



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott  
Governor

Mike Carrol  
Secretary

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 23, 2017  
**TO:** Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Taddese Fessehaye, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** April 12, 2017 TF Meeting Minutes

**THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:**

**Date:** June 14, 2017  
**Time:** 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon  
**Location:** Florida Department of Transportation  
133 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL 32807  
**Contact:** Taddese Fessehaye  
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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

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

## 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. Twenty-nine people were in attendance. Taddese Fessehaye, Community Liaison Manager and Rosa Chaves, Community Liaison for the Central Region represented the Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Everyone introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Michael Sauve, Deputy Regional Operations Manager and Stacie Cleveland, Regional Program Supervisor from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) gave an overview of their program. They explain how they serve people with certain developmental disability. Among these pathologies they have clients with severe autism, intellectual disabilities (I.Q. 69 or below), spina bifida, Prader-Willy Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, High Risk Child, Down Syndrome, and Phelan-McDermond Syndrome. Clients with mental disabilities are seen when the symptoms are manifested until the age of eighteen. The purpose of the program is to keep people out of institutional placement. If clients are not approved for any reason, they will be referred to another appropriate agency. These clients should be legal permanent residents or citizens and reside in the state of Florida. The application should be submitted through the internet. At the moment, they have 33,737 clients in Medicaid waiver and 20,536 in waiting list nationwide; 173 were approved so far this year and the strong limitation is in the budget. They have categories to classify clients and if they are in a "crisis criteria", will be enrolled immediately. All clients should have a Waiver Support Coordinator contact which in Central Region is 407-245-0440.

### GENERAL UPDATES

**USCIS** – Ms. Edly Vliet, Community Relations Officer from the Department of Homeland Security, reported that it is taking up to eight months for a citizenship processing. They will have a naturalization ceremony in Creole and Spanish. USCIS is having several forms updated. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> they will have a quarterly meeting.

**DCF ESS/ACCESS:** No one was present.

**Area Health Care Administration (Medicaid)** – Milagros (Millie) Chervoni, was present, but she had no update.

**RS-CONTRACTED PROVIDER UPDATES****Catholic Charities of Central Florida, Comprehensive Refugee Services (CRS):**

Debbie Cruz, CRS Program Coordinator, reported on 2017 World Refugee Day (WRD) commemoration project. The event will be held on June 24, 2017 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm and invited all members to volunteer; the venue is still to be decided. USCIS represented by Peter Tilhy, Orlando Field Office Director and Edly Vliet, Community Relations Officer are going to participate in the WRD celebration with a naturalization ceremony and they shared the basic conditions that must be followed to conduct the ceremony that day; the venue should be in a Federal or State government managed location.

CC is not going to receive more single persons to resettle because they cannot sustain themselves with the money available to them. They don't want homeless or crisis' families. They reported that success rate depends on families but most are working in three to four months.

CRS Case Management reported that they were very busy Feb and March, however, the number of arrivals has gone down in April.

Employment Services – Daisy Clemente reported that the program is successful in placing clients in jobs with the Pre-employment workshop being provided by Yamilet Exposito. Clients are feeling more confident in job's interviews due to the workshops they attend.

Legal Services - CC is concerned about two Haitian clients who were denied benefits and Social Security number, but the SS Office did not explain why. Debbie is going to send to Taddese and Rosa the clients' documents to analyze them. Representatives from SS Administration Office are not coming to Task Force meetings. Tadesse suggested direct communication with SS, have a meeting, and find out the reasons why they denied their application.

Adult Education – It was reported that the Adult Education Program is very full seeing good retention in class.

Youth Services – It was reported that the program is running well.

Refugee Resettlement Program – Carolina Toro, Program Manager stated that since they are expecting 60% decrease in arrivals, they are transferring employees from one program to another to avoid lay off and are building a volunteer program. They are expecting just one family in May 2017. CC is going to schools and colleges to advocate and recruit students to help refugees and its programs.

Taddese stated that Refugee Services is anticipating a reduction of about 80% in arrivals. However, less number of arrivals will allow providers to deliver quality services to clients.

**Community Coordinated Care for Children (4C):**

Wesline Archelus-Valentin and Michael Montgomery were present, but had no updates.

**County Health Departments:**

**Osceola** – No one was present.

**Seminole** – Diana Ruiz reported slowdown in the program, only 18 assessments in March 2017 and they cut off days of services to Monday through Wednesday. Last month Seminole Health Department had big Congolese families and since Orange County was overbooked they attended these clients.

**Orange** – Martha Ruiz – Government Operations Consultant from WIC and Nutrition Services stated that the only state who is fine with WIC and all their programs is Florida. They do not require any type of documents to provide help on health or WIC just for children under five years old. They have programs for TB, immunizations, HIV, STDs, Maternity, environmental, and epidemiology services for anybody, but if the client doesn't fill out the requisites, they refer them to clinics DOH is in contact with. The rest of the states in USA are decreasing number of people receiving benefits.

No one was present from refugee health.

**Lutheran Services Florida:** No one was present.

**NEXT MEETING**

**Date:** Wednesday, June 14, 2017

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

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

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