

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Miami-Dade County residents,

Since taking office one year ago, my top priority has been to protect lives and livelihoods and begin rebuilding a stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient Miami-Dade. We have faced great challenges and overlapping crises in the last year, not just the COVID pandemic but the unprecedented tragedy in Surfside. I am enormously proud of our extraordinary response to these unprecedented events as a community and as a County family, and I have no doubt that together we can overcome any challenges we face.

I'm also extremely proud of our work to produce a historic budget in the midst of a uniquely challenging fiscal cycle – not only a budget that puts us in a strong position to accelerate economic recovery, but a people-powered budget that brought our residents directly into government decision-making.

This year we engaged directly with residents in unprecedented new ways to better understand their priorities going into the budget process. We embarked on Thrive305 – a comprehensive, community-wide engagement campaign that gathered substantial and diverse feedback from tens of thousands of Miami-Dade residents about their priorities for local government. Partnering with over 80 civic groups and local and national foundations, we received direct input through a survey answered by nearly 27,000 residents and series of in-person and virtual conversations. We also hosted a series of budget town hall meetings in February to engage the public earlier than ever before in the budget process. All this input and feedback was incorporated into our Thrive305 Action Plan – released in November – and built into this Adopted Budget, a budget that reflects our residents' priorities and will help drive an economic recovery that leaves no families behind.

Miami-Dade County has worked as hard as ever these last few months to protect residents, businesses, and visitors throughout the pandemic, to safeguard lives and livelihoods and keep our economy moving forward. Through the dedicated efforts of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade Police Department, and our tireless healthcare workers, we built and scaled a community-wide vaccination campaign – prioritizing vaccination for the most vulnerable including our seniors, launching mobile units to bring vaccines to all corners of the community, and knocking on nearly 200,000 doors in under-vaccinated neighborhoods. Thanks to these efforts, we have vaccinated over 2 million people and achieved a 78 percent vaccination rate according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At the same time, we know COVID exposed and compounded deep disparities in our community and nationwide, particularly for low-wage workers who were first hit with unemployment and for Hispanic and Black families who suffered disproportionate impacts of the virus. Lack of access to childcare and housing that is affordable deepened further still during the pandemic. Minority-owned businesses were harder-hit and struggled to access relief programs. I'm proud of the swift action our community took under the leadership of the Board to distribute \$474 million in CARES Act funding to maintain critical services to our community and provide much-needed relief through hardship assistance, food distribution, small business loans, and more.

Additionally, funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), signed into law by the President in March, allowed us to continue efforts to sustain a strong long-term economic recovery. ARPA provided \$1.9 trillion in response to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the nation's health and economy; the legislation also includes fiscal recovery funds for local governments, including \$527.7 million for Miami-Dade County. Miami-Dade County received a partial payment of \$263.8 million from the Treasury on May 19, 2021 and the balance of the funds will be released within twelve months of the first disbursement; the Board passed a resolution to accept those

funds. In the Adopted Budget, a projected \$321 million will be used to reimburse allowable governmental services to the extent of reductions in revenue over several years. The remaining \$206 million is being utilized to advance critical infrastructure projects that will protect our environments, priority projects in each County Commission district, and economic and social impact projects/programs that include investments in mental health and housing to address the ongoing toll of COVID and build a healthier, more resilient community.

To protect both lives and livelihoods, we deployed \$60 million in federal relief through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program to keep tenants in their homes and provide up to a year of back rent owed to struggling landlords. Additionally, the federal government has created programs to help those hardest hit by the economic downturn and provide assistance for utilities and other critical needs. It's important to stress that history tells us that we are likely to experience delayed, ongoing effects of the economic crisis related to the pandemic in the near future – so adopting this budget was extremely important to prepare for future impacts and minimize adjustments in governmental services.

Gun violence is an epidemic that the pandemic only intensified. Working in partnership with the Board of County Commissioners, community leaders, and subject-matter experts, we developed the Peace and Prosperity Plan to combat the root causes of gun violence. The plan offers a best practice-driven approach to address the gun violence epidemic through prevention, intervention, enforcement, and re-entry with a focus on the neighborhoods most affected, while tackling underlying social and economic disparities – targeting resources towards community revitalization needs and economic insecurity. In conjunction with this plan, the Miami-Dade Police Department kicked off Operation Summer Heat to invest in strategic enforcement efforts to curb gun violence Countywide. This program has been extended and renamed Operation Community Shield, continuing through FY 2021-22 due to its great success last fiscal year.

I made a commitment when I took office as Mayor to prioritize four key pillars to build a stronger Miami-Dade: our economy, our environment, equity for all residents, and engagement with our community. I'm proud that we were able to maintain critical services in the Adopted Budget, while working to enhance programs and services that support all of these priority areas – our community's economic recovery; resilience projects that will rebuild our infrastructure while also creating jobs; greater public safety achieved equitably across all neighborhoods; and expanded partnerships with community-based organizations. The Adopted Budget also funds targeted service increases that result from the completion or acquisition of new facilities such as new fire rescue units and new library locations and extended hours.

We have a transformational opportunity heading into FY 21-22 not just to bring back our economy, but to rebuild stronger than ever by prioritizing investments in our residents, small businesses, and our infrastructure for future prosperity and greater resilience. This budget lays the groundwork for a growing and diversified economy; a healthier Biscayne Bay and environment; expanded engagement with all our residents; and new opportunities for families and small businesses, especially those that historically have been left behind.

I look forward to working alongside our County Commissioners, hardworking County employees, our local, state, and federal leaders, and all our residents, to turn the page to an even more prosperous future for the community we all love.

Sincerely,



Mayor Daniella Levine Cava