



# Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust Business Plan

**Fiscal Years: 2021 and 2022**  
(10/1/2020 through 9/30/2022)

Approved by:

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*Delivering Excellence Every Day*



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## **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

### **Department Mission**

Administer the proceeds of the portion of the one percent Food and Beverage Tax and other revenue sources dedicated to activities for the homeless; advise the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on issues related to homelessness; and implement the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan: Priority Home.

### **Our Customer**

The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust develops policy, administers funding and provides oversight to house and serve homeless individuals and families in Miami-Dade County, as well as individuals and families who are at imminent risk of homelessness. While there are many contributing and complicating factors related to homelessness, the most fundamental need is housing.

Biannually, the Homeless Trust conducts a census of sheltered and unsheltered persons. During the census conducted in the last ten days of January, the Homeless Trust administers surveys to homeless individuals and families in our Continuum of Care (CoC). Customer satisfaction surveys are also administered throughout the year to clients in programs funded through the Homeless Trust. Survey results, an analysis of system performance data, and an annual gaps and needs analysis conducted by our CoC which includes input from a wide range of community stakeholders, help to identify and evolve strategies and initiatives to assist in the further development and implementation of the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan: Priority Home. Priority Home is aligned with Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, and U.S. HUD's Policy Priorities.

As the coordinator of the local homeless CoC of housing and services for homeless households, the Homeless Trust interfaces regularly with homeless housing and service providers and stakeholders. These stakeholders include representatives of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing; law enforcement; hospitals; jails; mental health receiving facilities; domestic violence advocates; veterans programs; children and youth services providers and advocates; employment services; public housing agencies, affordable housing developers and formerly homeless persons, among others.

Table of Organization

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HOMELESS TRUST  
 FUNCTIONAL TABLE OF ORGANIZATION**

<b><u>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</u></b>	
<p>Responsible for the implementation of policies developed by the Board of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, including the utilization of local, state and federal funds to assist the homeless. Provides Leadership, coordination and administration to the department. Recommends, defines and monitors operating goals, objectives and procedures for the Trust and the Department.</p>	
<u>20-21</u> 6	<u>21-22</u> 6

<b><u>HOMELESS TRUST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR</u></b>	
<p>Manages, and directs all contract monitoring functions. Directs all departmental research and analyses for the implementation of Trust policies. Coordinates competitive procurement processes. Provides overall administrative support.</p>	
<u>20-21</u> 14	<u>21-22</u> 14



**Strategic Alignment Summary**

HS1-1 Reduce homelessness throughout Miami-Dade County

HS2-1 Provide the necessary support services for vulnerable residents and special populations

**Alignment of Selected Scorecard Measures to Resilience**

Measure 1: Reduce Homelessness in Miami-Dade County

Measure 2: Provide Sufficient Housing Units to Address the Needs of the Homeless

Measure 3: Prevent Homelessness

Resilience Drive: HW1: Meets Basic Needs

**KEY ISSUES**

- Protecting and serving highly vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness, as well as those at imminent risk of homelessness, with a focus on those at highest risk for severe illness from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Declining Food & Beverage Tax revenues as a result of the pandemic.
- Lack of full participation in the Local Option 1% Food and Beverage Tax from Miami-Dade. Three municipalities, Miami Beach, Surfside and Bal Harbour, remain exempt from the Food & Beverage Tax.
- Lack of affordable and supportive housing for homeless households, including extremely low-income special needs populations. A particular focus on:
  - Increasing numbers of senior citizens experiencing homelessness.
  - Unsheltered single adults, primarily men, including those suffering from substance use and mental health disorders.
- Policy shifts at the federal and state levels with regard to housing. The Homeless Trust and its providers leverage Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds, Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) funds, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and Section 8 vouchers to assist homeless households. Reductions and/or eliminations of these funding streams will severely impact the Homeless Trust’s ability to provide housing assistance to homeless and at-risk households. Statewide Supportive Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program funds are also leveraged in partnership with Miami-Dade municipalities.
- Further reducing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, particularly in the cities of Miami and Miami Beach where homelessness is largely concentrated (January 2021 Point in Time Count identified 892 persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, a 13% year over year decline).
- Year over year improvements in Continuum of Care (CoC) system level performance as measured by U.S. HUD which is increasingly tied to federal program funding for persons experiencing



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homelessness. System Performance Measures include length of time homeless, returns to homelessness, number of homeless persons, employment and income growth, first time homelessness and successful housing placement.

- Ensuring equitable access to housing and services and combatting racial disparities among persons experiencing and at-risk of homelessness. While 18% of Miami-Dade County's general population is Black/African-American, persons who are Black/African-American make up 57% of all persons and 66% of all families experiencing homelessness in Miami-Dade.
- Further design and implement a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness, with a focus on youth of color and LGBTQ youth ages 18-24.
- Enhanced understanding and improved coordination between the homeless and domestic violence systems; further developing cross system partnerships and common goals for systems enhancements that are survivor centered.
- Increased data sharing between systems, including law enforcement, healthcare providers and other stakeholders to better identify, engage and serve persons experiencing homelessness who are high utilizers of the health care, criminal justice and homeless systems.
- Increased coordination with other programs and mainstream resources that serve the homeless households (Veterans Affairs, Thriving Mind, hospitals, jails, crisis units, Head Start and Early Head Start, CareerSource, TANF, Medicaid, etc.), as directed by the federal HEARTH Act.

## **PRIORITY INITIATIVES**

- Continued implementation of emergency response plans to prevent, prepare for and respond the coronavirus pandemic to protect persons experiencing and at-risk of homelessness
  - Prioritizing homeless and formerly homeless persons and frontline essential workers as part of the vaccine distribution plan
  - Ensuring continued COVID-19 testing, retesting and tracing for persons experiencing homelessness
  - Maintaining quarantine and isolation sites for homeless households unable to self-isolate
  - Evolving social distancing, disinfection, PPE and other COVID-related protocols to protect persons experiencing homelessness
  - Scaling up permanent housing placements for persons experiencing homelessness using COVID-19 stimulus funds and preventing homelessness for persons most likely to enter the streets and shelter with a prioritization for households most at risk for severe illness
- Realignment and/or strategic reductions to mitigate housing and service reductions and replenish Food & Beverage Tax reserves. Leverage Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and other COVID-related stimulus funding to maintain service levels and accelerate permanent housing placement.
- Continue to advocate to the municipalities of Miami Beach, Surfside and Bal Harbour the value of Food & Beverage Tax participation. Explain how one-time commitments have enhanced housing and services for persons experiencing homelessness.

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- Fundraise in partnership with The Miami Foundation to secure and operate dedicated permanent housing facilities which include supportive housing for two growing homeless sub-populations: 1) Senior citizens, and 2) Unsheltered single adults with special needs.
- Expand partnerships with Public Housing Agencies, ESG and SHIP Entitlement Jurisdiction, developers, property managers, landlords and others to expand preferences, set-asides and referral agreements for persons experiencing homelessness. Expand the Move-Up Initiative to allow people who previously experienced homelessness to exercise tenant mobility.
- Through a continuing public process, review and incorporate new strategies into Miami-Dade's Community Plan to End Homelessness: Priority Home to improve system performance, and ensure homelessness is rare, brief and one-time whenever possible.
  - Continue system mapping, housing stock analysis, data-driven gaps and needs analysis and system right-sizing.
  - Enhance housing-focused outreach services for persons suffering from substance use disorders; increase effectiveness of engagement and improve the speed of exit from the homelessness system.
  - Add new capacity and scale up Rapid Rehousing (rental assistance and support services) programming for persons experiencing homelessness.
  - Continue to seek to integrate data systems from the homeless system, hospitals, jails, law enforcement, crisis stabilization units and other stakeholders to improve collaboration, identify emerging needs and prioritize persons experiencing homelessness for rental assistance and supportive services based on use and costs.
  - Review and evolve discharge planning policies to prevent homelessness (discharges from jail, hospitals, crisis units or other institutions).
- Further develop actions steps to address racial disparities and work to understand root causes of homelessness.
  - Continue development of racial equity plan and strategies to eliminate race as a social determinant of homelessness.
  - Continue participation as one of only 10 selected to participate in A Way Home America's Grand Challenge to end homelessness for youth of color and LGTBQ youth.
  - Ensure ongoing assessment of system of disparities within the homelessness system.
- Create sustainable solutions at Verde Gardens, particularly the farm and farmer's market, to facilitate employment and income growth for homeless/formerly homeless households and maximize the use of land provided under Title V, designed to increase the health and wellbeing of families in PSH. Further analyze the use of federal surplus property to serve homeless households.
- Continue system development and cross system partnerships to enhance housing and services to meet the unique needs homeless subpopulations, including youth 18-24, survivors of domestic violence and veterans. Further develop

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- Enhance program evaluation to ensure compliance with standards of care, policies and procedures. Utilize updated monitoring tools, enhance provider/client engagement, and improve technical assistance.

## **FUTURE OUTLOOK**

The Homeless Trust remains steadfast in its commitment to prevent, divert and further reduce homelessness in Miami-Dade County, and ensure that when homelessness does occur, it is rare, brief and one-time, and that sustainable practices and systems are in place to respond to future needs.

Our ability to support and enhance housing and services programming for homeless individuals and families, and those at risk of homelessness, continues to rely on sustained and increased federal funding commitments, the strong performance of the local Food and Beverage Tax, and the leveraging of partnerships with public housing agencies, entitlement jurisdictions, affordable housing developers and other mainstream housing and service providers. Continued implementation of the Community Homeless Plan: Priority Home will require additional resources, and increased collaboration with public and private organizations.

The Trust continues to view its local homeless response as a coordinated system rather than a collection of disconnected programs and will continue to embrace systems change in order to improve outcomes, inform the strategic allocation of limited resources, and create innovative programming and collaborations to bring an end to homelessness.

The Trust will be closely monitoring any shifts in federal policy priorities and evolving its system accordingly, in line with best practices and local needs, to continue successfully leveraging federal funding. Efforts will also continue to build reserves (in the form of tax equalization and capital replacement accounts) in order to efficiently and effectively meet housing and service demands despite sharp decreases in tax revenue as a result of the pandemic.