

# Memorandum

MIAMI-DADE  
COUNTY

**Date:** June 2, 2016

**To:** Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Item No. 2(B)2  
October 5, 2016

**From:** Carlos A. Gimenez  
Mayor



**Subject:** Response to Resolution No. 881-15 regarding the creation of an Open Data Policy in Miami-Dade County- Directive 151909

The following information is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-881-15, which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) on October 6, 2015, requesting that the County Mayor or designee prepare a report for the creation of an Open Data Policy in Miami-Dade County. The Information Technology Department (ITD) and the Communications Department have been working diligently to formalize the County's commitment to open data. The County's Open Data Initiative sets out to make data freely available for public use in order to further enhance transparency.

Since 2009, Miami-Dade County has made efforts to proactively release data to our residents. For example, the Information Technology Department's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division made the geographic data layers accessible through a self-service site. Employee and payment data were also made available through a financial transparency site. In September 2014, the County was granted the first Code for America Fellowship in Florida. The one-year program brought three (3) technology specialists to work with County staff to foster new approaches to problem-solving. The team was a strong partner in transitioning to more open data, sharing national best-practices, and utilizing open data as a foundational element of tech projects.

Late in 2014, Office of the Mayor staff reached out to the Sunlight Foundation, a leading non-profit organization that advises local governments looking to increase transparency and better understand best practices for building an open data program. Meanwhile, the County's GIS division worked with Code for Miami, a volunteer civic group focused on improving government transparency and communications with residents, to make geographic-based information available on [opendata.miamidadegov](http://opendata.miamidadegov), the open data portal. This effort was completed in early December.

In February 2015, the County officially launched the open data portal, a centralized repository containing a selection of high-value and high-demand data sets, which included information from the departments of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Solid Waste Management, and Internal Services. In June 2015, the County officially retired its Public Access website and migrated the site's most downloaded content to the open data portal.

Quality control checks are performed on the data sets prior to them being released on the open data portal. All parties involved in the creation and publications of data set content determine how often the information is refreshed. The County currently has automated processes in place to verify accuracy.

High value data sets, containing information that is frequently requested, will be published in the most relevant and current formats to ensure maximum usability by the widest audience. The County will release data proactively with the goal of increasing transparency, better engaging residents, and supporting economic growth. Prioritization of future data set releases will be determined based on public demand for information and the expense required to extract the data from its original digital source to publish it on the open data portal for public use.

In our work to develop the open data portal and Miami-Dade's Open Data Policy, the recommendations listed in the Sunlight Foundation's Open Data Policy Guidelines have been carefully considered. Analysis of 50 other municipalities has been conducted to understand the guidelines being followed, the success of the programs, and whether those guidelines would be appropriate for Miami-Dade County.

The analysis resulted in the following open data practices that Miami-Dade County either already performs or plans to perform:

1. The County will maintain [opendata.miamidade.gov](http://opendata.miamidade.gov), which will serve as the source for county wide and agency activities related to this open data initiative.

**Current Status: Completed** - The open data portal has been live since February 2015.

2. Miami-Dade County should continue to proactively publish information online and, when practical, in an open, machine-readable format that can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed, sorted, searched, and reused by commonly used web search applications and commonly used software.

**Current Status: Completed** - Once a dataset is uploaded to the open data portal, data repository technology automatically makes it available for download in a number of widely-used data formats. This list of formats is updated by the open data technology provider as standards change. Furthermore, upon being uploaded, data sets are provided in an easily accessible format which is automatically generated, eliminating the need for additional staff labor. Therefore, all data sets uploaded to the open data portal are already in an open, machine-readable format.

3. Protected data shall not be posted to the County's open data portal. Miami-Dade County will follow established security standards to determine which data sets are appropriate for public disclosure.

**Current Status: Completed** - The established data upload processes require that data connections not be directly linked to critical internal systems, safeguarding against cyber-threats. Scheduled copies of data sets are produced where they can be safely uploaded to the open data portal. Miami-Dade County currently follows accepted security guidelines such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, and Criminal Integrated Justice System to determine which data sets are appropriate for public disclosure by balancing the benefits of open data with the need to protect disclosure of information that is confidential, proprietary, or protected by law. Pursuant to state laws, protected data is excluded from the open data portal.

4. All departments will be required to update its public data on a regular basis to the extent that the County regularly maintains or updates its data sets.

**Current Status: Completed** - To date the upload of data sets is automated, eliminating the need for manual uploads and minimizing workload impacts to departments. Public record request volume has been used to help identify "high value" data sets for publication.

5. All accessible data produced by or for a unit shall be made available without copyright, patent, trademark or trade secret, or similar regulation other than reasonable privacy, security, and privilege restrictions.

**Current Status: Completed** - Unless otherwise noted, the data on the portal is public domain and made available with a Creative Commons Universal standard. With the Creative Commons license designation, the County grants the right to share, use, and build upon County-published data.

6. The open data portal shall provide functionality to solicit feedback from the public and to encourage public discussion on open data policies and data set availability. At least once annually, the County should have an open meeting at which members of the public may attend and directly provide input about the open data portal.

**Current Status: In Progress** - Requests for new data sets can be made through the open data portal. Furthermore, public records requests are being reviewed to determine high value data sets. A focus group was also held in 2015 at the National Day of Civic Hacking with members of the civic tech community prior to the preparation of this report.

Miami-Dade County's Open Data Initiative exemplifies the three (3) guiding principles of my administration: transparency, efficiency, and fiscal responsibility. I have been a strong supporter of our efforts to build out this successful program. The open data site currently hosts 10 data sets and 185 geographic layers of information. Collectively, the data sets amount to more than 50,000 views per month. I look forward to the initiative's continued success, helping our residents access County resources and encouraging them to collaborate with their County government on improving our community.

Per ordinance 14-65, this memorandum will be placed on the next available applicable Committee meeting agenda and subsequently placed on the next available Board of County Commissioners meeting agenda.

If you require additional information, please feel free to contact Angel Petisco, Chief Information Officer/Director of the Information Technology Department, at 305-596-8700.

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