



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carrol
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 16, 2018
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Refugee Task Force
FROM: Miriam Rosario (RS)
SUBJECT: November 16, 2018 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: Friday, January 18, 2019
Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: West Palm Beach City Hall
401 Clematis St. West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Contact: Miriam Rosario
Office: (561) 227-6722
Cell: (561) 459-6098
E-Mail: Miriam.rosario@myflfamilies.com

This task force has been active in the Palm Beach 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 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!

Southeast Region - Circuit 15
111 South Sapodilla Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

PALM BEACH AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the West Palm Beach City Hall. Miriam Rosario (MIR), Community Liaison represented the DCF, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Miriam thanked Mayor Jeri Muoio and Jose Tagle, assistant to the Mayor for hosting the meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services and the agency they represented.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A thorough presentation on Match Grant revised guidelines was given by Sandra Perez, Program Administrator, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Palm Beach (CCDPBC), Jesus Garcia, Program Coordinator, Youth Co-Op, Inc. and Jose Sanchez, Resettlement Program Coordinator, Church World Service (CWS) Miami. Per members' request, the power point presentation will be distributed via email.

YCI, CWS, and CCDPB all reported on arrival numbers and match grants slots.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

End of Year Review:

PB Refugee Task Force (RTF) accomplished many goals this year including World Refugee Day (WRD) and Welcoming Week. Many organizations collaborated to organize very successful events. Throughout the year, new partnerships were developed. The Palm Beach Sheriff's Office had crime prevention projects, the library offered workshops to newly arrived refugees. Many new refugees have been assisted through the collaboration of dedicated RTF members.

In Florida, refugee arrival numbers have decreased. Each region in the state (except Miami) is converting to a Comprehensive Refugee Service (CRS) service delivery model. The Broward and Palm Beach CRS ITN is still under the silent solicitation/procurement period. Any procurement related questions must be sent to the procurement manager.

The Palm Beach County Library will coordinate a books distribution with DOH to encourage refugee families to read. The African Family & Community Outreach in Orlando is currently organizing a book drive for kids and teens. The Broward RTF members were also invited to participate in this drive.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

USCIS, Zulma Ruiz, Community Relations Officer (CRO) reminded all that USCIS is using Tablets for English Reading/Writing Tests. On Oct. 1, USCIS will be using digital tablets to administer the English reading and writing tests during naturalization interviews as part of the agency's ongoing business modernization efforts. Although USCIS applicants already use digital tablets to sign or verify parts of their applications, this new approach expands tablet usage, allowing the device to be used for a greater portion of the application process. USCIS will be able to continue using the paper process on a case-by-case basis. While the eligibility

requirements and the subject material of the naturalization test have not changed, applicants are now using a stylus on a digital tablet instead of a paper application. Immigration Services Officers (ISO) will carefully instruct applicants on how to use the tablets before administering the tests. • Applicants will continue to take the civics test verbally, without the tablet.”

USCIS, Berta Cassidy, CRO, informed the task force of the importance of the medical signature on the LPR application form.

USCIS, Berta Cassidy, CRO, discussed USCIS InfoPass (electronic self-scheduling website). USCIS is encouraging everyone to use electronic self-scheduling.

USCIS is still receiving feedback until December 10, 2018 on the “Proposed Change to Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility. On Sept. 22, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) posted an advance copy of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) related to the public charge ground of inadmissibility, before formally publishing the NPRM in the Federal Register. The publication of the NPRM in the Federal Register opens a 60-day public comment period allowing members of the public to provide input on DHS’ proposal. After the comment period ends, DHS will carefully consider public comments and eventually publish a final rule in the Federal Register reflecting the date on which that final rule will go into effect. Additional information available- <https://www.dhs.gov> .

ESS/DCF-Gus Artau, ACCESS Liaison DCF provided information on Double SNAP benefits with fresh ACCESS Bucks’. Materials were distributed. He will be participating at the Caridad Center Health Fair along with RS providers as an outreach event.

DOH- Merlene Ramon, DOH supervisor informed that RS-DOH appointments are up to date. They have seen an increase in Venezuelans with asylum. She also provided updates on all services to refugees including youth workshops. DOH in Riviera Beach will start Pediatric Immunizations program in January 2019.

Social Security Administration (SSA), Yvonne Cruz informed the task force that SSA is converting to an electronic system. Clients are encouraged to submit documents online to avoid long lines at the SSA office. She will present on new SSI guidelines at the January task force.

AHACA- AHACA was not present but Miriam informed the task force that adults on Medicaid will now have separate Medicaid dental insurance. All of the refugees receiving Medicaid will need to make sure their address is correct because they will be receiving new cards.

RS Contracted providers:

Early Learning Coalition-PBC (ELC), ELC have moved to new location in Riviera Beach. **Youth Co-OP, Inc. (YCI)** - Jesus Garcia, Coordinator, reported on new arrival numbers in PBC. YCI is experiencing a decline in new intakes and referrals are welcome for those eligible with less than five years of arrival in the USA. The Vocational Program has no new slots available.

Catholic Charities (CCDPBC)- Sandra Perez reported on MG numbers and families. The EAD delay is still averaging up to 6 months. The providers are diligently helping these clients and providing direct services and referrals to alleviate these delays. **CWS**, legal and IA services are available to all eligible refugees.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, January 18, 2019**
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Location: West Palm Beach City Hall
401 Clematis St. WPB, FL 33301

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