

Overview

MCI was founded in 2006 and seeks to break the cycle of poverty in Liberty City, Miami with a “block-by-block approach”, and by focusing on the growth and development of the city's youth. Through the establishment of community partnerships, MCI is able to provide after school and summer programming, as well as family social services, which contribute to the ongoing upward mobility of Liberty City and creation of community spaces to enhance the youth and families ability to thrive.

Mission

“To create a community-based network that develops, coordinates and provides quality education, accessible health care, youth development programs, health and nutrition supports, opportunities for employment and safe neighborhoods for the children and families in Liberty City.” – MCI website



Constituency

- Youth and adults
- African-American
- Latino
- People with disabilities (learning, physical, or mental)
- Haitian
- Relative caregivers
- Immigrants
- Formerly incarcerated
- Low-income and SNAP eligible

Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in Miami, Florida

Poor Physical Environments

Including concerns about neighborhood safety and violence.

“There's not a whole lot of walkability. There's not a lot of lighting. There aren't too many recreation facilities. Also...safety. If people aren't comfortable having their children play outside or coming outside themselves, physical activity and things like that are really difficult.” – Natalie Diaz, Health and Wellness Coordinator

Quality of Early Childhood Education

Including making sure children ages 0-5 are ready for school.

“Within the first three years, those are super formative years for children not having the [mental health] services they need at a young age, by the time they're in a school program or in a head start program, they're acting out and need more attention than the teachers can give them.”

Educational Outcomes

Such as truancy, graduation rates, post-high school plans, etc.

Key Indicators of Childhood Health in Miami, Florida



The percentage of **low birth weight births** in Miami-Dade County was highest for African American babies (12.8%) compared to all other racial/ethnic groups.²

27%

of Haitian and 22% of Black mothers were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to receive **inadequate prenatal care** in Miami-Dade County.¹



More school-age children in Miami-Dade County are **overweight** (18.2%) and **obese** (25.2%) compared to the rest of the state (16.8% and 17.4%, respectively).²

Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

Family Advocacy Programs—MCI staff go door to door, speak with families, find out their needs, and connect them to services.

Established Residents' Councils in 3 Housing Projects

"Those residents councils consist of anywhere between three to five residents who are able to come together and voice concerns that they are having in the neighborhood in terms of safety, sometimes it has to do with sanitation or a lack of response from public housing and getting doors fixed, windows fixed, refrigerators fixed."

Health & Wellness Programs—Fresh food co-op, bike share program, afterschool nutrition education and physical activity curricula, and a community gym.

"We just opened our community gym, so it's a completely free gym. It's in an unused space at the school that's central in the community, so it's walkable for most residents."

MCI's Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety



Community Defined "Best Practices" to Improve Childhood Health

- **Increasing Resident Participation & Engagement**

"I think everything is interconnected. [Children] pick up a lot on what their parents are feeling, so if their parents are not feeling safe, the children aren't going to be feeling safe. If the parents don't want to engage in the community, the children aren't going to want to engage in the community. I think the more engagement we can create around really anything, the higher engagement we can get with parents and children. That is just a huge factor for development, especially with children at such a young age."

- **Advocating for Health & Wellness Funding at the State Level**

1. **Being "On the Ground"**

"I think the MCI signature attribute is how embedded we are in the community. We're there on the ground every single day interacting with residents, forming relationships. I think MCI's really unique in having a presence in the neighborhood and developing relationships with families that you don't often see with organizations."

2. **Community Members Make the Best Ambassadors**

"When we can find community leaders—people who are willing to engage with us on a regular basis and use them as ambassadors for the programs that we have to—go out and advocate within the neighborhood for not only MCI but for the services that we're providing, it works better than just us going door to door and saying, 'Hey, care about this program.' When somebody in the neighborhood who is going through the same the things as everybody else comes to the door and says, 'Hey, this is really cool. Check it out.' I think that's much more impactful, so getting some sort of resident leaders."

Allies/Partnerships Working on Children's Health

- Overtown Youth Project – Miami, FL
<http://overtownyouth.org/>

Website: <https://www.iamlibertycity.org/>

Address: 2525 NW 62nd Street, 4th Floor, Miami, Florida 33147

Telephone: 786.488.5512

Email: info@iamlibertycity.org

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/MiamiChildrensInitiative>

Youtube: [MCLibertycity](https://www.youtube.com/MCLibertycity)

Twitter: @iamlibertycity

Instagram: @iamlibertycity



1. Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade. (2012). Needs Assessment 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.hscmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Needs-Assessment-2.2012.pdf>
2. Florida Department of Health. (2015, March 16). MCH Health Problem Analysis for Miami-Dade Calendar Year 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.hscmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Maternal-Child-Health-Health-Problem-Analysis-2013.pdf>