



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 28, 2020
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario**, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: May 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: July 17, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: TBA
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

BROWARD COUNTY REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING**INTRODUCTION**

The meeting was held via a conference call and Miriam Rosario, Southeast Region (SER) Community Liaison (CL), Refugee Services (RS) Program, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) facilitated the Refugee Task Force (RTF) meeting. Miriam thanked and welcome all participants for calling in and joining the meeting during these challenging times. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agencies they represented. There were approximately 49 people on the call.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Elaine McArthur, Outreach & Education Coordinator, U.S. EEOC Miami District, (Florida, Puerto Rico, USVI), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provided a presentation on the EEOC and its resources. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Elaine went over these rules and encouraged task force members to contact her with any questions or concerns. EEOC are kept confidential, and she encouraged task force members to pass this information on to clients, staff, friends and families. Elaine is available to provide training to staff, employers and clients presentations. Members can contact her at: 813-202-7924 (direct), (800) 669-4000 or by Email: elaine.mcarthur@eoc.gov .

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

Task force members discussed how each agency is currently providing services and sharing resources. Each agency discussed plans and timelines for reopening offices.

Carlos Naranjo, Resettlement Program Coordinator, Church World Service (CWS), stated that CWS will be celebrating World Refugee Day (WRD) virtually. For this occasion, refugees will be sharing recipes and cooking via the Zoom platform (World Refugee Day Zoom Culinary Experience). WRD will take place every Saturday in June (until 6/20/20). Cooking Class will be led by refugee clients cooking typical dishes from their home countries while also sharing their journeys.

June 6- Nicaragua

June 13- Cuba

June 20 - Haiti

All classes will be held on ZOOM Meeting ID 839-6223-5854 Password: CWS
11am-1pm EST

Questions concerning the event can be directed to:

Renata Bresciani-Ruiz
Marketing & Fundraising Specialist
Church World Service
1924 NW 84 Ave
Doral, FL 33126
Phone: +1.305.774.6770 Ext. 1154
Email: RBresciani@cwsglobal.org

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Don Jarrell, Community Relations Officer, Tampa District (CRO), USCIS participated. USCIS Services are currently being provided virtually. USCIS offices are currently closed. USCIS is preparing to reopen certain domestic offices for non-emergency public services. The USCIS Tampa District (Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, West Palm Beach and Fort Myers) is starting a phased re-opening of Field Offices starting June 1. Appointment notices will contain information on safety precautions that visitors to USCIS facilities must follow. Ceremonies will start during the month of July with a fewer number of participants.

Career Source of Palm Beach (CSPB)- Marta Roque, Program Manager Welfare Transition & Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs stated, due to the pandemic, CareerSource has temporarily closed their administrative and career centers. CSPB anticipates re-opening offices in June. All services are currently conducted virtually and by appointment only. CareerSource Palm Beach County's Central Career Center will reopen with limited services from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. beginning Monday, June 1. Career Centers in Belle Glade and Delray Beach remain closed until further notice. The CareerSource Business Services staff connect employers with qualified candidates for job openings. Job seekers can access a series of 18 professional workshops from their home computer or mobile device 24/7 available from the organization's home page at www.careersourcepb.com. They can also call 561.340.1060 and select option 3.

Palm Beach County Library- Jayme Bosio and Maribel De Jesus both participated. They shared informational updates; All locations of the Palm Beach County Library System will reopen Monday, June 1 with limited services. Hours of operation will be 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Members will be able to browse, pick up holds and check out materials. They are continuing Walk-up/Drive-up Service. Library employees are available for assistance virtually during business hours. To access online services, please visit www.pbclibrary.org/virtual-library. Summer Grab and Go Lunches will be given out at all locations beginning Monday from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Visit their website at: <http://www.pbclibrary.org/> to see which day your local branch will be distributing meals.

American Red Cross (ARC), Jaime Cruz stated that all local ARC offices are closed. ARC services are still available, including services for those impacted by fires and those trying to connect with missing family members in other countries. ARC is also providing hurricane preparedness information. Questions can be directed to 786-714-6796.

Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services (GCJFCS)- Lorene Gregory, Microenterprise Development Program Coordinator, Refugee Services, Florida Center for Survivors of Torture, GCJFCS has funds available for refugee women who want to start their own small, home-based business (microenterprise). GCJFCS works in partnership with HIAS to help refugee women turn their talents and passions into businesses. Funds are currently available, and all loans can be deferred up to 90 days. Please share this program with interested refugee / asylee women who have been resettled in Florida. Her contact telephone is (727) 433-1934.

Alive and Well Community Partners, Ramona Noguera Washington, APRN & HIV Specialist, Alive and Well Community Partners offered resources such as HIV testing. They offer PrEP, multivitamins, B12, and other free supplements. Alive and Well Community Partners is looking forward to helping refugees by building relationship with the refugee services providers. Her contact information is 1-800-434-1366 Ex 1008, Email: npnoguera.aliveandwell@gmail.com

LSF Palm Beach Head Start/Early Head Start- Natacha Bazin, M.A., Child Safety, Health & Nutrition Program Manager, LSF Palm Beach Head Start/Early Head Start, informed the task force that administrative offices are currently closed. Students services are being offered remotely. Early Head Start is serving pregnant women and families with children under the age of 3. Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide free learning and development services to children ages 6 weeks to 5. Her contact information:

LSF Palm Beach Head Start/Early Head Start

Office: 561-233-1614, Mobile: 561-232-7419, 3230 Commerce Place, Suite A, West Palm Beach, FL. 33407, Natacha.Bazin@lsfnet.org www.headstart.lsfnet.org

Department of Health (DOH) – Jill Rubin RN BSHA, Supervisor, Refugee Clinic, Florida Department of Health-Palm Beach County stated that eligible clients can call for appointments. All services are currently being offered. Clients are asked to call before coming into the clinic. DOH is still open to the public and serving clients. Hours of operation are 8:00am to 5:00pm. Her contact telephone is 561-514-5307.

PB State College (PBSC) - Robin Johnson Blake, Director, Community Relations, Palm Beach State College stated that PBCS campuses will remain closed for the 2019-2020 school year. Distance learning opportunities are currently being provided. The Summer term begins June 1st and courses will be offered remotely. The College has short-term certificate programs available across all our academic areas such as STEM, the Arts, Business, Education, Health Science, Public Safety and Computer Science. PBSC also has free self-paced tutorials available (<https://www.palmbeachstate.edu/CCE/default.aspx>). For those students who don't have access to technological devices and Internet access, the College is loaning laptops and working to secure hotspots for those students in need.

Adult Education Program/Palm Beach County School District (AE/PBSC)- Sherrie Bedwell Senior Case Manager, North Tech /Adult & Community Ed., School District of Palm Beach County, Department of Adult and Community Education. AE/PBSC are continuing with Virtual Classes for the Summer Term. Teachers meet with the students Monday through Thursday for a minimum of one hour each evening. They assign assignments through Google Classroom. They also call them on the phone for one-on-one tutoring. They are hoping to return to in-person classes soon, but we will also have a virtual plan in place. The summer program is limited to current student.

Multicultural Department, Palm Beach County School District (PBSC)- Francisco F.J. "Harvey" Oaxaca, Director, Department of Multicultural Education, Palm Beach County School District. Harvey reported Distance Learning will continue through the last day of the school year, Friday, May 29. Distance learning is expected to continue during summer with activities for ESOL and Math Literacy. School staff will be reaching out to those selected families of students in the coming weeks for these extended learning opportunities. The District is working closely with community partners to determine the availability of quality camp opportunities for parents. The District is currently finalizing a summer distance learning site for students and parents. For more information, please visit: palmbeachschools.org/distancelearning. School Feeding Sites, School Food Service will continue its twice-a-week food distribution through the month of May. Distributions will occur Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 51 school locations. Contact information: "Harvey" Oaxaca, Title III (ESOL, Dual Language, Immigrant); District Translators, Title I-Part C (Migrant Ed Program), School District of Palm Beach County, Follow on Twitter @harveyoaxaca; @EsolPbc; #pbcliteracy; #ELs_Can, (561) 434-8010; PX 48010, Cell-(561)-351-5603, francisco.oaxaca@palmbeachschools.org

Palm Beach Sheriff Office (PBSO)-Marcia Bahia, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Gang Prevention Coordinator informed the task force that PBSO is offering gang prevention and bullying workshops. The workshops are offered virtually. The annual Youth Gang Prevention Summer event has been canceled. Marcia contact information; Phone: 561 688-4002, Cell: 561 319-6889 and email bahiam@pbsso.org .

RS/DCF – Ileana Bustelo, Deputy Director RS, offered an update regarding RS and COVID-19. Updates can be found here: www.myflfamilies.com/COVID1. DCF store fronts are closed and all application for services will continue on-line. Anyone with questions may call the customer call center at 1-850-300-4323, agents available 8am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday. TTY 1-800-955-8771. P-EBT is a supplemental benefit for households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures. Food stamp recipients can now order groceries online from Walmart and Amazon, but delivery fee cannot be paid with EBT card. DCF, which determines eligibility for the food assistance benefit program, and DACS, the agency overseeing the National School Lunch Program in Florida, have been working together to develop and implement a P-EBT program to issue benefits quickly and seamlessly to eligible Florida families. This program will run concurrently with the School District of Palm Beach County's NSLP program. Those who are receiving P-EBT will still be able to receive school district meals. RS will continue to operate remotely and will be evaluating re-open offices.

REFUGEE SERVICES PROVIDERS:

Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS); Carlos Naranjo, Church World Service (CWS) provided information on the CRS in Palm Beach. All CRS services and Match Grant (MG) are operating virtually. Carlos Naranjo indicated CWS is operating with a skeleton crew. Clients are being seen by appointment only. CRS services include Tier Case Management, Employment, Career Ladders, Legal, Adult Education and Mentoring services. Adult Education services are offered thru Palm Beach School District through referrals. All needed clients are seen by scheduled appointment. CWS/PBC telephone number is 561-266-0624 and the contact staff are: Francisco Figueroa (Administrator) and Grace Toapanta, CRS Coordinator, Gtoapanta@cwsglobal.org.

CWS/Match Grant program has had no new arrivals.

Palm Beach School District (PBSD); Sherrie indicated that Adult Education classes are being offered virtually. PBCS has not determined whether they will offer face-to-face classes in the fall.

Youth Co-Op, Inc. (YCI) -Sindy De Leon, Supervisor and Jesus Garcia, Programs Coordinator, reported YCI is offering Youth and Employment services. YCI is helping refugees with job searches, job interviews, orientations, and on-line applications. Match Grant is also being provided. All services are available virtually and clients are being seen in-person via appointment.

Catholic Charities Dioceses of PBC (CCDPBC)- Sandra Perez, Program Administrator, CCDPBC, reported Match Grant services are available. Case management is offered to all clients and clients are followed up with via phone and email. CCDPBC has seen an increase in asylum, Human Trafficking, and Cuban and Haitian cases. Matching Grant has 60% enrollment for FFY 20. CCDPBC offers counseling services for the Southeast Region community to help with Mental Health and Domestic Violence.

Early Learning PBC Coalition- (ELCPBC), Aileen Martinez, Vice President of Budget and Financial Analysis reported that ELCPBC is offering a limited number of child care scholarships for those serving on the front-line of the COVID-19 response efforts. Many of these hard-working families and single parents are having a difficult time finding child care because their current provider may have temporarily closed. Scholarships are offered to First Responder, Essential Health Care Personnel, and Critical Responses workers such as nurses, grocery dispatchers, transportation workers. Parents with children aged 6 weeks to 12 years old, please call the family resource line at 561-514-3300 to apply. ELC coordinates with community partners to provide parents with information and assistance to select high-quality child-development services, including Voluntary Prekindergarten, School Readiness, and other vital early learning programs. VPK enrollment is ongoing, and parents can apply online. Refugee services child care has available openings. For more information, visit: elcpalmbeach.org or call 561-514-3300.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, July 17, 2020**
Time: 10:00 AM to 12PM
Location: TBA

Contact: Miriam.Rosario@myflfamilies.com Phone: (561) 227-6722
David.Draper@myflfamilies.com Phone: (407) 317-7335