


**Date:** August 3, 2021

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

**From:** Daniella Levine Cava  
Mayor 

**Subject:** Creation of the Office of Neighborhood Safety

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Today, I’m pleased to announce the creation of the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS), a new division within the Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD), that will bring together residents, community stakeholders, and county representatives to address critical issues regarding public safety and quality of life. The office will develop and promote strategies to address the continuum of public safety, including prevention, intervention, reentry, and neighborhood revitalization, and will support the successful implementation of the Peace and Prosperity Plan, along with other proven anti-violence programs and strategies in collaboration with community partners.

I’m extremely proud of the work we did in partnership with the Board of County Commissioners to create the Peace and Prosperity Plan earlier this year, and I know this excellent team will carry forward that charge to build safer, healthier communities across Miami-Dade County.

More detail on the structure and members of the ONS team can be found below.

**Annika Holder, Division Director, Office of Neighborhood Safety**

Annika Holder, formerly the Interim Director of the Community Action and Human Services Department, (CAHSD), is an adopted Miamian originally from New York with extensive experience in public administration in New York, Atlanta, and Miami-Dade County. Prior to joining CAHSD, Annika worked as Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Educational Services for the Department of Social Services at the City of New York and led important departments at Parks and Recreation in Atlanta and New York. Annika holds a Master of Arts in Urban Affairs and Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the City University of New York.

**Chanel Jefferson, Legal and Policy Advisor, Office of Neighborhood Safety**

Chanel Jefferson is an experienced attorney who has dedicated her career to public service and advocacy on issues that disproportionately affect historically disadvantaged communities. Chanel currently serves as Chief of Staff for Commissioner Hardemon. Prior to that, she served as an attorney at the Miami-Dade Public Defender’s Office, and as in-house counsel at the Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Agency (SEOPW CRA). Chanel earned her J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law and a B.A. in Criminal Justice with a Minor in Spanish from Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, where she graduated Cum Laude.

**Juan Visser, Strategic Partnerships and Engagement Manager, Office of Neighborhood Safety**

Juan Felipe Visser, born in Colombia and raised in Miami-Dade, has dedicated his work to making cities and communities vibrant places to live. After graduating with a Bachelor’s Degree in Urban Studies from the University of Pennsylvania in 2015, he joined HR&A Advisors, a consulting firm that advises cities across the country on economic development and planning, where he was most recently a Director focused on equity and engagement. While at HR&A, among other projects, Juan led the design and execution of Thrive305, the largest public engagement initiative in Miami-Dade County government history. He also managed a US-Puerto Rico Mayor exchange program to share disaster recovery best practices in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, and the creation La Liga de Ciudades de Puerto Rico, a non-partisan league of cities to strengthen the island’s municipalities.

Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners  
Page 2

**Ira Thomas, Community Justice Manager, Office of Neighborhood Safety**

Dr. Ira Thomas has over 15 years of experience in urban education and social work, as well as leading and designing community and youth engagement programs. Most recently, Dr. Thomas served as a Justice Reform Coordinator with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) focused on reducing racial and ethnic disparities within the juvenile justice system. Dr. Thomas has experience as a professional educator, administrator, and youth counselor with a proven track record of working cooperatively and collaboratively with students, parents, and all community stakeholders. Dr. Thomas holds an Ed.D. in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy and M.ED in Higher Education from Harvard University, a Master's in Clinical Social Work from the University of Maryland at Baltimore, and a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD.

Please join me in wishing the current members of our County family all the best in their new roles and welcoming incoming hires to these important positions.

c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney  
Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney  
Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney  
Office of the Mayor Senior Staff  
Department Directors  
Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor  
Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs  
Melissa Adames, Director, Clerk of the Board