



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carrol
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 10, 2016
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: Debbie Ansbacher, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: March 9, 2016 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: May 11, 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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E-Mail: Debbie.Ansbacher@myflfamilies.com

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 Patti Grogan, Refugee Services Director, represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program. There were 39 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves and the agency they represented.

GUEST PRESENTATION

A presentation was given by Dr. Rita Nathawad, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Jacksonville Health and Transition Services (JaxHATS). The program serves people ages 16-26 with special health needs. The JaxHATS services include providing a Medical Home for all young adults with chronic medical and developmental conditions. The program can be reached at (904) 244-9233 and email jaxhats@jax.ufl.edu.

Patti Grogan, Director of Refugee Services, addressed the members and provided an overview of the past year. Patti reported Florida had 51,000 arrivals last year and had received 18,000 the first quarter of this fiscal year. However, funding has not been increased to date.

REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **Childcare:** Marcus Thompson represented the Early Learning Coalition. There was discussion on the benefit of families with young children enrolling in TANF for ongoing childcare. The Refugee Services funded childcare has a one year maximum. Children are transitioned to School Readiness and placed on the wait list, if necessary.
- **Employment:** Bill Brim, Employment Program Manager for Lutheran Social Services, reported they continue to accept referrals for vocational training of refugees who have been in the U.S. for more than a year.
- **Youth:** Kasey Guenther, Program Manager, Lutheran Social Services Refugee Youth program, reported 6 ninth and tenth grade refugee students from Englewood High School and members of the LSS Refugee Youth Program participated in the 2016 Jacksonville Science Festival February 25th - 27th. Under the guidance of their professional mentor, Lauren Watkins from White Oak Conservation Center, the students created a booth entitled "Where does your phone REALLY come from? (And the impact on the people and environment)". Their project was designed to educate the public on conflict minerals being illegally mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo and how those minerals travel the world to be processed into metals that eventually end up as pieces in the electronics we use every day in the United States. Kasey reported the students advocated the importance of recycling electronics and prolonging their use so to cut down on the high demand for the minerals and minimize the negative impact on the animals and people in the area. The students practiced research, built their vocabulary and understanding, and practiced their English speaking skills with complete strangers.

- **Ethnic Community Based Organization (ECBO):** Brenda Boydston, Project Director, reported they continue to do case management. The Bhutanese group has ongoing citizenship classes Saturdays. The African group has educational programs for adults on employment and the Karen Burmese are planning youth programs.
- **Legal:** Nancy Hale, Immigration Project Director, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, reported they have many Cuban clients coming in to apply for Employment Authorization Document. Nancy reported Citizenship Day is scheduled for early April at the Coastal School of Law.

GENERAL UPDATES

- **Children's Home Society:** Ciin Don Niang, Early Head Start, reported she continues to be 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 children up to age 3.
- **The Healing Project:** Christine Rothberg reported The Healing Project has a new name. The new name is Project for Healing. The website is Project healing.org.
- **ACCESS:** Yvette Burch explained the food stamp split issuance for one month while all receiving food stamps have their issuance staggered to different times of the month.
- **Duval Schools:** Hind Chahled reported they will host tax preparation with United Way's RealSense on Fridays through April 8th.
- **Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA):** Deweece Ogden represented AHCA.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 11, 2016
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.
Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

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