



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

Monthly Public Meeting – Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Town of Miami Lakes Government Center, 6601 Main Street, Miami Lakes, FL 33014

Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairwoman Michelle Abreu. Roll was called, and quorum was established with 15 members present.

Board Members Present:

Michelle Abreu (Chairwoman), Lourdes Abadin (Vice Chairwoman), Stephanie Daniels, Heather Paschal Binns Yumanela Candelaria, Dr. Carrie Carey-Johnson, Milagros “Millie” Del Valle (2nd Vice Chair), Marie Soeurette-Elio (Member at Large), Chelsea Granell, Dr. Sharon Kendrick Johnson (Past Chair), Nadege Vilsaint, Dr. Jacqueline Peña, Yama Paillère, Maria Santamaria, Josephine Novo

Board Members Absent:

Clora Adkins, Lunicel Alvarado, Elise Gerson, Katherine Leiva, Mercedes Carlson, Gloria Martinez, Yvette Ayala

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chairwoman Michelle Abreu opened the meeting by thanking attendees and acknowledging the significance of holding the board’s monthly meeting in the Town of Miami Lakes as part of the “On the Road” series. She extended thanks to Board Member Luni for securing the location and coordinating with municipal partners. The Commission formally welcomed:

- **Mayor Joshua Dieguez**, Town of Miami Lakes
- **Councilmember Alex Sanchez**
- **Kay Grant**, Chief Financial Officer
- A representative from **Commissioner Steinberg’s office**
- **Ibis Valdez**, representing the Office of the Mayor of Miami-Dade County

All offered brief but meaningful remarks in support of the Commission’s work and reaffirmed their commitment to the status of women and girls in Miami-Dade County.

Reasonable Opportunity for Public to Be Heard



Public comment was welcomed and featured several distinguished guests:

- **Professor Donna Coker** and **Rosario Concha** of the University of Miami Human Rights Law Clinic offered commentary on the importance of grounding the Status of Women Report in a human rights framework and pledged continued collaboration to strengthen legal and policy alignment with the CEDAW ordinance.
- **Paola Granados-Radlick**, **Alicia Nuche**, and **Samantha Moore**, representing the newly launched Miami Chapter of the **Chamber of Mothers**, shared their organization's three advocacy pillars—paid family leave, quality child care, and maternal health. They emphasized the need for partnerships and systemic change at the local level.
- **Viviana Alvarado-Pacheco** from **The Women's Fund Miami-Dade** shared insights on maternal health initiatives and strategies to align the report's policy goals with gender equity efforts across the county.
- **Beatrice Gonzalez** from **Lotus House** noted that the shelter is currently at its highest-ever occupancy rate, exceeding even pandemic-era levels. She spoke to the ongoing crisis facing vulnerable women and children in shelter systems.
- **Janel Baez**, representing **The Rich Reporter**, expressed her support for the board's visibility efforts and offered to help promote its initiatives through media storytelling and digital coverage.

Approval of April Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the April meeting was made by **Josie** and seconded by **Stephanie Daniels**. The motion was unanimously approved.

Director's Report – Dr. Rose Martin

Dr. Martin provided updates on several ongoing initiatives and key collaborations that will inform the 2024 Status of Women Report recommendations. She discussed meetings held with stakeholders including the University of Miami, the ACLU of Florida, the Women's Fund, and the UM Human Rights Law Clinic. These meetings emphasized gaps in disaggregated data, the need for aligned messaging on pay equity and gender-based violence, and opportunities for legal education and systems reform.

She then reported:

- **YWPA Scholarships:** Executive Committee reviewed applications; three recipients were recommended.
- **Women's Hall of Fame:** Nine nominations have been received. Application period closes May 30.
- **Financial Balances:** Friends Account – \$5,574.31; Trust Account – \$8,565.28
- **Collaborations:**
 - District 11: Maternal Health Fair
 - District 2: Black Maternal Health Fair
 - Vice Chair McGhee: Status of Women Forum
- **Upcoming Presentation:** Health and Safety Committee – June 10 at 11:00 AM



- **Reminders:** Financial disclosure (Form 1) due July 1
 - **Announcement:** Dr. Martin was recently appointed Director of the Social and Economic Development Council of Miami-Dade County
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Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Chairwoman Michelle Abreu reported on behalf of the Executive Committee. The committee met on May 19 to review applications for the Young Women's Preparatory Academy (YWPA) Scholarships using a standardized rubric. Three applicants were selected:

- Emerald Tellez (District 2 – Bastien)
- Nubia Fernandez (District 5 – Higgins)
- Amanda Bencomo (District 7 – Regalado)

A motion to approve the scholarship awards, funded through the Friends of the Commission account, was made by **Vice Chair Lourdes Abadin** and seconded by **Josie**. The motion was unanimously approved.

Legislative Committee

Committee Chair **Josie** provided a report on the success of the board's presentation before the Housing Committee and noted the upcoming invitation to present again before the Health and Safety Committee. She reported that Commissioners Gonzalez, Bastien, and McGhee expressed interest in further collaboration. Josie noted that although the May Legislative Committee meeting was canceled due to weather and quorum issues, it would be rescheduled shortly. She and Dr. Martin are actively working on this year's legislative recommendations.

GOALS Committee

The report was delivered by Committee Chair **Yama Paillère**, who introduced the newly created Strategic Goals Alignment Survey. She explained that the survey was developed to track Commission activities from January through May and align them with the board's strategic priorities: legislative advocacy, community engagement, and public visibility. Yama emphasized that the purpose is not to monitor board members individually, but to build a data-driven blueprint for future planning.

Dr. Martin clarified that, in keeping with Sunshine Law requirements, the survey responses will be submitted only to her (as a non-board member in this context), who will compile the data for the board.

A motion to approve the distribution of the survey was made by **Millie** and seconded by **Lourdes Abadin**. The motion was unanimously approved.

Communications Committee

Dr. **Carrie Carey-Johnson** delivered the committee report, highlighting that the board had already featured two women-led organizations in 2025—HeartCharged and the Chamber of Mothers. She celebrated the Commission's recent digital growth: Facebook engagement is up, Instagram followers have exceeded 4,000,



and the Commission successfully launched its LinkedIn page. She encouraged all board members to follow, share, and help amplify the board's visibility.

Events & Fundraising Committee

The report was delivered by **Vice Chair Lourdes Abadin** on behalf of Committee Chair **Luni**, who was absent. Lourdes reported that the "Commission on the Road" initiative continues to be successful, with the Town of Cutler Bay meeting bringing in over 40 attendees and tonight's meeting in Miami Lakes showing similar engagement. The committee continues exploring fundraising strategies to support future events.

New Business

Proposal: Disability Resource Fair

Board member **Josie** presented a formal proposal to host a **Disability Resource Fair** in District 13, aimed at mothers and caregivers of children with disabilities. She shared her personal experience supporting her younger brother, whose complex needs highlight the gap in accessible services for children—especially as they outgrow early childhood programs but still require tailored care.

The event would be held in late July 2025 at the **Milander Center** in Hialeah and would include:

- A sensory-friendly environment for children
- Free grooming services by a barbershop experienced in supporting children with sensory sensitivities
- Resource booths by 10+ community partners
- Distribution of hard-to-find diapers through **YouthCruise**, pending sponsorship

Josie explained that although she reached out to the **Miami Diaper Bank**, their distribution model required a closed, pre-registered event, which would prevent other vendors from participating and limit access. As an alternative, she is securing in-kind contributions from corporate sponsors, including **MegaTV**, and working with organizations like **Spectrum Family** to provide onsite sensory play zones.

Board members raised thoughtful questions during the discussion:

- **Board Member Nadege Vilsaint** suggested reaching out to The Children's Trust Parenting Clubs as potential vendors or partners.
- **Dr. Carrie Carey-Johnson** inquired about community buy-in and whether families would meaningfully participate.
- **Yama Paillère** asked about the logistics of ensuring the event was both accessible and effective in serving the intended population.

Josie responded to each question and confirmed that the event would be designed with family accessibility in mind, including targeted outreach, bilingual materials, and interactive activities.

A motion to approve the event as an official Commission for Women-sponsored initiative was made by **Chelsea Granell** and seconded by **Lourdes Abadin**. The motion was unanimously approved.



Discussion and Vote: Women Are Veterans Too Summit

Second Vice Chair **Millie Del Valle** presented an update on the upcoming **Women Are Veterans Too Summit**, scheduled for Thursday, June 12, 2025, at Homestead City Hall. She explained that the director's office had previously shared a sponsorship deck, but an updated version had since been issued.

The revised sponsorship levels were as follows:

- Champion Sponsor: \$5,000
- Resilient Sponsor: \$3,000
- Utility Sponsor: \$1,000
- Ally Sponsor: \$500
- Friend of Women Veterans: \$100

Millie made a motion for the Commission to contribute at the **\$500 Ally Sponsor level**. While the board expressed strong support for the summit's purpose, the motion prompted a discussion about whether the board should establish clearer protocols for approving sponsorship requests in the future.

During the discussion:

- **Yama Paillère** proposed that the Goals Committee consider evolving into a **Strategic Alignment Committee** that could develop a **rubric or metric system** for assessing sponsorship eligibility in a consistent and equitable way.
- **Vice Chair Lourdes Abadin** suggested that the board also consider creating a **formal budget** so that annual funds could be intentionally allocated to support different initiatives.
- Dr. Martin agreed that these were important governance considerations and proposed that a full conversation on funding strategy be tabled for further discussion at the committee level.

A **call vote** was conducted:

Roll Call Vote Results on Sponsorship Motion (\$500 for Ally Level):

- **Votes in Favor:** 7
 - **Votes Opposed:** 8
- Outcome:** The motion did not pass.

Despite declining the financial sponsorship, the board reached a consensus to support the event in the following ways:

- Share promotional materials on **Commission social media accounts**
- Disseminate the flyer and sponsorship deck via **email networks**
- Encourage board member **attendance and visibility** at the event as a show of solidarity



Announcements

Dr. Martin reminded board members that the **next Commission for Women meeting** will take place on **Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 6:30 PM** in **Bal Harbour**, in partnership with **Commissioner Steinberg**. Additional details and materials will be circulated in advance.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairwoman Michelle Abreu adjourned the meeting at 8pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Rose Martin

Director, Miami-Dade County Commission for Women