



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

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Mike Carroll**  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 23, 2015  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Debbie Ansbacher, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** January 14, 2015 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** March 11, 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

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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 Baptist Association of Jacksonville, 2700 University Boulevard South, Jacksonville, FL 32216. Hiram Ruiz, Director of Refugee Services and Debbie Ansbacher, Community Liaison, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program. There were 27 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order and meeting participants introduced themselves and the agency they represent.

### GUEST PRESENTATIONS

Stephanie Love of Step Up for Students gave an overview of the Step Up Scholarship and eligibility guidelines. There were discussions on how to get youth linked up to Step Up. Hiram Ruiz suggested other service providers make linkages when clients come in for other services.

Ashley Smith Juarez, Vice Chairman, Duval County School Board, District 3 attended the meeting. The attendees gave brief overviews of what services they provide to the community.

### REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

**Adult Education:** Ellen Kiser, ESL Case Manager at Catholic Charities reported they are now enrolling levels 5 through 8 for FSCJ. 206 were enrolled for January term and 189 enrolled in levels 1 through 4.

**Employment:** Jerome Crawford, Vice President of Operations at Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida reported they have a new Employment Development Center with Rosetta Stone available on 6 computers.

**Ethnic Community Based Organization:** Brenda Boyston gave an update on the engagement by Jacksonville University nursing students serving families in the homes.

### GENERAL UPDATES

- Jerome Crawford reported their Community Engagement Manager has been engaging the Episcopal churches and has recruited more volunteers. They are also hosting four universities who will spend their spring breaks doing community service projects at LSS.
- Michelle Karolak, Director of Refugee Resettlement at Catholic Charities reported the Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees (POWR) program held several events including a Multicultural event in November hosted by volunteers. Also, University of North Florida students volunteered in the ESOL classes. Michelle also reported they have a vision screening planned for the ESOL students.
- There was discussion on the health screening causing delays with scheduling primary care appointments. A meeting will be set up with the Refugee Clinic.

- Ange Tekam, a concerned citizen spoke about the need to provide financial and educational information, assistance with employment and navigating health systems, and cultural information to those providing services to the new arrivals. Ms. Tekam encouraged the Task Force to reach out to those who have been here longer to assist the new arrivals with cultural adjustment.
- Hiram Ruiz expressed his appreciation to the support he has had from the Jacksonville Task Force.

**Refugee Arrivals Scheduled – January 1-31, 2015:**

Catholic Charities	16
World Relief	29
Lutheran social Services	<u>10</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 11, 2015  
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.  
Baptist Association of Jacksonville  
2700 University Boulevard South  
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

**Contact:** Debbie.Ansbacher@myflfamilies.com Phone: (904) 485-9540  
Taddese.Fessehaye@myflfamilies.com Phone: (407) 317-7335