

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
FROM: Commissioner Alex Fernandez
DATE: May 15, 2024

SUBJECT: REFERRAL TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE (PSNQLC) TO REQUEST FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO EXPLORE AND PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR ESTABLISHING LIVE ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS OUTREACH SERVICES DURING AFTERHOURS.

RECOMMENDATION

The City's Office of Housing and Community Services-Homeless Outreach Services Team operates the walk-in center and community outreach Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM, ensuring consistent support during regular business hours. Additionally, the City funds an extended outreach team, available Thursday through Sunday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Outside these hours, the City's contracted provider, New Hope CORPS, delivers specialized outreach services seven days a week from 7:00 PM to 3:00 AM.

In 2022, the administration implemented my suggestion to create and install MBCARES signs in highly concentrated areas to enhance accessibility to homeless services. These signs, installed that same year, promote the city's homeless services, including the main line for homeless outreach, walk-in center location, and website. By raising awareness and improving accessibility, these signs play a crucial role in connecting individuals experiencing homelessness with the support services they need in our community.

Expanding on our ongoing efforts, there is an opportunity to improve phone coverage for the homeless services main line 305-604-4663 during evening off-hours. Currently, the Homeless Outreach Services Team responds to calls during regular working hours from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Additionally, while conducting street outreach, the City's extended outreach team transfers calls to a city cellphone on Thursdays and Fridays from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM and on weekends from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

Additionally, outside of regular and extended office hours, concerns are often reported to the police non-emergency number for assistance. Upon receiving these calls, the police dispatch an officer who, depending on the situation, can subsequently reach out to the Police-Homeless Resource Sergeant or New Hope CORPS.

To ensure continuous support for those in need, I propose sending this item to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee to explore options for having telephone coverage 24/7. This would involve investigating various staffing and technological solutions to ensure round-the-clock assistance for individuals reporting homelessness or needing services.

Exploring this option guarantees the public's round-the-clock access to report homelessness, demonstrates our commitment to providing comprehensive support services, and allows us to inform our decision-making process with further data collection.

Given the importance of addressing the needs of homeless individuals in our community, I recommend referring this item to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee for further discussion and exploring options for ensuring live assistance on the homeless outreach services phone line 24/7.

SUPPORTING SURVEY DATA

According to the 2022 Miami Beach Community Survey, 24.6 percent of survey respondents cited efforts to address homelessness as one of the major categories of city services that are most important for the city to provide. Additionally, the Mayor and City Commission identified the need to address homelessness by continuously evolving and innovating services to help those wishing to end their personal homelessness as a key management objective in the City's 2019 Strategic Plan Through the Lens of Resilience.

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?

Yes

Does this item utilize G.O. Bond Funds?

No

Legislative Tracking

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

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