



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carrol
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 6, 2017
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: Taddese Fessehaye, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: September 27, 2017 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: September 27, 2017
Time: 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Location: Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216
Contact: Taddese Fessehaye
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E-Mail: Taddese.Fessehaye@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Jacksonville 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 twenty-five to thirty 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, 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!

5920 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, Florida 32211

JACKSONVILLE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the Jacksonville Baptist Association. Taddese Fessehayee, Community Liaison Manager represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program facilitated the meeting. Patti Grogan, Director of Refugee Services and Molly Conrad, Procurement Manager and Budget Analyst were also present. There were 31 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 1:35pm and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

Taddese announced that Debbie Ansbacher, Community Liaison for the Northeast Region has retired and a replacement will be selected very soon. Over 100 applications have been received for this position.

GUEST PRESENTATION

David Grissett, Community Relations for Awareness, Education, and Prevention, with Epilepsy Foundation of Florida, gave a presentation about the Foundation's services.

- Epilepsy Foundation – Headquarters in Miami
 - Awareness, education, prevention
 - Causes of Epilepsy unknown; relation to head trauma
 - Will pay for clients to see neurologists 3x/year, and will pay for other treatments on a case-by-case basis
 - Intake supervisor: Carmen Torres
 - May need to call her to ask about language/translation capacities
 - Department of Health – can open cases and use Language Line to help clients connect with the intake supervisors
 - Free summer camp for children with epilepsy
- Pharmacies almost always have Patience Assistance for Medication programs to help low-income patients receive free or reduced medications

IMPACT OF HURRICANE IRMA ON REFUGEE FAMILIES

- Catholic Charities
 - Family of seven – their home was flooded and CC is working to get them into a new apartment
- Many trees down in Stonemount, but no serious damage
- Several families from Miami have been relocated to Jacksonville – working with Jax agencies to find housing/employment

DISASTER SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (D-SNAP)

Jessica Smith, DCF Northeast Region Community Partner Liaison, provided the following updates:

- Available to clients who lived in counties declared disaster zones (list of eligible counties online)
- Language Line will be available to all clients **on site**

- Applications cannot be completed on the phone – must be in person
 - Cards will be issued on site
- 100,000 expected for Duval County alone
- Clients receiving food assistance 9/4 - 10/5 are not eligible for Food for Florida
- For clients who are receiving food assistance, 40% of benefits were automatically issued
- Benefits ending in 9/30 were automatically extended to 10/31
 - Applications to extend benefits past 10/31 are due 10/15

RS CONTRACTED PROVIDERS

- World Relief (WR) – Jose Vega, Director of WR
 - 233 arrivals in FY 2017
 - 220 arrivals expected for FY 2018
 - Fundraising dinner on Saturday, September 30 (\$50/plate, \$400/table)
- Lutheran Social Services – Cristina Parcell, Operations Manager
 - 167 arrivals in FY 2017
 - 170 arrivals expected for FY 2018 (does not include asylees and SIVs)
 - Ten delegates from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs of Saudi Arabia on October 9 – round table discussion about welcoming refugees
- Catholic Charities – Michelle Karolak, Director of Refugee Resettlement
 - 137 arrivals in FY 2017
 - Matching Grant is 106
 - 120 arrivals expected for FY 2018
 - Tonight is a Kickoff Mass and reception for two-year campaign started by Pope Francis

More Hurricane Relief – Patti Grogan stated:

- Scope and scale of damage is important
- There is no extra money for refugees who are suffering hurricane damage; however, we can try and eliminate language barriers that refugees may face when seeking resources to help
- Refugees have access to the same resources as U.S. citizens – it's about making sure they know about those services and are able to access them

Laurene Hoffman, International Humanitarian Caseworker said the American Red Cross can provide disaster readiness materials in various languages

REFUGEE SERVICES UPDATES

Patti Grogan provided the following updates:

- Average is 1,500 arrivals/month since February
- 18,000 people for the year (compared to the 24,000 average in previous years)
- Presidential determination expected to be released today – current prediction is 45,000 refugees and 15-17,000 SIVs, 600/monthly Cuban and Haitian entrants
 - American Embassy in Havana is closed until further notice
- Cuban/Haitian funding was eliminated (\$15 million)

- Targeted assistance, which provides county-by-county assistance, has virtually been cut in half
- Total loss of budget – 38%
- We are expecting to lose a similar amount next year – if congress follows the advice from the current administration
- We do not have the means to continue doing business as we currently are – we need to find ways to decrease administration costs to ensure that quality services continue being provided
- Looking at a meeting in the near future to evaluate the future of resettlement in Duval County

COMMUNITY PARTNER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Salvation Army offers holiday assistance
- YMCA offering female-only swimming classes for young women who have religious limitations for co-ed swimming classes (Mandarin Aquatic Club is also offering single-sex swimming lessons)
- Center for Language and Culture – maintaining all programs despite budget cuts, but the test administrators are now by appointment-only
- Strong relationship between the agencies and UNF
 - Soccer program with refugee youth – afterschool daycare program to teach kids soccer on Friday afternoon – over 80 children are already signed up
 - The kids get to go on field trips and spend time with the UNF soccer teams
- Catholic Charities
 - ESOL classes – 3 days a week at Immaculate Conception
 - Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays in the morning and afternoon
 - Two positions open for morning teachers
- Thursday, October 26, 10am-12noon, World of Nations event
 - Duval Lutheran Services Florida head Start and Early Head Start

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, November 8, 2017
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.
Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

CONTACT: Taddese.Fessehaye@myflfamilies.com Phone: (407) 317-7335