



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

DATE: January 29, 2020
TO: Members of the Tampa Bay Refugee Task Force
FROM: Janet Blair, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: **January 28, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: April 21st, 2020
Time: 1:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.
Location: Main Auditorium, 9393 North
Florida Ave, Tampa, FL
Contact: Janet Blair
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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, academic institutions and faith community representatives. An average of 50 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 and needs, facilitate strong communication among refugee services and community 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.

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.

The meeting was held at the Department of Children and Families located at 9393 North Florida Ave, Tampa, FL. Janet Blair represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Service Program. A total of 54 individuals were present and the meeting was called to order at 1:35pm.

- Janet Blair opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions were given around the room.
- The Mental Health Minute was given by Stacy Kratz, Ph.D. The topic for this meeting was resiliency.
- Recognition was given to the Refugee & Migrant Women's Initiative which won the Organization of the Year award from the Tampa Bay Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Florence Ackey, who founded the organization, will receive the award at an event in March. More information will be sent to task force members on the event.

Presentations/Discussion:

- Darnell Greene gave a presentation on the 2020 Census. The presenter explained the importance of educating refugee clients on the census so that their families can be counted. He explained that there are both political and economic implications of the Census count. Each state's congressional representatives are allocated based on the census. He also explained that the census impacts funding for schools, Head Start, and other government-funded programs. Currently, the Census is available in 14 languages. Mr. Greene said they are recruiting bilingual staff for part-time and full-time positions. For more information on the census timeline or available jobs visit www.2020census.gov
- Janet Blair gave the Refugee Services update. Arrival numbers for federal fiscal year 2019 were shared and a timeline of task force events and projects for 2020 were outlined.
- Then the task force broke into small groups to discuss a variety of topics including planning World Refugee Day and the referral process for the new USF medical clinic being launched next month. Ideas and input were collected by a facilitator at each table. Sign-up sheets were also available for each task force committee/team. Notes on each topic will be typed up and shared at upcoming committee/team meetings. Committee/Team meetings will be held in the next month to follow up on these discussions. Teams/Committees will convene on Mental Health, Education, World Refugee Day planning and Community Outreach & Education.

General Updates

- Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services is hosting a Walk & Run for Refugees on Sunday, February 2nd at War Veteran's Memorial Park in St Pete. Task Force members are encouraged to participate and can register at www.gcfjcs.org/run-for-refugees
- Tampa Women Stars is holding a 5K Walk on Saturday, March 7th in honor of International Women's Day. More information can be found at www.tampawomenstars.com

Upcoming Tampa Bay Refugee Task Force Meetings

April 21st, August 18th and Nov. 17th

Time for all meetings: 1:30-3:30pm

Location for all meetings: Main Auditorium at the Department of Children & Families
9393 N Florida Ave in Tampa.