



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA**

Dear residents,

Since taking office in November, my top priority has been to protect lives and livelihoods and to begin rebuilding a stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient Miami-Dade. This upcoming budget cycle will be unlike any other, as we navigate the final phase of the pandemic and look ahead to full economic recovery.

Miami-Dade County has worked as hard as ever these last few months to continue protecting residents, businesses, and visitors, and adapting to changing needs. My first act as Mayor was to appoint our community's first Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Peter Paige, to ensure our pandemic response is grounded in the latest data and scientific understanding of the virus. We launched our community-wide "We Can, We Will," campaign, working hand-in-hand with businesses, community leaders, and cities to reinforce the public health precautions that work to slow the spread of the virus. And since December, we have invested in building an aggressive local vaccination program to distribute the life-saving COVID-19 vaccine quickly and fairly to all parts of Miami-Dade.

We were one of the first communities in the country to create a pre-registration system for residents to sign up for vaccine appointments, available online and by phone in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade Police Department, and our tireless healthcare workers – who have been on the frontlines serving this community since the very beginning of the pandemic – we were able to quickly launch large-scale vaccination sites at Tropical Park, Zoo Miami, and other locations, capable of vaccinating thousands of people a day. We prioritized vaccination for the most vulnerable including seniors in County care, and launched mobile units to bring vaccines to all corners of the community.

As vaccine supply expanded in recent weeks and the federal government opened additional sites across Miami-Dade, I pushed for a more aggressive eligibility expansion plan and timeline. Thanks in part to the advocacy of local communities including ours, I am proud that all Florida adults will be eligible to receive the vaccine starting Monday, April 5. We are now ramping up our direct outreach, including launching VACS (Vaccine Accessibility for Community Safety) Now teams to go door-to-door in areas with lower vaccination rates to share key resources and help residents make appointments.

Vaccination is our single best path forward out of the pandemic, and with expanded vaccine access and eligibility, we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. But we have a long way to go to full community immunity and economic recovery. Our residents need relief – particularly the most vulnerable – and businesses need support.

As we look to the budget year ahead, my focus will be to maintain our current level of services to the public by safeguarding fiscal stability; to continue providing direct relief to families and businesses still struggling to rebound from the pandemic; and to create a roadmap for long-term economic recovery and development.

Coronavirus exposed and compounded deep disparities, particularly for low-wage workers who were first hit with unemployment. Lack of access to childcare and housing that is affordable deepened even further 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 of County Commissioners to distribute \$474 million in CARES Act funding to maintain critical services and provide much-needed relief through hardship assistance, food distribution, small business loans, and more.

To protect both lives and livelihoods, we are currently deploying \$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.

Looking ahead, we should build on the successful efforts already implemented and take bold action to create new programs for economic recovery through American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funds – including an estimated \$527 million for Miami-Dade County. This critical funding will enable the County to maintain services, provide direct relief to our community, and lay the foundation to rebuild and rebound our economy. I look forward to working alongside the Board of County Commissioners to deploy this relief for the greatest possible short- and long-term economic impact.

With input from the Board and the Board’s COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force along with business and community leaders, we will develop a long-term economic recovery plan to support the hardest-hit industries and restore and create jobs. ARP funding allows investments in programs such as workforce training initiatives and capital infrastructure projects that put people to work. We should take full advantage of these funds to create good-paying jobs and help residents transition to new and growing industries. And we should invest in expanded programs including mental health and childcare services to address the ongoing toll of COVID and build a healthier, more resilient community.

Florida’s general revenue exceeded previous post-pandemic predictions by nearly \$300 million in February, pointing to an economy that is primed to bounce back. But tourism and hospitality revenues continue to lag behind, and it’s critical that we invest in safely and fully re-opening our local tourism economy. That’s why I am advocating for a plan to safely restart passenger cruising – a cornerstone of our regional economy that generates approximately \$7 billion and 40,000 jobs annually in Miami-Dade – by July 4. And the County continues to work alongside our business community to reinforce the mitigation and prevention measures that protect residents, businesses, and visitors until we have widespread immunity through vaccination.

Finally, building trust in government by bringing our residents directly into the decision-making process is a pillar of my new administration. Through our Thrive305 initiative – a community-wide survey and engagement process – we are receiving direct input from tens of thousands of residents about their priorities for local government. And 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 FY2021-22 budget that reflects our residents’ priorities and mount an economic recovery that leaves no families behind.

We have an opportunity in the year ahead not just to bring back our economy, but to rebuild stronger than ever by prioritizing investments in our residents, small business, and our infrastructure for future prosperity and resilience. I look forward to working alongside our County Commissioners and hardworking County employees, local, state, and federal leaders, and our residents, to turn the page.

The people of Miami-Dade are unendingly resourceful and resilient, and through the sacrifice and service of so many we have made it to the final chapter of this crisis. I am more confident than ever that our best days lie ahead.

Yours in service,



Mayor Daniella Levine Cava