

# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Residents,

As your Mayor, every year I work hard to ensure that our County budget reflects our community's needs and leads with smart fiscal stewardship to build a more prosperous, secure Miami-Dade. This is one of my most important responsibilities as your Mayor – to deliver reliable, efficient government services while protecting your hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

Since I became Mayor, we have kept costs low for Miami-Dade families to ease the burden of increasing cost of living. We passed two consecutive years of historic tax cuts with the support of the Commission, meaning Miami-Dade County now has the lowest combined tax rate since 1982 to provide much-needed relief to residents. At the same time, we tackled the affordability crisis, accelerating the construction of tens of thousands of new housing units. We are building a more accessible, reliable transit system that better connects all corners of our county and making long-overdue progress to modernize our airport. We've made Miami-Dade one of the safest metropolitan areas in the country by making historic investments in law enforcement – increasing funding by 8 % on average every year since I became Mayor. We helped thousands of local entrepreneurs to grow their businesses, and invested in our long-term resilience. We also made smart financial choices that have improved our bond ratings, saving taxpayer dollars through better investments.

As we prepared the adopted budget for the coming fiscal year, we face a stark new fiscal reality. Our County faces enormous strains on our resources, including the financial impacts resulting from an expanded and larger county government operation through the establishment of new constitutional offices – creating unfunded state mandates which now must be balanced – combined with federal and state cuts impacting our funding and revenue, a shifting national economic outlook, and increasing demand for County services thanks to our growth over the past several years. All these forces converged in one fiscal year, and as a result we have had to make very difficult choices to balance our budget while minimizing impacts to our residents and employees as much as possible.

My number one priority in developing this year's budget has been to continue providing the core services that our community relies on in the most effective, efficient way possible, without increasing costs for taxpayers. Following my WISE305 agenda rolled out earlier this year, we

have looked across all departments and in all corners of County government to ensure every single taxpayer dollar is spent to maximum impact and deliver savings. We are consolidating and reorganizing multiple departments to save on administrative costs totaling over \$33 million dollars saved. We have identified over a million dollars of savings in my office alone, by streamlining staff, reducing salaries for our top executives, and eliminating merit increases for my staff. We are investing in technology to provide more efficient and streamlined services. And I continue working with our leadership team to maximize revenue generation opportunities across the County, while we cut costs.

We are doing all this while protecting the core services residents need and deserve – investing in public safety, delivering clean water and solid waste services, providing world-class libraries, preserving our environment, and more. This is a fair, balanced, resident-focused budget that provides essential services while keeping taxes flat and safeguarding our County's long-term fiscal health.

Every year as Mayor, my team and I have worked hard to bring your voices to the forefront of the budgeting process. Your engagement will always be essential, and this year more than ever as we face these challenges together. Stay tuned for more information on upcoming public events to speak directly with the community about our budget.

I look forward to working alongside the Board, our incredibly dedicated County staff, and our residents to deliver a fiscally responsible, accountable budget that helps our community continue to thrive now and in the future.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniella Levine Cava". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Daniella Levine Cava