

# Memorandum



**Date:** December 17, 2025

**To:** Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Daniella Levine Cava *Daniella Levine Cava*  
Mayor

**Subject:** Report on Identifying Potential Benefits and Savings by using Public Service Aides instead of Law Enforcement Officers for Roadway Improvement Projects – Directive No. 250682

Agenda Item No. 2(B)(6)  
January 21, 2026

## Executive Summary

This report is in response to Resolution No. R-571-25, sponsored by Commissioner Raquel A. Regalado and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (the Board) on June 3, 2025. The resolution directed the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to identify potential benefits to the public and savings that could be realized by using public service aides instead of law enforcement officers in connection with roadway and other improvement projects by the Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) and the Water and Sewer Department (WASD).

While the directive explored the potential for utilizing Public Service Aides (PSAs) for traffic enforcement and other non-enforcement duties, a closer review raises potential concerns with replacing sworn Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) on roadway improvement projects undertaken by DTPW and WASD. PSAs are civilian personnel with very basic traffic enforcement training and have limited authority and powers when it comes to enforcing traffic infractions. Their job description and scope of responsibilities does not include traffic enforcement or pedestrian management during roadway improvement projects and they are not trained or equipped to handle uncooperative or combative individuals. The Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office (MDSO) has confirmed that PSAs are not permitted to be used for this purpose.

However, there is a notable cost differential between sworn LEOs and PSAs. Preliminary reviews indicate that PSA deployment could reduce hourly personnel costs by a minimum of approximately \$15.00 an hour. Over time, these savings could amount to substantial budget relief for both WASD and DTPW, especially given the volume of roadway improvement and construction projects currently underway and projected.

In light of this, the Administration is open to further exploring opportunities to responsibly integrate PSAs into specific situations and project circumstances where the risk profile is lower, and public safety will not be compromised. Any such integration would require close coordination with MDSO, appropriate training enhancements for PSAs, and clearly defined operational boundaries to ensure safety standards are maintained.

## Background

Roadway and infrastructure improvement projects frequently necessitate traffic enforcement, pedestrian management, and other support functions. Historically, these duties have often been performed by LEOs, either on duty or through off-duty details. The training and authority of LEOs facilitate in ensuring public safety and maintaining order in complex and potentially dangerous work environments.

Miami-Dade County currently utilizes PSAs in various capacities, including in support of police departments for routine reports, parking violations, and minor traffic accidents. These PSAs are typically non-sworn, unarmed civilian employees with limited enforcement and arrest powers, specifically excluding direct involvement with criminal suspects. While their existing roles demonstrate a foundational capacity for certain support functions, the transition to managing dynamic construction zone traffic presents potential challenges due to their limited enforcement capabilities and training compared to LEOs.

### Concerns Regarding the Use of Public Service Aides

- **Limited Enforcement Capabilities:** The primary concern with deploying PSAs for traffic enforcement in roadway projects is their limited enforcement authority.

Unlike LEOs, PSAs cannot issue citations for serious traffic violations, detain uncooperative individuals, or effectively respond to escalating situations involving aggressive drivers or direct threats within a construction zone. This lack of authority could lead to increased risks for both the public and construction crews, potentially compromising overall safety.

- **Insufficient Training for Dynamic Environments:** While PSAs can be trained in basic traffic enforcement, the dynamic and often hazardous nature of construction zones requires a higher level of comprehensive training, situational awareness, and rapid response capabilities that are inherent to LEO training (e.g., firearms, tactical gear, patrol vehicles, advanced law enforcement academies). Relying on PSAs for these critical roles may leave gaps in emergency response and incident management.
- **Potential for Increased Incidents and Liability:** The deployment of personnel with limited enforcement powers could inadvertently lead to a rise in traffic violations, non-compliance from motorists, and potentially more serious accidents within work zones. This could expose the County to increased liability risks.
- **Public Perception and Respect for Authority:** The public is accustomed to respecting the authority of sworn law enforcement officers in traffic enforcement scenarios. Introducing PSAs into these roles, without the visible authority and training of LEOs, could lead to confusion, non-compliance, and a potential decrease in the overall effectiveness of traffic management efforts. This could also undermine the perceived seriousness of construction zone safety.
- **Limited Capacity for Emergency Response and Escalation:** While protocols for LEO involvement can be established, relying on PSAs to identify and then escalate incidents to LEOs introduces potential delays in critical emergency response. LEOs can immediately intervene in criminal activity, major accidents, or instances of aggressive behavior, a capability PSAs lack.

### Potential Savings

The most significant potential savings stem from the difference in compensation and overhead costs between LEOs and PSAs. On average, the hourly wage for a Police Officer in Miami-Dade County ranges from \$74.00 to \$111.00, whereas the average hourly wage for a PSA is approximately \$59.40. For instance, if a project requires 10 hours of traffic enforcement per day over 200 days in a year, the cost of assigning a sworn LEO at the lower end of the pay range would total approximately \$148,000 annually, compared to \$118,800 annually for a PSA. This results in an annual savings of roughly \$29,200 per position. When applied across multiple projects and assignments, these savings could accumulate into several hundred thousand dollars annually, offering meaningful budget relief.

### Recommendation

Given the potential public safety concerns, the recommendation is to continue using sworn Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) for the majority of traffic enforcement and other critical safety functions. However, recognizing the opportunity for meaningful budget relief, the Administration is open to continuing this conversation with MDSO and other stakeholders to explore whether PSAs could, in the future, be responsibly integrated into certain situations and project specific functions without compromising public safety. For example, this could include construction zones where there is minimal traffic, streets that

already have reduced speed limits, or controlled environments where multiple officers are already assigned and an additional support presence is beneficial. Any implemented approach would require changes to job classifications, additional training, and clearly defined operational parameters to mitigate risks. This report serves as a foundational document for such a critical and beneficial undertaking.

This memorandum will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda, without committee review, pursuant to Rule 5.06(j) of the Board's Rules of Procedure. If additional information is required, please contact Stacy L. Miller, P.E., Director and CEO, DTPW, at (786) 469-5406.

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