

# Miami-Dade County, Florida Homeless Trust

## Contact Information:

The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust  
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## The Setting:

County Population: 2,500,625 in 2009.

Homeless Population: According Miami-Dade County estimates based on annual homeless count, there are about 3,777 homeless individuals with 789 on the streets.

## Highlights:

The Trust coordinates and funds the homeless continuum of care which includes shelter, transitional housing and permanent housing, all with supportive services. With housing and work specialists employed at the Homeless Assistance Centers, there is a 62.4% success rate in placing homeless in housing and 33% of those go on to live in unsubsidized market rate housing.

## Overview of the Fund:

After years of advocacy from a coalition of organizations, the Board of County Commissioners created the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust in 1993. The Trust has three primary functions:

1. To administer proceeds of the one-percent food and beverage tax;
2. To implement the local continuum of care plan, a three-phased plan, called the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan; and
3. To serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of County Commissioners on issues involving homelessness.

The Trust implements the local continuum of care plan, serves as an advisory capacity on issues involving homelessness, and supports and monitors the provision of housing and services for homeless persons throughout the County. The program has partnered with the

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Community Partnership for Homeless, involved in the construction and operation of Homeless Assistance Centers.

## Revenue Sources:

A one percent (1%) food and beverage sales tax (Homeless and Domestic Violence Tax) provides approximately \$12-14 million per year for the Homeless Trust Fund. It is collected on all food and beverage sales by establishments that are licensed by the State of Florida to sell alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises, except for hotels and motels. Only businesses that make in excess of \$400,000 in gross receipts annually are obligated to collect this tax. The Homeless and Domestic Violence Tax is collected throughout Miami-Dade County with the exception of facilities in the cities of Miami Beach, Surfside and Bal Harbour. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the tax receipts goes to the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, and fifteen percent (15%) goes to Miami-Dade County for domestic violence centers.

The Trust's annual budget is around \$40 million, comprised of local food and beverage proceeds, as well as federal (U.S. HUD) and state funding. Approximately \$20 million per year comes through a competitive process via HUD, \$12 million from the Food and Beverage tax, and the remainder through State funding and private sector contributions. The Trust is a proprietary department and receives no general fund dollars from the County. When including private investments for individual projects, every \$1 from the Homeless Trust Fund leverages about \$5 additional dollars.



## ***Verde Gardens***

Verde Gardens is an innovative project to help formerly homeless families achieve self-sufficiency and independence through affordable housing and wrap-around programs including vocational, micro-enterprise, relationship skills, and rehabilitative services.

Thanks to Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust obtained permission to utilize 52 acres of undeveloped property to serve as a unique project serving homeless families. More than 600 individuals will move in in June 2011. The project will contain 145 units of permanent supported housing (housing with services) for homeless/formerly homeless families. It will feature a landscape/produce nursery and a fresh market retail complex, which will serve as a micro-enterprise for the residents.

Residents of the Verde Gardens complex will enjoy amenities that provide a sense of community, including open public plaza areas, a basketball court, a community center and children's play area, and a soccer field to the north of the central plaza area. Residents will pay 30% of income toward rent with leases renewed on an annual basis.

This unique green development will also feature an organic farm and farmer's market and the entire development is seeking Gold LEED certification. The organic farm will produce fruits, vegetables and landscaping plants that will be sold in the farmer's market or wholesale to area restaurants and organic buying clubs. In addition to job training and micro-enterprise opportunities, the farm also will set aside plots for community gardening for the residents. The farmer's market will provide job-training and micro-enterprise opportunities for residents to sell organic produce and plants as well as handcrafted items to the public. The market also will operate a small bakery.

The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust and Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs through its Art in Public Places Program requested professional artists to create a comprehensive design for the central public plaza of the Verde Gardens Affordable Housing Development.

The Homeless Trust has partnered with Carrfour Supportive Housing who will be responsible for all aspects of the development and operation of this site. Verde Gardens is being funded with \$14 million from a general obligation bond dedicated to the Miami Dade Homeless Housing Trust Fund, \$2 million from a HOME (low-interest HUD loan) and private grants (development of playground designed by residents through Kaboom--the playground company).

## ***Administration:***

The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust has sixteen employees. All staff are employees of Dade County. Trust staff provide support to the Trust Board, present policy issues and concerns, implement mandates, and conduct any policy research and document preparation required. Staff also oversee the daily administration of more than 100 contracts with thirty local providers for the provision of housing and services for the homeless.

A 27-member Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust Board is responsible for the implementation of policy initiatives, and the monitoring of contract compliance by agencies contracted with the County, through the Trust, for the provision of housing and services for homeless persons. The Trust has served as lead applicant on behalf of the County for federal and state funding opportunities, and developing and implementing the annual process to identify gaps and needs of the homeless continuum.

Board members include:

- seven appointments from the business and civic community,
- four appointments from the provider community,
- two formerly homeless persons,
- a representative from the professional/academic community,
- three members of the Miami-Dade League of Cities,
- three representatives from the Greater Miami Religious Leaders Coalition,
- a homeless advocate/formerly homeless person,
- a representative from the Homeless Interfaith Coalition,
- the Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools,
- the President of the Miami Coalition for the Homeless,
- the Miami City Manager,
- the district administrator for the Department of Children and Families, and
- the Miami-Dade County Commissioners who chairs the committee overseeing homeless issues.

The Trust Board meets monthly and has established numerous working committees.

## ***Use of Funds:***

As the coordinator of the local Continuum of Care, a key partner on the Plan to End Homelessness, and distributor of all homeless funds (state and federal, in addition to funds committed to the local homeless trust fund), the trust is able to strategically fund projects as part of an overarching goal to house the homeless.

The Trust has developed a coordinated outreach, assessment and placement process for homeless persons accessing homeless housing and services in Miami-Dade County. The Trust developed and expanded a coordinated system of care that includes three phases of housing (emergency, transitional and permanent) along with an array of supportive services, consistent with the Miami-Dade Community Homeless Plan.

***Phase I: Emergency Housing.*** The Homeless Plan calls for the development of 1,000-1,500 new emergency housing beds at Homeless Assistance Centers (HACs) to provide anywhere from seven to up to sixty days of stabilization and comprehensive needs assessment. Funding for the capital and operational costs of this component come from proceeds of the food and beverage tax and private sector fundraising. One provider was selected to site, build and operate the Housing Assistance Centers.

***Phase II: Transitional Housing.*** The Plan calls for 750 new transitional housing beds to provide from six to nine months of housing with intensive case management assistance to prepare individuals for independent living. Programs use both leased and purchased facilities. The development of primary care housing has included annual operating subsidies to allow agencies to expand their capacity and/or lease additional housing to expand their services. All Trust-funded transitional housing requires the full complement of case management services.

***Phase III: Permanent Housing.*** Permanent housing units may be SRO's, project-based, scattered site, market rate, and/or voucher-funded. Preference is given to projects that re-integrate persons into the community and projects that provide long-term, follow-along services. The Plan identifies sources of funding for this expansion including state and federal funding (tax credits, McKinney) or locally-controlled federal funds (CDBG, HOME).

A Blue Ribbon Panel created by the Trust set forth a plan for achieving a goal of 2,500 new advanced care units. The Trust Fund has exceeded this goal. The Homeless Trust Business Plan called for the placement of 4,600 homeless men, women, and children into permanent housing each year. To complement the development of permanent supportive housing for homeless persons, the Trust works to receive an annual provider set-aside of HOME and other state funds to provide capital.

### ***Partnerships:***

The Community Partnership for Homeless (CPH) is the local private sector partner to the County, through the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust. CPH is a non-profit organization that was charged with siting, construction and operating up to three Homeless Assistance Centers. Homeless Assistance Centers (HACs) are campus-style facilities that are “one stop centers” in that they take a holistic approach to addressing the needs of the residents. They serve as the intake centers for the continuum of care.

To date, two HACs have been built, based on the community’s determination of its emergency housing needs. Miami-Dade County Public Schools operates adult and vocational classrooms, and job-training classes for residents of the homeless centers. The Health Foundation of South Florida and the Public Health Trust provide primary health care clinics at the two HACs. In addition, a wide array of social services is provided. Each resident of the Centers has a “case plan” designed to lead him or her to being a productive member of the community. Assistance is provided in accessing the necessary services to achieve this short term plan.

CPH’s mission includes raising the private funding necessary to assist in the implementation of the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan. CPH is further committed to assisting the Trust in this implementation through encouraging private sector involvement.

**The Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust was established in 1993 by the Board of County Commissioners and can be found at Article LIX, Section 2-751--2-760.**



*The 402-bed Chapman Center has facilities for single and family residents and includes a worship center, a vocational training center, child care facilities, and a full medical facility.*



Community Partnership for Homeless operates two Homeless Assistance Centers: the Chapman Center in downtown Miami (above) and the South Miami-Dade Center in Homestead (below).



*The 300-bed South Miami-Dade Center has facilities for single and family residents and includes a multi-purpose room, a vocational training center, child care facilities, and a full medical facility.*



## ***Accomplishments:***

The Homeless Trust credits its success to a one-of-a-kind dedicated source of funding, as well as a unique public-private partnership. It cites the following among its accomplishments:

- Developed a coordinated outreach, assessment and placement process for homeless persons accessing homeless housing and services in Miami-Dade County.
- Developed and expanded a coordinated system of care that includes all three phases of housing along with an array of supportive services, consistent with the Miami-Dade County Community Homeless Plan.
- Reduced the street homeless population of Miami-Dade County from 8,000 to under 800 people.
- Created more than 5,000 emergency, transitional and permanent supportive housing beds.
- Additional transitional and permanent housing units are in the pipeline.
- Secured more than \$62 million in private-sector funds (includes \$36 million in case contributions, \$16 million in endowment and \$10 million in-kind) through a public/private partnership. A unique contractual relationship with the Community Partnership for the Homeless, Inc. also included a fundraising requirement of \$8.5 million in private-sector funds.
- Collected more than \$97 million in food and beverage tax proceeds.



*Located in the heart of Little Havana, Villa Aurora is an innovative mixed-used housing development. The ground floor of Villa Aurora is the new home for Miami Dade County's only Hispanic library. Above the library, Villa Aurora contains 76 units of housing (39 units of supportive housing for formerly homeless families impacted by disabilities and 37 units of affordable housing for families earning less than 60% of the area median income). Villa Aurora's top floor is the new home of Carrfour's main offices.*

*Opened for occupancy in December of 1998, this is Carrfour's flagship project demonstrating the benefits of supportive housing for a mixed population of formerly homeless adults – men, women, the young and the elderly. The building has 76 individual apartments, each with its own bath and kitchen. There are 36 units set aside for the disabled and 15 units designated for elderly residents. Rents are subsidized to make them affordable by single individuals of low or moderate income. Common areas include: a living/learning center; a wellness/fitness room; a general purpose meeting room; and an outdoor courtyard. Residents have organized a resident council, publish a monthly newsletter, and along with the Rivermont House staff plan a calendar of events.*



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