

MDEAT

FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 ANNUAL MAGAZINE



**URGENCY
OF
NOW**

**23 YEARS
OF YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT**

**STATE OF BLACK
HOMEOWNERSHIP**

**MDEAT
10 YEAR
REFLECTION**

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT:
LEVELING
THE PLAYING
FIELD**

“Ours is not the struggle of one day, one week, or one year. Ours is not the struggle of one judicial appointment or presidential term. Ours is the struggle of a lifetime, or maybe even many lifetimes, and each one of us in every generation must do our part.

John Lewis,
United States House of
Representatives for Georgia’s 5th
congressional district
(February 21, 1940 –
July 17, 2020)

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JOHN DIXON,
Executive Director,
Miami-Dade
Economic
Advocacy Trust

There have been many times in our history that have presented challenges that we have always found a way around. There was a time when Black people could not vote, yet 162 Black men signed the city's charter to be incorporated in 1896. We were denied the opportunity to live wherever we wanted, yet D.A. Dorsey (a Black man) owned what is now Fisher Island, and Overtown was lined with Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. Even our grandparents and parents were able to buy homes despite being paid measly wages. The point is that the "Urgency of Now" is as paramount today as it has ever been, but times have always been urgent for Black people.

Change in our society reflects what could be considered the protest of voices unheard for many years, and what we're seeing today are young people protesting, "Listen to us"! This is an urgent moment for this generation, and there is a legacy to be created out of this urgency. What will be the legacy that we leave for the next generation as it relates to core quality of life concerns – housing, criminal justice, health, environment, and employment inequities?

It is urgent that MDEAT continues to work with public and private sector partners to collaborate on the "now". We are in the greatest period of technological advancement in modern history, and that means that there is no shortage of resources, funding, or ideas to create a sustainable plan that will improve the socioeconomic conditions of every member of this community, but it is a big lofty goal that MDEAT cannot do alone. Over the years, we have collaborated with a host of community based organizations, community leaders, the education sector, clergy, criminal justice, and elected officials to help the community, and we must continue to forge these relationships in an effort to improve conditions.

My clarion call to every member of this community – regardless of race, interest, affluence, affiliation, or position – is to come together using MDEAT as a resource and the connective tissue to the county and collaborate on creating an action plan for the Black community.

When the current momentum has died down, and after the public relations statements of solidarity have waned, will you still stand for the cause for equity and equality?

“Ours is not the struggle of one day, one week, or one year. Ours is not the struggle of one judicial appointment or presidential term. Ours is the struggle of a lifetime, or maybe even many lifetimes, and each one of us in every generation must do our part.”

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



KHALID SALAHUDDIN,
Chairperson,
Miami-Dade
Economic
Advocacy Trust

We've come to the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year with a lot of uncertainty of what a post-pandemic world looks like from here on out and what the true impact will be to the community and small businesses, particularly for Black America. What we do know is that there were already far too many persistent and chronic challenges prior to the pandemic that is only being magnified in a post-pandemic world.

Before COVID-19, Black people disproportionately suffered from chronic health conditions and a lack of access to quality healthcare. And the virus only brought this to the forefront. Black businesses were significantly underdeveloped, undercapitalized, and marginalized, and the inability to receive relief from the Federal government's CARES Act small business funding once again served as a reminder of our disparities. While businesses at large struggle to stay afloat and reopen, more Black businesses will never reopen as we come out of the pandemic. And what we are seeing in the protests and outrage around the country is Black people fed up with being fed up about Black lives not mattering.

The reality is that with the significant damage that was already done to the Black community over the past 401 years since the start of slavery, any hiccup or challenge in America pushes Black people further away from the moving target that often seems so hard to hit. As the saying goes, "when America sneezes, the Black community gets pneumonia."

That's why our role at Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) is first and foremost to report on these disparate conditions, which we do in our Annual Report Card and Scorecard on the State of the Black Community in Miami-Dade County. With this annual assessment, our role as an advocacy organization is to influence our governing bodies, community organizations, and business leaders to collaborate on policy recommendations that would help close the gap and get us ahead. While admittedly there has not been the type of progress that we would like to see in this community, MDEAT does recognize the urgency of now and that this being our greatest moment to disrupt, agitate, and push through to get back everything that is rightfully due to our people.

So we share this annual magazine as a look back over the past year and since 10 years of MDEAT's existence. We do so with a bit of optimism and a glimmer of hope that we have come too far not to seize the moment now. Whatever we are going to do and ask for as a people, now is the time to do so.

Since the days of MDEAT's predecessor agency, Metro Miami Action Plan (MMAP), and now through 10 years of MDEAT, there has not been any other Black organization in the county that is single handedly responsible for creating more Black homeowners, helping more Black businesses and entrepreneurs through access to resources like grants and technical assistance, and helping to reduce recidivism among our Black youth while supporting them for leadership and personal development. As a County-funded Trust, that has been our charge and reason for being all along. We know that there is much more that we could and should be doing, and while these are big shoes to fill and work that we cannot do alone, we seize this moment in appealing to members and businesses of the Black community and the community at large that now is our moment. These are urgent times that call for an urgency in action, and closed mouths do not get fed. We have earned the right and the privilege to ask for whatever it is that we want as a community and a collective body. And so we press on!

“Whatever we are going to do and ask for as a people, now is the time to do so. These are urgent times that call for an urgency in action, and closed mouths do not get fed.”

2019-2020

BOARD MEMBERS



**KHALID
SALAHUDDIN**
Chairperson,
MDEAT Executive Board



**HANNIBAL
BURTON**
First Vice-Chairperson; Chairperson,
Economic Development
Action Committee (EDAC)



**JAMES
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HINDSMAN**



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WRIGHT**



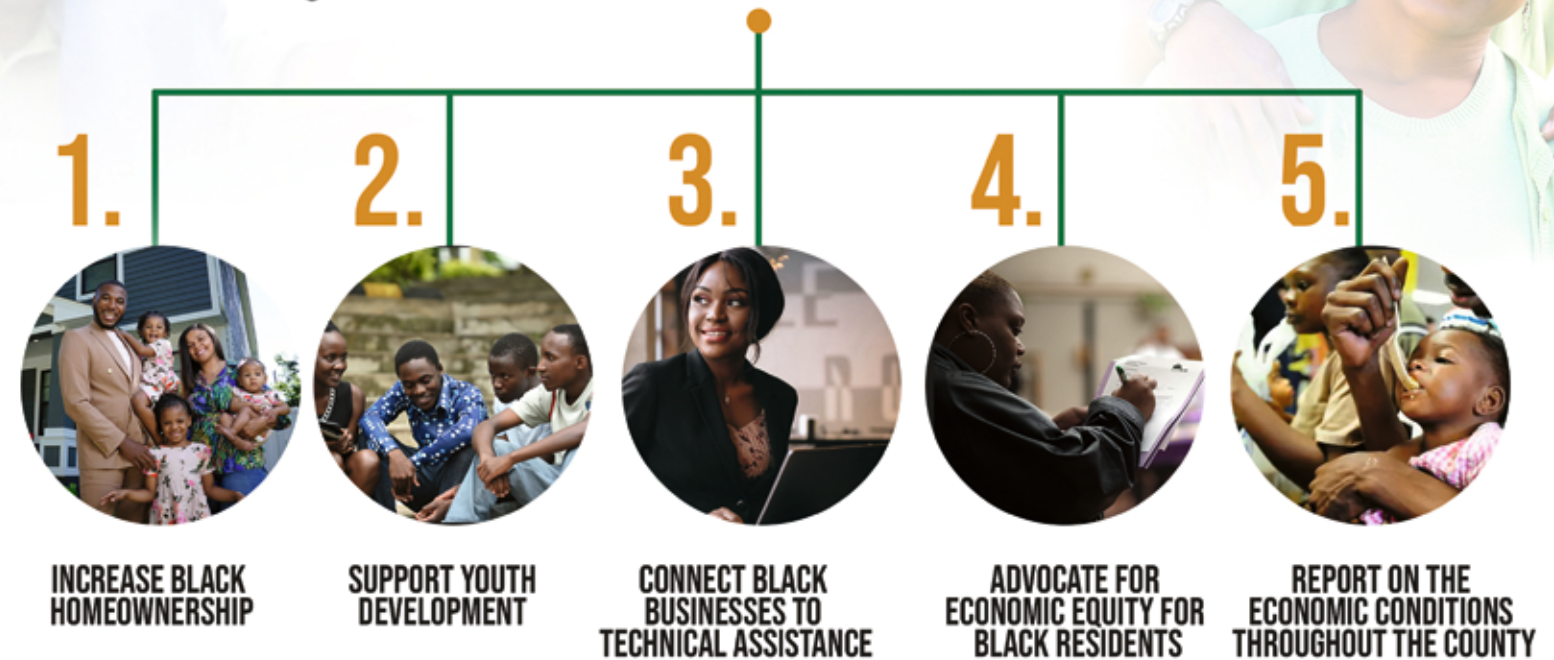
**LONNIE
LAWRENCE**



**JULIO
PITI**

5-PART ACTION PLAN

The only go-to source of its kind for Miami-Dade County's Black community.



All three programming areas
small business, families, and youth –
are critical parts to how communities thrive and prosper.

For more information, email: MDEATInfo@miamidade.gov

3 GEARS OF PROGRESS

Since inception, MDEAT's focus has been on addressing socioeconomic disparities within the Black community. We do so by focusing on the individual (i.e. youth and individual family member support), building neighborhoods through the expansion of homeownership, and supporting the foundation of strong Black businesses and economic development via job creation, entrepreneurship, business retention, and expansion. These three gears - family, neighborhood, and business - work together to connect the Black community to resources, funding, and programming that together create whole communities.

MDEAT has benefited hundreds of small businesses through grant funding, marketing support, and technical assistance over the years. The agency has also helped to create more than 7,500 new homeowners through the Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP) by providing down payment and closing cost assistance to first-time home buyers. Lastly, more than 7,800 youth have participated in the agency's Teen Court second chance and youth development program, which includes legal career exposure, paid summer jobs, psychological services, entrepreneurship programming, and other services. The ideal scenario to the three gears working together would be to help connect a Black business to resources that would help them grow, and then support the owner's homeownership goals with down payment support while also connecting their teen to MDEAT's internship and career exposure program.

As MDEAT closes out its first decade, our greatest opportunity will be to explore how advocacy and policy recommendations can make home ownership more affordable for Black residents. There is also an opportunity to expose more Black entrepreneurs to new opportunities, which is why we relaunched the Black franchising initiative this year. And as MDEAT continues to invest in our people and in our communities, we recognize the investment that Teen Court makes in our youth, and our goal is to expand the program to create more opportunities for our youth. Ultimately, we can do better by fostering greater collaboration among other like minded organizations. |

POVERTY, DISPARITIES ARE OBVIOUS, BUT POLICY ACTION IS NEEDED



BY NED MURRAY
PH.D., AICP, Jorge
M. Pérez Metropolitan
Center at Florida
International
University

In recent years, the Metropolitan Center and MDEAT have collaborated on the production of an Annual Report Card and Scorecard for Miami-Dade County's predominantly Black Targeted Urban Areas (TUAs). This is prepared in accordance with Miami-Dade, Florida, County Code of Ordinances Article XLVIII, Section 2-505. (e) which states the following:

The Trust, in addition to providing quarterly financial reports, shall submit to the Board an Annual Report Card on the State of the Black Community in Miami-Dade County. The report card shall include information on factors such as, but not limited to, the unemployment rate, the rates of business ownership, graduation rates, and homeownership rates within Miami-Dade County's Black community. The report card shall be presented to the Board and to the community.

These annual metrics address the four major areas identified by MDEAT that provide the underpinnings of a "healthy community": 1) Jobs and Economic Development, 2) Housing, 3) Education, and 4) Criminal Justice. The assessment uses the established baseline community indicators across the four areas of policy and provides the most current statistics and analysis of trends for each individual TUA. The scorecards are able to show advancement or decline among all community indicators, and this annual assessment has allowed for the consistent and continuous tracking of progress over time.

The Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center at Florida International University (FIU) and Miami-Dade County Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) have a long working relationship going back to the previous Metro-Miami Action Plan (MMAP). Our organizations have shared a mutual interest in analyzing and setting right racial disparities that have existed in Miami-Dade County over the course of many decades.

WHAT DOES THE DATA TELL US?

Each annual report has found clear evidence of persistent concentrations of poverty in the county. The needs are particularly acute with respect to persistent high poverty, unemployment, low median household and per capita incomes, lack of affordable housing, and crime. Other studies have also found that poor individuals and families are not evenly distributed across communities or throughout the county. For example, FIU Metropolitan Center's 2015 Prosperity Initiatives Feasibility Study for Miami-Dade County provided data that confirms the strong persistence of high poverty over time. The report found the majority of high-poverty census tracts in Miami-Dade County are located in neighborhoods where high-poverty has remained for decades.

WHY ARE THESE REPORTS IMPORTANT?

Persistent concentrations of poverty results in poor housing and health conditions, underperforming public schools, higher crime rates, as well as limited access to private services and job opportunities. As further proof, MDEAT's annual reports have documented the important crossover effects of economic disparity, persistent poverty, educational attainment level, affordable housing, and criminal justice issues. Further, the urgency and complexity of concentrated poverty places a burden on community development organizations with limited financial resources and management capacity.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The disparities and persistent poverty is apparent. The annual reporting only magnifies the severity of the challenges and urges policymakers to more intentionally

address each of the challenge areas. There is a growing sense of urgency to improve policy and programmatic outcomes in urban neighborhoods with persistently high concentrations of poverty.

MDEAT's Annual Report Card and Scorecard provides a policy tool and a systematic and performance-based approach to public and private investment in the county's TUAs. This includes a comprehensive set of measures or indicators to evaluate performance (outcomes). The indicators quantify on an annual basis the impacts government programs and private sector investments are having on improving the socio-economic conditions of the TUAs.

The template for systematic changes are already provided in the reports, policy tool, and recommended approaches. MDEAT's four policy focus areas are key to developing a fuller understanding of racial disparity issues that have long existed in Miami-Dade County and have become more magnified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the needs and challenges of the TUAs, and especially those TUAs with the highest poverty and crime rates, far exceed the capacity and levels of service provided by the multitude of child, family, school, medical, public health and substance abuse social services currently operating in the TUAs. The Annual Report and Scorecard reveal the scope and depth of the need and challenges. Clearly, if Miami-Dade County and its municipalities are truly committed to resolving their racial disparity issues they should allocate the necessary resources and create coordinated and integrated community economic development delivery systems for each of the four MDEAT policy areas. |

SMALL BUSINESS CAPITALIZATION GRANT

// We must double down on supporting Black businesses.

Since inception, MDEAT has always been on the side of supporting small businesses whether it is to provide funds for the purchase of supplies or equipment or to help a small business owner make payroll. While other economic development organizations tend to focus on macro businesses – larger job creators – our focus has always been on the growth and support of the small shop, many of whom are micro businesses. That’s because we know that if we can help connect a small operation to resources and opportunities, and perhaps help them navigate County procurement to become certified, then there’s a chance to nurture and grow our homegrown businesses.

One of our pillars for doing so has been our Small Business Capitalization Grant Program, which provides a \$2,500 grant to businesses located within the County’s designated Targeted Urban Areas (TUAs). Since fiscal year 2017-2018 alone, we’ve provided more than \$180,000 in grant funds, and most of the businesses have been Black-owned.

While \$2,500 may not seem like a lot, to a small business it can be a life saver. For example, we announced a funding round during the COVID-19 pandemic while many businesses were still shut down. MDEAT funded 16 small businesses for a total of \$40,000. This came at a critical time when national headlines reported that Black businesses were largely left out of the Small Business Administration’s pandemic funding due to various factors like a lack of banking relationships and a lack of back office support.

A previous grant recipient, Chicks and Wings, received \$5,000 during the 2007-2008 funding cycle. The business used the funds to purchase food inventory and cover payroll costs and went on to be awarded a vendor contract for Super Bowl XLI in 2007.

Similarly, Lullaby Learning Center received a \$5,000 grant to purchase furniture for its V.P.K. that otherwise would have remained closed. The Center was able to create one new job due to the V.P.K. Program.

There are countless similar stories of small businesses that have used the grant to keep the doors open and grow. What’s most important is the urgency in growing and scaling our Black businesses.

// In Miami-Dade County where only roughly 2.5 percent (1,902 out of 74,627) of registered small businesses are Black-owned, we’re sorely underleveraged in how we’re creating equity in our small business ecosystem.

We’re an entrepreneurial community and a small business one at that, and that means that many of our residents rely on a paycheck from a business that may not always have the backing and support of big business. Our role at MDEAT is to continue supporting our micro businesses, connect them to much needed resources, and to continue fostering an ecosystem for small business development. On the other side of the pandemic may be some loss but also an opportunity to rethink how we support small business. |

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19, MDEAT AWARDS \$40,000

In the midst of COVID-19 while small businesses struggled to stay afloat, MDEAT released another round of Small Business Capitalization Grants to help businesses cope. More than 100 small businesses applied – more than any other prior funding round and an indicator of the trying times. With only \$40,000 available, MDEAT selected 16 businesses to receive a \$2,500 grant each.



As a small business owner one of our biggest problems is getting working capital to make payroll and pay our bills on time. So we really appreciate all the support from MDEAT – the \$2,500 grant as well as the website grant to help us redesign our website.

RICKY BRANTLEY,
President, Viking Defense



2020 has been and continues to be a struggle for our property and project management business. I’m thankful that we were awarded this grant. It’s made a tremendous impact on our financial situation.

ASTON MCKENZIE,
President, Notsa’s Renaissance

Receiving the grant during the pandemic has helped us a lot. The process was fast, and MDEAT helped us in every step of the way.

IVAN NUNEZ,
Auto Brakes Plus, Inc

This \$2,500 grant award will significantly assist me in meeting my business needs during this pandemic crisis.

TWYMAN BENTLEY,
Owner, Accounting and Taxation Service

COVID-19 reduced my profits significantly. With MDEAT’s assistance through this and other initiatives, I’m better able to cope.

FRITZ JEAN,
President/Owner, New Talent Photo & Printing, Inc.

The grant helped pay the staff that takes care of the students of our first responders and front line workers. Thank you MDEAT for being here for us so we can be here for our community.

VERA HENRY,
Founder & Director, His Loving Hands Christian Academy

We congratulate and recognize the businesses that were funded during our 2020 MDEAT Small Business Capitalization Grant Program: Paramount Dance Studios, Panther Xtreme Cheerleading, Hip Rock Star, Gringa Flan, Nosta’s Renaissance, Dudley’s Professional Service, Foreclosure Forensics, Souls, Inc., New Talent Photo & Printing, Florida Tec, Our Little Hands of Love, Freedom Flag & Banner Company, His Loving Hands Christian Academy, Viking Defense, Miami Mini Riders Transportation, and OptaMiss Engineering.



MDEAT has helped my business grow through grants, training, and trade show marketing opportunities. The funds from MDEAT have given us the opportunity to market our product with an upgraded online POS website.

JESSICA WELSH,
Founder & CEO of Gringa Flan, Inc.



MDEAT has been a life-saver to my business especially during the pandemic.

VIVIAN WHITEHEAD-PHILLIPS,
President/Owner, Souls, Inc

Like many businesses our business was severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Ninety percent of our revenue comes from transporting students to/from school. The grant provided the much needed operating capital to keep our business afloat.

GINA DELICE,
CEO of Miami Mini Riders Transportation Inc.



The grant acceptance was right on time! Our business was undergoing unplanned changes due to the coronavirus outbreak including project delays and even cancellations. Funding from MDEAT helped keep advertising going so we could find additional work and maintain a steady stream of income. Programs like this really keep doors open, jobs secure, and small businesses alive. Thank you, MDEAT!

AMILLY ALVAREZ WASHINGTON,
CEO, OptaMiss Engineering

We’re thankful that this program allows us to remain in business and continue to do what we love to do.

ASHLEY BECKNO,
Paramount Dance Studios

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION

Throughout the year, MDEAT's Small Business and Economic Development division supports businesses by helping to connect them to resources, funding, technical assistance, and educational opportunities to help them grow. Of particular emphasis are the businesses located within 18 of the County's designated Targeted Urban Areas (TUAs).

BLACKPAGESMIAMI.COM

MDEAT had been sponsoring the annual Black World Guide published by Miami-Dade County Black Affairs Advisory Board, but it was published in print, and there was a need for a digitized version of the guide. In response, BlackPagesMiami.com was created in 2017 to make it more accessible and easier to search for and discover Black-owned businesses, particularly within Targeted Urban Areas (TUAs). The directory continues to grow now with more than 500 businesses. The platform also expanded this year to include the Black Business Podcast, which interviews and features Black-owned businesses for an inside look of how they're growing, navigating typical business challenges, and their outlook for the future.

BLACK BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT SERIES

Throughout the year, businesses and entrepreneurs alike participated in workshops and training opportunities presented by BlackPagesMiami.com. Each session provided an opportunity for the businesses to address their specific needs and challenges and also receive ideas and feedback to help their businesses thrive. The topics vary from month to month to include marketing planning, digital strategy, Facebook and social media, procurement, growth hacking, and doing business with the Federal government. There were eight sessions in total throughout the fiscal year and more than 200 businesses and entrepreneurs participating in the workshops.

BLACK FRANCHISING INITIATIVE

Back when MDEAT was MMAP, a Black franchising initiative was launched with the support of County Commissioner Dennis Moss. Under The Moss Plan, technical and financial assistance was provided to support the launch of four franchise businesses in

South Dade, of which one became the first Black-owned Denny's Restaurant in the Southeastern U.S.

MDEAT recently revived the franchising initiative as an educational platform to expose prospective franchisees to opportunities and to begin to create a pipeline of franchisees that could be supported through further education. The initiative launched this year with a two-part webinar featuring successful Black franchisees, franchise consultants, and an attorney sharing learning lessons, best practices, and how to get started. One of the sessions included George Tinsley, Sr., a long-time franchisee with 54 restaurants and more than a dozen of his franchises at various airport locations. Overall, participants in the webinar gained insight on how to start, finance, and successfully operate a franchise.

SMALL BUSINESS CAPITALIZATION PROGRAM

Throughout MDEAT's history, the agency has supported small businesses in the form of grants with emphasis on businesses located within the TUAs. Many of the awardees used the grant to make payroll, cover operating expenses, and purchase goods and supplies among other typical business functions. MDEAT again announced a grant funding period at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 500 people registered for the virtual informational session, which was very telling of the severity of the pandemic's impact. Ultimately, 16 businesses were selected for a grant of \$2,500 for a total of \$40,000 funded.

YOUTH INTERN PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (YIPI)

One of the many highlights of the Teen Court program is the opportunity for youth volunteers to be connected to paid summer jobs. Through the Youth Intern Partnership Initiative (YIPI),

MDEAT matches Teen Court volunteers with local small businesses and government officials in a six-week paid internship. YIPI was created to provide job training and early career exposure while also addressing unemployment among the county's teen population. Although YIPI did not place any teens this summer as a result of COVID-related shutdowns, the outcome of teens that have participated is of great benefit to this community.

Teen Court and YIPI together help to fill in some of the gaps that teens often face - personal development and a lack of exposure to careers and working professionals. As a second chance program, Teen Court allows volunteer teens, many of whom have aspirations for a career in the legal field, to obtain real life courtroom experience as they participate in the judicial process to deliver alternative sanctions to their peers who might have gotten in trouble with a misdemeanor. As a result of Teen Court's successes, MDEAT has many success stories of Teen Court participants who are now in law school or practicing attorneys, like Leonard Thompson who is a Miami-Dade County Assistant State Attorney.

MLK BUSINESS EXPO

MDEAT hosted the 8th Annual MLK Business Expo in South Dade during the MLK weekend as an opportunity to showcase local businesses and connect them to consumers. This year's expo saw a sharp increase in the number of vendors from 55 vendors during the 2019 expo to 124 vendors in 2020.

BUSINESS BREAKFAST SERIES

The Business Breakfast Series is an opportunity for MDEAT to present community partners, information, and resources for businesses. Resources can include everything from financing to technical assistance and community resources. |

DOING BUSINESS WITH THE FEDS: CLOSING THE PROCUREMENT GAP

BY FABIOLA
FLEURANVIL

Less than two percent of government contracting opportunities in the county are awarded to Black businesses, and according to the Census' 2017 Annual Business Survey, out of 74,627 employing companies in Miami-Dade County, only about 2.5 percent (or 1,902) are Black-owned. Something is wrong with this picture, and practical solutions are urgently needed.

These statistics imply two things: as a small business community, Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs are sorely underleveraged especially when national data shows that Black women are the fastest growing demographic of entrepreneurs in the entire country. Black women are also the only racial or ethnic group with more business ownership than their male peers, according to the Federal Reserve. Essentially, the number of Black-owned employer firms in the county should be much higher than what the data reports.

Secondly, the procurement numbers also tells us this: the inability for Black businesses to pierce the procurement veil handicaps the growth potential and wealth opportunities of an entire community. Because when small businesses have greater access to do business with the government - whether local, statewide or Federal - the impact to growth and scalability is exponential. Since Black businesses tend to be located in historically Black neighborhoods and often have Black employees, the potential to grow has a trickle down effect to Black families and the communities where they live.

Simply put, aligning Black businesses for greater procurement opportunities is a step towards closing the wealth gap and economic disparities. Atlanta did it. So did the mayors of Washington, DC and Detroit, and that has single handedly contributed to more Black wealth and a larger Black middle class in those metros than what we see in Miami.

As part of MDEAT's Black Business Engagement Series, we've hosted two procurement sessions this past year with the Small Business Administration South Florida District. These sessions educated participating businesses on how to become certified and pursue contracts at the Federal level. MDEAT has also supported other workshops to get more Black businesses certified with the County, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and other entities.



There are certainly stories of Black businesses that have successfully navigated procurement opportunities to scale and grow. One business in particular,

Alpha1 Staffing, which is female-lead by Garrie Harris, became certified through the County's Small Business department, successfully secured contracts with the county, school board, and state, and has since graduated out of the small business program. Alpha1 scaled to the Federal level and partnered up on a multi-million dollar Navy contract and continues to secure other contracts.



Another example is Casey Cooper, President of N.A.C.E. Incorporated and The Compass Circle. Casey started a trucking company in 2006 out of pure

“We could multiply the success factor of Black-owned businesses by deliberately making a conscious effort to set aside contracts, implement a mentor protege program, and enforce subcontracting goals with prime contractors and non-local firms

ambition and eventually scaled the business to pursue the Federal government three years ago. Things shifted for the company when she secured a \$5.5 million contract once she became 8(a) certified. “I’ve been able to work a lot less harder but make a lot more money by just working more intentionally and smarter.”

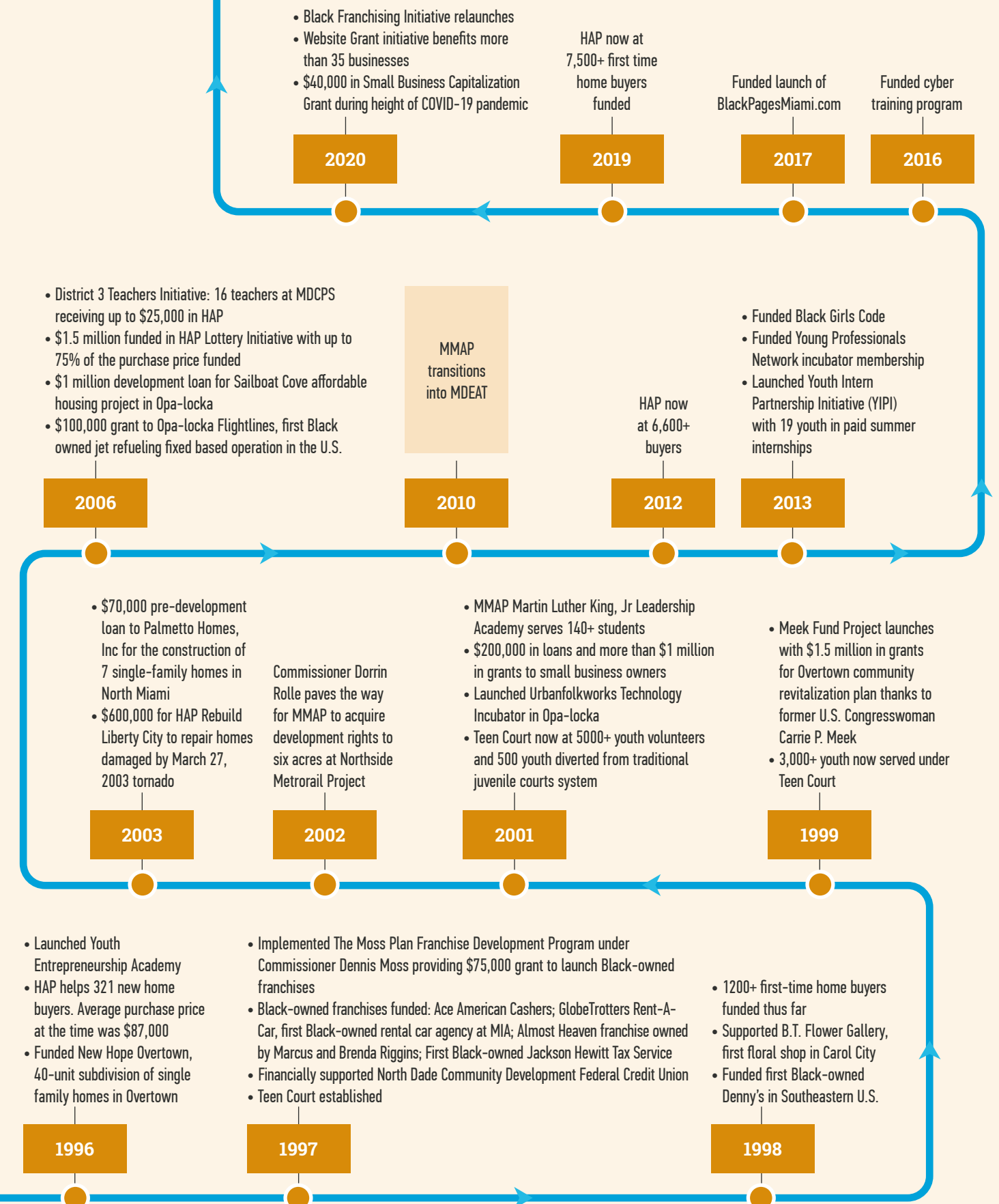
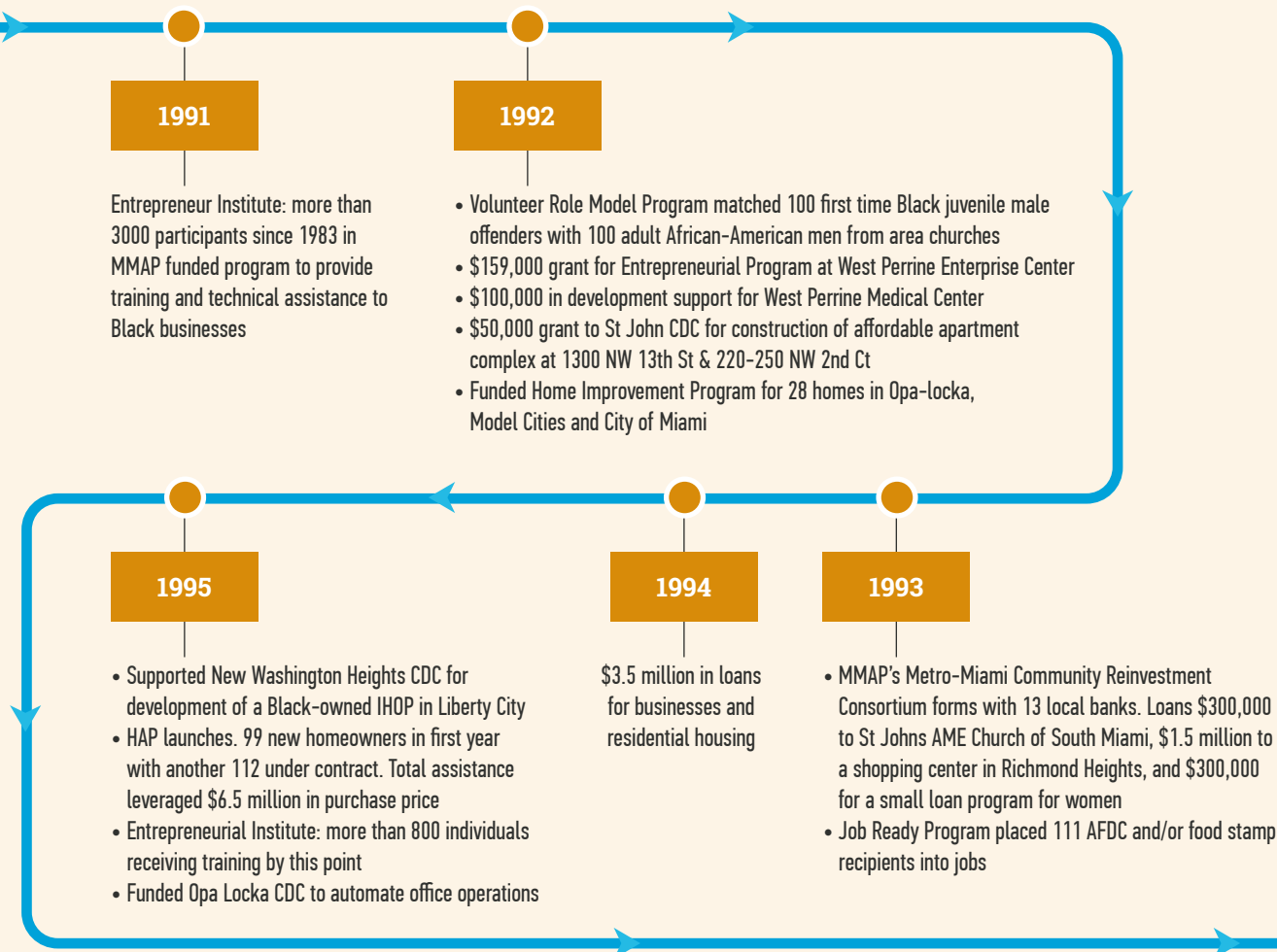
Casey now helps other women pursue Federal certifications and trains them on how to do business with the Federal government.

Imagine if we could multiply the success factor of Black-owned businesses like Garrie's and Casey's by not just pushing them towards certification but deliberately making a conscious effort to set aside contracts, implement a mentor protege program, and enforce subcontracting goals with prime contractors and non-local firms. We struggle to keep Black talent here who move north to Broward or even out of state to cities like Atlanta. However, if our elected officials and community leaders could create a business climate that says to Black entrepreneurs and businesses that they can be successful, profitable, and thrive here in Miami, not only will it reverse the economic conditions of our communities, but it would also attract talent and businesses, create jobs, and change the narrative for this community. |

MDEAT OVER THE YEARS: A LOOK BACK AT OUR BEST MOMENTS

Following the riots that erupted in 1980 after white police officers were acquitted for the death of Arthur McDuffie, the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County collaborated to create Metro-Miami Action Plan (MMAP) in 1983 as a solution to socioeconomic disparities in employment, economic development, education, housing, health and human services, and criminal justice. MMAP was reorganized by 2010 to become MDEAT.

We look back at 37 years of funding and supporting economic progress within Miami-Dade's Black community.




MDEAT IN THE NEWS

BUSINESS MONDAY

Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust: 40 years since McDuffie, with little change

BY JOHN DIXON
JUNE 08, 2020 07:00 AM



3:00 Powered by Trinity Audio

MORE FROM THE SERIES

Calls for action

We asked 10 black South Florida business leaders to share their views on race, community and business, and the path forward. Here's what they had to say.

EXPAND ALL

These last few weeks have been very telling of where we stand as a society. To think that we've made so many " strides " only to have the bandage peel off and layers of deep systemic issues be revealed once again. Coincidentally, this year is the 40th year since the McDuffie riots erupted in Miami, and things still have not changed in regards to police brutality and social justice.

The Black community has always been marginalized and ignored. The evidence is right before us in the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on the African-American community. And the outrage from the recent murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd is more proof that Black people are fed up in this country.

We have reached an intense boiling point in this country, and Black people are crying out to be heard, understood, empathized with, and shown justice. Meanwhile, most of America remains silent or politically correct throughout all of this.

The Miami Times

Saving Black communities through homeownership

Residents and housing leaders break down long-standing barriers

Melissa Harris, Miami Times Contributor | May 1, 2020 | Updated Sep 2, 2020



More than 80 people recently attended a Black Homeownership virtual panel sponsored by the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT), where housing leaders and Miami-Dade County residents tackled issues that have hindered Black people from becoming homeowners and discussed solutions to increase Black homeownership.

Jeffrey Watson

The meeting, said John Dixon, executive director of MDEAT, was the first of many efforts to draw into issues that have stopped Black Miami from purchasing homes.

Jeffrey Watson, a national housing developer and one of the panelists, spoke of his mother's persistence as a Black woman seeking to purchase a home in 1961.

Greater equity requires change. 'We cannot conduct business the way we have' | Opinion

BY MICHAEL SALTHER
AUGUST 20, 2020 07:00 AM

The Miami Herald asked local Black business people what they think is needed to create a more supportive environment for Black businesses and professionals and to encourage greater success for future generations. Here's what they had to say:



Michael Salther

James B. Wright, Member of Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust's Economic Development Action Committee:

In order to address enduring poverty, we must address both crime and poverty; they are inextricably joined at the hip. We accomplish this by leveraging an ecosystem (private sector investments, access to quality education, housing and capital, equitable public transportation, and financial education) which will lead to higher employment wages and self-sufficiency. Without the ecosystem, I believe, this exact

The Miami Times

MDEAT offers homeownership grants

Up to \$7,500 towards your down payment and closing

Miami Times Staff Report | MAY 05, 2020 | Updated MAY 06, 2020



Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) is currently offering two new programs to assist future home owners and small business. The Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP) is designed to increase the number of first-time home purchases for low-to-moderate income residents living in Miami-Dade County. The zero-interest deferred loan provides funding for first-time homebuyers towards down payment and closing costs, making it easier to get approved for a mortgage. Since 1995, the program has funded more than \$48 million.

The maximum allowable financing is \$7,250 for households at or below 80 percent of the adjusted gross median income, or \$4,750 for households above 80 percent of the adjusted gross median income from the same price of the home.

The loan is forgiven if you own and occupy the home for more than 10 years without a cash-out refinance on the loan.

Receiving help from MDEAT HAP is as easy as 1-2-3.

Step 1: Attend an Approved HAP Homebuyer Education Course.

Step 2: Contact a Certified HAP Lender to get qualified for a mortgage and HAP funds.

ADVERTORIAL

MDEAT encourages Miami-Dade residents to work within the local system for change

While the foundations of institutionalized racism are today shaken by worldwide protests following the police killing of George Floyd and Rayshard Brooks, Miami-Dade County is reminded of the continued need for government agencies like Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT). With a history tied to the McDuffie riots of 1980, MDEAT helps Miami-Dade County maintain a focus on Black Miami. Its mission is to ensure the equitable participation of Blacks in Miami-Dade County's economic growth through advocacy and monitoring of economic conditions and development initiatives. Its approach is to offer residents available resources that can help them advocate for systemic change and improve their condition through homeownership, business development and youth empowerment.

"MDEAT is a part of the solution," MDEAT Executive Director John E. Dixon explained. "It is getting Black residents to work within the county system - MDEAT - to advocate for the changes they want to see on a local level within their communities."

MDEAT is governed by a 15-member board and several action committees that civic-minded residents can join. It is through this vehicle that residents can help Miami-Dade County maintain a focus on socio-economic issues by working within the government system to identify and implement solutions.

Miami native and MDEAT Second Vice-Chairperson Kadraia Wright revealed that MDEAT has a unique mission and perspective. "This is a 'Call for Action' for those residents who want to help Miami-Dade County maintain a focus on socio-economic issues by working within the government system to identify and implement solutions," said Wright, who joined the MDEAT board in 2015. "I ask residents to join MDEAT in this ongoing and urgent quest for economic equality by contacting MDEAT and joining one of its pillar action committees focused on housing, economic, or youth. MDEAT is here to help residents overcome barriers and leave a positive future and legacy."

Through its resident-driven action committee, MDEAT encourages

prepared by Miami-Dade Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources.

Yet due to a heightened level of business closures related to COVID-19, MDEAT experienced more than a 400% increase in its 2020 applications across the ethnic spectrum from 2019 for the \$2000 TUA business grants. The pandemic was devastating to small businesses, even causing some of them to close their storefronts permanently.

A long time native of Miami-Dade County, Hamilton N. Burton, MDEAT Economic Development Action Committee (EDAC) Chairperson reinforced sentiment shared by protesters who placed a renewed global focus on supporting Black businesses. "Currently we are in a global crisis where the death of George Floyd and others before him show the world how disappointing it is to be Black in America," Burton explained. "However, the Black race has historically been at a social, economic and political disadvantage in this country. The only true remedy is to affect a Black socio-economic powerbase through initiatives like the EDAC, focused on education and economics which lead to empowerment."

This form of economic empowerment emerges through MDEAT's efforts that include supporting BlackPagesMiami.com, Black African Advisory Board's Black World Guide and S.O.B. campaigns as well as the MDEAT small business grant program. Through these efforts - pushed by local residents - people throughout the community can support Black Miami.

Protesters also advocated Black homeownership noting that the national homeownership rate for Black Americans remains at the 1960s level according to U.S. Census data in Miami-Dade, the 17.9%. Black population has a home mortgage rate of just 14%.

In helping to move the needle in Black homeownership, MDEAT Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP) has been in existence since 1995 when it was previously known as MMAP HAP. It changed names in 2009 when MDEAT

Recently, MDEAT expanded its reach within the Black community by hosting a monthly radio talk show on WMMT 1490AM. The first series of shows connects youth to Miami-Dade County Teen Court. Due to COVID-19, it is connecting them through a "Virtual Teen Court Experience." Teens can sign up for e-newsletters that cover mental health issues, participate in virtual forums on current events like the killing of George Floyd and stop and risk, and expand their network with teens from across the county to heighten transferable civic engagement and social justice skills learned from courtroom training in providing youth with a second chance. During the June 4, 2020 talk show police officers from Miami-Dade County and City of Miami as well as Teen Court alumni discussed the George Floyd tragedy. Teen Court alumni and Miami-Dade Assistant State Attorney Leonard Thompson, Jr. offered insight on the challenges he faces being a Black prosecutor during the current protests and arrests of Black youth.

Another talk show guest, MDEAT acting board chairperson and Youth Action Committee Chairperson Khadija Salihuddin expressed similar concerns about what the George Floyd protests represent and what is needed to move forward.

"As a Miami-Dade County resident and, more importantly, a Black man, I stand in solidarity with our youth and the various peaceful protesters around the world," Salihuddin shared. "MDEAT is here for youth and other residents who are using their voice to call attention to the injustices that are happening right now. MDEAT is here to support and provide resources for our youth, by

Miami Herald

BUSINESS MONDAY

What happens next? South Florida's black business leaders on racism and the path forward

BY MIAMI HERALD
JUNE 08, 2020 06:00 AM, UPDATED JUNE 08, 2020 12:48 PM

BUSINESS MONDAY



CALLS TO ACTION

Black business leaders in South Florida speak out



South Florida black business leaders in Miami-Dade and Broward speak out about racism and what the next steps should be after the death of George Floyd at the hands of police.



WHAT IS TEEN COURT?

It's more than just an alternative to arrest and a second chance for youth with minor offenses.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TEEN COURT MIAMI-DADE ECONOMIC ADVOCACY TRUST (MDEAT)



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Refer your teens to Teen Court.

ADULTS

Volunteer as a mentor.

YOUTH

Participate in the various programs.

For information,
Email: TeenCourtInfo@miamidade.gov or call (305) 622-2592

ABOUT THE MIAMI-DADE ECONOMIC ADVOCACY TRUST



The Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust is committed to the economic advancement of Black residents throughout the County through three programming areas: Small Business Advocacy and Economic Development, Homeownership Assistance Program, Teen Court & Youth Development.

23 YEARS OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT:

WHY TEEN COURT IS MORE THAN SECOND CHANCES

Today's youth are living in one of the greatest periods of this country's history as innovation, ingenuity, and entrepreneurship are an everyday part of life for them. They are growing up as digital natives and are exposed to all types of opportunities to create and innovate at such a young age. They are content creators on YouTube and TikTok as well as gaming and app entrepreneurs. With access to both traditional career paths and emerging ones, hands down today's youth have the greatest choices before them.

With that said, all youth still need access and exposure to see the full breadth of potential available to them. They need mentorship and guidance, and when they mess up or make mistakes, they need a second chance and an opportunity to try again.

That's the beauty of Miami-Dade Teen Court. It has given more than 7,800 youth over the past 23 years an opportunity to correct their wrongs as well as an opportunity to be exposed to new career pathways for an up close and personal experience that otherwise could not be afforded to them.

At the surface, Teen Court seems to be just a juvenile justice program. The typical entry point is usually a referring agency such as the Juvenile Services Department after the youth gets in trouble for a misdemeanor. The hope is that instead of getting a blemish on their record, Teen Court would instead try them in a court of their peers - other youth who also act as jurors and attorneys under the guidance of professional judges and attorneys - and the result would be an alternate sanction, such as a letter of apology, counseling sessions, or community service hours, among other possible sanctions.

For the youth on the volunteering side of the table, many of them have aspirations of a career in the judicial system or may be uncertain about their future career goals. So they come to Teen Court for a chance to experience all parts of the legal system from defense or prosecuting attorney to juror, clerk, and/or as a bailiff. While the entry point may be the judicial system, MDEAT eventually navigates the youth to other areas, including paid summer jobs, the Youth Intern Partnership Initiative (YIPI), entrepreneurship workshops, mental health services and family counseling, and so much more. So essentially, it's teens helping other teens while being shaped, molded, and mentored while getting access to opportunities. And that's what our youth need more than anything else.

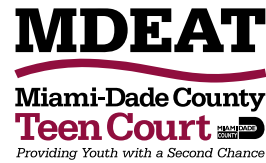
That's why Teen Court is under the direction of MDEAT. The agency defies the typical boundaries and definitions of economic development, which is traditionally tasked with job creation and company recruitment. Given our uniqueness as a small business community and the economic disparities among our Black communities and designated Targeted Urban Areas (TUAs), MDEAT stretches outside of this typical definition and instead focuses on improving the economic conditions of young people, families, and

small businesses. It's the three gears that work together to create thriving communities.

And we've seen the success stories with Teen Court to know that it works. For example, Leonard Thompson serves as Miami-Dade County Assistant State Attorney, but he first came through Teen Court as a high school volunteer aspiring to be an attorney someday. And today, he continues in service as a volunteer judge.

Miami-Dade Teen Court is part of a national network of teen/peer courts and the largest chapter in the state. While it's the Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP) that MDEAT has become known for, Teen Court is really one of the agency's best kept secrets. Over the past 23 years, the program has poured into the lives of adolescents and helped to develop leadership skills by allowing youth to participate in problem-solving and decision making. If every youth can have this type of exposure, access, and second chance, then their future can become like Attorney Leonard Thompson's or the next technology innovator.

MDEAT thanks all 7,800 youth that have come through Teen Court and the volunteer judges and attorneys who have given out of their passion and commitment to this community. |



TEEN COURT OVER THE YEARS

A walk through memory lane and a look back of the past few years of Teen Court success.

2007-2008

- + Teen Court begins partnership with Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS)
- + Student Court launches with MDCPS as an alternative to punitive responses such as suspension or expulsion
- + Parental Referral Initiative launches

2009

- + Thailand delegation visits Teen Court to identify and adopt a best practice model to reduce juvenile arrests in their country

2010-2011

- + 619 youth referred to Teen Court bringing the total to 4,762 since inception in 1998

2013-2014

- + Teen Court participates in National Day of Remembrance for Murdered Victims
- + 341 youth convene to recommend actions to address crime at home, in school, and the community in general
- + Student Court grows to six schools
- + 497 first-time offenders go through Teen Court, and 4,994 community service hours volunteered

2015-2016

- + 404 youth offenders participate resulting in a recidivism rate of less than 3%
- + More than 300 attendees participate in 2nd Annual Black Male Youth Mental Health Conference Series

2016-2017

- + Mental health services added to Teen Court offerings

2017-2018

- + 29 youth participate in Youth Intern Partnership Initiative (YIPI)

2019-2020

- + Teen Court leads mental health summit to address stigmas and expand psychological services

POWER OF MENTORSHIP

When you've worked hard, and done well, and walked through the doorway of opportunity, you do not slam it shut behind you. – **Michelle Obama**

Empowering and building leadership among youth is what drives Teen Court and nurtures its purpose, but what keeps it going is the commitment of volunteer judges and attorneys who passionately serve and help to train the young men and women who come through the program. Teen Court could not be successful without the volunteers – both adults and youth – and the partners who believe in second chances.



JUDGE WILLIAM ALTFIELD, Circuit Court Judge, Miami-Dade County Court Bench
Judge William Altfield has been involved with Teen Court since 2012 shortly after being appointed to the County Court bench. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was a prosecutor for nearly 25 years and observed the lack of intervention programs for defendants who had been making poor choices for much of their lives. He got involved with Teen Court to help steer youth away from the criminal justice system. *"I am moved when a child appreciates that their conduct was not only illegal, but it was also morally wrong and hurtful to their parent or guardian. It is a special moment when the child apologizes sincerely to their parent or guardian and recognizes how their decision impacts not only themselves, but others too. This program has prevented many children from becoming just another statistic in our criminal justice system. It's a program that can change the lives of so many youth."*



D'BRIA BRADSHAW, Esq., MBA, Director of Public Policy, Curastory
Attorney Bradshaw currently serves as a Teen Court volunteer judge presiding over cases on a bi-weekly basis. *"Michelle Obama once said 'If something good happens to you, or if you have an advantage, you don't hoard it, you are it, you reach out, you give back.' The legal profession is only made up of 2% of Black women attorneys and I wouldn't be where I am without Black women in and outside of the profession pouring into me. I want to be that positive mentor and cheerleader for the next generation of attorneys. Teen Court gives me this opportunity"*



RICHARD PATINO, Founder of The Patino Law Firm
Attorney Patino has served as a Teen Court Judge, mentor, YIPI employer, and volunteered during the summer training over the past five years. *"My fondest memory of Teen Court was meeting and being able to mentor two high school students. One has just received a full scholarship to the University of Miami Law School and the other just graduated from Florida International University and is preparing to take the LSAT. He is also well on his way to law school."*



LOREAL A. ARSCOTT, Owner of L.A. Law Firm, P.A.
"As a student attorney, I saw the value in this unique community service opportunity. Now as a practicing attorney, I get to return to the program that inspired me to pursue my legal career and to motivate the next generation of lawyers."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? TEEN COURT SUCCESS STORIES



BY JASMINE FRINK

«Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.» – **Maria Robinson**

Teen Court is more than just a juvenile justice program. It’s youth empowerment, leadership development, civic engagement, and career exposure. For MDEAT, Teen Court provides an opportunity to become more vested within the community. As we’re supporting the growth and development of small businesses and helping families close the wealth gap through homeownership, Teen Court is our answer to shaping our future talent and exposing them to new opportunities. We view all three – small businesses, families, and youth – as critical parts of how communities thrive and prosper.

Imagine a teen who got in trouble for a misdemeanor and a teen who dreams of becoming an attorney or who’s contemplating their future career. Teen Court pairs both teens together for a one of a kind experience by providing the teen with the misdemeanor with a second chance and the teen with the career aspirations with the opportunity to volunteer in a real court-like setting.

The teen with the misdemeanor walks away with a lighter sanction and avoids a criminal record in addition to getting access to mental health counseling, family counseling, educational workshops, and the potential of a summer job. The other teen gets a shot at practicing their legal aspirations in youth court, an opportunity

they wouldn’t traditionally have access to. They’re also mentored by real judges and attorneys, receives access to the suite of Teen Court services, and also earns community service hours. For the parents, it’s another opportunity to get their kids engaged and keep them active.

Since the inception of Teen Court more than 22 years ago, many talented young men and women have grown through the program and have become success stories that we’re proud of.

Karen Mora was a Teen Court volunteer and alumnae of Youth Intern Partnership Initiative (YIPI). She began her Teen Court journey while a student at Archimedean Upper Conservatory (2016-2019). Karen started as a juror but was quickly encouraged to try her hand as an attorney. The experience she had at Teen Court developed her public speaking skills and increased her confidence. By attending the Annual Training Summit, Karen got to visit several universities in a way that she wouldn’t have been able to do so on her own. The constant interaction with attorneys and judges who offered to educate the volunteers on courtroom procedures and legal matters was precious and encouraged her on the path she is on today.

Karen is currently enrolled at Florida International University, where she majors in Political Science. Because of Teen Court, Karen is inspired to be an attorney in either the criminal or environmental field and has a deep passion for environmental sustainability.

“To the community, try it. Most think Teen Court isn’t for them because they don’t like legal topics or aren’t good public speakers. However, I have to say that this was one of the most influential things I did during my high school career. Before this, I never

liked public speaking and had no clue about anything law related. The following year, I found myself joining Model UN and then running for a club presidency. I think you’ll surprise yourself, so I implore you to try.”

Leonard Thompson went from participating in Teen Court to now serving as a volunteer judge in his current role as Miami-Dade County Assistant State Attorney. Leonard began his Teen Court career in 2008 as a student at Carol City Senior High School and always had aspirations of becoming a lawyer. His experience afforded him the opportunity to practice in his future career. He would later attend the University of Florida and graduate with a political science degree and later, a Juris Doctorate Degree in 2013. His fondest memory of the entire experience were the trial cases he tried at the North Dade Justice Center while still in high school.

“This is an amazing opportunity whether to develop yourself or help other youth learn accountability for their actions while still providing them with a second chance. This experience has been invaluable to my growth.”

Loreal Arscott was in the pioneering class of Teen Court in 1999 as a junior at Miami Carol City High School’s Center for Legal and Public Affairs Law Magnet Program. She’s now a practicing attorney for her own law firm, L.A. Law Firm, P.A. Serving as a student attorney allowed her to advocate for her peers and prepare for a future career as a litigator.

“Having returned to the program and serving in the capacity of judge, I value my Teen Court experience even more. I see myself in our student attorneys and I yearn to serve as an example to the litigants

and all of the participants that despite the challenges you may face in life, you can and will overcome any obstacle that is in your path.”

Doris Rodriguez is a Stanford University student Class of 2021 and was involved in almost every role with Teen Court – from juror to teen attorney – and volunteered at every court house in the county. Doris was always passionate about advocacy and alternatives to incarceration as well as fair legal representation, especially for undocumented migrants.

“My favorite memory was when one of the Teen Court participants – who had committed

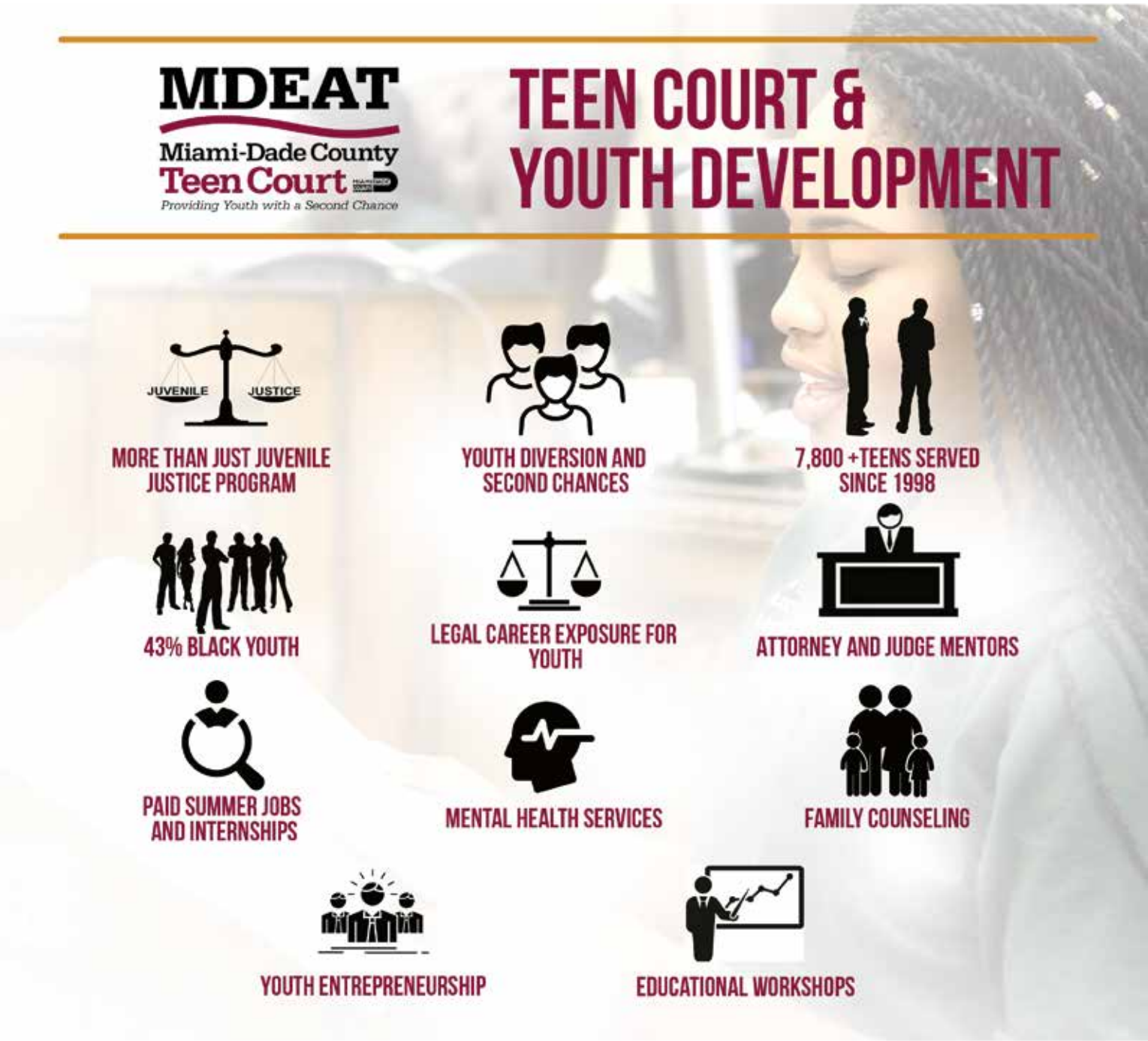
a crime and had been given the opportunity of a second chance – joined us as a volunteer after he completed his program. I was one of the volunteers that trained him to do his openings, questions, and closings. I think it really brought home the importance of these programs for me even at such a young age. I still think of him sometimes and hope he is doing well.”

Sophia Moss is a Teen Court parent with her kids volunteering in the program. She views the program as an opportunity to help youth become more well rounded by affording them the opportunity to develop social and team building skills while also taking on leadership roles.

“Keep this program going; it makes a difference. I am a mother raising several children, and I plan on keeping my children active in this program.”

Teen Court provides fantastic opportunities for character development and career exposure and would not be possible without the volunteer career judges and attorneys who serve and mentor the youth during the process. The Teen Court experience is genuinely irreplaceable, building the community’s youth one step at a time. |

JASMINE FRINK
Special Projects Coordinator,
Blueprint Creative Group



EVENTS & PROGRAMS

EVENTS & PROGRAMS



THE STATE OF HOMEOWNERSHIP IN BLACK AMERICA 2020:

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



BY MARK ALSTON

Wells Fargo CEO Charles Scharf outraged a lot of Black people across the country when he made the statement in a June 2020 memo that “there is a very limited pool of Black talent to recruit from.” The statement was likely to make a case for the lack of diversity across the company and corporate America.

Though directly unrelated to housing, Scharf’s statement is reflective of a larger systemic issue that plays out in economic disparities, with Black homeownership rates being one. The lack of diversity within the financial sector reveals itself in the lower approval rates for Black consumers who pursue mortgages or other loan products. It’s like the quality of care you receive in the medical world that could depend on whether or not you have a doctor that cares about your type of people or not. It can be subjective. And the same is the case when it comes to financing.

The fact is that Wells Fargo has among the worse mortgage approval rates of all lenders. Nationally, their approval rate is 29.7 percent of all Black loans, and that rate is decreasing every year. And in Miami-Dade County, the Black approval rate is even worse. It was 18 percent in 2019. Out of more than 1 million total loan applications nationally, Wells Fargo only made 10,000 Black loans at a 49 percent denial rate, which is increasing every year. And it’s not just them. The same is the case for Bank of America at a 19 percent mortgage approval rate for Black applicants in Miami-Dade County, and likely the same with other national lenders. Why do you think Wells Fargo’s approval rate is so low? It’s not that the programs are so different – it has the same products as every other lender. It’s because the people at Wells Fargo that touch the consumer does not reflect the consumer, and thus, does not have the same level of nuanced care or sensitivity towards them. So the outcome is in how loan applicants are profiled for risk.

Thus the biggest impediment to increasing Black homeownership in this country is the threat of risk-based pricing (or loan level price adjustments) that was put into place in April 2008 when Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were in trouble. Loan level price adjustments are probably the most egregious policies that we have in our financial system in addition to disparate housing policies. Essentially, this practice prices loans higher on the backs of “lower qualified” people, and in effect, subsidizes the people who do not need help.

In plain language, in a racialized system, and in an economy where on average Blacks have a dime for every dollar that Whites have based on the inability to pass on legacy and wealth, and due to inequities in wages - when you design a housing and financing system that prices loans based on FICO scores and down payments, you have just extended the reach of our disparate financial policies in a country that have affected Blacks since slavery.

Let’s look at the numbers for what they are, because in order to move forward, we have to face the hard truth of where things stand.

As of September 2020, the rate of Black homeownership in the U.S. stands at 47 percent according to the U. S. Census 2nd Quarter 2020 report. Forty-seven percent has been the highest rate of Black homeownership within the past 14 years. Retrospectively, the Black homeownership rate was 47.2 percent during the onset of the “great recession” of 2007 and was at an all-time high of 49.1 percent in 2004. Unfortunately, Black homeownership in America has never reached 50 percent.

Comparatively, the White homeownership rate currently stands at 76 percent, and the gap between White and Black homeownership is wider today (at 29 percent) than it was in 1900 when the differential was 27.6 percent. Fifty-two years since the assassination of civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968 and subsequent to the passing of the Fair Housing Act on April 11, 1968, and we continue to fight recurring battles for social and economic parity from a systematically disadvantaged position.

In Miami-Dade County, the situation is just as bad. Black residents are 17.7 percent of the county’s population, but only made up 6.2 percent of new mortgages in 2019. So out of a total of 45,240 mortgages in the county in 2019, only 2,846 (6.2 percent) of 7,030 Black mortgage applications were approved. That’s a 42.19 percent approval rate with 32.6 percent Black applicants denied and a 25.21 percent fall out rate (applicants that never moved forward in the process).

Public policy and tradition have served to block access and severely restrict Black home ownership opportunity in the form of exclusionary zoning, private covenants, redlining, eminent domain, and racially disparate housing finance policies. Going beyond housing, unmitigated institutional impediments have relegated Black Americans to the bottom rungs

of key quality of life measures. Blacks languish at the bottom of income, wealth, housing, health, education, and life expectancy scales, and atop categorical rates of incarceration, single parent households, neighborhood crime victimization, and poverty rates.

The history of opposition to Black ownership is widespread, systemic, and ongoing. Many rural Black farmers have lost their land and homes to “obituary tax” increases targeted and designed to strip them of their property. Similarly, many Black towns and communities have been destroyed to make room for hi-speed thoroughfares that did not even provide ingress or egress to the residents’ neighborhoods.

The fight to increase Black homeownership is a battle worth fighting as a start to reversing the wealth that continues to be siphoned out of Black families. What is needed are affirmative programs that are designed to make up for the injustices of the past in order to narrow the gap.

Starting with mortgage pricing models, the fix is to rescind back to pre-2008 guidelines in regards to risk-based pricing. There was no such thing as low level price adjustments prior to the recession. Because Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were in trouble and bad financial policies by the banks caused them to become insolvent, risk-based pricing was put into place to de-risk the financial system and save them. Consequently, they raised the bar for qualifying and priced mortgage loans based on FICO scores and down payment ability, thus adversely making it harder for those who need it the most. Essentially, they desensitized us to risk and said that we needed to make loans less risky.

I am an advocate for risk. I am one that says “let me try and fail” as opposed to making me always see you get ahead of me. It is more racist to raise the bar than to give me better access and the ability to make it work. When you raise the bar, you deny the opportunity to grow wealth and pass it down and instead create a legacy of tenancy and renters.

In a country with historical inequities in pay and wealth where two qualified people - one White and one Black earn two drastically different wages - it is not that Black people do not want to have an 800 FICO score, but when you make less, you sometimes end up making financial decisions that adversely impact your credit. Economic capacity is the real issue.

Now that Fannie Mae has become immensely profitable since the recession and has paid

back the entire money they borrowed plus some, it is time for the agency to get back to its mission of making affordable homeownership more possible. This country rewards risk, and we have to be advocates of risk rather than to take the risk out and not provide people with the opportunity to succeed.

There is no documented evidence that says that a 620 FICO score has a higher foreclosure rate than a 720 or 800 FICO. With the average FICO score being 674 for Black consumers and 734 for Whites, that means that on a five percent down loan for a \$200,000 house, the White buyer would have half a percent added to the cost of the loan compared to 2.25 percent added to the Black buyer’s loan. That is a 1.75 percent difference resulting in an \$879 monthly payment for the Black buyer compared to \$774 for the White buyer. Over the life of the loan, that is \$38,000 more in interest.

Here is the effect: When the denial rate is higher in a community, it impacts and affects the collective consciousness, and word gets around that you can not get approved for a house. So instead of putting our money into appreciating assets, we go ahead and put it into a car or other depreciating assets. It is disheartening that the financial system will take a chance in approving you for a \$90,000 car but not for a house.

By eliminating risk-based pricing, both buyers in the example above would not be charged any differently so long as they both met the minimum credit threshold of approvability and all other things being equal. That is how loans were priced pre-2008 recession.

The second fix to increasing Black homeownership is to have more loan originators that are diverse and represent the look of the community. The reason why United Wholesale Mortgage outperformed every other mortgage lender in Miami-Dade County with a 71.39 percent Black approval rate is because they only work with brokers and does not have a retail branch like Wells Fargo and the others. Brokers are far more experienced than loan officers and have more of an ability to address the issues that we (Blacks) tend to have. So a lot of the subjectivity is removed from the mortgage process.

Lastly, we have some housekeeping to do. We have to fight the issues with systemic racism but also have to fight against community low self esteem. We have gotten away from family and marriage and all of the things that

make us a strong community. We have to go back and address our ills. Our men have to marry our women and raise our children. We also have to live where we can afford to buy and not just buy based on what makes us feel good. We have to stand on traditional values and get back to being community-oriented. When we do that, we become stronger. The reason we are less stronger today is because we have become stratified and suffer from disenfranchisement with each other.

I believe and assert that homeownership is critical to building and sustaining strong families. It builds wealth, provides stability, creates a sense of self-worth, makes safer neighborhoods, and is a societal touch point that starts bright futures and provides a safety net for momentary life lapses. Homeownership matters, and Black homeownership really matters!

It is with this backdrop that I extend congratulations to the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) on its 10-year anniversary and 25 years of improving Black homeownership since the days of its predecessor agency, Metro-Miami Action Plan (MMAP).

There are those who question the Black focus of its mission and demand it to be more diverse. However, the disparities in the level of service to the Black community is glaring. Now is not the time to change focus or lose heart. Black Americans, descendants of those who labored to build, feed and clothe this country, who have been the subject of oppression and restriction deserve an affirmative opportunity to own a place they call home.

I salute you, Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust for 10 years, and I pray that your successes outrun your disappointments, and that you leave a legacy of changed lives and generational wealth passed from parents to children in the form of home ownership. Black homeownership really does matter! |

Mark Alston is Broker/Owner Skyway Realty and Alston & Associates Mortgage Company. He is immediate past Chairman of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) Political Action Committee as well as the 1st. Vice President of the California Association of Real Estate Brokers. Mark has served as President of the Consolidated Board of Realtist of Los Angeles and as Chairman of the Mortgage Banking Committee for the National Association of Real Estate Brokers.



BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

MDEAT HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HAP) DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE (DPA)

data from 1995 - June 2019



\$42 MILLION
total funded in HAP down payment assistance

HAP has been helping create homeowners since 1995



7,500 FAMILIES

have bought a home using HAP funds for more than \$1 billion in total purchase price



3,040+ BLACK FAMILIES

have bought a home using HAP funds for more than \$353 million in total purchase price

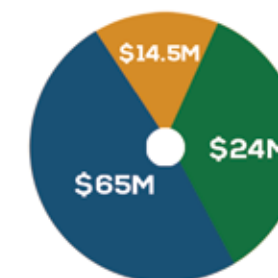
BLACK BUYERS
\$71.9 MILLION
IN TOTAL DPA FROM ALL SOURCES



- 13.4% from HAP Fund
- 64.7% from other Miami-Dade County DPA funds
- 12.6% from other non-county DPA funds



BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY



- 23% from HAP Funds
- 62.7% from other Miami-Dade County DPA funds
- 13.9% from other non-county DPA funds

HISPANIC BUYERS

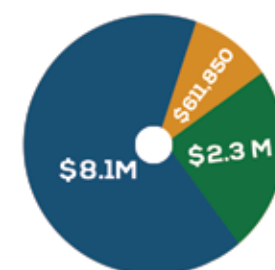
\$103.5 MILLION

IN TOTAL DPA FROM ALL SOURCES

A CLOSER LOOK: DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

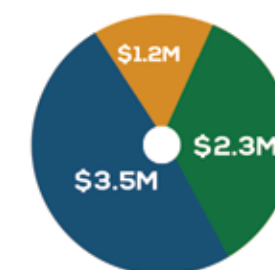
FROM JANUARY 2014 - JUNE 2019

HAP FUNDS FROM 2014 - JUNE 2019



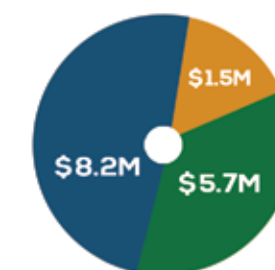
- 20.5% Black recipients (\$68.4m in total purchase price)
- 73.3% Hispanic recipients (\$252m in total purchase price)
- 5.7% White & other (\$19.8m in total purchase price)

DOWNPAYMENT ASSISTANCE FROM ALL SOURCES



BLACK BUYERS
\$7.1M IN DPA

- 33% from HAP funds
- 50% from other Miami-Dade County DPA funds
- 16.9% from other non-county DPA funds



HISPANIC BUYERS
\$15.4M IN DPA

- 53% from HAP funds
- 37% from other Miami-Dade County DPA funds
- 10% from other non-county DPA funds

presented by Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT)

MDEAT
HAP
Homeownership Assistance Program



BLACK HOMEOWNERSHIP IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

BLACK



\$180,514 | \$52,365

Average
Purchase
price

Average
Income

HISPANIC



\$187,348 | \$52,101

Average
Purchase
price

Average
Income

WHITE



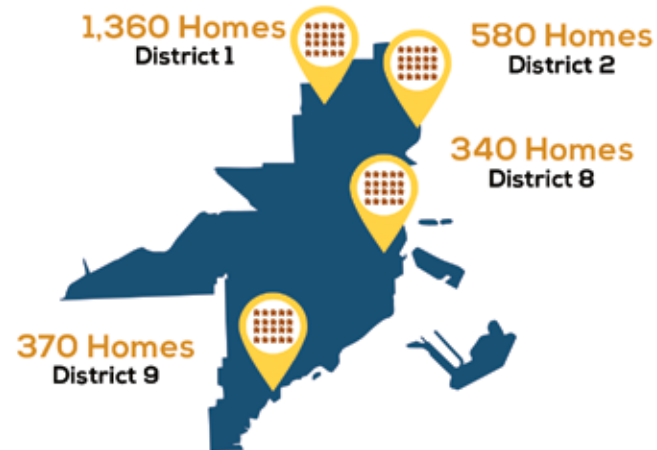
\$188,440 | \$54,101

Average
Purchase
price

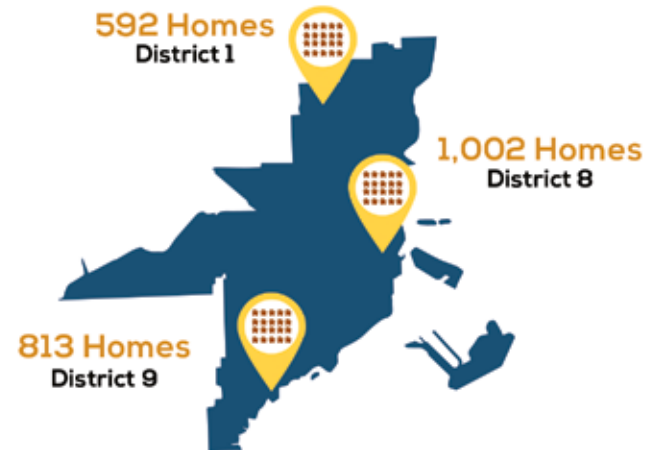
Average
Income

WHERE ARE THEY BUYING THESE HOMES?

BLACK BUYERS



HISPANIC BUYERS



ABOUT MDEAT HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HAP)

MDEAT
HAP
Homeownership Assistance Program

MDEAT HAP is designed to increase the number of first-time home buyers for low-to-moderate income residents living in Miami-Dade County. HAP provides up to \$7,250 towards down payment assistance and closing costs and can be forgiven if the buyer owns and occupies the home for more than 10 years without a sale or cash out refinance on the loan.

For more information, email HAPInfo@miamidade.gov

3,000 BLACK HOMEOWNERS AND COUNTING

Over the past 25 years, thousands of families have come through the Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP), each with their own unique stories.

MDEAT
HAP
Homeownership Assistance Program

Like Akera Lathan who purchased her first home through HAP at the age of 24. We hear stories about millennials forgoing a home and instead choosing to rent due to affordability and other reasons, but Akera knew that she wanted to reap the benefits of home ownership at a young age. Since then, her property value has tripled and she has been able to purchase another property as a rental, thus increasing her net worth and cash flow.

“The program shifted my mindset and grew my desire to leave a legacy for my children. HAP helped me to be intentional and strategic in all aspects of my life and has allowed me to provide a stable and consistent environment for my three children.” – Akera Lathan

As we see our neighborhoods change as a result of gentrification, MDEAT often advocates for the community not to be so quick to sell the home that their grandparents or parents worked so hard to build. And that is Lionel Moore’s story. He purchased his home in Miami Gardens in February 2020. It was the home that his grandfather owned since the 1970’s. So when his grandfather passed away, Lionel and his mom wanted to keep the house in the family, but his grandfather had a reverse mortgage on the home. So they used HAP funds to buy the property out of the reverse mortgage.

“I appreciate funding programs that help families stay in the community and purchase in communities where they want to establish roots.” – Lionel Moore

The same is the case for Trayon Bethel who is employed with Miami Dade Public Schools and knew that he wanted to remain in Liberty City and buy a home in the neighborhood. Liberty City has come under a lot of attention lately for fear that the same encroachment and gentrification happening in Little Haiti may move west to Liberty City. The neighborhood is proximal to downtown and is the highest point of elevation in the City of Miami, which is a huge selling point as the threat of flooding from hurricanes and storms, sea level rise, and climate gentrification attracts investors to higher ground.

Trayon, who bought his home in November 2019, knew exactly where he wanted to live. Although the house did have multiple offers on it, which is one of the challenges that buyers often face, he was still successful because the previous offer fell through.

“The more people that own in the neighborhood versus renting, the better it [the neighborhood] will be.” – Trayon Bethel

Throughout the year, there were also concerns of how the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting shutdown and the effect on jobs and the economy would affect the housing market. The 2008 housing crash nearly paralyzed HAP, and the concern was that consumer confidence would be impacted even with interest rates being at the lowest that they have ever been in a long time. Fortunately,

buyers continued to come through the door even through the height of the pandemic, and HAP continued to close on loans.



Kory Washington is one of the buyers that purchased a home during the pandemic using HAP funds. He continued to navigate the buying process despite the shutdown and finally became a homeowner in August 2020.

“The MDEAT program gave me an opportunity to become a homeowner, and the down payment assistance was the exact thing I needed to start this new journey in life.”

Lastly, we look back over the past years since MDEAT transitioned from MMAP to show how homeownership creates a lasting impact for Black families. Fester Little bought his Miami Gardens home in 2010 using HAP funds, which provides a zero-interest deferred loan that can be forgiven if the buyer owns and occupies the home for more than 10 years without a cash out refinance on the loan.

“It has been an exciting 10 years of homeownership, and I am coming towards the end of my grant. I’ve had many major highlights that have occurred since owning my home, and the greatest one would be real estate values increasing in my neighborhood. It has been an insightful experience, and it is good to know that HAP exists for first time home buyers.” |

TACKLING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN MIAMI: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS IN AN IMPRACTICAL ENVIRONMENT



BY JEFFREY WATSON,
HP3, LLC

What is the anti-gentrification solution for communities in Miami that have become more attractive to investors and affluent residents? That was the thesis to a virtual town hall hosted by MDEAT discussing the State of Black Homeownership. With a panelist of non-profit developers, real estate experts, and economic leaders and nearly 100 members of the community tuning in via Zoom, the town hall was presented to discuss practical solutions in an impractical environment. Dr. Ned Murray, Associate Director at FIU Metropolitan Center, paralleled the impact of gentrification to a cancer.

“Starting with the first wave of investment that comes into the community from the outside – it does not belong there just like a tumor does not belong in the body. It [gentrification] then begins to metastasize, which happens very quickly in Miami,” explained Murray. “In dealing with cancer, we know that in some cases there are pre-existing conditions, for instance, environment and diet, and we also know some of it is preventable and curable. The same is the case with gentrification.”

Miami is no different than historically Black communities around the country that have seen a surge in investment activity resulting in increased property values and long time

residents being priced out. While each community’s response to gentrification is different, there are best practices around the country where some sort of intervention has helped to either stop the cancer or at least boost resident’s ability to participate in the process. And that was the premise of the townhall – what can we learn as a community from other metropolitan cities with similar challenges that have created solutions to increase Black homeownership and address gentrification? Authorizing the formation of community land trusts is one possible solution. Nehemiah Davis oversees affordable housing development for Neighbors And Neighbors Association (NANA) and has been developing infill housing, which caps sales price for a property at \$205,000. Davis commented that land trusts would preserve more infill lots and properties for affordable housing development and would help in correcting gentrification.

I also agree with the idea of land trusts and that some form of government intervention and unique programs are critical. I compare Miami to other large cities that have a higher Black homeownership rate but without the housing programs that we have. The biggest difference is that homeownership in those cities is largely driven by higher incomes, education, and stronger employment. In Miami, where the average median household income of \$41,000 fails to match our high cost of living, land trusts can work to boost the affordability gap. However, it has to be said that we have one of the best programs in the country for delivering affordable housing. It is called a surtax program and is the source of funding for MDEAT’s Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP). Our surtax program is probably the best in the country and has produced 30,000 housing units in the last 28 years. The issue is not the absence of programs but the need to do a better job of executing the programs and then boosting them with additional resources.

Cornelius Shiver also participated in the town hall and offered an example of how his agency, the Southeast Overtown/Parkwest CRA, is creating unique models to overcome housing affordability in his community.

“As a CRA, we do not have to make a profit, and we have a strong revenue source, which allows us to make special concessions that would otherwise not fit market models. For example, the CRA had two townhomes for sale that we arbitrarily set the price to target a family at 40 percent and 50 percent average median income (AMI). We set out to qualify the buyer based on 30 percent of their income, regardless of what it was, and that would determine their mortgage and monthly payments. That in combination with down payment assistance programs like MDEAT’s and the \$80,000 available at the county would make a significant difference to the buyer’s ability to qualify and get into a home.”

Ultimately, there is a greater role that a collective body of government entities and community organizations can play in addressing housing affordability and to increase Black homeownership, and that requires that we get back to community-based planning. There has to be master plans created for Black communities and with a vision and actionable plan that outlines economic development, education, and housing. Mark Alston reminded us of what happened to Seattle and what gentrification looks like when it is complete. The neighborhoods in Seattle that were completely Black-owned are completely White occupied now, and Black people have been dispersed into the suburbs. As a result there is no voting power and no single area where there is a solid block of Black votes. Alston is Broker/Owner Skyway Realty and Alston & Associates Mortgage Company and immediate past Chairman of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) Political Action Committee. Gentrification is the result of economic inequities. When Black families earn 60 cents for every dollar that White families earn, as property values go up, we are left behind and do not have capacity to take advantage of the economic opportunities. That alone is enough to ask from the county that market principles in combination with market solutions are desperately needed to achieve a more balanced Miami for all.

Jeffrey Watson
is CEO of Solairgen Energy Corp.

WHAT MIAMI CAN LEARN FROM BUY THE BLOCK MOVEMENT

BY FABIOLA
FLEURANVIL

All over the country there are movements to take back communities from the threat of gentrification and to reinvest in keeping ownership Black and Buy the Block. Some of these have taken shape in the form of crowdfunding campaigns and others have been led by real estate investors and entrepreneurs using their influence to encourage others to invest in Black neighborhoods. While each of these communities may have their own unique challenges, they all share one common thread – decades of disinvestment in Black neighborhoods and too many of us moving out, and the result are outsiders seizing the opportunities.

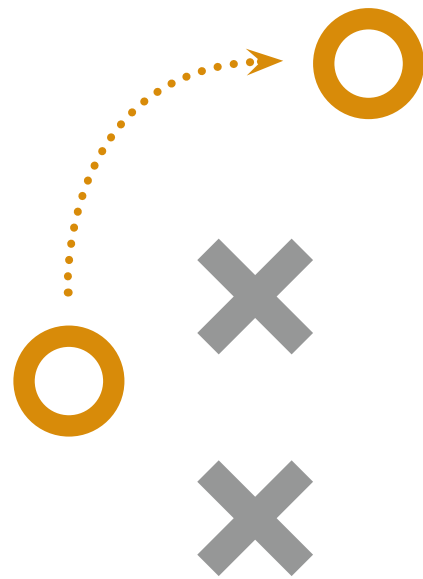
Evolution is needed for our communities. No community can grow and thrive and serve the next generation if it does not evolve to meet the hierarchy of needs of that community. And you also cannot stop private investment. However, evolution without preservation results in gentrification, and the outcome is a widening Black homeownership gap to the current 29 percent gap between White and Black families.

In Miami-Dade County, the ownership of many of the businesses in Black communities are not owned by people who look like the community. And residents are finding it much more challenging to buy a house in the communities where they want to live. We have an opportunity to learn from the Buy the Block movement and use similar concepts to address these challenges. Socially conscious investors could use these crowdfunding platforms or other SEC regulated investment funds to raise money and develop infill housing, acquire apartment buildings, restore distressed properties, and purchase commercial properties and consciously keep it all affordable and attainable for people in the community. This same collective investing model could be used by a group of entrepreneurs to raise funds to purchase franchises or any other type of business.

The point is that the issues and challenges in this community are really opportunities for creativity and collaborative thinking. If we allow our parent’s and grandparent’s homes to be sold instead of keeping them in the family, then of course, it is up for grabs by whomever. The value of properties and assets in Black and urban neighborhoods have historically been undervalued hence the surge in gentrification by outsiders. It is impossible to think that outsiders would overlook the opportunities in our community just because we will not invest in them. We have an opportunity to recreate our own Auburn Ave or Black Wall Street. There is not a shortage of money or funding. There is a shortage of creative thinking. |



LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD



BY ROB COLLINS

There is an invisible, systemic barrier that has plagued Black homeownership throughout the decades and has become a crutch to the widening wealth gap and continued economic disparities. Even in 2020.

When the 2019 report *The Color of Wealth* in Miami pointed out that 70.8 percent of non-Hispanic White families in the Miami metro area owned their homes compared to just 37.2 percent of the area's Black households, there was nothing particularly telling or profound about the data. That's because since the beginning of time, Black families across the country were restricted in where they could freely live. And even when Black people fared better with the Black Migration from the South to the North in search of better economic conditions and job opportunities, we were still living within this invisible barrier.

In Miami, Black workers were not allowed to settle wherever they chose despite being among the founders of the city. Instead, they had to form communities only within certain limited neighborhoods, many of which remain majority Black today. Black people

in Miami-Dade have been continuously told where they can live via violence, intimidation, and harassment, as well as through hidden administrative decisions and unfair (and illegal) policies and procedures.

We've made all of this progress in this country but still have not seemed to make seismic shifts in our financial and economic prosperity as a community. How is it that Black homeownership today is lower than it was more than 50 years ago before the Fair Housing Act was passed and when redlining was still legal?

When MDEAT's Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP) launched in 1995, it was to help make homeownership more accessible by minimizing the financial burden through down payment and closing cost assistance. The \$7,250 that HAP provides to first-time home buyers, when stacked with other down payment assistance (DPA) programs throughout the county, has the potential of significantly reducing the buyer's total mortgage loan amount, and thereby minimizing the buyer's debt burden. Additionally, HAP has always been designated for low to moderate income families below 140 percent of the median income for the area, which for a family of four is up to \$127,960 in annual income in 2020.

Of the more than 7,500 families that have purchased a home using more than \$42 million in HAP funds, about 40 percent (or a little over 3,000) have been Black families

receiving more than \$16.3 million in HAP funds. That's 3,000 new Black homeowners over 25 years from just one agency, but apparently that still has not been enough to quell the gap.

While homeownership isn't the least of our economic disparities – Black business growth, access to capital, and student loan burden all add to the challenges – what's important to note here is that several macroenvironment influences only widen the gap. Namely, over development, under investment, gentrification, debt burden, financial illiteracy, and discriminatory lending practices only help to push up housing costs in Black neighborhoods, push out residents, and make it that much harder for Black buyers.

For example, the 2015-2020 Miami-Dade County Analysis of Impediments showed that undesirable high-interest rate mortgage loans only made up 6 percent of the loans originated for White applicants, but 22 percent of the loans originated for Black applicants, and 16 percent of the loans originated for Hispanic applicants. But before that, Black borrowers also face inequities in many of the main factors considered in applying for loans in the first place, including credit, rental history/opportunities, employment, and banking. And actually, even with the same creditworthiness (when those factors are all the same), Black borrowers are still frequently given less favorable lending options and conditions. That is, two mortgage applicants, one White

and one Black, with the same application are likely to receive different decisions, with patterns of these decisions repeatedly falling along racial lines.

Again, this is not a new state of housing, but continued patterns of an invisible barrier. Over time, all this does is continue to siphon any instance of Black wealth to the point of putting us on par to where Black net wealth was in 1968.

Ultimately, all of this comes down to one thing – structural changes are needed to change the current financial trajectory for Black families. Programs alone are not enough. While MDEAT HAP is in place to help increase Black homeownership, the

systemic barriers and macroenvironment factors are much too great of a force for MDEAT to battle alone.

The State of Black Homeownership in Miami relies on the greater role that a collective body of government entities play in addressing housing affordability. It's illogical to herald the region as a global city on one hand while another segment of the community continues to be disparaged and pushed aside. There has to be a leveling of the playing field to adjust for the decades and 401 years of economic injustice and racial disparities in this country. And while this general issue goes well beyond the county, this polarization must be resolved if we are to live up to our hype as a truly global city.

Now, as you read this, the playing field for buying a home in Miami-Dade County remains uneven and continues to widen. MDEAT, however, has not resigned itself to this as an unbeatable challenge. MDEAT continues to reach people to help them help themselves, and in doing so, make increased Black homeownership (and everything that comes with it) a reality.

Rob Collins, Esq.
is the Miami-Dade Education & Outreach Coordinator for Housing Opportunities Project for Excellence (HOPE), Inc., a non-profit that fights housing discrimination in Florida's Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.



THE URGENCY OF NOW



BY FABIOLA FLEURANVIL

Every Black generation before us has walked away with receipts of how the protests of their time moved the needle forward. This generation – every one of us included – has the same responsibility, and whatever we are going to demand from America, and locally from the State of Florida and Miami-Dade County, must happen with urgency, boldness, and the unwillingness to not take no or crumbs for an answer. As they say in popular culture, it is time to get the bag because this momentum may not last, and the outpouring of funding will eventually come to an end.

AS A COMMUNITY, WHAT WILL WE ASK FOR AND DEMAND?

It was 40 years ago on May 18, 1980 when Miami erupted into riots lasting three days following the acquittal of the White police officers who beat Arthur McDuffie, a Black man, to death after a traffic stop. And forty years later, not much has changed, because as of the time of this writing, the white police officers who senselessly killed Breona Taylor in her Kentucky home have been acquitted with a slap on the wrist.

When MDEAT's predecessor, Miami Metro Action Plan (MMAP), was established in 1983 to address socioeconomic disparities in response to the McDuffie riots, many successes came as a result, including the funding of the first Black-owned Denny's in the Southeast U.S. and the development of the Sailboat Cove community in Opa-locka, among others.

However, Black businesses in Miami-Dade County have not seen the level of success that it will take to create generational wealth.

There is a Black momentum around the country that may not last long but is perhaps our greatest opportunity to make demands of a racialized system and to effectuate policy change. More corporate funding is pouring into social justice programs and towards Black businesses than ever before. We have never seen institutions from every branch of corporate America publicly support racial justice like we are seeing today. And whether it is the pressure of protestors, who are also as diverse as ever, the guilt from 401 years of systemic oppression, or the consciousness of America finally making amends with its dark past, what we are seeing today is the charge that we need to change our trajectory for Black Americans from this point forward.

By comparison, when the mayors of Atlanta, Washington, DC, and Detroit intentionally decided that local contracts were going to be set aside for Black businesses, those communities saw more Black entrepreneurs flourish and more Black wealth be created. And today, those same cities and countless others have done a far better job of attracting our Black talent than we have done of keeping them here.

Miami has not been a place where Black businesses and entrepreneurs can thrive, but it does not have to be that way. We are in the perfect position to change the system and no longer accept that only two percent of local government contracts are awarded to Black businesses. Whatever needs to be done to move that number to reflect at least our 17.7 percent representation in the county – whether that be the establishment of a mentor protege program or set asides specifically for Black businesses – we are due it.

MDEAT has been responsible for helping to create more than 3,000 new Black homeowners in the county, but that is still not enough because MDEAT alone cannot solve the macroenvironment issues that persist. Little Haiti is aggressively changing ownership and pricing Black people out of their homes and from their businesses, and it is also already happening in Liberty City. Gentrification, over development, and investor greed is encroaching on our Black communities that have historically been a safe haven for

where Black people have congregated and created community. Our millennials cannot afford to buy a home here, and more Black families continue to be pushed north just to afford a home.

WHERE WILL WE GO FROM HERE?

We are at 9-1-1 emergency levels in this country and in this county, and the urgency of now is in our face. The governor, our senators and elected officials from across our municipalities and counties, every resident – Black, White, Hispanic, and other – and every single major industry in this state is responsible for how we move forward from here. Florida is a battleground state in every respect – politics, culture, global status, and by sheer size alone – and every move that we make and every gain forward sets the temperature and tone for what the rest of America looks like and could be, whether good or bad.

What will our legacy be as a state and as a county that is reflective of the changing demographics in this country and our global dominance with the Caribbean and Latin America? We have a banner to wave and whether it is on the right side or the dark side will depend on how we move forward with urgency and rightness. |

Fabiola Fleuranvil
CEO, Blueprint Creative Group,
Agency of Record for MDEAT
and publisher of this annual magazine

LOCAL VOICES

Given the protests that erupted following the brutal murder of George Floyd, Breona Taylor, and countless others at the hands of police and White people, and the subsequent outrage regarding racial and economic disparities from the 400+ years of injustices against Black people, we asked various members of the community for their thoughts on why now is the perfect moment to disrupt the system and create lasting impact, and what that should look like.



“Within a matter of weeks, America went from a health crisis to an economic crisis, and now to a racial crisis. America is facing a racism pandemic. We have seen many global companies respond with a commitment to provide financial support towards causes related to police reform, racial equity, and civil rights. However, those efforts do not address the economic disparity and 400-year wealth gap in Black communities across the country. Anchor institutions nationally and locally must now open up opportunities to minority and women-owned businesses and afford them the opportunity to grow and secure contracts so that we can begin to close this gap. This also includes educating our community on wealth creation through life insurance, stocks, and real estate; gain access to capital; mitigate tax liabilities; and build business credit.”

JAMES WRIGHT,
Committee Member, MDEAT Economic
Development Action Committee (EDAC)
and By-Laws Committee



“As people of color, we have always dealt with issues of racial and economic disparity. In my opinion, for the first time in a long time, others seem to have joined and recognized the multitude of disparities and biases and are willing to seek actionable steps to rectify and make amends.”

JULIO PITI,
Board Member, MDEAT



“Until we become bold enough as a society to honestly acknowledge what the true root of the problem is and not just the symptoms, we will never have the capacity or the desire to discuss the solutions and evolve.”

JAMES BUNYAN,
Real Estate Broker/Consultant
and Executive Committee Member, MDEAT

Now would be an appropriate time to “disrupt” the system because we have a system that is not functioning as well as it could be operating because of a number of different variables. I think to attempt to disrupt the system just to disrupt would be of no consequence. I believe we need to decide on what we want to get accomplished, develop a plan to get it accomplished, and implement that plan with military precision that will include checks and balances to increase the probability of the success of that plan.

ALFRED L. CAMPBELL,
Ph.D. Researcher, Association of Black Psychologists and Committee Member,
MDEAT Youth Action Committee (YAC)



“We must have a plan of continuing to be involved in the everyday workings of government. We have to be prepared to collaborate with others to create lasting impact. We must know who we are, be proud of it, and not allow others to define who we are because then we lose.”

LONNIE LAWRENCE,
Noble South Florida and Board Member,
MDEAT and Member, Youth Action Committee (YAC)



“At this moment in time Black people should be more eager to come together and support each other. We can not be afraid to ask for what we deserve. We have to continue to stand up for each other and encourage the next generation to make a difference and create a legacy.”

LAWANDA WRIGHT-ROBINSON,
Miami-Dade County Small Business
Section Chief and Committee Member,
MDEAT EDAC

FINANCIAL LITERACY, WEALTH ACCUMULATION MUST BECOME PRIORITY



BY JAMES BUNYAN

It is obvious that MDEAT is firm about its commitment to increasing Black homeownership. Besides the economic benefits, what is not often discussed is the social justice connection to home ownership. As we are seeing today across the country, Black people and our communities are under the threat of a number of injustices, and one simple approach to addressing these challenges is to increase our collective wealth. The more ownership we have in our communities, the greater our ability to influence policing and policies as a result of having a larger tax base and voting block of Black residents.

We are well aware of a system of redlining, steering, blockbusting, and other discriminatory practices that often blocks Black people from owning a home. We also know that among the top reasons for mortgage denial for Black buyers is debt to income ratio, credit, and a lack of collateral, which results in about 60 to 70 percent of denial. What does that tell us? Lack of income, access, and wealth keeps us out of the process and further contributes to our diminishing collective wealth.

Even with these challenges, our parents and grandparents pursued home ownership with far less and with blatantly aggressive racism to deal with. So these are not insurmountable challenges to overcome. However, we have to get back to the business of teaching about wealth - the kind that comes from smart money practices, sound investing, credit education, and leveraging equity in our homes.

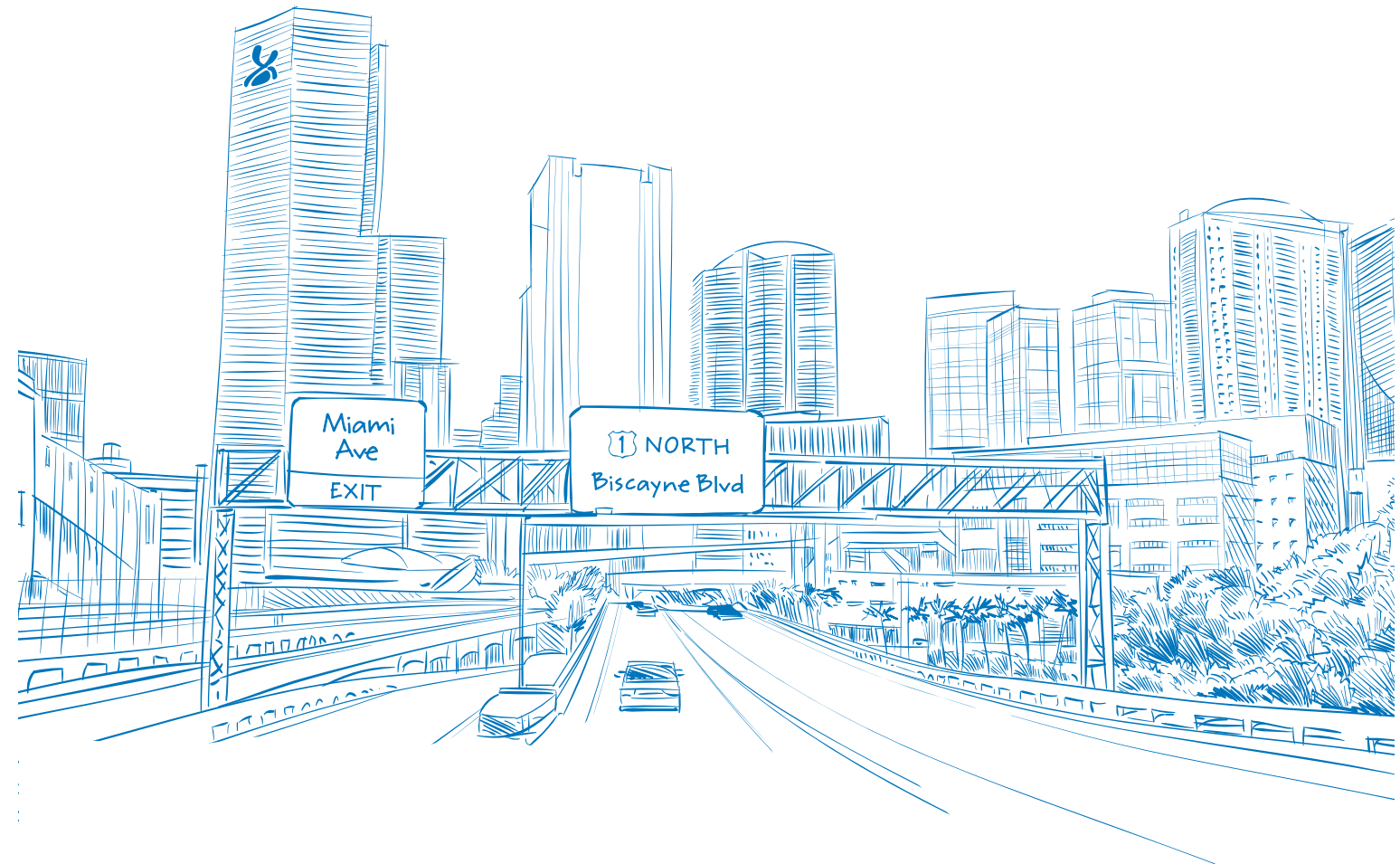
We also have to wrap our hands around the ballooning student loan debt that has become another crutch for our people. Eighty percent of Black students have to take out student loans in order to attend college compared to 59 percent of White students. The result is crippling the next generation's dreams of home ownership and wealth accumulation.

Due to wealth and pay gaps, Black families may not be able to fund a college savings plan at the same levels, which is why we have to embrace financial literacy and also teach it to our youth early.

Lastly, we have to get more aggressive about growing and scaling Black businesses, and that requires government intervention. The trajectory of a Black business is far greater when local government intentionally puts policies in place to increase procurement opportunities, and the same is required of the private sector - better implementation of supplier diversity programs that are small business friendly.

Whether young or old, homeowner or not, there is a greater responsibility for all of us to reach back and figure out how to close the knowledge gap. Ultimately, we have to be willing to collectively create alternative ideas and solutions to navigate these circumstances. New policies are needed and it will take everyone from the faith-based community and community based organizations to business groups, social organizations, elected officials, the greater business community, and our legislators to work together on these issues. |

James Bunyan
is Broker/Owner of Millennium III Realty,
Second Vice Chair of MDEAT Executive
Board and Chairman, MDEAT Housing Ac-
tion Committee.



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COVID-19 & MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S ECONOMY

BY KWAME DONALDSON, PHD.

As the smoke continues to clear from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing devastation to the economy and normalcy as we know it, our community is still assessing the impact across industries and the local job market. Similarly, communities across the country are rethinking the future of economic development and how to best respond to more urgent needs while still continuing to stimulate growth.

We asked Kwame Donaldson, PhD and Senior Economist at Moody's to provide a local economic update since the pandemic. Moody's Analytics provides financial intelligence and analytical tools and regularly reports on various economic indicators throughout the country.

Recent Performance. The economy in Miami-Dade County is recovering from the COVID-19 recession. The unemployment rate has improved from devastating to dreadful; the August jobless rate was 7.6 percent, slashing the previous month's record high in half but still well above the county's 10-year average. This improvement comes with a caveat: the substantial decline is partly explained by the drastic reduction in the labor force, which is smaller than it was two years ago.

Other aspects of the county's economy were unscathed by the recession. Housing price growth has accelerated because a decline in residential demand has been outmatched by an even bigger drop in supply. In addition, household balance sheets in Miami-Dade have not weakened in the wake of the disruptions. The total outstanding balance for all personal loans and consumer credit accounts has leveled off since the start of the year, and the delinquency rate is lower.

Low-wage jobs struggle to rebound. Despite these positive recent indicators, troubling signs persist. Low wage jobs were hardest-hit by the disruptions and shutdowns that public officials ordered to slow the spread of COVID-19, and much of this employment has not fully recovered.

Chart 1 shows how sectors of Miami's labor market performed this year. The left axis measures average weekly wages for each sector in the first quarter; these are reported for the whole metro area, including Palm Beach and Broward counties. The right axis measures the percentage change in employment in each sector since February, just prior to the COVID-19 shutdowns; these growth rates are for Miami-Dade County alone.

The pattern is clear. Jobs in the highest paying occupations have either increased or dropped only slightly, while the lowest-wage jobs have endured significant cuts. While most of Miami-Dade has emerged from the COVID-19

recession, households that depend on low-wage jobs in retail and leisure/hospitality are still struggling.

Low-income ZIPs lose pace. The hardship created by the withdrawal of low-wage jobs extends to house values in low-income neighborhoods. Across the county, there are 57 ZIP codes where house prices are tracked by CoreLogic, a firm that specializes in monitoring and reporting real estate price trends. Moody's Analytics divided these ZIP codes into deciles based on the ZIP code's median family income, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2018. The lowest decile represents ZIPs where the median

family income is in the bottom 10% for the county, the second lowest decile measures the next 10%, and so on.

Moody's Analytics then averaged the median family income and house price growth for ZIPs in each decile. In the lowest-income ZIP code decile, average family income was \$35,000 and the average home value is lower today than it was at the beginning of the year. By contrast, average income in the highest decile was \$150,000 and home values increased by 2% since the start of the year. Chart 2 plots all 10 of these pairs. The upward-sloping trend line confirms that homeowners in higher-income

ZIP codes have generally enjoyed faster house price appreciation since the beginning of the year.

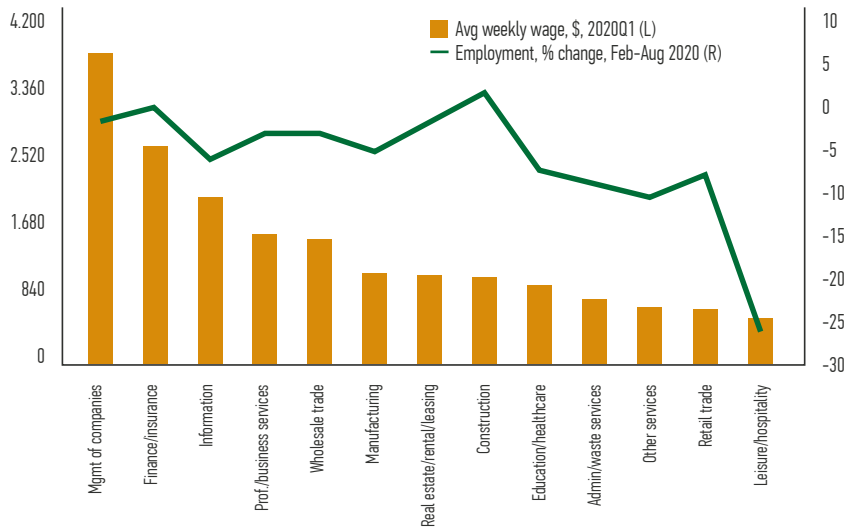
Moody's Analytics repeated the above analysis for every county in the U.S. with more than 10 ZIP codes tracked by CoreLogic, and the result is illustrated in Chart 3. In contrast to the positive relationship between family income and house price growth that is evident in Miami-Dade, there is an inverse relationship nationwide. The closeness between the downward-sloping trend line and the points on the graph indicates that the negative correlation is nearly perfect.

In most of the U.S., federal policies that include enhanced unemployment benefits and suspensions on evictions and foreclosures have supported house price growth in the poorest ZIP codes during the COVID-19 recession. But in Miami-Dade, these policies were insufficient to prevent losses in these communities because an extraordinary number of low-wage jobs have vanished.

Forecast. Miami-Dade County will fully recover all of its lost jobs by the end of 2022, but low-wage jobs in retail and leisure/hospitality will take longer to rebound. If officials do not enact policies to address the extended recession among low-income households, many of these residents will fall further behind. Income inequality in Miami-Dade, which is already among the most unequal in the nation, will widen.

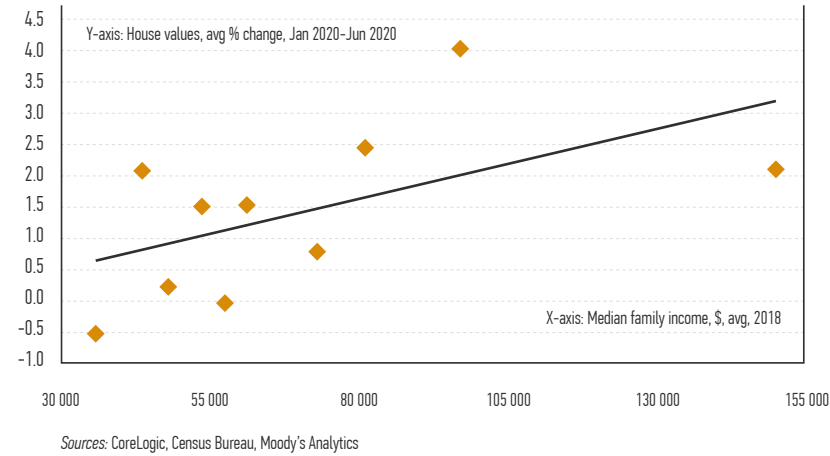
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Miami's Low-Wage Jobs Shed Employment

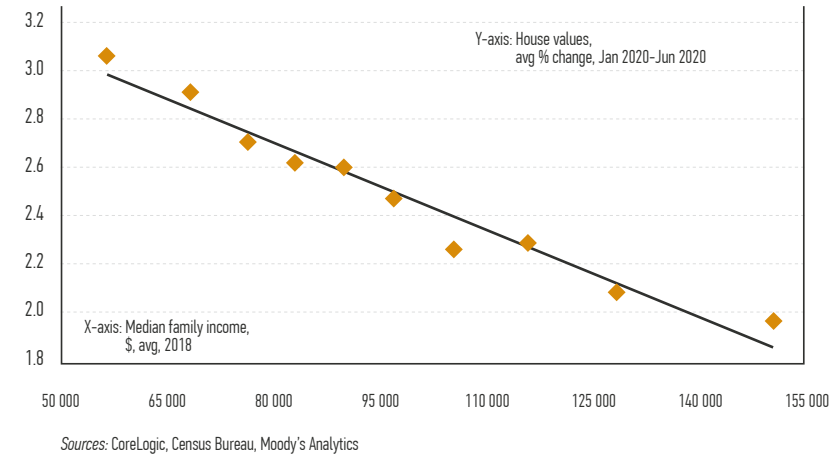


Sources: BLS, Moody's Analytics

Low-Income ZIPs Lose Value in Miami... ZIP code deciles in Miami-Dade County



...While Rising in Value Nationwide ZIP code deciles in the U.S.



Jobs in the highest paying occupations have either increased or dropped only slightly, while the lowest-wage jobs have endured significant cuts.

// Get in good trouble, necessary
trouble, and help redeem the soul
of America.

John Lewis,
speaking atop the Edmund Pettus
Bridge in Selma, Alabama,
on March 1, 2020

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