



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carrol
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 2, 2017
TO: Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: Taddese Fessehaye, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: August 9, 2017 TF Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: Wednesday, October 11, 2017
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Location: Florida Department of Transportation
133 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL 32807
Contact: Taddese Fessehaye
Office: (407) 317-7335
Fax: (407) 245-2766
E-Mail: Taddese.Fessehaye@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 attends 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

INTRODUCTIONS

This meeting was held at the Florida Department of Transportation Building, located at 133 S. Semoran Blvd; Orlando, FL 32807. Thirty-four people were in attendance. Taddese Fessehay, Community Liaison Manager represented the Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services (RS) Program. David Draper, RS Procurement Manager was also present. Everyone introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

I. Community Health Centers Presentation - Ada Tirado

- Established in 1972 with the purpose of providing quality and compassionate “affordable” (not free) health care
- Offers a wide variety of services including family medicine, dentistry, behavioral health, pharmacy, family planning, gynecology, internal medicine, pediatric medicine, and obstetrics
- Non-Profit organization that is a “Federally Qualified Health Center” (FQHC)
- They operate 12 health centers in the greater Orlando area (patients from any county may receive services – not just Orange)
- Accepts Medicaid and Medicare, but if an individual does not have health insurance, they still receive services at a discounted rate (there is a sliding scale; someone with a small income might pay \$20 to see a doctor and \$4 for lab work)
- Serves 60,000 patients annually; 148,000 medical encounters annually; 45,000 dental visits yearly; 180,000 prescriptions filled yearly
- 90% patient satisfaction rate
- All health centers are located near public transportation; bus passes are given out as needed
- Spanish Translators available. For all other languages, a phone interpreter service is utilized
- Hint from Ada – Families should get enrolled in the “sliding scale” program before they get sick; the enrollment process can take 1 to 3 months

II. Catholic Charities “Refugee Resettlement” Presentation – Nicole DeCarufel & Caroline Toro

- Explained definition of a refugee and gave general statistics on refugees (66,000,000 people currently displaced worldwide, half are children, only 0.5% are resettled)
- Catholic Charities Orlando has been resettling refugees for 35 years and has resettled 14,000 refugees from a wide variety of countries
- Explained program eligibility and briefly mentioned differences between R&P and CRS
- Explained in detail the first 30 days of resettlement (what must be done with each family)

- Explained the challenges that resettled refugees are currently facing (housing, transportation, upward mobility in employment, education, need for intensive case management, long term goal planning, budgeting, financial responsibility, nutrition, and preventative health)
- Because of the “refugee cap”, Catholic Charities has not resettled many people over the last 2 months

III. Catholic Charities Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS) Presentation - Debbie Cruz, CRS Program Director

- Started CRS program in March 2012
- Explained all of the services currently offered by the program in detail (employment, legal, youth, adult education, and child care)
- Explained that “case management” focuses on refugees that have been here for less than a year or those in crisis
- Discussed what constitutes successful integration (successful employment, language learning, vocational training, career laddering, mentoring, safe/affordable housing, community education, community partnership, etc.)

IV. Community Project Updates

World Refugee Day 2017:

- Wonderful/Successful event put on by Catholic Charities and many volunteers
- Also included a naturalization ceremony
- What needs improvement?
 - Vendor “Display Area” should be moved to the front of the room or displays should be moved outside of the building
 - It would be better to find a location that allows for more interaction between participants
 - Must provide better community awareness and more advertisement
 - The award ceremony didn’t go smoothly and took too long. It would be better to have awardees line up and be ready to receive awards in a quick and efficient manner

National Welcoming Week:

- Looking for volunteers to assist with the activities; if interested, contact Rosa
- Event will take place in September

V. Community Partner Updates

- Arab American Community Center has a Health, Employment, and Immigration Fair coming up soon (September 17)
- Debbie (CRS) stated that employers have been requiring more “employment skills” lately; this has been a challenge. She reported that there has been a decrease in the overall number of clients, but an increase in the number of clients from Haiti. The program has been seeing more “single” clients. The CRS program has reduced its number of cultural orientations. Permanent Residency applications are taking a long time to process at the moment (over a year) and there are constant delays. Debbie stated that some Cubans have the wrong status listed on their I-94s. Their I-

94 states that their status is RE6 instead of CU6. This has caused delays in processing immigration-related documents. Edly Vliet, Community Relations Officer with the USCIS stated that this was a “training issue”. Staff has now been trained and this issue has been resolved.

- Carolina Toro, Refugee Resettlement Program Manager with Catholic Charities stated that no one has arrived the last 2 months.
- Kathy Walker, TB Program Manager with Orange County Health Department stated that people are getting their assessment scheduled and completed in less than a week. Between the dates of June 15 and August 2, they have conducted 115 initial health assessments. She also mentioned that many Haitians have been arriving of late.

NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, October 11, 2017

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

Location: Florida Department of Transportation
Lake George Conference Room
133 S. Semoran Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32807

Contact: Taddese.Fessehay@myflfamilies.com (407) 317-7335
Rosa.Chaves@myflfamilies.com (407) 317-7336