



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST FORM (FY 2011)
SECOND HALF - 111th CONGRESS

1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT

Miami Dade County Park and Recreation Department (MDPR)

2. DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSONS, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE AND FAX NUMBER(S), & E-MAIL ADDRESS

George Parrado, Assistant Director for Recreation
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3. PROJECT NAME

Alliance for Youth Excellence (Fit-to-Play) Program

4. BACKGROUND

According to the Census Bureau, at least 7 million children return to an empty house on any given afternoon because their community does not offer sufficient, affordable after school programs that provide educational and enrichment opportunities.

When left unsupervised, children are most at risk between 3pm and 6pm. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, it is during these hours that children are most likely to commit or be victimized by crime; to smoke, to drink or use drugs; to engage in premature sexual activity; to experience depression; to develop eating disorders; to have dysfunctional family experiences; or to get involved in gang-related activity. These unhealthy activities can produce: anti-social behaviors, a lack of commitment to self and others, diminished self-esteem, unwillingness to secure educational opportunities, increased unemployment, and increased costs of welfare and health care programs.

In November 2008, a survey conducted by the Lake Research Partners during the Presidential Election found that three in four voters say that elected officials in Congress,

as well as new state and local leaders, should increase funding for after-school programming. Eighty-three percent of those surveyed agree that there should be some type of organized activity or safe place for children/teens to go after school every day that provides opportunities to learn. Eighty-nine percent of voters say after-school programs are important.

After-school programs have been proven in a variety of research studies to decrease juvenile crime and violence, reduce drug use, cut smoking and alcohol abuse, and decrease teen pregnancy. Furthermore, research demonstrates that in comparison to unsupervised peers, children who participate in after-school programs show improvement in standardized test scores and decreased absenteeism and tardiness.

The demand for functional and realistic intervention programs is substantial and the need to address these concerns is compelling. This is particularly true if the aim is to assist youth in developing sensitivity to the rights and concerns of others and gain a positive sense of social responsibility.

Miami-Dade Parks' *Fit To Play* Program provides a safe place for kids to engage in a variety of sports and physical activities, laying the foundation for a healthy lifestyle. Reaching children ages 6-14 all across Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade Park and Recreation encourages children to become *Fit To Play*. This comprehensive, year-round program operates as both a summer camp and an after school program, offering a variety of sports, performing arts and cultural arts, eco-adventures, and an educational component.

Fit To Play, which is offered in over 43 parks, literally reaches from county line to county line. It registers more than 11,000 kids in its summer camp and more than 3,500 in its after school program. The program reaches a diverse cross-section of our population, including all ethnicities and income levels. *Fit To Play* challenges kids with such activities as football, basketball, soccer, tennis, swimming, fencing, and field trips. We also offer camps for those with disabilities that include enriching camp experiences such as wheelchair sports, swimming, arts and crafts, and field trips.

Fit To Play program participants have shown dramatic improvements in overall health since the inception of this program in 2004. It is designed to help families achieve better health through fun, exhilarating physical activities and wise eating habits.

5. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Miami Dade Park and Recreation Fit-to-Play Program has 43 program sites throughout Miami-Dade County. Of these sites, 17 are located in economically disadvantaged areas. This funding will be used to continue programming at these 17 sites providing 450 children with After- School services.

The Fit to Play Out-of-School Program will focus on providing high quality services that help meet the needs of the community. The programs will provide safe, educational, recreational, social, and enjoyable experiences for the children. The program will offer

multiple components including: Recreation, Fitness, Sports Development Program, Cultural Arts, Homework Assistance, Health and Nutrition, and Green-It-Up. The program is aimed to increase children's knowledge and skills to make better decisions regarding nutrition, fitness, and to instill a "health-oriented" way of life in our youth.

Recreation, Fitness, Sports Development, & Cultural Arts:

The physical fitness activities are structured to promote fitness, fun, teamwork and cooperative play. Children will participate in sports development and recreational activities through both individual and team sports. Team sports may include: basketball, flag football, volleyball, track & field, softball, and soccer. Individual sports may include: track & field, fencing, tennis, walking, running, and golf. The physical fitness activities and outcome measures are based on the best practice of The President's Council of Physical Fitness. The program staff will administer pre- and post- fitness tests which track the fitness improvements resulting from involvement in our programs. The Sport Development component follows the sports schedule of the school year. Core sports include: flag football, volleyball, basketball, fencing, track & field, tennis, softball, and soccer. The Sports Development Program is a grass roots program that emphasizes physical fitness, social interaction, and good sportsmanship through a team sports environment. The program is open to all children ages 10 – 14. The cultural arts program will provide activities such as dance, drumming, arts and crafts, and cultural arts lessons.

Homework Assistance:

The daily homework assistance will include: homework help, various literacy activities, academic enrichment activities, group activities, discussion, reading log, one-on-one reading, silent reading, journalism activities, book clubs, drama activities, and language art skills. The children will be grouped by age and ability levels. The curriculum is based on the best-practices of the Florida Sunshine State Standards and the FCAT curriculum.

Health and Nutrition:

This component allows the participants the opportunity to learn about making improved food choices and the integral role good nutrition plays in overall health and wellness. It will focus on healthy eating habits, the food pyramid, and getting the family involved with life time sports such as golf, tennis, bowling, and swimming.

Green-It-Up:

The Green-It-Up component introduces sustainability practices and awareness of open spaces and the environment. Participants will be asked to sign a "Green Pledge" that encourages them to make personal changes that reduces their impact on the environment (i.e. recycling, reusable water bottles and lunch boxes, turning off lights when not in the room, taking shorter showers, turning the water off when brushing your teeth, plant a new tree, participating in a park clean-up and help keep their park clean). It will help to teach and promote these initiatives amongst their friends and family. Core components will include recycling, native plant identification, and park and green space beautification.

Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department's outcome-based measurements include:

The Fit To Play fitness pre- and post-testing is based on the President's Council for Physical Fitness and Sports. The categories are: Curl-ups, Shuttle run, ½ mile run, and push-ups.

6. AMOUNT REQUESTED

The amount requested is \$800,000.

7. APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE OF JURISDICTION (Please include federal agency of jurisdiction and account)

None

8. RATIONALE FOR FUNDING PROPOSAL (With details of how money will be spent, i.e. programming, administrative cost and expenditures. Also include verification that County has signed necessary cost sharing agreements if applicable)

The Miami Dade Park and Recreation Fit-to-Play Program has 43 program sites throughout Miami-Dade County. Of these sites, 17 are located in economically disadvantaged areas. This funding will be used to continue programming at these 17 sites providing 450 children with After-School services. The funding will be allocated to personnel and non-personnel expenses such as program supplies and administrative costs.

The fact that Miami-Dade County still represents the most active area for immigration into the United States has a significant impact on all delivery of parks services. The steady increase in population has resulted in near development capacity of the available open space within the Urban Development Boundary. The population spread westward has also made it difficult for park and recreation services to keep pace with the leisure demands of acquiring and developing new facilities.

Looking towards the future of our parks and recognizing the growing number of children in Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade Parks seeks to serve a greater number of children and provide more and better facilities and programs. To that end, Miami-Dade Parks is exploring ways to expand the quantity and improve the quality of these services to children in our community.

Although, in the past County funding was provided for staffing of the *Fit To Play* program, due to the decrease of the county budget the Fit-to-Play programs will no longer be funded by the general fund. In order to maintain of these much needed services other funding sources are a necessity.

9. ARE GRANT, FORMULA, OR ENTITLEMENT FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT, INITIATIVE, OR ACTIVITY? (If so, please indicate and explain rationale for requesting a separate appropriation earmark, as opposed to accessing other federal funds)

None

10. INTENDED RECIPIENT(S) OF FUNDING

Miami Dade County Park and Recreation Department (MDPR)

11. MATCHING FUNDS (List amount and source. Are Local and State matching funds required for this funding source? If so, please indicate the state or local match, as well as % of federal match required by the Federal Government)

No matching funds at this time.

12. HISTORY OF FEDERAL FUNDING (List agency funding and amount funded per year over the last 5 years)

None

13. HISTORY OF COUNTY FUNDING (List each fiscal year and amount funded)

This program has been in operation since 2004 and is funded through the General Fund.

14. AMOUNT RECOMMENDED IN THIS YEAR'S FEDERAL BUDGET (include agency funding this item)

None

15. IS THERE A DOCUMENTED NEED FOR THE PROJECT: INCLUDING DEPARTMENT REPORTS OR BCC ACTION? (If so, please provide documentation)

Need for After School Programming:

According to the Census Bureau, at least 7 million children return to an empty house on any given afternoon because their community does not offer sufficient, affordable after school programs that provide educational and enrichment opportunities.

When left unsupervised, children are most at risk between 3pm and 6pm. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, it is during these hours that children are most likely to commit or be victimized by crime; to smoke, to drink or use drugs; to engage in premature sexual activity; to experience depression; to develop eating disorders; to have dysfunctional family experiences; or to get involved in gang-related activity. These unhealthy activities can produce: anti-social behaviors, a lack of commitment to self and others, diminished self-esteem, unwillingness to secure educational opportunities, increased unemployment, and increased costs of welfare and health care programs.

In November 2008, a survey conducted by the Lake Research Partners during the Presidential Election found that three in four voters say that elected officials in Congress, as well as new state and local leaders, should increase funding for after-school programming. Eighty-three percent of those surveyed agree that there should be some type of organized activity or safe place for children/teens to go after school every day that provides opportunities to learn. Eighty-nine percent of voters say after-school programs are important.

After-school programs have been proven in a variety of research studies to decrease juvenile crime and violence, reduce drug use, cut smoking and alcohol abuse, and decrease teen pregnancy. Furthermore, research demonstrates that in comparison to unsupervised peers, children who participate in after-school programs show improvement in standardized test scores and decreased absenteeism and tardiness.

The demand for functional and realistic intervention programs is substantial and the need to address these concerns is compelling. This is particularly true if the aim is to assist youth in developing sensitivity to the rights and concerns of others and gain a positive sense of social responsibility.

Additionally, keeping kids safe and off the street via programs such as *Fit To Play's* after school program is an objective of the US Department of Justice and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. With youth violence increasing in many areas, programs like *Fit To Play* provide a safe place for kids to do their homework, play a variety of sports, and socialize with peers in a supervised setting.

Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department Fit-to-Play Programs help youth to identify options, make more appropriate choices, and understand the consequences of their actions all in a healthy and secure park setting.

Need for Recreation Programming:

One of the greatest healthcare challenges that Americans face in the 21st century is the alarming number of youth who are suffering from obesity. Studies estimate that 5%-7% of Caucasian and African American children, 12% of Hispanic boys, and 19% of Hispanic girls are obese. Diabetes, hypertension and other obesity-related chronic diseases that are prevalent among adults have now become more common in youngsters. Children who overweight will very likely become adults who are overweight. Obesity is much easier to prevent than to treat. Therefore, Miami-Dade Parks is aggressively addressing this serious health issue with its Fit To Play program. This program instills a "health-oriented" way of life in the children so as they learn and grow they will continue making smart decisions about foods and exercise.

According to the U.S. Census, 57% of the County's residents are Hispanic/Latino, 20% African-American/Black, and 23% White and other Non-Hispanic. In a County where children under the age of 18 make up 24.8% of the population, approximately 30.3% of children (ages 6 to 11) are overweight, and 15.3% are obese. For adolescents (ages 12 to 19), 30.4% are overweight, and 15.5% are obese. Our target population's demographics mirror those of Miami-Dade County, which are 44% Hispanic, 35% African American, 14% White, and 7% multi-racial, and include children ages 6 to 14.

Miami-Dade Parks is striving for the *Fit to Play* program to become *the* national model for fitness and nutrition among youth. We anticipate that municipalities across the nation – including schools and parks departments – will recognize the strength of this comprehensive fitness/nutrition model and will replicate the *Fit To Play* model in their communities to help promote healthier kids and provide them a safe place to learn and grow.

**16. WAS THIS PROJECT HEARD BEFORE A PUBLICLY NOTICED MEETING OR BODY OF ELECTED OFFICIALS (MUNICIPAL, COUNTY OR STATE)?
(List hearing body or meeting date)**

None

17. PRIORITIZE YOUR REQUESTS NUMERICALLY