



DCF is helping Haiti earthquake survivors!

As of midnight Jan. 20, a total of 8,229 people had arrived at Florida airports from Haiti since Wednesday, Jan. 13. Of those, the Florida Department of Children and Families has served 3,226 people.

The Department is offering immediate services to those affected by the tragic earthquake in Haiti. Department employees are meeting those arriving from Haiti at airports in Miami and Orlando to offer repatriation services, including temporary cash assistance, mental health counseling and housing assistance.

A complete list of services offered by the Department for those affected by the earthquake is available at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/haiti.shtml>

For information on the U.S. Government's relief efforts, please visit: http://www.whitehouse.gov/haitiearthquake_embed



Updates from DCF in Palm Beach County – Circuit 15 January 21, 2010

TOMORROW – Friday, Jan. 22, 2010:

The Palm Beach Area Refugee Task Force will meet TOMORROW, Friday, Jan. 22, from 10 a.m. to noon at the West Palm Beach Public Library, 411 Clematis Street, 3rd floor conference room. Miriam Rosario, DCF's Community Liaison for Refugee Services, is the contact person: Miriam_Rosario@dcf.state.fl.us or (561) 459-6098.

UPCOMING:

- The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, West Palm Beach Field Office, will hold the following presentations addressing Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitian nationals. The USCIS/WPB Office also will provide the public with Forms and useful documents.
 - ❖ Sunday, Jan. 24, 12:30 p.m.: Eglise Chretienne Haitian of Palm Beach, 300 N. Jog Road West Palm Beach, FL 33413
 - ❖ Sunday Jan. 31, at 10:00 a.m.: Church by the Faith, Martin Luther King Blvd. and Congress Ave., Riviera Beach. Contact Rosier Cles @: rcles@stu.edu
- The Palm Beach County Disaster Recovery Coalition will meet Thursday, Jan. 28, at 1:30 p.m. at the Emergency Operations Center at Southern Boulevard and Military Trail in West Palm Beach. Contact Jennifer Beckman for more information: (561) 375-6682 or Beckmanj@unitedwaypbc.org



NEED: Grief counselors for students (grades K-12) in Palm Beach County schools.

What DCF is doing: We have linked volunteers from Chrysalis Center and Camelot with the school district, which has identified 19 schools with large populations of Haitian students and teachers.

What you can do: If you have Creole-speaking master's level therapists available, please contact Bernadette Jasper for Children's Mental Health needs at (561) 650-6825, or Bernadette_Jasper@dcf.state.fl.us.

NEED: Grief counselors for students in the Adult Education Program in Palm Beach County.

What DCF is doing: Accepting Master's level clinicians who would like to volunteer by donating their services.

What you can do: If you know of a need or if you have therapists available, contact Isandra Zayas at (561) 650-6834 or Isandra_Zayas@dcf.state.fl.us.

NEED: Support groups for workers returning from volunteer duty.

What DCF is doing: Accepting Master's level clinicians who would like to volunteer by donating their services.

What you can do: If you know of a need or if you have therapists available, contact Isandra Zayas at (561) 650-6834 or Isandra_Zayas@dcf.state.fl.us.

NEED: A better understanding of Temporary Protected Status, the immigration status available to Haitian nationals who were in the United States prior to Jan. 12, 2010.

What you can do: Go to uscis.gov, the Web site of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service. Toll-free live assistance at 1-800-375-5283 has been extended until 11 p.m. daily. You also may call Aimee Cernicharo, attorney at St. Thomas University Human Rights Institute, Palm Springs, Florida, at (561) 472-2346. The Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, in conjunction with the Palm Beach County Bar Association, Catholic Charities and others, also is planning to help people apply for TPS. Call Shane O'Meara at (561) 655-8944 ext. 251.

NEED: Assistance completing applications for Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

What you can do: Volunteer to help applicants complete forms. Donate pens, paper, printing and copying supplies. A volunteer training will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 26, at 6:00 p.m. at Touissant L'Ouverture High School, 1325 Gateway Blvd. Boynton Beach, FL 33426. To participate, send an e-mail to ChereHaiti@gmail.com. Broward County volunteers should e-mail ksprophete@yahoo.com.

NEED: Clothing for children and adults, food, medical supplies, blankets, jackets, etc.

What DCF is doing: The Department is helping those who are eligible apply for food stamps and Medicaid. We also are assessing other family needs and linking the survivors with available services.

What you can do: Family Central Inc. is collecting donations of items. Call (954) 724-3859 or e-mail bwein@familycentral.org. Place of Hope also is collecting items and regularly traveling to Orlando to deliver the donated items to those in need at the airport. Contact Charles Bender, Executive Director of Place of Hope, (charlesb@placeofhope.com) or (561) 719-4896.

NEED: Volunteers to assist earthquake survivors arriving at Miami International Airport and Orlando-Sanford International Airport. The needs vary, including helping survivors get connecting flights to other parts of the country, finding hotel stays, arranging ground transportation, providing grief counseling.

What DCF is doing: The Department's Southeast Region has about 15 employees working shifts daily at the Miami International Airport to help relieve our colleagues in Miami. We also have teams on standby for any calls that may arise in Palm Beach and Broward counties.

What you can do: If you are interested in volunteering, go to www.flchildren.org to sign up and check the schedule for needs. You also may call Judith Warren, CEO of Child and Family Connections, at (561) 797-5046.



[Text-Message Service Launched for Haiti Earthquake Help](#)

Haitians can request the help they need with a cell phone by texting 4636. The program allows Digital and Voila customers to text their location and their needs to a cost-free short code: "4636" (INFO).

Emergency Contact Information:

During the Crisis in Haiti, calls regarding the welfare of U.S. citizens can be made to the Embassy's Consular Task Force in Port-au-Prince at 509-2229-8942, 509-2229-8089, 509-2229-8322 or 509-2229-8672.

The State Department Operations Center has set up the following number for Americans seeking information about family members in Haiti: 1-888-407-4747 (due to heavy volume, some callers may receive a recording).

The Department of State has received a high volume of calls concerning the welfare of U.S. citizens in Haiti and has established an e-mail address for people who are trying to contact their U.S. citizen friends and relatives in Haiti.

Please send your inquiries to: Haiti-Earthquake@State.Gov and include the following information:

- The full name, date of birth and passport information (if known) of the persons in Haiti you are trying to contact.
- Their contact information in Haiti; telephone numbers, email address, hotel name or address (if known)
- Your name and contact information, and your relationship to the person in Haiti (parent, spouse, friend etc.)
- Any special or emergency circumstances.

Use the “Person Finder” tool (<http://www.state.gov/haitiquake>) to find and share information about missing persons in Haiti.



FOR UPDATES:

Please e-mail elisa_cramer@dcf.state.fl.us to be added to DCF’s e-mail notification list.