



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

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

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: September 9, 2020
Time: 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Location: Teleconference
1-888-585-9008
Access # 951-031-034
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 21 people in attendance on the conference call (per Open Voice Call-in Log), 14 of those people identified themselves on the 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.
 - The Tiered Case Management Program has assisted 8 walk-ins this month. The need for services is increasing. They have continued to assist with referrals and benefit applications.
 - Youth Program: LSS is currently serving 23 youth clients., 70 hours of tutoring
 - Employment: LSS has placed 21 placements
 - Mentoring: LSS has 20 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):**
 - Match Grant: 3 families currently enrolled, they have been given permission to extend services past 180 days on a monthly basis, if family is not self-sufficient during the pandemic.
 - ESOL: English classes are being offered online.
 - ❖ 75 students currently enrolled in the lower level. The upper levels have seen a decrease in student enrollments to 37 students, who are enrolled in the summer classes (2 sessions)
 - ❖ Some clients have had some challenges with computer and internet access (some students are unable to access materials due to limited phone capabilities). They are looking for a more user-friendly platform and they will try out with the GED students first
 - ❖ The ESOL program has not received any new referrals for the last month.
 - ❖ Classes are continuing with both AM & PM options

- **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.
- They are primarily connecting with refugee clients via phone.
- They are assisting clients that need medication delivered to their homes.
- They served a new refugee client recently.
- Per ORR, approval has been granted to extend the vaccine deadline past one year

GENERAL UPDATES

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

- No Updates

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 Monday – Thursday Hours: 8 am – 5 pm

FSCJ ESOL

- Per President at FSCJ the opening of campuses is pushed back, all classes will be online, including ESOL
- ESOL levels 1-3, can come in the first two weeks of school to get acquainted w/ on-line classes.
- Class sessions: August 21st – November 24th and September 21st - December 15th. Class hour options: 9:30 am – 12 pm or 6 pm – 8:30 pm
- They will be using the Burlington English Test to get placement rather than CASAS (they don't offer on-line test)

YMCA

- They continue to provide support services. Clients are being seen on site with social distance practices/ precautions
- They are assisting clients with benefits and school enrollments for families over 5 years or immigrants
- They are providing food pantry once per month
- They are starting English and Citizenship classes next week; the classes will be smaller due to pandemic

Red Cross

- No updates

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 Tue and Thurs by appt only. They are taking precautions by temp check and exposure questionnaire as well as cleaning
- They are working closely with families and parents to assist them with preparing for the new school year, tech support, and opening school accounts

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 the pandemic.
- 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, Reemployment Assistance applications, and school enrollment.
- They have suspended all classes except driver readiness.

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.
- 4.) The moratorium on evictions have been extended by Governor DeSantis