



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

Ron DeSantis

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 17, 2019

TO: Members of the Tallahassee Refugee Task Force

FROM: Theresa Leslie, Refugee Services (RS)

SUBJECT: Task Force Meeting Minutes for Dec 10, 2019

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: March 10, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM to 11:30 PM
Location: Department of Children and Families
1317 Winewood Blvd, Bldg 3, Rm201
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Contact: Theresa Leslie
Office: (850) 778-4065
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E-Mail: Theresa.Leslie@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Tallahassee 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 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, 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.

TALLAHASSEE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the Department of Children and Families Conference Room, 201, Building 3 and Theresa Leslie, Community Liaison represented (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program and led the meeting. The meeting was called to order.

PRESENTATION

International Rescue Committee, J.D. McCrary, Executive Director of the IRC Atlanta office was the first to present. He gave a summary of his interactions with the mayor of Tallahassee, John E. Daily. He noted that the mayor stated his support of refugees and refugee families in the community. Mr. McCrary stated that IRC will continue to try to build support for refugees on a local and a statewide level.

Both Mr. McCrary and Tara Catanach, the acting Site Director of IRC announced a Refugee Day event they are organizing in Tallahassee in February 2020. Plans for this event will be sent by IRC to the community and members of the Task Force.

IRC reported that there are currently 125 refugees living in Tallahassee. They are anticipating 144 refugee arrivals during the current federal fiscal year.

IRC explained that many local refugees are approaching the time when they will apply for citizenship. The FSU Center for the Advancement of Human Rights will assist the refugees in completing the paperwork. Clients are now preparing for the exam.

IRC staff consulted with the task force on any suggestions they might have for civic activities designed for refugee youth and young adults.

Mr. Chase Beasley the AmeriCorps Vista staff person at IRC, announced that in February he will be going into the Peace Corps. He has been with Vista program and IRC for almost a year. IRC is advertising for a new Vista person to take over for the next year. At this point, Chase manages 25 volunteer tutors for refugee children and youth.

Chase has begun to build a mentoring program designed for refugees between 15-24 years old. This new Mentoring program will focus on civic and social engagement while also supporting each client's individual educational and vocational advancement. The program will be designed to give these individuals extra guidance and experiences that will contribute to a successful future.

Volunteer prospects are encouraged to email Ms. Beasley to ask for additional details and seek an appointment if further interested. Chase.Beasley@rescue.org
address:1310 Cross Creek Circle, Tallahassee, FL 32301

Karen Strange (from the city of Tallahassee's Adult Literacy Volunteer Program) discussed new program developments and an increased participation in the daytime and evening private tutoring sessions. The Adult Literacy Program has been operating for over 30 years and serves over 350 clients each year.

One of their staff, Alden Field, the Learning Center Coordinator, assists student who attends classes at the Perry Library on 2817 South Adams Street. At the Perry Library clients can improve their reading and math skills, receive GED prep help, receive computer instruction, and receive assistance with their resumes. Classes and tutoring are offered Tuesday through Friday.

The Task Force members are encouraged to promote this program to refugees and other community members who could benefit from the daytime and evening class hours. Task Force members can call 850-606-2960 or email LearningCenter@LeonCountyFl.gov for additional information.

The Leon County Health Department announced that RoseAnn Sheck, MSW will now be representing the Health Department at the task force. Krissy Hamilton, the previous representative, is now in a new position.

Theresa Leslie, Refugee Services Community Liaison presented a power point program entitled: Child Support Cooperation When Applying for Public Benefits as a Refugee". The presentation instructed task force members on how to assist refugees with benefits applications and how to note that an 'absent parent' was, in fact, residing in another country. Ensuring that applications are completed correctly will help reduce the number of errors and delays when processing these applications.

BRIEF PROVIDER UPDATE ON NEW ARRIVALS AND EMPLOYMENT

IRC continues to focus on the recruitment of employers that offer on-the-job training, career laddering, and mentorship/internship opportunities. These outreach efforts are coordinated by Molly Woodsum, the IRC Employment Case Manager. This is an ongoing effort.

Lisa Urban, Leon County ESOL Schools Coordinator, announced the installation of the Translation Line and the delivery of many training and teaching materials to be used in teaching and supporting ESOL students.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

10:00 to 11:30 AM

Department of Children and Families

1317 Winewood Blvd,

Bldg 3 Rm 201

Tallahassee, FL 32399

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