new Community Health Advocates who are fluent in additional languages.

**Refugee Services Program (RS/DCF) – David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, RS/DCF**, David announced that the Miami Comprehensive Refugee Services contract was awarded to Youth Co-Op. They will begin serving clients on October 1. Florida continues to see increases in Cuban and Haitian arrivals. SNAP benefits will be increasing on October 21 by 21%. The increase in SNAP benefit amounts will happen automatically. Recipients do not need to do anything to receive this increase.

#### **RS Contracted providers:**

**Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS)**; Frank Figueroa update on all CRS reports. CRS staff is very buzzy with new clients and increases of arrivals. Everyone is encouraged to make appointments due to the large amount of new arrival.

**Career Sources of PBC County (CRSPBC)**; Marta Roque reported on their TANF program. TANF clients are now required to report for training and employable activities. CRS/CWS will work with Career Sources for work registration requirements. CRS/CWS will sign the DCF letter for those clients that require registration.

**Church World Service, Legal Program (CWS)**; David Claros, Attorney Supervisor. The legal program has been slow in filing for clients mostly due to delays in immigration services. Employment Authorization documents (EAD) big delays.

**Adult Education/ Project Transition/ PBC School District (PBC School District)**: Sherrie Bradwell, Senior Case Manager, North Tech /Adult & Community Ed. School District of Palm Beach County, Department of Adult and Community Education reported and provided updates. The classes for Fall Term began August 23, 2021, Winter Term will begin January 18, 2022 and Summer Term will begin April 25, 2022. For the Fall Term we started Pre-Registration in July and New Registration started in August. PBC school District will start Pre-Registration for Winter the first week of December and then New Registration in January. For Summer started Pre-registration at the beginning of April and New Student Registration April 18, 2022. Usually continue Open Enrollment until the last month of the Term. The plans are on ending registration on October 28th for the Fall Term. There are times when it extended or end it earlier based on space.

**NEXT MEETING:**

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

Time: 10:00 AM to 12PM

Location: TBA

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

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