



2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES 2024-2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD



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Dear Members, Partners, and Stakeholders,

It is with great pride and a sense of purpose that I present to you the **2025 Legislative Agenda** of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities. As we continue to champion the interests of our diverse and vibrant communities, this booklet serves as a blueprint for the key legislative priorities and initiatives that will guide our efforts at the local, state, and federal levels.

At the heart of our advocacy lies an unwavering commitment to the protection of Home Rule, the principle that empowers our local governments to address the unique needs of their communities without undue interference. Preserving this fundamental right remains our top priority as we work to ensure that the voices of our municipalities are heard and respected.

This year, the Miami-Dade County League of Cities Executive Director and Board will travel to Tallahassee to advocate on behalf of our cities. By meeting directly with state legislators and decision-makers, we aim to strengthen our partnerships, champion the priorities outlined in this agenda, and reinforce the importance of protecting Home Rule.

Through strategic collaborations with legislators, community leaders, and stakeholders, the Miami-Dade County League of Cities continues to advocate for policies that promote sustainable development, enhance public safety, and improve the quality of life for our residents. This agenda represents the collective voice of our member cities and reflects our shared commitment to progress and resilience.

We have outlined the priorities that will shape our advocacy efforts in the coming year. Your engagement and support are vital as we strive to make a lasting impact. Together, we can ensure that our cities remain vibrant, inclusive, and resilient places to live, work, learn, and play. Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to our shared mission.

Yours in service,

Karyn Cunningham
President, Miami-Dade League of Cities
Mayor, Village of Palmetto Bay

Miami-Dade County League of Cities 2025 State Legislative Priority Positions

* Adopted from the Florida League of Cities (FLC) 2025 Legislative Action Agenda and approved by the Miami-Dade County League of Cities (MDCLC) Board.

PRIORITIES

Affordable Housing*

The Board **SUPPORTS** legislation that allows for a collaborative approach that balances the pressing needs for affordable and workforce housing while respecting the ability of local governments to effectively manage growth to ensure developments align with the character, capabilities and resources of each community.

Electric Vehicles*

The Board **SUPPORTS** legislation that ensures all vehicles, regardless of fuel type, contribute fairly to the funding of Florida's transportation infrastructure, which will allow cities to maintain safe and reliable roads for all residents.

Enterprise Fund Transfers and Extraterritorial Surcharges*

The Board **SUPPORTS** preserving municipal authority over utility revenues and the ability to realize a reasonable rate of return on utility assets. Legislation should honor current practices, existing contracts, utility operation and maintenance costs, service territory obligations and revenues obligated for debt service and planned projects.

Property Taxes*

The Board **SUPPORTS** the levy of property taxes by municipalities to provide critical services such as infrastructure, police, fire and emergency services. Further changes or exemptions to the property tax system and tangible personal property taxes would create inequities and unfairly shift the tax burden onto families, homeowners, renters, businesses and our most vulnerable population.

Sovereign Immunity*

The Board **SUPPORTS** preserving reasonable sovereign immunity liability caps for municipal governments to protect taxpayer funds and ensure delivery of public services.

POLICY POSITIONS

Annexation*

The Board **SUPPORTS** legislation that facilitates the municipal annexation of unincorporated areas in a manner that respects municipal boundaries, protects private property rights and encourages cooperation between municipal and county governments.

Impact Fees*

The Board **SUPPORTS** protecting municipal authority to set impact fees that safeguard existing taxpayers from incurring additional infrastructure costs.

Local Business Taxes*

The Board **SUPPORTS** preserving municipal ability to collect local business taxes in order to foster economic growth, ensure public safety, deliver emergency services and drive community development.

One Water*

The Board **SUPPORTS** the state legislature's endorsement of One Water policies that seek to enhance integration between different water systems while maintaining local flexibility.

Public Safety Recruitment and Retention*

The Board **SUPPORTS** legislation and funding to enhance recruitment and retention of municipal public safety personnel, which will help communities maintain effective emergency response and public safety services.

* Adopted from the Florida League of Cities (FLC) 2025 Legislative Action Agenda and approved by the Miami-Dade County League of Cities (MDCLC) Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2025 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

*Adopted and approved by the Miami-Dade County League of Cities (MDCLC) Board.

ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENTS

Florida's commitment to Early Childhood Education:

- Expand funding for the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program sufficient to cover the cost of a full-day Prekindergarten program for all students.
- Expand VPK to include program options for three-year old students.

FUNDING

Redefine cost factors within the FEFP beyond the comparative wage factor to include factors which disproportionately impact high-cost counties such as housing, transportation, health, and property insurance cost, which ultimately raise educational institutions operational costs.

Increase the state's investment in K-12 education by increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) commensurate with the rate of inflation and cost-of-living increases, but no less than 5 percent new funding, and maintain the full calculation of the Required Local Effort (RLE).

Allow school districts to manage the Florida Empowerment Scholarship (FES) vouchers.

Assist with the reconciliation of potential duplicate cases associated with the Florida Empowerment Scholarships (FES) vouchers and the reporting of FTE.

Ensure that the full cost of increases expected for the Family Empowerment Scholarships (FES) is accounted for during the FY 2025-2026 budget development and that the FTE associated with that projection remains transparent.

Maintain the Education Enrollment Stabilization Program (EES) in an amount necessary to prevent proration as a result of anticipated enrollment increases (FES, immigration, natural disasters, demographic shifts).

Eliminate compression within the FEFP formula.

Increase the Safe Schools Categorical allocation by at least \$40 million to narrow the funding gap associated with the mandate to staff one "safe school officer" per school and ensure sustainable funding for school districts.

Increase the mental health allocation to expand services to students and facilitate the hiring of additional school counselors, social workers, and/or psychologists; or to implement other effective mental health strategies.

Continue to invest in teacher and instructional personnel compensation improvement by providing sufficient funding to the Classroom Teacher and Other Instructional Personnel Increase Allocation to ensure salary increases beyond the prior fiscal year amount.

Increase per pupil funding for all students with exceptionalities (Gifted/SWDs) to account for both student population growth and inflationary costs related to services/programs.

Support funding to enhance community resources and post-secondary opportunities such as community-based life skills and transitional programs for young adults with disabilities, including those on the Autism Spectrum who are transitioning out of the K-12 environment.

Provide funding for Dual Enrollment courses or virtual classes outside the traditional school day, above the 1.0 FTE or 25 hours/week.

CAPITAL FUNDING

For purposes of calculation and distribution of capital outlay funds, include PK and Post-secondary/ CTE FTE membership counts in the methodology calculation of eligible students for capital outlay funds. (October v. February FTE).

Establish that when distributing 1.5 mill capital outlay funds to charter schools, the total discretionary millage revenue available for distribution shall be reduced by the school district's annual debt service obligation incurred as of June 30 of each prior fiscal year.

Support the establishment of a dedicated fund to assist school districts in implementing measures to improve operational efficiency, including the use of alternative energy sources such as solar, the acquisition of electric buses and fleet vehicles, and necessary infrastructure and technology upgrades to support their use.

Request flexibility on the use of Impact Fees for school renovations to better serve new students.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT REFORM

Remove the requirement for the State Board of education to automatically annually adjust the school grading scale.

Establish maximum flexibility to provide for students to achieve concordance for graduation purposes (i.e. PERT, ACT).

GOVERNANCE

Amend F.S. 1001.372(1) to allow school boards to omit one regular monthly meeting during the summer period (June, July or August).

Allow exemption to the school starting times by 2026 for middle and high school students pursuant to F.S. 1001.42(4)(f)(2). However, each school district may, after providing all the previous referenced information through the community, annually exempt a school or schools from these start times, and publicly noticed and discussed by the school board at a publicly noticed meeting. However, no start time may be before 7:15 a.m. Any such waiver shall be annually reported to the Florida Department of Education.

Support the streamlining of statutory and State Administrative Code requirements in order to enhance the efficiency of public-school operations.

Remove restrictions on the disposal of surplus school board owned property.

TEACHERS/PERSONNEL

Amend F.S. 1004.85 to enable more relevant and aligned teacher preparation programs, better serving the needs of districts and students by ensuring better teacher preparation programs (Educator Preparation Institutes).

Amend the teacher apprenticeship program to allow eligibility based on an Associate's degree or 60 credit hours from an accredited higher education institution.

Amend the teacher apprenticeship program for the mentor teacher to have two (2) years of "Highly Effective" teacher ratings, within the last five (5) years in districts identified as "Highly Effective."

Provide incentives and/or funding to facilitate the development of workforce housing specifically for public school personnel.

Include Pre-K staff in the definition of "Instructional Personnel" if employed by a Public School or Charter School.

Provide a bonus in the amount of \$50 to compensate teachers for every student who earns a "C" or higher on an IB Theory of Knowledge subject examination.

SCHOOL/STUDENT SAFETY/WELLNESS

Amend F.S. 316.1896(5) to read, "seventy-seven dollars (\$77) per violation must be distributed to the county for any violations" occurring in any unincorporated areas of the county or to the municipality for any violations occurring in the incorporated boundaries of the municipality in which the infraction occurred or the school district responsible for capturing the violation.

Provide increased funding for safety infrastructure needs, inclusive of school campus hardening, lightning detections systems at schools with outdoor play fields, and/or facilities where no other such device exists within a one-mile radius, and alert systems.

Provide funding to school districts to upgrade and strengthen cyber security controls.

Provide funding to support at least one nurse or emergency medical technician at each school.

Amend F.S. 1003.572 to require collaboration between public and private providers and require private providers to adhere to school board policies and procedures while on school property.

Amend F.S. 1003.572 to require the development of a standardized behavioral support plan.

Allow Districts to establish parameters for service providers which limit disruption to the instructional environment.



Prosecution Staffing Crisis 2024-2025 Legislative Session

In recent years, the Florida Legislature and Governor took substantial steps to compensate for their predecessors' decades of neglect. I am sincerely grateful for their efforts, but our community remains at a "tipping" point and its safety is at risk. From 2021-2023, we lost 156 prosecutors. By the 2023/2024 fiscal year, we were up to 206 resignations. This averages out to a loss of 70 prosecutors per year. The Legislature appropriates a starting salary of \$65,000 for Assistant State Attorneys. We simply cannot compete.

I. Threat to Public Safety and the Community

- a. Our inability to recruit, hire, and retain attorneys and staff threatens public safety. Because of attrition, regrettably many prosecutors are handling case volumes far in excess of their capabilities. Many of the prosecutors handling high-level cases, like attempted murder, rape, kidnapping, and armed robbery, have less than three years' experience and some of them have participated in only a handful of jury trials.
- b. Sadly, as a result, victims and their families must deal with a constant rotation of lawyers on their cases, forced to relive the trauma and victimization they endured each time, often giving up, and causing cases to be dropped and criminals freed.

II. Miami is One of the Most Expensive Cities in the United States

- a. Nearly 75% of law students graduate in debt and the average graduate owes \$160,000 in student loan debt.ⁱ The median rent in Miami for a one-bedroom apartment was nearly \$3,000 in September 2024, 75% above the national average.ⁱⁱ
- b. Miami's affordable housing market is woefully inadequate and remains one of, if not the most expensive housing market in the country.ⁱⁱⁱ Since FY 2020-2021 Miami's cost-of-living grew by 21%, but the living adjustments appropriated by the Legislature during that same time period amounted to only a 16% increase, a difference of 4.22%.
- c. From June 2023 to June 2024, the consumer price index (CPI) again rose 3.5% in the Miami, Fort-Lauderdale, West Palm Beach region,^{iv} double the 1.8% increase in the Tampa region during approximately the same time.^v

III. Salaries for Florida Prosecutors are Not Competitive in Miami-Dade County

- a. While I used vacancy money to raise our Legislatively funded starting salary, it remains in the bottom 25% paid to entry level attorneys in Miami.^{vi}
- b. We pay significantly less than local agencies in Miami. The lowest paid attorney in our local County Attorney's Office earns nearly \$171,000 and the lowest paid attorney in the Office of Inspector General's Office earns \$123,000. Recently, a new ASA, with just 6 months in our office, resigned to go to Miami Beach City Attorney's Office for a \$20,000 increase.
- c. At the end of FY 2023-2024, 113 of our prosecution positions were unfilled (over 32%), making it nearly impossible to properly staff critical divisions like our Gun Violence, Public Corruption, Human Trafficking, Gang, Organized Crime, and Narcotics units.

Our community and its victims, our office, and our attorneys deserve better.

Solutions^{vii}: [Only in the Criminal Division]

- a. Pursuant to the Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) Cost Area Differential (CAD) table, law enforcement officers and legal assistants in other agencies receive CADs of \$5,000 and \$1,248, respectively, in Miami-Dade County. We request that the prosecutors and staff receive the same CADs as their counterparts in other law enforcement agencies. Total: SAO Dade - \$3.3M, Statewide SAO's - \$8.8M
- b. We are requesting funds to raise the starting salaries of ASAs to \$85,000 and increase their pay floors to enhance hiring and retention. Total: SAO Dade - \$7.3M, Statewide SAO's - \$48.5M



2024-2026 MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION



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MDC - Delegation Vice Chair
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- Community Affairs
- Education Postsecondary
- Finance and Tax
- Fiscal Policy
- Transportation



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- Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services
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- Governmental Oversight and Accountability
- Rules
- Joint Select Committee on Collective Bargaining



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- Regulated Industries, Vice Chair
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- Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government
- Banking and Insurance
- Criminal Justice
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- Joint Legislative Auditing Committee
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- Education Administration
- Government Operations
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- Higher Education Budget
- Special Committees:
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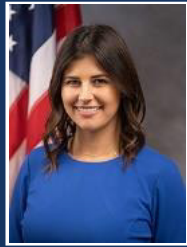
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