



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 24, 2019
TO: Members of the Palm Beach Area Refugee Task Force
FROM: **Miriam Rosario**, Refugee Services (RS)
SUBJECT: September 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date: November 22, 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

Melanie Rodriguez, Outreach Services Manager at Tess Lacroix, Economic Empowerment Advocate from AVDA, provided a presentation on their **Domestic Violence** program. AVDA's mission is to promote violence-free relationships and social change by offering choices to end violence and domestic abuse. The presentation focused on the prevention of DV and the many resources available to all individuals in PBC. They stated that DV is a pattern of coercive and abusive behavior used by a partner in an intimate relationship to gain or maintain power and control over the other partner. The presenters distributed flyers (in Spanish, Creole and English) regarding the DV's resources to help those coping with DV. Many DV and stalking resources were also offered. It was noted that October is DV awareness and prevention month and members were invited to the many events throughout PBC. During the presentation, the presenter encouraged collaboration with the task force members so that vulnerable refugees would be well informed of DV. Anyone seeking aid for DV may call the 240hour hotline: 1-800-355-8547.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN

Welcoming Week (WW)- Miriam I. Rosario (MIR), Community Liaison discussed Welcoming Week. Welcoming Week was celebrated as part of the Welcoming America initiative. The mission was to create a more welcoming region. This WW event at Palm Beach County involved a collaboration between the Palm Beach County Public Library and the Project Transition Program. It also involved a collaboration of the community, refugee students, Catholic Charities Dioceses of PBC, and the Women Voter organization. This year distinguished members of the panel included; Theomane Dorleans (born in Haiti and Instructional Team Leader with the Central Regional Office for the School District of PBC); Carol Cuesta (born in Guatemala and a Library Associate II with the PBC Library System); and Eduardo Grusman (born in Argentina and partner with Optimum Recruiting Training Staffing, Inc.). The panel shared their immigration stories with those in attendance. This year National Welcoming Week's theme was "The Florida Refugee Experience". The group discussed the book, "A Dream Called Home" by Reyna Grande. Immigrant and refugee students shared their immigration stories.

NEW ISSUES/ACTION TAKEN, cont.

Miriam Rosario, Community Liaison, RS DCF, also discussed the need for outreach in the community. Task Force members discussed ways to reach out to newly-arrived asylees in the community. A flyer focused on asylees will be distributed.

GENERAL UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

USCIS, Berta Cassidy, Community Relations Officer (CRO) spoke about revisions to the Naturalization test. This test is revised every 10 years. The revised test will be piloted in the fall. The group discussed resources in the PBC Library that will help those that need to study.

She also discussed a Presidential Memorandum on a Final Rule of Public Charge Ground of Admissibility. She stated that the final rule provides guidance on how to determine if someone applying for admission or adjustment of status is likely at any time to become a public charge. It was noted that the rule does not apply to aliens whom Congress exempted from the public charge ground of inadmissibility. Berta offered to email the task force a "USCIS Fact Sheet". The final rule will go into effect on October. 15, 2019 and will only be applied to applications and petitions postmarked (or, if applicable, submitted electronically) on or after Oct. 15, 2019. Applications and petitions postmarked (or, if applicable, submitted electronically) before Oct.15, 2019, will be adjudicated under the prior policy.

ESS/DCF- Teresa Hernandez; briefly provided information about Medicaid and SNAP application process.

CSCB-Marta Roque from CareerSource's PB office spoke about the programs and services available through CSB and the importance of community hours to help the newly arrived families.

RS Contracted providers- none present.

DOH, Merlene L. Ramnon, PhD, Director of Community Health reported an increase in eligible clients coming in for their health exams. Merlene also discussed the portal laboratory records. Patients can now have access to their health records online and on their mobile devices.

PBSO, Marcia Bahia, Community Outreach Gang Prevention Coordinator invited and discussed their coming community outreach "National Night Out" events in Royal Palm and Belle Glade. Vendor tables will be available (for free) at both events.

CCDPB, Sandra Perez, Catholic Charities, stated that their Match Grant slots have all been filled. They are awaiting new numbers for their FFY 2020 slots. Catholic Charities also mentioned receiving many calls from Bahamian evacuee that have been misinformed about Medicaid eligibility. Patricia Schreiber from 211-PBTC distributed a list of organizations that are helping evacuees.

NEXT MEETING:

Next Meeting: **Friday, November 22, 2019**

Time: 10:00 to 12PM

Location: West Palm Beach City Hall

401 Clematis ST., WPB City, FL 33401

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