



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 28, 2020
TO: Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario (RS)**
SUBJECT: May 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: July 16, 2020
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 Broward 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

BROWARD COUNTY REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING**INTRODUCTION**

The meeting was held via a conference call 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 and the agencies they represented. Approximately 41 individuals participated in the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Elaine McArthur, Outreach & Education Coordinator, U.S. EEOC Miami District, (Florida, Puerto Rico, USVI), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provided a presentation on the EEOC and its resources. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Elaine went over these rules and encouraged task force members to contact her with any questions or concerns. EEOC are kept confidential, and she encouraged task force members to pass this information on to clients, staff, friends and families. Elaine is available to provide training to staff, employers and clients presentations. Members can contact her at: 813-202-7924 (direct), (800) 669-4000 or by Email: elaine.mcarthur@eEOC.gov.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

Task force members discussed how each agency is currently providing services and sharing resources. Each agency discussed plans and timelines for reopening offices.

Oscar Rivera, South Director, Church World Service (CWS), stated that CWS will be celebrating World Refugee Day (WRD) virtually. For this occasion, refugees will be sharing recipes and cooking via the Zoom platform (World Refugee Day Zoom Culinary Experience). WRD will take place every Saturday in June (until 6/20/20). Cooking Class will be led by refugee clients cooking typical dishes from their home countries while also sharing their journeys.

June 6- Nicaragua

June 13- Cuba

June 20 - Haiti

All classes will be held on ZOOM Meeting ID 839-6223-5854 Password: CWS
11am-1pm EST

Questions concerning the event can be directed to:

Renata Bresciani-Ruiz
Marketing & Fundraising Specialist
Church World Service
1924 NW 84 Ave
Doral, FL 33126
Phone: +1.305.774.6770 Ext. 1154
Email: RBresciani@cwsglobal.org

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

USCIS, Roketa Mansfield and Berta Cassidy, Community Relations Officer (CRO), Miami and Caribbean District U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, participated. USCIS Services are currently being provided virtually. USCIS offices are currently closed. USCIS is preparing to reopen certain domestic offices for non-emergency public services. For the latest information on the status of individual offices, check our office closures page. While certain offices are temporarily closed, USCIS continues to provide limited emergency in-person services. Please call the USCIS Contact Center for assistance with emergency services.

Career Source of Broward (CSB)- Jaime Connelly, BSW, FCWP, Program Manager Welfare Transition & Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs stated that CareerSource Broward is temporarily closed. They anticipate reopening offices in July (by appointment only). Staff is currently working remotely to assist customers. Up-to-date information can be found at their website (<https://careersourcebroward.com/>) or by contacting Jaime at (954) 202-3830 Ext. 3126.

Coast to Coast Legal Aid of South Florida Inc. (CCLASF)- Victoria Sexton, Attorney at Law, Coast to Coast Legal Aid of South Florida Inc., stated they are currently closed. However, if anyone needs representation for an injunction or a restraining order, they should call the office immediately to request assistance. More information can be found at the organization's website (www.coasttocoastlegalaid.org/family) or by calling 754-312-3349.

American Red Cross (ARC), Jaime Cruz stated that all local ARC offices are closed. ARC services are still available, including services for those impacted by fires and those trying to connect with missing family members in other countries. ARC is also providing hurricane preparedness information. Questions can be directed to 786-714-6796.

FL Highway Safety Motor Vehicle - Ulises Pacheco, Program Consultant stated that offices are temporarily closed to the public. Licenses expiring in May will automatically be extended for 30 days. More information is available online (FLHSMV.GOV) or by calling 850-617-2000.

Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services (GCJFCS)- Sabine Balmir-Derenoncourt, Program Coordinator , 786-336-1120 or 786-336-1123, Florida Center for Survivors of Torture stated that GCJFCS has funds available for refugee women who want to start their own small, home-based business (microenterprise). GCJFCS works in partnership with HIAS to help refugee women turn their talents and passions into businesses. Funds are currently available, and all loans can be deferred up to 90 days. Please share this program with interested refugee / asylee women who have been resettled in Florida.

United Nations Association, UNA Broward County Chapter -USA - Eileen Davis-Jerome, Ed.D.,S.E., Regional Representative, National Council, United Nations Association-USA, UNA Broward County Chapter was in attendance. She stated that the UNA Broward Chapter works to empower the local community and conduct ‘global consultation’.

Department of Health (DOH) – Migdalia Diaz, Office Operations Supervisor II, TB/Hepatitis, Refugee Coordinator, Florida Department of Health-Broward County, stated that DOH continues to serve all clients. Clients are able to call and schedule appointments. DOH is serving approximately 4 refugee clients a day.

KidCare- Rebecca EB Miele, HSPS, Florida KidCare, Outreach Program Manager, Florida Department of Health, Broward, provided updates and resources. Behavioral services, weight management, free tax assistance, and swimming lessons are being offered. For more information, contact Rebecca Miele at 954-895-5563.

ESS/DCF- Wilber Roney stated that DCF storefronts currently have drop boxes where customers can leave documents (documents can also be scanned or faxed to DCF).

RS/DCF – David Draper, CL Manager, provided updates regarding RS and COVID-19. COVID updates can be found here: www.myflfamilies.com/COVID. DCF store fronts are closed and all application for services will continue on-line. Anyone with questions may call the customer call center at 1-850-300-4323. P-EBT is a supplemental benefit for households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures. Food stamp recipients can now order groceries online from Walmart and Amazon, but they delivery fee cannot be paid with the EBT card. DCF, which determines eligibility for the food assistance benefit program, and DACS, the agency overseeing the National School Lunch Program in Florida, have been working together to develop and implement a P-EBT program to issue benefits quickly and seamlessly to eligible Florida families. This program will run concurrently with the School District of Palm Beach County’s NSLP program. Those who are receiving P-EBT will still be able to receive school district meals. RS will continue to operate remotely and will be evaluating re-open offices.

RS Contracted providers: Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS); Oscar Rivera, Director, Church World Service (CWS), provided information on the CRS program in Broward. All CRS services and Match Grant (MG) services are operating virtually. He noted that CWS is operating with a skeleton crew. Clients are being seen by appointment only. CRS services currently being offered include Tiered Case Management, Employment, Career Laddering, Legal, Adult Education, Child Care, and Mentoring. Adult Education is being offered through Project Renew (Broward College). Clients can be seen by scheduling an appointment.

Project RENEW (PR/BC); Jocelyne Martinez, Project RENEW Director/BC, indicated that Adult Education class sessions are currently being offered online. Broward College is currently closed. To better make use of online classes, these students are also being taught computer skills. Project Renew currently has 170 registered students. They have not determined whether they will re-open in the fall.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Thursday, July 16, 2020**
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