



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott  
Governor

Mike Carrol  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** November 27, 2017  
**TO:** Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Miriam Rosario (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** November 16, 2017 Meeting Minutes

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### **THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:**

**Date:** January 18, 2018  
**Time:** 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
**Location:** Family Administration Division, Community Action Agency,  
900 NW 31 St. Ave. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311  
**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 Broward 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

## **BROWARD COUNTY REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The meeting was held at the Family Success Administration Division. Miriam Rosario, Community Liaison represented the DCF, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Miriam thanked the Family Success Administration of Broward County for hosting the meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

A presentation given by Ruth Thomas, Navigator Affordable Care Act (ACA) representing Broward Regional Health Planning Council, Inc. (BRHPC)–Health & Humans Service Innovations provided an overall and introduction to Affordable Care Act services and how to refugees can apply for coverage. The Health Insurance Marketplace Open Enrollment Period runs this year from November 1, 2017 until December 15, 2017. This year’s enrollment period has been cut in half, giving people only 45 days to purchase coverage or change their plan. Clients can come to BRHPC and learn about your health insurance options and get covered in 2018. The information is free one-on-one enrollment assistance in the Health Insurance Marketplace will be provided by a local in-person Health Navigators and Certified Application Counselors (CAC’s) to help consumers navigate income and eligibility questions. All refugee and asylums and Cuban/Haitian entrant can apply for the income free tax credit which can be applied to their premium. Premium tax credits will be available in 2018 for individuals who qualify. If lower than the 180 % of FPL they shouldn’t be penalized. ACA navigators will assess those with health coverage needs, explain the enrollment process and available resources. Ruth emphasized to the members to make referrals to ACA and they will help clients in determine eligibility and avoid been penalized. As of Nov 11, over 1.4 million consumers have selected 2018 health plans in the Health Insurance Marketplace, of which 345,719 are new consumers. Rebecca Mile, Kidcare Coordinator open the discussion regarding other options for affordable health care resources such as Kid Care and Medicaid. The Holy Cross Hospital also has medical assistance for low income families. Ruth reminded of the MOPED financial program with Broward Regional, however the applicant will still need a rejection letter from Medicaid. Ruth asked for please feel free to pass along and share information within your clients and networks and distributed material providing a quick reference guide for when applying for ACA services in plain language to help consumers navigate income and eligibility questions.

### **NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN**

#### **Best Practices in Recruiting and Utilizing Volunteers.**

Discussion the on the training that was provided last October in Orlando. Some of the Refugee resettlement and RS providers participated. The emphasis on how beneficial is the work of RS organizations do in resettling refugees. The volunteer recruitment and utilization model is from World Relief in Jacksonville uses in their refugee resettlement program has proven to be very successful and we wanted this model to be shared with all resettlement agencies in Florida. The training shared information on the integration process as an importance part as we help refugees become able to exercise their rights and contribute to the community. The training was attended by several representatives from Volags including Youth Co-Op (YCI), Jesus Garcia

staff with YCI can offer additional information as needed. The training PowerPoint was distributed so RTF members make use of the tools created and adapt it to their program.

### **GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

USCIS, Adam Chioffe, Supervisory Immigration Services Officer, Oakland Park Field Office from USCIS who was representing Berta Cassidy indicated Zulma Ruiz, will join Berta Cassidy as the newest Community Relations Officer sharing responsibilities and on October 8th, 2017 L. Francis Cissna was sworn in as Director of USCIS. Adam briefly spoke about Haiti-the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation and the impact for Haiti and stated additional information should be soon. TPS for eligible nationals of Haiti (and eligible individuals without nationality who last habitually resided in Haiti) through Jan. 22, 2018. TPS beneficiaries who re-registered may request a new Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Additional information available- <https://www.dhs.gov/tps> . Nicaragua/Honduras - Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke announced changes to Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for Nicaragua and Honduras - <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/11/06/acting-secretary-elaine-duke-announcement-temporary-protected-status-nicaragua>. Nicaraguans, Hondurans Haitian with TPS will be required to reapply for Employment Authorization Documents in order to legally work in the United States until the end of the respective termination or extension periods. Discussions regarding the impact on these changes and ways to help the impacted the individuals and their families. The Faith Base organizations have been helping. Peterson St. Philippe Attorney from Catholic Charites Legal Services discussion on EAD delaying to average 4 months and even with the USCIS extension letter might be accepted by employers. USCIS did hire officers however asylum cases are delayed. USCIS will further look into these concerns and Adam inform his superiors. Information appointment provided on the post-hurricane updates and all applicants who had interview scheduled during the hurricane period will be seen by the end November. Current delays on Info Pass and clients who had appointments will need to reschedule. He listed the upcoming outreach sessions and events at the Library Information Desk and USCIS. These sessions are free and open to the public. Additional information: to check the status of a pending application, petition, or request, go to Case Status Online, can also call us at 1-800-375-5283 (TDD for deaf and hard of hearing: 1-800-767-1833) or make an appointment at a local field office at [infopass.uscis.gov](http://infopass.uscis.gov).

**Career Source of Broward (CSB)- Keisha Hall WT Program Manager**, informed on their new hours and the Summer Youth program. Deadline of 1/8/2018. The CSB will be offering 800 jobs for kids in locations as Bank of America. CSC program available to those who apply early. Jeanette Alban with Youth Coop will be sharing information with the new YCI staff Beatriz Borges. The program can also be used for the youth program and YCI will be informing their clients on these opportunities. Rebeca Mile question on the youth income been consider as household income and the families losing their current benefits with DCF. CSCB consider the amount receive as subsidized income therefore not affecting their benefits. Keisha reported on the employment rate reduce to 3.3% from last year of 4.6%. The quality of jobs has increases. The “Six Rent a Car” a Rent Car Services company from Chicago is doing a job fair this week at BBT and hiring 300-400 in Broward. Angela Paschall, from CSB informed of these position been available for full time employment and bilingual speakers are needed. YCI clients will be able to participate at the fair. Angela provided her contact information.

**ESS/DCF-** Discussion regarding the different benefits such as DSNAP, RAP, TANF and each services criteria. Any concerns to be email to RS thru Miriam Rosario, SER CL.

**DOH-** Migdalia Diaz, DOH supervisor on leave however informed that RS-DOH appointments are up to date and she can be contacted via email at Migdalia.Diaz-Nieves@flhealth.gov with any questions.

**Year End Accomplishments- West Regional Library Broward County – Welcoming Week.:**

The RTF members and community partners and volunteers were able to hold two highly successful annual events. Per Mary Cassell, Librarian Senior West Regional Library your "Welcome Week America" program that was rescheduled due to Irma. It was very well-attended and I heard from customers and one of the presenters that it was a successful program! I am looking forward to doing another one next year, or perhaps sooner as well." The Welcoming Week event was held on despite Hurricane Irma the West Regional Library Broward County.

This year innovated **World Refugee Day** which is held in June in partnership with **Broward College and USCIS**. Over 200 attended this year's World Refugee Day event. This year new scholarship awards were given to successful Project RENEW students who had made a difference in the community and who are giving back to the community. The Kaplan Law Firm donate one of the large awards and the refugee clients were recognized with awards and private RSVP event. They individually share their successful story and recognized by prominent community leaders and volunteers. This year's event was also a success attendance and multiple community partners' participation. Even though we are experiencing loss of funding and the Cuban/Haitian funding was eliminated, RS providers are making sure their services are available and have increased their outreach. RS providers have reviewed the way they provide services and refugees have access to community resources. RS providers are ensuring these resources are available to refugees as they are seeking services and help. On the other hand, RS DCF contractual services is reviewing programs delivery and focusing on career laddering and employment training to help build job skill capacity.

**RS Contracted providers: Project RENEW (PR)** Clara Jarramillo with PR reported on their registration process for winter program. PR have two intake sessions, no GED in been offer during these sessions. PR is doing strong outreach and is asking the community partners for referrals. **Church World Service (CWS)** –Edele Firm discussed his Legal services and referrals process, The IA and Information and Referral program are actively helping many new arrivals specially in the Haitian community. Their Haitian community is experiencing delays in EAD and is been help by community and faith base organizations. **Youth Co-OP, Inc. (YCI)** - Gladys Sanchez and Jeanette Alban reported on their Vocational Career Laddering, Youth Program which offers GED and Career planning and Educational Path. YCI also offers Credentials/translations services. YCI is experiencing a decline in new intakes, and referral are welcome for those eligible with less than five years of arrival in the USA. **St. Thomas Human Right Institute (STHRI)**- Cristina Reis CEO, Attorney Director reported on the challenges been faced by the C/H specially the Haitians entrant as they apply for renewal of status. Many are being held back and not been renewing their status. **Catholic Charities (CCLS)**- Peterson St. Philippe Attorney from Catholic Charities Legal Services reported on EAD delaying to average of 4 months, The CCLS is diligently helping these clients and providing direct services and referrals to alleviate these delays. The new contractor for Child Care is **Early Learning Coalition of Broward (ELCB)**- Broward Regional Health Planning Council, Inc. (BRHPC) is

no longer offering Child Care Services. The referring agencies can email the referral form and set a request for appointments on behalf of the clients. No additional updates.

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Next Meeting: Thursday, January 18, 2018**

Time: 10:00 to 12PM

Location: Family Administration Division, Community Action Agency,  
900 NW 31 St. Ave. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311

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