An Open Letter to Mayor Carlos Gimenez:
A World-Class Community Must Have Open Data Governance

May 11, 2015

Dear Mayor Gimenez,

For years your administration has recognized that Miami's tech community needs support if it is to thrive in the world-wide economy. Last February, you stood on stage before members of the tech community to launch Miami-Dade's Open Data Portal. By doing so, you helped position the County as a worldwide leader in data-driven governance. Now, the undersigned members of Miami's tech community ask that you continue your commitment to responsive governance and innovation by adopting an Open Data Policy that governs the maintenance of the County's Open Data Portal and ensures the reliability of its data.

Since its launch, the County's Open Data Portal has been an unequivocal success. It has fostered transparency and accountability within the County and has helped local developers to create innovative solutions to a variety of civic challenges. Making county data routinely and freely available to the public means it is also available internally across County agencies, empowering Miami-Dade County employees to more effectively monitor and improve services. Local volunteers have created tools using the County's Open Data Portal to help Miamians predict flooding patterns, track public transportation services, and streamline the County's permitting process. New applications are being built every day with public data and with each line of code our community grows stronger. Indeed, the county's Open Data Portal is a promising start. But with your help, and the implementation of a robust Open Data Policy, Miami can solidify itself as a worldwide destination for technology.

An Open Data Policy would formalize the rules governing the County's Open Data Portal and would provide needed guidelines on data accessibility and data security. A reliable Open Data Policy would foster innovation by preserving data integrity and ensuring that the County's Open Data Portal is up-to-date and accurate. It would also provide assurances about the quality of the County's data to entrepreneurs wishing to start local tech businesses and developers seeking to utilize public data to create high-tech applications that improve civic life. A great example of how an Open Data Policy can trigger entrepreneurism and civic improvement occurred recently in Los Angeles when the municipality entered into an open data partnership with mobile app Waze to help its residents avoid the city's notorious rush hour traffic.

We appreciate the county's existing civic technology outreach efforts. The Community Information and Outreach (CIAO) department has led efforts to leverage county data and analytics to improve services and has assisted citizens engaging with county government technology and data. This department has worked hand-in-hand with the civic tech community to develop more accessible, user-friendly solutions to civic challenges through

technology. CIAO's commitment to collaboration demonstrates that they should play a key role in the implementation of an Open Data Policy. We therefore recommend that your office empower CIAO to work directly with county agencies to open their data sets in ways that are responsive to community needs, and to measure CIAO's success by its ability to demonstrate to agencies how they can procure and deliver services more effectively through the smart leveraging of open data.

We all share a commitment to building a strong civic ecosystem and ensuring that government technology benefits all residents. As members of this community, we will continue developing projects and hosting hackathons, trainings, and meetups to promote government transparency, technological innovation, and civic problem-solving. We'll collaborate, compete, and share expertise to help Miami-Dade address our most pressing civic challenges. And we'll train a new generation of Miamians to be civically engaged and to put their considerable skills to work for our community. We invite you, our commissioners and our county staff to join us again this year at [Miami's third annual National Day of Civic Hacking on June 6 at the LAB Miami](#) to work on next steps together and to see this commitment in action.

Throughout your term as mayor, you have been an advocate for Miami-Dade County's burgeoning tech scene. You have worked for economic opportunity, for transparency, for efficiency, and for accountability. We support these goals and believe that a robust Open Data Policy and your continued commitment to vital technology collaboration between community and government will accelerate our county's progress toward them.

Thank you,

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