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Message from Our Director



Nowadays you are likely to hear a lot about “evidence-based practice,” defined by Nannette Richford as “the use of research and scientific studies as a base for determining best practices in a field.” This term started in the clinical realm of social work and medicine but is now used in general management. For the past 16 years, the Metropolitan Center has been assisting local governments and nonprofits achieve evidence-based best practice throughout Southeast Florida. As this newsletter attests, our advice and counsel comes in many forms. Our clients frequently turn to Dr. Ned Murray for pathways to

neighborhood economic revitalization and affordable housing. Dr. Maria Ilcheva and Julia Webb design and implement surveys and mystery shops that inform policy making and improve customer service. I lend expertise in strategic planning and program evaluation. A cadre of graduate students and research affiliates gives us bench strength in a wide array of policy arenas.

But informed policy guidance means little without the human capital needed for rollout. This is where our Training Coordinator, Ms. Kerland Jacques, plays a critical role. Many clients realize that to enhance performance, their staff needs skill-building. Kerland can tailor an appropriate training program for entry-, mid-, and senior-level staff that facilitates organizational change and growth. We evaluate our training on an ongoing basis to assure a quality learning experience. And our tie-in with undergraduate and graduate programs at FIU provides a pool of well-trained public affairs students who are ready and willing to begin their public service careers when the need arises.

A cornerstone of our operation is crafting research and training to client need. We are good listeners and will tailor research and training to your organization’s needs and goals. Sometimes this means helping you define the questions that need answering. As researchers and providers of usable knowledge, that is one of our most important roles in the community.

The Metropolitan Center is South Florida’s leading “Think Tank.” We are enthusiastic about adding long-term value to the quality of life in the region. This is our goal and mission. Please contact me at howard.frank@fiu.edu or (305) 348-0410 to discuss how we can build “evidence-based practice” in your organization.

About Us

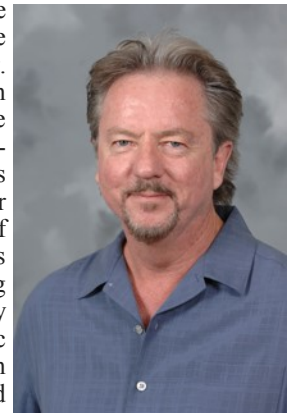
The FIU Metropolitan Center (MC) is a part of the School of International and Public Affairs within the College of Arts and Sciences. Established in 1997, the MC is an applied social science research and training institute and the leading public policy “think tank” in South Florida. Our approach to providing technical services is to take into account the unique needs of individual communities and organizations, while adhering to recognized methodologies for data analysis and reporting. With a multi-disciplinary team of experts, we are able to formulate high quality and comprehensive solutions to complex issues.

Our core areas of expertise include

- ◆ Population studies
- ◆ Economic development
- ◆ Strategic planning
- ◆ Talent development and retention

Staff Spotlight

Dr. Ned Murray, AICP is the Associate Director of the Metropolitan Center. Dr. Murray holds a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and is a certified professional planner with over twenty years of experience including 12 years as a former Director of Planning and Development. Dr. Murray is a leading expert on economic and housing market issues in South Florida. He has served as Principal Investigator on many landmark economic development and affordable housing studies including the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway Strategic Redevelopment Plan which led to the development of Midtown Miami and the Economic Development Implementation Plan (EDIP) for Miami-Dade County. Dr. Murray developed the “Municipal Scorecard for Affordable Housing Delivery[©]” model which has been used to evaluate affordable housing performance in Palm Beach and Broward Counties.



Upcoming Events

◆ *FIU Grant Writing Certification Program: Educating for Winning Grants—January 21-22, 2014*

Whether you're a beginning grant writer who is just getting started or a seasoned pro ready to move to your next level of performance, the Metropolitan Center can help you get there. This grant writing seminar consists of educational sessions presented over a two day period with the intent of providing a broad overview of the grant writing process. The session will touch upon developing a proposal concept, research and development, administering grants once received, programmatic marketing skills, hints on how to lobby state and federal legislative officers, establishing collaborative research partnerships and the use of the latest technology in grants writing and administration. If you would like more information or to sign up, please visit our website by [clicking here](#).

Past Events

◆ *Economic Development Infill: Challenges & Opportunities for South Florida Cities MetroForum - April 17, 2013*

The first MetroForum of the year was held in West Palm Beach. The session was moderated by Jeff Ostrowski of the Palm Beach Post and panelists included Karen Kiselewski, AICP (Renaissance Planning Group), Daniel Rosemond (City of Hallandale Beach), Bill Nemser, AICP, LEED AP (Village of Wellington), Dr. Ned Murray (FIU Metropolitan Center), and John Talmage. The theme of economic development infill was discussed through varying lenses. These included commercial corridor revitalization, community redevelopment infill, understanding urban markets, and two case studies - State Road 7 Medical Arts District and Midtown Miami. The audience was filled by more than 40 individuals from Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties. Additional information can be found [here](#).

◆ *2013 Transportation Summit: Visioning the Future of Miami-Dade County's Public Transportation - June 6, 2013*

The Metropolitan Center assisted the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust in organizing and marketing a Transportation Summit for Miami-Dade County. The goal of the event was to bring together stakeholders, agencies, the community and national experts to focus on the future of transportation in Miami-Dade County and to prompt discussion of the next major transportation projects in the community. In collaboration with CITT staff the Metropolitan Center prepared a detailed report on the summit proceedings that is available [here](#).

◆ *What if Our Luck Runs Out? Hurricane Risk, Preparation, & Mitigation Entering the 2013 Atlantic Hurricane Season MetroForum - June 27, 2013*

The hurricane mitigation and insurance MetroForum was held in June at the FIU Broward-Pines Center. The session was moderated by Maria Mallory White of the Sun Sentinel. We had a diverse group of panelists including Carlos Lacasa (Citizens Property Insurance Corporation), Rep. Frank Artiles (Florida House of Representatives), Frank Kowalski (Independent Insurance Agents of South Florida), Michael Lyons (Weston Insurance Holdings Corporation), and Metropolitan Center Senior Research Associate Dr. Maria Ilcheva. The event had over 40 attendees present from all three counties in South Florida. Topics ranged from Citizens Insurance, the current state of insurance and reinsurance in South Florida, what preparation and mitigation steps individuals can take to harden their homes, and current hurricane mitigation research the Metropolitan Center is conducting. Additional information can be found [here](#).

◆ *2013 APA Florida Annual Conference - September 12, 2013*

At the 2013 APA Florida Annual Conference, Dr. Ned Murray, AICP, participated in a panel presentation and discussion with Alberto Vargas, Planning Manager of Orange County and Stuart Kennedy, Program Officer at The Miami Foundation. The session titled *Beyond Placemaking - Community Making Principles that Build on the "Soul of a Place"* provided an understanding of what makes a place genuine and unique and inspires a collective vision of everyday settings which allow residents to experience the "soul of a place". Dr. Murray and the other panelists discussed the importance of integrating sustainable principles via a community's cultural heritage and focused efforts for improving livability through public spaces and urban mobility that can enhance connections to careers and networks. More information can be found [here](#).

◆ *Third Annual State of the South Florida Economy MetroForum - December 4, 2013*

The third annual State of the South Florida Economy MetroForum was held in downtown Miami at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The panelists included Tom Hudson (WLRN News), Dr. Tom Cunningham (The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta), Kevin Greiner (IBI Group, Inc.), and Jack McCabe (McCabe Research & Consulting, LLC). The session was moderated by the Metropolitan Center's Executive Director, Dr. Ned Murray, AICP. There were over 60 attendees at the event and discussion topics included the state of Florida's economy, an economist's perspective of South Florida, the state of the housing market, and economic development strategies for local governments. Additional information and presentations can be found [here](#).

Research Projects

Miami Fellows Evaluation: The Metropolitan Center conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the Miami Foundation's Miami Fellows Program. The program provides individuals in the early stages of their career and civic engagement, an opportunity to learn, grow, and expand their community leadership in Greater Miami. The goal of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the Program in increasing the leadership capacity of program participants and their ability to become change agents in the community. The evaluation included interviews, surveys and a focus group with participants in the program.

MPO Citizens Guide to Transportation Update: The Metropolitan Center updated the Citizens' Guide to Transportation "On the Move..." that provides information with regards to transit services, highway services, non-motorized transportation, and alternate mass transit services to transportation agencies and citizens in Miami-Dade County. The Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization contracted the Metropolitan Center to update the guide information, translate it into Spanish and Creole, and design the booklet. Electronic copy of the guide is available [here](#).

Hurricane Insurance and Mitigation: The Metropolitan Center received funding from the Florida State Legislature to conduct social science research on issues related to hurricane mitigation. The focus of the research in the 2012-2013 fiscal year was hurricane insurance. The 2012-2013 research focused on hurricane insurance from both the homeowners' and business perspective. The goal of the research was to examine to what extent these two stakeholder groups are prepared for a potential hurricane threat and how they have been affected by recent or proposed changes in the hurricane insurance market. The final research report is available [here](#).

City of Miami Annexation Feasibility Study: The Metropolitan Center analyzed the feasibility for City of Miami to annex neighboring areas by assessing the impact annexation would have on the city's ability to provide services and generate sufficient revenues to maintain a satisfactory level of service. The study provided assessments of potential revenues from various sources, including ad valorem taxes, licenses and permits and others, and compared those figures with future city expenditures in various areas including police and fire services, recreation, planning and zoning etc.

Quality Assurance Projects

211 Switchboard/The Children's Trust Helpline Quality Assurance Shops: Beginning in 2010 the Metropolitan Center has been conducting annual evaluations of the quality of customer service provided by 211 Switchboard agents to Miami-Dade residents. With more than 10 specialty lines, the Switchboard offers counseling, crisis intervention, suicide prevention, and information and referral service to every caller, chatter or texter. Open 24 hours a day, every day, Switchboard's Contact Center services are offered in English, Spanish and Creole.



The Metropolitan Center assessments simulate real-time customer experience by presenting the 211 call agents with inquiries and scenarios which they are likely to encounter in their daily work at the Switchboard. Some aspects of customer services which were evaluated included courteousness and politeness of agents, and relevance and accuracy of information they provided.

City of Hollywood Quality Assurance Shops: The Metropolitan Center conducted quality assurance shops in person and over the phone at various City of Hollywood departments. The shops assessed the ability of department staff to provide services to diverse populations. Metropolitan Center evaluators enacted scenarios corresponding to the unique expertise of the department and representing sufficiently different situations in order to evaluate department staff ability to react to diverse customer needs.

Economic Currents

The Metropolitan Center's *Economic Currents* publication provides an overview of the South Florida regional economy. The report contains current employment, economic and real estate market data using key indicators to measure growth and stability in the regional economy. The economic indicators can be used by local governments, businesses and community-based organizations to establish benchmarks, prioritize resources, target markets and apply for funding. The report provides measurable indicators for five drivers of economic sustainability – employment and economic growth, household purchasing power, residential real estate stability and commercial/office market activity. Past issues can be found [here](#).

Talent Development & Retention

- ◆ **USAID – Burkina Faso - Managing for Results Leadership Training:** The Metropolitan Center conducted a leadership program designed to train and develop senior staff at non-profit organizations to become more effective managers. The development of skills and strategies to handle the pressures and obstacles that go along with making decisions in public organizations is central to becoming a more effective manager. The focus of the Program was on sharpening the decision-making and problem solving ability of participants. By analyzing case studies of decisions made by managers and drawing lessons from those experiences, participants enhanced their leadership and managerial skills.
- ◆ **Miami-Dade Public Defender’s Office:** The Metropolitan Center assisted with development of performance evaluations tools for various levels of employees at Miami-Dade Public Defender’s Office. The tools will be utilized to evaluate employee performance and connect the results to the organization’s mission. In addition, we conducted a host of professional development programs for 300+ employees. The programs included Professionalism & Sensitivity training, The Empowering Supervisor, and Business Writing for Professionals.
- ◆ The Metropolitan Center conducted a series of professional development programs for **The Children’s Trust, Greater Miami Jewish Federation, AARP and the Village of Palmetto Bay.** The trainings ranged from supervisory and leadership programs to front line programs. The sessions consisted of Customer Service Essentials: Tools to Keep Your Cool and Confidence in the Workplace, Office Professionalism, Business Writing for Professionals, Records Management Certification, Executive Development program, Beginning Supervisory Skills, Situational Leadership, Sexual Harassment and Diversity, and Essentials of Leadership.
- ◆ **Miami CEMEX Cement Plant Employee Development Program:** The Metropolitan Center provided Supervisory Skills training for Miami CEMEX Plant Employees. The session designed for current and potential supervisors supplied participants with the tools and techniques to become effective supervisors. In addition, each supervisor participated in an observation, coaching and counseling session to evaluate their supervisory skills in action.
- ◆ **Village of Key Biscayne Strategic Planning Effort:** The Metropolitan Center assisted the Village of Key Biscayne with its Strategic Planning Efforts. The Center conducted interviews with the Village Council members to gather their ideas on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Village while prioritizing top five important factors. The Center then facilitated a two day session attended by the Village manager and department heads for further instruction on the key elements of strategic planning from concept to implementation and finally realization; how to perform performance measurements and gauge success. Upon completion of the session and evaluation of commission surveys, the information was utilized in the development of a tangible strategic plan.
- ◆ **Housing Finance Authority Organizational Assessment and Employee Development Program:** The Metropolitan Center conducted an organizational assessment of the Miami-Dade Housing Finance Authority. The assessment included interviews with staff, development of the checklist for transition, a balanced scorecard to judge successful implementation, as well as key performance indicators within each of the four scorecard domains; and crafting a guidebook to virtual operations. The Center also provided professional development programs for the staff of Housing Finance Authority: Performance Measurement, Project Management, Situational Leadership, Strategic Planning and Goal Setting, Planning and Managing Organizational Change, and Dealing with Change in Your Work and Your Life.
- ◆ **City of Miami Professionalism & Ethics for New Lobbyists Training:** The Metropolitan Center provides professionalism and ethics training to officials and lobbyists of the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County. The session is designed to provide opportunities to lobbyists to develop knowledge and individual introspections about legal issues, values, ethics/integrity principles, and how these impact daily decisions and careers. This program fosters discussion about issues as they relate to daily ethical decision-making by examining a series of case studies.

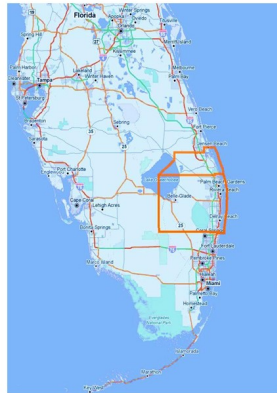
Economic Development Studies

City of Pompano Beach Visioning & Economic Restructuring Study: The Metropolitan Center partnered with Renaissance Planning Group to complete a visioning and economic restructuring study for the major transportation corridors in the City of Pompano Beach. The first objective for each corridor was to create an economic development strategy focused on strengthening the existing economic base and finding opportunities to attract new businesses and promote job growth. The vision, or set of desired community outcomes, provides a clear picture of what is possible given the unique existing assets and opportunities along US 1, Dixie Highway and Atlantic Boulevard. Implementing activities were outlined in a transformation plan that clearly connects the present with the possible by identifying the economic development strategies, the public and private transportation and infrastructure investments and the regulatory framework needed to guide and foster corridor revitalization and development.

The underpinning for each economic development strategy involved an assessment of the economic conditions, development trends and economic development potential of the major corridors the City has targeted. The project team applied a competitive advantage analysis to determine the potential economic drivers that can potentially attract private investment and enable industrial growth, job creation, increased tax revenues and expanded economic opportunities. The competitive advantage methodology

identified the economic advantages and disadvantages of each of the major corridors, local demand conditions and economic opportunities based on the presence of growing and sustainable industrial sectors, or the likelihood of desirable and competitive industries locating to the corridors through the enhancement of various factor conditions including: enhanced land use changes, site planning, land assemblage, transit, public infrastructure, public service capacity and economic incentives.

Affordability Foreclosed: The Rental Housing Challenge: The FIU Metropolitan Center was commissioned by the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties to conduct a Rental Housing Needs Assessment and Investment Strategy to determine how current market conditions are impacting the supply and affordability of rental housing in Palm Beach and Martin Counties. The final study, *Affordability Foreclosed: The Rental Housing Challenge* documented how the Great Recession and the devastating housing market collapse continues to impact thousands of individuals and families who are struggling with high under-employment, unemployment, stagnant wages, tight credit, minimal discretionary income, and rising costs. The study found significant “gaps” in rental affordability for both existing renters and those seeking an alternative to purchasing a home or displaced by the foreclosure crisis, finding affordable rental housing is becoming a crisis in



Economic Development Studies cont.

itself. With exploding average monthly rents that have skyrocketed 71% since 2000, more individuals and families are having a difficult time securing housing that doesn't consume their entire monthly income.

“We want this to be a community-wide conversation given no community is untouched by these issues,” commented Leslie Lilly, past President and CEO of the Community Foundation. “We believe the Community Foundation can best lead and support positive change by data-driven assessments, listening to and learning from others, and responding to needs where our mission and strengths align.”

“The report makes clear that the growing gap in the availability of affordable rental housing will not be easily solved, yet it also notes there are tools and resources on which to literally build—if innovation is a handmaiden in the process,” Lilly added. “These are unprecedented times and unprecedented solutions must be found and the best way to get to that destination is to journey there together.” If you would like to view the entire report, please click [here](#).

Survey Projects

Miami-Dade Overcrowding Survey: The Metropolitan Center conducted a mixed-method survey of randomly selected households in Miami-Dade County. The purpose of the survey was to provide estimates of overcrowding for the purpose of comparing them with U.S. Census estimates. Overcrowding figures have been used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the distribution of funding to Miami-Dade County and cities in the area. Changes in the most recent overcrowding figures provided by the Census have negatively impacted the amount of funding received by entitlement areas. The Metropolitan Center was contracted by the County and various cities under the leadership of the Miami Foundation to implement a survey that would assess overcrowding.

Miami-Dade County Information Technology Department Employee Satisfaction Survey: The Metropolitan Center conducted a satisfaction survey of employees of Miami-Dade County's Information Technology Department. The survey measured employees' satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs, work environment and supervisor or management team interactions.

The Children's Trust Provider Survey: The Metropolitan Center conducted a survey of current service providers funded by The Children's Trust. The survey was administered online, over the phone and via mail with the leaders of organizations receiving funding to provide services to residents in Miami-Dade County. The survey assessed overall impressions with the Trust, the reasonableness of various policies and procedures, the effectiveness and helpfulness of different electronic resource, and the assistance they receive in their contracts with The Trust.