



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 18, 2019
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Refugee Task Force
FROM: Miriam Rosario (RS)
SUBJECT: January 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: March 22, 2019
Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: West Palm Beach City Hall (WPB)
401 Clematis ST.
WPB, FL 33401
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 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 Jeri Muoio, WPB Mayor and Jose Tagle assistant for hosting the meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services and the agencies they represented.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

A presentation given by Monica Hertzbach, Community Relations Liaison, Chrysalis Health. The presentation focus on the services available to refugees. RS providers can refer clients to Chrysalis in efforts to maxim services to clients. Chrysalis locations are in Miami, Broward and Palm Beach. They have 300 therapists and services are offered in Creole, Spanish and English. Chrysalis offers: outpatient, psychosocial rehabilitation, assessment, case management and residential behavioral health, counseling, services. These services are available to refugee children (3 years and older) and adults with private health insurance, Medicaid and Medicare. A scale fee is available to those without insurance, in some instances a grant may be available if the patient can pay. Services to children can be at home and school to minimize trauma. The referral form will be distributed by email to the RFT members and can also be access on line. Referral Form to Chrysalis Health by email at referrals@chrysalishealth.com or by fax to (954) 587-0080 (email is preferred), Community Relations Liaison: Paige Duncan, Email: pduncan@chrysalishealth.com, Cell: (717) 712-8823. Per members request a copy of the presentation will be distributed.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

Jesus Garcia, Coordinator with Youth Co-Op, Inc.(YCI), presented on the Survey Local Job Market. The Employment provider analyzed the local job market to determine the occupations available in the community relevant to the skills and abilities of the arriving population, developed a list of major employers and significant employers of refugees, identified prevailing wages, and maintained a record of all job development activities. The YCI uses this information of the local job market survey to identify training needed for eligible clients.

Miriam Rosario, Community Liaison, RS DCF discussed the need to develop a strong outreach plan. A Palm Beach County Outreach Planning Team was created. The date and time of the first planning meeting will be announced. Twelve members including community partners signed up to collaborate in assessing and identifying the needs of the population and to determine creative ways to reach out. Miriam Rosario, Community Liaison, RS DCF stated that apart from Miami, all regions are going to convert to a CRS service delivery model. The ITN is still under the silent solicitation/procurement period in Broward and Palm Beach County. Any questions are to be sent to the procurement manager

World Refugee Day (WRD)- WRD will be part of the Palm Beach outreach plan to educate the community and develop resources for the refugees in Palm Beach. Members discussed previous activities and events in Palm Beach and signed up to create a WRD planning team. USCIS will be invited to participate with a Naturalization Ceremony. Meeting dates will be announced.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

USCIS, Berta Cassidy Community Relations Officer (CRO) reminded all that InfoPass is a free online service that lets people schedule an appointment with a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) immigration officer and answer questions. It's convenient and available in Spanish and English. Go to <https://my.uscis.gov/appointment> to schedule your appointment online from home computer, mobile device or the computer at your local public library. The call center is available to those who cannot access InfoPass. Applicants will not have to pay a biometrics fee at this time. USCIS is implementing this process as the agency works to transition operations to a fully electronic environment. Berta provided the link to the new tool to calculate fees prior to submitting applications. USCIS has launched a new Online Fee Calculator to assist members of the public in calculating the correct fee amount to include when filing their forms with USCIS at an agency lockbox facility. USCIS developed the Online Fee Calculator to help reduce the number of applications rejected due to incorrect fee amounts. The Online Fee Calculator will determine the exact filing and biometric fees an individual needs to include with their forms and will always have the most up-to-date fee information Visit; www.uscis.gov/feecalculator

USCIS is open during the Federal shutdown and services are offered. However, USCIS IS confirming that E-Verify is unavailable during the shutdown.

ESS/DCF- Gus Artau; DCF, ACCESS Community Liaison, discussed the impact of the federal government furlough and SNAP benefits. Gus explained that because of the partial US government shutdown, current customers will receive February benefits on January 20, 2019. There will be not be an additional deposit in the month of February. January will follow the regular schedule. Teresa Hernandez, explained the importance of informing refugee clients of this change. They distributed flyers in Creole, Spanish and English.

DOH- Merlene Ramnon, DOH supervisor, informed the task force that RS-DOH appointments are up to date. RS/DOH has served 361 arrivals and 345 refugee screenings have been performed. Clients are from Cuba, Haiti, Colombia and some are victims of human trafficking. DOH has created innovative workshops to reach out to and educate the refugee community. She can be contacted via email at Migdalia.Diaz-Nieves@flhealth.gov with any questions.

AHACA- Susie Allen-Brinson, Program Administrator shared some good news with members as adults on Medicaid will have separate dental insurance and will be able to access dental care. All of the refugees receiving Medicaid will need to make sure their address is correct because they will be sending out new cards. The market place enrollment period ended Dec 15 of this years. Members were advised to remind refugees and clients of the significant events where the refugees still can enroll in the market place.

PB School District- Javier Ortolaza, Guidance Services Specialist, Welcome Center (WC), Multi Education Services, The School District PBC, informed the task force that he is the new representative at the center. The WC continues to welcome families of new K-12 students whose first language is not English or who were born or attended school outside the USA. Services provided include grade level placement, interpretation services, evaluations of school transcripts,

advice on courses, and referrals to community resources. Flyers were distributed. He can be reached at 561-434-8194

WPB City: Jose Tagle, Assistance to the Mayor reported on the upcoming CENSUS. The Census will be hiring and is also looking for partnerships from community partners. It is important to educate the refugees on how to register. He indicated WPB is a Welcome City and Jeri Muoio, Mayor of WPB will be ending his second (and final) term soon.

PBSO- Marcia Bahia, Gang Prevention Coordinator, provided information (effective on 1/8/2019) stating that Floridians with felony convictions who have completed ALL the terms of their sentences (excluding murderers and felony sex offenders) can register to vote. Flyers were distributed.

Lorin B. Romeo Romay spoke about the Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group (LWW) and the Love of Literacy Luncheon, a literacy program that serves Lake Worth children and adults. Flyers were distributed. She offered to reach out to informal support groups for Venezuelan immigrants who have recently arrived in this country. She can be reached at 609-577-8223.

RS Contracted providers:

Early Learning Coalition-Broward (ELC), not present. Youth Co-OP, Inc. (YCI) - YCI is experiencing a decline in new intakes. Referrals are welcome for those eligible with less than five years of arrival in the USA. Jesus Garcia, Youth Co-op announced that they are currently working on opening a shelter to serve Unaccompanied Children in Palm Beach County. USCRI has been awarded a new grant for this purpose. It is expected that the shelter will open in January 2019. They are currently working on hiring staff, especially teachers, and ensuring that everything is ready for the opening. **Church World Service (CWS)**, Maureen Porras, Attorney, informed the task force of their legal program that assists with EADs and Naturalization services. CWS reported on delays on the processing of Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Berta with USCIS will notify her HQ. **Project Transition** reported that their program is actively looking for referrals.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, March 22, 2019**
Time: 10:00 to 12PM
Location: West Palm Beach City Hall
401 Clematis St. WPB, FL 33401

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