



CITY OF **HOMESTEAD**

MARCH 2024 - FEB 2025

A YEAR IN REVIEW



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Letter from the City Manager



Zerry Ihekweba, PhD, PE Homestead City Manager

Esteemed Mayor & Council,

As I reflect on my first year serving as City Manager for the City of Homestead, I am filled with gratitude for the trust and support you have shown me. Over the past year, our collective efforts have driven meaningful progress across our community, enhancing the quality of life for residents, modernizing our infrastructure, and streamlining processes to better serve the people of Homestead. These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication of our City team and the unwavering commitment of our elected officials.

From the beginning, my focus has been on fostering a city government that is responsive, forward-thinking,

and centered on the needs of our residents. We have taken significant steps toward improving public safety, expanding recreational opportunities, and investing in critical infrastructure projects. Our commitment to customer service has driven operational efficiencies, ensuring that City services are delivered with greater speed and effectiveness.

One of the most significant milestones we will achieve in the coming year is the launch of Homestead's first-ever Strategic Plan. This initiative will provide a clear roadmap for the City's future, aligning our resources and priorities with the needs and aspirations of our community. Alongside this, we will also see the kickoff of the Electronic Permitting and Licensing (EPL) system and continue our push to bring Pump Station 22 into compliance. With your leadership, we will engage residents and stakeholders in shaping a shared vision for Homestead—one that focuses on smart growth, economic development, and sustainable improvements.

Looking ahead, I am eager to build upon the foundation we have laid. Year Two will focus on the implementation of Phase One of EPL, strategic Infrastructure Upsizing throughout the City to ensure we are future-ready, and developing an actionable plan for the Old City Hall site. Our continued emphasis on quality-of-life enhancements, infrastructure investments, and process improvements will position Homestead as a model for excellence in municipal governance. Through collaboration and innovation, we will further strengthen our neighborhoods, support local businesses, and ensure that our residents receive the highest level of service.

I am honored to serve in this role and look forward to another year of progress, teamwork, and success. Thank you for your dedication to making Homestead a thriving and dynamic city for all who call it home.

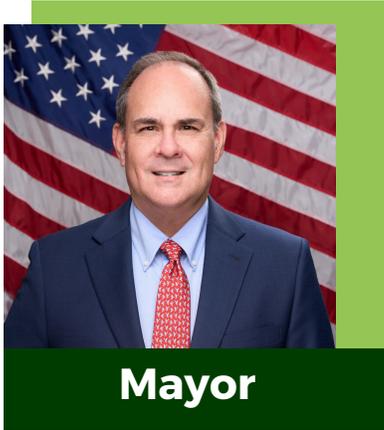
Sincerely,

Zerry Ihekweba, PhD, PE



Elected Officials

A YEAR IN REVIEW, MARCH 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025



Mayor

Steven D. Losner



Vice Mayor

Sean L. Fletcher
Seat 2



Councilman

Tom Davis
Seat 1



Councilman

Larry Roth
Seat 3



Councilwoman

Jenifer N. Bailey
Seat 4



Councilwoman

Erica G. Ávila
Seat 5



Councilman

Clemente Canabal
Seat 6



City Manager's Office

The Office of the City Manager is committed to providing strategic leadership, operational oversight, and responsive service to support the Mayor and City Council in achieving the City's goals. Through collaboration, accountability, and innovation, the City Manager's Office ensures that all departments operate effectively, that resources are managed responsibly, and that the needs of Homestead's residents are met with professionalism and purpose.

Top Accomplishments

- **Shaping the Future** - Initiated the development of Homestead's first comprehensive Strategic Plan, to align City goals with community priorities. Through extensive cross-departmental collaboration and resident input, the plan will serve as a five-year roadmap to guide smart growth, improve services, and elevate quality of life across Homestead.
- **Organizational Restructure** - Implemented a realignment of internal structures to improve efficiency, and support best practices across departments.
- **Strengthening Leadership & Talent** - Welcomed Kemarr Brown as Deputy City Manager and promoted Crystal Ollivierre to Assistant City Manager, reinforcing the City's executive team with experience, strategic insight, and leadership continuity, in addition to the onboarding of ten new department directors.
- **New Community Support** - Launched a dedicated Human Services Division within the City Manager's office to serve as a one-stop shop for community resources and support. This new division is focused on helping vulnerable populations, connecting residents with essential services, and expanding outreach efforts across the City.
- **Launching the City Manager Monthly Report** - Rolled out a monthly citywide report, where every department shares key accomplishments, aligning their work with strategic goals and keeping leadership and our elected officials informed in a unified, accessible format.
- **Building Culture from Within** - Developed and launched an employee intranet, giving City staff a central digital hub to access resources, benefits, events, and internal communications—boosting engagement and operational cohesion.
- **Fostering Unified Leadership** - Hosted a series of Executive Retreats sessions designed to strengthen communication, collaboration, and cohesion across all levels of City management, helping create a more aligned and high-performing organization.
- **Quality of Life Taskforce** - Created a focused taskforce to address illegal dumping and improve community appearance through targeted enforcement and response strategies.
- **Kick-Off of Enterprise Permitting & Licensing Initiative** - Launched the modernization of the City's permitting and licensing processes to streamline customer service, improve tracking, and increase overall transparency.



Communications

The Communications Department is dedicated to keeping residents informed, engaged, and connected through clear, accessible, and timely communication. By leveraging digital platforms, media outreach, and community engagement initiatives, the department ensures that vital information reaches the public efficiently.

Top Accomplishments

- Restructured from a Public Information Office to a full Communications Department, expanding the team's scope and capabilities. Added a new Communications & Marketing Officer position to amplify outreach and impact.
- Launched a comprehensive Hurricane Communications Campaign, throughout the Hurricane season, ensuring the community stayed safe and prepared.
- Earned a Telly Award for a tribute to staff in Wide Open Spaces.
- Expanded media presence with features in Florida Trend, Miami Today, Telemundo, NBC, El Nuevo Herald, Actualidad Radio, and more.
- Led the America 250 Campaign, unveiling a fresh logo for the U.S.'s 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.



Social Media Impressions

+5,000,000



Social Media Interactions

+69,000



New Implementations

- Top Common Code Violations – A public awareness campaign on frequent code issues, as apart of the City Manager's Quality of Life Taskforce that targeted illegal dumping.
- Community Matters – A new show covering key topics for residents and businesses.
- City Manager Report – A collaborative document highlighting departmental initiatives and progress.
- Capital Improvement Webpages – Online resources keeping residents informed on major projects.

- Digital Communication Upgrades – Improved online tools, accessibility, and media request processes, including backend implementation for greater departmental efficiency.
- Expanding Digital Reach – Increased engagement on Flickr, Nextdoor, and Threads.
- Consistent Branding & Messaging – Standardized branding, colors, and hashtags.

Grants Division

The City of Homestead's Grants Division is dedicated to securing and managing funding that enhances community engagement, resiliency and sustainability, economic development, quality of life, innovation and technology, alternative energy, and climate adaptation among other initiatives, driving meaningful progress for the community. Grants provide the City with alternative methods of funding to complete critical work and deliver improved services.

Top Accomplishments

- Successfully managed the City of Homestead's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) portfolio, allocating an impressive \$19.1 million in federal funding to combat the effects of COVID-19 and support community recovery and resilience—all while maintaining 100% compliance with grant reporting requirements. As of December 30, 2024, a total of \$13.3 million has already been expended, with all ARPA funds on track to be fully utilized before the federal deadline of December 31, 2026.
- Strategically allocated 100% of ARPA funds across 58 impactful projects, addressing a wide range of community needs including infrastructure, public safety, economic development, and public health.
- Oversaw, tracked, and ensured coordination for approximately 35 active grant-funded projects, representing a combined investment of close to \$50 million in the Homestead community.
- Secured 17 successful grant awards during that same period, bringing in \$6.3 million in new funding to enhance city services, infrastructure, public spaces, and resident quality of life.
- Between March 2024 and March 2025, the City applied for 44 grants totaling \$78 million.

\$19,192,087

In ARPA funds allocated by the City of Homestead.

\$13,303,393

Expended from 58 ARPA projects, as of December 2024.

\$6,297,722

From 17 new grants secured (non ARPA).



City Clerk



The City Clerk's Office is dedicated to serving Homestead with professionalism and transparency. Partnering with the City Council, departments, and the community, we ensure open access to government, maintain accurate records, and preserve city documents. Our goal is to be the premier source of information for residents, businesses, visitors, and employees.

Top Accomplishments

- Became a U.S. Passport Application Acceptance Facility in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, with two staff members certified as Passport Acceptance Agents.
- Implemented the CHAMPS Agenda Management system, improving accessibility and ease of use for the public.
- Launched the JustFOIA platform for seamless Public Record Requests, ensuring compliance with Florida's Sunshine Law.
- 30 ordinances, 172 resolutions and 15 CRA resolutions were prepared for execution and recording.



Fees Collected



Public Records processed



Lien Searches processed



Lobbyist Registrations processed.



Code Compliance

Brand New
Department

The City of Homestead Code Compliance Department prioritizes a customer-first approach, focusing on education, engagement, and proactive solutions to keep our city safe and vibrant. Through collaboration and service, they promote compliance, deter blight, and enhance the community's quality of life.



Top Accomplishments

- The newly established Code Compliance Department has successfully separated from the Police Department, becoming a fully independent, customer-focused entity, with a new Department Director.
- Focused on streamlining the Notice of Violation and Citation processes, codifying the Courtesy Notice procedure, and establishing clear criteria for special magistrates.
- A new office location has been identified for the Code Compliance Administrative Building, to better accommodate their team and create a welcoming environment for residents. Code Compliance will share a building with the Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department.
- Enhanced the department's website with expanded resources and easier access to vital information.
- Introduced rebranded uniforms and vehicles as part of the department's strategy to cement itself as a separate department.
- Two 2024 Ford F-150 trucks are now in service, with two 2025 Ford Mavericks on the way. These additions will enhance mobility, efficiency, and our ability to respond promptly to community needs.

2,260 Cases Opened



1,334 Cases Closed



Customer Service

We provide exceptional customer service by delivering reliable and accurate utility information. We are dedicated to assisting our community through seamless account management, responsive customer support, efficient billing and smooth payment processing. Our team strives to build and maintain strong relationships with customers, ensuring their needs are met with professionalism, transparency, integrity and respect.



Top Accomplishments

- **Faster Utility Applications** – Clearer requirements and online document submission make applying easier and more efficient.
- **Efficient Water Meter Management** – Troubleshooting and replacing non-communicating meters has reduced field visits and boosted efficiency.
- **Convenient Payment Reminders** – Missed payment notices are now sent via email, streamlining the process.
- **Same Day Utility Connection** - With upcoming paperless billing, as part of our Going Green strategy.
- **Stronger Team Support** – Three new clerical positions enhance applications, payments, and billing processes, while three roles were upgraded to supervisory positions.
- **New Customer Service Support Team Member** – Able to assist residents and businesses in-person at City Hall.

61,049 Calls handled



1,665 Customers served in new service window



11,427 Utility Applications Processed



15,688 Paperless work orders completed



CRA

The Homestead Community Redevelopment Agency (HCRA) is dedicated to revitalizing neighborhoods and fostering economic growth within the designated redevelopment area. Guided by its Community Redevelopment Plan, the HCRA implements strategic initiatives and transformative projects designed to combat deterioration, attract investment, and create a thriving community.

Top Accomplishments

- Welcomed Jared Beck, AICP, FRP, as the new Director of the Homestead CRA.
- Roof replacements at Krome Marketplace is now complete, paving the way for its transformation into downtown Homestead's next major project.
- Five low- to moderate-income homeowners received financial assistance for facade improvements to their homes.
- The CRA was awarded \$783,400 in Federal Brownfields Cleanup Funds to facilitate the remediation and reuse of key CRA-owned properties such as the Triangle Project, Krome Marketplace and other sites in Downtown Homestead.



New Implementations

- HCRA hosted its Pathways to Homeownership annual event, providing resources and homeownership education to help aspiring homeowners navigate the process with confidence.
- A partnership with Miami New Times, to expand the HCRA reach across Miami-Dade County.

\$75,000

Awarded to Cozy Greens from the Business Incentive Grant.

\$75,000

Awarded to Sak Pase to open a new restaurant in Downtown Homestead.

Development Services

The Development Service Department mission is to drive smart growth and sustainable development, ensuring our city's land and infrastructure evolve to meet the needs of our community. They oversee urban planning, zoning, permitting, and construction, streamlining the development process to create a thriving, well-planned future for all.



Top Accomplishments

- **Department Restructuring** – At the direction of the City Manager, the department onboarded their first in-house Director over the last 15 years.
- **12-Month Residential Moratorium** – For high-density residential development, ensuring thoughtful, sustainable growth while planning for the City's future.
- **Better Access for Residents** – The lobby is now open all day, making building permits, zoning, and business licensing faster and more convenient.
- **Small Business & Homeowner Concierge** – A dedicated staff member to guide residents and business owners through city processes, making navigation easier and more efficient.
- **Public Art & Landmarks** – Exciting projects are coming to life, including the William Krome Sculpture, a vibrant mural at Seminole Theatre, and a call to public art artists for a new water tower design.
- **Major Developments Underway** – Chick-fil-A, Soleste Midtown, and the Sandero Project are all in construction, shaping Homestead's growth.

Upcoming Projects

- **Online Permitting & Licensing** – Streamlined permitting, licensing, and code compliance solutions, along with a citywide online payment process, reducing red tape and improving efficiency for residents.
- **Visioning Charrette** – A collaborative process to define and visualize Homestead's future. The plan will be presented to the City Council for final approval soon.

6,082 Permits requested* ↑

5,087 Permits issued* ↑

*From July 2023 through February 2024

Economic Development

The mission of the Economic Development Department is to foster growth by attracting businesses, supporting entrepreneurship, and enhancing residents' quality of life. Through strategic investments and partnerships, it creates a business-friendly environment that drives job creation, innovation, and long-term prosperity.

Top Accomplishments

- Completed an economic analysis, and a hotel supply analysis of the city.
- Established relationships with the local business community.
- Worked with the City Manager's Office and City Attorney's Office to updated the council seat map.
- Assisted the CRA with redevelopment and revitalization efforts.
- Engaged commercial real estate brokers to expand awareness about the opportunities for business and economic development in the city.
- Responded to inquiries from new businesses and developers interested in opening a business in Homestead.



New Implementations

The Department is advancing its economic development strategies by leveraging cutting-edge tools to track workforce trends, supply chains, and talent flow. Utilizing BusinessFlare's customized AI platform, Street Economics, we gain smarter economic insights that inform our strategies. Additionally, a centralized dashboard integrates key economic data from various sources, streamlining internal analysis for better planning.

Strategic partnerships are also crucial to strengthening our efforts. We're collaborating with Miami-Dade County, the Beacon Council, the Realtors Association, the South Florida Manufacturing Association, the Levan Center of Innovation, and the CCIM Institute. Moreover, we have full access to BusinessFlare's specialists in research, urban planning (AICP), real estate, urban design, and quality of life initiatives. The department is reviewing Homestead's economic development place brand and updating our image and aerial library to boost the community's profile.



Finance and Budget

The Finance and Budget Department ensures responsible management of the City's financial resources with accuracy, transparency, and efficiency. Committed to integrity and accountability, the department drives smart budgeting, resource allocation, and financial reporting to support city operations and build public trust.

Top Accomplishments

- **Rebranded for Clarity** – Renamed Finance and Budget Department to better reflect its full scope of functions and services.
- **Modernized Budgeting** – Implemented OpenGov software to streamline the budgeting process, fully preparing the FY2025 Budget across personnel, operations, and capital planning.
- **Expanding Housing Resources** – Secured new SHIP and HOME funding to provide additional assistance for residents in need of affordable housing.
- **Major Infrastructure Investment** – Partnered with the Electric Utility to obtain a \$5.1 million Revenue Note for the construction of a new substation, enhancing the city's power infrastructure.
- **Established an Affordable Housing Trust Fund** – To aide in the development and maintenance of affordable housing

Upcoming Projects

- **Automating Time & Attendance** – Developing an automated system to streamline tracking, improve overtime management, and enhance payroll compliance with employee self-service features.
- **Strengthening Financial Oversight** – Working with City Financial Advisors to establish a formal debt management policy for responsible fiscal planning.
- **Enhancing Best Practices** – Partnering with the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) to update policies, strengthen internal controls, and boost efficiency.



Awards

-  Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.
-  Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Checks Issued

12,405



Paychecks for Employees

+22,000



General Services

Brand New
Department

The General Services Department is committed to efficiently managing City assets, fleet operations, and facilities. Previously overseen by the PROS and Procurement Departments, this division was established by the City Manager to bring in industry professionals for more effective management of City assets. By centralizing these essential services, General Services enhances operations, sustainability, and service quality across all departments.



A YEAR IN REVIEW, MARCH 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025

Top Accomplishments

- **New Leadership** – Welcomed General Services Director Israel Salgado.
- **Major Facility Upgrades** – Installed a new A/C chiller and copper coil systems at City Hall and Seminole Theatre for better operational effectiveness.
- **Strengthening Partnerships** – Joined the Enterprise Fleet Alliance for better fleet management and partnered with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to enhance city safety initiatives.
- **Branded City Vehicles** – All City of Homestead vehicles now proudly display the 250th-anniversary logo.

Upcoming Projects

- Construction is underway on the 3rd and 4th floors of the Cybrarium building, bringing even more innovation and resources to the community.
- **A Fresh Look for City Hall** – Pressure washing scheduled to give the building a refreshed and polished appearance.

\$163,419

Grant awarded for the Seminole waterproofing.



General Services

Brand New
Department

Cybrarium



The Cybrarium continues to be a vital hub for the Homestead community, with **125,892** physical items checked out, **110,915** visitors, and **4,416** new library card sign-ups this year.

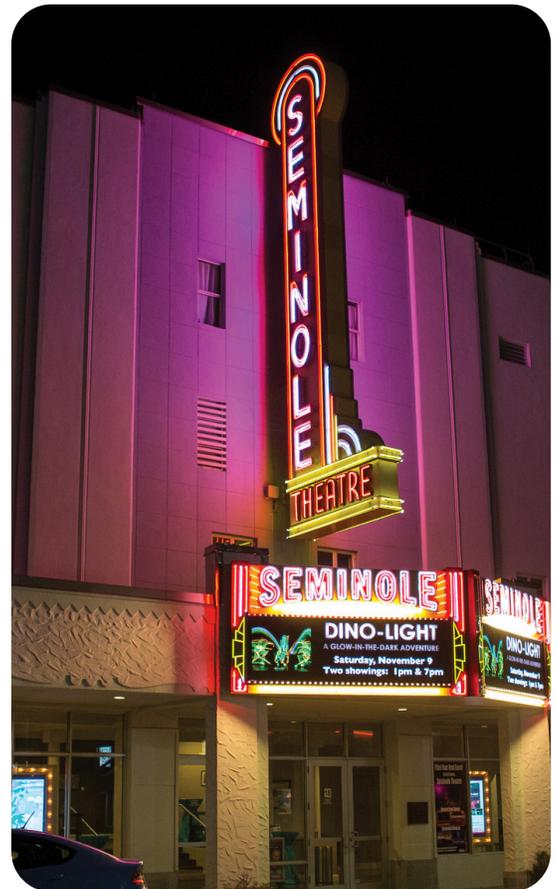
A total of **27,050** registered borrowers took advantage of resources, including **10,184** VR sessions, **514** programs, and **8,524** study room reservations. Digital access remains strong, with **22,339** computer sessions, **16,754** hours of computer use, **89,130** wireless sessions, and **67,650** website visits, making library services more accessible than ever.

Seminole Theatre

The Seminole Theatre continues to be a driving force for creativity and connection in the community. In the previous year, **28,529** people came together at **275** events — from live theater and dance to school shows, graduations, workshops, and civic gatherings — making the Seminole Theatre a true cultural hub.

Our commitment to youth programming was recognized with the Broadway World Award for Best Theatre for Young Audiences, fueling a surge in interest in our Conservatory and leading us to expand from one to two summer sessions.

We also secured **\$24,500** in grants to support the Seminole Theatre Players adult and youth productions. This success was made partly possible by **63** dedicated volunteers, who contributed **3,528** hours toward production and creative development — a testament to the community's investment in the arts. The Seminole Theatre isn't just a stage — it's where creativity thrives and the community comes together. We're proud of this momentum and excited to create even more meaningful experiences in the year ahead.



Homestead PD

The mission of the Homestead Police Department is to work in partnership with the citizens of Homestead toward providing a safe environment and to improve the quality of life consistent with the values of the community.



Top Accomplishments

- **New Leadership, New Vision** - On January 2025, the City of Homestead welcomed Chief Mario Knapp as the new Chief of Police. With 27 years of experience at the Miami-Dade Police Department, Chief Knapp brings proven operational expertise, strategic leadership, and a deep commitment to public safety and community trust.
- **Cracking Down on Vehicle Crime** - The Special Investigations Unit made 165 arrests related to stolen vehicles and vehicle burglaries, seizing more than \$126,000 in stolen property and criminal proceeds.
- **Strong Investigative Results** - The General Investigations Unit made 341 arrests, including 271 felony charges, 95 arrests for misdemeanors, city ordinances, or traffic violations, and 7 arrests related to outstanding warrants.
- **Improving Quality of Life** - To address illegal dumping, officers made 18 arrests and impounded 12 vehicles tied to violations—part of a focused effort to protect neighborhood cleanliness.
- **Homeless Outreach & Enforcement** - The Homeless Task Force conducted 140 field interviews, identified 79 encampments, offered services to 47 individuals, issued 49 trespass warnings, and made 18 arrests as part of a balanced approach to outreach and enforcement.
- **Targeted Crime Reduction** - The Group Violence Intervention Unit added a dedicated crime analyst to enhance data-driven strategies.

Reduction in overall shootings

36%



Reduction in contact shootings.

45%



Homestead PD



New Implementations

- **Upgraded to Axon Body-Worn Camera 4** – Improved durability, extended battery life, and enhanced image and audio quality strengthen the effectiveness of the Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program.
- **Enhanced PAL Gymnasium** – Upgraded facilities, including roof and exterior paint improvements, with an investment of \$866,000 to create a safer, more supportive environment for local youth.
- **Launched Community Service Aide (CSA) Unit** – Started with one CSA and grew to three, supporting patrol units by handling traffic-related incidents. CSAs responded to 14.3% of traffic crashes and issued 5.3% of uniform citations, allowing officers to focus on higher-priority calls.
- **Investing in Talent and Readiness** – Hired and trained 15 recruits, with 93% successfully completing all phases and entering active duty. Evaluations showed increased readiness, especially in legal understanding and procedural compliance thanks to the updated classroom module.
- **Advanced Field Training Program** – The Field Training Officer (FTO) program introduced a two-week classroom module, covering Body-Worn Camera procedures and the ELVIS/TRACS systems for electronic traffic incident reporting.
- **Created Internet Crimes Against Children Unit** – The General Investigations Unit (GIU) launched a specialized unit to combat internet crimes targeting minors, as part of a nationwide law enforcement initiative to protect vulnerable populations.

Grants and Awards

 1st place in Cat. 6 at the 2024 Florida Law Enforcement Traffic Safety Challenge Training and Recognition event in Orlando, Florida.

 Small and Rural Violent Crime Reduction Grant amounting in \$299,999.00

HPS Energy

The mission of HPS Energy is to drive economic growth by delivering reliable, efficient power to Homestead. From generation to distribution, they power homes and businesses while upgrading infrastructure to ensure uninterrupted service. Through strategic energy buying and a focus on innovation, HPS Energy is lighting the way to a stronger, more sustainable city.



A YEAR IN REVIEW, MARCH 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025

Top Accomplishments

- **Affordable Power, Consistently Delivered** – Homestead’s electric rates remain among the lowest in Florida, and below those of neighboring utilities, continuing our commitment to affordable energy.
- **Boosted System Reliability** – Added two major power circuits, increasing system strength by 10% and enhancing service reliability across the city.
- **Brighter, Safer Streets** – Upgraded a key substation’s protective systems and began a citywide transition to LED streetlights, improving visibility and energy efficiency.
- **Powering Progress** – Completed 75+ infrastructure projects to upgrade power lines, modernize systems, and support new residential and commercial development.
- **Reliable Power, Maintained on Schedule** – Completed 95% of scheduled substation maintenance on time, ensuring a dependable power supply for Homestead residents and businesses.
- **Smarter Energy Use** – Installed 2,500 new smart meters, giving customers real-time insight into energy usage and improving billing accuracy.

New homes and businesses connected

563



Incidents responded

548



Constructions fees collected

\$1,000,000



Street lights repaired

283



HPS Energy

New Implementations

- **Strengthened the Workforce** – Converted six temporary positions into full-time roles, including an engineer, project liaison, two certified electricians, and two administrative support staff to support the City’s growing electrical infrastructure.
- **Digitized Operations** – Streamlined internal processes by digitizing work orders and optimizing the Milsoft Engineering Analysis system to fully model the electrical grid.
- **Enhanced Grid Reliability** – Deployed Trip Savers and fault indicators to reduce outage impact and improve response times.
- **Upgraded GIS Data** – Migrated and integrated GIS data into Milsoft, improving system mapping and grid accuracy for smarter service management.
- **Optimized Power Distribution** – Managed electrical loads at Renaissance and secured uninterrupted service during critical infrastructure work at the Campbell Drive canal crossing.
- **Powered by Solar** – Began receiving 2.5 Megawatts of solar power from the Rice Creek Solar Project in October 2024, advancing the City’s commitment to clean energy and sustainability.

Upcoming projects

- **Donnie Avocado Substation** – A new substation in northern Homestead to support long-term growth and future demand. Planned completion: Q3 2026
- **Redland Substation Expansion** – Doubling capacity to improve reliability and circuit flexibility. Planned completion: Q1 2027
- **Renaissance Interconnection** – A new grid interconnection to enhance system redundancy and ensure continuous power delivery. Planned completion: Q3 2026

Awards



Restoring Communities Award, for assistance following Hurricanes Helene and Milton.



HPS/Energy Director selected by the South Florida Business Journal as one of the 2025 Top 25 Influential Businesswomen in South Florida.

\$1,000,000

Downtown Revitalization and Resilient Electrical Infrastructure Grant.

\$2,000,000

Grant awarded by FEMA.

\$132,000

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant award.



HPS Sanitation

HPS Sanitation is keeping Homestead clean and green with efficient, reliable waste collection and recycling services.

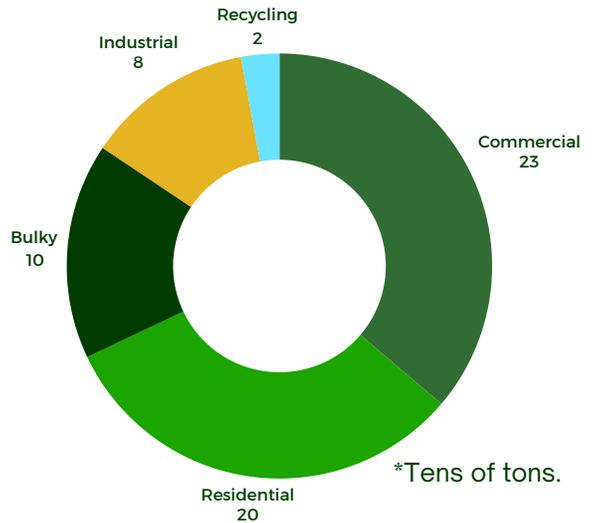


A YEAR IN REVIEW, MARCH 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025

Top accomplishments

-  Acquired five new vehicles, including one commercial front loader, two residential side loaders, and two bulky trash container trucks. These upgrades contributed to a 17% reduction in maintenance and repair costs.
-  Hired seven new drivers, leading to a 42% reduction in overtime expenses and improved overall service delivery.
-  Increased bulky waste collection by 332 tons, helping to keep Homestead's neighborhoods cleaner and more responsive to community needs.
-  Partnered with our supercan manufacturer to recycle decommissioned containers. This initiative reclaimed 520 supercans and diverted seven tons of plastic from landfills.
-  Implemented a camera system to monitor both drivers and the waste collection process, improving accountability and catching non-compliant disposal activity.

Trash Collected*



Overtime Cost Reduction

42%



Supercans Services

1,886



Commercial Dumpster Services

283



Human Resources

The mission of the Human Resources Department is to attract, develop, and retain a high-performing and diverse workforce and provide timely and effective services in the personnel, labor relations, insurance coverages, and safety areas to employees, City departments, and the public.



Top Accomplishments

- Successfully negotiated the 2024–2026 Police Benevolent Association agreements, fostering a positive and productive partnership with law enforcement personnel.
- The Risk Management Division launched a dedicated webpage outlining the City’s insurance requirements, making it easier for businesses to access essential information and documentation.
- Welcomed several new team members following retirements, promotions, and new positions, including a Human Resources Assistant, a Risk Manager and Risk Analyst and a new Human Resources Director, bringing strategic leadership and a vision for continuous improvement.
- Successfully launched the Summer Internship Program, giving Homestead students hands-on experience in municipal government.
- Hosted a successful Employee Appreciation Picnic, celebrating the dedication and hard work of our City staff.

3,109 Applications



65 New Hires



Human Resources



New Implementations

- **Launched Online Applicant Tracking System** – The City launched a new NEOGOV-powered system to modernize recruitment. The platform allows applicants to apply online, expands outreach, and streamlines the hiring process for both job seekers and hiring managers.
- **Expanded Benefits for Domestic Partners** – Effective January 1, 2025, employees can now add domestic partners to their insurance plans, reinforcing the City's commitment to inclusive benefits and supporting employee recruitment and retention.

Upcoming Projects

- Phase II of HR Automation on the NEOGOV OnBoarding module to streamline hiring with a fully paperless, remote-friendly process for new employees.
- Transitioning to paperless HR Forms with Laserfiche.
- Modernizing the HR Guide to ensure policies are aligned with best practices.
- Enhancing claims tracking systems to improve accuracy, and support a more proactive approach to managing risk.

New Branding

- **Stronger Presence** – Actively promoting job openings, sharing updates, and connecting with industry professionals on LinkedIn, and University recruitment pages.
- **Enhanced Employer Branding** – Reinforcing our commitment to attracting skilled professionals and showcasing Homestead as a great place to work.

New Partnerships

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Miami** – Partnered to support youth development through the Directors Mentor Students program, pairing City leadership with local students for guidance and inspiration.
- **Florida International University** – Added to the City's Dependent Scholarship Program, expanding educational opportunities for employees' families.

34 Liability claims open 

22 Liability claims closed 

13 Safety meetings hosted for more than 260 attendees 

Innovation and Technology

The City of Homestead's Innovation and Technology Department is dedicated to supporting all city departments by implementing and managing computer and communication technologies. Their responsibilities include overseeing technical projects, procuring and administering hardware and software, managing contracts, and providing staff training.



Top accomplishments

- The City of Homestead transitioned from cityofhomestead.com to homesteadfl.gov, aligning with federal best practices for government agencies. This change enhances security, reduces the risk of impersonation, and helps residents more easily identify official City communications online.
- Migrated email services from on-premises servers to Microsoft Exchange Online. This has significantly improved accessibility and reliability, allowing staff to access email securely from anywhere while reducing maintenance and operational costs. The shift also introduced Entra ID for better identity management and scalability across systems.
- Completed a full deployment of Microsoft 365 with Teams, enabling more seamless communication and collaboration across departments. With Microsoft Teams, employees can now chat, hold virtual meetings, organize projects in dedicated channels, and share files and task lists in real time—all within a secure, integrated platform. These upgrades are part of the City's ongoing commitment to efficiency, innovation, and responsive public service.
- Citywide cybersecurity training was implemented to strengthen employee awareness, reduce vulnerabilities, and enhance the City's overall digital security posture.

2,732

Helpdesk tickets closed.



Innovation and Technology

New Implementations

- **ERP System Upgrade** – Enhanced operational efficiency, improved user experience, and better data security, positioning the City for future growth and service delivery.
- **Internet Circuit Upgrade** – Increased bandwidth for better performance, reliability, and user experience, benefiting citizens and customers.
- **City Hall Wi-Fi Refresh** – Replaced and expanded, ensuring seamless coverage and lower maintenance costs.
- **Agenda Management Software** – Replaced legacy system with a cloud-based solution for more efficient public meeting management.
- **Voicemail Notifications via Email** – New feature will send automatic email notifications with voicemail attachments, improving communication efficiency.
- **Firewall Replacement** – Upgraded for enhanced network security, performance, and regulatory compliance.
- **Expanded Team Capacity** – The department welcomed Assistant Director Juan M. Lopez, CPTM, and IT Support Analyst Alejandro Ramos, bringing advanced expertise in ERP systems, cybersecurity, cloud platforms, and customer support.



Ongoing Projects

- **Wi-Fi in City Parks** - Enhancing connectivity and smart city initiatives, with completion set for July 1, 2025.
- **Workstation Replacement** – Transitioning to mobile-friendly setups with laptops and docking stations, starting with City Hall and expanding to other departments.
- **Centralized GIS System** - Improving resource management, public safety, and operational efficiency.
- **Enterprise Permitting & Licensing** - Collaborating with multiple departments to implement Tyler Technologies' system for streamlined community development processes.

Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces

Our mission is to provide Homestead residents with safe, engaging recreational, educational, and cultural activities. We promote wellness and learning for all ages.



Top Accomplishments

- **Restructured the Department** to focus solely on parks, recreation, and open spaces — by removing facility maintenance to the new General Services Department.
- **William F. "Bill" Dickinson Community Center** – Completed roof replacement to protect and preserve the facility.
- **Harris Field Press Box** – Received a new roof for improved functionality and weather protection.
- **Wittkop Park** – Resurfaced the basketball court to provide a safer play surface.
- **Harris Field & James Archer Smith Park** – Restroom facilities refinished for a cleaner, more modern experience.
- **Phichol Williams Community Center** – Installed new gym equipment to support health and wellness programs.
- **Park Grounds Maintenance** – Added new ballfield equipment and SandPro machines.

New Implementations

- **First Dedicated Pickleball Courts** – Coming to JD Redd Park in March 2025.
- **Year-Round Extraordinary Events** – Gather under the stars at Losner Park.
- **New Youth Programs** – A brand-new after-school care program and summer camp at the William F. "Bill" Dickinson Community Center.
- **Park Enhancements** – We're moving forward with projects from the Parks Master Plan, including court resurfacings and new playground designs.

\$200,000

Grant for the Blakery Park Playground.



Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces

Upcoming Projects

Easier Reservations – We're partnering with RecDesk to allow online facility reservations and program sign-ups.

Roscoe Warren Park Upgrades – Improvements include basketball court resurfacing, a new dog park fence, shade structures, and a large pavilion.

New Playgrounds Coming – Audubon and Wittkop Parks are in the design phase for exciting new play areas.

Harris Field Gym Lighting – LED upgrades are set for April 2025.

More Fitness & Fun – James Archer Smith Park will get new fitness equipment and a repaired pad.

Upcoming Projects – Biscayne Everglades Trail Phase 2 and Phichol Williams door replacements are in development.

Ernestine Jackson Seymour Park – Pending Council approval in February 2025.



Procurement

Their mission is to secure the best value for the City by procuring supplies, services, and equipment at the lowest overall cost. They ensure fair competition, transparency, and compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. Committed to professionalism, Procurement follow the highest standards set by UPPCC and NIGP.

Top Accomplishments

- **Stronger Vendor Engagement** – Hosted one vendor fair and two industry day events to boost participation.
- **ARPA Project Success** – Issued all purchase orders ahead of deadline for ARPA-funded initiatives.
- **Leadership Excellence** – The Procurement Director earned the prestigious NIGP-CPP certification.
- **Implemented OpenGov** to streamline vendor registration, notifications, open opportunities, and the contracts module.
- **Facility Upgrade** – A heavy-duty industrial fan is scheduled to be installed in the warehouse by March, improving working conditions and airflow.
- **Streamlined Vendor Registration** – Revamped the process and updated the City's website for easier access.



Upcoming Projects

In 2025, phase II of window installations is underway, set for completion by July. The 40-year building certification, including structural upgrades, is expected by September, ensuring long-term safety and compliance.

Fully implement OpenGov Business Process Review for Optimized Contract Management.

Our Team

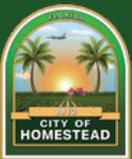
The procurement team prioritizes continuous education. Staff recently attended the NIGP Forum and the FAPPO Conference for professional development. Additionally, the team is expanding, with a new Buyer II position funded for FY25 and pending hire.

52 Formal solicitations processed

3,080 Requisitions processed

226 Contracts processed

2,372 Purchase orders processed.



Public Works

The Public Works Department keeps Homestead running by managing the City's infrastructure, water, wastewater, roads, and drainage systems. The Department ensures a safe, reliable, and eco-friendly utility service for residents and neighboring communities while also maintaining the City's roadways.



Top Accomplishments

- **Pump Station 22** - We are wrapping up the essential improvements at Pump Station #22 and preparing to transition into the next phase of work. These efforts bring us closer to lifting the moratorium, a vital step toward unlocking development connection opportunities and ensuring the reliability of our utility services.
- **Treatment** - The City supplied over 5,129 million gallons of drinking water while meeting all regulations, successfully passing inspections by the Florida Health Department and DERM. Additionally, the City treated over 3,407 million gallons of sewer and used 1,601 million gallons of wastewater effluent to recharge the Biscayne Aquifer.
- **QRT, Streets & Stormwater** - The team kept streets clean by removing trash, shopping carts, palm fronds, and tires, while maintaining 1,512 miles of roadways and 659 feet of curb and gutter. Stormwater improvements included 883 catch basin inspections, 487 cleanings, and 316 repairs, ensuring proper drainage and road safety across the city.
- **Distribution & Collections** - Cleaned 80,884 linear feet of sewer main lines, installing 327 new meters, and replacing 88 fire hydrants.
- **ROW Permits** - The City handled 57 right-of-way permits, issuing 46 new permits and 21 extensions.

58

Sewer repairs



4,014

Customer service work orders



Public Works

New Implementations

Upgraded our fleet to enhance service delivery for Homestead residents. Recent ARPA-funded acquisitions include a backhoe, mini hydraulic excavator, utility locator, sewer TV inspection van, F-350 stormwater truck, and a Ford Explorer.

Conducted key studies, including the Water and Sewer Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Pavement Assessment, and Trolley Efficiency Study. These will help identify system needs and deficiencies, integrating data into the City's new GIS system to improve operations, streamline services, and enhance community service delivery.

The City of Homestead America 250th Logo water tower painting has been successfully completed.



Upcoming Projects

→ **Sewer & Water System Upgrades** – Includes gravity sewer replacements on Krome and Flagler Avenues (2026-2027), water and sewer master plans (2025), Avocado Villas water main replacement (2025), and wastewater basin repairs.

→ **Facilities & Parks Enhancements** – Ongoing work includes Homestead Regional Park design (2025), interior and exterior renovations at the Code & Parks building (2025), and new administrative offices for Code and Parks (2025).

→ **Roadway & Transit Improvements** – Projects include the FTA Roadway & Transit initiative on Krome Ave, SW 1st Ave roadway and pedestrian crossing, and a signalization project at SW 152 Ave. Future improvements include roadway, lighting, and landscaping upgrades on SW 4th Street (SW 187 to Flagler Street) and SE 6th Avenue. Enhancements will also feature trolley stops, improved signage, and landscaping.

→ **Public Safety & Resilience** – Projects such as the WWTP backup generators, Wittkop Park water treatment chlorination facility, Water Treatment Well #7, and a vulnerability assessment to enhance infrastructure resilience.

471 Potholes repaired

71 City signs repaired or installed

28,856 Square feet of sidewalk repaired

4,986 Square feet of new sidewalk

