



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott  
Governor

Mike Carrol  
Secretary

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 29, 2016  
**TO:** Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Debbie Ansbacher, Refugee Services (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** January 13, 2016 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** March 9, 2016  
**Time:** 1:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.  
**Location:** Baptist Association of Jacksonville  
2700 University Boulevard South  
Jacksonville, Florida 32216  
**Contact:** Debbie Ansbacher  
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This task force has been active in the Jacksonville 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 twenty-five to thirty 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, 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!*

5920 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, Florida 32211

## JACKSONVILLE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

### INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the Jacksonville Baptist Association. Debbie Ansbacher, Community Liaison and Taddese Fessehay, Community Liaison Manager, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program. There were 57 people in attendance. Other special guests were George Lewis, Refugee Services, operations Manager and Rebecca Lockenbach, Refugee Services, Contract Manager. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

### GUEST PRESENTATION

A presentation given by Teresa Brown and Natasha Simmons of CareerSource on the new requirements of the Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) policy. Information was presented on the enrollment and reporting of allowable hours and education for compliance with the new rules for receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

### REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **Adult Education:** Michelle Karolak, Director, Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement, reported they have done 74 intakes this month. The morning class time has been adjusted to meet the bus schedule and is now 9am-12:30pm.
- **Employment:** Bill Brim, Employment Program Manager for Lutheran Social Services, reported they accept walk-in intakes on Thursdays from 10am-12pm. The Career Laddering continues to accept new clients who are at least 700 Level in ESOL and have been in the U.S. over one year.
- **Youth:** Kasey Guenther, Program Manager, Lutheran Social Services Refugee Youth program, reported their contract will end June 30th. George Lewis, Operations Manager, DCF, Refugee Services Program, reported they are looking at models to develop a new Invitation to Negotiate for the youth program.
- **Ethnic Community Based Organization (ECBO):** Brenda Boydston, Project Director, reported the office is hosting Real Sense on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays for tax preparation.
- **Early Learning Coalition:** Marcus Thompson reported he is meeting with visiting DCF, Refugee Services Childcare Contract Manager, Rebecca Lockenbach on the childcare contract.

### GENERAL UPDATES

- **Children's Home Society:** Ciin Don Niang, Early Head Start, reported she will be housed at the Ethnic Community Based Organizations (ECBO) office Mondays, Wednesday's, and Friday's. She will take referrals and do intakes on pregnant mom's and for special needs children up to age 3.

- **The Healing Project:** Myra Rubenstein provided a report that the National Partnership for Community Training, a technical support resource, has changed their focus to Refugee Mental Health, a testament to the importance of supporting refugees both in their physical and emotional needs. The goal of the Healing Project this year is to lower the instances of refugees being admitted to the hospital for emotional stabilization (Baker Act) through early identification and intervention. The Healing Projects is developing a new website.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 9, 2016  
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.  
Baptist Association of Jacksonville  
2700 University Boulevard South  
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

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