MIAMIBEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Neighborhood and Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: November 6, 2020

SUBJECT: **Discussion regarding possible ways to improve the homeless issue in Miami Beach.**
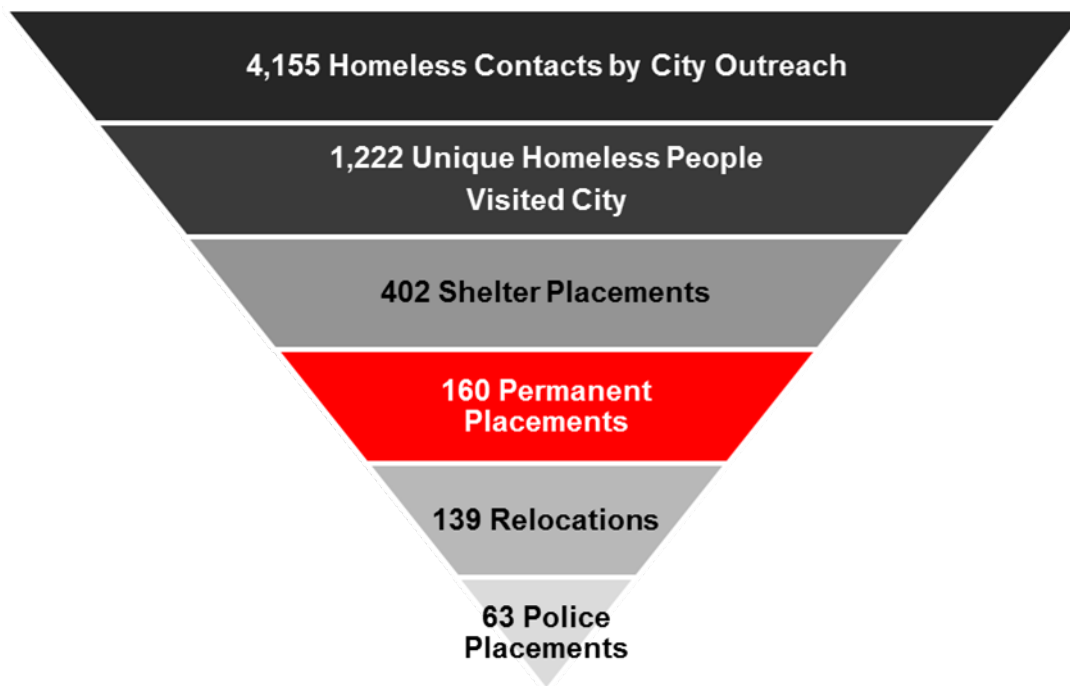
HISTORY
The Mayor and Commission referred this item to the Neighborhood and Quality of Life Committee (NQLC) at its February 12th meeting. The item was discussed at the May 20th Committee meeting where Commissioner Meiner, the item sponsor, requested the item be carried on for further discussion.

ANALYSIS
The City has completed its analysis of its homeless population for FY 19/20. In our City, 1,222 people self-identifying as homeless visited the City at some point in FY 19/20. The vast majority of these people arrived homeless from other jurisdictions, stayed for a while and then left on their own. **Please see Graphic 1 attached.**

4,155 Homeless Contacts by City Outreach

1,222 Unique Homeless People Visited City

402 Shelter Placements

160 Permanent Placements

139 Relocations

63 Police Placements

Using an in-depth analysis of those persons who accessed the City's assistance to relocate from Miami Beach to any of the 48 contiguous states, we have been able to identify several characteristics about the homeless:

- 89% of Miami Beach's homeless population arrived homeless to our City

- 85% of the City's homeless population have a criminal history
- 82.34 days is the average length of stay for homeless people visiting our City
- 53% of the City's homeless population has experienced repeated episodes of homelessness
- 39% of the City's homeless population have been arrested for violent crimes
- 37% of those who requested relocation services by the City actually returned to their place of origin (their last location prior to arrival to Miami Beach)
- 26% of the City's homeless were also served in the City of Miami
- 18% accepted shelter in Miami-Dade County at some point during their homelessness
- 11.63 is the average number of arrests among this population
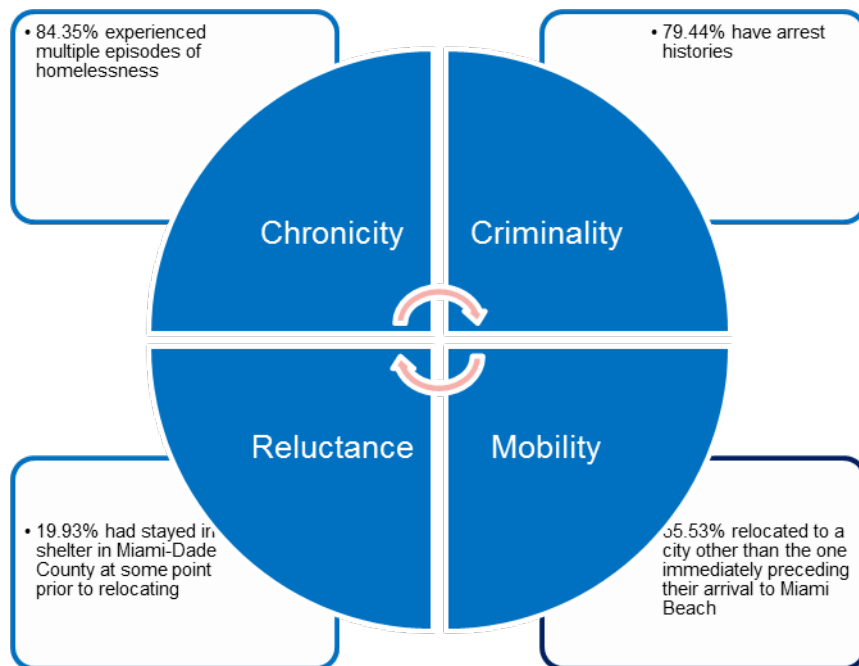- 6% of the City's homeless had lived in the City at some point in their lives

These data sets provide a clearer picture of who is homeless in our City and the challenges the community faces in working to end their homelessness including:

♦ **Chronicity** (the frequency and length of homelessness episodes)
♦ **Criminality** (the frequency of arrests for non-Pottinger Settlement offenses)
♦ **Mobility** (the period of time remaining in a single place to enable help)
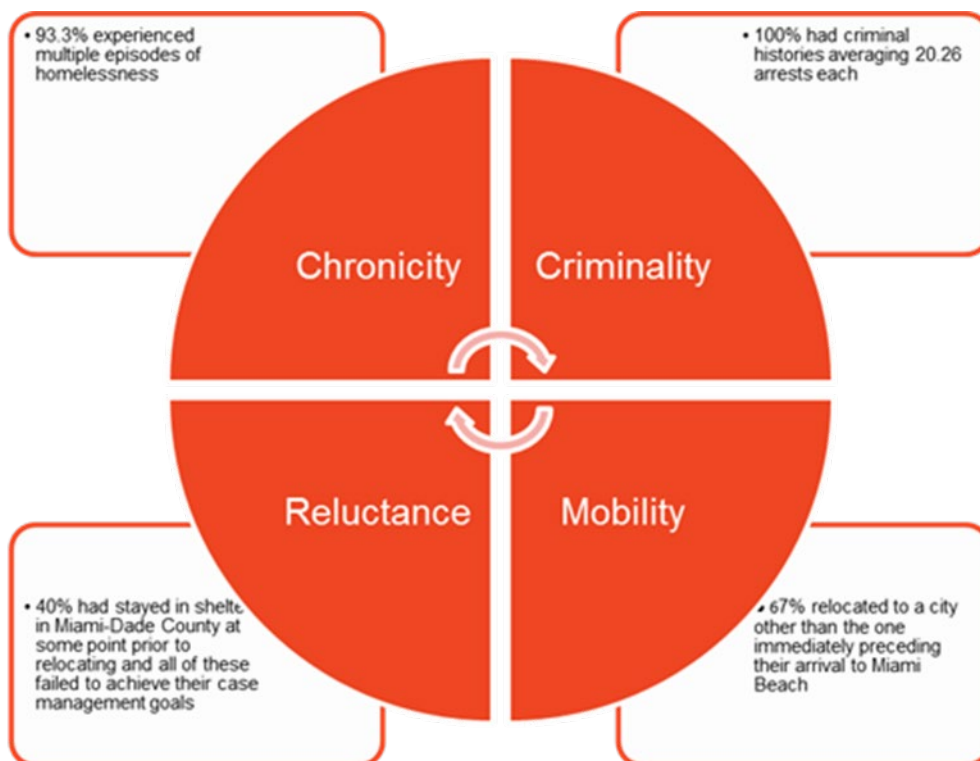♦ **Reluctance** to accept shelter (which enables stability to commence Care Plan)

These challenges are critical because they underscore that the decisions and behaviors of our population have a direct correlation to their ongoing homelessness. Housing does not change behavior. More so, homelessness cannot be resolved unless the person who is homeless is prepared or capable of changing the behavior that fosters homelessness. This is a central issue in our community as the City expends considerable resources conducting proactive outreach to the homeless to offer services (including shelter and employment) as a means of preventing the commission of illegal behavior ostensibly done to survive (i.e. trespass, aggressive panhandling, drinking in public, etc.).

As a reminder, the City of Miami Beach employs a Homeless Outreach Team conducting street outreach to the City's homeless as well as operates the sole municipal homeless walk-in center in the county offering a variety of services including those that can support a person's efforts to end his/her personal homelessness.

We conducted an analysis of the homeless clients who sought relocation services last two fiscal years. We found that the vast majority (84.35%) had experienced multiple episodes of homelessness and been arrested (79.44**%). Please see Graphic 2 attached.**

- 84.35% experienced multiple episodes of homelessness

- 79.44% have arrest histories

Chronicity | **Criminality**

Reluctance | **Mobility**

- 19.93% had stayed in shelter in Miami-Dade County at some point prior to relocating

- 55.53% relocated to a city other than the one immediately preceding their arrival to Miami Beach

We then extracted the top five percent of relocated clients from the past two years who stayed in Miami Beach for the greatest period of time (an average of 687.6 days) as they would be most representative of the City's permanent homeless community. We found that 93.3% had experienced multiple episodes of homelessness and 100% had criminal histories averaging 20.26 arrests each. **Please see Graphic 3 attached.**

- 93.3% experienced multiple episodes of homelessness

- 100% had criminal histories averaging 20.26 arrests each

Chronicity | **Criminality**

Reluctance | **Mobility**

- 40% had stayed in shelter in Miami-Dade County at some point prior to relocating and all of these failed to achieve their case management goals

- 67% relocated to a city other than the one immediately preceding their arrival to Miami Beach

The data clearly demonstrates that the homeless population in our community experience repeated episodes of homeless, have extensive involvement in the criminal justice system, tend to move from city to city (thereby not connecting to the community in a way to form reciprocal cohesion) and were reluctant to accept shelter and supports to address (end) their personal homelessness.

In summary, the data helps to identify specific attributes of our homeless population that enable a

broader and more profound understanding that can serve as the foundation to devise effective strategies to respond to homelessness within our community including:

- Homelessness is typically achieved elsewhere prior to relocation to Miami Beach;
- Criminality is a common behavioral occurrence (that can undermine employment and housing opportunities which are central to ending homelessness);
- The homeless population is quite mobile reflected, not only by their migration into the City but, also their subsequent willingness to move on to unchartered locales; and
- The population is reluctant to accept services – including shelter, employment and support services – making it challenging to expect a quick transition from the streets to independence and, more importantly, requiring more supports and longer intervention than a person who is willing and prepared to rapidly rehouse after becoming homeless.

CONCLUSION

The City employs a variety of strategies and services to support homeless persons' decision to end their personal homelessness. These efforts have resulted in a 25% decrease in homelessness in the past four years. As noted in the City's 2019 Strategic Plan, the City will continue to explore innovative and sustainable ways to support those who wish to end their personal homelessness as reflected over the data for the past five years. **Please see Graphic 4 attached.**

	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20
Point in Time Census	156	133	124	153	123
Total Annualized Homeless	1,998	1,571	1,377	1,480	1,222
Shelter Placements	676	570	547	442	406
# of Relocations	88	118	122	206	137

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Mobility – Address homelessness