



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis  
Governor

Chad Poppell  
Secretary

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 2, 2021  
**TO:** Members of the Broward Refugee Task Force  
**FROM:** Miriam Rosario (RS)  
**SUBJECT:** January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

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

**Date:** March 18, 2021  
**Time:** 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
**Location:** TBA  
**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 via Teams Meeting, Miriam Rosario (MR), Southeast Community Liaison represented the DCF, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Miriam thanked all for their participation. The meeting was called to order and participants were asked to sign in the chat to introduce themselves, services and the agency they represented. Miriam reminded all of the Refugee Task Force meetings compliances with no political statements.

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

The presentation on Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate, was discussed by Evan Sloop, Supervisory Immigration Officer, Fraud Detection National Security (FDNS) Directorate, USCIS Miami and Caribbean District, U.S. Citizenship, and Immigration Services (USCIS). FDNS will safeguard the integrity of the nation's lawful immigration system by leading agency efforts to combat fraud, detect national security and public safety threats, and maximize law enforcement and Intelligence Community partnerships. Their mission is to: Detect, deter, and administratively investigate immigration-related fraud. Establish guidance and oversee processes for identifying, reviewing, vetting, and adjudicating cases involving national security concerns. Develop and implement efficient and effective security screening policies, programs, and procedures. Serve as primary conduit for information sharing and collaboration with law enforcement and the Intelligence Community. Evan discussed the Fraud Trends: CU7 marriage fraud schemes, Fee Waiver fraud & DCF initiative, N-648 fraud Employment-based immigration fraud. FDNS investigates and processes fraud tips received from the public and other sources.

To report suspected immigration fraud please visit: <https://www.uscis.gov/report-fraud/uscis-tip-form>.

Reyna Corado, CRS Employment Coordinator, Church World Service, Comprehensive Refugee Service (CRS). Reyna did the presentation covering all data for their Survey Local Job Market and discussed and answered all members questions. The copy of the Power Point presentation was also distributed. Broward had 429 arrivals for 2020 and 451 for 2019. For the past year CRS/CWS built great relationship with staffing companies and private employers. These companies support our clients by contracting our clients even if they don't speak English very well or have transportation. These employers have demonstrated consideration for our clients by trying to offer them positions near their home. During the year 2020 Church World Service Employment Program placed 363 clients, averaging a salary of \$11.90 per hour. Popular industry placement is in services specially Health Services. Vocational Services and higher pay jobs are available to those mastering the English language. Comprehensive Services (CRS) Church World Service (CWS) can be reach at: Phone: 954-361-3493, Office Phone: 954-361-8495 Ext: 102, 3411 NW 9th Ave Suite #705, Fort Lauderdale FL. 33309

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

The presentation on Economy, Advocacy and Community Health (EACH) resources was introduced by Margaret Kosyk, Senior Attorney, from the EACH Unit, and Michael Habib, Attorney from the Coast to Coast Legal AID of South Florida (CCLA). Located at 491 N State

Road 7 | Plantation, FL 33317 and can be reach by Direct (954) 736-2453 | Fax (954) 736-2482. CCLA do have extensive experience in, Poverty law. Economic Advocacy and Community Health (EACH) do oversee; Public Benefits, Family Law, Victims of Domestic Violence, Senior Law for Age 60 and over Age 60. Eligibility for free legal services criteria; must be resident of Broward County, no income restrictions for Seniors, Anyone under 60 with low income. The EACH Unit handles cases for individuals under 60 The EACH Unit handles cases for individuals under 60 with some exceptions. with some exceptions. with some exceptions. with some exceptions. with some exceptions. with some exceptions: Social Security Disability (SSDI/SSI), Food Assistance, Cash Assistance (TANF), Veteran's Benefits, Healthcare Access, Unemployment Compensation. Legal advice and limited assistance as well representation as advice in appealing denials of eligibility for health coverage or medical services and prescriptions. Discussion and Medicaid coverage gap. As COVID-19 and Medicaid cannot be terminated during the COVID 19 emergency period unless the beneficiary moves voluntarily out of state or voluntarily withdraws. Anyone over the age of 18, regardless symptoms, can be tested at a state for COVID-19 at a state free of charge. Additional presentations on a spending bill was signed into law on December 27, 2020 that included \$900 billion for pandemic relief and had significant relief on healthcare provisions. Potential clients who require legal assistance with any of these issues should call Manuela Felix at issues should call Manuela Felix at issues should call Manuela Felix at 954 -736 -2490 or email: mfelix@legalaid.org. [mfelix@legalaid.org](mailto:mfelix@legalaid.org). Manuela Felix is a paralegal at Coast to Legal Aid who's responsible for the EACH Unit's client intake. Once the client has completed their intake and is eligible for services , CCLA will be assigned to an attorney.

## GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Jerome Hill, Program Operations **Administrator, Agency Health Care Administration ( AHCA)**, reported on updates. Offices are fully operational, and all calls are provided with services and referrals as needed. ACHA highlighting current guidance related COVID-19 testing for the elderly or individuals with a serious underlying medical condition. COVID-19 testing should be considered in individuals 65 or older or individuals with a severe underlying medical condition who have new onset lower respiratory track disease or pneumonia, either the inpatient or outpatient setting. Florida continues to have the highest percentage of vaccines administered to seniors 65 and older, with vaccinations in that age bracket accounting for nearly 65% of total vaccinations in the state. Please see [http://ahca.myflorida.com/docs/17719\\_COVID19\\_Testing\\_Criteria\\_for\\_the\\_Elderly\\_Flyer.pdf](http://ahca.myflorida.com/docs/17719_COVID19_Testing_Criteria_for_the_Elderly_Flyer.pdf)

James Connelly, Supervisor, **Career Sources Broward** updates reports on services provided to refugees, specially waiver under TANF and approved SNAP on the reported maximum allowances. Refugee eligible can always volunteer to do community hours event during waiver.

Carlos Naranjo reported on **Match Grant updates for CWS**. Due to COVIV-19 many new arrivals have reported loss of jobs or reduced hours. Those clients are served and help locate new jobs special during approved beyond the 180 days. MG clients are also referred to Vocational courses, ESOL classes, Health, Legal services, and many needed community resources.

Jocelyn Martinez, Director, **Project RENEW/Broward College**, updated on the spring and fall sessions. Students are participating by choice Classes are both remote learning and in classroom.

Depending on their need student can switch from evening to day classes. PR/BC has incentive new program where student can borrow a lap to enroll in classes and can keep if they re-register for next semester. Virtual classes are most popular; however, the challenges are the computer skills needed. Students are eager to learn English languages and basics computer skills.

Christine Reis, Esq Director, **St. Thomas University, Human Rights Institute (STU)**, reported conducting business in compliance with safety measures is time consuming, therefore, it is difficult to serve as many people as STU has served in the past. To protect staff, protect clients, and mitigate everyone's liability; STU must schedule less clients in a day. These are uncertain times, as immigration regulations regarding employment authorization (EAD) has drastically changed for the community we serve. STU has seen an increase in the need for I-765 (employment authorization renewals) as residency applications are being delayed. Asylum applicant not been eligible to work, and others while EAD expires they are not granted renewals. Some are not eligible for travels, TPS. Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) has also been struggling. STU's attorney has found that obtaining decisions on motions has been a challenge. The immigration judges have altered schedules, some not having a schedule at all. The community we serve have many misconceptions and legal services referral is advised.

Claudia Arce, **ESS/DCF reported on ACCESS** maximum allotments increases to 15%. SSA administration is providing fewer appointments. The Social Security Administration offices throughout the country are open for very limited services such as 1st time SSN cards where and in-person interview is required or when specific paperwork than cannot be mailed or wet signature is required, etc. As of right now there is no further information as to when the re-openings are going to occur.

USCIS, Roketa Mansfield, Community Relations Officer (CRO), Miami and Caribbean District **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services**, shared via chat and email a few updates. Please see below: If you have any questions, please let her know at: [roketa.f.mansfield@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:roketa.f.mansfield@uscis.dhs.gov)

#### USCIS to Replace Sticker That Extends Validity of Green Cards

Starting in January 2021, USCIS will replace the sticker that is currently issued to lawful permanent residents (LPRs) to extend the validity of their Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card (PRC or "Green Card") with a revised Form I-797, Notice of Action for Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card. LPRs file Form I-90, when their Green Card expires or is about to expire.

The revised I-797 receipt notice, together with an applicant's PRC, will serve as temporary evidence of lawful permanent resident status for 12 months from the expiration date on the face of the Green Card.

This change ensures that certain LPRs with a pending Form I-90 to replace an expiring Green Card have documentation of identity, employment authorization and authorization to return to the United States following temporary foreign travel. Applicants who have already been scheduled for a biometrics appointment will not receive a revised notice and will receive an extension sticker at their biometrics appointment.

Starting in January, applicants who file Form I-90 to replace an expiring Green Card will receive the revised receipt notice in the mail approximately 7-10 days after USCIS accepts their application.

Applicants with expiring Green Cards will no longer receive a sticker from the Applicant Support Center (ASC) at their biometrics appointments to obtain temporary evidence of LPR status. Instead, USCIS will send applicants a revised Form I-797, Notice of Action, the receipt notice for Form I-90, as proof of the extension of their Green Card.

#### USCIS Application Support Centers Updates

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have experienced delays in scheduling or rescheduling application support center (ASC) appointments to collect biometrics. Current processing times are affected by several variables including demand and capacity at individual ASCs.

The information below may help you understand what to expect with your biometrics appointment.

#### Safely Reopening ASCs

USCIS temporarily suspended in-person services between March and June to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and ensure employee and applicant safety. As a result, we cancelled approximately 280,000 appointments. USCIS began a phased reopening of our ASCs in July, after we installed protective screens and incorporated proper social distancing measures across 132 sites. Since reopening, there have been sporadic and temporary ASC closures for reasons such as local stay-at-home orders, COVID-19-related cleaning and extreme weather. From July to September, ASCs were operating at below 50 percent of pre-COVID levels. By late October, we increased ASC operations to approximately 65 percent of pre-COVID levels.

#### Current State

We are working to safely maximize appointment capacity at ASCs and are also reusing previously collected biometrics to conduct background and security checks when authorized by law. Based on capacity limitations unique to each ASC, we have not yet rescheduled all cancelled appointments. USCIS is scheduling approximately 10,400 appointments per day. Approximately 1.3 million applications are awaiting biometrics appointments as of mid-December. Applicants should continue to wait for an ASC appointment notice or a Form I-797, Notice of Action, from USCIS indicating that their previously collected biometrics may be reused.

#### Priority of ASC Appointments

Biometrics appointments are scheduled based on the prioritization of benefit types, considering adjudication capacity and processing times. Within a benefit type, USCIS generally schedules appointments on a first-in, first-out basis. The wait time for appointments will vary geographically, based on capacity and varying demand at individual ASC locations.

#### Biometrics Reuse

USCIS is authorized to reuse biometrics under limited circumstances, and usually where we must verify an individual's identity and the case is otherwise ready to adjudicate. If USCIS will reuse biometrics for a pending application, we will mail a Form I-797 notice to the applicant stating

that we will be reusing the applicant's biometrics and that the applicant is not required to appear at an ASC. Not all applications meet the requirements for biometrics reuse.

#### Walk-ins

Because of our COVID facility constraints, we cannot process walk-ins for biometrics collection except for military applicants and their family members when the principal applicant is scheduled for an appointment.

Before visiting any USCIS facility, check the USCIS Office Closings webpage for the current operating status. For more information about USCIS ASCs, visit our ASC information webpage. Please use our online tools for help in managing your application and to track the status of your case. If you have questions that are not addressed in your appointment notice, you may connect with the USCIS Contact Center.

USCIS Suspension of In-Person services on Tuesday, Jan. 19th and Wednesday, Jan. 20th.

USCIS temporarily suspended in-person services at all field offices, asylum offices and application support centers on January 19th and 20th. USCIS will reschedule individuals who had appointments on Jan. 19 and 20 and send them notices with their new appointment dates. The USCIS website and USCIS Contact Center will remain available for information, case status updates, and other online tools and resources.

#### **RS Updates:**

Ileana Bustelo, Deputy Director, **RS/DCF** provided updates on Refugee Services. There is currently an open procurement in Miami. Task Force members are encouraged to check the DCF Covid-19 webpage for programmatic updates and updates on benefits.

Miriam Rosario, Thanked and wish all a wonderful day!

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

**Next Meeting: Thursday, March 18, 2021**

Time: 10:00AM to 12PM

Location: Due to the pandemic via TEAM Meetings TBA.

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