



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 19, 2021
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario (RS)**
SUBJECT: November 18, 2021, Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: January 21, 2022
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 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 35 people were on the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Emily Hackerson, Director of Products and Services provider overview presentation on the Upwardly Global organizations resources. Emily was very excited to review the various resources: Job Coaching & Skilling Program, Jobversity by Upwardly Global is a technical assistance initiative in which we deliver our digital learning tools and Public Platform which open access to a curated set of self- paced job search and skill-building tools via our online learning platform. Upwardly Global's (UpGlo) is to lift immigrant professionals, including refugees and asylum seekers, out of underemployment into thriving wage jobs that align with their skills and education. They build an inclusive, future-ready workforce that embraces the skills of immigrant and refugee professionals. Upwardly Global's introductory and free online learning pathway, "Journey to a Job," to master 5 critical steps in the U.S. Job Search, including how to create an American-style resume and licensing requirements for specific careers. Upwardly Global offers job search tools for immigrant job seekers. Additional resources understanding the culture and communication, interview skills, licensing requirements and Afghan Job Seekers: Public Portal Resource. public portal and other Afghan job seeker resources accessible here: <https://www.upwardlyglobal.org/support-afghans/> The Power Point Presentation was shared with all members via email.

Lutheran Services Florida (LSF): Natacha Bazin, M.A., Child Safety, Health & Nutrition Program Manager, LSF Palm Beach informed Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) Program is accepting application for 2021 and 2022 school year. She provided overview regarding all the Head Start/Early Head Start Program. Head Start Mission is to educate, equip, and empower children, families and staff through partnerships and efficient data driven systems to close the achievement gap. Head Start help all children to be Ready for School and prepared for Life. Services include: Education & Health services at no cost Full day/ Full year program, Over 90 % of Head Start children meet the kindergarten school readiness standards Serves children with special needs, development delays & learning disabilities, Developmental screenings (language/ literacy & social/ emotional). Highly trained teachers follow a creative curriculum for preschoolers. Call for PBC Transportation at 561-841-4200. Please call (561) 233-1640 for referrals to Head Start/Early Head Start. HS/EHS recruitment flyers in various languages were shared via email.

Vital Statistics, FL Department of Health PBC: Amarilis Salazar, Chief Deputy Registrar, Tania Canals, Deputy Registrar Supervisor and Carla Jackson-Felder Lead Worker, offered an overview on all the Vital Statistics, FL Department of Health PBC services. Vital Statics are used for Legal purposed such as ID/Drivers License, passports school and Economic benefits. Statics are used for Epidemics (like the COVID-19) Monitor the leading Causes of Death, Unintentional injury, suicide & homicide related deaths, Infant deaths, Occupational related death, and Trends Overall health of population. Due to the Pandemic many families are having babies outside the hospital. Is important to educate refugees families if they do so, within five calendar days after the date of each birth, the record must be filed. It is most important that birthing facility staff is familiar with the vital statistics laws and regulations on birth registration. If the child is brought to the birthing facility within 3 days after a home delivery, the birthing facility should prepare the record with what facts are available. The record must indicate the county where the delivery occurred.

If the child is borne and not register by an entity or midwife within the year, they can come to the county health department and start the process of registration. If it is more than a year, then it must be handled by the State Office in Jacksonville. The Enumeration at Birth Program is coordinated through the Social Security Administration (SSA). If the parents request on the birth record that a social security number be issued for a child, the SSA will issue a social security card for the child within 4-6 weeks of the date of birth. SSA will not issue a social security number on a deceased or unnamed child. SSA will mail the card to any US state or territory, but not to a foreign or military address. When the mother of a child is married at the time of birth, she must list her husband as the father of the child, regardless of circumstances. Once a father is register on the birth certificate the only way of removing it is through the courthouse. It's important for informed refugee families to know if they choose to have the babies at home to register the babies as soon as possible as the birth certificate is a documentation needed for ACCESS benefits. A power point presentation was share with all members.

Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc.: Rachel Mondesir, MPA, Community Engagement Manager, Palm Springs Office, she provided overview on the program initiatives of present on Birth to 22, a collective impact effort being made in the county to address youth indicators of success for our youth from birth to the age of 22. She distributes information via email and updated on the 3T's Ambassador Training so that you too may help spread the word and increase this initiative's visibility and impact. When parents talk and interact with their children, they boost brain development from birth. To learn more, families of children ages 0-3 in the Glades & Boynton Beach areas are invited to join one of these groups. Parents workshop offers Stipends available for participants who complete the 8 weekly sessions. Family Coaching offers to each family a take-home kit to use in building language. For more information, please contact; Rachel Mondesir (561) 600-9423, cell (561) 381-1094, rachel.mondesir@elcpalmbeach.org, Christopher Velazquez - (561) 514-3303 - christopher.velazquez@elcpalmbeach.org and Adriana Chapa - (561) 231-5860 - adriana.chapa@elcpalmbeach.org

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), not present for updates. Afghan nationals paroled into the United States on or after July 30, 2021, due to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan are eligible for the certain fee exemptions and streamlined processing. Please visit their website <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/contact-us> or contact Jarrell, Donald Don Jarrell |

Community Relations Officer | DHS | USCIS | Tampa, Fort Myers & West Palm Beach, at Donald.Jarrell@uscis.dhs.gov.

Department of Health-Broward County (DOH): Merlene Ramnon PhD, MPH, MSN, RN, Community Health Promotion and Education Director, updated report as RS Health Clinic has two nurses' practitioners handling the influx of refugees. Average 16 full assessment per day. All appointments are following the DOH protocols. Many referrals are provided to community resources such as, COVID & Flu vaccines, infection control screening, children's school vaccine. Department of Health will be hosting a Drive thru Baby Shower Items at the American Lung Association /Quantum Foundation to provide baby items to pregnant and women who have infants. the event will be on Friday, Dec 3, 2021 at 2:00 to 4:00pm. For information regarding eligibility and services please see the Florida Department of Health Refugee Health Program website.

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office (PBSO): Marcia Bahia, M.S., Gang Prevention Coordinator, provided information regarding the Gang prevention Summit. The educational event is scheduled for 4/30/2022 at PB Lakes HS. As in previous years all refugee youth are invited. For additional information please contact Marcia at bahiam@pbsso.org

Palm Beach County Library System (PBCLS): Jayme Bosio, Government Research Services PBCLS provided information regarding all free services. Library services in PBC now open for in person resources and access to all the branches and hours of operations. The Wellington Branch reopen and soon the Lantana Branch offering many in person services and activities to refugees. The Palm Beach County Library also has the Food Bank at the library to help with SNAP and Access Florida applications <http://www.pbclibrary.org/food-service-program>.

Mandel West Palm Beach City Library: Tara Moreno, Multicultural Coordinator Librarian, reported the Mandel Library have ESOL classes now for beginner and intermediate, call 868-7730. Also, Food Bank of PBC is helping with the ESS/DCF Benefits application; at the library every Thursday from 10-3pm.

Church World Service (CWS): Oscar Rivera, Director CWS update on all CRS services including the new unaccompanied refugee minors and home study program in addition to their APA. From Broward RTF meeting, CWS Reception and Placement (R&P) Coordinator informed on their 200 assurances for travel under the R&P. CWS received 86 individuals and 40 families, some in Broward and mostly in PBC. The Afghan some arrived in Miami area served under the Afghan Program (APA). Matching Program (MG) is enrolling for parolees and asylees. Employment Authorization Document (EAD) continues to be a challenged for Cuban and Haitian, impacting the MG Employment program. CWS has created and welcome new partnership for housing services.

Survivors of Torture (FCST): Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt, MSW, Program Coordinator From the Florida Center for Survivors of Torture, Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services provided updates regarding their benefits. The FCST services covers PBC and Broward County in addition to Miami. Mental Health counseling and case management are services available for refugees and specially for the recent Afghan arrivals. Sabine offered an overview

presentation for the next RTF meeting. She can be reach at Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt sabine.derenoncourt@gcjfcs.org.

Career Sources of PBC County (CSPBC); Marta Roque, TANF Sr. Career Consultant Refugee Unit informed on the high volume of client been referred to CSPBC. The CSPBC-TANF program continue to partner with Youth COOP in assisting new families with children with employment and meaningful activities. www.mroque@careersourcepbc.com

211 Helpline Palm Beach and Treasure Coast: Patrice Schroeder provides information on the immediate service for those in need within Palm Beach, Martin, St Lucie, Okeechobee and Indian River Counties. 211's advocacy programs are still up and running & available. Help Me Grow provides growth/developmental/behavioral health screenings for children 0-8 yrs. The Special Needs Helpline supports and assists families and caregivers of children with disabilities (0-22 years) in finding needed services. Also 211's Elder Crisis Outreach program helps connect vulnerable seniors to critical services. Caregivers can also access 211's Caregiver Project offering support and guidance for those adults that are family caregivers for another adult. 211's MYFLVET program provides peer to peer support to veterans and helps the veteran and their families find resources and services. 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. Calls to 211 feature multilingual capabilities. Patrice Schroeder, informed that people can access 211 Online Resource Directory that includes hundreds of local, state and national programs and services at www.211palmbeach.org click on "Get Help Now". Patricia invited those interested in attending the InterAgency Network of PBC with a wide variety of service providers attending email: patrice.schroeder@211pbtc.org Also if you provide services to the people of the Glades- you may wish to attend the Glades Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH) use same email. Patrice reminder all organizations to update the 211 Database: email your agency info or updates (changes etc.) to judi.hechtman@211pbtc.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. Some cases have the parole expired however they can still be eligible for RS. These documentations require various processes for eligibility verification. All applications are handled on a case-by-case basis. Additional information can be located at DCF website; myflflorida.com. Claudia also introduced Ms. Ernsth Moise as the new member in the Senior Human Services Program. Ms. Moise and Claudia are going to work with the refugees together. Please when you send an email to Claudia regarding issues with clients that needs to review or any other questions please copy Ms. Moise as well. Ernsth can be reach at Ernsth.Moise@myflfamilies.com and Claudia can be reach at claudia.arce@myflfamilies.com

Refugee Services Program (RS/DCF) – David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, RS/DCF. David reported that SNAP benefits increased nationwide, and arrivals are increasing statewide over the last few months. Florida is seeing Cuban, Haitian, and Afghan arrivals throughout the state. He informed the task force of a recent ORR Policy Letter that allows Afghan Humanitarian Parolees to receive refugee services and benefits. (APA).

RS Contracted providers:

Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS); Gladys Sanchez, CWS update on CRS services including the challenges of new cases with a longer wait time to obtain EAD. CRS is been very busy with increases of new arrivals processing intake and increases in case management. CRS orientations are offered mainly via phone services. CRS continue to provide referrals to adult education and services in the community. Gladys stated biggest challenges are getting the ESS/DCF (SNAP and benefits) ACCESS applications appointments on time. The Food Bank of PBC (FBPBC) is helping CRS with appointments three times a week at the CWS site. Miriam informed of reaching out to other ACCESS Partners including FBPBC other sites (such as PBC Library, WPB City Library, YCOOP) or refer clients to the DCF office directly and clients to ask for supervisor assistance if help is needed. Natalia Patino, Supervising Attorney at Church World Service, updated reported on the CRS Legal Services and Miami.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov and ICE-ERO-MIA-MMO-ScheduleAppt-SMB@ice.dhs.gov. If one of your clients is going to change address, please ask them to email ICE their new address. ICE is emailing clients their Notice to Appear as well as new ICE appointments.

Palm Beach County Schools/ Adult Education; Sherrie Bedwell, Director, Dept. of Adult & Community Ed., updated report on the Registration starts January 5, 2022 for Adult Education with the Palm Beach County School District. Classes begin January 18th and continue until April 14, 2022 for the Winter Term. AM & PM Classes available in Literacy, ESOL, CCR & ABE/GED. Sites are offering; Adult ESOL & ABE/GED in hybrid. sherrie.bedwell@palmbeachschools.org

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, January 21, 2022**

Time: 10:00 AM to 12PM

Location: TBA

Contact: Miriam.Rosario@myflfamilies.com Phone: (561) 227-6722
David.Draper@myflfamilies.com Phone: (407) 317-7335