



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 19, 2019
TO: Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: David Draper, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: February 13, 2019 TF Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2019
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Location: TBD
Contact: David Draper
Office: (407) 317-7335
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E-Mail: David.Draper@myflfamilies.com

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 about thirty to thirty-five 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 at Catholic Charities located at 1819 N. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL, 32807. Nineteen 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

I. **Catholic Charities Central Florida – Daisy Clemente, Employment Coordinator,** provided an overview of the employment program.

- When Catholic Charities receives a new client, they perform an initial assessment and evaluate the client's condition (making referrals as necessary). If the individual needs employment services, they are referred to the Catholic Charities Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS) Employment Program.
- The CRS Employment Program makes connections with employers in Osceola, Orange, and Seminole Counties. They currently serve clients from many countries including Cuba, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Russia, and Venezuela. They serve refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and others.
- In this program, the caseworker helps the client build their resume. They advocate for the client and attempt to place them in a job. They educate the client on the labor market and labor market trends. They help the client develop employability skills and they conduct mock job interviews. When necessary, Catholic Charities provides job training and career laddering. Some recent clients are 'professionals' and are entering the country with some job skills. The CRS Employment Program provides career orientation to these individuals. Catholic Charities is also seeing many Venezuelans needing services. Some of these Venezuelans have better English skills and can be more-easily placed in employment. Other activities the case worker assists with include taking clients to job fairs and referring them to vocational training. The CRS Employment Program states that 60% of their clients are successfully placed in employment.
- Program participants face many challenges that include social integration, transportation, challenging work schedules (especially families with children), child care, lower salary jobs, and finding jobs that match their skillsets.
- Overall, the program has many 'success stories'. For example, Career Laddering clients are often placed in stable, professional employment. Catholic Charities maintains a strong communication with program participants even after they have obtained steady employment and achieved self-sufficiency.

GENERAL UPDATES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Martha Ruiz, Government Operations Consultant from WIC and Nutrition Services stated that the Florida Department of Health W.I.C. Program continues serving clients in Orange County. They assist approximately 34,000 clients a month.

Elizabeth Cronlund, Community Development Coordinator of Summit Church stated that they have been approved for an additional 10 “transitional foster placements”. In order too successfully place all of these children, Summit Church will be recruiting additional foster families.

Donald Jarrel, Community Relations Officer USCIS stated that a new Community Relations Office (Vesna Bozic) is being hired to serve the Orlando and Jacksonville areas. She will serve as a liaison between USCIS and the local communities. She will be attending the next task force meetings in Orlando and Jacksvonille.

Anne Packham, Project Director Market Place stated that only 4 navigators are currently working in Orange, Osceola, Lake, and Seminole counties. She mentioned special enrollment options for people that lose their health coverage (for example, those that lose their jobs).

Stephanie Wall, Florida Immigrant Coalition stated that a certain bill is being proposed (CS-SB Bill 168). This bill relates to federal immigration enforcement.

Debbie Vega, Director of Comprehensive Refugee Services with Catholic Charities (CC) mentioned that they continue to see an increase in Venezuelans asylee clients. Because of an influx in Venezuelan and Cuban clients, the Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS) program is exceeding goals in many of their programs. Also, Catholic Charities has three active English classes (two in Orlo Vista and one in St. John Vianney Church. Two case managers and three interns are currently assisting that program.

Catholic Charities has been helping many Venezuelans at their food pantry. They are using this as a way to connect with potentially eligible clients. The CRS employment program has been working with many new clients and has been encouraging them to improve their education (through vocational studies, English classes, etc.). Also, the CRS employment program has been conducting outreach at local churches and other local organizations in search of clients in need of services.

Many Venezuelans still refuse to accept benefits due to the belief that new ‘public charge’ rules will negatively impact them in the future.

Weam Jabbar from the Women and Children Organization states that they have free immigration consultation Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00-5:00 pm.

David Draper, Community Liaison Manager from Department of Children and Families DCF went over a presentation regarding the DCF Refugee Services Program in Florida. During FFY 2018, DCF saw 8,029 arrivals. The majority of these arrivals (72%) were Cuban entrants. Miami continues to receive the largest number of clients (51% of all clients), but Orlando receives the second largest number (9.9%). Statewide, there are a total of 20,559 active employment clients. Through Adult Education, DCF served 11,537 clients. Through the Citizenship and Immigration Related Employability Services program, DCF served 14,120 individuals. Approximately 422 individuals received Integration Assistance services. These services included intensive case management, emergency housing assistance, brief intervention services, and referral services. The DCF Refugee Services Program has also assisted with Refugee Youth Services (Which includes both Academic Pathways and Career Pathways for eligible youth).

Also, David suggested forming a committee to plan the 2019 World Refugee Day celebration. Ana Cruz from H.O.L.A. offered their facilities for meetings. Elizabeth Cronlund from Summit Church offered their to have the celebration at Summit Church. Rosa Chaves was tasked with facilitating the meetings and sending invitations. The following individual agreed to assist:

1. Ana L. Cruz – City of Orlando. H.O.L.A.
2. Elizabeth Cronlund – Summit Church.
3. Kirsty Ortega – Summit Church
4. Martha E. Ruiz – D.O.H. WIC program
5. Weam Jabbar – Women and Children Org.
6. Debbie Vega and staff – Catholic Charities
7. Stephanie Wall – Florida Immigrant Coalition
8. Jimmy Tercero - CSI Pediatric Services

Additionally, since more than 50% of arrivals in Central Florida are Venezuelans, David proposed forming an outreach committee to brainstorm techniques for reaching out to potential clients. The date and location of these meeting still must be determined. The following individual agreed to assist with the committee:

1. Debbie Vega and staff – Catholic Charities
2. Martha E. Ruiz _ D.O.H. WIC Program
3. Elizabeth Cronlund – Summit Church
4. Kirsty Ortega – Summit Church
5. Ann Packman – Health Insurance Market Place

David proposed to provide an asylee orientation in Central Florida. Donald Jarrel, USCIS Community Relations Officer, stated that USCIS would be willing to assist. Elizabeth Cronlund from Summit Church informed the task force that Mosaic Church in Winter

Garden also provides asylees orientation twice a year. Weam Jabbar from Women and Children organization is willing to help in this asylee orientation as well.

David also announced that we have new Governor Ron DeSantis and new Secretary Chad Poppell.

NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, April 10th, 2019

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

Location: TBD

Contact: David.Draper@myflfamilies.com (407) 317-7335
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