



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

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Mike Carroll**  
Secretary

---

**DATE:** March 29, 2016  
**TO:** Members of the South West Florida Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Janet Blair, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** February 24, 2016 Meeting Minutes

---

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

**Date:** April 27<sup>th</sup> 2016  
**Time:** 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon  
**Location:** Redeemer Lutheran Church  
3950 Winkler Ave. Extension  
Fort Myers, FL 33916  
**Contact:** Janet Blair  
**Phone:** (813) 545-1716  
**Fax:** (813) 558-5598  
**E-Mail:** [Janet.Blair@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Janet.Blair@myflfamilies.com)  
[Taddese.Fessehaye@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Taddese.Fessehaye@myflfamilies.com)

This task force has been active in the South West Florida area for many years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and mutual assistance associations. An Average of fifteen 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, 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 next meeting!*

SunCoast Region, 11351 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL 33778

---

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and  
Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

## SWF REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was held at Redeemer Lutheran Church located at 3950 Winkler Ave Extension in Fort Myers, FL and was facilitated by Janet Blair, Community Liaison for Refugee Services at the Florida Department of Children and Families. Sixteen members were in attendance and the meeting began at 10:10am.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

- A presentation was given by Estela Aguilar from Healthy Start Coalition on the newly implemented “Help Me Grow” program in Lee, Hendry and Glades Counties which assists with early identification of developmental and educational concerns and links children and their parents to community-based services and supports. This program is now available through calling the local 2-1-1 program and offers bilingual services for Spanish speakers. More information on the program can be found online at <http://healthystartbaby.org/help-me-grow/>
- The second presentation was given by Barbara Short from CareerSource and provided a detailed overview of the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and current requirements under the Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) policy as well as other educational and vocational trainings currently being offered in Lee and Collier counties. SWFL CareerSource currently has funding for vocational training for clients who qualify. Free ESOL classes are available online and the Lee County CareerSource office has a computer lab that clients can utilize.

### **WORLD REFUGEE DAY UPDATE**

- Jacquie Mathews-Williams gave an update on the event planned for Naples on Saturday, June 25th from 10am to 2pm. The event will be held at the Golden Gate Community Center and will include a citizenship ceremony and festival. The festival will include cultural entertainment, children’s activities and food trucks. A subcommittee was formed to plan the event and will convene via conference call in March.

### **PROGRAM INFORMATION & UPDATES**

**United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS):** A new Fort Myers office will be opening in May which will serve both Lee and Collier counties. The Community Relations Officer for this area will be Shelly Randall.

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, April 25th 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM,  
Redeemer Lutheran Church, 3950 Winkler Ave. Extension, Fort Myers, FL 33916

Contacts: [Janet.Blair@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Janet.Blair@myflfamilies.com) or [Taddese.Fesseheye@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Taddese.Fesseheye@myflfamilies.com)