


Memorandum



Date: May 9, 2022
To: Honorable Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz
and Members, Board of County Commissioners
From: Daniella Levine Cava 
Mayor
Subject: Report Regarding the Prohibition on Certain Offenders’ Adoption of Animals from
the County - Directive 220211

Executive Summary

Since the launch of the Animal Abuser Database registry the Animal Services Department (ASD) has tracked the database registry to ensure the individuals listed within are prohibited from adopting from ASD. This report outlines the methodology utilized to screen and prevent offenders from adopting, and steps taken to ensure collaboration from partnering animal rescue organizations. To date, there has not been an occurrence where ASD has denied an adoption because an individual was listed on the Animal Abuser Registry.

The following report is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-226-22, sponsored by Commissioner Joe A. Martinez, and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) at the March 1, 2022 BCC meeting, which directed the County Mayor to provide a report regarding the implementation of Ordinance No. 18-9 and the prohibition of certain offenders’ adoption of animals from the County.

The adoption of this Resolution requests the following information: 1) the methodology the Animal Services Department (ASD) is using to screen for offenders; 2) whether the Department’s screening has prevented offenders from adopting animals, and if so, how; and 3) the steps the Department has taken to ensure that animal rescue organizations with which the County collaborates are not adopting animals to offenders.

On February 6, 2018, Ordinance No. 18-09, sponsored by me when I was a Commissioner, amended sections 5-5 and 8CC-10 of the Code and was approved by the Board. The amendment prohibited adoption of animals from the County’s Pet Adoption and Protection Center by individuals adjudicated of committing certain animal-related offenses; clarifying Animal Services Department Director’s discretion to refuse adoption or transfer for other reasons to protect health, safety, or welfare of people or animals; providing for appeal of adoption or transfer refusal; directing County Mayor to coordinate with the Clerk of Courts and the Miami-Dade County State Attorney’s Office regarding information on animal related offenses and to report to the Board within a specified time frame; and providing for enforcement by civil penalty.

Immediately after this Ordinance was adopted, ASD began working with the Clerk of the Courts and the State Attorney’s Office to determine the feasibility of creating an Animal Abuser Database. It was determined that the County needed to develop its own tracking system to capture the specific information required by the Ordinance. In November 2019, the Animal Abuser Database went live online and is currently available to anyone who wishes to use it:

<https://www.miamidade.gov/Apps/ASD/CrueltyWeb>. ASD has been using this online database since and has also made other animal welfare organizations aware of this website for their use.

1) Methodology used to screen for offenders

Before finalizing any adoption process, ASD searches the Animal Abuser Database to ensure the adopter is not on the registry. Additionally, all ASD Clerks charged with processing adoptions are trained on the Department’s policy and protocols concerning the animal abuser registry.

2) Screening and Prevention of offenders

Any potential adopter, foster, foster ambassador, volunteer, or rescue partner found to be listed on the Animal Abuser Database registry is immediately labeled as “Abuser” on the ASD’s shelter software system and their individual account is noted with the indication “Do Not Adopt” which serves as an alert to any person accessing the account to not proceed with the adoption or release of a pet.

3) Steps taken to ensure collaboration from animal rescue organizations in not adopting animals to offenders

As soon as the database went live, ASD informed partnering animal rescue organizations registered with ASD of the website and ordinance. Additionally, ASD revised the rescue agreement to include language to their contracts requiring organizations to use the Animal Abuser Database registry before adopting any of their pets. Any animal rescue organization found to violate the agreement is automatically suspended.

To date, there has not been an occurrence where an individual listed on the Animal Abuse Registry has attempted to adopt a pet from ASD. Rescue partners have not reported any occurrences. Additionally, ASD has taken the extra step to flag the accounts of those currently listed on the existing animal abuser database.

Since this Ordinance’s amendment and the utilization of the Animal Abuser Registry by ASD and rescue groups since November 2019, over 26,400 animals have been protected and safely rehomed either through adopters, rescues, and fosters not listed on the animal abuse registry.

Should you require additional information, please contact Bronwyn Stanford, Director, at 305-418-7188.

Per Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda.

c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney
 Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney
 Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney

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and Members, Board of County Commissioners
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Office of the Mayor Senior Staff
Bronwyn Stanford, Director, Animal Services Department
David Clodfelter, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs
Adeyinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor
Basia Pruna, Director, Clerk of the Board
Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator