

FLORIDA NO-KILL PROCLAMATION

Executive Support Packet

Supporting the proposed
Florida No-Kill Proclamation

Prepared for Executive and Legislative Review

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Executive Summary: Florida No-Kill Proclamation

Why Issue This Proclamation

Florida has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to companion animal welfare, enforcing robust felony anti-cruelty frameworks under Title XLVI, Chapter 828 of the Florida Statutes. The state legally secures companion animals during state-mandated emergency evacuations. Furthermore, Florida law actively protects family pets within domestic violence injunctions to ensure total household safety.

National momentum is building. In June 2026 the U.S. Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution supporting no-kill sheltering. Florida’s shelters saved 85% of the dogs and cats in their care in 2025, within five percentage points of the benchmark. A proclamation offers encouragement to close that gap.

A Voluntary, Community-Driven Approach

✓ No State Mandate	Creates an aspirational statewide goal without imposing requirements on local governments.
✓ No Required State Appropriation	The proclamation itself requires no new state funding or taxpayer-funded program.
✓ No Required County or Municipal Action	Local governments retain complete discretion over whether and how to pursue the 90% benchmark.
✓ Preserves Local Control	Communities determine which strategies and partnerships best meet their individual needs.
✓ Leverages Private and Nonprofit Partnerships	Encourages shelters, rescues, foster networks, veterinarians, volunteers, and private organizations to work collaboratively.
✓ A Clear, Measurable Goal	Establishes the 90% save-rate benchmark as an understandable objective while recognizing the continued necessity of humane euthanasia in appropriate circumstances.

What The Proclamation Does

This proclamation intentionally shifts the focus from a top-down state mandate to an operational framework that empowers local shelters, grassroots rescues, and community action teams to eliminate the unnecessary euthanasia of companion animals. The proclamation is built on the 90% save rate, the benchmark used by Best Friends Animal Society, which counts every animal entering a shelter.

By establishing a unified executive vision, it removes bureaucratic friction and serves as a green light for local cities and neighborhoods to launch tailored public-private initiatives, such as foster programs. These initiatives absorb the logistical strain on municipal facilities without requiring new state funding.

Success in Other Counties and States

The 90% benchmark acknowledges that typically no more than 10% of entering animals suffer from severe, irreversible medical conditions or behavioral challenges where euthanasia is the only humane outcome.

Commitment to this benchmark is highly successful. Recent national data from the Best Friends Animal Society demonstrates that the national save rate has climbed to 82.5% (up from 71% in 2016), with nearly 4 million shelter pets saved annually. States that have adopted these frameworks see dramatic improvements; for example, states like Delaware, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont have successfully maintained a 90% or higher save rate statewide. Florida's current 85% save rate means the state is five percentage points from the benchmark. Best Friends Animal Society estimates Florida needs to save about 20,000 more dogs and cats a year, out of roughly 283,000 entering shelters.

State Proclamations and Florida County Action

I. State Proclamations

Twenty-three states have issued no-kill proclamations or resolutions:

Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia.

Georgia's actions are legislative resolutions.

<https://bestfriends.org/no-kill/proclamations>

II. Florida County Action

Florida county commissions have taken formal action toward no-kill or 90% lifesaving goals, including:

- Miami-Dade: Resolution R-583-12 (July 3, 2012) directed a plan to achieve a 90 percent save rate. Resolution R-1255-20 (December 15, 2020) established the county's No Kill Animal Shelter Policy. The county reports a save rate of 90% or greater every year since 2015.

- Manatee: the Board unanimously approved a no-kill plan with a 90% goal on October 11, 2011. The county reported a 94% shelter save rate in 2025.
- Alachua: the county budget office reports that a Board resolution mandates a 90% live release rate. The county reported 91.55% for fiscal year 2025.
- Hillsborough: the Board approved the Be the Way Home plan on May 1, 2013. The county describes its goal as 90% and reports a live release rate above 90%.
- Marion: the Board enacted an ordinance in August 2018 moving its shelter to no-kill. The county reports a 91.9% live release rate for 2023/24.
- Sumter: commissioners voted for a no-kill policy in December 2020 and recommitted in February 2022.

In Brevard County, the Sheriff's Office runs animal services under a public no-kill commitment and reports a 90.98% live release rate for fiscal year 2024/25. Lake County has operated its shelter as no-kill since January 2017. Statewide, 91 of Florida's 135 shelters reached the 90% benchmark in 2025 (Best Friends Animal Society).

Sources: Best Friends Animal Society's 2025 National Shelter Data Report

(<https://bestfriends.org/network/studies-publications/shelter-pet-lifesaving-data-2025-report>), its proclamations page (<https://bestfriends.org/no-kill/proclamations>), and county government records and news reports.

For Additional Information

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