



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 22, 2019
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario**, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: March 22, 2019 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: May 17, 2019
Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: West Palm Beach City Hall
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 Palm Beach 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

PALM BEACH AREA COUNTY REFUGEE TASK FORCE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held at the West Palm Beach City Hall, Miriam Rosario (MIR), Community Liaison represented the DCF, Refugee Services (RS) Program. Miriam thanked Mayor of WB City and staff for hosting the meeting. The meeting was called to order and participants introduced themselves, services and the agency they represented.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Esther Mendoza, the new Palm Beach Sheriff Office (PBSO) Special Projects Coordinator. Esther is under a grant and will be working in the south end of Lake Worth. The Special Projects Palm Beach Sheriff Office provided a presentation on a new program focuses on the safety of immigrants and refugees. Participants are educated on safety, reporting plans, outreach plans and referrals to community services to aid in the protection. The Leadership Council Lake Worth meeting will be held on Wednesday at COMPASS Community Center, Lake Worth, FL.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

Miriam Rosario, Community Liaison, RS DCF discussed the development of a **strong outreach plan (OP)**. Members discussed their collaboration to help refugee clients and this year newly arrivals asylees in the community such as increased in the Venezuelan & Haitian community. The Palm Beach Outreach Planning Team met and discussed collaboration and outreach strategies. The team reviewed Refugee Service Performance Data to improve the plan.

World Refugee Day (WRD)- WRD will be part of the Palm Beach outreach plan to educate the community and develop resources for refugees in the Palm Beach Area. Palm Beach State College is hosting WRD event again at their Duncan Theater, Lake Worth Campus. Members discussed previous activities and events in PBC. USCIS will be participating with a Naturalization Ceremony. Sindy De Leon, Supervisor YCI has scheduled WRD for June 27, with a Refugee Award ceremony and a Community Resource Fair. The WRD nominations forms were distributed.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

USCIS, Berta Cassidy Community Relations Officer (CRO) reminded all about Information Services Modernization – On March 18th, the Information Services Modernization Program expanded to all Miami and Caribbean District Field Offices. This program ends self-scheduling of InfoPass appointments and instead encourages applicants to use USCIS online information resources and the USCIS Contact Center. As a reminder, individuals needing in-person service must make an appointment through the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283. This includes individuals needing a stamp in their passport for travel/work, emergency advance parole requests, local filings and motions. Expanded Fee Payment System - On March 18th, all Miami and Caribbean District field offices rolled into a new expanded fee payment system. Under this new

payment system, we will only accept personal, attorney or business checks as well as debit/credit cards. Please note: this change only applies to locally submitted filings.

ESS/DCF- Gus Artau discussed RAP/ACCESS benefits eligibility.

DOH-M, Merlene Ramnon, DOH supervisor was not present, but she informed the task force that she can be contacted with any questions.

CSCB-Marta Roque from CareerSource’s PB spoke about new programs and services available through CSB. She distributed informational material.

RS Contracted providers:

CWS Francisco Fernandez, stated that some Cuban arrivals are arriving with only an “Order of Release on Recognizance”. CWS (in PBC and Broward) indicated that Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) are being delayed which impacts refugees. Berta from USCIS will notify her headquarters as other regions report improvements.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, May 17, 2019**
Time: 10:00 to 12PM
Location: West Palm Beach City Hall
401 Clematis ST., WPB City, FL 33401

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