Miami-Dade Public Libraries - Miami Beach Regional Branch

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Demographics

Miami Beach Regional Library serves the residents of lower Miami Beach. This area is part of a large urban center in Miami and is a tourist destination. The total population of the library's service area is approximately 39,000 residents. Much of the population are adults between ages 18-45. About 16% of the population are older adults and 13% of the population are under 18 years old (ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)). Most income levels, by household, in this area make either below $50,000 or above $75,000 with very little percentage in between. According to survey demographics compiled by the Social Explorer database, 29% of households make $100,000 and up annually, 10% make between $75,000 and $100,000 annually, 26% make less than $25,000 and 21% make between $25,000 and $50,000. Compared to national poverty levels, 64% of the households in this area are "Doing Ok," and about 36% are "Poor or Struggling" (ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)).

Education demographics for the library's service area seem to reflect the household income ratios. For the population of the library's service area that is 25 years old and up, only 11% have less than a high school diploma, 37% have at least a high school diploma and 57% have a bachelor's degree or better (ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)). Concerning ethnic origin, 46% of the library's service population are born in the US and 53% are from outside of the US. Of the people born outside of the US, only 23% are naturalized citizens (ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)). Within the foreign-born population in the library's service area, 20% are from Europe, 6% are from Asia, nearly 2% are from Africa, and almost 70% are from Latin America and the Caribbean (ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)).

Building Access Considerations

Building access for the Miami-Dade Public Library faces criticism on Yelp, were people state that there is no available parking outside. There is also a lack of seating available outside. This is to dissuade people experiencing homelessness from loitering according to a Yelp review on January 7, 2017 (Miami-Dade Public Library System, 2021). According to the ADA Notice page on the Miami-Dade Public Library's website, if a program, service, activity, or facility does not meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements, the person filing the claim is directed to file a complaint with the local ADA representative.

Governance and Funding

Miami Beach Regional Library is part of the Miami Dade Public Library System (MDPLS). The branch itself is run by a branch manager but falls under the oversight of the Miami-Dade Library District Director and the governing board members. The governing board members are commissioners from the districts that make up the library system's service area. Funding for the library comes from several places. Ad Valorem property taxes and "nonmajor special revenue fund" called the "Public Library Fund" given by the county (Miami-Dade County, 2019, p. 175). There are also permanent funds, called the "Libraries Permanent Fund" and Donor restricted endowments that contribute to library funding (Miami-Dade County, 2019).

According to the MDPLS Fiscal Year 2020-21 Proposed Budget and Multi-Year Capital Plan, the actual budget for the 2019 fiscal year was 89 million dollars for the entire library district (Miami-Dade County, p. 187). There were no exact breakdowns for specific branch funding but, assuming funding is doled out equally among the fifty branches, the 2019 budget for Miami Beach Regional would be $1.8 million, give or take.

Staffing

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The FY 2019 – 20 Proposed Budget and Multi-Year Capital Plan outlines six divisions relating to staffing: Director's Office, Human Resources, Fiscal and Business Operations, Communications, Programming, and Community Engagement, Facilities Management and Capital Development, and Public Services (Miami-Dade County, 2019). The first five divisions represent upper-level management, while the latter division (Public Services) represents the staff within the public library that work directly with patrons.

Regarding the Public Services division, the number of roles at each branch varies depending on the size, and is generally made up of one branch manager, adult service librarians, youth service librarians, reference librarians, library aids, pages, and volunteers. There are three salary brackets for librarians, determined by set qualifications and level of experience. At the intern level, librarians having a starting salary of $43,000 per year. The next level up is this trainee level, which has a starting salary of $46,000 per year. The last and highest level is the librarian level, and at that level librarians start at $48,000 per year (Librarian 1, n.d.)

Customer Service

Library staff at the Miami-Dade Public Library has been reviewed as being very helpful and welcoming according to a yelp review from January 6, 2020 (Miami-Dade Public Library System, 2021). Additionally, the Miami-Dade Public Library offers "Librarian on Demand" via their website. This allows patrons to text, chat, or email a librarian. The live chat and texting options are available from 10 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday (ET), and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday (ET). Email is available any time of the day, every day of the week.

Collections, Materials, and Technology

      Miami Beach Regional Library is on the leading edge of technology in the MDPLS system. The branch has basic technologies like computers, tablets, laptops, free wi-fi, printers, and photocopy stations. The branch is one of few in the MDPLS system that has a maker center called, "YOUmake Miami." The YOUmake center is for people 8 years old and up, though kids under the age of 13 must be accompanied by an adult inside. The center has 3D design, 3D printing, graphic design, sewing, video production, photography, jewelry making, music production, painting, robotics/LEGO, arts, and crafts (YOUmake Miami, 2021). Assistive Technologies include assisted listening devices for library programs, Microsoft Windows Accessibility magnifier on all computers, Topaz desktop video magnifier, zoom text magnifier reader and drive up wi-fi (Assistive Services and Technologies, 2021).

      The library's collections span a wide range of materials. The library holdings include braille and talking books, books in all formats including large print books and cassettes. The library has an ever-widening collection of fiction and non-fiction books in Spanish. The collection also contains music in all formats, like scores and vinyl, audiobooks in electronic formats, on CDs and cassettes, DVDs, and VHS tapes. The library's collection has graphic novels for both adults and young adults, LGBTQ titles are also held by the library for children and young adults. The branch collection also includes periodicals, microforms, reference materials like maps and atlases, and video games.

      Digital collections are available for customers online. Choice materials from the district's special collections have been digitized, these collections cover historical and developmental periods of Miami, art, rare books and manuscripts, genealogy records, and photographs of historic Miami. Similarly, there is a virtual permanent art collection exhibit available on the library's website. Lastly, the library subscribes to databases for homework help, tutoring, college prep, continuing education, and career research, most databases are from ProQuest.

Programming

During Covid, the Miami-Dade Public Library system shifted all their programming to an online platform. The events are hosted on Zoom to enable group participation and collaborative engagement. While Covid changed the format of most events, it did not change their essence.

Miami-Dade has successfully kept up a variety of events and classes through the pandemic. Their Adult Learning Academy has classes in math, literacy, SAT prep, job help, and more scheduled every day of the week – often with two or more classes each day. Educational classes like SAT prep, Spanish as a second language, and English as a second language are taught by certified teachers. It isn't clear from their website whether those teachers are library staff members who have gotten certified or if the library partners with local schools and tutoring organizations in town.

Events geared towards teens and young adults include graphic design and art classes, meditation and Zumba classes, and even a young adult library advisory board! The advisory board meets weekly via Zoom where local teens can earn volunteer hours as they help improve library offerings. Younger kids and families can join daily story time, imaginative play, and story time with a therapy dog via Zoom every day. Some days there's even a bedtime stories session at 6pm! On Fridays and Saturdays through June 2021, anyone under 18 can come get a hot breakfast and/or lunch at the library provided by the Sisters for Abundant Living.

Unique Offering

There is a strong focus on the arts at the Miami-Dade public libraries. There are rotating exhibitions based on annual themes and library special collections, as well as a permanent art collection that highlights African American, Latino, and Miami artists. There is also the Vasari Project, which is "a library collection dedicated to documenting, collecting, and preserving

Miami-Dade County's art history from 1945 to the present" (The Vasari Project, n.d.). This project is available to view by appointment only and is located at the Main Library branch.

Adult Services

Adult Learning Academy

The library provides daily classes such as math, literacy, and SAT prep for adults. Adults can also take classes in English as a second language and Spanish as a second language several times a week. On the weekends, the library puts on job help classes to help teens and adults work on their resumes and effectively find work in the community.

Project LEAD

The library provides one-on-one adult literacy instruction for English-speaking adults who are functionally illiterate. A family member or friend who is literate would need to sign them up for instruction online.

Braille and Talking Books

For adults with visual impairments, the library provides access to both Braille books and talking books. Talking books are specifically designed for those experiencing blindness or low vision to be able to easily select and play audiobooks on specialized cassettes and players. The library's collection of these talking books is available via mail.

Links to Government Websites

The library provides easy access to several government websites and forms to help patrons navigate the often-frustrating world of online government interaction. Patrons can access and download IRS forms, FEMA forms, connect with disability services, find a job, and more from the library page.

Passport Services

The library provides passport services such as headshots and collecting relevant documentation by appointment.

Connection Home Library

If patrons are not physically able to come to the library – including older adults and persons with mobility impairments – they can request and receive items via the mail. There is no age limit on this service, so theoretically a young child with severe anxiety or someone without easy access to transportation could also utilize this service.

Mobile Printing

Any patron can use library printers via a mobile app. All prints cost between 10 and 25 cents each.

Services to Customers Experiencing Homelessness

The Miami-Dade Public Library System collaborates with the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust – a housing trust fund project which "Assists homeless in Miami-Dade County through a homeless hotline, shelter referrals and access to information on other homeless services" (*Homeless Trust,* n.d.). Miami-Dade makes basic paperwork and pamphlets related to Homeless Trust available at each of its fifty library branches, though paperwork has not been made available through their website. Patrons wishing to access services provided by Homeless Trust may choose to complete paperwork at a Miami-Dade Public Library, however in order to submit paperwork, they must travel to the Homeless Trust brick-and-mortar building located inside the Government Building in northwest Florida. Further services specifically offering support for customers experiencing homelessness are not currently available.

Services to Refugees and Immigrants

There is a lot of untapped potential to start offering more inclusive community services at the Miami-Dade public libraries. Directly, there are currently no services in place specifically to support refugees and immigrants. Two programs that most closely relate to being potentially useful are the previously mentioned Adult Learning Academy (where participants have access to a course on English as a second language – though they must have reliable computers with internet, video, and audio capability, and must commit to attending each course over a ten-week period), and Project L.E.A.D., which is a series of classes aimed to assist adults with low literacy skills. Per the requirements page, however, interested patrons must be fluent in English at the time of sign-up (*Project L.E.A.D.* n.d.)**.** Though these programs will support specific audiences, the Miami-Dade libraries have the potential to expand to include a wider array of resources for supporting refugee and immigrant communities within their larger community.

As stated in their FY 2019 - 20 Proposed Budget and Multi-Year Capital Plan, "As part of the Recreation and Culture strategic area, MDPLS serves one of the largest and most diverse populations in the United States" (Miami-Dade County, 2019). The library services do not reflect this statement at this time. Research of the area shows there are numerous organizations offering refugee and immigrant services, providing opportunities for MDPLS to collaborate and better-serve their diverse and expanding population of patrons.

Youth Services

The Miami Dade Public Library has several programs and services directed at the youth of Miami. These programs include The Library for Teens, The Library for Children, and the Online Homework Help and Tutoring Program along with many events through the month.

These services are primarily online at this time, but also include programs that are meant to be in person, such as volunteer opportunities and in-person events.

Library for Teens creates an area online that focuses on teen issues within the library. The site includes resources for the Teen Library by linking the catalog, e-book and audiobooks, free museum passes, and YOUMedia Miami, a program that blends creativity and technology. These first few links link in library services and the art-based culture of Miami. The Teen Library also focuses on book space, homework help, college, careers, health and relationships, and volunteering opportunities. This page has accumulated the different resources that are based on the needs of teens in the area for easy access.

Early literacy programs, pre-school prep, games, and story time programs can be found on the Library for Children. This online library is formatted differently than the Teen Library, focusing on early literacy and resources for parents.

The Online Homework Help and Tutoring program offers free tutoring sessions every Saturday. These programs work with certified teachers. The day and time limit could cause scheduling problems for people seeking tutoring, especially if they have jobs that require them to work on Saturdays. Additionally, by requiring a quiet space and weekly registrations, it could deter some people who are seeking homework help.

Finally, considering the events designed for the Miami youth, the events range from online story time to and online chess tournament, and online dance classes. Due to the global pandemic, Covid-19, this may not be a good representation of the events offered by the Miami Dade Public Library.

Literacy Considerations and Challenges

This past year has created new challenges when teaching literacy. For the Miami-Dade Public Library, this is no different. The library is offering many literacy programs, especially through its Library for Children, including story times, literacy games, and parent resources. According to an article "Modeling Reading Ability Gain in Kindergarten Children during COVID-19 School Closures" children experience a summer slump that is supplemented by summer school or library programs, but since there have not been those programs due to Covid-19, children may be falling further behind on their literacy learning (BAO 2020). The Miami-Dade Public Library still held their Summer reading program from June 20-August 8, 2020, but it was only available online. As with all programs held online, they may reach more people because they do not require travel, but they run the risk of missing the children who would attend in person, but do not have access to internet. Bao et al. says that though it is not as effective as teaching literacy, it is better to read with your child than to not work on reading at all (2020).

Partner Organizations:

Sisters for Abundant Living

This organization provides free meals, educational support, and health and wellness instruction to the Miami area (Sisters for abundant living, n.d.). The library is hosting them at the end of each week through the spring semester and into early summer during 2021.

County Department of Cultural Affairs

The library system has partnered with the County Department of Cultural Affairs to create an archive that collects and preserves local art history from 1945 to the present (The Vasari Project, n.d.). The department is tasked with "develop[ing] cultural excellence, diversity and participation through Miami-Dade County by strategically creating and promoting

opportunities for artists and cultural organizations," (Dade county, 2021). This project is discussed in further detail in the section on unique offerings.

The Children's Trust

The Children's Trust is funded by property tax whose "mission is to partner with the community to plan, advocate for and fund strategic investments that improve the lives of all children and families in Miami-Dade County," (Admin, 2021). This trust funds homework help sessions, virtual library exhibits, and special children's events at the library each month.

Yad Vashem

The library partnered with Yad Vashem to create a virtual exhibit of art and posters from the time of the Holocaust and immediately following camp liberation that were housed in the library's permanent art collection (Virtual exhibitions, n.d.). Yad Vashem is the world leader of Holocaust studies and education located in Jerusalem (About the international school for Holocaust studies, n.d.).

Museum Passes

The library partners with 16 parks, museums, and zoos in the Miami area to provide free entry for families and individuals. Some museums and parks put limitations on the ages of the children who qualify under the family pass, but most museums allow up to four people in one family to come in regardless of age (Museum pass program, n.d.). The library has a limited number of passes each week, so patrons can get them on a first-come-first-served basis.

Outreach Possibilities and Challenges

Age Ranges

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One of the challenges for Miami-Dade is its age categorization. The age categories are as follows: Early Childhood (0-5), Children (6-11), Tween (8-12), Young Adult (12-18), Adult (19+), Older Adult (55+), Families, All Ages. These categories present challenges for outreach. For example, the Young Adult and Adult categories are rarely used on their own. Out of 24 activities aimed at the Young Adult age group during one week in March, only 3 events listed just Young Adult and not Adult – chess club, homework help, and a surrealist art class. Most of the events that highlight Young Adult are also highlighted for the Adult age group. This leads to a lack of events truly geared towards teens.

Take and Make

The library has several online offerings that encourage creativity such as their mixture of Bingo and Scavenger Hunt. However, they could offer limited supplies for take-and-make events. They have several STEAM and art classes coming up that would pair nicely with a take-and-make set up.

Discord or In-Game Server

The library offers several online gaming events for teens, but they're hosted on Zoom. I think the library could use Discord or create an in-game server on the online games they are promoting rather than using Zoom as a second app. The events could be streamlined if the library sends out links to the library's specific server. The library could also utilize free online group games such as Among Us to get teens involved together while staying away from a Zoom meeting room.

Partnering with Local Schools

Since everyone is online right now, this is the perfect time to get involved with local schools. Zoom has made it easy to connect people from different organizations. Why not help an English teacher with one of their book units? How about promoting Spanish language resources in a high school Spanish class? Why not contact a local chemistry teacher to partner on a fun at-home experiment? This is the time to get connected with teachers and school administrations so that bigger partnerships might happen in the future.

Museum and Zoo Partnership Reimagined

The library could expand its partnerships with museums and zoos in the area. While the cultural organizations have limited visitor access, why not create a program where patrons could go on a short docent-led Zoom tour of an exhibit? The library could provide discussion and resources to connect patrons to the items or animals they learned about.

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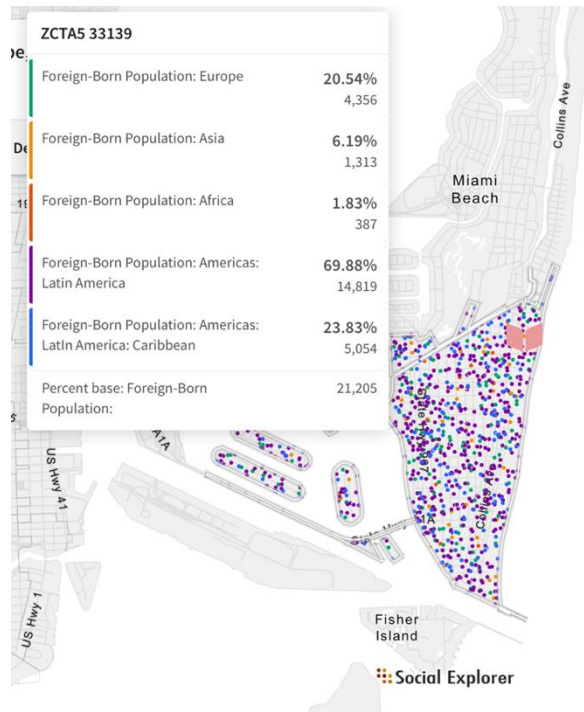Sisters for abundant living. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.sistersforabundantliving.org/

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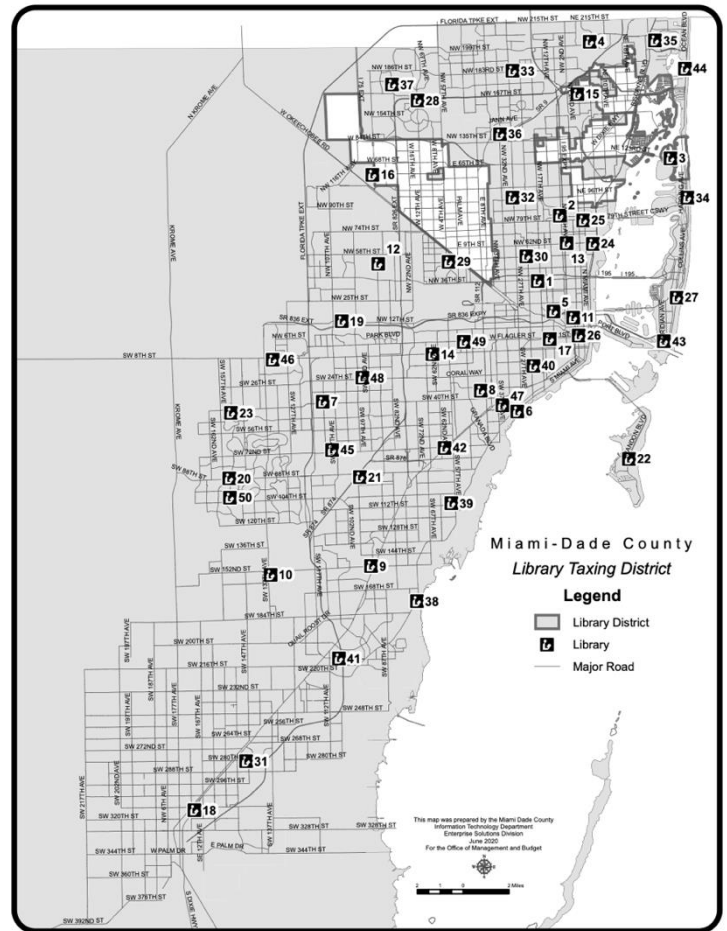Virtual exhibitions. (n.d.). Retrieved https://mdpls.org/virtual-exhibitions

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Appendix

Foreign-Born Population (ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)

Library Taxing District(Miami-Dade County, 2020, p. 198)