



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 8, 2019
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: LeAndra Stafford, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: September 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: November 13, 2019
Time: 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Location: Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216
Contact: LeAndra Stafford
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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. LeAndra Stafford, Community Liaison represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program facilitated the meeting. There were 34 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

GUEST PRESENTATION

1.) Martha Hemphill, Program Manager, Emergency Assistance Program, City of Jacksonville

City of Jacksonville Emergency Assistance Program

- The city of Jacksonville Emergency Assistance Program offers assistance with burial, victim services, substance abuse aftercare, rent/mortgage, food, and utilities
- They are responsible for Indigent burial and Cremation of unknown or unclaimed decedents and for those who lack the resources for funerals.
- The city of Jacksonville usually assists with 600 or more burials per year.
- Clients can access victim services for assistance in the Springfield area.
- The City offers persons with substance abuse issues who have been incarcerated up to four months of assistance in a 132- bed facility (aftercare program).
- Through grants, they offer mental health funding and subcontract out the HIV program through the Ryan White Foundation
- The Emergency Assistance Program spends \$1.4 million on direct services for rent, mortgage, food and utility assistance.
- The City serves between 25-28 hundred households (usually as a one-time service) but on a case-by-case basis, they can provide services for an extended period of time.
- The City's Emergency Assistance program can only be accessed by appointment or agency referral. They also have access to the interim eviction hotline. The Appointment Line is 904 630-2469
- Information about the program can be found at:
<https://www.coj.net/departments/parks-and-recreation/social-services/emergency-financial-assistance-program>
- In order to access the service, you must qualify:
 - ❖ You must be a Duval County resident.
 - ❖ Your household income must not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.
 - ❖ You must be in a documentable crisis situation.
 - ❖ You must have a delinquent, eviction, foreclosure or shut-off notice or loss of utility service.

- ❖ You must meet the established eligibility guidelines and provide proof of eligibility.
- ❖ You must not have received financial assistance from the program within the past 30 months.
- ❖ You must have had the capacity to meet basic needs before suffering the current financial hardship.
- ❖ You must provide a picture ID for the applying client and all adults in the household.
- ❖ You must provide Social Security documentation for all household members.
- ❖ You must provide proof of all household income and resources for the past 45 days.
- ❖ You must provide a lease agreement and copy of the eviction notice, if applicable.
- ❖ You must provide utility shut-off notice, if applicable.

REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **World Relief (Jose Vega, Director):**
 - World Relief Jacksonville officially closed its doors on 07/31/19. They have notified their clients and referred them to either Lutheran Services Florida (LSS) or Catholic Charities Bureau (CCB) for additional services or if they need assistance.
- **Catholic Charities Bureau (Matt Schmitt, Associate Director):**
 - CCB has 73 arrivals out of the 71 that they expected since Oct. 2018. These refugees are mostly from the Ukraine, Iraq, and Eritrea.
 - In the Match Grant program, 33 out of 51 slots have been filled.
 - ESOL: The Adult Education Contract has come to an end (August 2019) Final numbers: 271 new clients, 260 vouchers distributed, 40,814 instructional hours delivered, and 1,669 lower level clients served. This service will continue with Lutheran Social Services as the provider. CCB will subcontract to provide Adult Education to Refugees in Duval.
 - No update for Tier Case Management Services (TCM)
- **Lutheran Social Services (Cristina Parcell, Director):**
 - LSS had 9 arrivals in August and 19 arrivals are expected in September.
 - LSS is not currently providing matching grant.
 - The youth program is serving 24 youth clients. Those clients are receiving tutoring through “Kim’s Open Door” and “UNF, Hicks Honors College”.
 - As of August, Cristina Parcell, is no longer the Program Director for Refugee Services
- **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid:**
 - No Updates

- **Early Learning Coalition:**
 - No Updates

- **Department of Health**
 - The Department of Health wants to make sure providers schedule labs on Tuesday and Thursday
 - The assessment appointments are Tuesday – Friday; However Wednesdays and Fridays are the heaviest days
 - Immunizations are now being scheduled for return visits to make sure the clients can complete their vaccines at no cost within the year of arrival.
 - Because the I-693 form has a limited timeframe, DOH will not issue the completed form until the client is ready to apply for citizenship.

GENERAL UPDATES

USCIS –

- No Updates

FSCJ ESOL –

- No Updates

YMCA –

- YMCA updated the information about Welcoming Week events and what to expect.
- YMCA gave a calendar of events for the New Americans program. In this program, clients can be served after the five years of arrival and regardless of status.

Red Cross –

- Restoring Family Links Program – The Red Cross encouraged community partners to refer clients (They will start taking calls for families in Bahamas after the crisis has subsides).
- Red Cross recommended donating money to reputable agencies instead of donating items.
- Red Cross reminded the task force about the Sound the Alarm, Safe a life campaign

Center for Language & Culture (CLC) –

- No Update

Agape Clinic –

- Agape now has in-house mental health services with translation available.
- Services are offered at a sliding-scale fee.
- Recipients must be 18 years of age or older; however, there are some exceptions for certain youth patients
- The mental health services are available at the King Street and University Boulevard locations.

MASS (Muslim American Social Services) –

- MASS offers a free clinic for individuals ages 18 and above.
- Those served must be Duval County residents.
- Those served must have an income that is 200% or lower of the poverty line.
- MASS partners with other clinics to meet the specific medical treatment needs of clients
- Clients can go online to schedule an appointment www.massclinic.org
- MASS will work with clients on a case by case basis who have share of cost Medicaid insurance.

NEW ISSUES/ ACTIONS TAKEN

- 1.) Reminder of upcoming Welcoming Week Event on September 21st from 1pm – 4pm. We again partnered with Dupont YMCA to celebrate Welcoming Week. Flyers with translations for Burmese, Russian, Arabic, Karen, Spanish, Creole, Bosnian, and Vietnamese were distributed to Community partners to share with clients
- 2.) Mental Health Awareness Month: The Task Force reviewed the importance of Suicide Prevention and recognizing signs to prevent it. National Suicide Prevention Week is September 9- 14, 2019. Flyers on Mental Health Facts for children and teens were distributed at the task force.
- 3.) Match Grant Quarterly Consultation Update
 - a) Lutheran Social Services not currently providing Match Grant Services
 - b) Catholic Charities Bureau (Frances Luna): Community Engagement: Several employers in the local community have reached out to Catholic Charities Match Grant Program seeking refugees for employment opportunities, including Panda Express, Unifirst, West Fraser, and private employer for nanny jobs. Training: Clients are taken to the bank for a hands-on Cultural Orientation class on banking in the United States. Clients learn to open bank accounts and how to access different bank services via the checking and savings account and using the ATM machine. Challenges: Problems encountered are clients not revealing health issues that affect gainful employment. 14 clients out-migrated which is unusually high and will bring concern if the trend continues.