

# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Miami-Dade County residents,

As we look to the budget year ahead, my administration remains laser-focused on tackling the greatest challenges facing our community and building a stronger, more inclusive, and more prosperous Miami-Dade.

The last year unfolded in a way that has been unlike any other in our history – one that tested us all in new ways. We faced the latest chapters in a global pandemic, navigating each new twist and turn to protect our community while fighting to help the hardest hit get back on their feet and supporting businesses struggling to rebound. We confronted a gun violence epidemic that exploded nationwide as a result of the pandemic, taking strong and decisive steps to prevent violence and solve crimes and delivering real results that have brought us national recognition. And we were rocked by the tragedy in Surfside when Champlain Towers South fell in the middle of the night, one of the worst building collapses in modern history. Our community stepped up, united, as the world watched, to respond to crisis – standing with the families facing unthinkable loss and taking steps to ensure it could never happen again.

Through all that we have faced, and no doubt because of it, we are a community uniquely positioned to take on the future. Our economy was ranked the most recovered in the entire nation. We are diverse, innovative, and resilient.

But as our economy rebounds, Miami-Dade continues to face a deepening housing and affordability emergency that we cannot ignore. We've become the least affordable community in the country, the epicenter of the national housing crisis. To truly sustain economic growth and capture the forward momentum of growing new industries, it's critical that we invest in solutions to tackle this crisis head-on and ensure Miami-Dade is a place where all residents can afford to live and thrive. That's why we have already taken urgent action to put Miami-Dade on a pathway to affordability. We invested a record \$260 million last year towards the expansion of housing that you can afford. By the end of this year, we will have an estimated 14,000 units of affordable and workforce housing in development – and we recently announced our new goal to have at least an additional 18,000 units of affordable and workforce housing in financial closing by the end of 2023. The private sector has stepped up to the plate with key investments in our \$75 million Building Blocks Fund and other efforts. And while developing more affordable units is critical, even more measures are needed as housing costs continue to rise.

We owe it to residents struggling with the rising costs of living to provide immediate relief. That's why our proposed budget is offering relief to homeowners by reducing the millage rate for the first time in a decade, while maintaining services and investing in critical affordability efforts. We have the opportunity and responsibility to deploy new revenue sources back into our community to lay the foundation for a more affordable Miami-Dade in the long term, and I am committed to dedicating resources and supporting solutions to address the housing crisis for all residents in this year's proposed budget.

It's clear we have made great progress to recover from the worst impacts of the pandemic and resulting economic fallout. The strategic investments we made in last year's budget helped make struggling families and small businesses whole, while also funding key infrastructure projects and economic and social programs to sustain a recovery in the long term. In the coming fiscal budget year, I remain focused on maintaining our current level of services to the public by safeguarding our fiscal stability and creating a roadmap for long-term economic development.

We must continue to invest in much-needed infrastructure that will make our communities more livable and better connect residents to opportunity – such as a world-class transportation system and reliable broadband in every home. We need to safeguard our environment now and for the future by making essential investments to protect our bay and aggressively reduce our carbon footprint, including accelerating the transition from septic to sewer and expanding access to renewable energy. And to prepare for the new economy, we must equip small businesses with the resources they need to succeed and connect our workforce to high-paying jobs in the highest-growth industries, including tech.

Building trust in government begins by bringing our residents directly into the decision-making process – a core pillar of my administration. Like last year, we hosted a series of budget town hall meetings in February to engage the public earlier than ever before in this year's budget process. This input and feedback will be critical as we craft a FY2022-23 budget that reflects our residents' priorities and lays the foundation for economic recovery and growth that leaves no families behind.

This year we will continue rebuilding our community and economy stronger than ever by prioritizing critical investments in making Miami-Dade more affordable and livable, upgrading our infrastructure for future prosperity and resilience, helping small businesses thrive, and connecting residents to opportunity. I look forward to continuing to work alongside our County Commissioners, dedicated County employees, local, state, and federal leaders, and the members of this community to lay the building blocks for a thriving community.

The people of Miami-Dade are unendingly resourceful and resilient, and through the sacrifice and service of so many, I know that we will continue to navigate whatever challenges are thrown our way and ready our community for the future.

Sincerely,

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

Mayor Daniella Levine Cava