



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carrol
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 15, 2018
TO: Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force
FROM: Miriam Rosario (RS)
SUBJECT: November 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: January 17, 2019
Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: Broward College Central Campus
3501 S.W. Davie Road, Building 3- Room 117
Davie, FL 33314
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 Broward 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 at the Broward Family Success Division/Community Action Partnerships (BFSDCAP). Miriam Rosario (MIR), Community Liaison represented the DCF, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Miriam thanked BFSDCAP for hosting the meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services and the agency they represented.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A presentation was given by Felipe Pinzon, M.P.A., Senior Vice President of Strategy & Programs, Hispanic Unity of Broward (HUB), regarding the Pathways to Citizenship Program and services available to refugees. Hispanic Unity was Awarded Citizenship and Assimilation Grant Program by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Hispanic Unity was awarded the grant along with other organizations across 19 states to help prepare lawful permanent residents (LPRs) for naturalization. A copy of the presentation will be distributed to task force members. RS providers can refer clients to HUB and also HUB will refer clients to Youth Coop, Inc. (YCI) in an effort to maxim funding and services to clients. HUB has many services available to refugees, such as ACCESS assistance, vocational training, ESOL classes, financial education, income tax and homeownership. Services are offered in Creole, Spanish and English. They work in partnership with USCIS to offer citizenship workshops, including mock interview, assistance with citizenship applications, learning to use the tablets for the test and filling for a USCIS waiver. Their fee is \$80.00 and is limited to 215 people.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

End of Year Review and Goals: Members discussed RTF accomplishments throughout the year such as World Refugee Day sponsored by RTF members and supported by partnerships with Broward College and USCIS. During these events, refugee students received scholarships and awards. This year refugees that have been in USA for over 10 years and have been working with RS organization were also recognized with awards and plaques. Clara Jaramillo Project RENEW (PR) announced that Broward College & Project RENEW sponsored a Welcoming America event for the fifth time. She thanked BC/PR for their ongoing commitment and congratulated all for their collaboration for a successful event. Clara encouraged everyone to read the news article on Project RENEW in the Sun Sentinel Newspaper. DOH was able to help those seeking citizenship with the medical requirements and flu shots. The Broward library received the 'literacy technology award'.

Miriam Rosario, **Community Liaison, RS DCF** stated that except for Miami, all regions are going to convert to a Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS) service delivery model. Miami consolidated legal services. Florida is seeing a decrease in arrival numbers. The Broward and Palm Beach CRS ITN is still under the silent solicitation/procurement period. Any procurement related questions must be sent to the procurement manager.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

USCIS, Berta Cassidy Community Relations Officer (CRO) reminded all about that “On Oct. 1, USCIS began using digital tablets to administer the English reading and writing tests during naturalization interviews as part of the agency’s ongoing business modernization efforts. Although USCIS applicants already use digital tablets to sign or verify parts of their applications, this new approach expands tablet usage, allowing the device to be used for a greater portion of the application process. USCIS will be able to continue using the paper process on a case-by-case basis. Applicants will continue to take the civics test verbally, without the tablet.”

She also provided an explanation to the group on the USCIS proposed changes to “Public Charge” rules. She noted that the comment period on proposed changes ends 12/10/2018 and USCIS is encouraging individuals and organizations to submit comments to USCIS. These changes will apply to those seeking admission, including adjustment of status, an immigrant visa, change of status, and extensions of stay—unless congress expressly exempted a group from the ground of inadmissibility. After the comment period ends, DHS will carefully consider public comments and eventually publish a final rule in the Federal Register reflecting the date on which that final rule will go into effect.

Medical examinations and vaccinations in the United States are typically required for anyone who applies for lawful permanent resident status (Form I-485). To ensure the results of the medical examination are still valid at the time, USCIS adjudicates the associated benefit application, applicants should schedule the medical examination as close as possible to the time they file for adjustment of status, respond to a Request for Evidence, or attend an interview (if applicable). She indicated effective 11/1/2018, the medical documentation for request for residency is valid to USCIS no more of 60 days from the medical signature date.

She briefly mentioned that DHS published a Federal Register Notice (FRN) announcing that the TPS designations for Sudan, Haiti, El Salvador, and Nicaragua will remain in effect so long as the Court’s Order continues. Beneficiaries of TPS Haiti and TPS El Salvador who have been approved for re-registration currently have TPS-related documentation that will remain in effect for more than six months (until July 22, 2019, and Sept. 9, 2019, respectively).

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.

ESS/DCF- Wilber Roney; discussed EAD delays and the impact on services. More discussion was held on the concept of public charges. Most clients in this area are not aware of this potential issue. Yuliet Alonso, DCF, ACCESS Community Liaison, (not present) is organizing a Summit for the DCF Access Partners in December. Catholic Charities’ attorney will present on the topic.

DOH- Migdalia Diaz, DOH supervisor informed the task force that RS-DOH appointments are up to date.

AHACA- Susie Allen-Brinson, Program Administrator, explained that adults on Medicaid will now have separate dental insurance. All refugees on Medicaid must ensure that their addresses are up-to-date since they will be receiving new cards. The market place enrollment period is open until December 15. Members were advised to remind refugees and clients of the due date.

Urban League of Broward-Raul Sigler, Jr., Program Director of the Senior Jobs program discussed the need to educate seniors for employment opportunities.

RS Contracted providers:

Early Learning Coalition-Broward (ELC), Kimberly Borromeo, Senior Supervisor Family Services stated they have child care services slots available. **Youth Co-OP, Inc. (YCI)** - Gladys reported on their office move this November. Their telephone number will remain the same. YCI is experiencing a decline in new intakes and referrals are welcome for those eligible with less than five years of arrival in the USA. Gladys and Felipe coordinated their ongoing referrals for clients. **CWS,** Oscar Rivera, Director, stated that their legal program (as well as Catholic Charities) are providing assistance with EAD and Naturalization services. CWS will be moving offices in January, same complex just a larger office. Vonda Ward Bryant with the **Broward County Library** will coordinate books distributions with CWS to refugee's families in efforts to encourage refugee families to read. The African Family & Community Outreach in Orlando is currently organizing a book drive for kids and Teens. Broward RTF members were also invited to participate in this. Arnold Jean-Baptiste with **Children Services Council of Broward,** informed members of the coming Census Count and encouraged all to educate the clients on the importance of the census. Project RENEW, Clara Jaramillo indicated that Spring registration starts on 1/14/19. Adult Education is offered in South Central and North Campus.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 17, 2019

Time: 10:00 to 12PM

Location: Broward College Central Campus

3501 S.W. Davie Road, Building 3- Room 117

Davie, FL 33314

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