



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carrol
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 18, 2016
TO: Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: Pedro Padua, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: Minutes April 13, 2016 TF Meeting

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: May 25, 2016
Time: 12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.
Location: Florida Department of Transportation Building
133 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL 32807
Contact: Pedro Padua
Office: (407) 317-7336
Cell: (407) 625-8205
Fax: (407) 245-2766
E-Mail: pedro.padua@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, S1111D, Orlando, Florida 32801

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. Forty-four people were in attendance. Iliana Bustelo, Deputy Director, Taddese Fessehayee, Manager Community Liaison Unit and Pedro Padua, Central Region Community Liaison represented the Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Everyone introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION – ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS – SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM

Mr. Greg Moody, Executive Area Director for OCPS School Choice Program indicated that the presentations will focus on the Alternative Education Program and the Extended Day (before and after school care for elementary and middle school students) and introduced Dr. Maria Rincon-Dwyer and Mr. William Tovine.

Dr. Maria Rincon-Dwyer, After School Program Administrator, started off by indicating OCPS's before and after-school programs are present throughout the district in most elementary and middle schools. The program activities range from Homework Assistance, Academic Enrichment, Tutoring, Personal Enrichment, Recreation, Fitness/Team Sports, Arts and Drama, Music Education, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), Culinary Arts, Career Exploration, and Character Education. She added that transportation is available in some schools and suggested people check with the particular school. She mentioned the program is free for middle school students; but there is a fee for elementary school students (\$130.00 which includes registration, deposit and tuition for 1 week); however, there are scholarships available for people that meet income guidelines.

Interested parties can visit: www.schoolchoice.ocps.net

Mr. William Tovine, Principal for Alternative Education, indicated the program is tailored to students' that are interested in a different approach to traditional education; it combines academics with employment opportunities and transportation to worksite is provided. Students attend school half a day and work half a day. He said the program has two excellent partners: **Universal Studios and Simmons Youth Mall**. The program provides workforce readiness skills and practical work experience; options for online classes and night school, Summer School, Hospitality Industry certification and Scholarship opportunities.

Students must meet the following criteria:

Be 16 to 19 years of age (special needs students up to age 21); Have a qualifying GPA of 2 to 2.5, have a strong desire to be successful in a non-traditional school setting and not have any major discipline referrals.

Students interested in the program may see their Guidance counselor or contact the School to Work Recruiter at 407-245-1555 X 2112227

www.schooltowork@ocps.net

GENERAL UPDATES

Refugee Services: Ileana Bustelo gave a brief update about the collaboration with ACCESS that has been taking place to address the sanctioning problems for clients that are dually enrolled (Refugee Cash Assistance or Matching Grant and SNAP) as a result of the new requirements (work registration) for ABAWD (Able Body Adults without Dependents). She indicated new guidelines should be issued by next month.

USCIS – No one present to report.

DCF ESS/ACCESS – Lodia Rojas, RAP Unit Supervisor for ACCESS mentioned that if clients are sanctioned for noncompliance with work requirements due to illness (not a simple cold) their sanction can be lifted. She encouraged providers to notify the RAP Unit in those instances.

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

World Refugee Day – Pedro reported the day for this year's celebration was changed to Saturday, June 25 from 12:00 to 5:00 PM at Oak Ridge High School **Auditorium**. He added that using the Auditorium is more cost effective because there is no need to rent chairs, stage or sound system. He said a limited number of exhibitors (10) have been selected to set up informational tables inside the auditorium but extra efforts will be required to keep movement and noise to a minimum during stage presentations or performances and exhibitors must shut down prior to the Naturalization Ceremony (3:00 PM).

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

Richard Logue, Immigration and Refugee Program Director, reported there has been a steady increase of arrivals during the past two quarters. For the quarter ending March 31 they served 540 clients, which reflects a 30% increase. He added that arrivals from Cuba are the largest contributors; including some of the Cubans that had been stuck in Costa Rica. He said providing assistance on walk-in basis to people applying for benefits or seeking to register for employment became a challenge; but adjustments were made to accommodate demand. He added there has been an increase of Haitian arrivals as well, attributed to the family reunification program. He indicated some Haitian border crossers are being issued a Notice to Appear and it has been cumbersome to get CBP to issue I-94 and when they do, the parole is limited to one year. Richard also mentioned there are waiting list for ESOL in Seminole and Osceola.

Raisa Sifonte, Instructional Coach for SCPS Family Immigrant Connection Center, suggested clients living in Seminole could come to the center (239 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, FL 32746) for ESOL classes. She can be reach at 407-871-1115.

Legal Services – Noemi Guzman, Program Coordinator, commented on the issue regarding CBP and I-94 for Haitians by saying they had a good relationship with CBP; but it was lost when the previous Director retired.

Employment – Daisy Clemente, Program Coordinator, reported that placement in February and March were the highest this year. She added that Career Laddering and Day Care Training have been very instrumental with placement.

Adult Education – Katherine Diaz, ESOL Program Coordinator, reported the in-house 8 weeks ESL (Introductory and Pre-Literacy) has a total enrollment of 61 active clients with 75% attendance. A total of 74 vouchers have been issued to ALCO in Osceola and 66 to Seminole State College. A total of 47 clients were referred to PALMAS in March.

Youth – Maria Diez, Program Coordinator, reported there are 50 clients currently enrolled and there are 8 clients on waiting list. She added the program is collaborating with OCPS Multilingual Students

Education Program to get Rosetta Stone software to parents; but many parents don't have computers. Taddese said RS could look into the possibility of getting "surplus equipment from DCF to be donated to program.

PALMAS – Mr. Thomas Conry, Academic Advisor, reported on behalf of Rose Exantus that 18 ESOL students were inducted in the National Adult Education Honor Society and 2 were inducted in the National Technical Honor Society.

He mentioned that the program will have 6 technical training completers in June: One in wastewater management, One from dental assistant program, three in computer System Information Technology (Mr. Colas, one of the students from CSIT program got a position with AT&T in December, and interviewed last week with Bright House and was offered the position on the spot. He is trying to make up his mind on which position to go for- Good problem to have) and One in Interior Decorating.

He noted that Graduation for Mid Florida Campus will be on June 1st @ 7:00pm at Oakridge HS and graduation from Orlando Campus will be on June 2nd @ 7pm at Jones HS. He added that they still don't have access to RSDS; but Bright House is assisting to find a solution.

Community Coordinated Care for Children (4C), Michael Montgomery, Family Support Specialist, reported they get about 20 referrals per month. They currently have 53 children enrolled and 17 on wait list. There was no projection for next month's enrollment.

County Health Departments

Osceola – Lizzette Plaud, Health Services Representative, sent her report prior to the meeting. They served 43 clients in March and 10 for the first part of April.

Orange and Seminole – No one was present to report.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reverend Gabriel Ipasu, President of Africans United Council, announced they would like to plan a Health Fair for seniors, but have not been able to identify a physician that could collaborate with them. Ms. Ada Tirado, Marketing and Outreach Lead for Community Health Centers said she will ask Dr. Marie Joseph Francois for her collaboration.

Ms. Ada Tirado announced they have expanded services out of their Eatonville/Forrest City clinic; they now provide medications, Dental and Behavioral Services.

There was an announcement from representatives of the Church of Latter Day Saints regarding their "JustServe.org" website to find volunteers or register to volunteer.

NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, May 25, 2016

Time: 12:00 to 2:00 PM

Location: Florida Department of Transportation Building
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Contact: Pedro.Padua@myflfamilies.com Phone: (407) 317-7336
Taddese.Fessehayee@myflfamilies.com (407) 317-7335