



SUNGARD PUBLIC SECTOR OSSI

Case Study
Launching a New
Agency

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

MIAMI GARDENS, FL LAUNCHES SUCCESSFUL NEW AGENCY FROM THE GROUND UP

CONTACT INFORMATION

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DEPARTMENT PROFILE

Sworn Officers	190
PSAP Staff	19
Population Served	110,000
Annual Call Volume	125,000
Total Calls for Service	100,000
Square Miles	22

PRODUCT PROFILE

Computer-Aided Dispatch (OSSI CAD)
Records Management System (OSSI RMS)
Mobile Computing (OSSI MCT)
Mobile Field Reporting (OSSI MFR)
Police-to-Citizen Data Access (P2P)



SITUATION:

Incorporated in 2003, Miami Gardens, Florida is home to the Miami Dolphins football team, Florida Marlins baseball team, and University of Miami Hurricanes. Miami Gardens was previously a census-designated place (CDP) but not a full-fledged city; one of the chief motivations for incorporating was to establish city services independent of Miami-Dade County, who had previously provided most municipal functions, including public safety through the Miami-Dade Police Department.

“Miami-Dade is a large organization; people get transferred in and out,” explains Paul Miller, Deputy Chief of the Miami Gardens Police Department. “You may have an officer doing well in the community, but the officer could be transferred next month. Then the department brings someone else in and the officer has to learn the area and understand the people. By founding our own agency in Miami Gardens and focusing on our own community, we could give the department more of a ‘home town’ feel.”

In September of 2006, the Miami Gardens City Council decided to move forward with a new police agency in the city; their chief was hired in December of that year, and the agency officially launched in September 2007 with 189 sworn and non-sworn employees. Within a year, that number has grown to 250, with Miami Gardens taking over specialized services such as homicide from Miami-Dade officers.

The Miami Gardens Police Department literally started with nothing—from a building to house the station, to police cars and office furniture, every resource a modern agency would require to operate effectively had to be acquired or built from the ground up. This included the agency’s technology solutions.

“From the beginning, we wanted to be automated and use an electronic reporting system,” says Miller. “Initially, we weren’t going to handle our own communications, but when we received the proposal from Miami-Dade, it was going to be so expensive to use their system that we decided to also staff a non-emergency 911 center.”



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SOLUTION:

Providing the software solutions required to support the Miami Gardens Police Department began with a contractor devoted specifically to building out the agency's technology infrastructure. "The city itself was only four years old, so they were still growing," Miller says. "To add close to two hundred employees and a very robust public safety system on it—I thought, you gotta be kidding me! We brought in a team of about five individuals who set up our whole network—e-mail, the whole technology network infrastructure we're now using."

When it came time to choose a vendor for the agency's CAD and RMS software solutions, SunGard Public Sector was already a leading contender with their OSSI suite thanks to their extensive experience in the state of Florida and throughout the southeastern United States. "In the end, we made our decision based on the fact that OSSI software was more fluent in Florida than any other product," explains Miller. "We looked at the regional landscape and realized that OSSI applications were in wide use throughout Florida. In fact, the cities on two of our borders, Miramar and North Miami Beach, use the system."

IMPACT:

The Miami Gardens Police Department celebrated its first anniversary on December 16, 2008. In that time, they have reduced crime by 17 percent; one study had ranked the city as the sixth most dangerous in the United States, and now ranks it as the 13TH. Officers have been recruited from as far afield as Alaska, and an honor guard of officers presented the American flag at a Miami Dolphins football game.

"I'm glad to say that through the use of OSSI, we're making a difference," says Miller. "With OSSI Mobile Computing Technology, officers can see a call on the laptop screen and get instant updates. We're a very busy city, with 90,000 calls so far this year, and we need to keep air time free on the radios, so having the mobile application is very helpful to us."

Overall, the creation of the Miami Gardens Police Department can be counted a success, not just based on the statistics, but thanks to the hard work of dedicated officers and the positive responses from citizens in this growing new community.

"We had six units arrive at the same time to get gas, and there must have been about ten or twelve people at the gas station, and they started applauding the officers when they saw the Miami Gardens Police Department cars," boasts Miller. "And one day I was at the neighborhood dry cleaner, and a gentleman stopped his car, came over, and said, 'I've lived here for 27 years, and I just want to thank you.'"