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**P.O. Box 552213**

**Miami Gardens, FL 33056**

[**www.MissMiamiGardens.org**](http://www.MissMiamiGardens.org)

[**MissMiamiGardens@Gmail.com**](mailto:MissMiamiGardens@Gmail.com)

**About the Miss Miami Gardens**

**Scholarship Program**

* The Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Pageant was initially established in 2007 by the Miami Gardens City Council, under the leadership of former Councilman Melvin L. Bratton. The pageant continued from 2007-2011, awarding five young women with financial scholarships, who would then go on to represent the City of Miami Gardens at the Miss Florida Competition.
* In October 2022, the program was relaunched through the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program, Inc., an independent registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and the sole fundraising entity for the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Competition. In February 2024, the organization will award two titles and two scholarships including Miss Miami Gardens & Miss Miami Gardens Outstanding TEEN, both of which are official local preliminaries to the [Miss Florida](https://www.missflorida.org/), [Miss America](http://missamerica.org/) and [Miss America's Outstanding Teen](https://www.missamerica.org/maoteen/) Competitions.
* The [Miss America Organization](http://www.missamerica.org/), one of the nation’s leading achievement programs and one of the world’s largest providers of scholarship assistance for young women. Last year, the Miss America Organization and its state and local organizations made available millions in cash and scholarship assistance to young women nationwide.

* Participating in the Miss America program helps young women pay for college and prepare for a career through hands-on leadership; all while gaining life experience, working on issues of importance to society, enhancing personal and professional skills and developing artistic expression.

**Our Mission Statement**

The Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program is dedicated to providing scholarships for young women to continue their education.

Our goal is to uphold the unique tradition of the Miss America Organization,

by empowering women with the experiences and scholarships that will allow them to achieve their educational goals, while developing their presentation skills, talents, and confidence.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

* **TAVARES JONES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Tavares Jones serves as the Executive Director of the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program. His experience spans over 10 years within the Miss America Organization, serving as a Certified Judge, Board Member and Co-Executive Director for several local preliminary pageants in Florida, Georgia, Ohio and Arkansas.

Beyond his work with the Miss America Org., Tavares is a journalist with experience across four television news markets. A graduate of the University of Florida, he holds dual degrees in Broadcast Journalism and Political Science. Tavares also devotes much of his time serving various organizations including the United Way, Children’s Miracle Network, Catholic Charities, and the Ryan White Foundation. Tavares is proud to be a part of and committed to preserving one of our nation’s leading achievement programs and the world’s largest provider of scholarship assistance for young women, the Miss America Organization.

* **LATOTA PORTER, BOARD MEMBER & DIR. OF DEVELOPMENT**

Latoya Porter serves as the Director of Development for the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program. A native of South Florida, Latoya is an alumnus of the great Florida Memorial University, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Masters in Reading Education with an ESOL & Reading Endorsement.

As an educator, Latoya serves as the Literacy Coach and Professional Development Liaison at Miami- Dade County Public Schools’ Scott Lake Elementary. Her work and passion for community service goes far beyond the classroom, as she also dedicates her time to various organizations including Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Miami-Dade County Public Schools MINT, she’s the Founder & President of Girls Growing into Greatness, Inc., and a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

* **KRISTYN LETTE, BOARD MEMBER & DIR. OF OPERATIONS**

Kristyn Lette serves as the Director of Operations for the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program. Her experience spans over 20 years in various leadership roles consisting of Operations and People Development.

Kristyn is passionate about mentoring youth, she’s an anti-bullying advocate and active participant in the South Florida Chapter for The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s (AFSP) ‘Walk to Fight Suicide’. Kristyn is also a former contestant & runner up in the Model Search America pageant of Richmond, Virginia. Kristyn is honored to serve as a Board Member for the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program and is excited for all the amazing opportunities the program

affords to young women.

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* + - **LORRAINE WRIGHT, BOARD MEMBER & SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR**

Lorraine Wright serves as the Scholarship Chair of the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program. With over 15 years of professional experience in higher education, Ms. Wright specializes in creating lifelong opportunities for minority-serving institutions. She’s also well-versed in student leadership development, conflict resolution, mentorship, and holistic support for minority students in the higher education community.

Ms. Wright is an alumna of Miami Dade College and Florida International University. She’s currently a doctoral candidate at Northcentral University. Her dissertation explores the challenges and successes of Black students at two-year colleges and universities. Her professional affiliations include the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the Association of Florida Colleges, the Florida College System Student Government Association, National Society of Leadership, and the Black Professionals Network. She’s also an avid community advocate serving several organizations including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Miami, Miami Chamber of Commerce by way of Miami Dade College, North Campus and a member of Dade County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

* + - **ERIKA BROWN, BOARD MEMBER & JUDGE’S CHAIR**

Erika Brown serves as the Judge’s Chair of the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii into a military family who loves animals. She grew up in the Midwest.

Erika holds a bachelor’s degree of Journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia and began her career as a news producer in Cape Girardeau, Missouri before moving to South Florida, where she currently works as an Emmy-nominated senior producer at WSVN-Television of Miami. Beyond her career, Ericka serves as a foster parent for Guardian Angels for Soldier’s Pets and is active member of the South Florida Association of Black Journalists and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

* + - * **KATERINA RODRIGUEZ, MARKETING & PUBLIC AFFIARS CHAIR**

Katerina Rodriguez serves as the Marketing and Public Affairs Chair for the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program. Beyond this role, she currently works in television as a News Producer and Journalist at WSVN-TV Channel 7 news, South Florida's Fox News affiliate.

A Broadcast Media graduate of Florida International University, Katerina also attended the University of Florida, and majored in criminology. As native of Miami-Dade County, Katerina works closely with various non-profit organizations specifically focused on educational outreach and “Get Out the Vote”, which include efforts aimed at increasing voter turnout among marginalized groups in South Florida. Katerina has also dedicated several years to coaching high school competitive debate teams and judging competitions across the country.

**ABOUT THE MISS MIAMI GARDENS SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION**

* Candidates in the **Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Competition** gain experience through participation in interviews, talent performances, public speaking, promoting social impact initiatives, and social media interaction. Cash and in-kind educational scholarships are available to all young women who advance to the Miss Florida state competition.
* **PHASES OF COMPETITION:**

1. Personal Interview with Judges
2. On Stage Question & Social Impact Pitch
3. Talent Competition
4. Evening Wear

* **Miss Miami Gardens Competition Scoring Guidelines:**
* 35%    Private Interview with Judges
* 15% On Stage Question & Social Impact Pitch
* 35%    Talent Performance
* 15%    Red Carpet (Evening Wear)

**SOCIAL IMPACT**

* Each candidate will be required to have a Social Impact Initiative which they will advocate during their year of service as Miss Miami Gardens. Each candidate should select a Social Impact Initiative in relation to a cause or issue that she has a strong personal commitment, involvement, or conviction.
* A candidate’s Social Impact Initiative allows her to explain to the judges and members of the community a subject matter of her choice, how she chooses to advocate for it during her year and the metrics she plans to use for success at the close of her year of service. In addition, it should explain how her advocacy will further the Miss Florida & Miss America Organization’s mission.

## **Miss America Scoring System**

-There are four areas of competition in the Miss America Organization. This is a review of each phase of competition and the judging criteria.

* The same panel of judges will score each phase of competition. Each candidate is scored individually, not comparatively and is scored immediately after she completes each phase of competition.
* The Olympic Scoring System is used. Scores are 1-10, whole numbers only.

The high and low scores are dropped. The remaining scores are combined, and percentages figured. The total score for each candidate determines the result of the competition.

* **PRIVATE INTERVIEW**  
  The interview will be conducted on the day of the competition. It is 35% of the total score. Candidate’s wardrobe selections should be age appropriate and could be pants, skirt, or a dress. Choose something that you would wear for a job interview.
* Candidates will be introduced as they enter the room and will speak from a podium.

The nine- and one-half minute interview will begin immediately. When the time has elapsed, candidates will be offered a chance to clarify anything or make a closing statement of up to 30 seconds. Questions are on general topics, current events, items from a candidate’s resume, and from their social impact essay.

* This is the candidate’s opportunity to let the judges get to know her. The judging will emphasize the candidate’s poise in handling the questions and how well she articulates her beliefs on the issue, not the position she takes.
* **The judges are looking for:** overall first impression, qualities and attributes of Miss America, positive role model, knowledge and understanding of her Social Impact Initiative, ability to fulfill job responsibilities, confidence and commanding presence, personality, appearance, and attractiveness, validated opinions and responses, ability to express feelings and defend beliefs, energy, intelligence, and communication skills (speech, vocabulary, and grammar).
* **TALENT**  
  Talent is 35% of the total score. The time limit for a candidate’s talent performance is

90 seconds. Each candidate must begin and finish onstage. No live animals or dangerous props are allowed (fire baton or swords). All props must be functional and an integral part of the talent. No enhanced lighting is allowed.

* When a candidate is choosing talent music and content, keep in mind the values and image of the Miss America Organization. The Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program has the right to ban music, movement, costume, or content deemed inappropriate.
* The judges are looking for: overall first impression, interpretive ability, technical skill, stage presence, totality of all elements including costume, music, and choreography, quality of the performance, and entertainment value.

**SOCIAL IMPACT PITCH & ON-STAGE QUESTION**

* This phase of the competition is an extension of the private interview and is worth 15% of the total score. The question is written by the judges after each interview and before the next interview begins.
* Each candidate will deliver a 45 to 50 second Social Impact Pitch (SIP), which at her discretion can include a statement on the initiative’s importance, her work, and plans with the initiative, or other information.
* Immediately following the candidate’s Social Impact Pitch, she will answer an On-stage Question. The question is essentially an extension of the private interview. The time limit to answer the question is 20 seconds and a timer will be used.
* Attire for the Social Impact Pitch is the candidate's choice and can be what she wore to the private interview or something a little "showier" since it is part of the production. This is a chance for each candidate to show her personality through her choice of attire.
* The judges are evaluating the candidate’s extemporaneous responses to the onstage question, sense of empowerment, and passion for her Social Impact Pitch. Other judging criteria includes poise, confidence, and comfort level in speaking before a large audience.  
    
  **RED CARPET (EVENING WEAR)**
* The Red Carpet / Evening Wear phase of competition is 15% of the total score. The candidate’s entire look and stage presence is taken into consideration.
* **The judges are looking for:** overall first impression, sense of confidence, walk, posture, carriage and grace, personality, stage presence, beauty and sense of attractiveness, appropriateness of the evening wear.
* **A note on wardrobe selection in all phases of competition:** Candidates should always choose something that compliments her personality. Candidates are judged on the total look and overall first impression; not the outfit itself or price of the outfit. Each candidate should choose a style, color, and fit, that is becoming to her.

**ABOUT THE MISS MIAMI GARDENS OUTSTANDING TEEN**

**SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION**

* Candidates in the **Miss Miami Gardens Outstanding TEEN Competition** gain experience through participation in interviews, talent performances, public speaking, promoting social impact initiatives, and social media interaction. Cash and in-kind educational scholarships are available to all young women who advance to Miss Florida’s Outstanding TEEN state competition.
* **PHASES OF COMPETITION:**

1. Private Interview
2. Lifestyle & Wellness /Sportswear
3. Talent
4. Evening Wear & On-Stage Question

* **Miss Miami Gardens Outstanding TEEN Competition Scoring:**
* 30%    Private Interview with Judges
* 10% Lifestyle & Wellness / Sportswear
* 40%    Talent
* 20%    Evening Wear & On-Stage Question

**SOCIAL IMPACT**

* Each candidate will be required to have a Social Impact Initiative which they will advocate during their year of service as Miss Miami Gardens. Each candidate should select a Social Impact Initiative in relation to a cause or issue that she has a strong personal commitment, involvement, or conviction.
* A candidate’s Social Impact Initiative allows her to explain to the judges and members of the community a subject matter of her choice, how she chooses to advocate for it during her year and the metrics she plans to use for success at the close of her year of service. In addition, it should explain how her advocacy will further the mission of the Miss Florida’s Outstanding TEEN & Miss America’s Outstanding TEEN Organizations.

## **Miss America’s Outstanding TEEN**

## **Scoring System**

**INTERVIEW**

* The Private Interview competition is the first opportunity to meet the panel of judges. The duration of the interview will be 8 minutes.  During this time each contestant will be able to converse with the judges about their goals and aspirations as well as express their personal opinions. The judges will be looking for a sharp and tasteful young woman who is sure of herself, current events and her Social Impact Initiative. This portion of the competition counts for 30% of the final score.

**LIFESTYLE & WELLNESS/ SPORTSWEAR**

* The Lifestyle & Wellness phase of the competition is designed to see how well the candidate maintains a lifestyle of good physical health and whether she has the sense of confidence and self-assurance needed to be a titleholder. This phase is performed in active / sportswear, not swimsuits.

This portion of the competition counts for 10% of the final score.

**TALENT**

* The Talent phase of competition allows each candidate to demonstrate artistic craft.  The presentation will not be more than 90 seconds in duration.  Some examples of talents performed within the Miss America Scholarship Competition include singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument, comic or dramatic reading, baton, acrobatic movements, etc.  Each candidate is responsible for providing their own music or arrangements.
* Judges will be looking for interpretive ability, technical skill level, stage presence and integration of elements (costume, choreography, music, and props) used in the presentation. Talent represents 40% of the final score.

**EVENING WEAR & ON-STAGE QUESTION**

* The Red Carpet / Evening Wear & On-Stage Question phase of competition is 20% of the total score.
* **The judges are looking for:** overall first impression, sense of confidence, walk, posture, carriage and grace, personality, stage presence, beauty and sense of attractiveness, appropriateness of the evening wear.
* **A note on wardrobe selection in all phases of competition:** Candidates should always choose something that compliments her personality. Candidates are judged on the total look and overall first impression; not the outfit itself or price of the outfit. Each candidate should choose a style, color, and fit, that is becoming to her.

**ON STAGE QUESTION**

* Immediately following the candidate’s modeling of her evening wear, she will answer an On-stage Question. The question is essentially an extension of the private interview. The time limit to answer the question is 20 seconds and a timer will be used.
* The judges will be looking for personality, intelligence, speech, vocabulary, and style.

**CANDIDATE AGE & RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

**AGE**

* Miss Miami Gardens candidates must be between 19-28 years of age.
* Miss Miami Gardens’ Outstanding TEEN candidates must be between 13- 18 years of age.

**RESIDENCY**

**Must fulfill ONE of the following:**

* Candidates must reside, work, or be successfully enrolled in and physically attending classes on a full-time basis at an accredited college or technical school in the City of Miami Gardens, FL or Opa-Locka, FL, reside, work, or attend school in one of the following approved address zip codes: **33013, 33014, 33054, 33055, 33056, 33169, 33175, 33179, 33269.**

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

* Candidates must be in reasonably good health to meet the job requirements.
* Participate in fundraising for the Miss America Foundation.
* Meet character criteria set forth by the Miss America Organization.
* Candidates must be able to meet the time commitment and job responsibilities as set forth by the Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program, Inc. should she win the title. (The titleholder will enter a contract with the organization)
* Candidates must not now, nor have ever been married, nor has had a marriage annulled, nor will get married during the year of service to the organization.

# **Text, letter Description automatically generatedApplication**

* First, you will need to register through the [Miss America website](https://www.missamerica.org/signup/). You will need to select the correct state (FLORIDA) and enter “Miss Miami Gardens” as the competition you would like to enter.
* Second, enter your information below to receive the application packet.

### APPLICATION PART ONE

**Which Pageant would you like to compete? (Please circle one)**

* **Miss Miami Gardens 2024 (Age. 19-26)**
* **Miss Miami Gardens Outstanding TEEN 2024 (Age. 13-18)**

**Top of Form**

**Full Legal Name:**

**Date of Birth:**

**Address:**

**City:**

**Zip:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Education & Highest Grade Level Completed:**

**Talent you will be presenting:**

**Parent/ Guardian’s Name:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

# **Text, letter Description automatically generatedMini Miss & Mr. Miami Gardens Program**

**About the Program:**

* The Miss Florida Sunshine Princess & Prince Program is designed to introduce young girls and boys ages 4-12 years-old to the Miss Florida Scholarship Program before they reach competition age. Helping children understand that Miss America is not just a dream, but something they can begin preparing for at a young age.
* The program allows children to work closely with the Miss Miami Gardens & Miami Gardens Outstanding TEEN candidates who will serve as their role models and mentors through community service. Participants will also take part in the Miss Florida Competition during the summer and with the Miss Miami Gardens titleholders throughout the year.

**Cost for Participation:**

* $75.00
* Make checks / Money orders payable to:

**Miss Miami Gardens Scholarship Program Inc.**

**Top of Form**

**Child’s Name:**

**Child’s Age:**

**School Attending & Grade Level:**

**Home Address:**

**City:**

**Zip Code:**

**Parent / Guardian’s Phone:**

**Parent / Guardian’s Email:**

**Child’s Interest & Hobbies:**