



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 17, 2020
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario**, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: January 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: March 20, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: West Palm Beach City Hall
Contact: Miriam Rosario
Office: (561) 227-6722
Cell: (561) 459-6098
E-Mail: Miriam.rosario@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Palm Beach area in the past few years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and volunteer groups. An average of about twenty to twenty-five 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!

Southeast Region - Circuit 15
111 South Sapodilla Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

PALM BEACH AREA COUNTY REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING**INTRODUCTION**

The meeting was held at the West Palm Beach City Hall, Miriam Rosario (MIR), Community Liaison represented the DCF, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Miriam thanked Mayor of WB City and staff for hosting the meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services and the agency they represented.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Amanda St Jean, Regional Public Information Officer from the Executive Office for Immigration Review, provided an overview of the organization. She stated that the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is an office of the United States Department of Justice whose primary mission is to adjudicate immigration cases by fairly, expeditiously, and uniformly interpreting and administering the Nation's immigration laws. Under delegated authority from the Attorney General, EOIR conducts immigration court proceedings, appellate reviews, and administrative hearings. Besides being a separate agency within the Department of Justice, the Immigration Courts are also independent of USCIS and from the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices in the DOJ Civil Rights Division and the Office of Immigration Litigation in the DOJ Civil Division. The presenter noted that the chief function of EOIR is to conduct removal proceedings, which are administrative proceedings to determine the removability and admissibility of individuals in the United States. Removal proceedings are conducted in immigration courts. As of September 28, 2016, there are fifty-eight immigration courts throughout the United States. A fact Sheet with overview material was distribute and a flyer with a list of Pro-Bono legal services.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

Local Job Market Analysis- Cindy De Leon Supervisor with Youth CO-OP, Inc presented the Broward Survey local Job Market analysis. She provided an overview of the jobs available, job placements in the Palm Beach community, and the training being provided. Youth Co-Op analyzed the local Job Market to figure out ways to help refugees obtain employment and become self-sufficient. Cindy discussed the importance of refugee employment services in the county. She discussed ways to collaborate with other task force members to better assist refugee clients and newly arrived asylees. A copy of the Power Point presentation will be distributed to task force members.

End of the Year Review- Miriam discussed the refugee task force accomplishments of the year and the importance of finding ways to improve the the quality of life of the local refugee population. The task force discussed previous presentations that had been given at the task force and they discussed creating new partnerships to helps clients with their most pressing needs. The task force also discussed the various events that had been organized throughout the year, including World Refugee Day.

World Refugee Day (WRD) - Miriam discussed plans to organize the Palm Beach County World Refugee Day event. As with previous years, the Refugee Task Force will collaborate with other local organizations to conduct the event. Potential themes were discussed.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

USCIS: Roketa Mansfield and Berta Cassidy, Community Relations Officer (CRO), Miami and Caribbean District U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), discussed a proposal to increase certain USCIS application fees. The proposed fee rule accounts for increased costs to adjudicate immigration benefit requests, detect and deter immigration, fraud, and to thoroughly vet applicants. USCIS last updated its fee structure in 2017. USCIS also spoke about an updated Naturalization Test that is currently being reviewed. USCIS will be offering upcoming trainings for teaching citizenship. One of those trainings will be taking place in Miami.

PBC Library System -Jayme Bosio with the Public Beach County System Library informed the task force on library services.

ESS/DCF- Teresa Hernandez; Spoke of the importance of submitting specific documents when applying for DCF benefits.

CSCB - Marta Roque from CareerSource's Palm Beach County office spoke about the benefits they provide to those receiving TANF.

Department of Labor (DOL)- Ariel Rivera Maldonado, Community Outreach with the US Department of Labor, spoke briefly about the services that they offer.

Haitian American Culture Collaborative (HACC) - Ancy Louci invited everyone to the three free seminars. The seminars are designed to encourage civic responsibility and share Haitian culture. The events will be held at the Delray Beach Public Library on February 1, February 15, and March 7. For more information contact Arlene Ustin at Austin@prescott.edu.

RS Contracted Provider- No new updates from Church World Service or from Youth Co-Op.

Miriam Rosario reminded the task force that the Palm Beach County School District did not renew its Adult Education contract (Project Transition). All refugee adult education referrals will go through Church World Services' new Comprehensive Refugee Services contract.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, March 20, 2020**

Time: 10:00 to 12PM

Location: West Palm Beach City Hall

401 Clematis ST., WPB City, FL 33401

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