

# Memorandum



**Date:** June 24, 2022

**To:** Honorable Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Daniella Levine Cava  
Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniella Levine Cava".

**Subject:** Report on the Collaboration between University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities and Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust to Establish a Program for Neurodivergent Youth to Participate in Teen Court - Directive 212660

This report is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-64-22, which was sponsored by Commissioner Raquel A. Regalado, and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) at its January 12, 2022, meeting. This resolution directed the County Mayor or County Mayor’s designee to collaborate with the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities and Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust to establish a program for neurodivergent youth to allow such youth to fully participate in the Miami-Dade Teen Court program without any funds being expended by the County. The Resolution also directed the administration to identify resources needed to provide access and participation for neurodivergent tweens, teens, and young adults, and to provide a report.

Upon receiving contact information for Christina Rodriguez, Case Manager for Applied Research and Behavioral Training with UM-NSU CARD, Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust staff made contact via email to schedule a Zoom meeting to become familiar with the UN-NSU CARD program and begin preliminary discussions on items that need consideration when contemplating the inclusion of neuro-divergent individuals in the teen court program. The Zoom meeting was set and attended by Christina Rodriguez, Kelvin Taylor, Juvenile Services Specialist, and William Simmons, Contracts Officer.

On March 25, 2022, Youth Services held a second meeting via Zoom with Shantigra “Shae” Williams an administrator with the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (UM-NSU CARD). The session yielded outcomes inclusive of long-term and short-term goals that address advocacy, juvenile justice, and underserved Black youth affected by neurodivergence. This partnership should create an impactful presence with the Trust, community partners, and the affected populations.

## Outcomes

***Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust recommendations for implementation of a program for neurodivergent youth to allow such youth to fully participate in the Miami-Dade County Teen Court program that does not require additional funds being expended by the County.***

With no additional funds being expended, Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust recommends allowing high-functioning youth with neurodivergence to participate in the current established

Teen Court Program. Those youth will be able to serve as a Bailiff, Clerk, Juror, Prosecution, and/or Defense Attorney. Implementation of a program to allow all youth with ranging divergencies would require additional funds for staff and contracted services for UM-NSU CARD expertise.

***This Board further directs the County Mayor or Mayor’s designee to identify resources needed to provide access and participation for neurodivergent tween, teens, and young adults.***

Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust’s Youth Services Division – *Teen Court Program*’s staff has reached out to various entities that provide services to neurodivergent youth. Ms. Elaine Mederos, Regional Coordinator at Positive Behavior Supports Corporation has agreed to become a resource to provide access and participation for neurodivergent tween, teens, and young adults. At this time of the report, Miami-Dade County Teen Court staff are still exploring more resources.

Per Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda.

c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney  
Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney  
Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney  
Office of the Mayor Senior Staff  
William Diggs, Executive Director, Economic Advocacy Trust  
Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs  
Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor  
Basia Pruna, Director, Clerk of the Board  
Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator, Office of Agenda Coordination