


# Memorandum



**Date:** May 17, 2021

**To:** Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Daniella Levine Cava  
Mayor 

**Subject:** Mayoral Appointment – Interim Director of the Animal Services Department

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Pursuant to the authority vested in me under Section 2.02(C) of the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter, I hereby appoint Lorna Mejia-Lopez to the position of Director of the Animal Services Department, effective May 7, 2021. Lorna will serve in this interim capacity until the permanent director is selected.

Lorna began her County career in 2005 and has since taken on a number of roles with increasing responsibility, most recently serving as the Assistant Director of Shelter Services and Live Release Programs in the Animal Services Department for the past seven years. In this role, she developed and managed an operational budget of over \$9 million and oversaw the largest operational branch in Animal Services, with approximately 140 full time employees. She also maintained the Department's No-Kill status while overseeing the intake, care and outcome for over 30,000 pets annually, managed operational responsibilities at several locations, including the main Pet Adoption and Protection Center, the Medley Shelter location, Petco and PetSmart satellite adoption centers, the Homestead Animal clinic, and the new WOW (Wellness on Wheels) Mobile unit, and managed functions spanning Customer Service, Adoptions, Kennel operations, Receiving and Intake, as well as Rescue, Transport, Volunteer, Pet Retention, Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Return, Events, and Foster programs, and the planning, deployment and operation of all Pet Friendly Evacuation Shelters during declared states of emergency.

Lorna holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Florida. Her resume is attached for your reference.

Please join me once again in congratulating Lorna on this appointment and in thanking her for her service to Miami-Dade County.

## Attachment

c: Honorable Harvey Ruvin, Clerk of the Courts  
Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney  
Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney  
Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney  
Office of the Mayor Senior Staff  
Department Directors  
Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor  
Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs  
Melissa Adames, Director, Clerk of the Board  
Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

- Executive leadership skills and experience.
- Intimately familiar with structure and function of a large countywide operation.
- Extensive management of a high volume open-admission municipal animal shelter.
- Experience with various legislative processes.
- Effective communicator.
- Highly proficient administrative problem-solving and analytical skills.

## **EXPERIENCE**

**Assistant Director of Shelter Services and Live Release Programs** 2014 – Present  
**Miami-Dade County Animal Services Department**

- Oversee the largest operational branch in Animal Services with approximately 140 full time employees, which includes a Division Manager, a Shelter Program Manager, a Section Manager, six program coordinators, six supervisors, and various administrative support staff.
- Maintain the Department's No-Kill status while overseeing the intake, care, and outcome for over 30,000 pets annually and ensure the success of the Department's mission.
- Manage operational responsibilities at several locations to include the main Pet Adoption and Protection Center, the Medley Shelter location, Petco and PetSmart satellite adoption centers, the Homestead Animal clinic, and the new WOW (Wellness on Wheels) Mobile unit.
- Manage Miami-Dade Animal Services Live Release operations which include: Customer Service, Adoptions, Kennel operations, Receiving and Intake, as well as the Rescue, Transport, Volunteer, Pet Retention, TNVR (Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Return), Events, and Foster programs.
- Develop and Manage an operational budget of over \$9 million.
- Charged with the planning, deployment, and operation of all Pet Friendly Evacuation Shelters during declared state of emergency.
- Collaborate with marketing and media efforts which include serving as a departmental representative to promote life-saving programs and initiatives; social media messaging; educational campaigns and adoption promotions.
- Coordinate all shelter special events which include but are not limited to signature events, adoption programs (in-house and offsite), and community spay and neuter programs; scheduling of volunteers and working with shelter operations to ensure staffing of per diem vets, contracted personnel, and ensure supplies are available.
- Responsible for developing and maintaining strong working relationships with the Board of County Commissioners, local elected and municipal officials, community stakeholders, industry experts, community advocates, non-profit organizations, private businesses, and union leadership.

**Senior Analyst for Policy and Legislative Affairs** 2011 – 2014  
**Miami-Dade County Office of the Mayor**

- Reviewed proposed legislation for the Mayor of Miami-Dade County.
- Analyzed legislation proposed by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners.
- Prepared for and conduct Mayoral briefings for all Board and committee meetings.
- Responsible for monitoring and assigning policy directives to County departments.
- Managed the 2012 Charter Review Task Force, including creating and managing meeting agendas and materials, updating the website, as well as the coordinating meetings to solicit public input.
- Served as Mayor's appointment to the Spay Neuter Miami Foundation – making recommendations for the funding of sterilization programs for the pet population in Miami-Dade County.

**Administrative Coordinator** 2010 – 2011  
**Miami-Dade County Animal Services Department**

- Assisted the Animal Services Department Director in managing the daily operations.
- Prepared all incoming and outgoing correspondence to the Director's office.
- Drafted and analyzed legislation impacting the Department.
- Coordinated countywide adoption and spay/neuter events, working closely with non-profit organizations, volunteers, and municipalities.
- Conducted research on grant opportunities to fund operational needs of the Department.
- Served as liaison between constituents, elected officials, and the Mayor's office on behalf of the Director.



**Legislative Analyst**

2005 – 2010

**Board of County Commissioners, District 4**

- Reviewed and analyzed all legislative matters, including contracts, zoning, and Comprehensive Development Master Plan applications on behalf of the District Commissioner.
- Liaison for matters pertaining to the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Committee, and Board agenda items.
- Responsible for briefing the District Commissioner after reviewing all pertinent materials, requesting additional information from relevant parties, and conducting legal and policy research.
- Analyzed budget proposals for 50 different County departments and assessed budgetary impacts to County operations.
- Mentored staff by providing training, technical assistance, and guidance on policy interpretation.
- Coordinated communications with state and municipal leaders, as well as with stakeholders in various non-profit and special interest groups.
- Met with constituents to alleviate concerns and mediate conflicts.

**Legislative Aide to Commissioner**

2002 – 2005

**City of Miami Beach**

- Analyzed all legislative matters, including contracts and various Commission agenda items.
- Coordinated and conducted briefings for City Commissioner after reviewing all pertinent materials and requesting additional information from relevant parties.
- Conducted legal and policy research.
- Attended business conferences on behalf of the City Commissioner.
- Coordinated communications with state and municipal leaders, as well as with stakeholders in various non-profit and special interest groups.
- Responded to written and verbal inquiries from public officials regarding sensitive and confidential information.
- Met with constituents to alleviate concerns and mediate conflicts.

**Legislative Aide**

2000 – 2002

**Florida House of Representatives**

- Coordinated public relations activities on behalf of Florida House Member.
- Drafted press releases and newsletters for House Member related to policy and outreach activities.
- Liaison with constituents by responding to inquiries and resolving complaints.
- Developed successful outreach projects to assist constituents.
- Coordinated events including receptions, fundraisers, and various public relations activities.

**E D U C A T I O N**

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science  
University of Florida

Gainesville, FL  
1995 – 1999

European Culture and Politics - Study Abroad  
University of Utrecht

Utrecht, Netherlands  
May 1996 – Aug 1996

**M E M B E R S H I P**

Spay/Neuter Miami Foundation  
Appointee of Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez

2012 – 2014

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Response K-9 Foundation, Inc.  
Appointee of Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez

2020 – Present