



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

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Mike Carroll**  
Secretary

---

**DATE:** January 15, 2016  
**TO:** Members of the Tampa Bay Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Janet Blair, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** December 1, 2015 Meeting Minutes

---

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

**Date:** February 2, 2016  
**Time:** 1:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.  
**Location:** Suncoast Hospice  
5771 Roosevelt Blvd, Clearwater FL  
**Contact:** Janet Blair  
**Phone:** (813) 545-1716  
**Fax:** (727) 588-7063  
**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 Tampa area for many years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and mutual assistance associations. Averages of 45 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 next meeting!*

## **TAMPA BAY AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MINUTES**

***Mission Statement: Helping Refugees to settle, integrate and thrive through support, education and community.***

This meeting was held at Grace Lutheran Church located at 3714 West Linebaugh Ave in Tampa Florida. Patti Grogan, Director of Refugee Services, Taddese Fessehaye, Community Liaison Manager and Janet Blair, Community Liaison for the SunCoast Region represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A total of 60 were present during this meeting. Janet called the meeting to order at 1:33pm and Patti led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Presentations:**

- A presentation was given by Vanessa Bonet from BayCare Health System on the Affordable Care Act and open enrollment process.
- Doug Haskitt from Pinellas Technical College showed a film entitled “**Refugees: Roads To Success**” which was a collaborative project this year between Pinellas Refugee Education Program, the Digital Video Production Department of Pinellas Technical College, St. Petersburg, and Refugee Services of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). This film profiles five current and former refugees as they work toward vocational and academic success in the Tampa Bay area. Janet explained that this film is available on line or in DVD format for all Task Force members to utilize in community presentations/training/education. Doug Haskitt was thanked for all of his hard work on this project.

### **Refugee Services Update:**

- Patti Grogan gave an overview of the role of the Task Force in coordinating services for refugee families. She also explained that the majority of refugees (94%) coming to the state of Florida are Cubans and over 75% settle in Miami.
- Janet Blair announced that Task Force member Elizabeth Dunn received a Human Rights Award from the Tampa/Hillsborough Human Rights Council and will be one of the honorees at the annual breakfast to be held on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **General Updates**

**United States Citizenship & Immigration Services:** Tony Bricon gave a brief overview/update of the Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program. This program allows certain eligible U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to apply for parole for their family members in Haiti. There is a \$360 application fee, but applications are by invitation only.

**Department of Children & Families:** Information on the new Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) policy to take effect January 1, 2016, was shared. More information and clarification will be

forthcoming as each region works to implement this policy. Local trainings and meetings will be held to ensure that all refugee service providers are involved and informed.

## **2016 TF Meeting Schedule**

- Feb. 2nd 1:30-3:30pm Suncoast Hospice, The Gathering Place Rooms A & B in Building 1, 5771 Roosevelt Blvd, Clearwater, 33760
- April 5th, 1:30-3:30pm, Department of Children & Families, Main Auditorium, 9393 N Florida Ave. Tampa 33612
- June 14th, World Refugee Day Event, 10:00am to 12pm, Pinellas Technical College, 901 34th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33711
- August 2nd, 1:30-3:30pm, The Children's Board of Hillsborough County, 1002 East Palm Avenue, Tampa, FL 33605
- Oct. 4th, Pinellas Technical College, 6100, 154th Ave N, Clearwater, FL 33760
- Dec. 6th, 1:30-3:30pm, The Children's Board of Hillsborough County, 1002 East Palm Avenue, Tampa, FL 33605