



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

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 29, 2015
TO: Members of the Jacksonville Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: Debbie Ansbacher, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: May 13, 2015 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: July 8, 2015
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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Cell: (904) 524-1316
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

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

JACKSONVILLE AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the Jacksonville Baptist Association. Debbie Ansbacher, Community Liaison represented the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Refugee Services (RS) Program. There were 33 people in attendance. The meeting was called to order and meeting participants introduced themselves and the agency they represent.

GUEST PRESENTATION

Christine Dahnke, Executive Director of ESOL and World Languages, Duval County Public Schools provided an update on the ESOL programs. Christine reported there are 200 seniors graduating in ESOL from Duval Schools. There are 360 students enrolled in ESOL at Englewood High School, 230 enrolled in Southside Middle School and 300 at San Jose Elementary School. The GED is available to be taken in English, French and Spanish. Other high school options are Catapult Academy and Lone Star serving students 16-21, where the program is done using computer instruction.

REFUGEE SERVICES CONTRACTED PROVIDERS UPDATE

- **Adult Education:** Ellen Kiser of Catholic Charities reported they had enrolled 270 students since September. Of those, 185 are enrolled in FSCJ levels 5-8.
- **Employment:** Bill Brim, Lutheran Social Services, reported they had placed 23 clients in jobs in May of which twenty-three were from World relief, four from Catholic Charities and five from Lutheran Social Services (LSS) (two additional placements were undisclosed).
- **Integration Assistance:** There was discussion about challenges locating affordable housing for large families and for medically needy newly arriving families. Discussion will continue in future meetings until these issues are resolved.

GENERAL UPDATES

- **World Refugee Day:** The event is scheduled for June 19th with a naturalization ceremony at the Jacksonville Main Library at 11am with a cultural celebration following at noon in Hemming Park. A planning group has been formed and has been planning the event.
- **Refugee Clinic:** Tawanda Washington reported appointments are one to two weeks out for new arrivals. The labs and referrals are given to the clients. They are now accepting walk-ins for immunizations Monday through Thursday 8am-4pm. There was discussion of concerns about Medicaid plans not accepting new clients. It was agreed a Medical Sub-committee would be formed. A sign-up sheet was passed around and ten signed up. Debbie Stokes, from the Agency for Healthcare Administration asked that all concerns be reported through their web-site for them to document and research the issues.

- **Mental Health:** Christine Rothberg reported she has a new office location on Chester Avenue in addition to seeing clients scheduled in the resettlement agencies. She is also bringing in a new therapist and two interns. Christine also reported fourteen attended the last Health and Happiness group program.
- **Interpretation:** Katie Addison, Pacific Interpreters, provided information and asked for feedback on interpreter services. Katie scheduled to come back and provide interpreter trainings at the resettlement agencies.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 8, 2015
1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.
Baptist Association of Jacksonville
2700 University Boulevard South
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

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