

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Residents,

As your Mayor, every year I work hard to ensure that our Miami-Dade County budget reflects our values, invests in a more prosperous and secure future, and delivers on the critical services that keep our County running.

I'm especially proud of all that we have been able to accomplish in the first three budgets of my administration. We propelled our economy forward out of the pandemic into a period of historic growth by investing in our small and local businesses while putting money back in our families' pockets. For the last two years, we passed historic tax cuts totaling over \$43 million for Miami-Dade residents, which means Miami-Dade County now has the lowest combined tax rate since 1982 to provide much-needed relief to residents. We tackled the affordability crisis, deployed innovative programs and accelerated the construction of tens of thousands of new housing units. We've made Miami-Dade one of the safest metropolitan areas in the country. And we brought down approximately \$1.5 billion in state and federal funds to accelerate key infrastructure projects and another \$1.5 billion to address County operations.

Now, we are embarking upon a year of transformation in our local government, which means a budget unlike any we have seen before. Our County is preparing for the creation of three new constitutional offices (the Tax Collector, the Supervisor of Elections and the Property Appraiser) and the reestablishment of the Sheriff. In addition, we are transferring several financial functions to the Clerk of Court and Comptroller.

However, our community continues to grow, driving higher demand for County services. It's critical that we maintain a solid financial footing to continue to deliver the high-quality services that our residents need and deserve as the transition to constitutional offices takes place. To do this, we must be prudent, thoughtful, and fiscally responsible in our approach by optimizing our current resources and maximizing all funding opportunities, while safeguarding taxpayer dollars.

Our Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget will remain laser-focused on tackling our community's key priorities.

Last year's budget invested more than \$500 million toward the expansion of affordable housing and programs to provide relief and resources to renters and homeowners. This year, we'll continue to expand the much-needed supply and help tens of thousands of families stay in their homes, with dignity.

When it comes to public safety, we lowered gun violence rates and implemented our groundbreaking Peace and Prosperity Plan, which works to break cycles of violence and create opportunity. As we prepare for the transition to an elected Sheriff, we will ensure the continuity of our exceptional public safety services for all residents.

From transportation to infrastructure, we are becoming future-ready. We are investing a record \$7 billion, including \$1.7 billion for maintenance, to modernize Miami International Airport from the cabin to the curb. In the year ahead, we are programming to make significant investments in all five priority corridors of the SMART Plan. The South Dade Transit Way, connecting Homestead to Dadeland, will be complete this year, and we're working to stay on track to deliver the long-promised North Corridor and build out the Northeast Corridor – expanding mobility and opportunity from north to south. And we continue to strengthen our bus system through the roll out of the Better Bus Network – the first community-led redesign in nearly 40 years – to deliver more routes, more frequently, to more people.

As our economy grows and diversifies, it must also be inclusive. We are making investments to help small businesses succeed, like our successful STRIVE305 program, which is on track to reach 75% of all small businesses in the County by 2025. We are supporting our workforce, through partnerships such as the Future Ready Scholarship at Miami Dade College – ensuring all residents have an opportunity to complete a degree at zero cost. And through our continuing investment in the Miami-Dade Innovation Authority, we are funding startups to pilot innovative technology that tackles our community's biggest challenges.

Of course, we can't forget about our beloved environment, which is the cornerstone of our shared prosperity. By protecting Biscayne Bay, preventing flooding, investing in solutions to extreme heat, helping property owners transition from septic to sewer, and building public trust to meet the growing needs of our community – we will ensure future generations can live and thrive here.

Every year as Mayor, my team and I have worked hard to bring your voices to the forefront of the budgeting process. We have hosted unprecedented numbers of budget town hall meetings to hear directly from you, and this year will be no different. Your engagement will always be essential!

I look forward to working alongside the Board, our hardworking County staff, and our community to deliver a sound, fiscally responsible, accountable budget that continues to invest in all the key services our community needs and to ensure our shared prosperity now and in the years ahead.

Yours in service,

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

Mayor Daniella Levine Cava