

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. Miami-Dade County was a transportation hub serving as the end point of Henry Flagler's railroad that extended from Jacksonville to the Miami River and what later became Downtown Miami. As 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 County's namesake, was a soldier killed during the Second Seminole War. In 1997, the County electorate voted to combine the two names to become the current Miami-Dade County. With an estimated population of 2.8 million residents, Miami-Dade County is the most populous county east of Chicago and the seventh largest in the nation by population. Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties comprise the Miami-Fort Lauderdale - Pompano Beach, Florida 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 waters) 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 has the unique distinction of being 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 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. Based on 2019 population estimates, individuals of Hispanic origin comprise 69 percent of the population of Miami-Dade County, followed by Black (15 percent) and White (13 percent) individuals.

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. The estimated 2020 Area Median Family Income (MFI) for a four-person household as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is \$61,000. For 2019, the American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that approximately 16 percent of the residents of Miami-Dade lived below the poverty line. 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 income 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. Last year, all these metrics were greatly improving from their worst recent performance. The unemployment rate improved from a high of 11.6 percent in 2010 and had dropped to under 2 percent in early 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed this trend and may have lasting and lingering effects throughout our economy.

As our local economy begins its recovery, the tourism industry will play a vital role. Our County's beaches, events, attractions and weather make us a desirable destination for both domestic and international visitors. In 2019, Greater Miami and the beaches were visited by more than 24.5 million people, 16.3 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. In 2019, the total economic impact of visitors was \$17.9 billion. Fifty-three percent of all visitors came to Miami-Dade for vacation, another 21 percent cited either visiting relatives or business as their main reason for travel. During the first quarter of 2020 the County experienced strong growth in visitors bolstered by the Super Bowl, followed by the COVID19 shutdown beginning in March. For 2020, total visitors fell 58 percent to 11.6 million visitors, 7.9 million stayed overnight and the remaining 3.7 million visiting for the day, with an estimated economic impact of \$7.9 billion. Since the release of the COVID vaccine and new rules from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, our economy has begun to recover. Based on June 2021 data from the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, air travel is almost at pre-pandemic levels, and hotel room bookings have surpassed pre-pandemic levels as have dining and attraction attendance. Port Miami is preparing for cruise ship passengers by the end of the summer, which will further improve the County's economic outlook.

In 2019, 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 Resilient Cities Network. Greater Miami & the Beaches is proud to be one of the first communities recognized as a partner of this important effort.

FY 2021-22 Proposed Budget and Multi-Year Capital Plan

The Resilient 305 Strategy is a document created to establish a framework to address priority resilience challenges through intergovernmental and community collaboration. It has opened up opportunities for us as we look for ways to address the impacts of the pandemic on our local economy.

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, to ensure that the County has the wherewithal to continue to thrive.

To provide for a safer and more resilient community, we also need to continue our focus on infrastructure investment, provision of affordable and workforce housing, development of a diverse economy, community engagement 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.

The COVID19 pandemic continues to be a shock to our system, but it exacerbates a long-time stressor of our reliance on the tourism industry for our ultimate economic success. As a result, the [One Community One Goal](#) (OCOG) initiative provides Miami-Dade County with a roadmap for its economic, entrepreneurial and educational success. OCOG is a collaboration between the public and private sectors to promote community-wide economic development and prosperity in Miami-Dade County, by encouraging innovation, amplifying strengths and imparting leadership to join public and private priorities. This community-wide initiative which began in 1998 has led to an increase in higher paying jobs, enhancement our educational ecosystem and development of a vibrant population of young professionals.

In addition to the Mayor's Thrive305 public input initiative, the Strive 305 program released in 2020 is designed to help the growth of small businesses and support entrepreneurial efforts to launch and grow new businesses. This new program will support the small business community through online small business and entrepreneurship hub for information, education and networking; a virtual small business incubator for education and mentorship; a countywide network of physical incubators to assist the launch of new businesses; technical assistance boot camps to assist small businesses in access to capital, finances, business planning, branding, digital marketing, sales, operations and more.

OCOG and Strive 305 will be an ongoing initiative critical to our community's post-pandemic recovery. Their missions are to continue bringing a broad spectrum of Miami-Dade individuals and organizations together to advance the goal of a thriving, inclusive and diverse community.