

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



December 17, 2014

Dear Fellow Residents of Miami-Dade County:

For the first time in more than a decade, the FY 2014-15 Adopted Budget provides a foundation for a balanced five-year forecast. We established a sustainable operating plan and continue to transform the way that we deliver services to our community. Over the next five years we will be able to support the current level of services and make investments in our reserves. We are well on our way toward a future that promises economic potential, fiscal sustainability, and wide-ranging opportunities for development.

The FY 2014-15 budget process was a challenging one. Though property values did improve, especially in our coastal cities, the overall Countywide, UMSA, Fire and Library revenue increases were limited. We had to resolve unexpected costs imposed by unfunded State mandates, the restoration of employee benefits as a result of contract negotiations, and increased operating costs. Despite these costs, we were able to hold services together, keep reserves at responsible levels, and continue to advance our capital development programs.

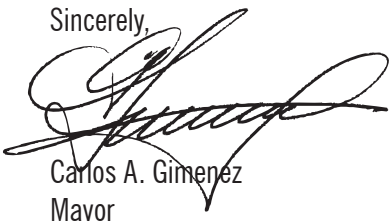
To date, we have been able to reach agreement with labor unions representing more than half of our employees – agreements which include the implementation of a healthcare plan redesign which will save the County at least \$50 million per year, once all employees are included. These successful negotiations have allowed us to maintain positions and services and restore benefits to employees. In order to maintain all of our sworn positions in the Police Department and the Boot Camp Program in the Corrections and Rehabilitation Department through FY 2014-15, we utilized funding available to the County through the sale of our Air Rescue helicopters. If we are able to expand the healthcare plan redesign to all employees, those restorations can be maintained beyond this fiscal year.

Since the beginning of my administration, the budgets I have proposed have closed nearly \$800 million in gaps – which included the largest property tax cut in County history – created because the costs of doing business have exceeded the resources available. Over the past three years, we have cut \$260 million in costs - \$190 million of which are recurring, maximized the use of available one-time revenues, eliminated nearly 2,500 positions, and saved more than \$400 million in personnel costs through retirement rate adjustments, healthcare cost controls, and concessions negotiated with our labor organizations.

I continue to fulfill the promises I made when I took office - to provide you with a government that is built on transparency, efficiency and fiscal responsibility. We need a government that is sustainable, one that takes an honest long-term view when it comes to our budget. I remain committed to doing all that I can to make Miami-Dade County the world class community we all know it can be for our families now and in the future, while keeping taxes low and providing the essential services you expect from your county government. I look forward to working with the Board of County Commissioners towards this goal in the years to come.

This year, through the efforts of Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa and Finance Committee Chairman Esteban Bovo, the Board of County Commissioners engaged in the budget development process from the beginning. I look forward to continuing to work with all Commissioners to support the delivery of essential services and further my vision of Miami-Dade County as a leading global metropolis with a robust and sustainable economy, vibrant neighborhoods, and a diverse and engaged community. Working together we will make this a reality for all of us.

Sincerely,



Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor