

Blackstone to open office in South Florida

It plans to hire 215 employees making average of \$200K per year

The Blackstone Group is planning to open an office in South Florida, as the region's economic boosters work to attract financial and investment firms.

The New York-based **private equity giant** plans to hire about 215 employees, most of whom will be back-office technology workers, according to Bloomberg. The news comes as the Miami-Dade County Commission approved a resolution on Thursday that would provide up to \$650,000 in incentives over a 10-year period to attract an unnamed investment firm, which sources confirmed is Blackstone.

The company plans to pay the Miami employees an average of \$200,000 a year. Called "Confidential Project Sunshine" in county documents, it's expected to generate more than \$910,000 over the 10-year period.

The company would invest up to \$25 million in the new office, and is seeking up to 50,000 square feet in downtown Miami or Brickell, the documents show.

The bidding process for Amazon's second headquarters in 2018 propelled business leaders in South Florida to recruit more out-of-state companies to set up shop in the Miami area. Florida's lack of state income tax has long made it an attractive option for New York-based firms.

Blackstone would be joining billionaires Carl Icahn, **Barry Sternlicht** and David Tepper who have all opened operations in South Florida over the past few years.

Icahn Enterprises is the most recent to do so, opening a 23,500-square-foot penthouse office in Sunny Isles Beach in August. Sternlicht's Starwood Capital Group moved to Miami Beach in recent years and is building a new headquarters there, and Tepper's Appaloosa Management opened an office in Miami Beach in 2016.

The number of S.E.C.-registered investment advisors based in downtown Miami nearly doubled from 2014 to 2019, according to a report from the Miami Downtown Development Authority and the analytics firm Convergence. The report found that the amount of reported assets under management grew by 61 percent over that period, up to more than \$75 billion.

The federal tax overhaul in 2017, which limited the ability of taxpayers to deduct state and local taxes (SALT) from their income, was a **major catalyst** in bringing more high net-worth individuals, and now their companies, to South Florida, experts have said.