



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 26, 2015
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: Debbie Ansbacher, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: September 9, 2015 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: November 4, 2015
Time: 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Location: Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216
Contact: Debbie Ansbacher
Office: (904) 485-9540
Cell: (904) 524-1316
E-Mail: Debbie.Ansbacher@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Jacksonville 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 twenty-five to thirty people 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!

5920 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, Florida 32211

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

JACKSONVILLE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the Jacksonville Baptist Association. Patti Grogan, Director of Refugee Services and Debbie Ansbacher, Community Liaison represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program. There were 44 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represent.

GUEST PRESENTATION

Jeff Haney, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid gave an overview of their Housing Program. Marcus Thompson's presentation on Childcare was postponed and will be scheduled in November.

Patti Grogan, Florida Department of Children and Families, Director, Refugee Services Program gave a presentation titled Challenges in Changing Times. She discussed the growth in eligible populations and the decrease in funding. Funding for some services may be reduced or lower priority programs may need to be eliminated.

REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **Adult Education:** Ellen Kiser of Catholic Charities reported she will be leaving her position. Everyone wished Ellen well on her journey. She will be moving out of state.
- **Employment:** Bill Brim, Employment Program Manager for Lutheran Social Services, reported they recently did a placement where the candidate hired is being paid \$40 an hour. A question was asked about when clients are eligible for vocational training. Bill responded that they are eligible after one year in the U.S.
- **Integration Assistance:** The Refugee Resettlement Agencies discussed approaching apartment complexes to negotiate rent rates. Some agencies are placing larger families in rental homes. They will plan to meet with apartment managers.
- **Youth:** Kasey Guenther, Youth Program Coordinator for Lutheran Social Services reported as a result of recent contract budget reductions, the positions that worked with the elementary and middle school students will be eliminated effective October 31st.
- **Ethnic Community Based Organization (ECBO):** Brenda Boydston reported the Burmese are planning a Disaster Relief Fund Raiser for the Chin State of Myanmar. The event is scheduled Saturday, September 26, 2015, 6-8:30pm, Mandarin Baptists Church, 11244 San Jose Boulevard.
- **Refugee Clinic:** Sue Higgins, new Program Administrator for Refugee Health in Tallahassee was introduced.

GENERAL UPDATES

- **AHCA:** Deweece Ogden introduced herself as the contact for Medicaid. Deweece can be contacted at (904) 798-4267 and email Deweece.Ogden@ahca.myflorida.com. She asked that the Medicaid plans be contacted directly to first resolve issues.
- **Eileen Rodden:** Eileen is part of the Women's Center that supports elder survivors of sexual violence. The Women's Center Hotline is (904) 721-7273. Eileen asked that clients be encouraged to call if they need services.
- **Mental Health:** Christine Rothberg of the Healing Project is working collaboratively with the Child Guidance Center where refugee children can receive services. Christine reported the Mental Health Orientation had been given to 196 clients in Fiscal Year 2015. They are starting new groups in October focusing on physical and mental health. Christine introduced Dawn Sweeten, a new therapist working with the Healing Project.
- **USCIS:** John Taylor announced he will be moving to a position in Orlando and this will be his last meeting. A replacement will be announced and will attend future meetings.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 4, 2015
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.
Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

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