

The Facts About Miami-Dade County: Serving Seniors 24/7

Miami-Dade County has been working hard to identify, protect and defend the programs that serve those who have spent a lifetime contributing to our community – our senior citizens. Together with public and private partners, we are providing a safety net for some of the most vulnerable members of our community and making a difference in their lives.

We believe we have a moral obligation to care for those who cared for us, but recently, the programs and services the county provides (and the people who provide them) have come under attack. It's important to know the facts.

This year, Miami-Dade County will:

- Serve more than 241,000 free meals to 1,005 seniors through 24 senior centers throughout county.
- Provide 100,375 home delivered meals to an estimated 275 seniors.
- Provide 424,324 free evening and weekend meals to 1,163 seniors who are considered to be at high risk for malnutrition.
- Provide more than 177,000 seniors over the age of 65 (or Social Security beneficiaries) free Metrobus and Metrorail service through the county's Golden Passport Program.
- Provide more than 25,000 people, many of whom are seniors, free Special Transportation Services (STS), which provide door-to-door transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use traditional public transit services. STS provides an average of 27,000 trips per week.
- Mail checks for \$100 to more than 46,000 low-income seniors during the economic downturn. All homesteaded homeowners who receive the \$25,000 seniors' tax exemption qualify.
- Distribute 20,000 Golden Tickets Arts Guides to senior citizens providing hundreds of free tickets to local cultural events.
- Deliver thousands of books to residents who are chronically ill, disabled and frail and unable to visit Miami-Dade County Public Libraries in person. The county's book-by-mail service delivered more than 31,836 books last year.
- Provide 584 seniors with case management services and individual care plans to coordinate services to enhance their quality of life.
- Rehabilitate more than a dozen aging and damaged homes owned by senior citizens. More than 100 homes have been repaired or reconstructed through the county's Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program (SHARP) since 2006. Improvements include new roofs, hurricane impact windows and modifications to make bathroom and kitchens wheelchair accessible.
- Investigate cases of abuse and/or exploitation of the elderly or disabled by a caregiver. The Miami-Dade Police Department's Elderly/Disabled Abuse and Exploitation Unit investigated 72 cases last year, resulting in 16 arrests.
- Conduct training for all sworn Miami-Dade Police Officers on how to recognize elderly abuse.
- Partner with LoJack/Safety Net to reduce the recovery time of missing persons with dementia and other cognitive conditions. A wristband worn by participants emits a radio signal which tracks the missing person, facilitating his/her recovery.
- Provide 437 seniors with personal care and homemaking services to allow them to remain in their homes and avoid premature or unnecessary institutional care.
- Provide 300 seniors with adult day care services at six adult day care sites offering social and recreational opportunities to provide a respite for the caregivers and reduce the need for institutional care.
- Coordinate volunteer opportunities for 1,052 seniors enabling them to provide labor support to our community.
- Coordinate the activities of 202 seniors who volunteered to

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The entire budget, including quick facts and details about every department, can be found online at www.miamidade.gov/budget.

work with at-risk youth as foster grandparents empowering these youth to confront challenges in their daily lives.

- Provide hundreds of grants totaling \$14 million to non-profit organizations, many of which offer activities specifically designed for senior citizens, including musical performances and arts and crafts programs at senior centers, intergenerational Holocaust awareness programs within the Miami-Dade County Public School System, and documenting the impact of a therapeutic music program for Alzheimer's patients.
- Coordinate the activities of 101 seniors who volunteered to work with at-risk isolated seniors and provide them with needed companionship.
- Provide 150 seniors with various social and recreational activities at two specialized senior centers, including the Haitian-American Senior Center in Miami-Dade County, providing respite for the caregiver and to maintain and/or increase social skills on the part of the participating senior.
- Require more than 1,380 licensed nursing homes and assisted living facilities to develop and maintain emergency plans.
- Provide enhanced sleeping accommodations for wheelchair-bound seniors at all designated hurricane evacuation centers.
- Distribute thousands of informational guides instructing senior citizens and people with special needs on how to shelter in place during hurricanes and other emergencies.
- Help thousands of residents, many of whom are seniors, mediate disputes with businesses. Last year, the county helped consumers recover close to \$1 million.
- Host dozens of educational events and produce materials to help seniors detect and avoid identity theft and fraud.
- Organize book discussion clubs, computer classes, yoga, knitting, ESOL and Yiddish club meetings specifically for older adults, and market those programs to more than 27,000 library e-mail subscribers over 55.
- Promote and preserve the health of older adults through the Mayor's Initiative on Aging: To Life! Efforts include planning for the unique challenges facing our community as thousands of Baby Boomers prepare to retire. The Mayor's Initiative on Aging has already provided thousands of seniors free health screenings, educational material and fitness activities to encourage healthy aging; and worked with hundreds of community service providers to improve and enrich senior services.
- Stand ready to provide dozens of senior citizens assistance in shuttering their homes in the event a hurricane approaches.
- Offer 500 seniors free park programs, including crafts, socials, games, exercise sessions and field trips at seven park locations.
- Introduce a twice-weekly Low Impact Water Exercise program at select parks to promote joint flexibility, muscle strength and coordination.
- Distribute free cell phones to hundreds of seniors enabling them to dial 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency. More than 220 phones have been distributed this year.
- Facilitate additional services for hundreds of senior citizens who cannot care for themselves or need additional assistance. Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's Elderlinks program has assisted more than 350 seniors so far this year.

With these facts in mind, let's begin a communitywide conversation about local government, the programs and services it provides and the value of those services for residents who call Miami-Dade County home.