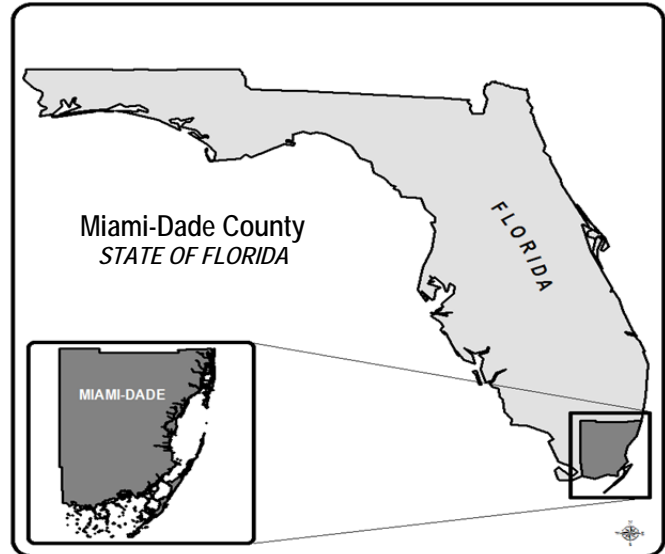


## WHERE ARE WE? WHO ARE WE?

Miami-Dade County, formerly known as Dade County, was created on January 18, 1836 under the Territorial Act of the United States. Some believe the city was named Miami, which comes from “Mayaimi” and means very large lake, refers to Lake Okeechobee. The Miami River marked the beginning of a canoe trail through the Everglades to the big lake. Other interpretations include the Native American words for “sweet waters” and “friends.” The County was originally named for Major Francis L. Dade, a soldier killed in 1835 in the Second Seminole War. The name was combined to Miami-Dade County in 1997. Subsequent to the creation of Miami-Dade County, Florida became the twenty-seventh state of the United States of America on March 3, 1845.



Miami-Dade County, Florida is the most populous county in the southeastern United States and the seventh largest in the nation by population. Miami-Dade County is often referred to as the "Gateway to Latin America and the Caribbean." The County's population as of April 2015 is 2,644,650. Miami-Dade County is part of the seven-county South Florida Region, which includes Monroe, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties. Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties comprise the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the nation's eighth largest MSA and fourth largest urbanized area, with a population of almost 5.828 million.

The population density within the urban area is approximately 1,361 people per square mile. Based on the most recent census data, nearly 77 percent of the total population is White, 19 percent is Black or African American, and four percent is of some other race or combination of races. The largest ethnic group in the County is Hispanic or Latino, representing 65 percent of the population. Approximately 51 percent of the people living in Miami-Dade County in 2011 were foreign-born. Among people, at least five years old, living in Miami-Dade County in 2010, 72 percent spoke a language other than English at home. Of those speaking a language other than English at home, 88 percent spoke Spanish and 12 percent spoke some other language. The 2015 Area Median Income (AMI) for a four-person household as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is \$49,900. As reported by the University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 21 percent of the families in Miami-Dade lived below the poverty line.

Approximately 424 square miles (excludes bay and coastal water) of the County are within the urbanized area, while the total county area currently covers a total of 2,431 square miles; 1,898 square miles of land bound by Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Everglades National Park to the west, the Florida Keys to the south, and Broward County to the north. Miami-Dade County is the only metropolitan area in the United States that borders two national parks: Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park.

In 2012, the Gross Regional Product in Miami-Dade County grew to \$124 billion. The leading industries in the region contributing to this growth include real estate, wholesale trade, retail trade and accommodations and food services. That year, total private employment grew nearly three percent, with the fastest growing sectors including

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construction, professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, transportation and warehousing, and retail trade. The top three trade partners in 2013 were Brazil, Colombia, and Costa Rica and other countries in the top 25 include China, Singapore, and United Arab Emirates. A comparison year to date import trade from the third quarter of 2012 to the third quarter of 2013 reflects a growth of more than ten percent. However, when comparing the total value of goods traded between 2013 and 2014, there was a 4.3 percent decline. Projected economic weakness in Europe, South America, and Central America, coupled with a slow-down in China, instability in the Middle East and Eurasia, and a stronger, dollar could suppress exports in the coming year.

Miami International Airport (MIA) and PortMiami are major economic drivers in the region and are the hubs for tourism and trade. In the last 12 months, there have been more than 21 million arrivals at MIA and more than five million cruise passengers at PortMiami. Year to date, visitors to Greater Miami have grown by more than six percent over last year. Tourist taxes are projected to grow between eight and nine percent over last year.

In September 2012, the South Florida Regional Planning Council released the South Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for 2012-2017. The CEDS reports that the regional population has begun to grow again, with a significant number of immigrants enhancing our diversity, which is an asset for the region's global competitiveness. While this growth and diversity will provide for the development of new businesses, it will also require the regional governments to make major investments in the region's infrastructure, including water and wastewater, transportation, and solid waste. Lower incomes, higher poverty rates, and relatively lower educational attainment levels mean that improved educational opportunities will be critical to the region's success. The CEDS is intended to align state, regional and local economic development initiatives, utilizing the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six-Pillars of Florida's Future Economy™ as its organizing foundation:

- Talent Supply & Education
- Innovation & Economic Development
- Infrastructure & Growth Leadership
- Business Climate & Competitiveness
- Civic & Governance Systems
- Quality of Life & Quality Places

Miami-Dade County endeavors to support economic development in our region by providing resources to support infrastructure and to make our community livable and sustainable.