

# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



July 7, 2016

My fellow residents,

I have always fought for the future of Miami-Dade County. Ensuring our children and grandchildren will have a safe, vibrant, financially sound community has always been my focus as Mayor. Since I was elected Mayor in 2011, I have put Miami-Dade's financial house in order. Today, our financial outlook is strong: our financial forecast is balanced with conservative growth estimates and without a need to raise tax rates to support operations. But our County government requires more than financial strength to weather the storms ahead. Climate change and international political fluctuations will affect our fi-

nancial markets and our economy. It is our duty as Miamians to build a safe, resilient community that can withstand these stresses and serve as a welcoming place for our 2.7 million residents, the millions who visit each year, and future generations of Miamians.

In May 2016, Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami, and the City of Miami Beach joined together to become members of the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities global network. As part of Resilient Cities, Miami-Dade will work with innovative cities around the world to develop strategies to improve our local economy, provide greater opportunities for our residents, and strengthen our budget to better prepare for storms, sea-level rise, and other natural and man-made threats. To support our efforts, in FY 2015-16, I championed establishing an Office of Resilience and appointing a Chief Resilience Officer to lead Miami-Dade County in the development of a comprehensive and cohesive resilience plan for our government and to collaborate with our 34 municipalities and neighboring counties to develop a resilience plan for the region.

The FY 2016-17 Proposed Budget is a reflection of this focus on allocating our resources to enhance the resilience of Miami-Dade County and enhance our residents' quality of life. There are four dimensions of resilience that serve as the pillars of our resilience framework:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Economy & Society
- Infrastructure & Environment
- Leadership & Strategy

By analyzing the services we provide to our residents through this new prism, we have reinvigorated our efforts toward making our community a safe place to live with employment opportunities, cultural and recreational options, social services and communications channels within a government committed to protecting and maintaining our natural and man-made assets.

In FY 2016-17, we will increase the number of police officers in our community and add a new Fire Rescue unit. We will fully fund my Youth and Community Safety Initiative to find innovative ways to tackle the youth violence crisis in our community (\$2.9 million). More than \$200 million in funding to support existing and new applications for affordable housing projects are funded. In fact, \$46 million in County funding as part of the more than \$300 million Liberty Square public housing project has already been allocated. The budget includes funding to continue transitional housing services for homeless victims of domestic violence. My Employ Miami-Dade Initiative, which has already led to 471 participants successfully finding jobs, is fully funded, along with \$1 million to continue our Summer Youth Employment program. We will also continue the Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department's amazing Fit2Play and Fit2Lead programs, which provide an opportunity for both young children to participate in parks programming and older kids to learn to be recreational counselors.

Funding to establish a relationship with the Small Business Development Center at FIU is included in the budget so we can provide another opportunity for small business capacity building. A marketing coordinator position has been added to the budget for the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust and funding support will continue for eMerge Americas, a technology conference that brought together 13,000

attendees and 400 companies in 2016. Miami International Airport expects to receive 2.3 million tons of cargo and greet 45 million passengers and PortMiami anticipates cruise passengers and cargo to increase as a result of newly signed agreements and the widening of the Panama Canal.

Libraries will be open more hours and 13,000 kids will participate in Learn to Swim programs. Funding for community-based organizations and cultural grants will be increased by a combined \$1.3 million and environmental grant funding is increased by 70 percent. Planning and design for the Coconut Grove Playhouse, HistoryMiami, and the Westchester Cultural Arts Center are included in the budget. The 311 Answer Center will continue with the same hours and we will have 10 additional early voting sites, for a total of 30, for the upcoming elections. More than \$2.3 million of funding will be dedicated to Mosquito Control for equipment, spraying, and education and outreach.

For this to be a successful region in the future, we must address issues with our infrastructure. Funding for the Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit (SMART) Plan is included to support planning and design of six rapid transit corridors that directly support the mobility of our future population, as well as economic growth. The implementation of the adaptive traffic signal system is also funded, with expenditures of more than \$40 million budgeted in the first year and a plan to replace 750 buses with both diesel fuel buses and buses fueled by compressed natural gas will commence. More than \$600 million in spending is budgeted as part of a \$13 billion plan to address the needs of our Water and Sewer Department. Funding to enhance the tree canopy following the findings of the tree study recently completed is allocated (\$750,000). We will also be spending more than \$10 million on greenways and bikepaths. The new Pet Adoption and Protection Center is open and the Animal Services budget will top \$20 million, with more than \$10 million coming from the General Fund. Information technology resource consolidation continues and a new process for the acquisition of vehicles has been initiated in order to improve the planning of purchases and ensure environmental goals are met. I have instructed staff to work with the South Florida Water Management District to accelerate the implementation of the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project to improve the health of Biscayne Bay. A new issuance of Quality Neighborhood Improvement Program (QNIP) bonds is planned to tackle neighborhood infrastructure issues.

While funding these services is critical for our community, having the organizational infrastructure and financial stability to support the services is monumentally important. Funding for supervisory and executive level management training is included in the budget and we will begin to develop a successor program to the former Management Trainee Program. Reserves totaling 3.98 percent of General Fund operations will be allocated, including the Emergency Contingency Reserve with a balance of \$48.176 million. The Water and Sewer Department will fund a debt service reserve of \$16.3 million to ensure we meet the additional bonds test requirements to enable the issuance of debt to address our infrastructure needs in FY 2017-18.

All of this is important, but I'm forever mindful of the responsibility we have to be good stewards of the public's money. That is why we must ensure that our residents keep as much of their hard-earned dollars as possible. We are always looking for innovative ways to manage costs while allowing for savings to be used to restore and enhance services in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner. The per capita cost of the tax-supported portion of our government for FY 2016-17 is \$494, which is 35 percent lower than at its highest over a decade ago. The budget assumes that the operating millage rates remain flat, but the millage rates for both the countywide and Fire Rescue voted debt will be reduced. Since my election just over six years ago, taxpayers have saved more than \$1.2 billion as a whole, which is the equivalent of just under \$1,300 for the average household. My administration and I will continue working to ensure that Miami-Dade County remains on a path toward future financial sustainability and overall resiliency for all 2.7 million of us who call Miami-Dade County "home."

Sincerely,



Carlos A. Gimenez  
Mayor