



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis  
Governor

Shevaun L. Harris  
Secretary

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 12, 2022  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** January 12, 2022, Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** March 9, 2022  
**Time:** 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.  
**Location:** TBD  
**Contact:** LeAndra Stafford  
**Office:** (904) 485-9540  
**Cell:** (904) 524-1316  
**E-Mail:** Leandra.Stafford@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 via video remote meeting. LeAndra Stafford, Community Liaison, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program and facilitated the meeting. There were 30 people in attendance on Microsoft Teams virtual meeting. Guests included: David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, as well as several DCF staff were also in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants identified themselves by agency in the chat box.

### GUEST PRESENTATION

1. Joanne Ortiz, CLC Coordinator, Duval Co Public Schools.  
*Center for Language and Culture*
  - Goals & Strategic Plan at CLC
    - a) Create a positive difference in the community through actions and services
    - b) Support a smooth transition to families new to Jacksonville
    - c) Teach others about American cultural norms and the DCPS system
    - d) Make the community a better place for all its members
  - ELP Testing Center for Students
    - a) Provide welcoming environment for initial English Language Proficiency (ELP) Testing for Students
    - b) Advise parents and students of appropriate programming
    - c) Support families with completion of registration documents including lunch registration and transportation
  - ESOL, Dual Language & World Language
    - a) ESOL: designed to specifically improve the language proficiency of students whose native language is not English. In addition to receiving academic instruction in reading, writing speaking, and listening, the ESOL program strives to develop and appreciation of diverse cultures and languages
    - b) Dual Language Program: designed to teach global understanding, professional success, and personal growth in today's global environment. Knowledge of other languages and cultures is an absolute necessity and a useful key to access the world
    - c) World Languages: designed to prepare students to succeed in a world that is culturally diverse and in a global economy through academic achievement and proficiency in a second language
  - Monthly services free of charge:
    - a) Translation Support
    - b) Homework assistance to students
    - c) Daytime language classes for parents
    - d) Informational community sessions in various languages
    - e) Orientation to American schools for newly arrived families

- f) Parent and Community Outreach programs
  - g) Center open: 5 days per week, 8 am – 4:30 pm
2. Linka Crosby, Instructional Program Manager- ESOL, Florida State College at Jacksonville  
*ESOL at FSCJ*
- ESOL information:
    - a) Website: [https://www.fscj.edu/academics/adult-education/english-for-speakers-of-other-languages-\(esol\)](https://www.fscj.edu/academics/adult-education/english-for-speakers-of-other-languages-(esol))
    - b) ESOL Main Line: 904-997-2513
    - c) ESOL email: ESOL@fscj.edu
    - d) Hours of Operation: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM
  - Class information
    - a) A12 Session- January 10 – April 12, 2022
    - b) B12 Session – January 31 – May 2, 2022
    - c) Schedules:
      - Monday and Wednesday 8:30 am and 6:00 pm (Depending on Class location)
      - Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 am and 6:00 pm (Depending on Class location)
    - d) Locations: Deerwood Center, Kent Campus, South Campus, and Downtown Campus
    - e) Cost: \$30
    - f) Format: Online and Hybrid
  - Special Topics Course:
    - a) Civics and Law
    - b) ELL to HSE (ESOL to GED support courses)
    - c) Medical Terminology and Medical Assisting: Bridge courses to the Medical Assisting Program
    - d) Listening and Conversation level 912
    - e) Pathway to Medical Programs in Career Workforce
  - ESOL Pathways:
    - a) Personal Improvement Path
    - b) Career Certificate Path
    - c) High School Equivalency Path
  - Extra Learning Opportunities for Students
    - a) Individual Tutoring: Online or in Person
    - b) Conversation Club

### **REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE**

- **Lutheran Social Services (Laura Cook, Refugee Services Program Manager):**
  - **CRS Summary**
    - ❖ Lutheran Social Services (LSS) continues to operate. They are open to the public and serving everyone
  - Employment:

- ❖ Have noticed with Afghan clients most speak some English but a small group does not.
- ❖ They get employed around \$12.50 to \$15 p/hr.
- ❖ LSS has been able to place 65% of the male Afghan clients into jobs (most female Afghan clients are not working)
- ❖ EAD and SSN have been coming more readily and it helps with the job search
- Youth Program and Mentoring
  - ❖ 12 enrolled in the youth program
  - ❖ 18 enrolled in the mentoring program
  - ❖ Need more applicants
  - ❖ Have been conducting intensive enrichment programs
  - ❖ In the youth program, they have completed tours, explored the Alligator Farm about careers, toured Sweet Pete's Candy Shop
  - ❖ Publix will do a job interview seminar
  - ❖ Will complete MLK day of service
  - ❖ Continues to offer tutoring at Kim's Open Door
- TCM
  - ❖ Completed 90 RS Assessments
- Career Laddering
  - ❖ Started a new 3-month training class for medical office assistant- 9 enrolled
  - ❖ Last class 80% of the participants got hired
- R&P: 30 arrivals APA: 160 arrivals since October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Preferred Communities Program is set to start at the end of January.
- **Catholic Charities Bureau (Anna Lindler, Associate Director):**
  - R&P: 107 arrivals APA: 180 arrivals since October 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Have a warehouse full of donated furniture, accessories, and clothes
  - Have hired staff that speak Pashto and Persian
  - ESOL:
    - ❖ In December there was a two week Break due to the holidays  
34 new intakes completed,  
Attendance in refugee specific classes:162
    - ❖ January 2022
    - ❖ As of Jan 12<sup>th</sup>, have completed 59 testing and intakes
    - ❖ Over 200 students are enrolled (classes are too large)
    - ❖ Need to hire more teachers as well ESOL support staff
    - ❖ Classes started Jan 4<sup>th</sup>
    - ❖ Have had issues with giving out the computers because some won't/  
don't know how to access transportation to pick them up
    - ❖ Also, some still don't have access to the internet
    - ❖ CCB is receiving a lot of referrals from Beyond90 for Cuban and Haitian clients for one-on-one testing
    - ❖ Received a lot more referrals from LSS then from CCB
    - ❖ Sending a lot of referrals to FSCJ

- **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**
  - No Updates
- **Early Learning Coalition (ELC):**
  - No Updates
- **Department of Health (DOH)**
  - No Updates
- **Duval DOH:**
  - No Updates

**GENERAL UPDATES**

**United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

- Vesna Bozic, has been promoted to Regional Lead for Community Relations Southeast Region
- Donald Jarrell, will now be the Community Relations Officer for Jacksonville as well as Tampa

**ACHA**

- No Updates

**FSCJ ESOL**

- No Updates (Presented today)

**YMCA**

- They also provide Basic English Classes and Citizenship Classes in the evenings
- 14 individuals became citizens including a 76 year old male
- They are providing food pantry three days per week, with a concentration to assist residents in the Dupont area, however, all are welcome to get food
- The Thanksgiving potluck was a success the clients enjoyed it. The providers worked together to make it a wonderful experience for the clients

**Red Cross**

- The Family links (international reunification) program is still in operation and accepting referrals

**Center for Language & Culture (CLC)**

- No Updates (Presented today)

**UNF**

- No Updates

**Beyond 90**

- Recently hired a Refugee Mental Health Clinical Supervisor and two other clinicians
- Amra Mesic (Clinical Supervisor) introduced herself. She is also a former refugee from Bosnia

**CareerSource**

- No Updates

**NEW ISSUES/ ACTIONS TAKEN**

David Draper, Community Liaison Supervisor

- 1.) Afghans are eligible for services ORR policy letter released on 9/30/21
- 2.) Increase in Afghan arrivals across the state
- 3.) Cuban and Haitian arrivals are presenting different eligibility documents
- 4.) Expect R&P to also increase in the coming months