



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

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Mike Carrol**  
Secretary

---

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** June 5, 2017  
**TO:** Members of the Palm Beach Refugee Task Force (RTF)  
**FROM:** **Miriam Rosario (RS)**  
**SUBJECT:** May 19, 2017 Meeting Minutes

---

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

**Date:** July 21, 2017  
**Time:** 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
**Location:** West Palm Beach City Hall  
**Contact:** Miriam Rosario  
**Office:** (561) 227-6722  
**Cell:** (561) 459-6098  
**E-Mail:** [Miriam.rosario@myflfamilies.com](mailto: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 COUNTY REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:**

A power point presentation given by Cecilia M. Wolf, M.S., Ed, Specialist Guidance Services Welcome Center, (WC) Department of Multicultural Education, Palm Beach County School District, "Facilitating The School Registration Process" provided an excellent overview of the ways the Welcome Center in helping the students with the school registration process. The WC is especially helping new students with many areas such as; summer school, compliance with ESOL and placement, lunch registration, bus route transportation, documentation needed, notarize services on site, transfer of schools, how to apply to college and referrals outside the school. The Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states that children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence are considered homeless was explained, the definition of homeless and the services available under this program such as counseling, and translation services. If, due to a loss of housing, a child must live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground, on the street, in abandoned buildings, or doubled-up with relatives or friends, then he/she is eligible to receive services provided under the McKinney-Vento Act. This WC is a concept replicating the NYC schools to help the new students feel welcome and provide all around school needed services in one place to eliminate barriers to facilitated a prompt registration. The WC also is offering immunization clinics at the same Welcome Center. The dates for the summer immunizations are 6/8, 7/13, 8/17.

A power point presentation given by Milory Senat, Operations Analyst/Community Affairs from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) provided an informative overall and introduction to their services programs. The APD services program provides support services, assessments and referrals, to those with eligible defined developmental disabilities. The APD applications are available in different languages and a staff can also make home visit if needed. APD has a long wait list however families in crisis will be given priority. All participants were aware of the program and were encourage to refer to APD. Milory emphasized to the members to make referrals to APD and they will determine eligibility. Material was distributed providing a quick reference guide for when applying for services and documentation needed.

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

**Florida Disaster/Hurricane Season Preparedness presentation and discussions; ESS/DCF** Beginning June 1st, 2017 through the end of November will mark the official Hurricane season. The Southeast Region Refugee began its unique Food for Florida Disaster Exercise. The Food for Florida program offers emergency food assistance to eligible victims of hurricane or other types of disaster ones the community receives Presidential disaster declaration is received. The

department is preparing to handle quick distribute of food benefits to eligible families in the aftermath of a disaster. DCF has stream line the application, pre-application process and card issuance with wireless Satellite technologies. Also the department is able to respond to each user by implementing the early release of benefits to current food assistance customers if needed. The exercise looks on how to best meet the needs of all Floridians in a time of crisis. Information was provided on documents needed as verification requirements for identity, residency household composition and income/assets. Discussion on how to prepare refugees families on disaster plan and the organizations emergency plan.

**The World Refugee Day (WRD)-** Sindy De Leon YCI and WRD planning group discussions; Five WRD events scheduled in PBC for the month of June. This year theme is “Today Refugees, Tomorrow Americans.” The WRD event on June 22 at 8:30-12:30 pm will be at Palm Beach State College. Patti Grogan, RS-DCF and Hon. Jeri Muoio, Mayor of West Palm Beach., are among the presenters. This event includes a naturalization ceremony by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of 50 people followed by a Refugees Award Ceremony honoring the successful Outstanding Refugees, Volunteer and Students Drawing Award recognitions. A WRD Proclamation is sponsor by the office of the Hon. Paulette Burdick, Mayor Palm Beach County Commission. Welcoming remarks by Dr. Jane Wihbey, Provost Lake Worth Campus, Palm Beach State College. The Community Resource Fair and musical is being organized by the WRD planning committee. The Palm Beach County Library System is commemorating the WRD with a series of Film Screening “Salam Neighbor”. The American filmmakers Zach Ingrasci & Chris Temple who traveled to the edge of war to live among 85,000 Syrians in Jordan Za’atari refugee camp. After the film, representatives from YCI and CWS will offer information about their services followed by an open discussion about the film. The film screening will be at the: Greenacres, Main Library and West Boynton Branches on 6/3, 6/14 and 6/22 respectively. A collection of short stories about the aspirations of those who leave one country for another, “The Refugees” by Viet Thanh Nguyen will be at the Main Library 6/7/17 at 6:00 pm. This workgroup will meet to finalize plans for the events.

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

**USCIS**, no representative present however, Miriam briefly discussed what Berta Cassidy Community Relations Officer, Miami District USCIS informed at the Broward RTF regarding the six-month Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Secretary of Homeland Security John F. Kelly has extended TPS for eligible nationals of Haiti (and eligible individuals without nationality who last habitually resided in Haiti) through Jan. 22, 2018. Current beneficiaries of Haiti’s TPS designation seeking to extend their TPS must re-register by July 24, 2017. TPS beneficiaries who re-register may request a new Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Those who re-register and request a new EAD during the 60-day re-registration period may receive an automatic extension of their expiring EAD for up to 180 days from the date their current EAD expires. Current EADs will not be automatically extended without a new EAD request. Additional information on TPS for Haiti—including guidance on eligibility, the application process, and where to file—is available online at [www.uscis.gov/tps](http://www.uscis.gov/tps). USCIS encourages the public to be extra vigilant about immigration scams. Discussed the new look of the Lawful Permanent Residence Card (green card) and Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) Cards. Both have been redesign the EAD shows an Eagle and the LPR shows the Statute of Liberty. Scammers take advantage of times of uncertainty. For information on protecting clients, visit [uscis.gov/avoidscams](http://uscis.gov/avoidscams).

**DOH-** Not representative however discussion regarding price on the civil surgeon exam. Mr. Mike McDonald from the Impact International (II) stated the common thread between the refugee families and volunteer organizations such II as is their desire to find a reasonably priced civil surgeon to someone who is able to complete the USCIS-required vaccination assessment to obtain legal permanent resident status. They are aware that refugees need assistance by a civil surgeon for their residencies and are searching prices to “help refugees”. Miriam recommended that they can contacted via email go to <https://my.uscis.gov/findadoctor> for the closest USCIS-approved civil surgeon based on the client’s zip code. Members also recommended to contact: Merlene Ramnon PhD, Nursing Consultant for Northern Clinics, at 561-514-5303 from the Department of Health (DOH) provides the refugee health assessment services to those eligible refugees. To contact also the RS legal providers such as; Christine Reis, Director, St. Thomas University Human Rights Institute at 786-264-6211 and Silvio A. Padilla Jr., Palm Beach Sub-Office Director Church World Service (CWS), at 561.266.0624. Oscar D. Rivera Director, CWS Miami also shared his contact information and informed them to contact him to help with any questions.

**Health Council of Southeast Florida-** Marcia Hayden, Lead Navigator/Project Manager provided brief update on the Affordable Care Act. Discussion given regarding the anticipated changes, evolving Marketplace, keeping Consumers Covered and required documents to confirm their Special Enrollment Period eligibility before they can begin using their coverage. Marcia stated on changes such as the shorter period to signing up reduced to only 30 days.

**Career Source PBC (CSPBC) -** Marta Roque, Senior Career Consultant, TANF, informed on their services helping the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), clients and noted a decline in participants.

**RS Contracted providers: Project Transition (PT)-** Noel Hernandez, Program Administrator, reported on their registration process for summer and fall program. PT have 350 students attending classes, intake sessions are available, credentials/translations services, day& evening classes and voucher program to offer Adult Education (AE) in the community is being offered. AE is a service available to eligible refugees up to five years from their eligibility date. **Youth Co-OP, Inc. (YCI)** – Sindy De Leon, Supervisor 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. **Church World Service (CWS)** –Oscar Rivera discussed their Legal services and referrals process. He noted on the changes within the last two weeks in releases no parole but in a USCIS of Notice to Appears. The Integration Assistance (IA) and Information and Referral program are actively helping many new arrivals specially in the Haitian community. No additional updates.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

**Next Meeting: Friday, July 21, 2017**

Time: 10:00 to 12PM

Location: West Palm Beach City Hall, 401 Clematis Street, WPB, FL. 33401

**Contact:** [Miriam.Rosario@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Miriam.Rosario@myflfamilies.com) Phone: (561) 227-6722  
[Taddese.Fessehaye@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Taddese.Fessehaye@myflfamilies.com) Phone: (407) 317-7335