



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 14, 2020
TO: Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: David Draper, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: October 14, 2020 Task Force Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Location: Microsoft Teams or TBA
Contact: David Draper
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This task force has been active in the Orlando area for many years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and mutual assistance associations. An average of 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 at the local, state and national level, request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, discuss refugee service needs and explore solutions to those needs. Meeting participants 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!

400 W. Robinson Street, S1111C, Orlando, Florida 32801

ORLANDO AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

This meeting was held virtually via the Microsoft Teams platform. Approximately 38 people were in attendance. David Draper, Community Liaison Manager, represented the Florida Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Rosa Chaves, Community Liaison for the Central Region, was also present. Everyone introduced themselves and the agencies that they represented.

Special presentation

- **Anne Piervil - Equal Justice Works Fellow with Florida Legal Services sponsored by the Florida Bar Foundation**, provided information about medical-legal services for Haitian farm workers residing in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake, Volusia, and Polk Counties. Florida is home to a large number of Haitians. Approximately 40% of the population are farmers and 11% reside in Orlando.
- **Elaine McArthur - Outreach & Education Coordinator U.S. EEOC (equal Employment Opportunity Commissions) Miami District (Florida, Puerto Rico, USVI)**, provided an overview of her organization and discussed equal opportunity employment laws. EEOC is responsible for enforcing Federal laws which protect workers and job applicants from discrimination based on religion, sex, race, national origin, age, disability, or genetic identity. Her organization works to protect the rights of workers.

GENERAL UPDATES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vesna Bozic, USCIS Community Relations Officer, informed the taskforce that they are organizing weekly virtual discussions (Let's Talk Immigration) every Wednesday at 10:30 AM and every Thursday evening at 6:00 PM. She also mentioned that USCIS fee increases will not be going into effect yet (the implementation of fee increases has been delayed).

- **Felipe Sousa-Matos - City of Orlando**, informed the task force that the city of Orlando operates an Office of Human Services which deals with addressing discrimination. Also, on Friday October 16, the city will celebrate the Pride Shabbat with the Jewish Federation. On October 14, they will have an Orlando Youth Empowerment Summit.
- **Janet Foggs – DCF Government Operations Consultant**, has created a resource directory which can be found at www.myfloridamyfamily.com

- **Naomi Montanez-Lugo – Florida Blue**, announced that open enrollment will start on October 15.
- **Anne Packham, Marketplace Project Coordinator** informed that the open enrollment starts very soon and will be opened for 6 weeks. All refugees and asylum seekers with eligible immigration status who are in the USA are able to get marketplace coverage. They provide services in English, Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese.
- **Asli Yalim, UCF Assistant Professor in the school of Social Work** is conducting a study on refugee access to health and mental healthcare. She is requesting providers complete her assessment (which has been distributed via email).
- **Lisa Dominguez, Bethany Christian Services**, is working with a trafficking victim assistance program to help immigrants who are victims of human trafficking.
- **Maria Diez, Catholic Charities Mentoring and Youth Program** informed the task force that Rae Wilburn, a Vista Member, is planning to dedicate another year of service to the mentoring program. The program has recently recruited many new mentors and mentees. Recently, youth from the mentoring and youth program met with one of the local universities who is assisting by providing ESOL to some of these youth.
- **Julius Jonas, Catholic Charities Vista Outreach Coordinator**, told the task force that they are conducting a survey looking at employment trends in Central Florida. The purpose of the survey is to find ways to better prepare clients for employment by targeting vocational training that will help them become more employable and connecting to companies that can offer good job opportunities.
- **Michael Montgomery, Community Coordination Care for Children (4C)**, announced that there is no waiting list for the refugee child care program. All child care centers are currently open for business. A lot of individuals have returned to the program and are in need of child care assistance.
- **Michael Holbrook, Catholic Charities of Central Florida** provided updates on the Comprehensive Refugee Services Program. He announces that Catholic Charities offices are open, services are being provided on all levels, and some refugees are attending in-person ESOL classes (however, most ESOL classes are virtual). Clients are being seen in the office via appointment only.
- **David Draper, Department of Children and Families Refugee Services Community Liaison Manager** encouraged task force members to continue checking the DCF COVID-19 web page for operational updates and changes to benefits. DCF Refugee services currently has three active procurements (Tallahassee, Southwest Florida, Miami). Any information on these procurements must be requested through the procurement manager. The presidential determination on the number of refugees being resettled this year has been set at 15,000. Although that number is low, Florida is expecting to receive asylees and

Cuban and Haitian entrants. The governor's eviction moratorium is set to end soon, but the CDC moratorium on evictions is still in place.

NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday Dec 9th, 2020

Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Location: Virtual Microsoft Teams

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