

# AGE-FRIENDLY HOUSING POLICIES IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY



*CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGING IN PLACE*

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# INTRODUCTION

Housing is important both the national economy and each individual's standard of living. Yet its **high cost** can pose difficult **affordability** problems, and its long life necessitates continual **maintenance** to prevent deterioration.

The challenges associated with affording and maintaining quality housing place particularly challenging burdens upon *older adults*.

This **Housing Policy Scan** aims to:

- Capture the nature of **housing conditions for older adults in Miami-Dade County**;
- Showcase a series of **Best Practices in age-friendly housing policies** that are particularly promising for addressing older adults' housing needs;
- Assess the **current status of the Best Practices policies in Miami-Dade County** and its five entitlement cities (Miami, Hialeah, Miami Beach, Miami Gardens, and North Miami), and
- Offer an **advocacy strategy** that local proponents of age-friendly housing policies can pursue to promote adoption of such policies.



# THE NATURE OF AGING IN THE US

- US population trends: increasing life expectancy + a declining birth rate + aging of the baby boom generation will increase number and proportion of US population 65+.
- By 2030, 20% of people will be 65+. For 1<sup>st</sup> time in US, by 2035, older adults > children.
- Older adults strongly prefer to age in place (in their home or community). 78% of adults ages 45+ surveyed (2014) would prefer to remain in their homes. If unable to do so, 80% have strong interest in remaining in local community.

# THE NATURE OF AGING IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

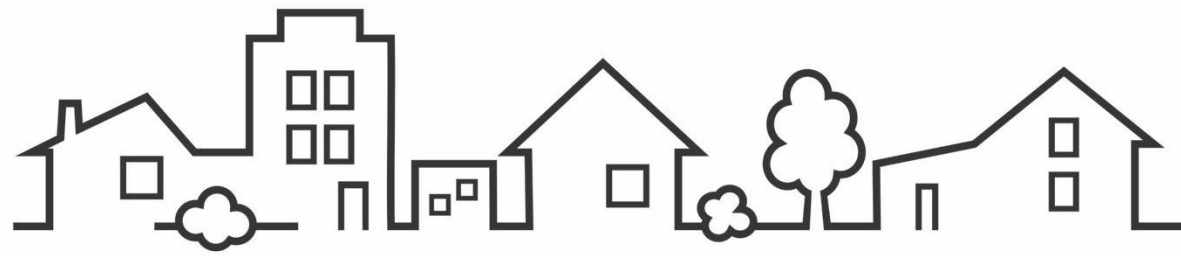


- Miami-Dade County (MDC) has largest number of older adults of any FL county: 26%+ of its over 2.6 million residents is 55+, and 15% is 65+. 35% of adults 65+ is disabled.
- Out of the 853,624 homeowners in MDC, 42.9% of homeowners are age 55+.
- Of those, 20% are considered cost-burdened renters and 24% are cost-burdened homeowners.
- Of 850K+ homeowners in MDC, 43% of homeowners are age 55+
- Of persons 55+, 20% are considered cost-burdened renters and 24% are cost-burdened homeowners (i.e. 30% < income is spent on housing).

# THE NATURE OF AGING IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY



- Benefits of creating age-friendly, livable communities: (1) enhance personal independence, (2) allow residents to age in place, (3) save dollars during vulnerable years, (4) foster engagement in local civic & social life
- Ability of older adults to “age in place” in their home or community is influenced by local policies, esp. (1) those that shape physical design & accessibility of home, (2) community features (e.g. nearby services & amenities, affordable housing, transit options)



# POLICY SCAN



# ACCESSIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY, UNIVERSAL DESIGN, AND VISITABILITY

These terms refer to housing features intended for use by people with disabilities, including older adults. Each has slightly different but compatible meanings and include design considerations such as:

- wide doorways
- lower sinks and counters, with knee spaces beneath
- lower light switches
- grab bars in bathrooms
- lever door handles (instead of difficult-to-grasp round knobs)

**Visitability** is a less stringent standard; focuses primarily on ensuring that the entryway and a first-floor bathroom are navigable by visitors with disabilities.



Source: Easterseals Crossroads



# ACCESSIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY, UNIVERSAL DESIGN, AND VISITABILITY

Sarasota County, FL has developed *Universal Design and Visitability Program Checklists* and offers certifications for homes that meet Universal Design standards, making the homes more marketable and promoting age-in-place policies.

Two takeaways re: age-friendly design standards:

- (1) Local governments don't promote these features but could promote an *optional* Sarasota-style program.
- (2) Local governments can help fund renovations that meet universal, visitable, etc standards



# HOME RENOVATION PROGRAMS

Home Renovation Programs aim to improve owner-occupied dwellings.

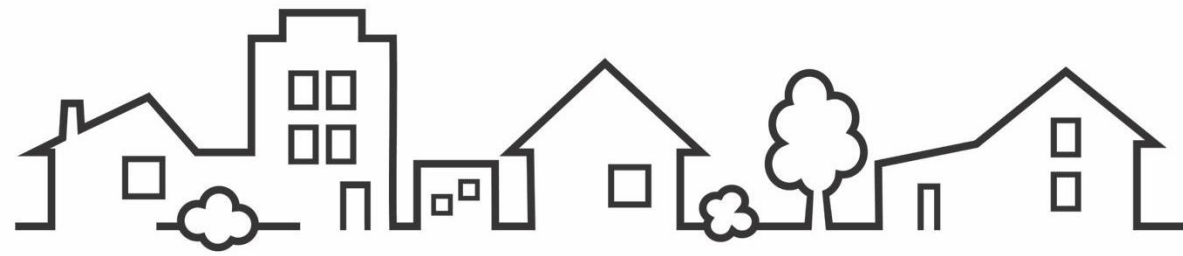
Programs are generally designed to help income-qualified homeowners fix home problems (e.g. roofing, plumbing, heating, electrical, and ADA).

Many local governments have such programs, usually income-based.

Other options:

- Rebuilding Together Miami-Dade (nonprofit; income-based, older adults and disabled are priority)
- Ygrene/PACE Program (for-profit; no income or age requirements).





# *MOST IMMEDIATE* POLICY OPTIONS

# PRESERVING EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK

95 developments with 9,694 assisted units are at heightened risk of affordability loss because of expiring subsidies, aging facilities, or both. This amounts to 22 percent of MDC's assisted housing stock— an amount similar in scale to the 8,000+ units that have left the assisted inventory in the county since 1993.

No local government has a policy in place to deal with this...yet.

Miami Homes for All has identified an advocacy strategy and seeks support.

1809 Brickell Avenue, pictured here, has provided older adults with affordable apartments for decades. Its affordability controls will expire in 2019.

*Source: Miami Herald*







## MICROUNITS



Rendering of a new microunit in San Francisco.  
*Source: microbigliving.*

Microunits are dwellings that range between 200-400 square feet. They encourage more efficient use of land by accommodating greater population density in a smaller area. Most offer common work spaces, gyms, pools, and outdoor areas. Microunits offer low maintenance costs and are rented at substantially lower rates than traditional homes.



# MICROUNITS

## Status in Miami-Dade County:

Locality	Availability	Notes
Miami-Dade County		The County is currently undergoing a 120-day study to encourage the efficient use of land. Microunits are included in the study.
City of Miami		Microunits are allowed in Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas, with minimum square footage of 275 square feet. Parking requirements are also lower than average-sized units, which makes the development more affordable.
City of North Miami		Not Allowed. The smallest units – those located in the City's Neighborhood Redevelopment Overlay (NRO) District and the Planned Corridor Development (PCD) District – must be at least 550 square feet.
City of Miami Beach		Microunits are allowed in Multi-Family districts, where unit size requirements are lower for elderly development. Miami Beach is also introducing the co-living and micro-unit concept in the NE Town Center District. This project has not yet been approved by the Commission. Public meetings are upcoming.
City of Hialeah		Not allowed. The City requires that units be 800 square feet or larger.
City of Miami Gardens		Not Allowed. The City requires that studio apartments be 650 feet or larger, and that one-bedroom apartments be 800 square feet or larger.

# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS



Source: American Tiny House Association

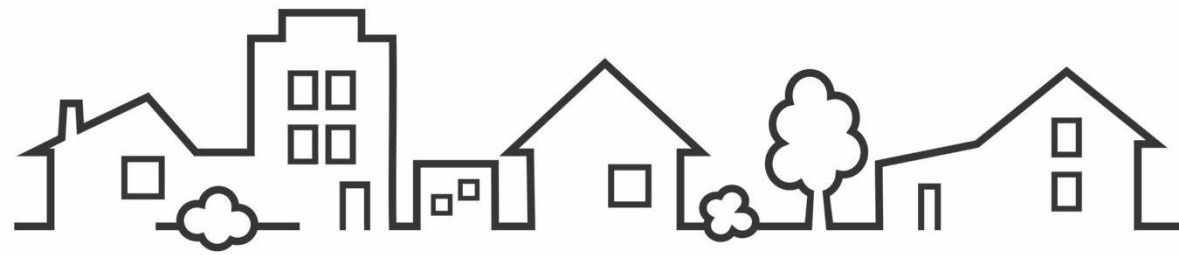
*Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)* are residential living units within or attached to a single-family dwelling, and that provides independent living facilities for one or more persons, including provision for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation on the same parcel of land as the principal dwelling.

They're also known as “granny flats” or “casitas.”

For an older person with a fixed income and growing housing affordability challenges, renting out a unit or moving a friend or relative onto their property can help with those costs.

## Status in Miami-Dade County:

Locality	Availability	Notes
Miami-Dade County*	✓	CDMP supports the development of Accessory Dwelling Units however there are no provisions in the zoning ordinance to implement outside of urban centers. ADUs do not count towards density, therefore providing an incentive to build them whenever allowed.
City of Miami*	✓	T3-L zoning designation mapped throughout the city allows for ADUs. An assessment of areas that can be rezoned to include ADUs (i.e. NCD-3, T3-R rezoned to T3-L) may provide additional opportunities.
City of North Miami*	—	Only grandfathered ADUs are allowed.
City of Miami Beach*	—	Not allowed.
City of Hialeah*	✓	Though provisions known as the Elderly Homeowners Relief Act, accessory units are allowed. The primary purpose of the Act is to allow one rental occupancy on homestead residences owned or co-owned by an older adult within the habitable space of a detached single-family residence, a garage or an accessory building in order to generate income that will help older adults preserve the ownership of their homestead.
City of Miami Gardens*	—	Not allowed in single-family and duplex zoning.



## Contact Information

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