Miami-Dade County Office of Community Advocacy

Elder Affairs Advisory Board

Monthly Public Meeting

Thursday, November 20, 2025

Sunkist Grove Community Center

12500 NW 13th Ave, North Miami, FL 33167

MINUTES

Members Present: Deborah J. Love, Marina Blachman, Barby Morales, Winnie Tang, Brenda Lampon

Members Absent: Johnnie Kerr, Mario Tapia, Armando Riera

I. Welcome

The meeting opened with welcoming remarks. Guests and community partners present were acknowledged and invited to introduce themselves.

II. Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to Be Heard (2 minutes per person)

Public comments and introductions included:

- **Susie Wells**, Owner, *First Quality Medical Supplies*, introduced her organization and shared that they provide statewide services including incontinence supplies and other medical supply supports. She expressed interest in assisting the community and thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend.
- **Joseph Nigel**, Social Services Manager for the Senior Program, City of North Miami, welcomed the Board and highlighted the importance of community partnerships. He noted that many seniors were present and actively seeking resources and community engagement opportunities.

- **Michael D.**, Assistant Director, Miami-Dade County Community Services Department, introduced himself and shared a general overview of programs under his oversight, including Head Start programming and summer meals, and noted his collaboration with staff involved in older adult services.
- **Elvis Higgs**, Community Director for Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities (Miami-Dade County Community Services Department), shared an overview of services including senior centers, adult day care centers, senior volunteer opportunities (e.g., Senior Companion, Foster Grandparent), respite-related services, and the availability of training and resources to support volunteer participation and community engagement.
- A community member (former board member and long-time community advocate/caregiver) provided remarks regarding community service, caregiver experiences, and the importance of supporting seniors and caregivers.
- **Laura Morilla**, Director, Office of Community Advocacy, welcomed attendees and provided an overview of volunteer advisory boards housed under the Office of Community Advocacy, including that board members are appointed by County Commissioners and that the boards meet monthly to advocate for their respective constituent groups.

III. Approval of Agenda – November Meeting (Vote)

A roll call/attendance check was initiated; however, **a quorum was not established**. Therefore, **no vote** was taken to approve the agenda.

IV. Approval of Minutes – July 31, 2025 (Vote)

Due to **lack of quorum**, **no vote** was taken to approve the July 31, 2025 minutes.

V. Elections (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Second Vice Chairperson)

Due to **lack of quorum**, **elections were not held** and will be addressed at a future meeting when quorum is present.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Selection of Community Outreach Committee Members
Due to **lack of quorum**, no formal selections were made.

B. Community Outreach Committee (Discussion)
Discussion included continued outreach efforts and the importance of collaboration with community partners.

C. Older Adult Resource Fair (Discussion)
The Resource Fair was discussed as the Board's major annual outreach event. It was shared that the **next Resource Fair is being planned for April 30** and will be held in **Hialeah**. Community partners expressed interest in participating and supporting turnout. Appreciation was expressed to partners for prior collaboration and encouragement was given for broad community participation.

D. Older Adult Resource Guide
The Resource Guide was discussed as a "community resource directory" (compared to "Yellow Pages") intended to help older adults locate services and supports. Updates and expansion of resources were encouraged. The **Creole edition** was mentioned as forthcoming/near completion, with plans to share it once available.

VII. Old Business

A. Ethics Refresher Training (Discussion) – Presented by Mr. Robert Thompson, Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics
The ethics refresher training was discussed. It was noted that the training had been previously planned and the group expressed interest in receiving it. Vanessa indicated she would coordinate with Mr. Robert Thompson and provide available dates to schedule the training, with a preference for an in-person session.

VIII. New Business

A. Discussion on the 2026 Meeting Calendar (Vote)
Due to **lack of quorum**, **no vote** was taken.
Discussion included whether to return to Westchester Regional Library every other meeting versus continuing to rotate meeting locations throughout Miami-Dade County to improve accessibility and community engagement. Multiple participants supported rotation to meet seniors where they are and to address mobility/access issues.

IX. Announcements

A. Resignation of Chairwoman Lupe Bruneman – announced.
B. Resignation of Second Vice Chairwoman Betty Hermida – announced; appreciation was expressed for her service.
C. Passing of Board Member Magali Abad – announced; condolences were expressed and there was discussion about sending flowers/acknowledgment to the family.
D. January 29 Presentation: Florida Long-Term Care Program (PPL)
An overview was provided about Florida's Long-Term Care Program , which allows eligible adults with disabilities and older adults to select, hire, and train caregivers (including family members) at no additional cost, subject to program requirements (e.g., screening/training).

The January 29, 2026 meeting presentation was announced, and interest was expressed in sharing the information broadly with seniors and caregivers.

E. The Board does not meet in December. Happy Holidays – announced.

X. Adjournment

Because **a quorum was not present**, formal action items were deferred. Attendees were invited to mingle, ask questions, and connect with staff/community partners. The meeting was then **adjourned**.