



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 31, 2015
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: Debbie Ansbacher, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: July 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: September 9, 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
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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

JACKSONVILLE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the Jacksonville Baptist Association. Debbie Ansbacher, Community Liaison represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program. There were 30 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represent.

GUEST PRESENTATION

Bryan Hensley, Northeast Region, Deputy Director, Florida Department of Children & Families, gave a presentation on the dangers of co-sleeping. Byran provided tips to share with refugee families on the importance of keeping babies safe while sleeping. Babies are safest sleeping alone, on their backs and in a crib. Byran reported there were 13 infant deaths in Duval County in 2013 due to unsafe sleeping practices. Posters will be given to Debbie Ansbacher to distribute to the refugee resettlement agencies (*Follow-up: Posters were distributed to the Resettlement Agencies*).

REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **Adult Education:** Ellen Kiser of Catholic Charities reported there is no longer an afternoon class. The students have been moved to morning or evening classes. She also reported 16 and 17 year olds are eligible to attend ESOL classes if they are not enrolled in high school.
- **Employment:** Bill Brim, Employment Program Manager for Lutheran Social Services, reported they are encouraging clients to enroll in English classes when the follow up contacts are made. Additional vocational training courses are being explored.
- **Integration Assistance:** Galina Volkovinskaya, IA Program Coordinator for Lutheran Social Services, reported they continue to enroll clients and will be able to rollover cases when the new contract year begins in October. Leandra Stafford, Catholic Charities, reported they had great success this year reaching populations in need and were seeing an increase in Cuban and Haitian clients. Catholic Charities identified a concern with availability of dental sedation for children requiring sedation for procedures. There are no providers in Duval in the Molina Network. Children are having to be transported to Gainesville for treatment. Debbie Ansbacher will contact Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) about this Issue. (*Follow-up: The Medicaid Plans each have their own latitude on contracting providers and they can be out of town. In some plans, Medicaid can arrange transportation*).
- **Youth:** Kasey Guenther, Youth Program Coordinator for Lutheran Social services reported they have 78 enrolled in the summer learning program. She reminded everyone to make referrals of new arriving youth.
- **Ethnic Community Based Organization (ECBO):** Brenda Boydston updated the group on the staffing at the ECBO office. They are open 9:00am to 1:00pm, Monday through Saturday.
- **Refugee Clinic:** Abdullah Muftic reported the TB clinic has moved back into their old space after an extensive renovation.

GENERAL UPDATES

- **World Refugee Day:** The event was a great success. The group agreed we should not plan future events on Friday. We should also plan to provide food for performers and groups brought by the agencies and get firm commitments of who will provide items and transportation. Overall, the event was a huge success for both the refugees and showcasing the wonderful cultures for the larger Jacksonville community.
- **Eileen Rodden:** Eileen is part of the Women's Center that supports elder survivors of sexual violence. They provide counseling free of charge as well as assistance to the victims filing for compensation. The Women's Center Hotline is (904) 721-7273.
- **Mental Health:** Selena Webster-Bass reported they are developing a multicultural list of mental health providers. The list will identify licensed clinicians with expertise with various populations.
- **Early Head Start:** Christine Stevens gave an updated on the Children's Home Society's Home Based Early Head Start program. They serve eligible pregnant mothers and families with children up to age 3. After age 3 the children transition to the center based programs.
- **USCIS:** John Taylor reported the renovation is complete. They can now do Citizenship ceremonies on-site for 25 with ceremony seating for 86. Open houses will be scheduled.
- **Susan Shrive:** Susan Shrive attended as a concerned citizen to learn about coordination of services. She is also an ESOL professor. Susan suggested other activities for refugees to practice their English, gain work experience and to meet business owners such as volunteering with Habijax building homes.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 9, 2015
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.
Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

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