



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

January 27, 2012



Fellow Residents of Miami-Dade County:

We have accomplished much since I took office in July 2011. In six short months, we proposed and adopted a budget that returned property tax rates to FY 2009-10 levels; reduced nearly 1,500 County positions; began the process of reorganizing County government, going from 42 departments to 26 departments, including the Office of Human Rights and Fair Employment Practices created by the Board; and established a budget that will help meet the financial targets included in the FY 2011-12 Adopted Budget and lead to further savings in future years.

I would like to thank the Board of County Commissioners for the input and support they provided during this process. We took these significant steps in order to lighten the burden that taxpayers have been carrying, while keeping essential services in place.

As Mayor, I set out to lower taxes, maintain critical services for our most needy residents, and shrink government. This budget reduces taxes by more than \$200 million, protects services for seniors and children, maintains public safety, and reduces both the number of County departments and the number of County employees. This was a challenging process that required many difficult decisions about the services we provide – from meals for the elderly to providing drinking water and sewer services, from sheltering homeless animals to supporting sports and recreational programming for our kids, from enforcing code provisions in our neighborhoods to running an airport and seaport with millions of passengers and millions of tons of cargo passing through every year.

The budget assumed concessions in salaries and benefits for all employees – including concessions that I mandated for the non-bargaining employees under my purview shortly after taking office in July. I also made clear to County labor unions that I would consider their cost-saving proposals in lieu of concessions, as long as the savings they identified were both quantifiable and recurring. We have now ratified contracts and resolved items at impasse with all unions. Holding budgeted positions vacant, postponing purchases, reducing contract expenditures, and increased revenues have offset costs associated with delays in the bargaining process.

With the steps that my administration has already taken, and provided that our assumptions for property tax roll growth and other revenues hold true, this budget and these millage rates will be sustainable for two years without further reductions to employee pay and benefits, significant layoffs, or drastic service adjustments.

These volumes include charts and information showing how your tax dollars and other County revenues are spent. We have also provided you with information about the budgets for each department, as well as the related performance information including selected results anticipated for each different activity provided by the County. This budget reflects the priorities that you established for us. Refreshed goals and objectives from our revised Strategic Plan, which many residents of Miami-Dade County helped shape, are also reflected in this spending plan.

This budget is a beginning. There is still much to be done and I look forward to working with the Board of County Commissioners in the months ahead as we implement the changes to our organization, identify further savings through consolidations and process improvements, and focus on delivering priority services for our community.

Even as the economy recovers, we must be cognizant of establishing a level of spending that is sustainable for the future, and we must also continue to look for ways government can be a help – not a hindrance – to economic development and job-creation efforts. As I lead our County in these continuing efforts, I will keep you informed every step of the way. As I stated in the budget message that accompanied the Proposed Budget, I am fully committed to delivering a county government that lives within its means, shares the sacrifices that you, our residents, are making and delivers quality public service.

Sincerely,

Carlos A. Gimenez
Miami-Dade County Mayor