

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 8(M)(1)

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

DATE: December 2, 2025

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution authorizing the
County Mayor to establish the
Department of Solid Waste
Management DSWM Cares
Program; providing for program
administration by the
Community Services Department
to assist eligible customers
experiencing financial hardship;
and authorizing the County
Mayor to exercise all provisions
therein

Resolution No. R-1155-25

The accompanying resolution was prepared by the Solid Waste Management Department and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Oliver G. Gilbert, III.



Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/uw

MDC001

Memorandum



Date: December 2, 2025

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

From: Daniella Levine Cava
Mayor 

Subject: Proposal for the Establishment of the Department of Solid Waste Management
“DSWM Cares” Program for Financial Assistance to Solid Waste Customers

Executive Summary

The Department of Solid Waste Management (“DSWM”) proposes the establishment of the “DSWM Cares Program” (“Program”), a voluntary contribution initiative designed to assist solid waste customers experiencing financial hardship with their solid waste fees. This Program will be funded through voluntary contributions from solid waste customers and the philanthropic community (“Donors”) and will be modeled after the Water and Sewer Department’s “WASD Cares Program.” Serving over 350,000 customers, DSWM seeks to alleviate financial burdens and strengthen community support through this initiative. This Program will be administered by the Community Services Department (“CSD”) through an interdepartmental memorandum of understanding agreement (“MOU”), attached as Exhibit 1 hereto, to ensure effective implementation and management.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) approve the creation of the Program and authorize the County Mayor or County Mayor’s designee to implement the Program and establish a fund to be generated through voluntary contributions from Donors, similar to the model used for WASD Cares. The County Mayor or County Mayor’s designee will oversee the Program’s implementation, including eligibility criteria, procedures for collecting contributions, and the distribution of funds. The Program will enable contributions to be made on a voluntary basis by Donors to support those who are unable to afford their waste management bills due to financial hardship. Eligible applicants must be active solid waste customers within the Miami-Dade County Waste Collection Service Area. Additional information on the eligibility requirements can be found in the MOU. CSD will administer the program and approve applicants for fund distribution.

Scope

The Program will provide financial assistance for the payment of solid waste fees for eligible DSWM customers. DSWM currently provides essential waste management services to over 350,000 customers in Miami-Dade County (“County”).

Delegation of Authority

Authorizes the County Mayor or the County Mayor’s designee to exercise all provisions contained within the Resolution.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source

The monies distributed through the Program will be supported entirely by voluntary contributions from Donors. These contributions will be collected and distributed by DSWM to qualifying customers based on established eligibility criteria. However, there will be a fiscal impact to DSWM to pay CSD a stipend

payment of \$204.15 for each application that has been reviewed and approved. Other costs are currently unknown.

Track Record/Monitor

CSD has a proven track record of managing customer assistance programs and successfully administering funds aimed at helping financially vulnerable individuals. CSD currently administers several similar programs, including utility assistance programs. CSD, as the administrator of the Program, will assess applicants' eligibility for assistance. CSD's caseworkers will review all applications submitted via the DSWM Cares portal to ensure all applicants meet the Program standards. DSWM will be responsible for monitoring the Program, ensuring that the funds collected through voluntary contributions are distributed equitably and in accordance with established guidelines.

Background

DSWM is a vital service provider, ensuring the proper collection and disposal of waste for more than 350,000 customers in the County. In recent years, many customers have faced financial hardships that have made it challenging to afford essential services, including waste management. To address this issue, the DSWM seeks to establish a voluntary contribution Program modeled after WASD Cares that assists customers of the Water and Sewer Department. Other governing bodies in the United States have successfully implemented similar voluntary contribution programs for essential services such as water, electricity, and sewer. However, none have yet applied this model to waste collection services. The Program will fill this gap and provide much-needed support to customers facing financial difficulty while ensuring continued access to waste management services.



Roy Coley
Chief Utilities and Regulatory Services Officer

Memorandum of Understanding

Program Guidelines and Implementation Memorandum of Understanding between Miami Dade County Department of Solid Waste Management and the Community Services Department - DSWM CARES PROGRAM AGREEMENT

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU" or "Agreement"), is entered into between the Miami-Dade County Department of Solid Waste Management ("DSWM"), and the Community Services Department ("CSD"), to establish a collaborative effort for the DSWM Cares Program (the "Program"), a needs-based assistance fund. This fund provides financial assistance to eligible Miami-Dade County solid waste customers experiencing hardship with their annual solid waste residential collection fees ("Solid Waste Fees").

DSWM customers and the philanthropic community partners and entities may contribute to the Program. This fund will assist eligible residents with a once-a-year payment of their current, budget-adopted Solid Waste Fee (see program guidelines for exclusions and eligibility). As part of its obligations under this Agreement, CSD will administer the Program in accordance with its guidelines. DSWM will not be involved in determining eligibility or the funding amount for any applicant.

CSD shall ensure that no person is subjected to discrimination in connection with the Program based on age, gender, disability, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, or ancestry contrary to applicable law.

DSWM customers who are potential recipients of the Program funds shall have equal assistance opportunities. Assistance will only be granted during a twelve (12) month period to a property owner. These guidelines cannot be added to or deviated from without the prior written consent of the DSWM Financial Services liaison.

CSD, by signing this Agreement, does hereby agree to the following terms and conditions.

I. Eligibility Requirements

Potential applicants can apply online at (www.dswmcares.gov).

An eligible applicant must meet all the following criteria:

1. Applicants must be active solid waste customers within the Miami-Dade County Waste Collection Service Area, and have no outstanding balance exceeding one (1) year in arrears. Eligibility can be confirmed by visiting gisweb.miamidade.gov/communityservices/ and entering the service address. This fund provides financial assistance to eligible Miami-Dade County solid waste

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customers who are experiencing hardship with their annual Solid Waste Fees.

2. The property for which assistance is requested must be a single-family residence and must be the applicant's primary residence (secondary or rental properties are not eligible).
3. The property must be owner-occupied and have an active homestead exemption.
4. The total household income, including the income of all who reside at the property, must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level as defined by current federal guidelines. Applicants must provide recent documentation of household income or benefit statements.
5. Applicants must provide a valid Florida Driver's License or government-issued identification card matching the name and address on their annual solid waste residential collection bill.
6. Applicants may apply once within a twelve (12) month period and must be delinquent on the current Solid Waste Fees. The CSD caseworker will review the current bill for eligibility.
7. Applicants approved for the Program must reapply annually to confirm continued eligibility. This ensures that the funds support a wide range of applicants in need.

II. Eligibility Determination and Case Management

1. CSD, as the administrator of the Program, will assess applicants' eligibility for assistance. CSD's caseworkers will review all applications submitted via the DSWM Cares portal to ensure all applicants meet the Program standards. CSD will also schedule appointments, as needed, to assist with filling out online applications. DSWM will not have a role in eligibility determinations or decisions related to assistance amounts for applicants.
2. **Non-Discrimination Clause:** CSD and its representatives agree that no person will be subjected to discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), and intersex, or any other legally protected status in connection with this program.
3. **Equal Opportunity for Assistance:** All potential recipients of the Program will have an equal opportunity to receive assistance. CSD will ensure fair and impartial treatment of all applicants under the Program.

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4. **Program Standards:** CSD agrees to adhere to the eligibility criteria and program standards established by DSWM for the Program.

III. DSWM Cares Payment Requirements

1. If funds are available, and the applicant meets the established guidelines, CSD will process and approve their application. Once an applicant is deemed eligible, DSWM will record a waste fee tax cut for the entire annual delinquent amount in the Waste Collection System ("WCS"). Accrued interest and late fees may be waived upon the Director's approval. The annual waste fee may change based on DSWM's fees in place at the time the application is being reviewed. After the waste fee tax cut is reflected in the WCS, DSWM will record a cash transfer from the DSWM Cares Fund program where donations are accumulated, to the Collections Operations Fund. This transaction is recorded internally in the INFORMS general ledger system.
2. Recipients can only receive assistance once t annually as funding and resources permit .
3. Funds received from donors are recorded into the DSWM Cares Dedicated Fund and reflected as restricted. When an applicant is deemed eligible by CSD, DSWM will record an intra-fund transfer from the DSWM Cares Restricted Fund, into the Collections Operations Fund in order to offset the tax cut recorded in the WCS for the delinquent solid waste non-ad valorem fees in the property tax system. This process ensures transparency and minimizes administrative complexity for CSD, Miami-Dade Office of the Tax Collector, and DSWM when applying payments to the appropriate residential accounts. The Accounting & Bond Administration Division is responsible for reconciling the transfer of funds to the residential account awarded the waste fee reduction.
4. CSD's primary responsibility is to review and approve applications. DSWM is responsible for maintaining detailed records of all donations, recording the waste fee tax cut in the WCS, recording the intra-fund transfers, and reconciling them to each individual collections residential account. DSWM must also prepare monthly reports to summarize intra-fund activity (e.g., donations received, transfers of funds, number of residents served). The fund balance report will be provided to CSD on a monthly basis by DSWM.
5. The Residential Collections Billing Unit in DSWM Accounting must reconcile the intra-fund transfers from the DSWM Cares Restricted Fund into the Collections Operations Fund and confirm that they were applied to the appropriate residential accounts.

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IV. DSWM/CSD Interface

Program Funding

The Program offers an opportunity for DSWM customers and the philanthropic community to make voluntary contributions in support of the Program. Contributions can be made through the following convenient options:

1. Direct contributions via the DSWM homepage.
2. Contributions made at the time of paying property taxes either online or in person at the Tax Collector's Office.
3. Contributions submitted when making payments for DSWM services, such as landscaper coupons, permit fees, and disposal fees.
4. Contributions made through the solid waste online payment system for additional services such as bulky waste pickups and additional carts.
5. Contributions made through the DSWM website during community outreach events or as directed by DSWM staff.
6. Additionally, anyone, whether a current customer or a member of the philanthropic community, can contribute by visiting the DSWM website and selecting the donation option.
7. All voluntary contributions will be allocated to a designated restricted fund in the County's pool cash system. These funds will be managed by DSWM to ensure proper distribution to eligible program recipients.

Disbursement Schedule

Contributions to the Program may be received year-round. Eligible funds will be disbursed to the recipient, provided funds are available.

Applicants may apply for assistance throughout the year, but payments will only be issued when funds are available.

The Program doesn't exempt applicants from paying their current waste service fees. This program will only cover the approved assistance amount.

Program Commitments and Payment

Pursuant to the terms outlined in this MOU, DSWM will pay CSD the stipend payment of \$204.15 for each application that has been reviewed and approved in

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accordance with the provisions set forth in the Agreement. To ensure timely processing, intra-fund transfers from DSWM to CSD must be recorded no later than thirty (30) days after the approval of an applicant.

Client Education

As part of this Program, CSD caseworkers may provide potential clients with educational support regarding the Program and broader solid waste and recycling services available through Miami-Dade County. Caseworkers may also distribute educational materials provided by DSWM on recycling and other services to foster responsible waste management and community improvement.

This outreach ensures that clients are well-informed about assistance options, sustainable practices, and resources that can positively impact their households and the community.

CSD Staff Training

To ensure effective client education, DSWM will provide a brief orientation session for CSD caseworkers on the Program, recycling practices, and other solid waste services.

This session will familiarize caseworkers with the provided educational materials, highlight the importance of recycling, and empower them to encourage program beneficiaries to adopt responsible recycling habits. By increasing awareness of recycling's role within solid waste management, the orientation supports DSWM's broader campaigns and helps clients become more informed recyclers, contributing to community sustainability.

V. Auditing

DSWM will routinely review and reconcile DSWM Cares customer files and program processes. The Program may be subject to internal and external audits throughout the year. Every quarter (due by the 15th day of the first month of each quarter, for the prior quarter), DSWM will prepare the following:

- The completed Fund Reconciliation Report, signed by the Financial Reporting Manager and the Division's Controller confirming the DSWM Cares Restricted Fund is "in balance" and verifying that the information provided is as true and accurate as possible.
- The completed and signed Fund Reconciliation Report also demonstrates DSWM's internal reconciliation of the fund.
- The Fund Reconciliation Report also includes the following metrics:
 - DSWM Cares Restricted Fund beginning balance
 - Administrative fees paid by DSWM to CSD
 - Donations year-to-date recorded into the DSWM Cares Restricted

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Fund

- DSWM waste fees tax cuts recorded in the WCS
- Intra-fund transfers from the DSWM Cares Restricted Fund into the Collections Operations Fund
- Other Adjustments
- DSWM Cares Restricted Fund ending balance
- Number of applications processed

VI. General

DSWM and CSD affirm their commitment to delivering this community resource with the highest standards of professionalism, ensuring a positive outcome for the Program. The designated representatives for both departments, specifically the respective department directors, will serve as the principal points of contact for this Agreement:

Miami-Dade County Department

Solid Waste Management

Aneisha Daniel, PhD, Director
2525 NW 62nd Street
Miami, FL 33147
(305) 514-6666

Miami-Dade County

Community Services

Department

Cathy Burgos, Director
701 NW 1st Court, 10th Floor
Miami, FL 33136
(786) 469-4600

The parties to this Agreement acknowledge that the Program is designed to be adaptable to meet the community's evolving needs. As such, modifications to the Program may be occasionally necessary to enhance its effectiveness. Any changes to this Agreement must be made through mutual consent and documented in a written amendment signed by both parties.

VII. Termination

DSWM and/or CSD may terminate this Agreement at any time, provided a ninety (90) day written notice is given to the other department.

VIII. Term of Agreement

Upon its execution, this Agreement shall remain in force for a period of five (5) years from the date that it is approved by the Board of County Commissioners. This Agreement can be renewed for an additional five (5) years if both parties agree to exercise an option-to-renew. Should this occur, any remaining funds will be returned to DSWM along with a complete accounting.

Memorandum of Understanding

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Miami-Dade County Department of Solid Waste Management and Community Services Department caused this Agreement to be executed on the date indicated below.

Miami-Dade County Department
Of Solid Waste Management

Miami-Dade County Community
Services Department

Department Director

Department Director

Date: _____



MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

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

DATE: December 2, 2025

FROM: 
Glen Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 8(M)(1)

Please note any items checked.

- _____ **"3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised**
- _____ **6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing**
- _____ **4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing**
- _____ **Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget**
- _____ **Budget required**
- _____ **Statement of fiscal impact required**
- _____ **Statement of social equity required**
- _____ **Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing**
- _____ **No committee review**
- _____ **Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____, majority plus one ____, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3) (h) or (4)(c) ____, CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c) (2) ____)** to approve
- _____ **Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required**

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 8(M)(1)
12-2-25

RESOLUTION NO. **R-1155-25**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO ESTABLISH THE DEPARTMENT OF SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DSWM CARES PROGRAM; PROVIDING FOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION BY THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO ASSIST ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP; AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO EXERCISE ALL PROVISIONS THEREIN

WHEREAS, this Board desires to accomplish the purposes outlined in the accompanying memorandum, a copy of which is incorporated herein by reference,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board:

Section 1. This Board authorizes the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to establish the DSWM Cares program (the "Program"), where voluntary contributions will assist eligible Department of Solid Waste Management ("DSWM") customers experiencing financial hardship. The Program shall be administered internally by DSWM, and the Community Services Department will review and approve applications for eligible customers experiencing financial hardship pursuant to a memorandum of understanding with DSWM, substantially in the form attached to the Mayor's memorandum as Exhibit 1.

Section 2. This Board authorizes the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to exercise all provisions therein.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner **Danielle Cohen Higgins** , who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **Kionne L. McGhee** and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman	aye		
Kionne L. McGhee, Vice Chairman	aye		
Marleine Bastien	aye	Juan Carlos Bermudez	aye
Sen. René García	aye	Oliver G. Gilbert, III	aye
Roberto J. Gonzalez	absent	Keon Hardemon	aye
Danielle Cohen Higgins	aye	Vicki L. Lopez	aye
Natalie Milian Orbis	aye	Raquel A. Regalado	aye
Micky Steinberg	absent		

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 2nd day of December, 2025. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JUAN FERNANDEZ-BARQUIN, CLERK

By: **Basia Pruna**
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.

dsh

David Stephen Hope