



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Chad Poppell**  
Secretary

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 18, 2020  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** May 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** July 8, 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 via teleconference. LeAndra Stafford, Community Liaison, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program and facilitated the meeting. There were 17 people in attendance on the conference call. David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, was also in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants identified themselves by agency.

### REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **Lutheran Social Services (Nina Frank, Refugee Services Program Manager):**
  - **CRS Summary**
    - ❖ Lutheran Social Services (LSS) continues to operate. They are adhering to social distancing guidelines.
    - ❖ LSS conducts weekly conference calls with local providers regarding their status and ability to still assist/serve clients.
    - ❖ LSS has been able to work with clients through Microsoft teams, Zoom, WhatsApp, and other virtual means.
    - ❖ The Mentoring and Youth programs have extended their services to the other family members to assist with online learning.
  - LSS Reception and Placement (R&P) program is currently assisting 14 individuals.
  - The Tiered Case Management Program has helped many clients in need of assistance with benefits applications.
  - Youth Program: LSS is currently serving 22 youth clients.
  - Employment: LSS has placed 17 clients in employment.
  - Mentoring: LSS has 21 mentees. They are communicating with mentors via Zoom, WhatsApp, and text. Three UNF interns have been working virtually with these clients.
- **Catholic Charities Bureau (Matt Schmitt, Associate Director):**
  - Tiered Case Management: Assessments are being completed over the phone
  - ESOL: English classes are being offered online.
    - ❖ Some clients have had some challenges with computer and internet access (some students are unable to access materials due to limited phone capabilities)
    - ❖ ESOL teachers have been very creative in assisting clients with their lessons. They have utilized WhatsApp, Teams, and phone- calls.
    - ❖ Catholic Charities (CCB) is offering ESOL classes live (through virtual means), but also records those classes for students unable to attend live sessions. Students complete activities and lessons through emails. Most students have been provided books.

- ❖ The ESOL program has had some re- enrollments and one new enrollment from R&P.
- CCB is expanding the food pantry to a new location. They are partnering with Farm Share to serve at least 300 people per day with food. The new location is at The Jesse Dupont Center, Monday through Friday, 12-6 pm. The pantry will be a 'drive-up' service and will be operating for the next 4 weeks.
- **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**
  - No Updates
- **Early Learning Coalition (ELC):**
  - ELC staff is currently teleworking and continue to assist clients with their child care needs.
  - More child care providers are re-opening.
  - Refugee clients are not using child care services as frequently due to the quarantine and the closure of certain child care centers.
- **Department of Health (DOH)**
  - The Refugee clinic is still open and seeing refugees for vaccinations.
  - They are primarily connecting with refugee clients via phone.
  - They are assisting clients that need medication delivered to their homes.
  - They have not served any new refugee client recently.
  - Most of DOH staff have been focused on COVID-19 issues.

## **GENERAL UPDATES**

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

- Vesna Bozic, community relations officer, states she is currently working remotely but can give virtual presentations (utilizing Microsoft Teams or Webx) and discuss USCIS services.
- USCIS field offices are closed to the public and staff are teleworking. Staff come into the office every two weeks to get files to adjudicate. They are preparing for a staggered reopening on June 4 and will be equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- The agency will issue a flyer for distribution with contact information on what applicants should bring into the office. Masks will be mandatory and only applicants will be allowed in. Attorneys will be encouraged to be in attendance virtually. This information will be distributed nationally.
- You can visit the COVID-19 link at [www.USCIS.gov](https://www.USCIS.gov) for more information on the USCIS COVID-19 response and the USCIS office status.
- After reopening, shortened versions of naturalization ceremonies will be conducted in the parking lot (tentative). Also, tentatively, officers will naturalize some individuals immediately after their interviews are complete.

**ACHA**

- Individuals should call the helpline with any concerns regarding the Healthcare Marketplace or Medicaid (#1-877-254-1055)
- The staff is teleworking but still available to assist customers

**FSCJ ESOL**

- No Updates

**YMCA**

- No Updates

**Red Cross**

- Services continue to be offered virtually. Chapter offices are closed to the public and masks must be worn.
- Red Cross is currently monitoring the upcoming storm season and exploring how the population can shelter in place during the quarantine. They are also working to put all their prep information online (virtual).
- They are offering ‘family reunification’ services virtually.
- The Red cross blood supply is currently low. The Red Cross is asking individuals to consider donating blood. They are holding a blood drive at their chapter office on June 2 and 3 (by appointment only).

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

- The CLC is closed but working virtually. They are available by phone or email
- They are working closely with families and parents to assist them with online learning, obtaining laptops, and setting up accounts.
- They are tentatively planning on re-opening in June (Monday through Thursday).
- All summer camps will be held virtually (online).

**Project for Healing**

- Project for Healing is currently offering confidential therapy through an online portal and/or via phone. If a client must be seen face to face, they follow strict protocols for social distancing.
- They have provided 90 sessions to teach clients how to handle stress related to COVID-19.
- They continue to receive referrals from community providers.
- They continue to partner with Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA) to provide psychological evaluations for asylum seekers.
- The Northeast Florida resource book is complete and looks great. It is a crowdsourcing-based resource guide that gives locations of local resources. It was completed in partnership with University of North Florida (UNF) students.

**Beyond 90**

- Beyond 90 continues to serve clients in their office through plexiglass. They are providing masks, scanning paperwork, and serving clients at a distance.
- They have seen an increase in clients asking for assistance with SNAP and Reemployment Assistance applications. They have also assisted clients with questions regarding stimulus checks.

**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.) Individuals receiving EBT may now purchase food online from Walmart and Amazon.
- 3.) Information on Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) can also be found on the DCF COVID-19 webpage.