



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

**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Chad Poppell**  
Secretary

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** December 3, 2020  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** November 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** January 13, 2021  
**Time:** 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.  
**Location:** TBD  
**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 virtually via the Microsoft Teams platform. LeAndra Stafford, Community Liaison, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program and facilitated the meeting. There were 49 people in attendance on Microsoft Teams virtual meeting, 24 of those people identified themselves in the chat section. David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, as well as several DCF staff were also in attendance. Yvette McDonald and Faith Hurt from ORR, Fausto Pimentel, and Vesna Bozic from USCIS were also in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants identified themselves by agency.

### **GUEST PRESENTATION**

1.) Elaine McArthur, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Miami District  
*Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

- EEOC is a federal agency responsible for ensuring equal employment opportunity through federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination against individuals in a protected class.
- Protected Categories: Religion, Race, Sex/Pregnancy/LGBT, Color, National Origin, Age, Disability and Genetic Information
- Employers who employ 15 or more individuals must adhere to the federal law prohibiting employment discrimination and EEOC oversight. There are also state and local agencies in Florida that enforce fair employment practices.
- An individual has 300 days after the incident to file with the EEOC
- Retaliation is prohibited under all Federal EEO Statutes when an individual has opposed unlawful employment practice, filed a complaint, part of an investigation or hearing concerning discrimination.
- If anyone has questions about employment discrimination or employment rights in general, they may call 1-800-669-4000 or [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

### **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
  - The Tiered Case Management Program continues to refer clients to appropriate services
  - Youth Program: LSS served 21 youth clients in July and 17 in August. After-school tutoring will begin in the schools at the end of this month.

- Employment: LSS made 17 placements the last month
- Mentoring: LSS has served 20 mentees this month with a total of 23 enrolled. They are communicating with mentors via Zoom, WhatsApp, and text. Three UNF interns have been working virtually with these clients.
- The Americans Pathways Program (Career laddering) is available to clients that have been in the US for more than 60 months.
- 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: 8 individuals were enrolled (2 families) in September and they expect to enroll 10 in November
  - Reception & Placement (R&P): Received 14 individuals (five families) and they expect to receive 10 individuals (1 family) on 11/20/20
  - Tier Case Management Program: Case managers are working with 7-10 clients virtually. The number of clients served is increasing due to increases in arrivals.
  - ESOL: English classes are being offered online
    - ❖ Tested 42 for lower levels in October
    - ❖ 93 students attending with 103 currently enrolled in the lower levels.
    - ❖ 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 to increase more participation with students on a more user-friendly program.
    - ❖ The lower-level students are using WhatsApp app and it seems to be working well when using the video option in the app, however, the teachers can only work with 2-3 students at a time.
    - ❖ Testing is conducted on Thursdays and Fridays at CCB
    - ❖ The staff continues to try to reconnect with students to encourage them to return to class
    - ❖ Classes are offered in the morning and the afternoon. Because of technology, class 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.
  - Would like the community partners to educate the refugees on the importance of cooperating with the clinic concerning COVID status.
  - Please encourage all clients to answer calls from 904-253-1850.

- Rapid tests results are not always immediately reported to DOH. If a client receives their results, they should contact DOH.
- DOH utilizes language line services when necessary.
- EPI Hotline 904-253-1850

## **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**

- No Updates

### **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, and school enrollments for refugee families 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. However, the classes will be smaller due to pandemic
- The gardening area is being upgraded with a new irrigation system

### **Red Cross**

- Continue to work remotely
- The Family links (international reunification) program is still in operation and accepting referrals
- Youth needing volunteer hours, please contact Red Cross regarding virtual volunteer opportunities

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

- The CLC is open four days per week by appointment only and are limited by 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 Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment only.
- On November 19, ESOL specialist will be available to assist in enrolling students in the Dual Language Program.

**UNF**

- The students are working with YMCA, San Jose Elementary School, & CCB with soccer and English classes

**Project for Healing**

- No Updates

**Beyond 90**

- No Updates

**Florida Immigrant Coalition**

- WeaveTales Resource Guide for Northeast Florida is an online resource guide created by WeaveTales to help immigrants, refugees, and low-income families in Northeast Florida better navigate reliable and trustworthy resources available in their areas. It features the locations and information on providers of core services such as food, housing, and legal aid. It is available on our website and can be accessed in English, Spanish, or Arabic at [www.weavetales.org/nefl](http://www.weavetales.org/nefl).

**Women's Center of Jacksonville**

- The Women's Center has resumed Spanish Speaking support group for domestic violence victims

**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 has ended statewide