

**TO:** The VAMCo Executive Cabal

**FROM:** Eduardo Rodriguez

**DATE:** October 29, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Proposal - Analyze and Align Adoption/Volunteer Instructions for Miami-Dade Animal Services (MDAS)

## **Purpose**

I'm requesting approval to analyze how Miami-Dade Animal Services (MDAS) presents adoption and volunteer instructions across web, print, and event materials, and to produce an evidence-based internal report on where clarity and usability can be improved in their current system. I'd like to follow up with sending MDAS a recommendation report or a unified instruction set.

## **Summary**

MDAS publishes instructions (fees, identification, what to bring, where to go) and volunteering steps across multiple service and FAQ website pages. Residents also come across information at partner locations and adoption events. When instructions are fragmented across locations, first-time adopters and volunteers can miss steps or arrive unprepared. In recent years, MDAS has temporarily limited public intake during periods of overcapacity, which shows how needed clear and self-service-friendly instructions are. The proposed analysis will inventory MDAS's current instructions (English/Spanish web pages, FAQs, on-site signage, and handouts if possible), map steps for "Adopt a Pet" and "Become a Volunteer," and collect findings into a concise report. That report will position VAMCo. to deliver a recommendation report prioritizing content, navigation, and cross-linking fixes. The plan is to emphasize clarity, consistency, and scannability for the public while respecting MDAS policies.

## **Introduction**

Miami-Dade Animal Services (MDAS) serves the county through adoptions, volunteer programs, and community outreach. Essential adoption information appears across the "Pet Adoption" service page and linked FAQ. This page covers what to bring, identification and address requirements, species-specific fees, and location/hours. Volunteer onboarding is on a separate "Volunteer at Animal Services" service page with linked FAQs that include eligibility and orientation times (Miami-Dade County Animal Services, n.d.-e, n.d.-f). These pages contain the correct facts but split them across multiple links and points of entry. During high-demand periods or temporary intake suspensions due to overcapacity, people may experience policy changes or scheduling adjustments (Miami-Dade County, 2023, 2024; NBC 6 South Florida, 2024). Research on shelter operations shows that clarity and consistency in process communication affect both user outcomes and staff workload (Horecka & Neal, 2022). Websites mostly dictate public engagement with adoptable animals, suggesting that scannable, well-labeled content can improve task success (Morrison, Maust-Mohl, & Ferry, 2024). I identified the flaws of MDAS's materials through a quick scan of the pages cited and by reading through several articles on the overcrowding of MDAS shelters in recent months. Aligning the instructions that the public sees reduce unnecessary counter questions, helps residents arrive prepared, and shortens queues. This proposal documents what MDAS currently tells residents for

two common goals and evaluates how effectively the content assists with each task. Adopting a pet: find an animal, confirm availability, prepare documents/equipment, understand fees/inclusions, and complete adoption in person. Becoming a volunteer: confirm eligibility, submit the application, and attend the required orientation. The focus is on improving how steps and expectations are communicated (labels, sequence, and cross-links). Intake pauses and policy updates are usually communicated via dated county press releases and then reiterated by local media. Replacing this method with a clear, “single-source-of-truth” page can reduce confusion during fast-changing conditions.

### **Proposed Task**

I will review how MDAS explains two common tasks: adopting a pet and becoming a volunteer. Afterwards I’ll check whether the steps are clear, complete, and easy to follow. I’ll use MDAS’s public pages and FAQs as my main sources (Miami-Dade County Animal Services, n.d.-a–f), plus recent county press releases for context on policy changes during overcapacity (Miami-Dade County, 2023, 2024).

### **What’s involved**

1. Collect the pages: Save links and screenshots of the Pet Adoption page, adoption FAQs (fees; what to bring; returns), the Volunteer at Animal Services page, and the “How can I become a volunteer?” FAQ (Miami-Dade County Animal Services, n.d.-a–f).
2. Map the steps: Make two short step lists:
  - Adopt a pet: find an animal, check fees & what to bring, where/when
  - Become a volunteer: check eligibility, apply, orientation time/place.
3. Clarity/readability check. Look for clear headings, short lists, consistent wording (e.g., fees and IDs), and whether key info is placed where users first need it. Make sure English/Spanish versions match. (Horecka & Neal, 2022).
4. Quick user checks: Ask five first-time users to do two tasks. The first is to find everything that is needed to be adopted (fees, what to bring, where). The second is to find volunteer eligibility and the next orientation time. Afterwards we would ask the users short and quick questions about the process. Record success and time taken (Nielsen Norman Group, 2019).
5. Combine findings: Create a short internal report with the page inventory, the two step maps, a simple issues list (what, where, why it matters), and a brief note on how changing conditions like intake pauses make clear instructions important (Miami-Dade County, 2023, 2024; NBC 6 South Florida, 2024).
6. End with a recommendation report.

What it will take:

- MDAS public web pages/FAQs and recent press releases
- A simple spreadsheet for the inventory and step maps
- Five volunteer participants for short checks
- Use insights from shelter research to keep the review focused on clarity and consistency

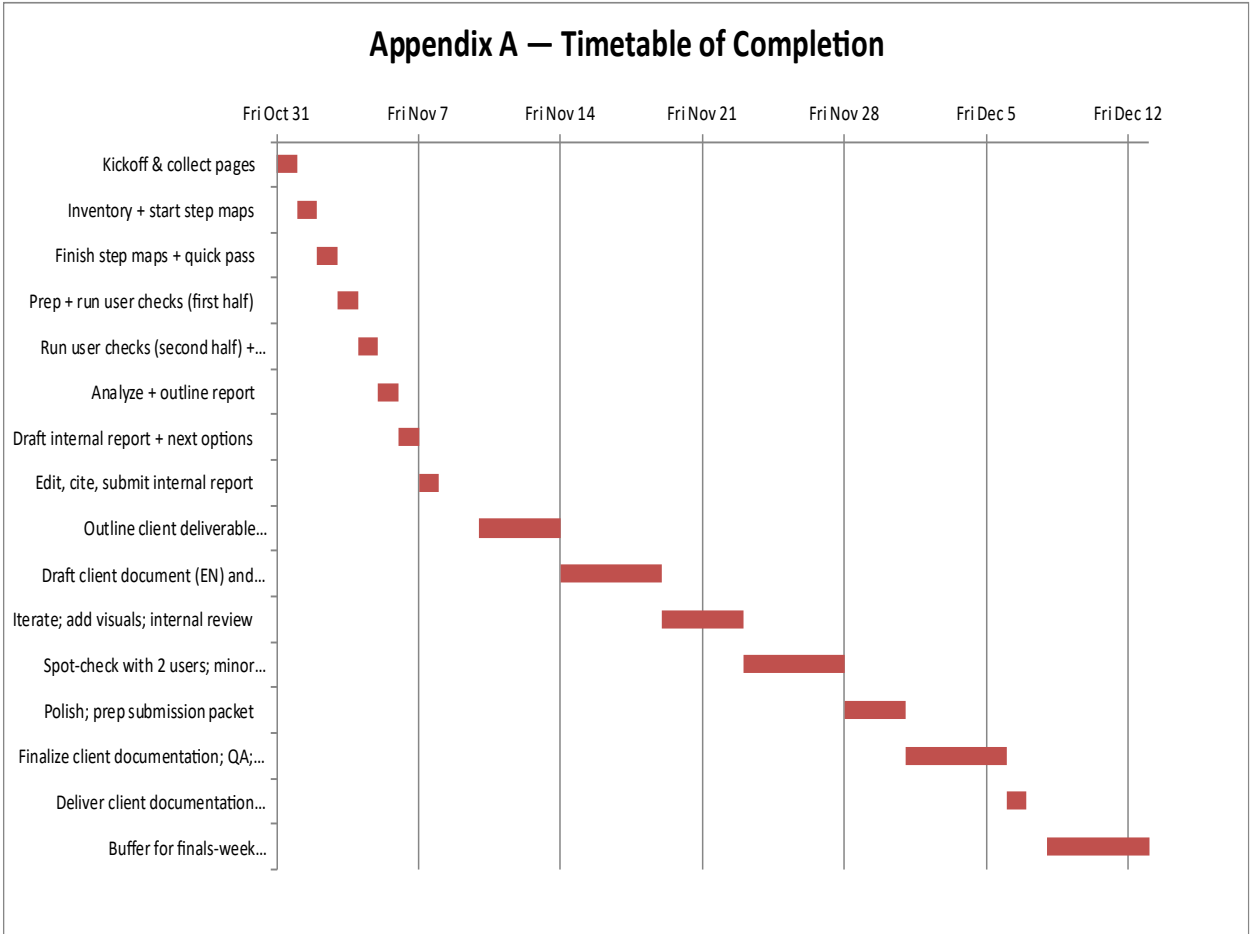
### **Schedule for Completion**

- Fri Oct 31 - Kickoff & collect pages.
- Sat Nov 1 - Inventory + start step maps.
- Sun Nov 2 - Finish step maps + quick pass.
- Mon Nov 3 - Prep + run user checks (first half).
- Tue Nov 4 - Run user checks (second half) + organize notes.
- Wed Nov 5 - Analyze + outline report.
- Thu Nov 6 - Draft internal report + next options.
- Fri Nov 7 - Edit, cite, submit internal report.
- Mon–Thu Nov 10–13 - Outline client deliverable (Recommendation Report or one-page instruction set) and build skeleton.
- Fri–Tue Nov 14–18 - Draft client document (EN) and mirror in ES.
- Wed–Sat Nov 19–22 - Iterate; add visuals; internal review.
- Sun–Thu Nov 23–27 - Spot-check with 2 users; minor fixes (Thanksgiving Thu Nov 27).
- Fri–Sun Nov 28–30 - Polish; prep submission packet.
- Mon–Fri Dec 1–5 (Week 15) - Finalize client documentation; QA; APA check.
- Sat Dec 6 (Week 15) - Deliver client documentation (target).
- Mon–Sat Dec 8–13 (Week 16) - Buffer for finals-week presentation/revisions if needed.

### **Statement of Qualifications**

I'm prepared to complete this report because my recent technical writing work has focused on the same skills this project needs. I can collect and organize MDAS web pages and FAQs, then map the steps a first-time user would follow to adopt a pet or become a volunteer. I can run 5 quick information gathering sessions with test users and then gather and compare the results. I'll edit for clarity and consistency by using headings, short lists, and plain wording. This way, fees, IDs, and "what to bring" are easy to find. I can compare English and Spanish versions to make sure the meaning and order match. I will also document sources correctly in APA and timestamp links and screenshots so findings are easily traceable.

Appendix A – Timetable



## Appendix B – References

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