# University of Miami
# Community Scholars

Shared Housing Research and Design Project
The A-Team

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
OFFICE of CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

***PARTNER: THE HOMELESS TRUST***

HOMELESS TRUST
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

# The Team

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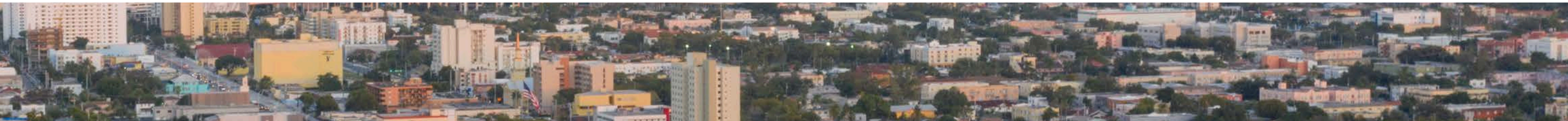


# The problem

A new WalletHub report rated Miami the least affordable city for renters out of 182 U.S. cities — placing it below famously expensive locales like New York and Boston (1).

**Overall Housing Loss:** More than 150,000 people lost their homes through eviction and foreclosure between 2017 and 2019, a rate of 2.7 percent per year. This rate of housing loss is below average for the Sun Belt counties examined in this report.

Housing loss was most acute in tracts to the west of the Miami International airport and in the neighborhoods Opa-Locka, Westview, West Little River, Gladeview, and Brownsville. In these tracts, we saw housing loss rates two or three times higher than the rest of the county.

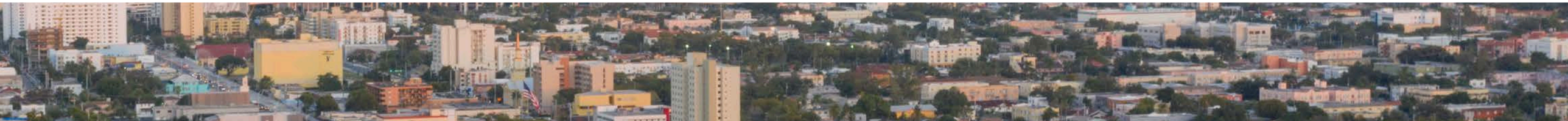
**Mortgage Foreclosure:** The foreclosure rate for Miami-Dade is the highest of the seven Sun Belt counties included in this report. More than 26,000 households were foreclosed upon in Miami-Dade County over this three-year period, a foreclosure rate of 3.1 percent.

# Partner Solution

**Shared Housing** = Two or more people who live in a rental unit, sharing common areas and sometimes a room with at least one other individual
Populations served by this model: rent burdened individuals, seniors, single adults

**How is it operationalized?**
Homeless Trust provides funding → Homeless Service Providers find (or serve as) landlords willing to participate in the program

- No standardized model. Has been effective in other contexts, but so far not very successful in Miami-Dade



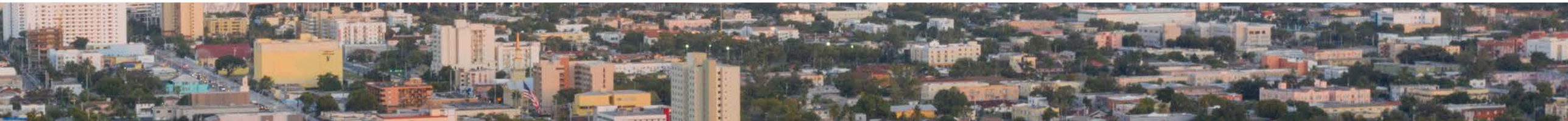
# Our Project

Identify challenges to the shared housing model in Miami-Dade

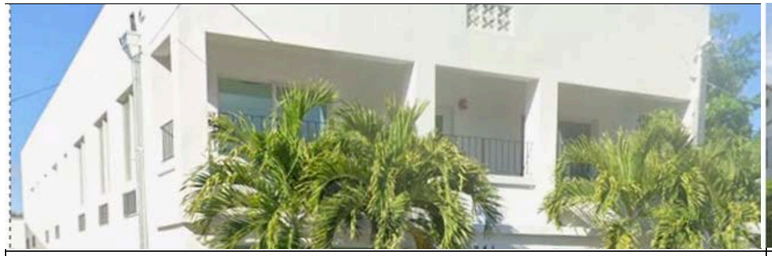
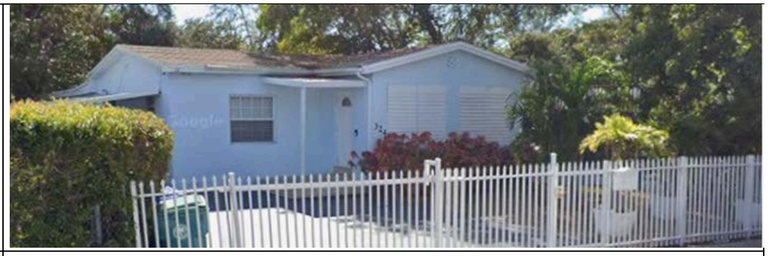
Share tenant perspective and priorities on shared housing

Develop questions for use in a matching tool for prospective tenants

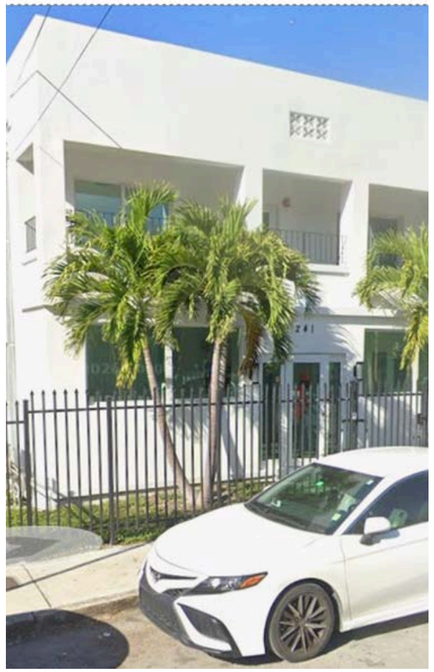
Recommend a format for deploying a matching tool and best use case for matching tenants



# The Sites

|  | |  |
|---|---|---|
| 241 NW 17th St. | 522 NW 47th St. | 324 NW 52nd St. |
| 21 (mostly) individual rooms<br>Bed, closet, minifridge in each room<br>5 bathrooms<br>Shared kitchen<br>1-2 fridges<br>Shared coin laundry | 4 bedrooms, 3 baths<br>Furnished<br>Shared kitchen – 2 fridges<br>2 living areas<br>Laundry<br>Backyard space | Single family home<br>4 bedrooms, 3 baths<br>Furnished<br>Shared kitchen<br>2 fridges<br>2 living areas<br>Laundry<br>Backyard space |

# 241 NW 17th St.



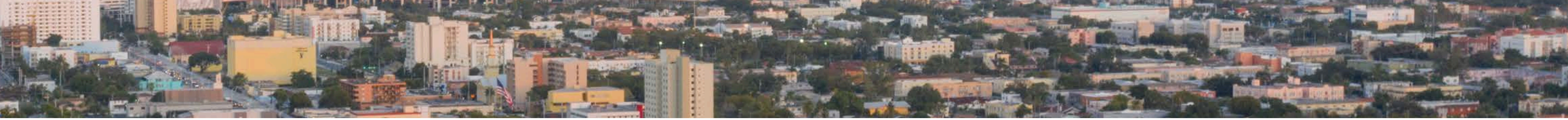
- Likely to have 25-26 residents, all single men
- Prioritizing chronically homeless
- Receiving referrals from Homeless Trust
- No age restrictions or drug/alcohol screen
- Do have resident contract about drug/alcohol use
- Provider concerns about exposure to drugs/alcohol in surrounding neighborhood
- Vacant at time of visit
- Case manager to be present during business hours
- Will help with bathroom assignment, cleaning responsibilities, kitchen shifts, etc.

# 522 NW 47th St.

- 9 single men currently in home
- Mostly older adults, at least one younger man in recovery
- Drug/alcohol screening prior to placement

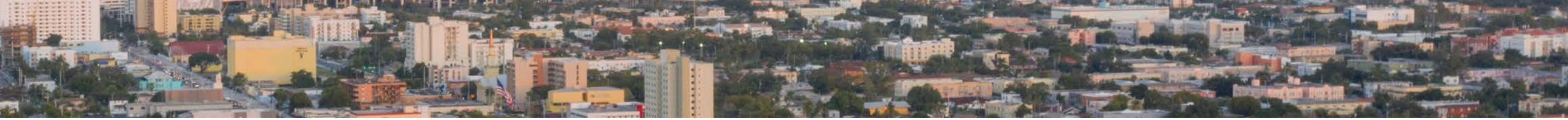
# 324 NW 52nd St.

- 8-9 single men
- Older adults only
- Between Design District and Little Haiti – residential area
- Drug/alcohol screening prior to placement



# The Interviews

| Provider/Landlord | Residents |
| --- | --- |
| Malena Legarre, Executive Director of Hermanos De La Calle<br>***Learnings:***<br>◦ Manage 28 properties<br>▪ Mostly single-family set up for shared housing<br>▪ Usually visit homes once or twice per week, doesn't do official inspections unless an issue arises<br>▪ Has volunteers that help provide services<br>◦ Charges flat $500 to residents<br>▪ Has at least one home with government subsidy that lowers rents to 1/3 of income | • Approximately 12 residents at 2 single family properties<br>• Mix of ages, race/ethnicities<br>• Conducted in both English and Spanish |



# Current Screening/Matching Process

Provider Searches for Shared Housing Availability

Verify Income. Ability to Pay Rent + Ability to perform activities of daily living?

Verify homeless status

# Current Matching Questionnaire (Provider Example)

## THE CONVENT PRE-SCREENING

**Full Name:** _____
**Date of Birth:** _____
**Phone Number (if any):** _____

### 1. CURRENT HOUSING STATUS:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1-Are you currently homeless?<br>☐ Yes ☐ No<br>If yes, how long have you been homeless?<br>Verified by: _____ | 2-Where are you currently staying? (Check all that apply)<br>☐ Streets/outdoors<br>☐ Shelter<br>☐ Car/abandoned vehicle |
| HMIS #_____ | Check history in HMIS: _____ |

### 2. SAFETY & STABILITY:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you feel safe in your current living situation?<br>☐ Yes ☐ No<br>If no, please explain:<br>_____<br>_____ | 2. Have you ever lived in a shared housing environment before?<br>☐ Yes ☐ No<br>If yes, how did it go?<br>_____ | 3. Are you willing to live in a shared home with rules, curfews, and expectations?<br>☐ Yes ☐ No |

### 3. SUBSTANCE USE & RECOVERY:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1-Are you currently using any | 2-Are you willing to live in a | 3-Do you need referrals to |

# Project Deliverable

HOMELESS TRUST
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

## SHARED HOUSING QUESTIONNAIRE

### CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This document contains confidential client information protected under applicable federal and state privacy laws, including HUD guidance and program confidentiality standards. Information provided will be used solely for housing placement and supportive service planning.

**Instructions**

1. Fill this form out with case manager assistance
2. Fields [in brackets] are placeholders for your information
3. Input information into online form

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Name: [Individual]

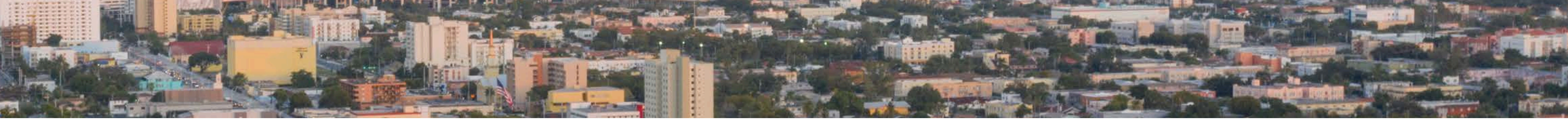
_____

**Shared Living Matching**

Do you have a preferred area where you would like to live (select all that apply)?

☐ Northern Miami-Dade (e.g. Brownsville, Miami Gardens, North Miami, Opa-Locka, etc.)

☐ Central Miami-Dade (e.g. Allapattah, Downtown



# Resident Priorities

- Overall cleanliness
- Personal hygiene habits
- Schedules/Routines
- Language and culture
- Age
- Drug/alcohol use
- Respect

## *CHALLENGES:*

- Residents expressed feeling a sense of one wrong move could potentially remove them from the house and restart cycle of homelessness
- Miscommunication, interpersonal conflicts/ conflict avoidance
- No current intake form that acknowledges differences in lifestyle habits, medical needs, etc

## person-centered process

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# Recommendations for Matching Criteria

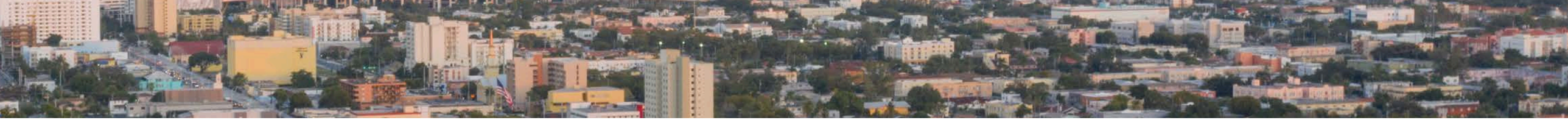
- Cosine similarity
  - Measure of similarity between individuals on each of the included questions and overall
  - Create pairs or groups of individuals based on how well they match
  - Can assign weights based on importance
  - Can also define clusters
    - Groups of 2-3 for 1-bedroom units
    - Groups of 4-6 for 2-bedroom units
    - Groups of 6-9 for 3-bedroom units
    - Groups of 8-12 for 4-bedroom units

# The Steps

- **Step 1:**
  - Apply eligibility filters
  - Geographic location, amount able to pay, ability to commit to one-year lease, need for month-to-month, accessibility needs
    - May also need to add some additional considerations (eg. qualify for elderly housing, family housing, housing for individuals in recovery)
  - Will determine locations that clients cannot be placed
- **Step 2:**
  - Assign weights to each question based on relative importance
  - Suggested weights
    - **High** (3-4): Language match (4), Sleep/wake alignment (3)
    - **Medium** (2): Noise level, cleaning habits, cleaning importance (multiplier effect), bathing frequency, temperature preference, social environment, visitor frequency, sharing household items, sharing personal items, smoking compatibility, conflict resolution, comfort with diverse backgrounds
    - **Low** (1): Age alignment, unit type preference, utilities included in rent preference

# The Steps (continued)

- **Step 3:**
  - Define clusters and criteria
  - How many 1, 2, 3, 4-bedroom units are available?
  - What region are they located in?
  - Are they accessible?
  - Rent amounts
  - Length of lease
  - Type of program (elderly, family, individuals in recovery)
- **Step 4:**
  - From initial pool of residents and available units, run analysis and create groups
- **Step 5:**
  - When adding new applicants, compare scores to existing assignments to decide best location for placement



# Next Steps

- Make final adjustments to questionnaire
- Determine platform for questionnaire
  - Qualtrics, Microsoft Forms, Google Forms, etc.
- Determine approach for matching analysis
  - Excel, Power BI, Power Automate, statistical software package, etc.
- Test, train and deploy questionnaire across service providers

# Additional Recommendations

- Uniform use of shared housing questionnaire across providers
- 1-1 with potential roommate to facilitate ease of transition and home visit tour
- Increase website user accessibility (information on shared housing not readily available on the Homeless Trust website nor provider sites)
- Questionnaire matching system availability in Haitian Creole and Spanish