



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carrol
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 4, 2018
TO: Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: David Draper, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: April 11, 2018 TF Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: Wednesday, June 13, 2018
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Location: Florida Department of Transportation
133 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL 32807
Contact: David Draper
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This task force has been active in the Orlando 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 thirty to thirty-five 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 at the local, state and national level, request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, discuss refugee service needs and explore solutions to those needs. Meeting participants 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!

400 W. Robinson Street, S1111C, Orlando, Florida 32801

ORLANDO AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

This meeting was held at the Florida Department of Transportation, located at 133 S. Semoran Blvd, Orlando, FL 32807. Twenty-eight people were in attendance. Taddese Fessehaye, Community Liaison Manager represented the Florida Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services (RS) Program. David Draper, RS Procurement Manager and Rosa Chaves, Community Liaison for the Central Region were also present. Everyone introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

I. **Primary Care Access Network (PCAN) – Anne Packham, MPH, Marketplace Project Director** PCAN, provided an overview of the Affordable Care Act and Health Insurance Options for Refugees and Other Immigrants.

- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) passed in March 2010 to assist people in obtaining more affordable health insurance. The law stipulated that people could not be denied insurance for having pre-existing conditions and that insurance plans could not be canceled due to excessive sickness/health issues. Starting in 2014, individuals were required to have health insurance or pay a penalty (with some exceptions). This penalty will be eliminated in 2019.
- PCAN is federally funded and is administered by the University of South Florida. In Central Florida, PCAN has navigators licensed by the State of Florida working in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Lake Counties. They help with the application process, provide information on eligibility, and assist in filling appeals as necessary.
- The Marketplace (also known as “The Exchange”) is an online system where a client can compare and buy individual health insurance plans. This is done through “healthcare.gov” where clients can compare prices based on age, place of residence, and smoking status. The client must be a Florida resident and also a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, or a non-citizen who is lawfully present in the U.S., and must not be incarcerated (other than incarceration pending disposition of charges). Plans vary by county and all plans must cover 10 essential health benefits: doctor visits, emergency services, hospitalization, maternity/new born care, mental health and substance abuse disorders, prescription drugs, rehabilitative and habilitative services, laboratory services, preventive and wellness services/chronic disease management, and pediatric services including oral and vision care.

- The Insurance Path for refugees is quite different because they often qualify for Medicaid (Refugee Medical Assistance) for 8 months upon arrival. After 8 months, they have the option of getting employer coverage or marketplace coverage. Children may be allowed to stay on Medicaid or receive Florida Kidcare.
- Other documented immigrants will not qualify for Medicaid during five years but may be eligible for Marketplace coverage within 60 days of arrival or receipt of eligible immigration status. They must wait until “Open Enrollment” to apply for these coverages.
- Marketplace helps financially with “Advanced Premium Tax Credits” (APTC) where the government helps with the monthly premium. Receiving APTC does not constitute being a “public charge”. The Marketplace also offers a “Cost Sharing Reduction” (CSR) which is an additional help for costs not covered by the premium such as deductibles and copayments for households earning less than 250% of the federal poverty. For anyone enrolled through the Marketplace, there is an out-of-pocket maximum cap of \$7,350 per individual and \$14,700 per family.
- Documented immigrants with a household income below 100% of the FPL and who aren’t eligible for Medicaid based on immigration status, may qualify for financial assistance if they have lived in the U.S. for less than 5 years. Lawfully present immigrant children are eligible for Florida Kidcare even if their parents do not have a documented status.
- Open enrollment dates change every year, but it generally takes place in November or December. Outside the open enrollment period, the client needs to experience a ‘qualifying event’ to enroll. Refugees should apply within 60 days of losing Medicaid. If a client misses the 60-day window and doesn’t have another qualifying event, s/he must wait until the next Open Enrollment period to be covered. In this case, a client may owe a penalty when filing his or her taxes.
- After the initial refugee entry period, there is often a 5-year waiting period to be eligible for Medicaid in Florida (for adults). DCF determines Medicaid eligibility for older and/or disabled individuals, non-citizens with medical emergencies, pregnant women, former foster care individuals, parents and caretaker relatives of children, and children without Kidcare. Florida KidCare covers children under 18 who are Florida residents, do not have health insurance, are not in public institutions, and meet income eligibility.

GENERAL UPDATES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Debbie Cruz, CC Director of Comprehensive Refugee Services stated that they are seeing a lot more Venezuelans with approved asylum because immigration offices are expediting the asylum review process. Several of the new Venezuelans are in the vocational pathway. Cuban parole and approved asylum is just one client this period. The ESOL program started the new period with 101 students (mostly Cubans and Haitians). Employment is conducting workshops but the new influx of Puerto Ricans is competing for jobs with refugee clients. The Youth Program has 50 students and 36 will finish in May 2018 and enter into the vocational pathway. The Legal Program is struggling with EADs because the approval process is being delayed (it is taking a very long time to obtain an EAD). Catholic Charities has created a partnership with a training program teaching “hospitality language” for refugees. This should increase their chances of obtaining hospitality jobs. The resettlement program (R&P) is receiving a very low number of arrivals (just 17 recent arrivals). Twenty three individuals have been served through Match Grant. Obtaining housing has been very difficult because Puerto Rican evacuees are now occupying affordable housing options that used to be available to refugees. Catholic Charities needs help with the housing situation.

Patti Grogan, **Director of Refugee Services** briefly discussed the status of the refugee program. She pointed out that in five months we had just 2,632 individuals coming to the U.S. We need to focus on the integration of not just the new-arrival population, but also the large population that arrived previously over the last few years. We should work with them to improve English proficiency and job training so that they are not stuck in low-level employment for the rest of their lives. We need to do an in-depth analysis of our families to see where we can best help them. It is also important that we encourage clients to apply for Legal Permanent Residency. It is possible that less 25,000 people will arrive by the end of FFY 2018. Some Cuban and Haitians have been detained and then released, increasing the number of people we have in the U.S. We do not know if Cubans wanting to go to Bogota, Colombia will be able to travel to that country to process their legal paperwork/documents so that they can come to the U.S. With the family reunification program, we don’t know what will happen in the long term. Patti also mentioned that in regards to asylum seekers fleeing their country, typically richer more educated individuals leave/flee first, then the middle class leaves, and finally the poor. We need to take this into account when prioritizing who to serve with limited funds.

Edly Vliet, Community Relations Officer with the USCIS stated that they have an updated website that is now easier to navigate. She also informed the group that if a client doesn’t pick-up their EAD or LPR within 60 days of it being issued, the card is returned to USCIS and is destroyed. If we know a client has changed his or her address, it should be updated with USCIS within 10 days. The naturalization process is currently taking 11-14 months after submission. The Orlando USCIS office is not a “pilot” office

and does not process naturalization documentation. This paperwork will continue to be managed by USCIS offices in Texas and California.

Salma Chiny, Senator Marco Rubio's Constituent Service Representative, informed the taskforce that on April 23 at Edge Wood Community Center there is an event where Puerto Rican evacuees with disabilities will be providing feedback on their experiences during the move to Florida after the hurricane.

COMMUNITY PROJECT UPDATES

The World Refugee Day (WRD) planning committee provided an update about the celebration. There will be two activities: The first one is the celebration on June 16th, 2018 at Summit church with the participation of several organizations which are going to provide donations to have raffles, food, performances, and so many other activities. The second activity is an Oath Ceremony on June 20th, 2018 (place and time to be determined).

NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Location: Florida Department of Transportation
Lake George Conference Room
133 S. Semoran Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32807

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