



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Chad Poppell**  
Secretary

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 13, 2020  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** January 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** March 11, 2020  
**Time:** 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.  
**Location:** Baptist Association of Jacksonville  
2700 University Boulevard South  
Jacksonville, Florida 32216  
**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 at the Jacksonville Baptist Association. LeAndra Stafford, Community Liaison represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program facilitated the meeting. There were 21 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

### GUEST PRESENTATION

- 1.) Bill Brim, Executive Director, Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of North Florida  
*Refugee Employment Services, Job Market Analysis – Jacksonville, Fl*
  - LSS announced a change in the executive staff at LSS. Mary Strickland is no longer the CEO and Bill Brim is now the Executive Director of LSS
  - LSS stated they are working hard to re-establish the refugee employment program
  - Last month (December), LSS placed 21 refugees into employment
  - LSS has made connections with many employers in the community.
  - LSS reported that Jacksonville unemployment is at all-time low of 2.8%
  - LSS has placed 209 clients into employment in 2019.
  - Industries that employ refugees are food service; hospitality; production; human services medical; retail/sales; warehouse; and cosmetology.
  - Some refugees have occupational experiences prior to coming to the US, including students, laborers, farmers, and Housewives/ self-employed
  - According to LSS, Jacksonville has the most diverse employment opportunities in the state.
  - LSS will be opening a Financial Opportunity Center for those refugees who have been here over 5yrs and who can no longer get assistance through the DCF refugee contract.
  - LSS is currently offering a New American Pathways program on Saturdays; They are offering certifications in Child Care. This program is being offered through private funding. They currently have 25 students.

### REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **Lutheran Social Services (Nina Frank, Refugee Services Program Manager):**
  - Refugee Services Assessments: In the Tiered Case management Program, LSS has conducted 29 entry assessments and 44 walk-in assessments..
  - LSS closed its Reception and Placement (R&P) program in October 2019. They have now reopened their R&P and are taking in new arrivals. They are scheduled to receive a family this month. Their projected number for the year is 120 Refugees and 25 special immigrants.
  - Youth: LSS is currently serving 21 clients in their youth program.
  - Employment: LSS placed 48 clients in employment and 6 in career laddering.

- Mentoring: LSS has 11 mentees who have completed 132 hours of mentoring.
- **Catholic Charities Bureau (Matt Schmitt, Associate Director):**
  - CCB had 115 arrivals from October 2018 through December 2019.
  - Projected arrivals for FFY 2020: CCB is projecting 120 refugees and 40 special immigrants.
  - Match Grant: Catholic Charities has 50 slots have been filled and have received approval for 12 additional slots.
  - Tiered Case Management: For 2019, CCB has had 108 total cases. They have opened 6 cases in December.
  - ESOL: From October through December 2019, 61 students completed intakes, 68 students were tested, 132 vouchers were distributed, and 51 students were enrolled; CCB provided 407 hours of guidance and retention
  - Match Grant: CCB enrolled 73 people in Match Grant. They had a rate of 100% employment at 180 days.
- **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**
  - No Updates
- **Early Learning Coalition:**
  - No Updates
- **Department of Health**
  - No Updates

## **GENERAL UPDATES**

### **USCIS –**

- There will be a fee increase for citizenship applications (80% increase)
- On Jan 9<sup>th</sup> In Jacksonville, there will be a teacher training for anyone who teaches citizenship preparation classes. Location: Southeast Regional Public Library from 10:30 am – 4 pm

### **ACHA –**

- Please call with any concerns about Medicaid; the helpline #1-877-254-1055

### **FSCJ ESOL –**

- ESOL lasses started on January 6 (a 15-week session). They also started a 12-week session to keep up with the demand for ESOL. The 12-week session will start on Jan 27.
- 1,017 students have enrolled in ESOL.
- FSCJ is starting a Medical Bridge class on January 27; They currently have 12 students enrolled in the class.
- Classes are in Deerwood Campus in the evenings at 6 pm.
- FSCJ has successfully opened ESOL in the South Campus and is now trying to open ESOL in North Campus. Depending on demand, Kemp Campus is another possibility.

**YMCA –**

- No Update.

**Red Cross –**

- Restoring Family Links Program – Red Cross encouraged community partners to refer clients
- Red Cross reminded the task force about the Sound the Alarm, Save a life campaign in April 2020

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

- Application for Dual English and Spanish programs are due January 23. CLC can assist parents with applications.

**Project for Healing –**

- Project Healing continues with the Community Listener program and training bilingual people to help in the community: English and Arabic class start on 11/10, times: 9-12 and 1-4, Levels 1 & 2.

**Beyond 90 –**

- Beyond 90 assisted 20 Individuals with job applications, food stamps, and Medicaid.
- Beyond 90 is currently doing fundraisers for their youth summer program.

**NEW ISSUES/ ACTIONS TAKEN**

- 1.) Requested Volunteers to work on the next World Refugee Day Event for 2020.