OUR COUNTY

Miami-Dade County has always existed as a crossroads. Early in our history, our region was a site of conflict between Native Americans and European Explorers. Early in its history, Miami-Dade County was a transportation hub serving as the end point of Henry Flagler’s railroad that extended from Jacksonville to the mouth of the Miami River and what later became Downtown Miami. Because we are such a diverse community, we are representative of the American experience, reflecting both the conflict and concord that comes with bringing different people together. Our geographic location has put us squarely at the epicenter of climate change. We stand today at the crossroads of our past and the future.

Dade County was created in 1836 and encompassed an area from the present-day Palm Beach County to the Florida Keys. Interpretations of the name “Miami” include the Native American words for “very large lake,” “sweet waters,” and “friends.” Major Francis Langhorne Dade, our namesake, was a soldier killed during the Second Seminole War. In 1997, the two names were combined to become the current Miami-Dade County. With an estimated population of 2.8 million people, Miami-Dade County is the most populous county in the southeastern United States and the seventh largest in the nation by population. Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties comprise the Miami - Fort Lauderdale - West Palm Beach, FL Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the nation’s seventh-largest MSA and fourth largest urbanized area, with a total population of nearly 6.2 million.

Approximately 424 square miles (excluding 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, 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.

Because of our location, we are considered to be one of the most vulnerable areas to climate change. The impact of sea level rise has been the focus of our resilience efforts from the beginning. In 2009, Miami-Dade County joined the Southeast Florida Climate Change Compact to collaborate with our neighbors on issues related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Since its creation, the partners in the Compact have successfully completed a Regional Climate Action Plan, developed a unified sea level rise projection for Southeast Florida, and completed a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory and a regional vulnerability to sea-level rise analysis. We take into account future climate change impacts, along with other shocks and stresses, in making decisions regarding capital development, operational needs, and land use.
By learning more about the people who comprise our community and the economic realities they face, we can better prepare for the future. Miami-Dade County is a very diverse, international community. More than half of the people living in Miami-Dade County at the beginning of this decade were foreign-born and more than 70 percent of residents spoke a language other than English at home. The chart below illustrates the breakdown of our major racial and ethnic groups, as well as statistics regarding age and gender.

The average income of residents in Miami-Dade County is lower than that of the nation as a whole and our rate of poverty is higher than the average for the United States of America. The estimated 2019 Area Median Family Income (MFI) for a four-person household as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is $54,900. In 2015, according to the American Community Survey (ACS), almost 17 percent of the families in Miami-Dade lived below the poverty line. Now, approximately 19 percent of families have an income below the poverty line which is determined to be $28,290 for a family of four in 2017. Miami-Dade County, a region of extremes, is one of the most extreme examples of economic inequity, with the top 5 percent of Miami households earning an average salary of more than $200,000 annually, while the lowest 20 percent earn just under $20,000 per year – ten times less. Unemployment, foreclosures, and poverty rates were all higher in South Florida as a result of the worst recession since the Great Depression. All are currently greatly improving from their worst recent performance. The unemployment rate, which was 11.1 percent in 2010, has dropped to 3.2 percent at the end of 2017.

Miami-Dade County home sales grew 10 percent from May 2018 to May 2019, reaching a new high of 1,335 transactions. Median sales prices for single family homes were up 2.9 percent but condominiums/townhouses were 0.8 percent lower than 2018. Homes are remaining on the market longer and new listings have decreased – signs that the market is cooling down. However, because of the
hot real estate market for the past few years, rent, as a share of household income, remains much higher in Miami-Dade County than the share nationally and the average share of the 25 largest counties in the United States. More than 40 percent of South Florida homeowners and 53 percent of renters are classified as “cost-burdened” because they pay more than 30 percent of their household income on housing, according to a Miami Herald report highlighting information from a recent report of the FIU Urban Future Initiative.

National and international trade and tourism are the largest drivers of the economy in South Florida. In 2017, Miami’s 10 largest trading partners accounted for more than $35 billion worth of trade. The chart below reflects their relative activity with Miami.

Customs District 52 – the Miami District – reported a positive trade balance of just under $12 billion in 2018, the highest since 2014.
In 2018, Greater Miami and the beaches were visited by more than $23.3 million people, 16.8 million of which stayed overnight. Roughly two thirds of these visitors came from within the United States and one-third were international tourists, with the most coming from South America and Europe. The majority of visitors are here for a family vacation, arrive by air and stay in hotels. In 2018, visitors spent nearly $18 billion during their stay and the average visitor spent more than $1,000 per visit. Miami Beach remained the most common area for visitor lodging, with Downtown Miami and North Dade/Sunny Isles Beach also top destinations. The top neighborhoods visited in 2018 were Miami Beach, Downtown Miami, South Dade, Doral, Key Biscayne, Wynwood, Coconut Grove, Little Havana, Aventura and Coral Gables.

The chart below shows total employment, average annual wages and total establishments of target industries in Miami-Dade County. The vertical axis represents the average annual wage, while the horizontal axis represents the total employment. The size of each bubble corresponds to the total number of establishments in each industry. The top three employing industries were Hospitality and Tourism, with nearly 143,000 jobs and a 3.3 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between 2012 and 2017; Life Sciences and Health Care, accounting for 133,700 jobs (growing 1.5 percent per year); and International Banking and Finance, employing 46,400 (up 1.4 percent per year). The top two industry clusters, Hospitality and Tourism, and Life Sciences and Health Care, captured almost two-thirds, 65 percent, of the total target industry employment.
The Preliminary Resilience Assessment done to prepare for the Resilient 305 Strategy development provided information regarding the leading growth industries in Miami-Dade County. The follow charts illustrate the number of jobs, the average wages, and the representative companies for the top industries, including hospitality, life science and health care, banking, creative, trade, aviation and technology.
GM&B Context
Economy + Diversity

TRADE
Industry Growth:
Year Jobs
2012 28,533
2016 34,394

Wages/Salaries*:
$47,721

Total No. of Companies: 2,511

*2015 Wages + Salaries, Sources: EMSI 2016 via Beacon Council, Advantage Magazine

AVIATION
Industry Growth:
Year Jobs
2012 21,264
2016 24,670

Wages/Salaries*:
$62,253

Total No. of Companies: 482

*2015 Wages + Salaries, Sources: EMSI 2016 via Beacon Council, Advantage Magazine

GM&B Context
Growth Industries

Economy + Diversity

TECHNOLOGY
Industry Growth:
Year Jobs
2012 6,795
2016 8,674

Wages/Salaries*:
$87,171

Total No. of Companies: 7,773

*2015 Wages + Salaries, Sources: EMSI 2016 via Beacon Council, Advantage Magazine

Although the Technology Industry has the lowest number of jobs in comparison to other industries, the Technology Industry is seeing the most job growth in recent years.
Just last month, the Resilient 305 Strategy was officially released. A product of Greater Miami & the Beaches, a partnership of Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami, and the City of Miami Beach, the Resilient 305 Strategy addresses resilience challenges prioritized through hundreds of hours of collaborative work with thousands of stakeholders, both governmental agencies and representatives of the private sector and not-for-profit worlds. Greater Miami & the Beaches, originally a part of the 100 Resilient Cities Network pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, is now a partner of the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center. The Resilience Center leverages the strengths of the Atlantic Council, one of several voluntary organizations created soon after World War II to promote public understanding of policies and institutions that would build collective security and peace. Global climate change and its impacts on our future resources will perhaps the most significant impact of any threat on our world in coming years. Supported by a $25 million gift from Adrienne Arsht and a $30 million grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the goal of the Resilience Center is to reach one billion people with resilience solutions to address climate change, migration and security by 2030 and prepare governments and institutions to better prepare for, navigate and recover from shocks and stresses. Greater Miami & the Beaches is proud to be one of the first communities recognized as a partner of the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center.

The Resilient 305 Strategy is a document created to establish a framework to address priority resilience challenges through intergovernmental and community collaboration. Organized into three goal areas – places, people and pathways – the Resilient 305 Strategy identifies goals based on determined objectives. Implementing each of the actions identified by the Resilient 305 Strategy will require a dedicated team dubbed the PIVOT: Progress, Innovation and Vision for Our Tomorrow. The PIVOT team will oversee the prioritization, implementation and monitoring of progress. The FY 2019-20 Proposed Budget includes $500,000 set aside to begin support for the efforts needed to make the Resilient 305 Strategy a reality.

Like many other regions in the world, Miami-Dade County faces a number of current and future challenges including the impacts of climate change, aging facilities and transportation infrastructure, economic disparity, pandemics, cyber-attacks, terrorism and other natural and man-made disasters. A Resilient Strategy addresses these global issues, organizing solutions into six phases as illustrated in the chart on the next page.
The Resilient 305 Strategy is organized into three goals areas. “Places” addresses location-based challenges by enhancing climate resilience through design and planning; creating, connecting and improving mobility and housing options; and safeguarding ecosystems. Actions in this goal area include building healthy coral reefs and ecosystems, reducing storm surge vulnerability, developing mobility hubs and connectivity, and redeveloping public housing to make it more resilient.

“People” aims to improve the lives of citizens every day, rain or shine, by supporting job and wealth creation; addressing specific health needs for the most vulnerable; and preparing and empowering neighborhoods and networks to anticipate and respond to disruptions, both large and small. Ensuring representation in the census, breaking the cycle of youth violence, increasing resilience through volunteer emergency training and engaging communities through public art to help enhance the region’s social sustainability are all actions in this area.

“Pathways” seeks to bring together governments, businesses, community organizations, and educational institutions by setting common goals and committing to actions, such as utilizing a pre-planning for post-disaster toolkit, creating an actionable science advisory panel (ASAP), and utilizing a collaborative approach to improve coordination and resilience on water issues.
To provide for a safer and stronger community, the resilience strategy promoted by 100 Resilient Cities, we need to continue our focus on infrastructure investment, provision of affordable housing, development of a diverse economy, and public safety. Development of a diverse economy is perhaps the most critical, because a healthy economy can provide the resources needed to fund the other needs.