



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 19, 2019
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario**, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: July 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: September 20, 2019
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 the 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

Pedro M. Guilarte, Partnership Specialist, Southeast Florida, U.S. Census Bureau, Atlanta Regional Census Center 2020census.gov/jobs provided a presentation on the 2020 Census program. The program will focus on helping families register wherever they live. The presenter distributed flyers (in Spanish, Creole and English) regarding the census. The presenter explained that the census data is used for determining grants, the funding of programs, and district lines, among some of the important uses. The presenter noted that jobs with the Census 2020 are available all over Florida. The presenter asked for the collaboration of the task force in informing the local population, including refugees, of the census.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

World Refugee Day (WRD)- The task force discussed the recent WRD event. WRD in Palm Beach County was a well-attended event that helped educate the community on refugees and refugee issues. The event was celebrated at the Duncan Theater at Palm Beach State College. Marcia Bahia, PBSO gave a presentation that showed pictures of the event. Those in attendance enjoyed the Refugee Awards program, the art display, and the USCIS Naturalization Ceremony at the Lake Worth Campus. This year 100 candidates became U.S. citizens. This year's theme was "Refugees Contributing to the American Dream". Refugees in attendance shared their success stories and were recognized with awards. Local refugee entrepreneurs were recognized for their contributions to the Palm Beach community. Also, successful students were recognized for their accomplishments. The Community Resources Fair was a collaboration of over 27 organizations.

Welcoming Week (WW)- Miriam I. Rosario (MIR), Community Liaison discussed the opportunity to welcome all refugees and immigrants into the Palm Beach community through a Welcoming Week activity. She explained how this event had been conducted during the previous year. Since Welcoming Week is soon approaching, the task force discussed ideas for the event. The Welcoming Week event will be planned in collaboration with the local community, the refugee services providers, and any other organization interested in contributing. Several individuals and organizations promised to assist in the planning of the event. The Palm Beach Public Library and Project Transition both promised to collaborate. More information will be emailed to task force members on this topic.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN, cont.

Miriam Rosario, Community Liaison, RS DCF discussed developing a strong outreach plan. The purpose of this plan will be to better reach out to refugees and newly-arrived asylees. A flyer focused on asylees was distributed to task force members.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

USCIS, Roketa Mansfield Community Relations Officer (CRO) spoke about a Presidential Memorandum on Enforcing the Legal Responsibilities of Sponsors of Aliens. With the memorandum, the Administration seeks to enforce long-standing immigration laws, ensure consistency among federal and state agencies responsible in administering any federal means-tested public benefit programs, and protect the American taxpayer.

ESS/DCF- Teresa Hernandez; discussed RAP/ACCESS benefits eligibility and the importance of reviewing all documentation to determine eligibility. Teresa briefly provided information about Medicaid and SNAP for children.

CSCB-Marta Roque from CareerSource's PB office spoke about the programs and services available through CSB and the importance of community hours to help newly arrived families.

RS Contracted providers:

CCDPB, Sandra Perez, Catholic Charities, stated that they have filled their 155 Match Grant slots. She mentioned Cubans arrive with only an "Order of Release of Recognizance". She said this is impacting their ability to apply for an EAD. Church World Services (CWS) stated they have 15 to 16 Match Grant slots available. Catholic Charities also mentioned delays in EAD processing and the importance of carefully reviewing immigration documents. The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) stated that they are accepting referrals for child care assistance and families can apply for many services, including VPK and school readiness.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, September 20, 2019**
Time: 10:00 to 12PM
Location: West Palm Beach City Hall
401 Clematis ST., WPB City, FL 33401

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