



RESEARCH ON ISSUES AFFECTING OLDER ADULTS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

An Executive Interview Study of Community Leaders



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“This is an excellent idea. It's been a long time coming. It should have been done 20 years ago.” – Business Leader

“It would be great to have more focus and attention drawn to this segment of the population. This initiative will awaken a lot of people in the County to the needs of the older adult population.” – Academic

The Health Foundation of South Florida and the United Way of Miami-Dade commissioned Bendixen & Amadi International (B&A) to conduct ‘executive interview’ research detailing how to communicate with opinion leaders in Miami-Dade County to gain insight into:

- To what extent opinion leaders are aware of, understand and prioritize issues facing the older adult population in Miami-Dade County and how those issues affect the community as a whole;
- Opinion leaders’ perception of the older adult population in Miami-Dade County;
- The viability of the Health Foundation/United Way Older Adults Initiative;
- The messages that resonate with opinion leaders; and
- The appetite for a potential dedicated public funding source for older adult issues.

B&A worked with the Health Foundation of South Florida and the United Way to compile a list of current, leading community stakeholders and influential opinion leaders to interview. Over 150 in-depth executive interviews were conducted with academics, business leaders, civic leaders, elected officials, and governmental officials in Miami-Dade County between February 10 and April 14, 2014.

The respondents who graciously gave of their time for an in-depth telephone interview provided key feedback on issues critical to understanding perceptions of the issues affecting the older adult population. Taken as a whole, **there is little immediate consciousness of the challenges facing the older adult population**, however when prompted, opinion leaders recognize the importance of addressing the issues related to this ever growing group in Miami Dade County community. The universal lack of awareness suggests the need for educating the community about the topic, in order to create an atmosphere in which any proposed initiative could succeed. Additionally, B&A recommends that the initiative should conduct further research among the general voting population in order to gain an understating of how the community at large might view these issues.

INTRODUCTION

The Health Foundation of South Florida and the United Way of Miami-Dade commissioned Bendixen & Amadi (B&A) to quantify the perception of community leaders on issues affecting older adults in Miami-Dade County and the viability of an initiative to address these issues.

B&A research personnel conducted 150 in-depth interviews with current, leading community stakeholders and influential opinion leaders that are academics, business leaders, civic leaders, elected officials, and government officials. A description of the methodology and of the demographics of the respondents can be found in the last section of this report. It is important to note that the findings of this study do not necessarily reflect the views of the general Miami-Dade County population. Opinion leaders offer a unique perspective of the community and are generally aware of the issues and needs of Miami-Dade County given their work and experiences.

Demographically the sample is older, predominantly male and more affluent than the broader community and is therefore a unique community subgroup and is not representative of the Miami-Dade County population as a whole.

The goal of the interviews was to understand how opinion leaders in the community perceived the older adult population and the issues they face, and the viability of the Health Foundation/United Way Older Adults Initiative.

THE PROJECT UNIVERSE

To truly have an impact on public policy toward older adults in Miami-Dade County, it is important that the community's leadership has an appreciation of the nature of the challenges on the horizon and more importantly is convinced to utilize the combined weight of their influence in support of proactive changes. This research study forms the base of efforts to achieve these objectives. To the extent that this segment of the community is aware of and passionate about addressing a given issue, the likelihood of mobilizing the necessary public and political will to do so is increased immeasurably. Conversely, if the community leadership is either unaware of or unwilling to address a particular issue, marshalling the necessary resources to do so would prove difficult if not impossible.

Key to understanding the findings of this report is to first understand the nature of the universe that was included for study. The individuals selected to participate represent a broad cross-section of the local community vanguard and included many of the most high profile and influential people in Miami-Dade County. The research seeks to identify how members of this influential group see the older adult population, the issues that affect them and by extension affect us all.

We take great pride in our ability to reach the true community vanguard of Miami and are truly appreciative that so many agreed to be a part in this important study. Below is a representative sample of the 150 people interviewed:

- Alex Penelas, Former Mayor of Miami-Dade County
- Barry Johnson, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
- Daniel Alfonso, City Manager for the City of Miami
- David Landsberg, Publisher, Miami Herald Media Co.
- David Lawrence, The Children's Movement of Florida
- Juan Zapata, Miami-Dade County Commissioner
- Katherine Fernandez-Rundle, Miami-Dade State Attorney
- Merrett Stierheim, Former County Manager
- Michael Kosnitzky, Former Chairman of the Public Health Trust
- Dawn White, American Airlines
- Donna Shalala, University of Miami
- Dr. John Clarkson, University of Miami School of Medicine
- Ed Williamson, Owner of Williamson Cadillac
- George Burgess, Former County Manager
- George Foyo, Baptist Health South Florida
- Jack Lowell, Flagler Real Estate Services
- Jim Cason, Mayor of Coral Gables
- Jonathan Kislak, Antares Capital Corporation
- Joseph Serota, Weiss Serota Helfman Pastoriza Cole & Boniske
- Monsignor Franklyn Casale, St. Thomas University
- Penelope Shaffer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida
- Ron Book, Lobbyist
- Ruth Shack, Past President, Dade Community Foundation, Former County Commissioner
- Sally Heyman, Miami-Dade County Commissioner
- Sergio Gonzalez, University of Miami
- Wayne Chaplin, Southern Wine & Spirits of South Florida
- William Talbert, Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

MAJOR FINDINGS

- I. The older adult population is not a conscious “top-of-mind” concern.
- II. When directly prompted, opinion leaders recognize the gravity of the challenges faced by the older adult population.
- III. The Health Foundation/United Way older adults initiative is universally perceived as a ‘good idea’.
- IV. All of the messages tested were found to be convincing by at least six out of ten community leaders. However, there was not one message that particularly stood out from the rest.
- V. Support also exists among a majority of opinion leaders for the idea of a dedicated public funding source for older adults, but there is not as much support as there is for the initiative, as a whole.

MAJOR FINDING #1:

The older adult population is not a conscious “top-of-mind” concern.

The study was designed in such a way as to provide multiple opportunities for the older adult population to be measured as an issue of importance to community leaders before it was revealed that the study was about this particular population. Regardless of the context in which it was presented, the research overwhelmingly shows that the older adult population is not a conscious “top-of-mind” concern to community leaders.

NOTE: This point was so clear, and in our opinion is so critical for the initiative to understand, that all of the other findings in our professional judgment are secondary by comparison.

When asked in an open-ended question, “In your opinion, what is the single most important issue facing Miami-Dade County today”, opinion leaders cited a wide variety of issues including the economy, education, traffic and even climate change. Of note to this study, **no one mentioned older adults** as the single most important issue facing the community.

The economy / Jobs / Unemployment	29%
Education	18%
Traffic / Transportation	10%
Public corruption	7%
Poverty	7%
Infrastructure	6%
Social services	6%
Healthcare	4%
Community apathy	3%
Climate change	2%
Older Adults	0%
Other	7%

Selected Representative Comments

“When there is strong economic growth and proper employment everyone gets their needs met.” – Business leader

“Everything revolves around the economic health of our community. If we don’t have high-quality jobs, we’ll end up with a brain drain.” – Elected official

“Economic development is the source of solving many problems. Vibrant economies create opportunities and fund everything else.” – Business leader

“Miami-Dade County has a volatile economy in terms of the different sectors and how they perform. We need to build other industries besides construction that bring high-paying jobs and stability in employment levels and value creation.” – Business leader

“The economic vitality of a community is fueled by jobs.” – Civic leader

“Continuous job growth allows people to get jobs and get off welfare, increases revenue and increases our tax base. This is the best thing that can happen to any economy.” – Business leader

“The economy translates into all other issues that the County is dealing with.” – Academic

“We have a huge opportunity for growth and not enough people trained through our education system for the jobs available. There are too many people with an insufficient education who can’t have an economically viable life.” – Business leader

“Our education system is perceived to be poor and that hurts us in attracting investments in South Florida.” – Business leader

“Our education system is badly flawed. Education is the infrastructure that's going to allow us to thrive.” – Elected official

Having asked where opinion leaders stand with regard to present day community issues and priorities; the next phase was to project into the future to determine if there was any differentiation in their thinking.

When asked in an open-ended question to think about the next 5 to 10 years and provide us with the most important issues Miami-Dade County will face, opinion leaders cited transportation, education, economic development, infrastructure, job creation, and healthcare among the top issues that will face Miami-Dade County in the coming years.



Again, with an eye toward providing multiple opportunities for opinion leaders to highlight issues affecting older adults before being told that the study was about older adults, the next battery of questions dealt with community priorities. When provided with a specified list of issues and asked what they thought should be the **most important** priority for Miami-Dade County, only 2 percent of respondents chose improving services for older adults as the most important priority facing the community.

Improving County infrastructure such as water, sewer, and transportation	45%
Improving services for children and families	24%
Combating public corruption	10%
Improving public safety	4%
Lowering County taxes	2%
Improving services for older adults	2%
Other	13%

In the reverse, when given the same set of options to choose from as to what they thought should be the **least important** priority for Miami-Dade County, improving services for older adults was the choice of 10 percent of respondents

Lowering County taxes	57%
Combating public corruption	14%
Improving services for older adults	10%
Improving public safety	10%
Improving County infrastructure such as water, sewer, and transportation	5%
Improving services for children and families	2%
Other	1%
Don't know / No answer	1%

These number clearly indicate a significant disconnect between what we know to be the magnitude of the challenges on the horizon with regard to older adults and the awareness and appreciation of those issues in the minds of opinion leaders in Miami-Dade.

Additionally, when asked in an open-ended question to consider all of the demographic groups in Miami-Dade County, which specific population they consider to be the most underserved and underfunded, only 9 percent of opinion leaders mentioned older adults. This is the case even following a set of questions where older adults was one of the specified choices.

African Americans	31%
Children	19%
Haitians	12%
The poor	9%
Older adults	9%
Immigrants	6%
Other	6%
Don't know / No answer	8%

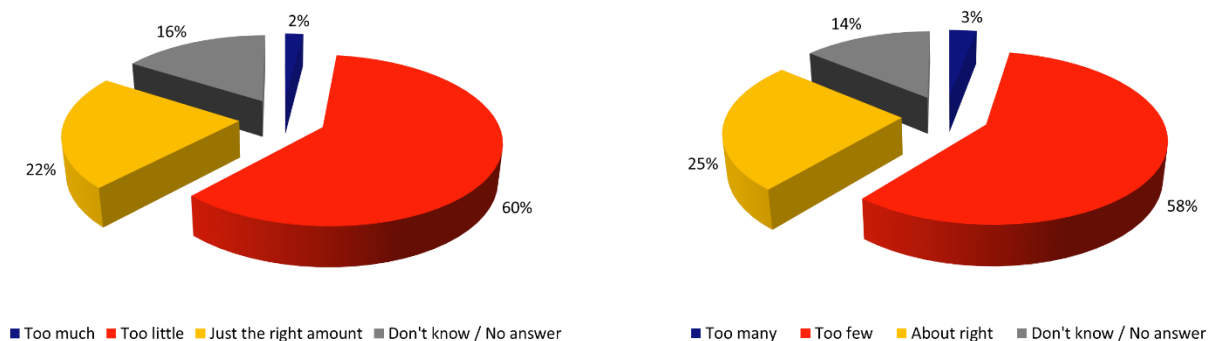
Taken together, the results from this series of questions make it clear that the older adult population is not of top-mind concern to opinion leaders in Miami-Dade County. That is, whether prompted or unprompted and given the opportunity to prioritize among top issues facing the community today and into the near future, the older adult population is not at the forefront of concern to opinion leaders. Therefore, educating both community leaders and the general population to raise awareness about the issues affecting older adults, will be vital to garnering support for any proposed initiative.

MAJOR FINDING #2:

When directly prompted, opinion leaders recognize the gravity of the challenges faced by the older adult population.

With a baseline appreciation among opinion leaders for issues affecting the older adult population having been established, the next phase of the research endeavored to determine attitudes in the light of additional information. Respondents were exposed to a variety of statements regarding the older adult population, including service delivery, resource allocation, challenges faced and responsibility for care. Although opinion leaders did not independently cite older adults or the issues affecting them among their top concerns, when specifically asked about the older adult population, leaders do appear to recognize the gravity of the challenges they face.

For example, when directly asked, 60 percent of respondents think that issues affecting older adults in Miami-Dade County are given too little attention and 58 percent think that Miami-Dade County is a community that provides too few services for older adults.



Of those who responded that too few services are provided for older adults, 34 percent believe that it is due to a lack of money to provide all necessary services, 28 percent attribute the lack of services to the rapid growth of the adult population and the inability of the community to adequately service it, and 27 percent recognize that older adults are not a priority in Miami-Dade County.

Selected Representative Comments

“Older adults are an ever-growing population. As this piece of the pie grows, there’ll be more demands on services. The needs continue to increase while resources continue to decrease.”
– Business leader

“I think it’s a great family concern. As older parents and grandparents age, families don’t know what to do or how to get help to aid these older adults. I think, by personal experience, it’s difficult to guide them to the programs they need or help them find government assistance. While programs exist for children and families and there is public awareness for their issues, this public knowledge is completely lacking for older adults.” – Academic

“Services for older adults are usually underfunded. Most people don’t think older adults are important unless they have an elderly family member looking for services.” – Civic leader

“As the population continues to age, less people will have the services they need unless supplemental help is provided.” – Business leader

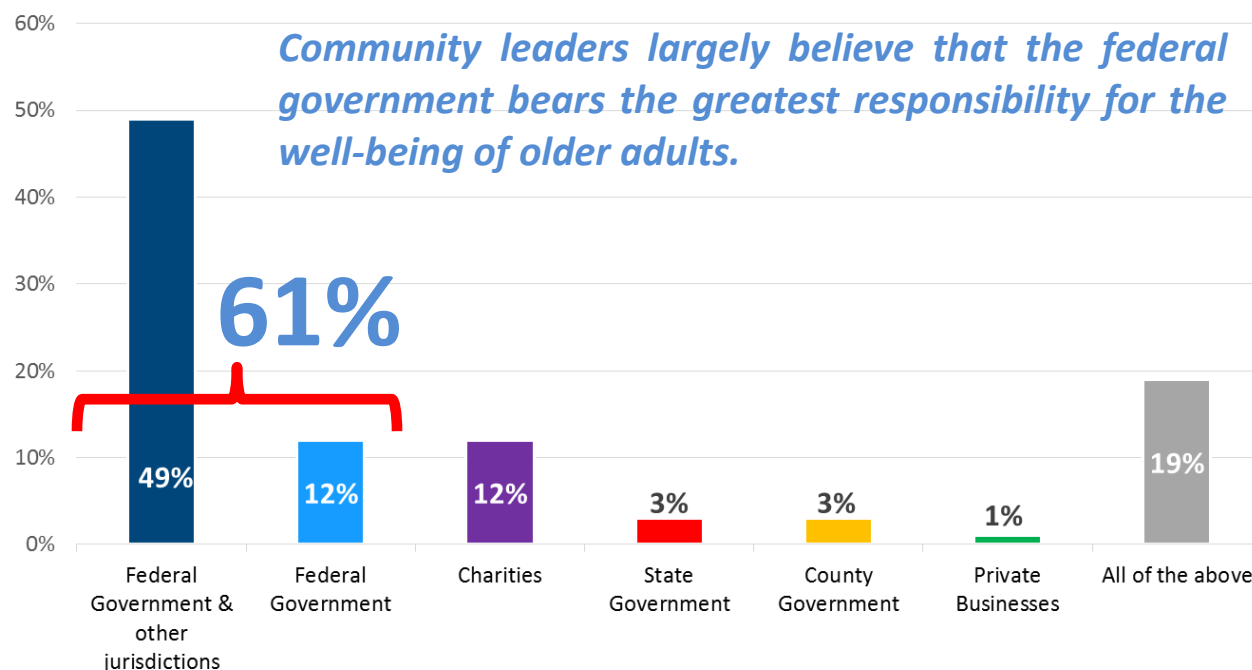
“We haven’t put in any kind of system for neighborhood-based services for older adults. We only have nursing homes or relatives who care for their older adults in the home. This will only get worse as the aging population continues to grow.” – Governmental official

“The older adult population is growing and the infrastructure needs to be expanded.” – Academic

“Miami is a large city that keeps expanding and there has not been enough public services to keep up with the expanding population of older adults.” – Civic leader

With regard to the challenges faced by the older adult population, opinion leaders were asked to think from the perspective of older adults in Miami-Dade County and cite the greatest challenge they faced. Living on a fixed income (31 percent), mobility and transportation access (14 percent), affordable healthcare (11 percent), and isolation or neglect (10 percent), were among the most common responses. When asked what the greatest challenges presented to Miami-Dade County by the older adult population, opinion leaders cited rising healthcare costs (26 percent), not having the resources needed to serve older adults (21 percent), providing sufficient services to retain older adults’ quality of life (12 percent). Looking forward, healthcare services (35 percent), social services (12 percent), transportation services (10 percent), and volunteer and community engagement opportunities (10 percent) are believed to be the best use of public dollars to improve the lives of older adults in Miami.

In order to gauge whether community leaders perceive this to be a county issue in the first place, respondents were asked above and beyond the responsibility that family bears, who bears the greatest responsibility for the well-being of older adults. Opinion leaders surveyed overwhelmingly view this primarily as a Federal Government issue and responsibility.

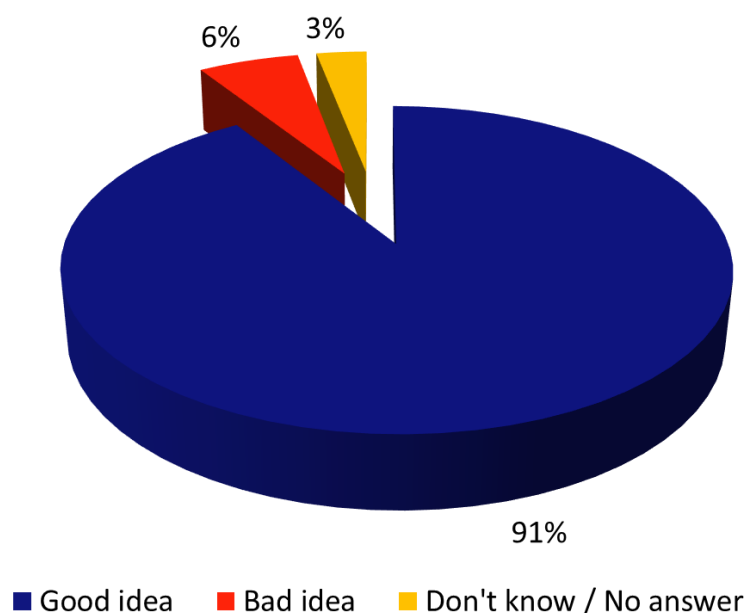


While the older adult population and the issues they face are not a “top of mind” concern to community leaders, when prompted, they recognize the challenges this demographic faces, with too few services and not enough resources dedicated to addressing the needs of this rapidly growing population.

MAJOR FINDING #3:

The Health Foundation/United Way older adults initiative is universally perceived as a 'good idea'.

Moving on to the proposed initiative, community leaders were told that the Health Foundation of South Florida and United Way are partnering to develop an initiative focusing on the older adult population in Miami Dade County. The purpose being to raise awareness about the importance of valuing older adults and preparing for the needs of the aging population. Opinion leaders were asked if they thought this potential initiative is a good or a bad idea for Miami-Dade County. The overwhelming majority, 91 percent, indicated that it was a good idea.



When asked specifically why they thought this potential initiative is a good idea for Miami-Dade County, respondents believed that the initiative would bring attention and focus to the problem (44 percent) and referenced the large size and rapid growth of the older adult population (35 percent). Here, it is clear that opinion leaders recognize the lack of attention and awareness of the issue. Again making education and awareness of issues related to the older adult community, the key to garnering the necessary support for the success of the initiative.

Selected Representative Comments

“This is part of the future. We have a rapidly aging population in a very expensive marketplace. Older adults face numerous financial challenges. The reduction of federal programs for food also leaves them caught in the squeeze.” – Governmental official

“This is an issue now and it’s going to get worse because the population of older adults is going to increase dramatically over the next 5-10 years. The community needs a plan to deal with this.” – Civic leader

“This is a population we need to focus on. The government is going to be strained with the growing aging population so I think private initiatives can be of great help.” – Business leader

“There are 80 million elderly people and baby boomers coming of age. Florida has a very high percentage of them. Many elderly come to retire in Florida and they need proper infrastructure and care.” – Academic

“Based on the demographics, it seems that a large segment of our community will benefit from this initiative.” – Elected official

“If the needs of older adults are not serviced, this impacts everyone else. You can’t isolate one demographic group from the others and expect it to function individually. Dollars and cents determine the quality of life of older adults. To the extent that they can’t afford services, someone has to step in.” – Business leader

“This is a reality we need to address and the truth is that there isn’t a plan to address it. I don’t know if we’ll have the resources to address the needs of older adults.” – Elected official

“We won’t be ahead of the curve but we’ll be addressing a critical area of need in our community.” – Business leader

“We haven’t been conscious about older adults and their contribution. We need to focus on their health and safety because they give the community a lot. They contribute to the social fabric of our community.” – Civic leader

“We don’t care enough for older adults in terms of healthcare. Their capacity to sustain themselves from day-to-day is limited.” – Elected official

“Anytime you focus on a specific population and review and address their issues, you will only walk away with a better understanding.” – Business leader

“It would be great to have more focus and attention drawn to this segment of the population. This initiative will awaken a lot of people in the County to the needs of the older adult population.” – Academic

"I think we need to focus on services in preparation for increasingly growing proportion of older adults. We need to do all we can to help organizations that will fund these efforts and who are taking this demographic issue seriously especially because older adults are living longer and they will need assistance." – Elected official

"Our population has always been older and this will continue. The number of years between working lives and death is increasing. People need more services. Government is pulling back. We need to substitute for our safety net. They are an increasing percentage of the community." – Business leader

"This is important for our community because older adults are sometimes forgotten or not valued. We could use their experience and maturity for our benefit." – Business leader

"For our community to thrive, we have to take care of the people at all levels. We need to give people the resources they need to lead healthy and successful lives." – Academic

"You can't sit here and do nothing; the gap will only continue to grow. The cost to service older adults is only going to increase given the numbers." – Business leader

"We have a responsibility to these people. We don't just throw a person out when you reach a certain age. We have a responsibility to help the people that need our support. It's a responsibility we should embrace. If we don't have strategies to employ this enormous number of people and ensure that they can live a life that will be a lot longer, the economic consequences will be huge. We have a huge potential mess on our hands – an enormous population that would be forced to live in abject poverty." – Governmental official

"This is an excellent idea. It's been a long time coming. It should have been done 20 years ago." – Business leader

MAJOR FINDING #4:

All of the messages tested were found to be convincing by at least six out of ten community leaders. However, there was not one message that particularly stood out from the rest.

Crucial to the long-term success of efforts to raise the awareness and prioritization of older adult issues in Miami-Dade County, will be the ability to effectively communicate with opinion leaders, decision makers and the community at-large as to why this is an area worthy of focus. To that end, the Health Foundation of South Florida and United Way have developed a preliminary series of potential messages and the research endeavored to gauge the effectiveness of these messages.

The following messages were submitted for study:

1. We have all benefitted from the contribution of the previous generation. As generations age, they deserve to live in a community that's set up to help them remain vibrant, engaged, connected and valued.
2. The growing number of older adults is an expanding resource for our community. They are taxpayers, voters, and homeowners. If we support their health and independence, they can continue to provide community stability and important volunteer and financial support to our civic, educational and religious institutions.
3. Caring for an aging parent can be very costly and place tremendous financial burdens on family. It is important for our community to provide help to families in finding and accessing services for their parents and themselves.
4. Over the next 20 years, every day an additional 7,000 people will turn 65 years of age. Funding for services for older adults already falls short of what's needed. To prevent further strain on community resources, it is crucial to start preparing now and to bolster services to meet the needs of this fast growing population.
5. One day, I too, will feel the effects of aging. When that day comes, I want to be able to remain living in Miami-Dade and know that my needs will be met and my talents and contributions tapped and valued.

Effectiveness ratings of advocacy messages tested:

<i>Message</i>	<i>Convincing</i>	<i>Unconvincing</i>
We have all benefitted from the contributions of the previous generation.	73%	26%
The growing number of older adults is an expanding resource for our community.	72%	27%
Caring for an aging parent can be very costly and place tremendous financial burdens on family.	69%	27%
Over the next 20 years, every day an additional 7,000 people will turn 65 years of age.	67%	32%
One day, I, too, will feel the effects of aging.	67%	31%
More than 20 percent of Miami-Dade's families are caring for an older adult.	64%	34%

The research project offered a unique opportunity to get advice from community leaders as to how they might go about communicating with and convincing the community at-large on the importance of issues affecting older adults in Miami-Dade County. When given the open-ended opportunity to provide this guidance, responses emerged that the initiative could take into consideration when crafting communications campaigns in the future:

It's our responsibility as a community	28%
Show them the numbers, the costs and the benefits	17%
We will all be old someday	15%
Older adults are a large and increasing population	9%
We should showcase older adult issues through PR campaign	8%
Appeal to your own family members	6%
Older adults are still productive	2%
Other / Don't know / No answer	15%

Selected Representative Comments

“Community involvement is important at all levels. This doesn’t end when people grow older. Older adults are leaders to many families. We should all be interested in building on that tradition to make it more meaningful.” – Business leader

“A community that doesn’t care for children and the elderly is not a quality community in any sense of the word.” – Business leader

“Older adults were there for us when we were growing up. Any society worth anything needs to take care of the elderly.” – Government official

“We have an obligation and a responsibility to older adults. A community is judged by how it takes care of the most needy.” – Elected official

“We owe a duty to those that paved the way for all of us and whose contributions have allowed us to reap the benefits of this County today. We owe it back to these people to make sure they are able to live their twilight years in dignity.” – Academic

“We owe it to them because they sacrificed for us as a generation. Many older adults are still productive so it would be an awful waste of human potential if we don’t find ways to engage them. We’re all aging so whatever we do for them we’re doing for ourselves.” – Business leader

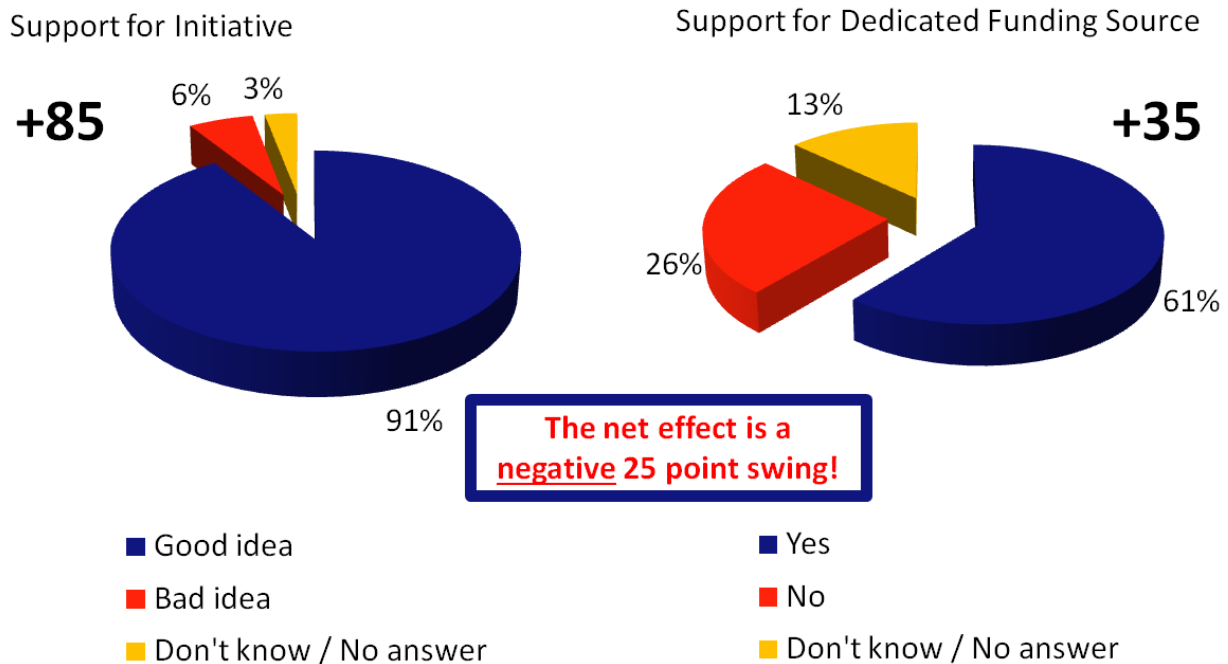
“We have a responsibility to meet the needs of the older adult population. We’re a poor community if all we forget those who are the backbone of our community.” – Civic leader

MAJOR FINDING #5:

Support exists among a majority of opinion leaders for the idea of a dedicated public funding source for older adults, but there is not as much support as there is for the initiative, as a whole.

There exists near universal support for the potential initiative by the Health Foundation of South Florida and United Way to address the growing needs and challenges faced by the older adult community in Miami-Dade County. When asked, however, if separate and apart from this potential initiative, they thought there should be a dedicated public funding source for older adults age 65 and over like there is for children and the homeless, 61 percent of opinion leaders supported, while 26 percent opposed additional public funding.

Though there is still majority support, there is a *negative net effect of 25 points* between support for the initiative and support for a dedicated funding source.



Of those that responded in the affirmative, when asked why they believe there should be a dedicated public funding source, 65 percent said that older adults are an underserved population, 17 percent consider it to be the best way to ensure that funds exist for this population, and 14 percent agree that it is our responsibility as a community.

SUPPORTERS - Selected Representative Comments

"If they do need assistance and we can help, why not? It's our responsibility to do so." – Civic leader

"This is a population that will have needs that have been underserved historically." – Elected official

"This would provide a targeted source of funding that can be built on to address a need instead of having a need and not knowing where the resources will come from." – Business leader

"I think there are certain basic services that a society owes its people at a minimal level." – Academic

"Healthcare costs are much greater for older adults than for young people. We need to plan to build resources, financial and otherwise, to service their needs." – Governmental official

"There should be no differentiation between the older adult population and the younger population when it comes to funding." – Civic leader

"Older adults are a large and growing segment of our community requiring some level of support that doesn't exist now. This affects the quality of life of older adults and our community overall. With that said, it's very difficult to raise money for social services nowadays." – Business leader

"They supported us when we couldn't support ourselves. Now it's our turn to support them." – Civic leader

"A dedicated public funding source would make it much harder to forget this population. It would also create more champions for this population than there currently are." – Academic

"Government has a role in taking care of their own as well as the citizens. We have an individual and social responsibility. It's all hands on deck." – Business leader

"I think this is a relatively easy way for the County to meet these needs. You just need to witness to the work that The Children's Trust has done and see that such a fund can be very effective. I feel it's very fitting that there be an elders' trust where every property owner is taxed. This would be a successful project as opposed to a non-government fundraising effort." – Academic

Among those that did not support a dedicated public funding source many reasoned that there are already a number of federal programs that exist to serve the older adult population. This is in line with the earlier sense of opinion leaders that the care of the older adult population, beyond what families bear, is primarily a Federal Government responsibility. As a result there is a certain degree of swimming against the current of perception necessary in order to establish older adult issues as an area appropriate for local prioritization.

OPPONENTS - Selected Representative Comments

“I think older adults get a disproportionate amount of federal resources. There’s a system already in place for them so a dedicated public funding source is neither necessary nor appropriate. I think we should address their needs in an ad-hoc way instead.” – Business leader

“Older adults receive Social Security benefits, Medicare and Medicaid. I don’t think we need a separate trust for them.” – Government official

“There are individual federal programs like Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security in place to care for older adults. There are also federal sources that give grants to Counties for specific programs. I think we need some sort of clearinghouse where people can go to learn about all the services that are available to them.” – Business leader

“In my honest opinion, there is too much taxation already. You need individuals and families to step up and take responsibility for older parents and grandparents. The government is already taking enough from us.” – Business leader

“I think there are enough tax dollars. We don’t need another tax.” – Business leader

“I don’t like dedicated public funding sources because they create self-serving bureaucracies.” – Government official

“There’s already funding for older adults; it’s just not earmarked. Government can’t be the answer to everything. We need to defer to other entities to meet the needs in our community.” – Academic

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

Who is an 'older adult'? What do older adults contribute to society? When do they stop being productive? These were among a battery of questions designed to provide additional clarity as to how this population is viewed in the minds of community opinion leaders. The overall perception of the population being particularly interesting given that a significant segment of the individuals interviewed would themselves be considered part of or very near becoming part of the older adult population.

While the largest share of respondents indicated that a person becomes an older in their 60s, interestingly a significant percentage of opinion leaders now believe that an individual does not become a part of this groups until their 70s or beyond, perhaps an acknowledgement of changing demographics as people are living longer and continuing to work later in life.

In their 60s	43%
In their 70s	34%
It depends on the person	15%
In their 50s	4%
In their 80s	2%
When the person retires	2%

Furthermore, opinion leaders believe that the greatest contributions made by older adults to Miami-Dade County are their experience, knowledge and wisdom (42 percent); their legacy and history (18 percent); their purchasing power (11 percent); and their volunteerism (11 percent).

Experience / Knowledge / Wisdom	42%
History / Legacy	18%
Purchasing power	11%
Volunteerism	11%
Community stability	5%
Childcare	4%
Diversity	3%
Mentoring	1%
Other	2%
Don't know / No answer	3%

Selected Representative Comments

“They provide so much richness and diversity. They’ve seen a lot, been through a lot, and we can learn a lot from them.” – Civic leader

“Older adults provide wisdom and a stability factor to our community. They’re the voice of experience.” – Business leader

“Their knowledge, history, and wisdom. They are hugely valuable to the community. They bring compassion and perspective. You develop wisdom with age. If we were smart, we would see that they could be a larger part of our workforce and greater part of the community.” – Government official

“They built the city for the most part. They contribute their knowledge and keep us grounded in many ways. Any functioning city needs to care for the elderly.” – Business leader

“They provide tremendous experience that we need to harness. They balance out millennials’ enthusiasm and irrationalism.” – Elected official

“A lot of older adults are retired so they volunteer a great deal in our hospitals, nursing homes and schools. They also sit on many non-profit boards as experienced CPAs and lawyers.” – Academic

“They volunteer, provide mentorship, raise grandchildren, and provide a sense of history.” – Business leader

“A sense of stability and history. They bring their knowledge of the past and a more conservative view of the future thereby providing a balance.” – Civic leader

“They helped create the modern version of Miami. A lot of what makes Miami great was brought here by them. They keep it alive and pass it on to the next generation.” –Government official

“They set the stage for what is to come in the future. The ones who come before us build the community we inherit. Each generation grows the community and brings experience and background to our professions that help the entire community to develop even more in many ways. Without this wisdom and knowledge younger generations might repeat the same mistakes or waste time/resources.” – Elected official

“They help with family stability. As they remain employed longer, they provide stability to the workforce.” – Business leader

When asked when they thought older adults stop being productive members of society, most of the opinion leaders surveyed thought of it in terms of ‘a state of being’ with regard to the individual’s physical or mental condition rather than as a specific or chronological age.

When the person has mental or physical health issues	28%
It depends on the person	20%
Never <u>OR</u> when the person’s life ends	18%
When the person no longer wishes to be engaged	7%
When the person is no longer self-sufficient	6%
When the person retires	6%
When they reach their 70s	4%
When they reach their 80s	4%
Other/Don’t know / No answer	7%

It should be noted that there was a small but vocal minority of respondents who were offended by the notion that a person ever stops being a productive member of society, perhaps providing a word of caution as to how these issues should be framed and discussed going forward.

METHODOLOGY

As previously indicated, the Health Foundation of South Florida and United Way of Miami-Dade commissioned Bendixen & Amandi (B&A) to conduct 'executive interview' research detailing community leaders' perceptions issues affecting older adults in Miami-Dade County. B&A conducted 150 in-depth executive interviews over the phone with 'opinion leaders' in English between February 10 and April 14, 2014. B&A worked with the Health Foundation of South Florida and United Way to compile a list of current, leading community stakeholders and influential opinion leaders in each of the following representative categories: academics, business leaders, civic leaders, elected officials, and government officials.

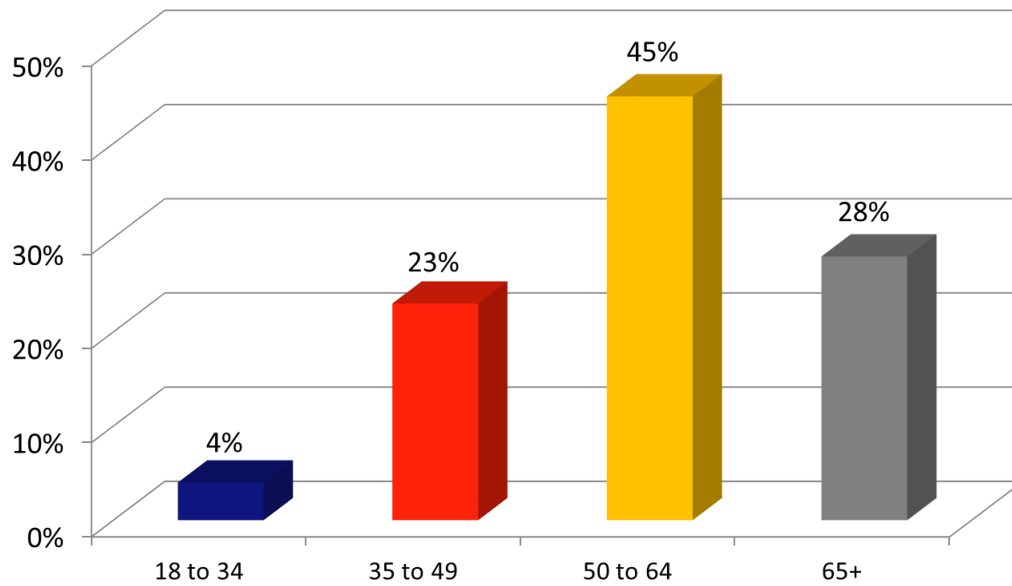
To begin the project, an introductory letter approved and signed by the Health Foundation President and CEO, Dr. Steven Marcus, and United Way of Miami-Dade President and CEO, Harve Mogul, was sent to each opinion leader selected, followed by a telephone call to schedule an interview or discuss any further details and questions about the research study. This was subsequently followed by a 15-20 minute interview conducted by a professional interviewer. Any leader who was contacted by phone and had not received the letter was e-mailed a copy to review before deciding whether to participate in the study. A list of interview topics was also sent by e-mail to ensure the respondents understood the scope of the study.

There are several critical factors during the selection process to ensure the study would be completed thoroughly and accurately. First, the pool of potential interviewees was magnified to all for rejection of our cause while still ensuring a large sample size. This was parallel to careful selection of leaders from a range of categories (academia, business, government, etc.), so that the total would be as representative as possible.

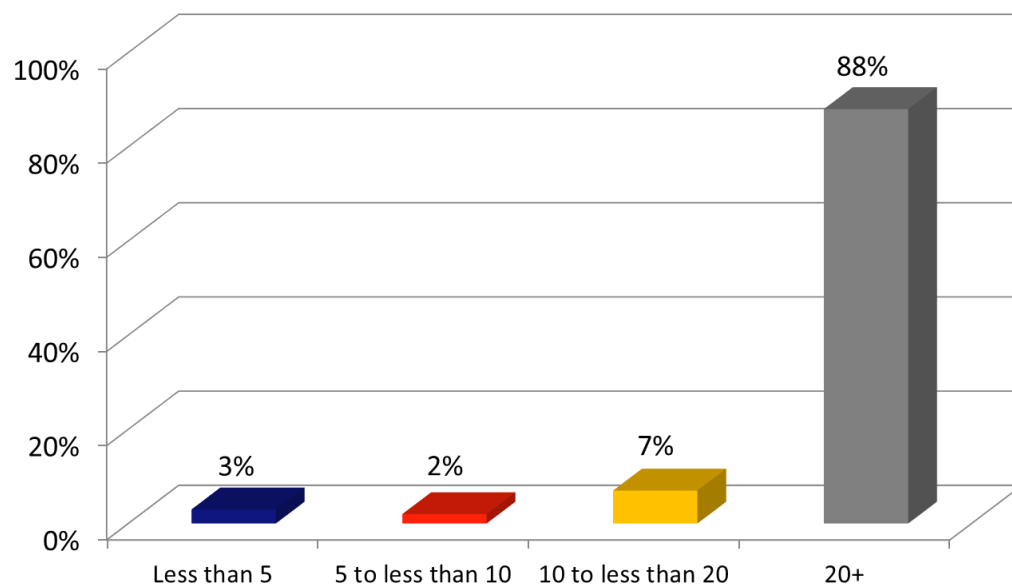
B&A was also proactive to ensure the interviewers were carefully selected and trained, taking into consideration the rank and sophistication of the sample populace. Each interviewer participated in a detailed training session coordinated by a senior researcher at B&A. The interviewers were closely monitored and required to report to the project manager multiple time a week regarding the number of contacts made, number of interviews scheduled, number of interviews completed and any other issues experienced during calling. All responses were transcribed by the interviewers at the time of the call, which were then sent to B&A researchers to be entered into an aggregated results file. For several open-ended questions, coding frames were developed based on common responses. Data was crosschecked to ensure that the aggregate data file accurately captured original transcriptions of the interviews.

DEMOGRAPHICS

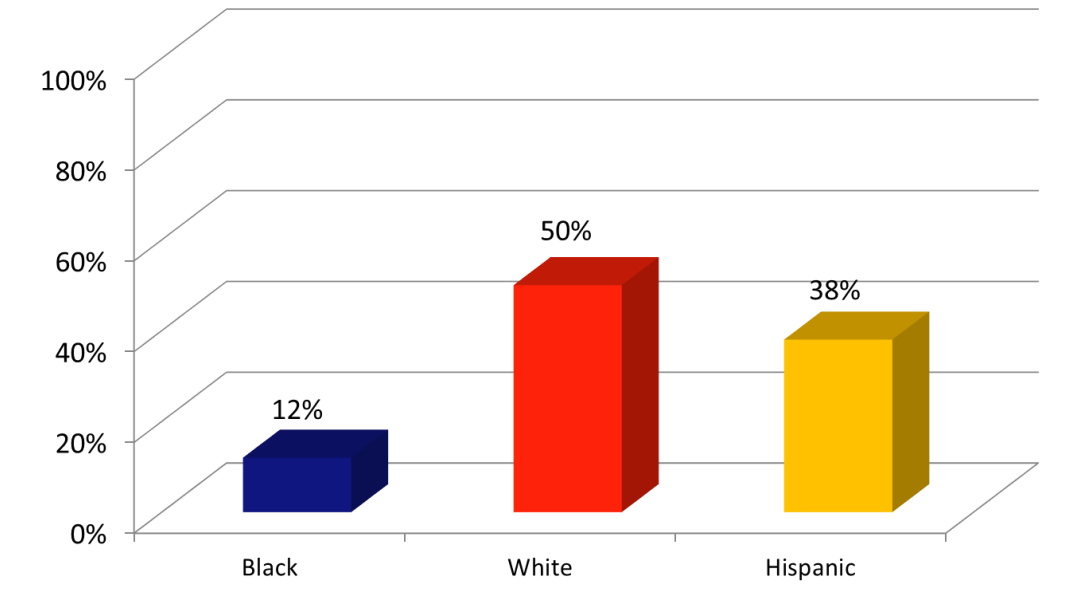
AGE



YEARS LIVING IN MIAMI



RACE/ETHNICITY



GENDER

