



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
CONFERENCE MEETING

#26-0588

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: June 16, 2026

TITLE: Presentation of the "I Am Sistrunk: Sistrunk Talk Series" Final Report and the National League of Cities and International Economic Development Council, Inc. for the Economic Recovery Corps Fellow Program Closeout - Community Services Department (**Commission District 3**)

The City of Fort Lauderdale is concluding its participation as a host community for the inaugural Economic Recovery Corps Fellowship, which will officially end on July 31, 2026. The \$30 million national initiative, funded by the United States Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, was administered through a national coalition led by the International Economic Development Council and the National League of Cities. The program provided high-level administrative capacity to local governments at no cost to the host community. Out of hundreds of competitive applicants nationwide, the City of Fort Lauderdale was selected as one of only sixty-five (65) host sites across the country, a distinction that recognized the immense historical significance of the Sistrunk Corridor and the City's commitment to community-driven revitalization.

On December 3, 2024, the City Commission approved Commission Agenda Memorandum #24-1143, authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Economic Development Council and Motivate Enterprises, LLC. Under this approved framework, the International Economic Development Council fully funded the financial obligations of embedding an economic development professional to provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity-building support. The fellowship was valued at approximately \$235,000, at no cost to the City.

The primary scope of the City's participation focused on the historic African American corridor, known as the Sistrunk Corridor, and its surrounding neighborhoods. Historically a thriving arts, entertainment, and commercial hub, the corridor had devolved into an enterprise zone experiencing high unemployment and low educational attainment rates. Through this national fellowship, Ms. Servola Frazier was assigned to the City of Fort Lauderdale as an embedded fellow for a thirty (30)-month term.

Ms. Frazier worked closely with City staff to target critical strategic priorities to drive transformative change in the Sistrunk Corridor area. The initiative focused on strengthening local businesses by providing direct support and strategic resource matching to fortify the local small business ecosystem. Further, it implemented programmatic enhancements to scale economic programs that stimulate sustainable commercial and cultural activity, and included the crafting of policy recommendations for economic development to eliminate barriers to entry for local residents. Furthermore, fellow's involvement with a larger national coalition ensured that the City received advanced technical assistance, regional data sharing, and direct access to national economic development toolkits.

As the fellowship reaches its conclusion on July 31, 2026, this presentation serves as the official program closeout for the International Economic Development Council Economic Recovery Corps Fellowship. It features the final report of the "I Am Sistrunk: Sistrunk Talk Series" initiative, which successfully built community-driven momentum, celebrated local heritage, and established alternative frameworks to sustain economic growth and build generational wealth within the historic Sistrunk Corridor.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Strategic Connections

This item is a Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 City Commission Priority advancing the Bolster Thriving Communities Initiative.

This item supports the Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029 Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Business Growth and Support Focus Area—Goal 6: Build a Diverse and Attractive Economy.

This item advances the Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We are Prosperous.

Attachment

Exhibit 1 – Sistrunk Talks Presentation

Prepared by: Servola Frazier, Economic Recovery Fellow, Community Services Department

Department Director: Porshia L. Garcia, Community Services Department