



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun L. Harris
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 1, 2021
TO: Members of the Orlando Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: David Draper, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: August 11, 2021, Task Force Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: Wednesday, Oct 13th, 2021
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Location: Microsoft Teams or TBA

Contact: David Draper
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This task force has been active in the Orlando 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 thirty to forty 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 at the local, state and national level, request for proposals, training, workshops, conferences, discuss refugee service needs and explore solutions to those needs. Meeting participants 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!

400 W. Robinson Street, S1111C, Orlando, Florida 32801

ORLANDO AREA REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

This meeting was held through Microsoft Teams. Approximately 44 people were in attendance. Rosa Chaves, Community Liaison for the Central Region, led this meeting. Everyone introduced themselves and the agencies that they represented through the Microsoft Teams chat.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

- **Vanessa McCarthy – Catholic Charities Director of Comprehensive Refugee & Immigration Services** provided an overview of their services for refugees and all programs. They discuss the Youth and Mentoring Programs, Employment, Adult Education, and Legal Services.

GENERAL UPDATES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Vesna Bozic, USCIS Community Relations Officer**, informed the task force that Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is available for certain countries (Venezuelans, Haitians, etc.). The Orlando USCIS Field Office has a new Director, Michael McLeary, who was previously a director in Boston. A quarterly stakeholder meeting will be held in September.
- **Anne Packham, Marketplace Project Coordinator** informed the task force that if a client is outside the enrollment window but receives an EAD, this client may apply for insurance on the Marketplace (they have 60 days to do so).
- **Kathy Walker, DOH Orange County** announced that their nurse in the refugee program will retire on September 15. They are in the process of hiring a new one. They are currently experiencing a backlog, however if a client needs help, they can call 407-723-4156 to ask for an appointment.
- **Fatima Ait Rami – Islamic Center of Orlando ICOrlando** announced that they have a surplus of backpacks. Anyone that needs some can ask her.
- **Laquita Moore – DOH Orange County** announced that she has been working in the refugee program for three years and is now is hired as a new Nurse Supervisor for TB and Refugee Health in Orange County.

- **Vanessa McCarthy – Catholic Charities CRS Director** let the task force know that they have seen an increase in clients.
- **Shaimaa Elawdan – Catholic Charities – ESL Program Manager Adult Education**, stated that AE has seen increased enrollment in their ESOL classes. Currently they have two physical English classes, one on site and one in Orlo Vista. Online classes are ongoing. Youth and Mentoring programs have also increased in clients since July 2021.
- **Rae Wilburn – AmeriCorps/Vista Program at Catholic Charities** let the task force know that they are having issues recruiting volunteers. Mentors should remain with the program for at least six months.
- **Alphonse Lindor – Haitian Services Specialist from Pine Hill’s Neighborhood Center for Families** announced they have regular vaccines in Taft office this week and Bithlo office next week and are accepting walk-ins and appointments. In Bithlo/Christmas - NCF 18510 Madison Ave. Orlando, FL 32820 407-254-9400. In Taft - (407) 254-1960 Address: 9500 S Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32805
- **Safriya King-Grimshaw – Bays Kids Program Director** announced they have a new therapist on staff and can now assist English and Spanish speakers. They can assist youth in Orange County.
- **Hillary Copp – Department of Children and Families Contract Manager**, is the new Contract Manager for the Central Florida contract (Catholic Charities).

NEXT MEETING**Date:** Wednesday Oct 13th, 2021**Time:** 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.**Location:** Virtual Microsoft Teams**Contact:** David.Draper@myflfamilies.com (407) 317-7335
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