



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppel
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 25, 2021
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: January 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: March 10, 2021
Time: 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Location: TBD
Contact: LeAndra Stafford
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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 teleconference. LeAndra Stafford, Community Liaison, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program and facilitated the meeting. There were 39 people in attendance on Microsoft Teams virtual meeting, 30 of those people identified themselves in the chat section. David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, as well as several DCF staff was also in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants identified themselves by agency.

GUEST PRESENTATION

1.) Lori Chelf, Outreach and Education Coordinator, *Co-Founder*
Beyond 90

- Beyond 90 became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2017.
- In 2014 the founders became volunteer partners with World Relief and saw the need for ongoing services to support refugee past 90 days.
- In 2015, Lori left her job and she and her husband sold their condo and moved into an apartment complex to live among the refugee community. From there they expanded services to become Beyond 90.
- Their goal is to assist with Self-Sufficiency, Housing, and Crisis Management. To help accomplish this they offer programs: Refugee learning Courses, Community Events, and Housing.
- Later this year they will be adding the mental health component by bringing the organization Project for Healing under their umbrella of services.
- In 2020, Beyond 90 Service Center had 864 Client Visits, from 244 families, from 21 different countries.
- Beyond 90 uses the Tarjimly app for language interpretation

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 adhering to social distancing guidelines.
 - ❖ All providers are open and being creative in reaching out to their clients either by video, phone or by face to face with social distance measures
 - ❖ They are working on subcontract site audits
 - Employment: LSS made 17 placements in the last month, 7 people enrolled into the career laddering program
 - Obtaining social security cards are still an issue and hard to get.

- The food pantry is now open 5 days per week 10 am – 12 pm for those in need. Feeding Northeast Florida will do a big food give away on 11/20/20
- **Catholic Charities Bureau (Anna Lindler, Associate Director):**
 - Match Grant: Families that were enrolled in program in September are self-sufficient; Two families, 10 individuals that were enrolled in December still waiting for their SS cards. As soon as we received their SS numbers, they will start seeking employment; The job market seems to be good employers are contacting them for vacant jobs.
 - Reception & Placement (R&P): Two families, 10 individuals arrived in November, Ukrainians. A family of 4 arrived in December, Ukrainians; All the families that arrived in September have received their SS numbers. The families that arrived in November and December have not received their SSNs yet. They were finally able schedule an appointment for the 14 individuals; 20 recently arrived families received Christmas gifts from Sacred Heart Church and Share your Blessing.
 - Tier Case Management Program: 1 case in Tier 1 and seven cases in Tier 3
 - ESOL: English classes are being offered online
 - ❖ They were off for two weeks during the holidays. They created a short video in the WhatsApp to inform students to return to class.
 - ❖ Had 84 students in December.
 - ❖ Vouchers for FSCJ upper level classes are very low only 20 students have enrolled
 - ❖ They are working hard on retention and have called over 200 students
 - ❖ CCB currently have openings for an ESOL instructor for level 200-300 (evenings), also for a substitute teacher.
 - ❖ Testing is conducted on Thurs and Fridays at CCB
 - ❖ Have classes in AM & PM but with technology class available times are flexible
- **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**
 - No Updates
- **Early Learning Coalition (ELC):**
 - No Updates
- **Department of Health (DOH)**
 - The Refugee clinic is still open and seeing refugees for vaccinations.
 - DOH is playing a key role in COVID vaccines; staff is working 12- 15 hours per day. The plan varies by locality there is no formalized state plan for vaccines
 - Would like the community partners to educate the refugees in the importance of cooperation with the clinic concerning COVID status.
 - Please encourage all to answer calls from 904-253-1850. There are a lot of spam calls, but DOH will allow them to call us at 904-253-1850.

- DOH have been giving flu shots to refugee patients; there have been a slight increase with refugees being seen in the clinic

GENERAL UPDATES

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

- No Updates

ACHA

- No Updates

FSCJ ESOL

- Classes start Feb 1st
- Registering students until Feb 8th
- Added more on-campus testing at Downtown and Deerwood Campuses

YMCA

- They continue to provide support services. Clients are being seen on site with social distance practices/ precautions
- They are assisting clients with benefits, food stamps, school enrollments for families over 5 years or immigrants
- 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
- Started English and Citizenship classes, the classes will be smaller due to pandemic

Red Cross

- Continue to work remotely
- The Family links (international reunification) program is still in operation and accepting referrals
- Asking for participants for blood drive, especially of African American decent. Can schedule a donation at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/>
- Will be having a workshop on International Humanitarian Law

Center for Language & Culture (CLC)

- The CLC is open four days per week by appts only and limit the number of people allowed in the building at one time. Hours 7:30 am – 5:30 pm. They are available by phone or email. Phone numbers: Hind: 904-755-5753, Mary: 904-419-8835, Office: 904-739-4891
- There are three testers available Mondays and Wednesdays by appt only. They are taking precautions by temp check and exposure questionnaire as well as cleaning
- Applications for dual language program is open until March 1st. It offers subjects in both English and Spanish

- Partnered with LSS for a workshop on Resume development and Budgeting on Jan 28th at 11 am.
- Have offered more supports in high schools to increase the graduation rate for students in ESOL

UNF

- The students are working with YMCA, San Jose Elem, & CCB with soccer and English classes
- Currently creating ideas to consider for the fall and any needs for interns

The Player Center for Child Health at Wolfson Children's Hospital

- Free application assistance for public benefits
- Car seat checks and discounted car seats
- Offer community education classes

NEW ISSUES/ ACTIONS TAKEN

David Draper, Community Liaison Supervisor

- 1.) Information on DCF's response to COVID-19 can be found on the DCF website.
- 2.) The moratorium on evictions have been extended statewide
- 3.) Community Liaisons are working on collaborations for vaccine rollout to the refugees
- 4.) The number of arrivals may change per the incoming new president; will need to wait and see