



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

Ron DeSantis

Chad Poppel
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 9, 2020

TO: Members of the Tallahassee Refugee Task Force

FROM: Theresa Leslie, Refugee Services (RS)

SUBJECT: Task Force Meeting Minutes for June 9, 2020

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: September 8, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM to 11:30 PM
Location: Department of Children and Families
1317 Winewood Blvd, Bldg 3, Rm201
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Contact: Theresa Leslie
Office: (850) 778-4065
Cell: (850) 445-4040
E-Mail: Theresa.Leslie@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Tallahassee area in the past few years. The participants are representatives of various government agencies, private not-for-profit organizations and volunteer groups. An average of about twenty to twenty-five attend 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, 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.

TALLAHASSEE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held via conference call with the Department of Children and Families Refugee Services Staff. Theresa Leslie who called the meeting to order.

PRESENTATIONS

International Rescue Committee, Una Bilic, Site Manager presented program updates and current successes and challenges:

IRC reported that since the middle of March, all staff, interns, and volunteers have been working 100% remotely at home while assisting refugee clients through Zoom and What's App applications. They have also received re-training on job interview skills, completing job applications, hurricane preparedness, etc. Through employment partnerships with hotels and landscaping companies, some of the refugees are remain employed. IRC reported that an AmeriCorps Vista employee and summer interns are making calls to find other jobs for the other clients. Ms. Bilic reported that she will be filling the job vacated by the last Employment Case Manager.

IRC explained that many local refugees have approached the time when they can apply for citizenship. IRC will be working closely with them as they work to attain his goal.

IRC also announced that a new AmeriCorps Vista volunteer started working for IRC and will work to build the capacity of the Refugee Mentoring program. This program will focus on refugee youth and young adults, ages 15-24. This new Mentoring program will stress civic and social engagement while also supporting each client's individual educational and vocational advancement. The program will be designed to give these individuals extra guidance and experiences that will contribute to a successful future.

Legal Services of North Florida, Recent Grant Award

Cecille Lucero introduced herself to the Task Force explaining that she will be supervising and be actively participating in a new grant program entitled the Medical Legal Partnership at the Neighborhood Medical Center.

Tiffany Black, RN and an Executive Staff Member of the Center recommended that Ms. Lucero contact Refugee Services Community Liaison, Theresa Leslie about partnering with IRC as many refugees get their health care at this Center. She explained that they are in need of language accommodations, dental services, and often legal assistance.

Under the Medical Legal Partnership, this new grant will have a Case Manager on staff to assist eligible clients with their civil legal needs. The program will be further refined once the needs of the clients are assessed.

As stated on their web site Neighborhood Medical Center is the client's home for healthcare, providing Primary Care, Mental Health, and Dental services. They are the Big Bend area Federally Qualified Healthcare Center (FQHC) and a non-profit 501c3 organization. Materials such as brochures will be developed and will be accessible to the Task Force members and other community partners.

The Leon County Health Department announced that RoseAnn Sheck, MSW will now be representing the Health Department at the task force. Krissy Hamilton, the previous representative, is now in a new position. The Health Department reported that they have experienced budget cuts and are reducing staff.

Lisa Urban, Leon County ESOL Schools Coordinator, repeated her announcement of the installation of the Translation Line and the delivery of many training and teaching materials to be used in teaching and supporting ESOL students.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, September 8, 2020
10:00 to 11:30 AM

Department of Children and Families
1317 Winewood Blvd,
Bldg 3 Rm 201
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Or by Conference Call: 1-888-585-9008, the code: 951-031-034#

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