

Civics Academy

Empowering
Communities Through
Civic Engagement



[Pre-Session Survey](#)

Summer 2026 – Session 1



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA



MARLEINE BASTIEN
Miami-Dade County Commissioner For District 2

Community Agreements

Examples:

- We will not judge one another
- We will listen with care
- Share the space (our goal is for every voice to be heard, and no single voice to dominate..)
- We will ask questions with curiosity
- “You can share my story with others but not my name”
- We will be on time
- We will respect each other

Civics Academy Goals:

- Become an active and engaged citizen
- Learn how to participate in your local government and advocate for your community



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nap0-_OJ5oc

Session 1

Foundations of Civic Participation

OVERVIEW

- Begin building connections with others in your community
- Learn what is meant by civic participation and how it can be different from volunteering or political engagement
- Describe key structures of government (federal, state, local) and how they connect to civic life
- Identify ways we can influence decision-making beyond elections
- Reflect on our civic identities



Session 1

Foundations of Civic Participation

OPENING ACTIVITY

Icebreaker Discussion: “Why Civic Participation Matters”

- My name is...
- The reason I'm here is...
- What I hope to get out of participating is...
- A time I was engaged in my community was...
- It matters to be engaged in my community because...



What is "civic participation"?



Civic participation:

Civic participation is the active involvement of individuals in improving their communities and influencing public life through both political and non-political actions.



Levels of Government & Civic Participation

- What are the three levels of government?
- What unique role does each play?
- Which level of government has the most day-to-day impact on our lives?



Three Levels of Government in the United States

- **Local (Miami-Dade County, Constitutional Offices, municipalities)**

- County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, School Board
- Examples of responsibilities: *Public safety, transportation, zoning, libraries, city roads.*



- **State (Florida Government)**

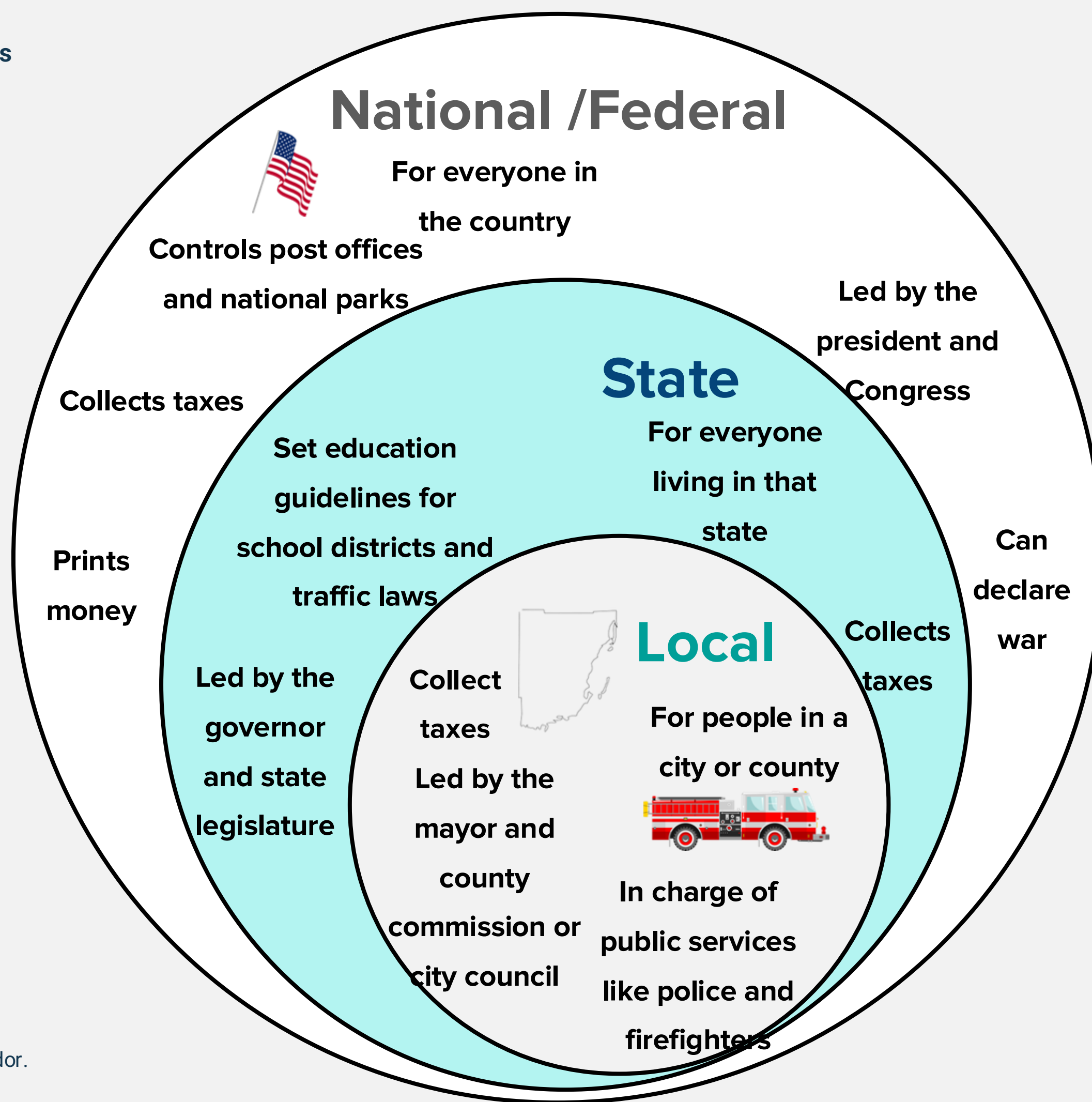
- Governor, legislature, state agencies.
- Examples of responsibilities: *higher education, elections, state highways.*



- **Federal Government (United States)**

- President, Congress, Supreme Court, federal agencies.
- Examples of responsibilities: *National security, immigration, economy, interstate highway, Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid.*





Understanding Local Government: Miami-Dade County

- The most populous county in Florida (~2.8 million)
- 7th largest county in the U.S. (by population)
- Strong Mayor Form of Government - Mayor serves as an elected Chief Executive along with an elected Board of County Commissioners representing 13 districts

Organized by:

- 34 municipalities (cities, towns, villages)
- Large "unincorporated" areas served by County government





Meet Your Commissioners



Chairman

ANTHONY RODRIGUEZ



Vice Chairman

KIONNE L. MCGHEE

WHO IS MY COMMISSIONER?

Please enter an address



Oliver G. Gilbert, III

DISTRICT 1



Marleine Bastien

DISTRICT 2



Keon Hardemon

DISTRICT 3



Micky Steinberg

DISTRICT 4



Vicki L. Lopez

DISTRICT 5



Natalie Milian Orbis

DISTRICT 6



Raquel A. Regalado

DISTRICT 7



Danielle Cohen Higgins

DISTRICT 8



Kionne L. McGhee

DISTRICT 9



Anthony Rodriguez

DISTRICT 10



Roberto J. Gonzalez

DISTRICT 11



Juan Carlos "JC" Bermudez

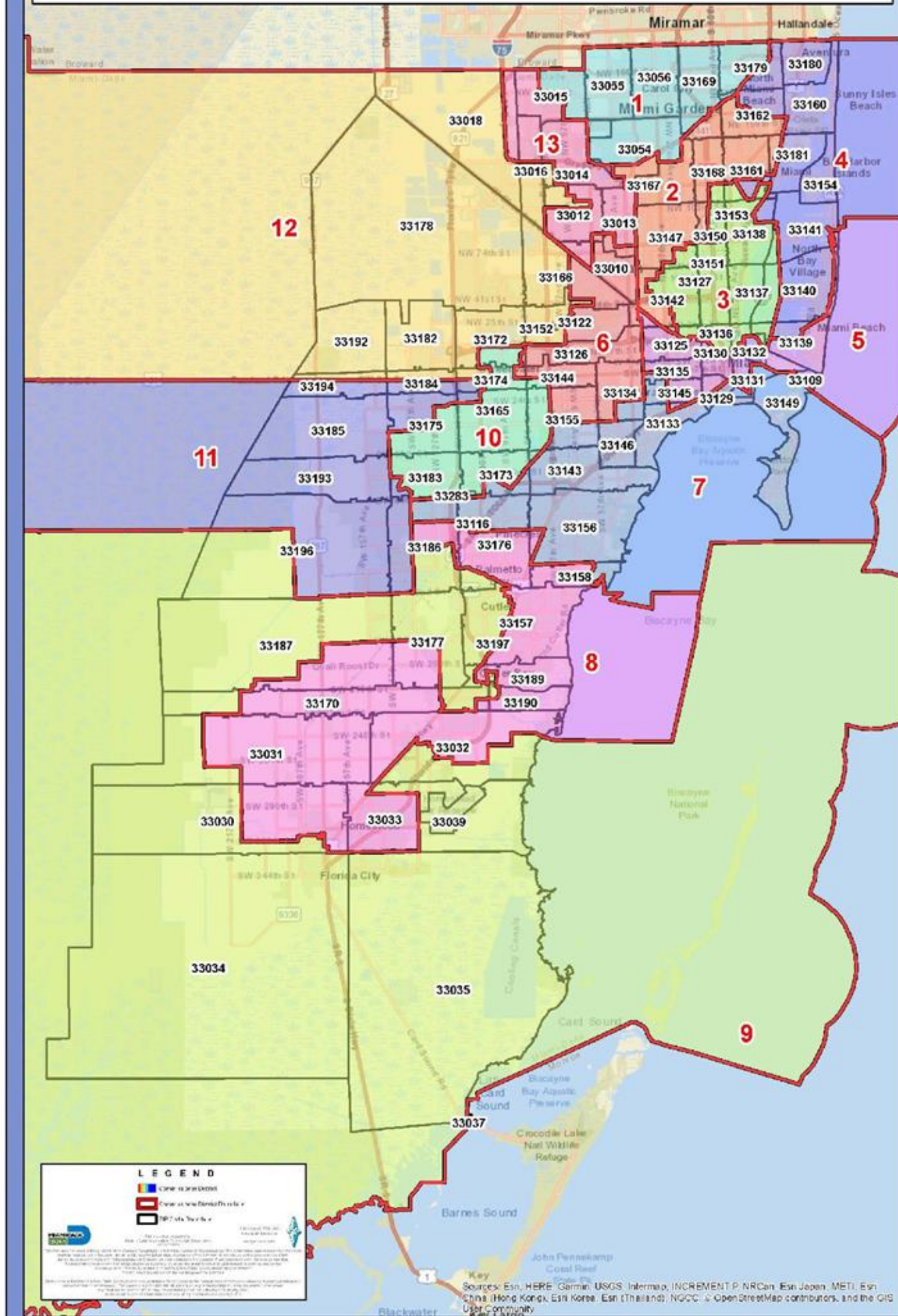
DISTRICT 12



René Garcia

DISTRICT 13

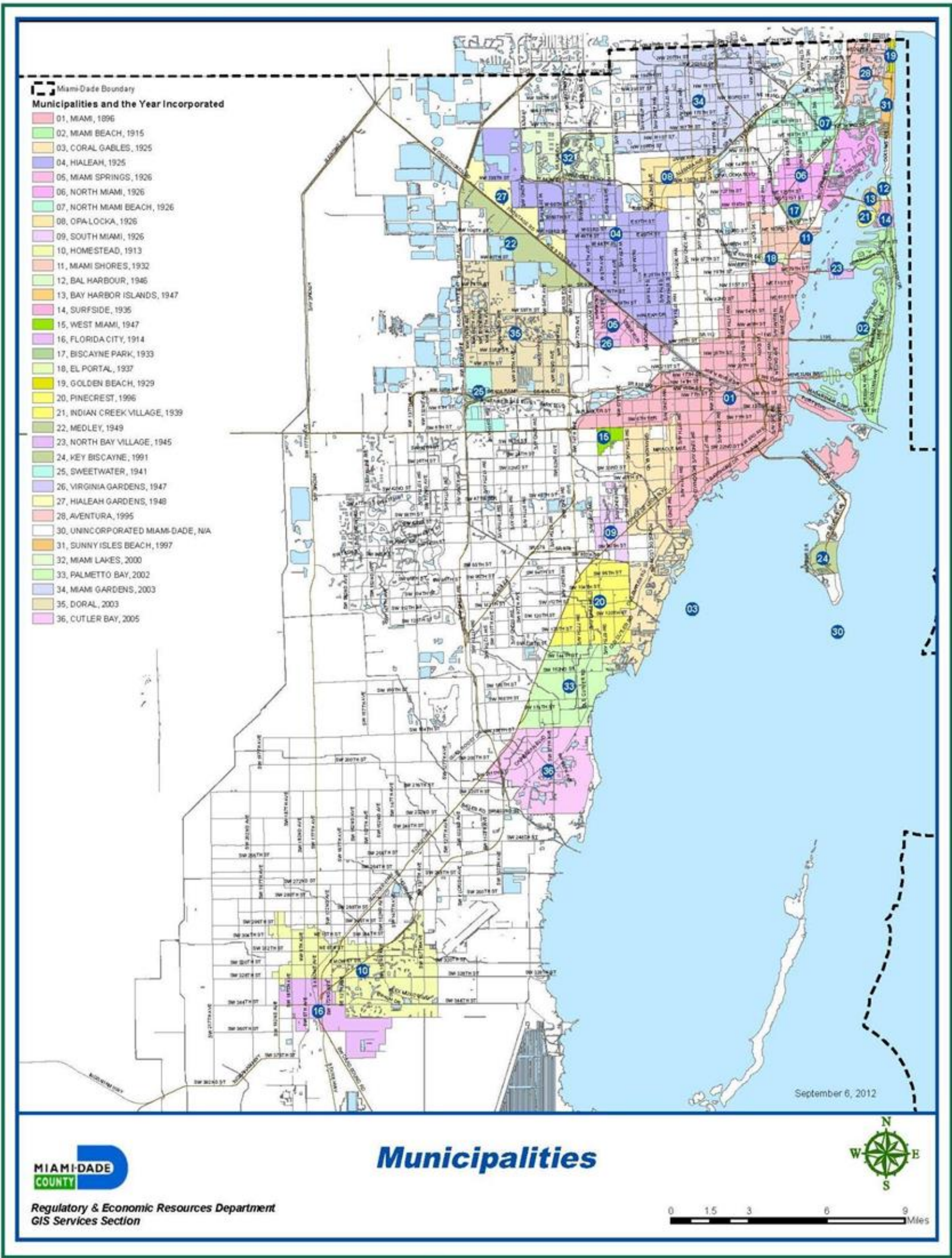
MIAMI-DADE COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS & ZIP CODES



Miami-Dade County's 34 Municipalities & Unincorporated Areas



Learn. Engage. Become an Ambassador.



Channels of Civic Participation

**What are ways you can
be involved in your
community?**

Civic Participation Example

[MADD - Mothers Against Drunk Drivers](#)



Rooted Like a Tree

Miami Workers Center in 2024



Rooted like a Tree: Grassroots Organizing in Florida 2024

Who Represents Me?

Get to Know Your Elected Officials (worksheet)

Get to Know Your Elected Officials!

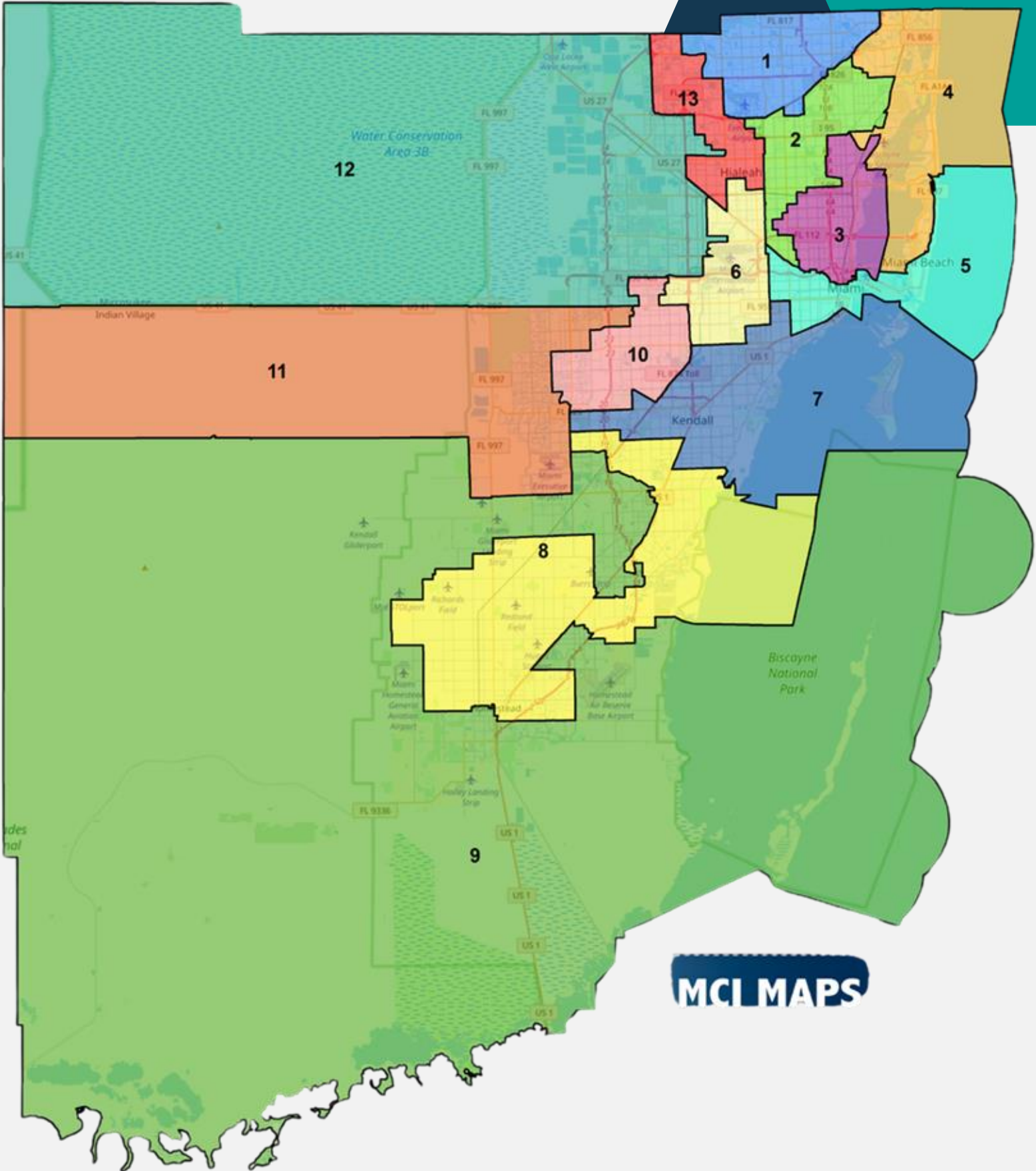
Fill out this worksheet to identify your current elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels. Use the hyperlinks/QR codes on the left and/or search the internet to complete the form.

Name of Federal Office	QR Code (or Google search)	What district do you live in?	Who is currently in this position?	When will their term end?
President		USA		
Vice President		USA		
U.S. Senators		Florida	1. 2.	
U.S. Representative (enter your zip code)		Florida		

Name of Florida State Office	QR Code (or Google search)	What district do you live in?	Who is currently in this position?	When will their term end?
Governor		Florida		
Lt. Governor		Florida		
State Senator				
State Representative				

Name of Local Office	QR Code (or Google search)	Who is currently in this position (and your district if applicable)?	When will their term end?
Miami-Dade County Mayor			
Miami-Dade County Commissioner (enter your address)			

(Over)



America250

MIAMI★DADE

250

WE ARE
America★

1776-2026

America250 – Local History

- Julia Tuttle is the founder of the City of Miami and is famously known as the "Mother of Miami." She is the only woman to found a major American city, having used her own land and influence to convince Henry Flagler to extend his railroad to the area in the late 19th century
- Native American settlements in south Florida date back to **12,000** years ago, along the Miami River, and what would eventually be Broward County and Palm Beach County.
- In **1513**, Juan-Ponce de Leon led the first documented European expedition to Florida.
- Dade County was created on **February 4, 1836**, under the Territorial Act of the United States. The county's previous title was named after Major Francis L. Dade, a soldier killed in **1835** in the Second Seminole War, at what has since been named the Dade Battlefield.
- There were multiple attempts, from **1958-1990**, to change the county's name from 'Dade County' to numerous other options, such as:
 - ✓ County of Miami
 - ✓ Miami County
 - ✓ Metropolitan Miami-Dade County



Today's highlights....

- **Built connections** and began forming a **shared sense of community and purpose**
- Explored **civic participation** as everyday action—not just voting
- Learned how **federal, state, and local governments** shape our daily lives
- Discovered how **ordinary people influence change** beyond elections
- Saw **real examples of grassroots action** leading to policy change
- Identified **who represents you** and how to engage with them
- Reflected on your own **civic identity** and what motivates you to act

Session 1

Foundations of Civic Participation

CLOSING REFLECTION

- What's one key takeaway from today's session?

Call to Action:

- What's one step you can in the next two weeks to be more civically engaged?



Mayor Daniella Levine Cava



CONNECT WITH YOUR MAYOR



Office of the Mayor

Learn. **Engage.** Become an Ambassador.



County Commissioner Marleine Bastien



District 2 - Commissioner Marleine Bastien



Board of County Commissioners



<https://linktr.ee/MiamiDadeBCC>



Session 1

Foundations of Civic Participation

CONTACTS



- **Miami-Dade County**
 - <https://www.miamidade.gov/>



- **Miami-Dade Public Library System**
 - <https://www.mdpls.org/>



- **Community & Education Well-Being Research Center at the University of Miami**
 - <https://sites.education.miami.edu/cewrc/>



- **Maurice A. Ferre Institute for Civic Leadership at Florida International University**
 - <https://www.ferre.fiu.edu>



- **The CLEO Institute**
 - <https://cleoinstitute.org/>



- **Hispanic Unity of Florida**
 - <https://www.hispanicunity.org/>



- **Mexican American Council**
 - <https://www.mexamcouncil.org/>



- **Miami Workers Center**
 - <https://miamiworkerscenter.org/>



- **Prosperity Social & Comm. Dev. Grp Inc**
 - <https://www.santia.org/>



Become an active resident, learn how to participate in your local government and advocate for your community.

Choose either In-Person or Zoom attendance

Class Schedule & Locations:

Arcola Lakes Branch Library
July 7, July 14, July 21, July 28
Tuesdays 6 pm – 8 pm
8240 NW 7 Ave.
Miami, FL 33150

Westchester Regional Library
June 23, July 7, July 14, July 21
Tuesdays 6 pm – 8 pm
9445 Coral Way
Miami, FL 33165

North Dade Regional Library
June 25, July 2, July 9, July 23
Thursdays 6 pm – 8 pm
2455 NW 183 St.
Miami Gardens, FL 33056

Naranja Branch Library
July 8, July 15, July 22, July 29
Wednesdays 6 pm – 8 pm
14850 SW 280 St.
Miami, FL 33032

Zoom ONLY platform
June 23, June 30, July 7, July 14
6 pm – 8 pm

Learn. Engage. Become an Ambassador.

Sign up at miamidade.gov/civicsacademy



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[End of Session Survey](#)

Thank you!