

# THE MIAMI FOUNDATION

## SOUTH DADE COMMUNITY NEEDS AND NONPROFIT FUNDING LANDSCAPE



### Key Findings and Opportunities for Action

In 2024, a group of South Florida funders commissioned a study to better understand how funding resources flow into South Dade and how well they meet local needs. South Dade, defined in this study as the area south of SW 88th Street (including Kendall and Palmetto Bay), is home to some of Miami-Dade County's fastest-growing, yet most underserved communities—presenting a long-overdue opportunity to better understand the landscape and unlock more meaningful, sustained impact.

This two-phase study combines funding analysis and community voices to surface insights that can guide smarter, more equitable investments for long-term change. The following pages highlight what we learned—with actionable takeaways for funders, partners, and community leaders.

Read on to explore what we learned from the data and from conversations with experts in this space.

## PHASE 1

# What We Learned

We analyzed more than 1,400 grants made to 262 South Dade nonprofits between January 2023 and October 2024. These grants came from two public funders and more than a dozen private foundations.

These grants were supplemented with data from organizations participating in Give Miami Day 2024, enabling additional insights into organizational capacity and funding dynamics. This quantitative review highlights both the strengths of current funding patterns and critical gaps where South Dade remains under-resourced.

**77%**  
Public Funds  
vs.  
**23%**  
Private Funds

## HOW FUNDING FLOWS

### Public Dollars Lead with Private Funders Filling Critical Gaps

Approximately \$94 million flowed into South Dade during the study period from participating funders. Public funding drove the majority (77%) of this investment, with private dollars filling significant gaps.

**This heavy reliance on public sources makes the region vulnerable to shifts in policy or budgets.** Considering the subset of organizations that were also included in the Give Miami Day data, 34% of the nonprofits rely on government sources for more than half of their annual budget.

## WHERE THE MONEY GOES

### Youth and Family<sup>1</sup> Services Receive the Most Support

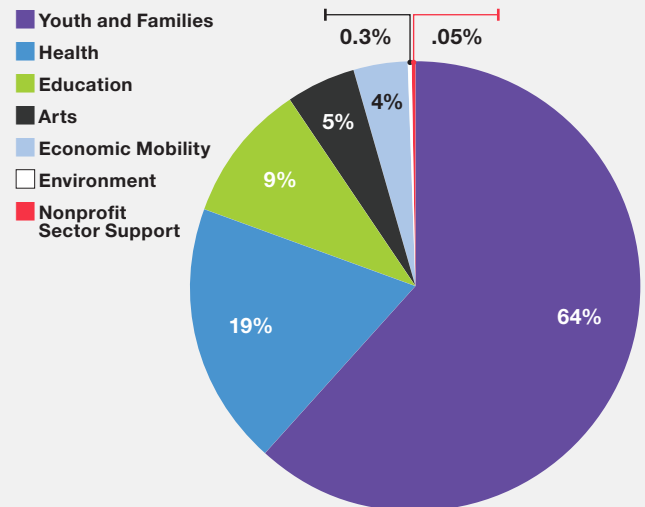
Youth and Family services receive the bulk of funding (about 64%), followed by Health (19%) and Education (9%). **Meanwhile, areas critical to long-term resilience—such as Economic Mobility, Arts, and Environment—are significantly less funded.**

At only 0.05% of funding to South Dade, Nonprofit Sector Support reflects investments in ecosystem-wide capacity building for nonprofits—such as shared trainings, cohort initiatives, or backbone support—that are not tied to a specific issue area.

<sup>1</sup> The Youth and Families category includes more sub-services than other issue areas, as funders often define this area more broadly or do not explicitly distinguish certain services in their reporting.

## Funding Focus Areas

Percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100%.



## Funding Focus Areas Definitions

Definitions for focus areas may vary, but the following seven cross-cutting categories were developed to identify patterns and make comparisons:

- ▶ **Youth and Families:** Wrap-around & Support Services, Housing, Out of School Time, Family Strengthening, Benefits Navigation
- ▶ **Health:** Food/Nutrition, Mental & Behavioral Health, Physical Health, Health Education, Health Benefits Navigation, Seniors/Older Adults
- ▶ **Education:** Academic & Learning Supports for Pre-K through 12th grade, Tutoring & Teacher Training, Post-secondary Scholarships
- ▶ **Economic Mobility:** Job Training, Employment, Financial Literacy, Career Readiness, Entrepreneurship, Small Business Development, Financial Coaching
- ▶ **Arts:** Arts Education, Outreach, Access (free or subsidized tickets or programs)
- ▶ **Environment:** Environmental Sustainability, Resilience, Disaster Relief, Recovery, Animal Life
- ▶ **Nonprofit Sector Support:** Nonprofit Sector-wide Support (training, capacity building, advocacy)



# PHASE 1 What We Learned

**More than 66% of Funding** flows to Homestead and Florida City

## WHO GETS FUNDED Organization Size and Location Matter

**Larger organizations (budgets exceeding \$2.5M) and nonprofits headquartered outside of South Dade tend to attract a disproportionate share of grants.** Smaller, community-based nonprofits often operate with limited budgets and thin infrastructure, making it hard for them to scale their impact.

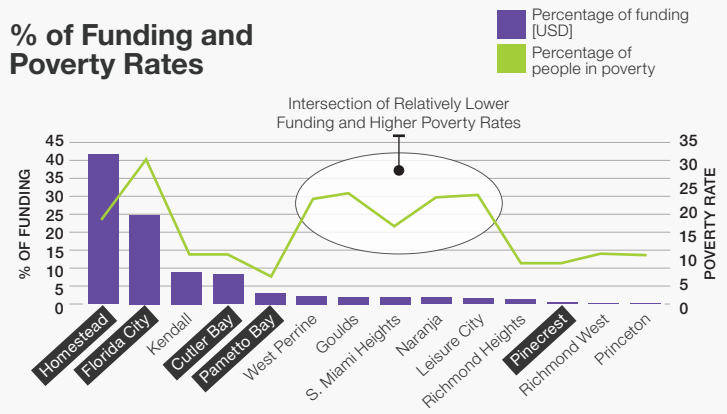
Higher-poverty unincorporated areas — neighborhoods that fall outside of municipal boundaries, such as West Perrine, Goulds, Naranja, South Miami Heights, Leisure City, Richmond Heights, Richmond West and Princeton — consistently receive fewer grant dollars overall and per capita<sup>2</sup> than municipalities like Homestead and Florida City. **Overall, grant funding tends to flow most heavily to organizations based in those two municipalities.**<sup>3</sup> One factor explaining this pattern is that more organizations identified in the study tend to be clustered in these two municipalities than in other areas.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY Limited Flex Dollars to South-Dade based nonprofits

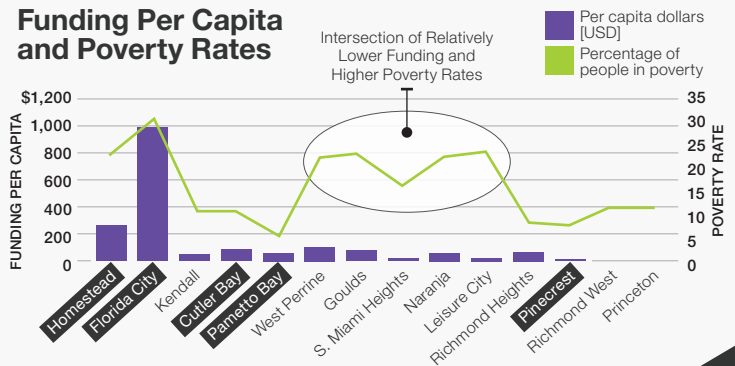
**The data reveals limited access to flexible funding.** Only 4% of funds went to flexible or unrestricted grants (such as general operating or capacity building dollars) and just 1.7% to capital improvements, leaving organizations without the resources for investments in their staff, infrastructure, and growth. Moreover, 71% of organizations received support from just one funder, underscoring the fragility of nonprofit funding models and especially for those working in and based in South Dade.

### Geographic Differences

#### % of Funding and Poverty Rates



#### Funding Per Capita and Poverty Rates



**NOTE:** Communities highlighted in black above are municipalities; those that are not highlighted are part of unincorporated Miami-Dade County.

<sup>2</sup> 2020 Census Data on population size and poverty rates (defined by the Census Bureau as "Percent below poverty level") were used to calculate per capita funding for this study. The Census did not have data for Quail Heights or Redlands.  
<sup>3</sup> Data on geographic differences was based on the subset of grants in the dataset that designated one or more specific "geographic areas/communities served" in South Dade. Amounts designated for multiple communities were split equally between the different communities for the purpose of this analysis.

## PHASE 1 / DATA

## Key Takeaways

With \$94M invested in South Dade under two years, the strong commitment by public and private funders in this study is something to celebrate. At the same time, to ensure that residents are able to thrive, there remain several opportunities to improve the way funding flows to and within South Dade.

1

## Geographic differences highlight opportunity

Homestead and Florida City receive more consistent funding, while unincorporated areas face greater investment needs.

2

## Room to diversify funding streams

Reliance on public funding—often tied to specific priority areas—can leave gaps that more flexible, private dollars are well positioned to fill.

3

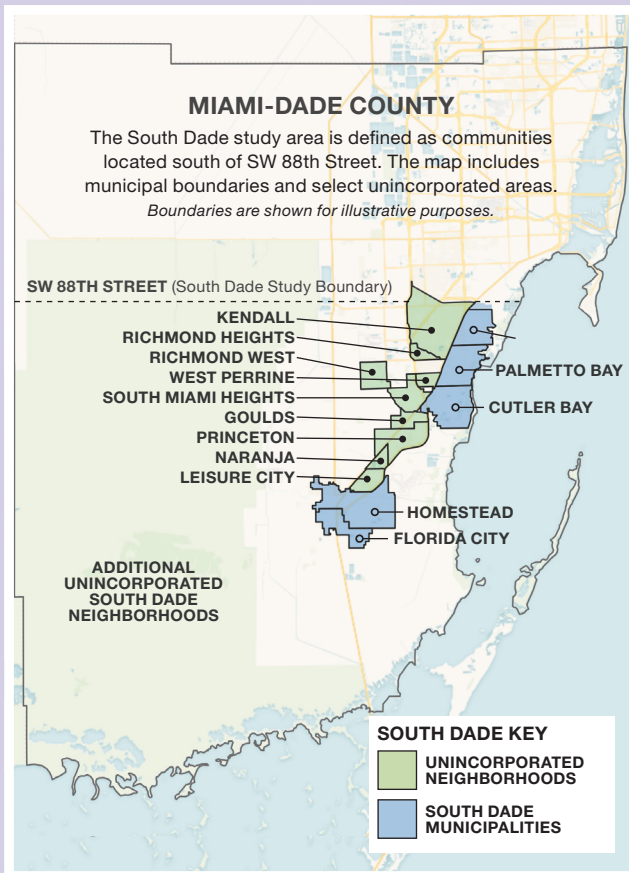
## Opportunities to expand impact across other areas

Funding focuses on youth and families, with growth potential in economic mobility, arts, and environment.

4

## Momentum needed for strengthening local nonprofits

Small organizations are active but need support to grow and reach underserved areas.



## PHASE 2

# What We Heard

To complement the funding analysis, Phase 2 captured the perspectives of 19 intentionally selected, high-trust local leaders, service providers, and advocates. Each brings deep, firsthand knowledge of South Dade communities. These interviews highlight the lived experiences of South Dade residents and bring the grant data to life. Their voices reveal the barriers families face each day and the opportunities for more responsive support.

## BASIC NEEDS UNDER STRAIN

### Housing and Healthcare

**Housing affordability is the most urgent concern.**

Families struggle with rising rents and limited supply of affordable housing, causing them to double up or relocate. **Access to healthcare**—especially specialty care and **mental health services**—is scarce locally, forcing residents to travel long distances or delay/forgo treatment. **Older adults face limited supports**, while families continue to experience difficulties meeting basic needs such as food, utilities, and the cost of living.

## BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY

### Pathways to Economic Mobility are Limited

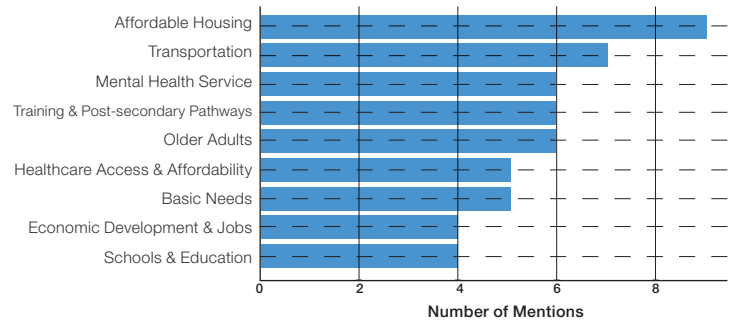
**Transportation is a consistent barrier.** Public transit is limited in unincorporated areas, and services are often scattered, making access difficult for residents without reliable vehicles. **Workforce training and postsecondary pathways** into high-growth, high-wage careers remain limited, leaving many families unable to break cycles of poverty or commute long distances for well-paying jobs. **Schools are under strain as well**, needing additional funding, safety measures, and expanded college and career readiness programs.

## Nonprofit Infrastructure is Underdeveloped

South Dade's organizations lack adequate physical space **to house their operations and expansions into new areas.** Equally scarce are meeting spaces for nonprofits to collaborate. Grassroots organizations are stepping in to fill gaps but operate with little financial stability or technical support.

### Key Needs and Service Gaps in South Dade

This bar graph ranks the greatest needs and service gaps in South Dade based on the respondents' comments.



## RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

### Increased Access and Best Practice Models

Expanded bus routes, an increase in primary care and urgent care facilities, and strong community-police partnerships are positive developments for the region's residents. The introduction of best practice models, such as [Arts Access Miami](#) and a new resource hub in Homestead ([The Healing Sanctuary](#)) are notable. While some strong models of nonprofit collaboration exist—such as the South Dade Cares Coalition, Richmond Heights Community Alliance, and Goulds Coalition of Ministers and Lay People—more funding is needed to scale collaborations across the ecosystem, particularly in unincorporated South Dade.

## PHASE 2 / COMMUNITY VOICES

### Key Takeaways

1

**Basic  
Needs  
Unmet**

Affordable housing and healthcare access are top concerns.

2

**Barriers  
to  
Opportunity**

Limited transit, fragmented services, underfunded schools, and few career pathways hinder economic mobility for South Dade families.

3

**Infrastructure  
Gaps  
Persist**

Nonprofits lack space, staffing, and coordination to meet demand.

4

**Progress  
is  
Uneven**

Awareness of services and access remain limited, even as transit and health resources expand.



# Opportunities for Action

Together, the data and community voices point to strategic opportunities where donors and funders can make the most impact:



## CLOSE THE GAPS

### Fund Grassroots Innovators and Diversify Resources

Expand flexible, capital, and private funding streams to support grassroots nonprofits, faith-based groups, and organizations that are stepping in where services fall short. Pair funding with capacity building to help them thrive.



## MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

### Bring Services Into the Community

Invest in mobile units and neighborhood “resource hubs” anchored in schools, churches, housing developments, and community sites—particularly in unincorporated and under-resourced areas—to reduce transportation barriers and increase access.



## BUILD LOCAL POWER

### Grow the Next Generation of Leaders

Strengthen the pipeline of South Dade leaders through training and leadership development that can drive sustainable organizations and collective impact in critical areas like post-secondary success and workforce development.



## SHINE A LIGHT

### Connect Families to the Services They Deserve

Invest in local communications, outreach, and education strategies to increase awareness of existing services—especially in unincorporated areas—including hiring community health workers or navigators to work with people and organizations.



## STRATEGICALLY INVEST

### Targeted Funding Can Accelerate Impact

Targeted funding in priority areas such as affordable housing, healthcare access, workforce development, and postsecondary pathways can help close long-standing gaps.

## PARTNER TO STRENGTHEN SOUTH DADE

South Dade is home to resilient families, dedicated leaders, and strong grassroots organizations. By closing funding gaps, investing in infrastructure, and lifting up local leadership, we can ensure South Dade families not only meet basic needs but thrive. We invite donors, funders, officials, and partners to work together to unlock the full potential of South Dade. Contact us if you are interested in joining.

### CONTACT

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## SOUTH DADE LEADERS

- Michelle Shirley & Barbara Jean (Be Strong International) • Kim Torres (Branches) • Yian Perrin (CareerSource South Florida) • Peter Wood (Community Health of South Florida [CHI]) • Julissa Rivera (The Miami Foundation) • Luisa Santos & Katherine Leiva (Miami-Dade County Public Schools) • Romania Dukes (Mothers Fighting for Justice) • Susan Rubio Rivera (MUJER) • Pastor Robert Brooks (St. Peter’s Missionary Baptist Church) • Cardelle Hayes (South Dade Connections) • Sandra Nanni (Start Off Smart [SOS]) • Sammy Gonzalez & Pedro Diaz (Young Musicians Unite) • Pastor Theo Johnson, First Lady Alicia Johnson, Reverend John Parker & Minister Harold Ford (Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church) •



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## APPENDIX

### Data Limitations and Considerations:

**Incomplete Picture:** The \$94M total funding surveyed doesn’t include all county-wide investments from funders, donor-advised fundholder gifts, or funding from entities outside of the participating organizations.

**Data Challenges:** In producing an aggregate summary across various funders, this study faced limitations related to data availability, completeness, and consistency. Some figures represent estimates rather than exact totals. Findings should therefore be interpreted with an understanding that a margin of error is inherent in the analysis.

**Qualitative Data:** The Phase 2 findings reflect the perspectives of interviewees and should be interpreted as insights rather than verified facts.