



# ANIMAL RESOURCE CENTER OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY DAYTON, OHIO

November 2018  
Team Shelter USA, LLC in collaboration with the  
University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program

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## INTRODUCTION

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During the week of November 26, 2018 an organizational and community assessment was completed by Dr. Sara Pizano, veterinarian and Animal Welfare Strategist of Team Shelter USA, LLC in collaboration with the Cameron Moore from the University of Florida Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program. Dr. Kim Sanders, veterinarian and public shelter director in Anderson County, South Carolina and Becca Boronat, NKSC Project Manager from the Charleston Humane Society, also in South Carolina, joined the assessment team.

This assessment partnership is part of a nationwide initiative to end the euthanasia of dogs and cats as population control in shelters using proven national Best Practice standards. The team greatly appreciates the invitation by the County Administrator to help the Animal Resource Center of Montgomery County (ARC) realize full life-saving potential within the scope of effective public and animal safety responsibilities.

Prior to the onsite assessment, the Ohio State Statute, local ordinances, municipal contracts, protocols, enforcement data, shelter statistics and complaints from local animal advocates were reviewed and consultants discussed the assessment process with county leadership. Prior to the visit, meetings were scheduled with key stakeholders and decision makers that took place during the assessment week. The consulting team met with the:

- County Administrator and Assistant County Administrator
- Newly appointed ARC Interim Director
- County Attorney
- Communications Director
- Commissioners
- Municipal leaders holding cat contracts
- ARC management team and staff
- ARC Animal Advisory Board
- Director of the Humane Society of Greater Dayton
- Director of SICSA

During the visit, the assessment team observed daily practices at the shelter and observed/interviewed a variety of staff. A Best Practice presentation for the community was well attended by advocates from private shelters, rescue groups, volunteers, commissioners, the media, county administration and ARC staff, which was also recorded by the county communications department ([https://www.mcoho.org/departments/animal\\_resource\\_center/news\\_and\\_events.php](https://www.mcoho.org/departments/animal_resource_center/news_and_events.php)).

This report will serve to identify opportunities to help pet owners in lieu of shelter intake, create a community-minded enforcement program, streamline shelter operations, eliminate waste of and reallocate current resources, enhance collaborative efforts, create a comfortable environment for shelter pets and end euthanasia as population control. Local laws, shelter policies and corporate culture are all threads that are interwoven into the fabric of the organization. An attempt has been made here to categorize these interdependent processes thereby creating a foundation that leads

to *all* intended goals. Key principles may be repeated in different sections for emphasis and to highlight critical connections that can lead to either positive and negative consequences.

The assessment team acknowledges that the ARC intake population can include large dangerous dogs unsafe to rehabilitate and medical/surgical cases without hope. Therefore, animals in both categories are expected to be part of the euthanasia pool of 10% or less. An overall save rate of 90%+ is possible and far easier to achieve when pets with other alternatives do not enter the shelter in the first place.

Local ordinances and policies should reflect those goals and leadership must look at the difference between what is in the control of the organization and what is not. Providing constituents with assistance in lieu of admitting their pets to the shelter is now considered Best Practice and will be discussed at length (see **Safety Net** and **Managed Admissions**).

All recommendations are in line with the core Best Practice standards shared by all national reputable animal welfare organizations to include the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Million Cat Challenge, the National Animal Control Association, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Maddie's Fund, Alley Cat Allies, and the American Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Best Friends Animal Society has recently published an excellent *Humane Animal Control* manual in line with all recommendations in this assessment report and in early 2019, Team Shelter USA will be publishing *The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters* (see **Resources and Recommended Reading**).

These national animal welfare organizations also offer a plethora of information for shelters and animal control agencies, online at no charge, that includes an endless array of webinars, blogs and updates on recent scientific publications and examples of successful programs. Two national conferences are hosted each year, one by Best Friends Animal Society and the other by the Humane Society of the United States. The Petco Foundation, Maddie's Fund, Best Friends and PetSmart Charities also provide programming grants for both public and private shelters (see **Resource Allocation and Collaborative Opportunities**). Shelter leadership must be well educated regarding all potential outside resources and educational opportunities.

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters* is considered the Gold Standard with the understanding that resources vary between shelters. However, there is a baseline of standards called *The Five Freedoms* that must be met with respect to animal care and husbandry. When a practice or housing unit is described as '*inhumane*' or '*unacceptable*' in this report it is a definition from the guidelines that must be resolved without delay. *Please note that this definition is not intended to describe the dedicated staff and volunteers committed to caring for the shelter pets.*

## THE FIVE FREEDOMS

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freedom from hunger and thirst

freedom from discomfort

freedom from pain, injury, and disease

freedom to express normal and natural behavior

freedom from fear and distress

Shelter staff are compassionate individuals whose job is to care for animals but entering any shelter for a dog or cat is an unnatural experience and therefore potentially frightening. The variety of smells, unfamiliar surroundings and people cause high levels of stress that often lead to negative reactions like aggression. Stressed pets behave poorly, have compromised immune systems and are therefore at higher risk of contracting infectious diseases. These behaviors in turn not only create safety risks and stress for shelter staff but decrease adoptability. Compassion fatigue is understandably a serious issue in the animal welfare sector and ARC staff and community advocates are no different.

Leadership must implement *all* possible strategies to mitigate stress for both pets and people. While some pets handle this unnatural setting better than others, there are several strategies that can help. Dogs are keenly aware of sounds and smells and pick up clues about their environment with all their senses. When stressed, cortisol is released at high levels in their urine and that unique odor serves as a warning signal for other dogs. Appropriate disinfectants such as accelerated hydrogen peroxide and sanitation in all areas, including those outside such as vertical poles or fences where incoming dogs commonly urinate, is helpful in the reduction of odors (see **Housing, Sanitation and Enrichment~Canines**).

Best Practice standards described throughout this report will result in fewer animals in the shelter with lower lengths of stay, space for humane housing and opportunities to provide proper enrichment for all shelter pets. These in turn will create a more comfortable environment for all shelter pets and people.

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*IN 2019, FEAR FREE PETS (FEARFREEPETS.COM) WILL BE INTRODUCING A SHELTER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM AT NO COST. ALL SHELTER STAFF AND LEADERSHIP SHOULD BECOME CERTIFIED AND A FEAR FREE CHAMPION APPOINTED TO HELP IMPLEMENT FURTHER CHANGES.*

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This assessment report is divided into sections of recommendations addressing the pillars of each Best Practice strategy with examples of successful programs backed by research when available. A Summary of Recommended Action Steps can be found at the end of the report and include the Emergency Action Steps. A separate excel document is attached so it can be updated electronically to monitor progress moving forward.

Though this report will focus on opportunities for improvement, there are many positive attributes that must be acknowledged. They include but are not limited to:

- County administration and commissioners committed to implementing Best Practice initiatives
- Interim Director assigned to oversee the implementation of Best Practice recommendations
- Many caring and dedicated staff
- Committed volunteer force
- 1 behavior volunteer focused on dogs
- Engaged community advocates and transfer partners with keen desire to help life-saving mission
- Many visiting and willing adopters
- County not renewing contracts for cats with municipalities in 2019 and encouraging proactive sustainable solutions for community cat management
- Recently discontinued the practice of Animal Control Officers (ACOs) transporting owner surrenders as a convenience when shelter stopped accepting owner surrenders due to overcrowding
- Recently discontinued protocol of negatively judging dogs for growling near their food
- Open 6-days for all live outcome with Sunday and holiday hours for owners searching for their pets
- Reported live release rate for cats increased from 35% in 2017 to 56% YTD as of October 31, 2018
- Several cat condos in cat stray hold with appropriate square footage (however, some used for puppies in the D3 dog kennel)
- Current stainless-steel cat cages easily retrofitted with inexpensive \$70 portals so cats can be provided appropriate space
- Spacious shelter with natural light in dog kennels and cat adoption rooms
- Facebook page with 10,000+ followers
- Member of the Dayton Alliance for Companion Animals with Humane Society of Greater Dayton and SICSA Pet Adoption Center
- Using Chameleon shelter software, considered the Gold Standard
- Successful *Send Them Home* fee waived adoption event November 2018
- Monthly *Mingle with Mutts* adoption event second Sunday of each month
- Website states all dogs entering the shelter registered on Finding Rover facial recognition app to enhance reunification rate
- Reporting statistics to Shelter Animals Count

## EMERGENCY ACTION STEPS

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During the assessment visit, many issues were identified that required immediate attention. A list of Emergency Action Steps was presented at the exit meeting on November 30 with the County Administrator, Assistant County Administrator, Communications Director, newly appointment Interim Director and management team so work could begin to rectify issues prior to the assessment report. Those recommendations were as follows:

### Management of Best Practice Implementation

1. Appoint outside coordinator to provide daily communication for all staff and volunteers regarding any changes in protocols
2. Ensure staff and volunteers view Dr. Pizano's Best Practice presentation that were not in attendance on Tuesday, November 27 (link available through County Administrator)
3. Reclass vacant Animal Control Officer (ACO) position to cover an additional technician
4. Fast track filling balance of vacant positions
5. Request audit of Fatal Plus controlled substance use and reconciliation as per DEA guidelines
6. Fix walk-in freezer

### Staffing

7. Ensure enough staff to clean and feed all shelter pets by 10am and spot clean throughout the day
8. Conduct daily inventory to ensure all pets are accounted for and reconcile any issues
9. Feed all shelter pets twice daily
  - a. Canines-a mix of canned and dry
  - b. Felines-dry all day and canned twice daily

### Managed Admissions

10. Ask Good Samaritans to foster instead of leaving litters of kittens and puppies, provide vaccines and schedule spay/neuter appointment at date of anticipated weight (already discussed with County Attorney)
11. Discontinue Safe Pet program and refer to SICSA and HS

### Intake Protocols

12. Ensure on intake:
  - a. Canines-booster and kennel cough
  - b. Felines-booster
  - c. Each pet receives Strongid dewormer so discontinue fecal test on each pet (unless diarrhea/medical concern)
13. Take pictures and auto post every pet info on intake (with the exception of court cases) to county website, PetHarbor, etc.

### Population Management

14. Create Daily Rounds system. Daily Rounds Team to ensure each pet has a plan of action/follow up each day towards live outcome. Team should include staff from:
  - a. Enforcement

- b. Medical
- c. Shelter manager
- d. Rescue coordinator when available
- 15. Discontinue requiring veterinary physical exams prior to moving to adoptions and create system to alert vet about medical needs
- 16. Discontinue behavior temperament testing unless valid concern (already discussed/approved by County Attorney)
- 17. Use contract veterinarians and contract technicians to catch up on surgeries, ask Humane Society and SICSA for help with backlog and spay/neuter releases
- 18. Follow up on all enforcement and SAFE PET cases to ensure closure for pets
- 19. Ensure each pet has a cage card in a plastic sleeve attached to their cage

#### Housing and Sanitation

- 20. Order Rescue (accelerated hydrogen peroxide) and discontinue current disinfectants
- 21. Order portals for cat cages
- 22. Discontinue the use of plastic stools inside cat cages
- 23. Work on plan to install divider doors between single enclosure runs throughout all dog holding areas

#### Return to Owner /Adoptions/Rescue

- 24. Allow owners looking for their lost pets when the shelter open 11-6 (if owner does not have driver's license, allow them to look throughout the shelter anyway)
- 25. Order rabies vaccinations and tags and give each pet over 3 months a rabies vaccination prior to leaving the shelter
- 26. Ensure adoption areas are kept full even if pets are on stray hold
- 27. Implement fee waived adoptions until further notice
- 28. Discontinue the practice of checking landlord status
- 29. Release shelter pets on first come/first serve basis:
  - a. to adopters with a spay/neuter contract if after stray hold (already discussed with county attorney)
  - b. to adopters with a Foster to Adopt contract (already discussed with the county attorney)
  - c. for rescue (anywhere in shelter including adoptions)
- 30. Send animals home at the end of surgery day instead of holding overnight alone in the shelter



## ANIMAL CARE ADVISORY BOARD

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- No term limits or leadership structure
- No apparent authority or influence to improve the operation as several members report making Best Practice recommendations that have not been implemented

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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For an advisory type board to be effective, there should be a structure with a clear vision, mission, purpose and productive pathway for communication to stakeholders. County leadership should consider changing the name and function of the board to the ARC Task Force. The Task Force would provide oversight of all shelter and enforcement activities, stay current regarding new Best Practice initiatives and ensure transparent communication/support between shelter leadership, commissioners and the stakeholders in the community. This newly appointed group could help ensure that Best Practices in this assessment report are implemented, provide assistance when needed and report unbiased progress to the County Administrator, commissioners, animal advocates and the community.

Staggered term limits of 2 to 3 years and a governance structure will help formalize the group. At minimum the ARC Task Force should include a/an:

- President to provide leadership and ensure the purpose of the ARC Task Force is fulfilled
- Secretary to record and organize all activities
- Outreach/Communications person to communicate with all stakeholders

Committees could include:

1. *Best Practice* to track implementation of Action Steps and keep current on any new Best Practice initiatives in the industry moving forward
2. *Data and Trends* to analyze positive/negative trends as they correlate to operational changes
3. *Outreach* to help push the social media posts on behalf of shelter pets
4. *Safety Net and Community-minded Enforcement* to provide assistance for pet owners in need
5. *Transfer Partnership* to create mutually beneficial program and make recommendations to address any concerns
6. *Team Builders* to attract and develop community partnerships

The ARC Task Force could provide unbiased progress reports to the County Administrator, commissioners and community on a monthly basis for 2019 then perhaps quarterly. Reports should include positive progress, challenges accompanied by recommended solutions as well as any resource needs to accomplish intended goals.

The County Administrator should create the make-up of the board after community input but include the shelter director or designee as a liaison between ARC and the Task Force. At minimum there should be representation from the Greater Dayton Humane Society, SISCA and the rescue community.

## USE OF TECHNOLOGY

### DATA & TREND ANALYSIS

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

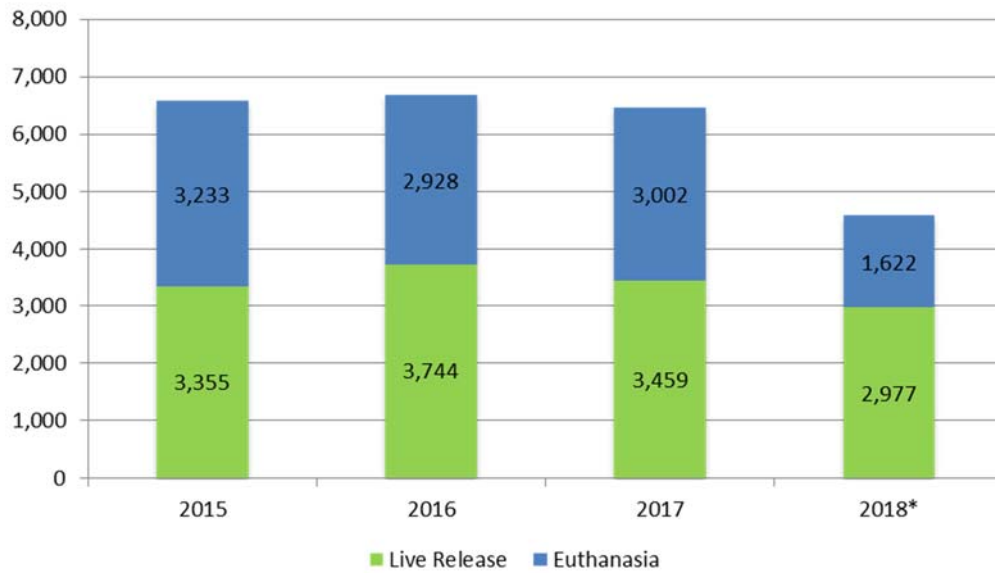
- Pictures and information about each pet not posted in real time on intake for owners in search of their lost pets or to market pets available for adoption due to self-imposed bottlenecks (enforcement cases are an exception)
- Shelter staff does not have autonomy to post/highlight pets on website or Facebook page
- Staff inaccurately reports that euthanasia is exclusively for poor health and temperament and not space but also stated that data is intentionally manipulated
- Information/follow up not consistently updated in Chameleon or not updated at all
- Not utilizing Chameleon to fullest potential with features that include but are not limited to:
  - mobile Chameleon for ACOs
  - Visual Kennel so staff can identify an empty enclosure in Chameleon
  - bar codes/scanners for population management, inventory and medical follow up
  - Postmaster add-on to automate communication with transfer groups (and in the future, foster volunteers)

#### *Live Release Rates*

Year	Dog Intake	Dog LRR	Cat Intake	Cat LRR	Combined LRR
2015	4,904	56.34%	1,742	33.98%	50.48%
2016	4,752	59.97%	1,986	45.02%	55.57%
2017	6,545	60.02%	1,895	35.25%	52.85%
2018* (through October)	4,746	64.93%	1,179	56.06%	62.73%

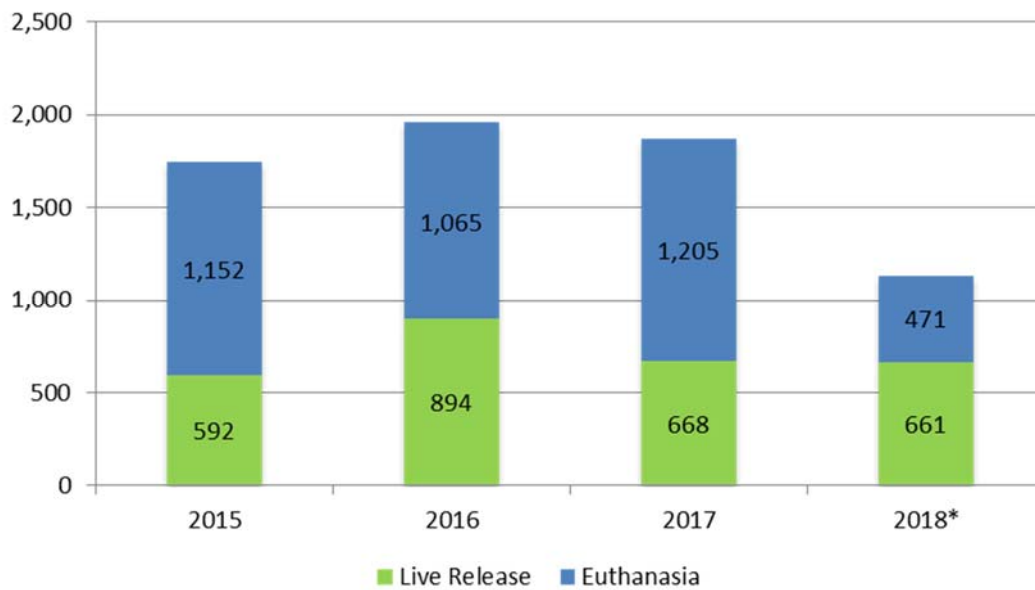
*Figure 1: Depicts the intake and live release rate for dogs and cats for the past 3½ years. Live Release Rate percentage was calculated by dividing the live outcome number into the live intake number. FY17/18\* data is through October 31, 2018.*

### ***Live Release Versus Euthanasia of Dogs and Cats***



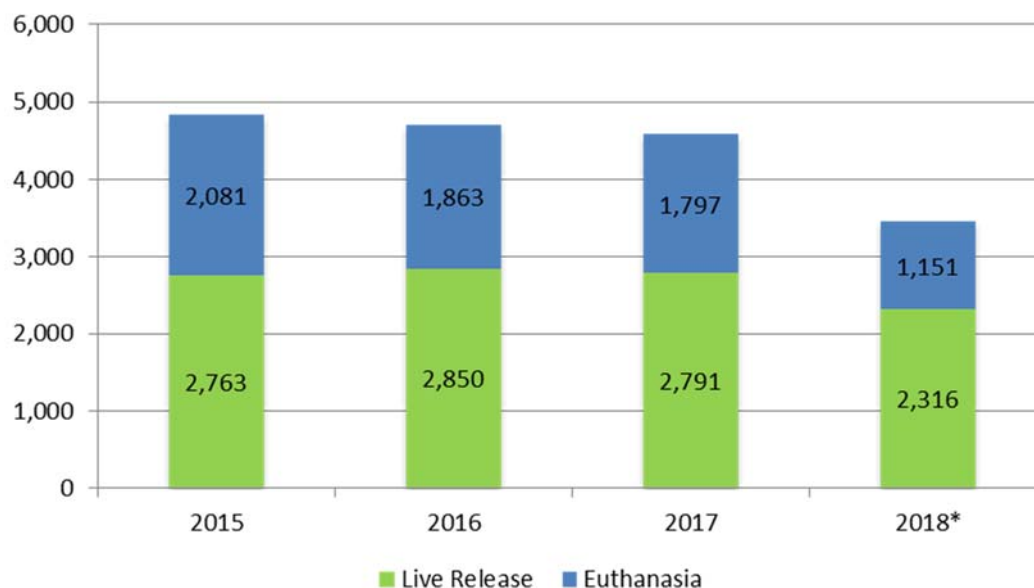
*Figure 2: 2018\* statistics are through October 31, 2018*

### ***Live Release Versus Euthanasia of Cats***



*Figure 3: 2018\* statistics are through October 31, 2018*

### ***Live Release Versus Euthanasia of Dogs***



*Figure 4: 2018\* statistics are through October 31, 2018*

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The overall live release rate of 90%+ for dogs and cats is currently used as a benchmark for all private and municipal shelters with the acknowledgement that there will always be some level of euthanasia that include medical/surgical cases beyond hope and large dangerous dogs who cannot safely be rehabilitated. In the calendar year 2018 through October, when analyzing the statistics provided, the live release rate is a combined 63%, higher than 2017 with a 35% live release rate for cats and a 60% rate for dogs yet far below the benchmark of 90%+.

When questioned, staff and leadership were not familiar with the live release rates. These key performance indicators are an important way to engage staff, involve them in creating solutions to current issues and include them in celebrating life-saving success moving forward.

The encouraging news is that many shelters with enforcement responsibilities in Ohio and around the country are proving that life-saving can be a part of the public and animal safety plan.

**Sample of Public Shelters with Live Release Rates over 90% following an assessment**

Shelter Location	Starting Live Release Rate Prior to Assessment	Live Release Rate 2017
Anderson County, SC	49%	92%
Boone County, KY	81%	91%
Brevard County, FL	81%	96%
Campbell County, KY	45%	92%
Grant County, KY	91%	96%
Huntsville, AL	49%	92%
Louisville, KY	84%	92%
Montgomery County, TX	68%	91%
Waco, TX	36%	90%
Whitfield County, GA	72%	91%

*Figure 5: Depicts the dramatic increase in life-saving after leadership received a shelter assessment and implemented the recommended Best Practice standards*

### Jacksonville ACPS Shelter Intake versus Euthanasia

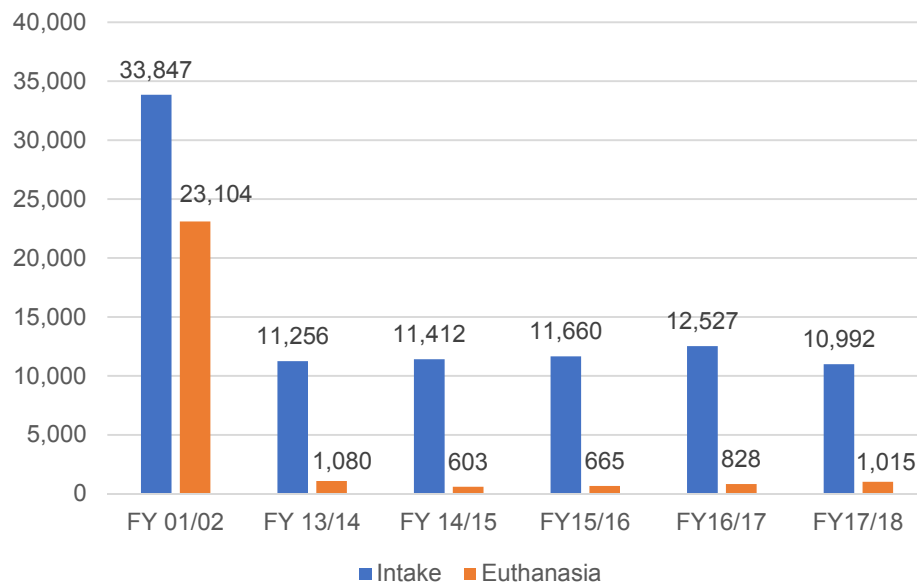


Figure 6: Depicts the positive trend of decreased intake and euthanasia after lifesaving strategies implemented. Uptick in euthanasia in FY17/18 was because the shelter is now receiving more advanced medical and behavioral cases.

### Anderson County PAWS Live Release Versus Euthanasia of Dogs and Cats

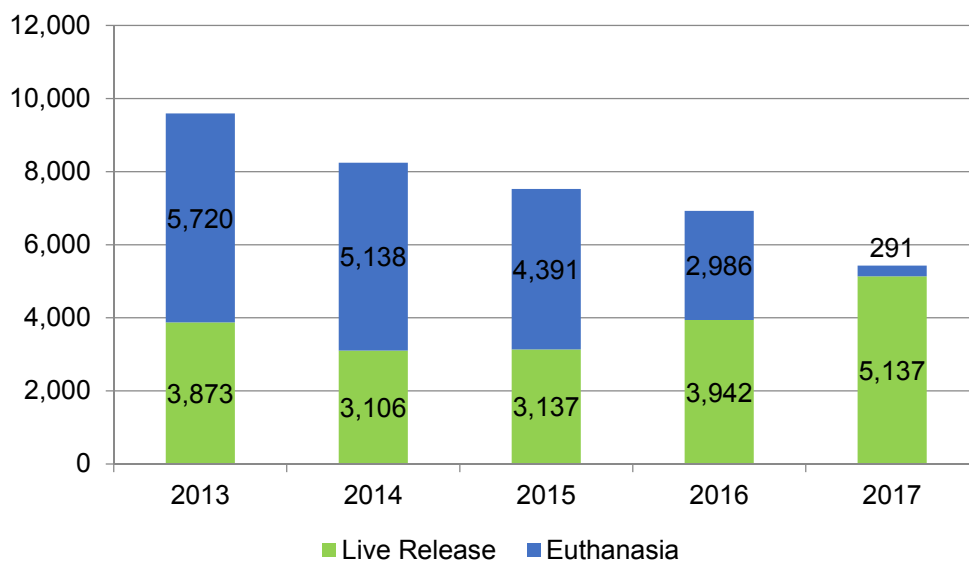


Figure 7: Depicts the positive trend of decreased intake and euthanasia after lifesaving strategies implemented after only 3 months in 2017. Anderson County has remained above a 90% live release rate for 2018 YTD.

The use of shelter software is imperative for animal welfare organizations and Chameleon, currently in place, is considered the Gold Standard and should be used to the fullest potential. Technology provides opportunities not possible through any other means of communication and ARC should capitalize on every avenue, the most basic of which is the website. The website should be kept up to date and include a picture of each shelter pet in real time when they enter the shelter. Intake and enforcement staff already take the pictures but must ensure they are available for owners searching for their pets and those interested in adopting. This is resolved easily by changing the status from 'lost' to 'available' in Chameleon and a function of self-imposed barriers discussed in detail in the **Population Management** section.

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*ALL PICTURES SHOULD BE AUTO-UPLOADED TO THE WEBSITE VIA PETHARBOR AND  
OTHER SEARCH ENGINES  
(WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ENFORCEMENT CASES)*

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A shelter staff person should be enlisted to do social media outreach and should have access to update the county website and create Facebook posts to attract more adopters and supporters. ARC already boasts an impressive 10,000 Facebook followers but there remains much potential to leverage technology to rebrand the organization. Short videos capture the attention of pet lovers who are then likely to support ARC and cross post. Maddie's Fund and ASPCA have a great variety of tips and examples to amplify the impact of social media ([maddiesfund.org](http://maddiesfund.org) and [ASPCapro.org](http://ASPCapro.org)).

Consultants were encouraged to learn that ARC is reporting data to the national registry, Shelter Animals Count. This is now mandatory for organizations applying for grants with national funders, however, **the accuracy and transparency of data is non-negotiable**. All information captured about an animal must be true, correct and up to date in real time to prevent any fatal or legal errors. Animals are euthanized for space and many for illness and behavior issues as a result of their shelter stay. Saying otherwise has created an understandable culture of mistrust with the community that will take time and life-saving proof to rectify.

In addition to the intake categories included in the Shelter Animals Count data matrix, it is imperative to capture the split between stray pets brought to the shelter by the public and stray pets admitted by Animal Control Officers. Likewise, a category for Return to Field should be tracked once that program is in place.

The public should understand the risks for pets that enter the shelter that can be explained in such a way that it motivates and inspires people to help instead of criticize the organization. Hillsborough County does an excellent job reporting statistics and progress on their website daily. See link here: <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/residents/animals-and-pets/pet-advocacy/pet-resources-reports-and-statistics>.

Data and trends must be used to design the most impactful programs so resources can be allocated in the most efficient way. Alternatively, if trends look far worse when compared to

another community, the organization should question what those progressive shelters are doing differently to achieve positive results.

The Chameleon shelter software team reports that most shelters underutilize their product so there is great potential to help staff work smarter, not harder by capitalizing on this technology. ACOs should have tablets and use Mobile Chameleon so they can input information and post pictures of stray dogs in the field. Leadership reports that this mobile feature can be added at no extra cost to the current Chameleon license.

The enforcement and shelter staff would benefit by using the Visual Kennel feature so they can determine at a glance where there is an empty cage/kennel for a pet they need to place. This would eliminate wasting time searching for an open kennel. Staff already have 2 scanners and bar code print out on cage cards but report they are not using the scanners for inventory, only for medical treatment needs. Additional scanners and training are needed to utilize this feature that will help streamline the management of the shelter population. County leadership is encouraged to schedule a visit by Chameleon staff who can ensure more features are utilized, appropriate reports are in place to monitor shelter and enforcement trends and provide training. Chameleon also hosts an annual conference that would be helpful for the software point person on staff to attend as new streamlined features are often added to the software.

There are a wide variety of reports that leadership should use for effective Population Management. Many reports are built into Chameleon and others may require the creation of a customized report. Examples of reports that can be used:

- Templates: The creation of templates make it easier for staff to enter data in real time. A template for surgery, for example, would include the drugs and basic surgery protocol so staff would only have to fill in amounts of the drugs used and any variation in outcome from the template.
- Pets in need of vaccinations: All pets, dogs and cats, should be vaccinated at the point of intake and receive age appropriate boosters every two weeks. To ensure this is happening, a report should be run each day with the list of any pets missing vaccinations so staff can easily identify those pets and vaccinate them in a timely manner.
- Length of Stay (LOS): Length of stay in any shelter is correlated with negative consequences so the consistent goal for each is to find the best permanent placement in the shortest period of time. This is a key performance indicator. A LOS report can alert the outreach team that certain pets need special marketing campaigns, ensure added enrichment is provided for long term enforcement stays and track improvement of Safety Net, Managed Admissions and live outcome programs.



## CUSTOMER SERVICE

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Unknown number of phone calls and messages unanswered
- Front desk staff answer outside calls while guests wait in line for assistance
- Because of the many self-imposed bottlenecks within the shelter operation combined with insufficient number of Animal Care Providers and front desk staff, shelter staff is not able to provide consistent, excellent customer service
- Website states and staff reports that euthanasia is not done for space, which is not an accurate statement
- Certain enforcement practices understandably lead to customer service complaints:
  - *Example:* A constituent recently took in a friend's 2 dogs and an anonymous complaint was filed with ARC. According to the constituent there had been no issues with the dogs running at large or being aggressive. An ACO left a citation at the door stating 'if anyone is feeding and watering these dogs call 898.4457, failure to respond will result in dogs being removed'. A box on the citation was also checked off that failure to have current year registration for any dog(s) more than 3 months of age would result in further action. The constituent went to the DMV office to purchase tags and was instructed by a county employee to wait 3 days until the 2019 tags went on sale so he would not have to purchase tags for 2018 and then buy new ones 3 days later. He had the dogs less than 30 days.

The constituent called a supervisor but did not receive a response. In an effort to resolve the issue, the constituent took a day off work and came to the shelter to speak to a supervisor. The supervisor told the front desk receptionist that he was not available to speak to the constituent and instructed the receptionist to tell the constituent to come back on another day. The consultant stepped in and spoke with the constituent to find out the issue and asked the receptionist to call the supervisor back and relay the information. At that time he came out to the lobby and instructed the constituent that he did have to purchase the tags immediately and not simply within 30 days. He also instructed him that he had to speak to the ACO who wrote the citation.

The ACO was in the field, not available and the issue unresolved. When the supervisor left, the constituent asked an Animal Care Provider in the lobby how long he had to purchase a license after acquiring a new dog and was told 30 days. He then asked why the enforcement supervisor told him he needed to purchase it that day instead of waiting the 3 days until the 2019 tags were made available to the public. She had no response and the constituent left angry and frustrated.

- *Example:* A constituent called to inquire about euthanizing their sick elderly dog. The constituent was told that they were required to purchase the \$48/\$40 license, depending on the sterilization status prior to the euthanasia being performed at a cost of \$40. (License fees doubled because license was being purchased after January 1)

- *Example: ACOs encouraged to write citations*
- On November 29, a person came to the shelter in need of pet food but was told there was none available. She was not provided with information about another local pet food bank. Consultant was standing at the front desk and provided a flyer to the Dayton Pet Food Pantry run by Advocates 4 Animals, Inc.
- Many examples of people coming to the shelter to adopt during the assessment week only to be told there were no cats available for adoption and no additional dogs available for adoption other than the ones in the adoption area. On November 26, there were 10 dogs in the adoption area but 7 of those were unavailable as they had already been adopted and were waiting for spay/neuter surgery so they could go home. There were no cats in the adoption rooms, yet 96 dogs and 21 cats were in the areas off limits to the public pending an evaluation. These numbers do not include court cases or those in the SAFE PET program.
- Absence of cage cards on each enclosure means that potential adopters must stand in line at the front desk to get basic information about a pet such as age or gender

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Communication with the public and stakeholders is essential for any business operation. Montgomery County leadership should strive to ensure that every point of contact is as positive as possible within the scope of enforcement responsibilities. Even commissioners pointed out the difficulty in reaching an ARC staff member by phone and lack of customer service at the shelter.

An analysis of the number of phone calls must be done so that the volume of calls is addressed as efficiently as possible. When this was done at Miami-Dade Animal Services in 2006, leadership estimated 10,000 phone calls a year when in fact, there were over 300,000. The implementation of the 311-county system helped alleviate this disparity tremendously as trained operators had access through key words to information regarding basic information about all departments.

This also highlights the great need for the website to be user friendly and provide as much necessary information as possible about shelter pets and services in an effort to prevent phone calls. No doubt there are duplicate messages and multiple phone calls made by one constituent when they do not receive a response. This analysis will also help fine tune staffing needs.

As proven Best Practices are implemented, many staff will be alleviated of an excessive workload burden and better equipped to provide excellent customer service. Staff must be well versed in the reality of challenges that ARC faces in an effort to have honest conversations with the public and stakeholders and attract more support. Many in the community are traumatized by the lack of transparency that has bred a deeply engrained culture of mistrust that must be rectified.

Enforcement practices must be revisited. Leadership is encouraged to adopt a community-minded approach and reserve punitive action for true perpetrators of public and animal safety. As a result of several disturbing cases, including a death from a dog attack, county leadership responded by instructing the issuance of citations as frequently as possible. While these tragic cases are

extremely heartbreaking, issuing citations without a true threat is not the appropriate reaction and does not prevent future issues. The examples above have contributed to the negative reputation of the department.

Consultants acknowledge that ARC cannot provide 100% assistance for 100% of the pet owners in the community but even resources that are available are not routinely communicated. A robust number of potential adopters visited the shelter during the assessment week only to be told there were no cats available for adoption and only the 3 in dog adoptions available, even though many were in the shelter and in need of placement.

Many common sense solutions are available to create a more effective system for the public and staff. Simply ensuring that each pet has a cage card with basic information that follows them throughout the shelter, will better inform visitors and prevent them from standing in line at the front desk to get basic information about a pet such as the age or gender if not obvious.

Most importantly, leadership must set the staff up for success and create hours of operation that provide needed services to the public along with adequate staffing levels.

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## STAFFING & HOURS OF OPERATION

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Filling vacancies may take months through the human resource (HR) process
- Shelter Operations Manager responsible for management of population but in addition does ordering of supplies and personnel
- Imbalanced Table of Organization with 1 supervisor overseeing 12 employees and another overseeing 2
- No medical staff coverage on weekend
- Animal Care Providers have an extremely unreasonable workload and variety of competing job duties so by default are set up for failure. Daily tasks include:
  - Cleaning and feeding all shelter pets
  - Intake processing
  - Adoption counseling
  - Relieving the front desk staff during their break
  - Escorting owners in search of their lost pets or bringing individual pets to the lobby if owner does not have identification
  - Surgery and adoption release
  - Euthanasia
- *Example:* On November 27, there were a total of 4 Animal Care Providers scheduled. 2 were assigned to euthanasia leaving 2 responsible for the list of tasks above. At 5pm, the 149 shelter pets remained in their filthy enclosures, were not fed and several were without water.
- Animal Care Providers are scheduled for a 30-minute lunch during a 10-hour shift but report they are often called upon during their lunch break

- 10-hour shift for Animal Care Provider is too long for this exceptionally physical and demanding position (10-hour shifts are better suited for ACOs who spend parts of their day in transit)
- Many staff suffering from severe Compassion Fatigue, several cried during routine interviews to learn about their jobs and at least 2 staff resigned during the assessment visit
- Many hard working, dedicated and caring staff deeply distressed by the complaints and criticism by the community but with a deep desire to care properly for shelter pets
- Currently 5 vacant Animal Care Providers since leadership reports high turnover
- 2 'temp staff' on duty during assessment but Animal Care Providers reported that they are not allowed to handle animals, cannot be left alone in the kennel and were not performing tasks that helped them accomplish their duties
- Many ACOs disagree with Standard Operating Procedures regarding the frequency of issuing citations and expressed support for a community-minded approach reserving enforcement action for true public and animal safety issues
- 1 ACO splits time between field services and answering dispatch line, even though ACO higher paid position
- 2 front desk staff (1 position currently vacant) with insufficient for hours and days of operation to provide excellent customer service. In addition, Animal Care Providers, already unreasonably stretched have to fill in for them on breaks
- No foster program therefore no coordinator in place
- No Rescue Coordinator but told that interviews in progress for Outreach Specialist during assessment visit would cover rescue
- No staff dedicated exclusively to adoptions
- No staff dedicated to enrichment and behavior modification (and not conducive due to current system)
- Former volunteers cited communication issues as reason that prior behavior modification program ended
- In conversation with 2 former employees, communicated lack of support and overwhelming job duties as reasons for resigning but cared deeply for shelter pets
- Intake hours and opportunities exceed live outcome hours

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Staff and volunteers, the human capital, is the most valuable resource ARC has. Each staff person's job duties must be laser focused to create an efficient system that leads to intended goals. For a variety of reasons, the imbalance of the Table of Organization combined with the lack of population management has led to an avalanche of negative consequences. These include but are not limited to 5 vacant Animal Care Provider positions, unreasonable workload for a variety of staff, inadequate animal care, poor customer service, Compassion Fatigue and staff burnout. Thankfully, with the proper systems in place, all of these issues can be resolved.

Consultants understand the challenge of the HR system with respect to the unreasonable amount of time it takes to fill a vacant position and request that in particular, Animal Care Provider positions are fast tracked. In the meantime, a plan B must be put in place so that basic animal

care is not compromised. Options may include scheduling an ACO to assist in the kennels or asking partner organizations like the Greater Dayton Humane Society and SISCA for help with temporary staffing. Leadership may consider filling temp positions with trained staff from those organizations who may be willing to work an extra day, for example. This approach is superior than hiring general temps who are unlikely to have an animal handling background.

The newly appointed Interim Director must analyze the Table of Organization and consider the imbalance of oversight between supervisors. All job descriptions and duties must be further analyzed with input from the management team and staff. When ARC admits an animal to the shelter, staff is required to provide basic care. A clean environment, appropriate enclosure, adequate food, water and enrichment are non-negotiable. To do so, staff must be set up for success and appropriately resourced.

With respect to the Animal Care Providers, the National Animal Control Association and the Humane Society of the United States ([https://cdn.ymaws.com/nacanet.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Docs/NACA\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/nacanet.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Docs/NACA_Guidelines.pdf) and [animalsheltering.org](http://animalsheltering.org)) provide baseline recommendations. Leadership should consider hiring a per diem or part time veterinarian 2 days a week so there is 7-day coverage for shelter medicine and spay/neuter surgery.

Kennel staffing needs to provide basic morning sanitation, spot cleaning throughout the day and twice daily feeding only, can be roughly calculated by using the formula: *number of animals in the shelter per day x 15 minutes per animal=number of minutes per day.*

On November 27, there were 149 animals in the shelter, considered low inventory by staff during the typically 'slow time' of the year. Therefore  $149 \times 15 = 2,235$  minutes or 37 hours per day. For an 8-hour shift, 5 Animal Care Providers would be needed *per day*. In a community the size of Montgomery County, the shelter should be open for live outcome 7 days a week. It must also be noted that the above formula is based on an expected length of stay of only 4 days, which is much longer at ARC currently. As Best Practices are implemented, however, the length of stay average will improve. There are currently an adequate number of Animal Care Provider positions within the Table of Organization, the issue is attrition.

Animal Care Provider shifts should be 8 hours in length as opposed to 10 for this very physically and emotionally demanding job. Shifts should be weighted with more staff scheduled at the beginning of the day for sanitation and feeding in preparation for opening to the public in the morning. For the balance of the day, Animal Care Providers should be spot cleaning and feeding a second meal at the end of the day and assisting the Adoption Team. Needless to say, all staff must be provided with a lunch break. The rate of Compassion Fatigue, burn out and resignations is not only understandable but expected under these conditions.

Several ACOs are enthusiastically supportive of a community-minded enforcement approach and should be engaged in a plan to develop programs with other county departments to provide assistance in underserved areas. This program was reportedly in place in the past but was discontinued and assumed to be budget related. Resource allocation is essential at every level and paying a part time dispatch person is more cost effective than using a higher paid ACO as fill in.

Again, leadership should strive to create a department whereby every point of contact is as positive as possible. This includes field work, phone, and in person interaction. The front desk staff should not answer outside calls as they should be empowered to concentrate on each visiting customer. A receptionist should be placed in an office to answer and direct all outside calls.

### RECOMMENDED ADJUSTMENTS TO THE TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

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1. Balance supervisory oversight
2. If Outreach Specialist intended to be Rescue Coordinator, should answer to a supervisor as opposed to the director
3. Reclass vacant ACO position to veterinary technician and stagger technicians for 7-day coverage
4. Utilize (1) ACO as the community cat coordinator

### RECOMMENDED STAFFING ADDITIONS

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- (2) full time Behavior/Enrichment Coordinators (stagger schedule for 7-day coverage)
- (1) full time Foster Care Coordinator (stagger schedule with Rescue Coordinator so can cover for each other 7 days a week)
- (2) full time Adoption Team Leaders (stagger schedule for 7-day coverage) (see **Adoptions**)
- (1) full time operator (stagger schedule with Dispatch operator for 7-day coverage, may need additional staff depending on call volume analytics)
- (1) full Safety Net coordinator to assist constituents with alternatives to intake (see **Safety Net**)
- Per diem or contract veterinarian 2 days a week to cover shelter medicine and surgery when full time veterinarian off

### RECOMMENDED HOURS OF OPERATION

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#### Enforcement:

- 8am to 6pm for regular calls Monday through Friday
- 6pm to 8am on call for emergencies only Monday through Friday
- 6pm Friday to 8am Monday, on call for emergencies only

#### Live Outcome Hours (return to owner, adoptions, rescue, foster care)

- 10am to 6pm 7 days a week

#### Animal Care Providers

- One shift from 6am to 3pm so cleaning/feeding can be completed shelter wide by 10am when open to the public
- One shift from 10am to 7pm for spot cleaning, general care, second feeding, adoption counseling

#### Owner Surrender Intake

- Appointments required a week in advance, 11am to 1pm Tuesdays and Thursday if no alternative to intake identified (see **Safety Net**)

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## BEFORE THE DOOR

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### RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC/SHELTER POLICY AND LIABILITY

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#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Municipal ordinances vary throughout
- Ohio State Statute with respect to stray hold outdated and in need of revision
- No foster care program (Good Samaritan foster care, Foster Care Ambassador or Foster to Adopt during stray hold period) reportedly due to 'liability concerns'
- Requirement for behavior temperament test prior to moving to adoptions

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#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The consulting team applauds Montgomery County leadership for making the crucial decision to work differently with municipalities with respect to cats and not renew the 2019 contracts. During the assessment week, a meeting had been proactively scheduled with consultants with those municipal leaders. Consultants described providing sustainable resolution for constituents by providing subsidized spay/neuter with the line item budgets already earmarked to reimburse ARC \$60 per cat intake. Using that same \$60 to sterilize and rabies vaccinate the community cat provides a better solution for many reasons (see **Return to Field**). Ironically, 3 municipalities described their ongoing success with this proposed community cat management approach that has been in place for several years.

The next step is to ensure that all municipal codes are in line with Best Practice recommendations. The assessment team collaborates with attorneys working at national animal welfare organizations and the following recommendations reflect the collective recommendations.



## PROPOSED REVISIONS (MUNICIPAL)

Recommendations to include	Reason
Requirement for all entities utilizing shelter services to abide by the same ordinances in line with Best Practices	Ordinances in line with Best Practices are universal. Variations in ordinances within a community creates unnecessary inefficiencies.
Anti-tethering	Tethering dogs as a means of housing/restraint is considered inhumane. Tethered dogs are 2.4 times more likely to bite (HSUS).
Sterilization if dog designated dangerous	Sterilized pets are less likely to roam to find a mate. Testosterone is linked to aggression and levels lowered when neutered. Nursing mothers are more likely to protect their pups.
Provision for community cats (exclude from leash law)	It is a societal norm for cats to have access to the outdoors or live exclusively outdoors.
Guidelines for feeding community cats and decreasing risk for wildlife	Community cats should be fed at regular times, in containers that are removed after cats eat and in areas least likely to attract or interfere with wildlife.
Define community cat	Any unowned free roaming cat that may be cared for by one or more residents of the immediate area who is/are known or unknown; a community cat may or may not be feral. Community cats that are ear tipped are sterilized and have received at least one vaccination against rabies. Community cats are exempt from any licensing, stray, abandonment and at-large provisions directed towards owned animals. A community cat may also be defined as a cat 'found' outside that is brought to an animal shelter and not yet sterilized/ear tipped.
Define community cat caregiver	A person who provides care, including food, shelter or medical care to a community cat, while not being considered the owner, custodian, harbinger, controller or keeper of a community cat or to have care or charge of a community cat. Caregivers must make every effort to minimize the impact on local wildlife, feed the proper quantity of food for the number of cats in appropriate food containers, discard food containers daily and feed only on their property or with the permission of another landowner (city, state or federal public property). Community cat caregivers shall not be deemed to own, have custody, care or control of community cats. Community cat caregivers may redeem community cats from the shelter without proof of ownership and are exempt from any charges and/or fees.



Recommendations to include	Reason
Exclude Return-to-Field program from abandonment clause	The intent of an abandonment clause is to protect pets from being left in an unfamiliar place. A Return-to-Field program involves returning community cats to their home location where they were already cared for.
Housing bite quarantine only if owner unknown (pending dangerous dog investigation is at the discretion of the director)	Shelter space should be reserved for stray pets with no other options or part of an enforcement case. Owners of pets in need of quarantine from a single incidence should be responsible for the quarantine arrangements.
No stray hold for kittens and puppies under 4 months to live outcome	Kittens and puppies are at high risk of contracting an infectious disease at the shelter and are not part of the reunification pool. LOS leads to negative consequences.
No mandatory stray hold for any felines to live outcome	Nationally less than 3% of stray cats are reclaimed through a shelter. Studies show that cats are 7 to 13 times more likely to find their way home from the street or find another home when compared to a shelter. Trap and euthanize is ineffective at decreasing community cat numbers. LOS leads to negative consequences.
Foster during stray hold	Overall, most of shelter population will not be reclaimed. LOS leads to negative consequences.
Financial incentive for services with reclaim (spay/neuter, rabies vaccination and microchip)	Fees, fines and citations prior to reclaim for a stray at large and not part of an enforcement case is a barrier to reclaim. Offering incentive for services is beneficial for pet, owner, shelter and field services and provide sustainable resolution.
Recommendations to exclude	Reason
Memorandum of Understanding or contracts with shelters not linked to number of animals admitted	Shelter space should be reserved for public and animal safety cases and pets with no alternatives.
Field Officers do not convenience transport owner surrenders or healthy community cats for the purpose of shelter intake	Field Officers should focus on public and animal safety and proactive community programs.
Breed Specific Legislation	No evidence that physical characteristics are linked to aggression
Pet Limits	Not correlated to responsible pet ownership or hoarding risk
Regulation of community cat colonies or caregivers	Does not promote partnership efforts with caregivers and feeders, positions animal control entity as the enemy. Resources wasted with no positive outcome.
Mandatory spay/neuter for the general public	No evidence that mandatory spay/neuter linked to decreasing shelter intake, creates a punitive action with no resolution, risk of increasing shelter intake. (AVMA/ ASPCApro.org)

## PROPOSED REVISIONS (STATE STATUTE)

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Laws and ordinances have been developed with the core goals of community and animal safety with the best of intentions. However, with the advancement of the animal welfare industry, scientific studies, dependable data and successful programs nationwide, there is a wide disparity between these outdated ordinances and intended goals. The Ohio State Statute mandating a 14-day stray hold for a stray dog with a tag is one such example. While consultants appreciate that revisions to the state statute are not within the direct control of Montgomery County leadership, there are measures to mitigate the negative consequences of this requirement that should be put in place.

The majority of stray dogs in public shelters are reunited with their families well within 3 days. The additional 11-day requirement does not lead to the intended goal of reunification for most of the dogs but does correlate with negative consequences. Length of stay means overcrowding is likely, there is more emotional stress on the staff and shelter pets, higher levels of infectious disease and risk of euthanasia. Civic leaders should recognize this as added cost of care days that could be avoided and develop a foster care program.

## ASSESSING LIABILITY

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In conversation with the management team and many staff, 'liability' was given as the reason that a foster program was not allowed as per the County Attorney. However, during the assessment week, foster programs were discussed directly with the County Attorney and Assistant County Administrator who have agreed to create a foster care contract (sample attached).

Foster programs are standard in both public and private shelters in the United States. Though a specific return to owner rate for stray dogs could not be determined during the assessment week, this information should be teased out of the current data pool that includes enforcement cases returned as well. The total percentage for both categories was 26% in 2017. While work continues to be done to increase the number of stray dogs reunited with their families, the majority of them will need to be rehomed.

Categories of needed foster care programs and contracts written by the County Attorney include Good Samaritan Foster Care, Foster Care Ambassador and Foster to Adopt, discussed in more detail throughout this report.

Another issue discussed with the County Attorney and Assistant County Administrator is the evolving recommendations surrounding behavior temperament tests. The ASPCA has done an enormous amount of work in this area and though they developed many of these testing protocols have updated their own position statement stating that they should not be used exclusively to judge all dogs. With the exception of 'egregious' aggression, multiple sources and events should lead to the decision to hold a dog back from adoptions and/or allow them to go to a transfer partner because of behavior (<https://www.asPCA.org/about-us/asPCA-policy-and-position-statements/position-statement-shelter-dog-behavior-assessments>).

As per the County Attorney, the true liability lies in stating the dog passed the temperament test with no signs of aggression and goes on to bite a person after the adoption. The shelter would

then be accused of guaranteeing that a dog would not bite. In conclusion, a temperament test in the shelter does not 100% correlate with future behavior. Large dogs showing variable signs of aggression may be candidates for additional behavior modification and adoption with restrictions, transfer to a partner organization or for a small percent, euthanasia.

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## COMMUNITY TARGETED SPAY/NEUTER

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Unknown number of spay/neuter surgeries subsidized and at no cost to socioeconomically disadvantaged pet owners

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

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Part of the plan to productively reduce shelter intake is providing accessible services for target groups. Studies show that most animals entering shelters are intact and from socioeconomically disadvantaged households. Therefore, by providing this category of pet owners subsidized spay/neuter services, intake at the public shelter decreases (*Getting to Zero*, Peter Marsh, **Resources and Recommended Reading**). In general, the tipping point seems to be approximately 5 subsidized surgeries per 1,000 residents.

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*IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY WITH 530,000 RESIDENTS AND POVERTY RATE OF ONLY 18.2%, A MINIMUM OF 2,650 SURGERIES MUST BE SUBSIDIZED ANNUALLY SPLIT EVENLY BETWEEN DOGS AND CATS FOR QUALIFIED PET OWNERS IN ORDER TO FURTHER DECREASE SHELTER INTAKE.*

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The owner must be income qualified which should be simple and streamlined in an effort to remove all barriers to services with as few steps as possible. When scheduling the appointment with the service provider, the client would be instructed to bring proof of qualification. Pet owners on government assistance automatically qualify and can simply show their Medicaid, Food Stamp, WIC, Section 8 or SSI documentation.

For those in need but not on government assistance, qualification may be done based on income if they earn less than 250% of the poverty level (2018 Federal Poverty Level Chart can be found online). For those individuals, copies of their W2's, previous year tax returns, current paystubs or other income verifying documentation can be used.

Spay/neuter for targeted groups that include socioeconomically disadvantaged pet owners, community cats, large breed dogs and pets living in high intake areas should be highly subsidized, as close to free as possible and **maxed at \$20, all inclusive**. Targeted spay/neuter programs are proving the direct inverse correlation between the number of surgeries in the community and shelter intake/euthanasia.

Montgomery County residents are fortunate to have programs already in place. They include:

- The Greater Dayton Humane Society Spay Neuter programs that includes onsite surgery, a voucher program for qualified pet owners to use at participating private veterinary hospitals and community cat programs with municipalities
- The SISCA Spay Neuter programs that includes onsite surgery, community cat programs and subsidies for qualified pet owners
- 3 municipalities with current community cat programs (Miamisburg, City of Dayton and Englewood)
- Snip/Tip/Chip available for \$20 copay (West Carrollton residents only); however unclear how many residents are being offered this when they surrender a cat to the shelter and how many surgeries are being performed at ARC

Montgomery County leadership is strongly encouraged to further collaborate with the above spay/neuter providers, engage more private veterinary hospitals and help fund programs for socioeconomically disadvantaged pet owners. This will ensure the co-pay remains under \$20 and target numbers are reached each year that will benefit ARC as well. Many targeted spay/neuter programs, such as the ones below, are proving the inverse relationship between subsidized surgeries and decreased shelter intake/euthanasia.

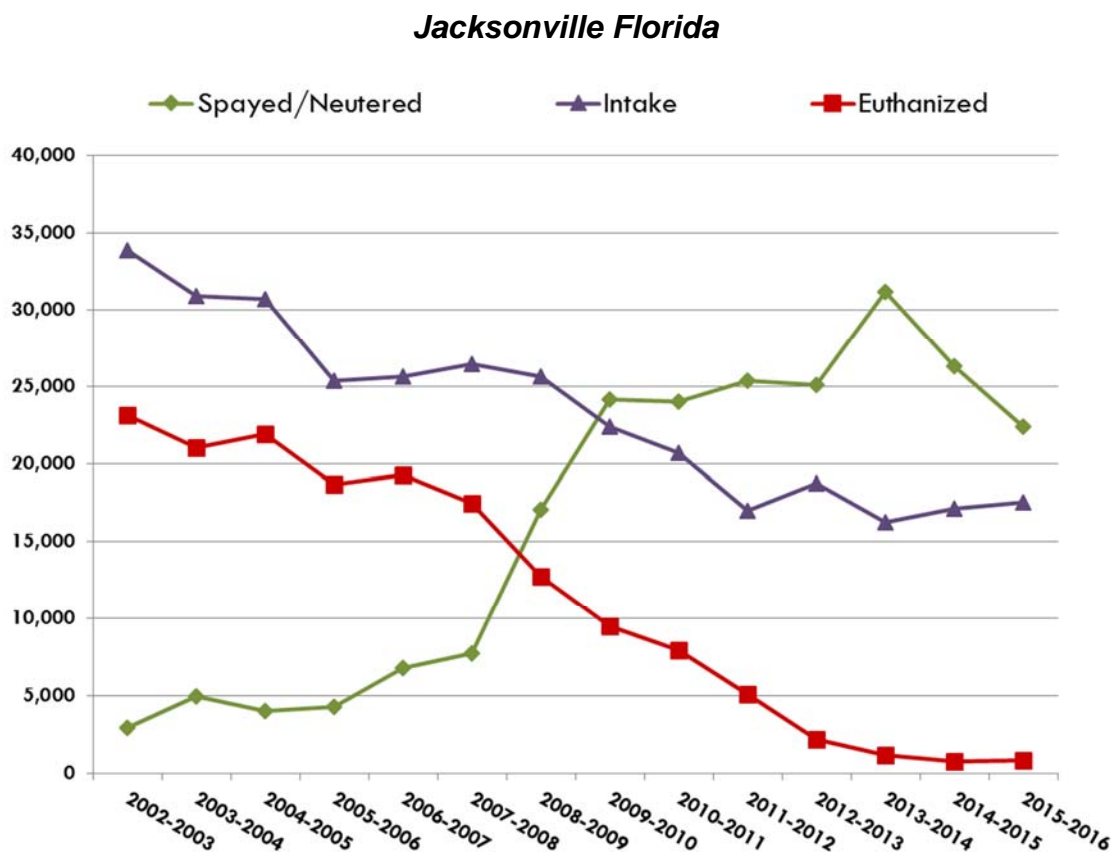


Figure 8: Depicts the inverse relationship between targeted spay/neuter at FCNMHP spay/neuter clinic and shelter intake/euthanasia in Jacksonville, Florida

### Waco, Texas

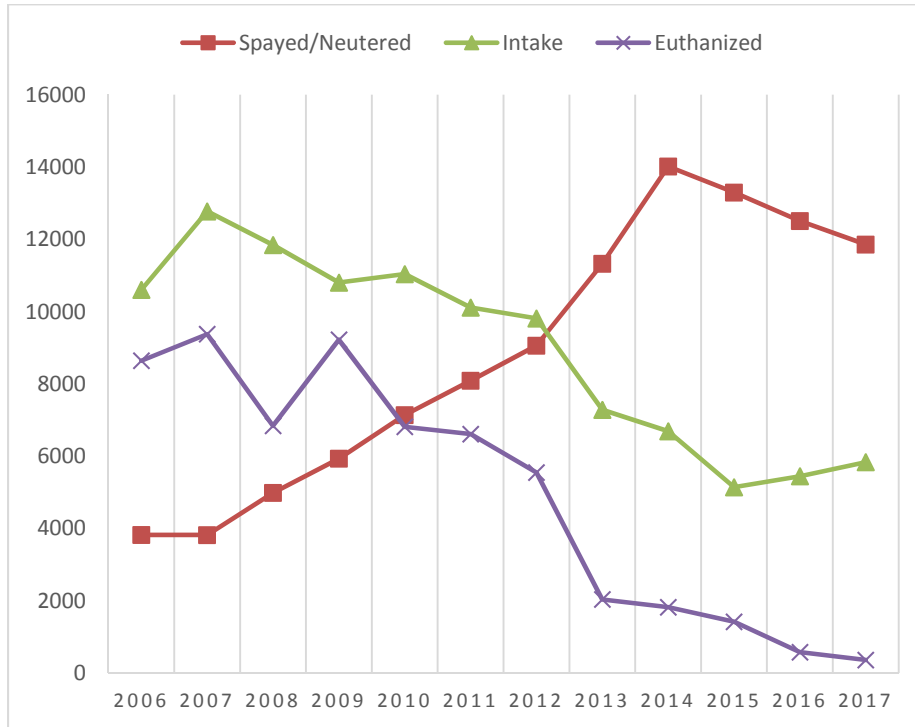


Figure 9: Depicts the inverse relationship between targeted spay/neuter at the non-profit Animal Birth Control spay/neuter clinic and public shelter intake/euthanasia in Waco, Texas

### Nashville, Tennessee

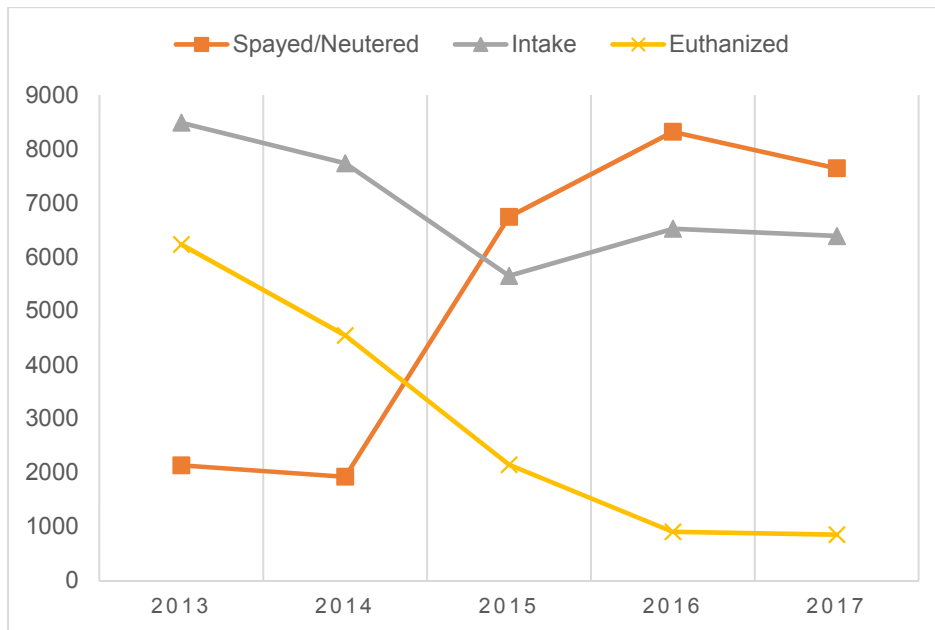


Figure 10: Depicts the inverse relationship between targeted spay/neuter done at the non-profit Pet Community Center and public shelter intake/euthanasia

### Indianapolis, Indiana

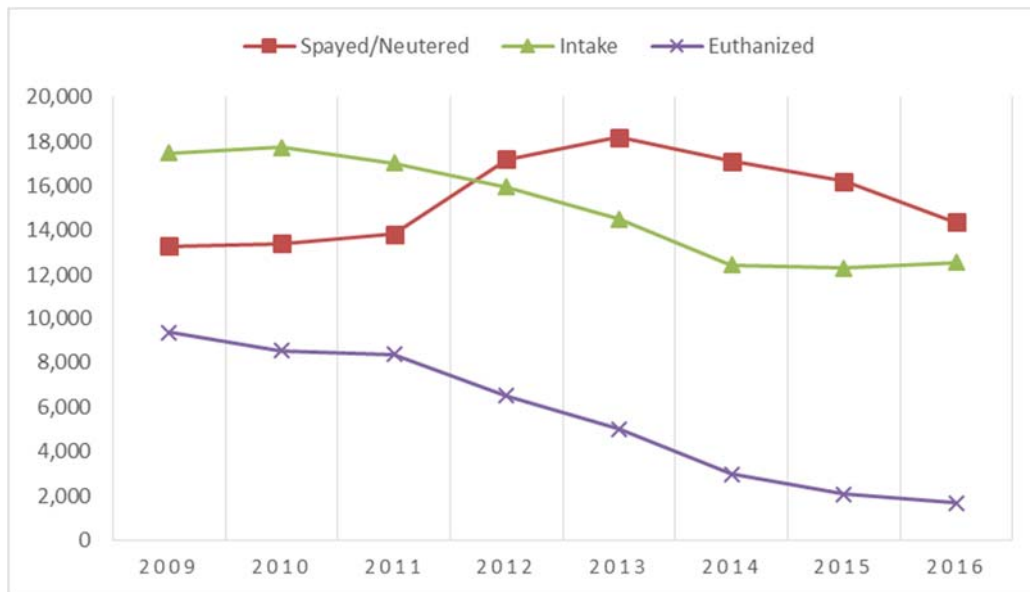


Figure 11: Depicts the inverse relationship between targeted spay/neuter at the non-profit FACE spay/neuter clinic and public shelter intake/euthanasia in Indianapolis, Indiana

## SAFETY NET

### OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No formal Safety Net program
- No appointments required for owner surrenders
- Recently stopped taking in owner surrendered pets due to volume of animals but not offering direct resources
- Management reports staff should be referring to the SICSA intake diversion program but that organization as well as rescue partners are just as overwhelmed
- (Important note: Concern about this recommendation was expressed during public Best Practice presentation on November 27. But animal advocates misinterpreted recommendations for ARC thinking that more animals would be diverted to rescue groups. This recommendation, however, means that ARC would engage in helping pet owners find solutions for a home to home placement or link them to needed resources directly.)

### RECOMMENDATIONS

ARC serves the dual roles of providing animal control services and sheltering of pets. Unfortunately, the traditional sheltering system has adapted a culture of eliminating barriers for intake but creating life-threatening barriers to live outcome. At ARC, this has resulted in a shelter that is chronically overcrowded on the intake side with open space in the adoption areas. Leadership must re-examine the role of the shelter facility and reserve space for animals that are

victims of cruelty, neglect or abandonment, enforcement/court cases and pets with no alternative placements. Last year, 14% of the shelter intake was made up of owner surrenders, representing hundreds of opportunities to intervene (587 dogs and 298 cats).

In 2 recent ASPCA studies, up to 80% of owners interviewed did not want to relinquish their pets to a shelter but did not have access to the temporary help they needed ([aspcapro.org](http://aspcapro.org)). This highlights a common misconception that those that surrendered their pets to a shelter did not care about them. It has been commonplace to allow animals to freely flow into public facilities only to bottleneck a system that leads to euthanasia as a means of controlling the shelter population. By helping pet owners reserve the shelter as the last option instead of the first choice, shelter intake will *productively* decrease.

Effective Safety Net programs focus on helping owners keep their pets or place their pets via other avenues, thus bypassing the shelter. The first step in program development is to identify the needs of these pet owners and match them directly with resources that may be in kind donations and services. In Brevard County, Florida, the sheriff's office took over animal control operations several years ago and in their second year, established a Safety Net program they refer to as Surrender Mitigation. In the first year of this program, 80% of the potential owner surrenders (dogs and cats) were assisted without entering the shelter. In other words, shelter intake decreased in the owner surrender category by 80% because constituents were given access to the help they needed or found an alternative on their own. *This was accomplished with no increase in staff or budget.*

During the initial phone call, the Surrender Mitigation staff identifies the issue and schedules an appointment for a minimum of 14 days later or longer if appointment slots are full. This gives the staff and owner time to work on a resolution. They also take the time to educate the owner regarding the risks of entering a shelter such as exposure to infectious diseases and euthanasia so they understand both parties want what is best for the pet.

Leadership should consider telling owners their appointments are tentative while they assist them with alternatives. This is a practice adopted by the city of Huntsville, Alabama animal services. That shelter transitioned from open intake to scheduling appointments Tuesdays and Thursdays between 11am and 1pm for owner surrenders but only if there was space in the shelter.

A formal Safety Net program should be the first initiative that shelter leadership implements. For one, it engages a community who is eager to help but uneducated about how they can make a difference. Second, it educates pet owners who have mistakenly been led to believe that a shelter has all the resources to rehome their pet. Lastly, it reserves shelter space for the public shelter to provide for the services they were intended, namely animal and public safety.

At the city of Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services shelter, Safety Net staff were originally provided by non-profit partners such as the Jacksonville Humane Society and the First Coast No More Homeless Pets spay/neuter clinic until the shelter could absorb these positions into their current budget structure. These staff also worked at the intake office at the city shelter.



To begin, pet owners who need to rehome their pets should be directed to the free Adopt-a-Pet Rehome site where they can connect with potential adopters thus bypassing the shelter. This information should be available on the ARC website and recommended for those calling on the phone. Home-home.org is also another website that can be customized for ARC and all Montgomery County organizations to link owners in need of rehoming their pets and those looking to adopt. This prevents a shelter intake and is best for every pet.

A Best Friends Animal Society survey and many other shelters such as Memphis Animal Services and the Brevard Sheriff's Office unanimously report that introducing the requirement for an owner to schedule a surrender appointment did not increase the number of abandoned pets on the property, the number of stray pet calls or the number of injured pet calls. At Memphis Animal Services, a sign for the public alerting them to the presence of surveillance cameras and the state law protecting animals from abandonment appears to have been helpful.

Creating a formal Safety Net program is an excellent collaborative opportunity for ARC in the effort to identify in kind services and donations by engaging the community. This is also an area of focus for national animal welfare funders who recognize this proactive investment and over time decreased costs of care in shelters so all grant opportunities should be exhausted. SISCA, the Greater Dayton Humane Society and local rescue partners may be willing to develop a community partnership around the existing programs so pet owners in need have one unified resource.

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## ENFORCEMENT

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- ACOs encouraged to write citations (see also **Customer Service**)
- Dispatch regular calls 8am to 9pm, 7 days a week (see also **Staffing**)
- No standard Chameleon intake process
- No tablets or laptops in vehicles so ACOs write out notes and enter into Chameleon at the end of the day when they get back to the shelter which adds hours to their workload
- Some ACOs scan for microchips and look up info in field on their own personal smart phones, others wait until they return to the shelter so eliminates chance for reunification in the field
- Inappropriate use of catch pole, cat grabber and cat nets observed several times
- Clean vehicles in between animals but not drying enclosures (do not have squeegees small enough for enclosures)
- Ineffective cleaning products used and dilution of bleach not automated/timed appropriately
- Transported parvo dog then took truck out of commission for 24 hours as per Standard Operating Procedures



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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ARC leadership is applauded for recently discontinuing the convenience transport of owner surrendered pets by ACOs, who should be reserved for true public and animal safety. Key to the success of the enforcement program is to equip the ACOs with all the tools they need to be productive in the field. Currently, officers have flip cell phones, radios, uniforms, bullet proof vests, tasers and digital cameras.

A universal microchip scanner, already in each vehicle, should be used to check for microchips in the field routinely. In an effort to increase the return to owner rate in the field, thus preventing a shelter intake, officers should adapt protocols developed by the Port St. Lucie Police Department in Florida. Officers are instructed to stay on the scene when they capture a stray dog, check for a microchip and enter information into the database before leaving. This simple step has helped increase the number of dogs reunited in the field that overall boasts a 74% rate compared to ARC at under 26% in 2017.

Tablets should be purchased that can also replace the need for digital cameras so ACOs can utilize mobile Chameleon in the field. The software is already in place with this feature that can be implemented at no cost with the exception of the purchase price of the tablets. With the ability to enter a picture and information into Chameleon in the field, the reunification process can begin while preventing a bottleneck in the shelter during the intake process.

As discussed, a thorough analysis of each staff person's productivity, including the ACOs should be done. While the National Animal Control Association states that there is no universal formula for the number of ACOs needed in a community, a productivity assessment will be helpful to improve service to residents. Leadership can then determine if additional enforcement vehicles are needed since the current fleet includes 8.

Best Friends Animal Society has recently published the *Humane Animal Control* manual that should be used as a vital reference to supplement this assessment report. All enforcement and shelter staff must provide humane animal handling and be appropriately trained. Catch poles are meant to protect people from dangerous dogs but should never be used to drag them. Cat nets are for use in an emergency situation only and should not be used to transport a cat from one area of the shelter to another. Chemical restraint must be used with a large fractious dog and feral dogs are a better way to transport cats. Both methods are safer for animals and staff.

Sanitation of enforcement vehicles is outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures but was not observed during the assessment visit. Recommendations regarding effective disinfectant with an accelerated hydrogen peroxide apply to the vehicles as well as shelter spaces. Leadership should have a system in place to ensure these protocols are followed as any breach in sanitation can contribute to infectious disease rates (see **Housing, Sanitation and Enrichment~Canines**).

Accelerated hydrogen peroxide is effective on contact for all common shelter pathogens, odors and bodily fluids. With the proper disinfectant and sanitation protocol in place, vehicles do not need to be taken off the road after exposure to a known pathogen, such as parvo virus. Squeegees appropriately sized to use in the enforcement vehicle enclosures should be purchased.

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## MANAGED ADMISSION

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### OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- No formal Managed Admission program
- Discontinued taking owner surrenders at ARC recently but no alternatives offered
- Out of county animals accepted
- No Good Samaritan Foster Care program

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

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Across the animal welfare industry, there are many titles describing a single program. For the purposes of this report, Safety Net is referring to a community program that focuses on matching needs with resources to help owners keep their pets or place their pets, thus proactively preventing a shelter surrender. Managed Admissions is referring to the policies that dictate how certain groups of animals are handled. Charging a fee for certain groups such as owner surrendered pets and for pets from another county is appropriate and has historically been \$40 and \$50, respectively. Leadership is encouraged to determine how many animals are admitted to ARC from other counties and why that need exists.

Managed Admission groups also includes Return to Field (cats) and Good Samaritan Foster Care Ambassadors.

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## RETURN TO FIELD (CATS)

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- No Return to Field program in place
- ARC overcrowded with cats that are housed inhumanely that has led to high levels of upper respiratory infections and subsequent euthanasia

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

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Consultants applaud Montgomery County leadership for the recent decision to not renew cat contracts with 9 municipalities. Prior to the assessment visit, leadership scheduled a meeting with consultants and these civic leaders to discuss the recommendation to keep the budget line item of \$60 per cat but reallocate that money for spay/neuter/rabies vaccination and ear tip then return to the cat's home location. Three municipal leaders described their already successful community cat programs, in place for years. Their testimonials included less complaint calls regarding cats.

Return to Field (RTF) is defined as the sterilization, ear tip and rabies vaccination of a cat, 'found' outside that is friendly or feral, brought to the shelter by a Good Samaritan that is of good body weight with a healthy coat that is returned to their home location the day after surgery. This is distinguished from Trap Neuter Return (TNR) which is a program for cats that are not at risk of

entering the shelter. Municipal ordinance revisions are recommended to eliminate any stray hold periods for cats so they enter the spay/neuter program day 1, have surgery day 2 and are returned to their home location day 3. *This program is considered low risk since less than 3% of the stray cats are reunited with their owners.*

RTF is considered standard Best Practice today and the enormous amount of associated data conclusive. In a 2018 Million Cat Challenge survey of 131 shelters that decreased euthanasia *more* than 50% between 2012 and 2017, Managed Admissions and RTF ranked as the overwhelming reasons. Also, in a 2014 study, Dr. Julie Levy, of the University of Florida, reported that shelters that did not implement RTF had a per capita intake 3.5-fold higher and per capita euthanasia was 17.5 fold higher. From a cost standpoint, decreasing intake can provide opportunities to reallocate resources.

RTF has only benefits in the community:

- Stops the exponential reproduction of participating cats and their associated nuisance behaviors when intact
- Increases community immunity against rabies
- Eliminates complaint calls
- Prevents or stabilizes cat colonies
- Decreases impact on wildlife

Likewise, when implemented correctly, this program has only benefits in the shelter that will:

- Decrease cat intake at ARC year 1 by an estimated 1,000 cats
- Eliminate euthanasia for population control or upper respiratory infections and decrease cat euthanasia each year
- Provide more space for cats that do enter the shelter so less risk of infectious disease
- Drastically reduce adoption competition
- Return 100% of the eligible cats back to their home location (considered the RTO program for cats)
- Provide more resources, staff, volunteers, space, etc. for dogs
- Less stress on staff, dogs and cats
- Result in a 90%+ live release rate

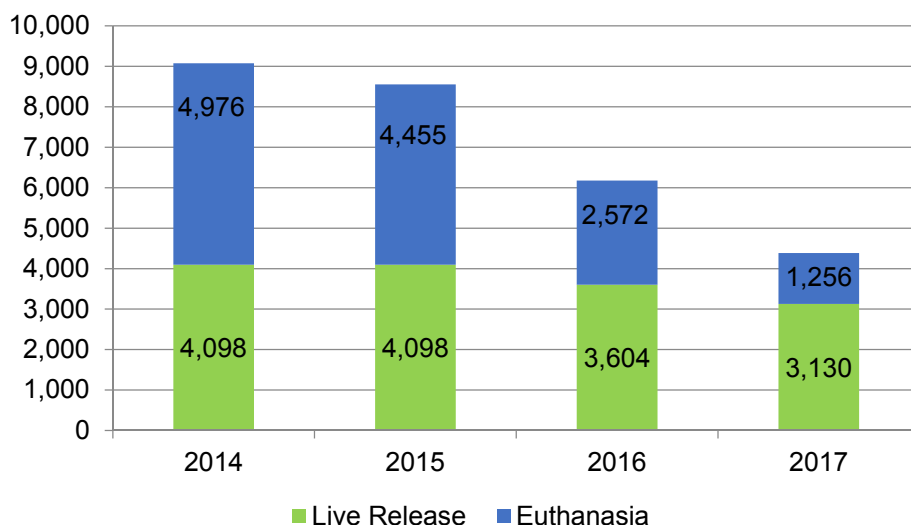
The surgical workload can be divided by all the current Service Providers whether they are private veterinarians, the humane society, SISCA or ARC. At the Greenville County shelter, when offered the surgery at no cost, 50% of the Good Samaritans picked up the cats and returned them home. *In year 1, cat intake and euthanasia were reduced by 2,000 cats that were instead sterilized and returned home.* In a cost analysis, that program proved to be budget neutral.

In 2017, only 35% of the cats that entered the shelter left alive. Although the year to date 2018 live release rate is higher, there remains a gap with the benchmark of 90%+. Leadership is strongly encouraged to begin a formal RTF program. All cats 'found' outside with good body weight and large enough for spay/neuter are eligible for the RTF program. Housing considerations are discussed in the **Housing and Enrichment~Felines** section.

Many public shelter staff who have transitioned to an RTF program are now the biggest advocates. Several testimonies can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyE4XwUFZaY>.

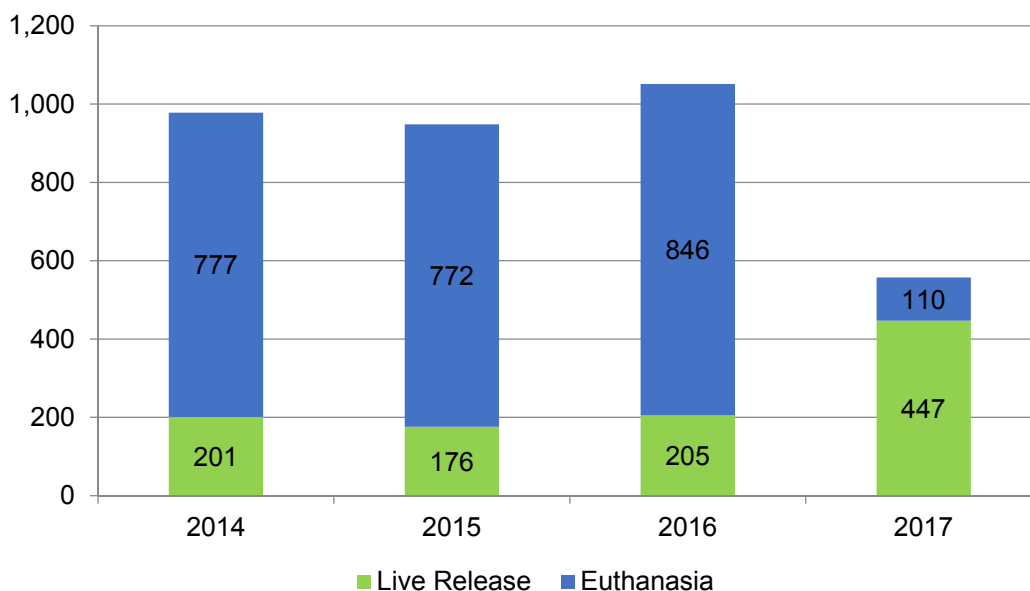
### ***Samples of Impactful RTF Programs***

#### ***Greenville, South Carolina***



*Figure 12: Depicts positive trend of decreasing intake and euthanasia since 2014. TRF Program implemented May 2016 and neighboring Spartanburg County passed TNR resolution in October 2016.*

#### ***Murray County, Georgia***



*Figure 13: Low save rates and high euthanasia continue to trend between 2014-2016. 2017 has seen a significant decrease in intake and euthanasia as lifesaving strategies including the RTF program have been implemented.*

### Montgomery County, Texas

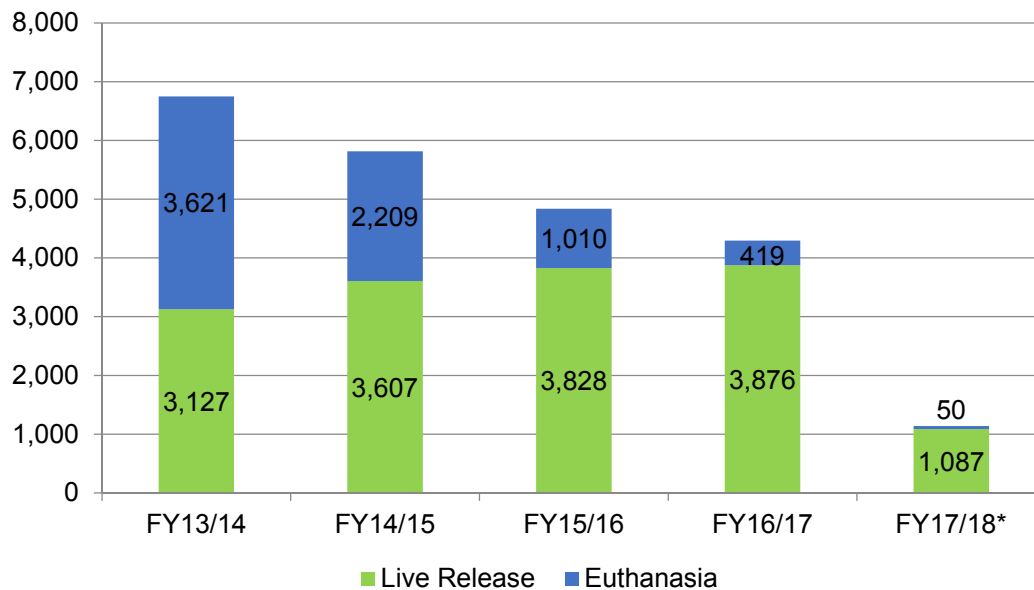


Figure 14: The RTF program was started in June 2016 and has directly resulted in the decrease of cat intake and euthanasia. FY17/18\* statistics are through December 31, 2017.

## GOOD SAMARITAN & FOSTER CARE AMBASSADORS

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No foster programs of any kind with multiple staff reporting 'liability' concerns by the County Attorney's office as the reason

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In a meeting with the County Attorney and Assistant County Administrator, the consultant described the standard practice of foster care programs in both public and private shelters nationwide. Also communicated was the less than 26% return to owner rate for stray dogs and less than 3% rate for stray cats, making foster care a low risk program overall. Good Samaritan Foster Care at the point of intake and in lieu of a shelter intake, Foster Care Ambassadors enlisted after intake and Foster to Adopt during the stray hold were all discussed. Key points to include in a legal document were recommended and an example of a Foster Contract provided (attached). The County Attorney did not see any major liabilities with any type of foster program and the interim director encouraged to follow up to complete the needed contracts.

Staff also reported as ARC employees they were not permitted to do foster care due to union restrictions. Again, the Interim Director should confirm this but at the same time ensure there are clear lines of communication, protocols and a signed contract if staff is allowed to voluntarily foster shelter pets.

A 2015 Maddie's Fund survey revealed that municipal shelters need the most help but are the least likely to ask for it. This is likely due to the perspective that open admission shelter leaders felt victimized without options and forced to admit all animals to the shelter without question. However, successful Good Samaritan Foster Care programs have proven that the fear of negative backlash from the public has instead been met with a willingness to help. The same survey showed that shelters increased the probability of engaging Good Samaritans as foster volunteers when provided resources such as food, crates, spay/neuter and vaccines. That approach is also cost effective as it prevents the shelter intake.

Several years ago, after pleas to the public for foster volunteers went unanswered, Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services, decided to try this novel approach. Along with many robust live outcome programs that yielded short lengths of stay, the foster program was transformed and thousands of underage kittens saved (note: this mature community does not see many puppies in the shelter).

Leadership should develop this program so staff answering the phones or intake staff have the tools to educate these Good Samaritans. Organizations like Alley Cat Allies already have the *Wait Until 8* program that encourages Good Samaritans to wait at least until puppies and kittens are old enough for spay/neuter and that program can easily be adapted at ARC. Orphan Kitten Handbooks are available free of charge at [kittenlady.org](http://kittenlady.org) where educational videos can also be found. This is yet another example of *productively* decreasing intake.

Good Samaritan Foster Care combined with the traditional Foster Care Ambassador program eases the burden on shelter staff and volunteers not to mention reduces exposure to infectious disease with the most vulnerable population. These programs should include avenues for Foster Care Ambassadors to find permanent placements after their fosterlings are sterilized to avoid a second shelter intake. Examples include networking opportunities like offsite adoptions, a special Facebook page and adoption events.

Barriers to recruit foster volunteers and turning Good Samaritans into foster volunteers must be eliminated. As discussed in length in the section pertaining to **Adoptions**, the shelter staff must trust that more people are good than bad. Foster Care Ambassadors should not be subject to any volunteer orientation requirements or other barriers that would create delays in being able to foster and can be provided with a brochure containing all pertinent information along with contact information for the appropriate staff.

All shelter resources including funding and staff/volunteer time must be used wisely. One way to increase efficiency is to streamline communication with Foster Care Ambassadors by using a closed Facebook group and/or Maddie's Pet Assistant app. Once set up, Foster Care Ambassadors can be alerted about shelter pets in need in real time, get standard medical advice as well as appointment reminders for vaccines and spay/neuter.

It is essential to streamline the foster programs and make decisions regarding candidates during Team Rounds, discussed in detail under **Population Management**, if a Good Samaritan is unable to foster.

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## POPULATION MANAGEMENT

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### INTAKE PROTOCOLS

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#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Inconsistent intake process
- Animal Care Providers with too many responsibilities (see also **Staffing**)
- Not all pets vaccinated and given Strongid at the point of intake, though part of SOPs
- Vaccinations like Bordetella not stored properly therefore not 100% effective
- SOP requires booster shot every 2 weeks for puppies/kittens while in the shelter but not done routinely as staff report do not have time
- Reusing syringes after soaking in unknown solution that breaks down rubber stopper over time and is a potential trap for pathogens

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#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The intake bias historically part of the animal welfare system has now been challenged so finite shelter space is reserved for those with no other options. With community minded enforcement, targeted spay/neuter community programs, Safety Net and RTF programs, shelter intake will productively and drastically decrease. The ultimate goal is to use the shelter as the last resort and not the first option to assist constituents with alternatives.

Facing the overwhelming number of animals flowing into the shelter daily, in the absence of proactive live outcome programs, is extremely stressful for ARC staff and volunteers and leads to inadequate animal care. As staff are stretched too thin, Best Practices are forsaken in the interest of speed to finish a task. But information captured at the point of intake is crucial for the most efficient pathway planning. Staff should be trained to do a basic physical exam, even it is only visual (sample SOP attached). The goal is to record abnormalities for the veterinarian to be seen in a timely manner.

Weighing each pet on intake is imperative so they may be dosed with medication appropriately. Under dosing will lead to ineffective treatment while overdosing is wasteful. A walk on scale is appropriate for canines and a human baby scale is appropriate for felines. Both should be disinfected between pets.

Pictures of each pet should be auto uploaded on the website, Petharbor and search engines in real time. This is imperative for stray pets as owners will search online first as well as those searching to adopt a pet. Although photos must be taken of pets involved in enforcement cases, they should not be posted to the website, search engines or Facebook. This should be automated through Chameleon. Volunteers can still be recruited to provide flattering photos of the adoption animals after intake.

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***ALL CANINES AND FELINES MUST BE GIVEN CORE VACCINATIONS AND STRONGID DEWORMER ON INTAKE WITHOUT DELAY IN ORDER TO START BUILDING IMMUNITY***

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As per the Association of Veterinarians *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters* it is not acceptable to expose or house species that are naturally prey and predator together, such as dogs and cats. Cats should not be walked through dog areas. An alternative area should be set up so there are separate areas for cats and dogs to receive their initial physical, preventive care and any medical follow up.

Routine deworming should be provided for each pet with Strongid. In addition, administering Ponazuril at the same time as Strongid prevents issues with the intestinal parasite *Coccidia*, common in puppies and kittens and should be repeated in 2 weeks. Vaccinations for all dogs and cats should be given on intake and repeated in 2 weeks. Puppies and kittens should continue receiving booster vaccines every 2 weeks up until age 20 weeks if still in the shelter or foster care (see attached guidelines).

SOPs for vaccinating shelter pets appears to be in place but not routinely followed with animals missing vaccinations. Pharmaceuticals in need of refrigeration, must be stored according to the manufacturer's guidelines to ensure they are as efficacious as possible. Other items, like syringes, are not designed to be reused and that practice discontinued.



*Figure 15: These photos depict a mini-fridge housing vaccines in D3 that was not cooling appropriately and a bowl of syringes waiting to be cleaned and reused*

Animals often enter the shelter with no history of vaccinations and therefore no immunity to common shelter pathogens. In addition, viruses like parvo and distemper have incubation periods during which time pets look normal and will not test positive until they show clinical signs. Vaccinating on intake is the only action available to provide any level of immunity.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) and Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) are now known to occur in less than 10% of cats and when positive and sterilized, have a negligible transmission rate. For



these reasons, recommendations regarding testing all felines before adoption are evolving. In lieu of testing, shelter staff can educate adopters about testing at their own veterinarian. Cats part of the RTF program do not need to be tested for the same reasons as it does not change the decision tree (see **Adoptions**).

Dogs over 6 months should be tested for heartworm disease using the IDEXX or Witness test. When this is done on intake, the appropriate Plan of Action pathway to live outcome can begin.

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## DAILY LIVE OUTCOME TEAM ROUNDS

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- No Population Management/Daily Live Outcome Team Rounds for pathway planning
- No cage card holders and some missing cage cards not with shelter pet so public and staff forced to take extra steps to find information
- Have Chameleon bar codes on cage cards but not using scanners for Population Management
- Only path from the back to the front of the shelter for cats is through a dog kennel
- Self-imposed bottlenecks increasing length of stay by weeks to months out of public view or on website:
  - Spay/neuter surgery (discussed under **Shelter Medicine and Surgery**)
  - Dogs over 5 months held in stray hold until temperament test done
  - No process for follow up on repeat temperament tests with different results so dogs remain in stray hold for unspecified period of time (*example*: ID A052924 unnamed in D3-72A)
  - Requirement for veterinarian or technician to examine all pets prior to moving them from stray hold to adoptions. On one day of the assessment week, 13 cats and 37 dogs were waiting to be examined, with some waiting for several weeks and at least one since November 2
  - Holding some cats for 2-day stray hold per contract with specific municipalities even though no stray hold for cats exist in the ordinances
  - No animals are moved to adoption areas during the stray hold period
  - During a spot check of enforcement cases, no follow up notes in Chameleon
  - No consistent follow up for SAFE PET program:
    - *Example*: Scooter (ID A044846), 18 years old was admitted on September 11, with the last entry in Chameleon record was on September 18. When consultants questioned status on November 30, they were told that an ACO would be sent to the home that day to post notice. Consultants were then informed Scooter would become the property of ARC in 3 days if there was no response from the owner.
    - *Examples*: Rosie (ID A050996) and Milo (ID A050995) entered the shelter on August 10 when ARC was called to pick up the dogs after the owner was taken to the hospital. The ACO left a note at the house on that day and there were no follow up notes in Chameleon since. When consultants questioned staff on November 30 regarding closure and rehoming options for Rosie and

Milo, they were told an ACO would be sent to the house, a note left on the owner's door and said that the dogs would become the property of ARC if the owner did not respond in 3 days.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Once community programs are up and running, the RTF program begins and all efforts to find alternative placement for pets are exhausted, there will be far less entering the shelter and therefore lower levels of infectious disease. For those that do enter the shelter, it is imperative that a Plan of Action to move them to live outcome begin at the point of intake. Exceptions include court cases in progress, large dangerous dogs and medical/surgical cases without hope that would be part of the euthanasia pool under 10%. Enforcement cases with unavoidable long lengths of stay should be included in Daily Live Outcome Team Rounds in an effort to monitor mental/physical health and provide proper enrichment and ensure that closure for a pet is not delayed (see also **Housing, Sanitation and Enrichment~Canines**).

Basic things like attaching a cage card sleeve on each enclosure, keeping the cage card with the pet and using the scanner/bar code system all help the staff work more efficiently.

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### *ADDRESSING SELF IMPOSED BOTTLENECKS WILL ALLOW FOR THE FLOW OF SHELTER PETS TO LIVE OUTCOME IN THE SHORTEST LENGTH OF STAY BUT WITH THE PROPER ENRICHMENT*

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The requirements to move pets to the adoption area should be revisited. In the wide scope of the shelter population, the issue of a stray hold for cats will no longer be in place in the absence of municipal contracts. Cats brought into the shelter who were 'found' outside and large enough for surgery, will be part of the RTF program so should be returned to their original home day 3.

For dogs and puppies brought in as stray, historical stats show that less than 26% of the dogs will be reunited with their original owner and will be in need of rehoming. Most importantly, as part of Fear Free shelter, the fewer times pets are forced to become accustomed to a new space, the less fear, stress and anxiety they will feel. From an infectious disease standpoint, keeping shelter pets in the same (humane) space throughout their stay mitigates the spread of pathogens. For these reasons, the visiting public should be able to view all pets for potential adoption whether or not it is during their stray hold. When this concept is adopted, dogs may stay in their original enclosure without having to move them into what is now the front adoption area. Exceptions are court cases, dangerous dogs and zoonotic cases which can be housed in a kennel section off limits to the public.

There is no alternative pathway for cats between intake/stray hold and the front lobby adoption area. Cats are terrified when walked directly through a dog kennel. Leadership is encouraged to create/build/retrofit such a path as exposure to an entire dog kennel is unacceptable. Fortunately, incoming stray cats will now be part of the RTF program and returned to their home location without a lengthy shelter stay.

Often times in animal welfare, requirements are put in place with the best of intentions but that do not correlate with intended goals. Behavior temperament tests are one such example. Though the ASPCA originally developed these tests, their own research has confirmed that behavior seen in this snapshot of time under very unnatural conditions, do not correlate with behavior in the home. ASPCA Position Statement on Shelter Dog Behavior Assessments (<https://www.asPCA.org/about-us/asPCA-policy-and-position-statements/position-statement-shelter-dog-behavior-assessments>).

If a dog is exhibiting unprovoked egregious aggression, the dog would not be considered for placement. However, leadership is strongly encouraged to create positions with staff who can lead, train and engage volunteers to provide enrichment and when needed behavior modification for dogs. This will help the team make the most appropriate placements with an adopter or rescue partner and this team can be expanded greatly with willingly volunteers trained appropriately in dog behavior and handling.

Conversely, an adopter is given what appears to be a guarantee when a dog passes a temperament test. If the dog later bites after the adoption, the adopter could accuse ARC of giving them a false sense of security regarding the dog's behavior. Consultants discussed this topic at length with the Assistant County Administrator and the County Attorney, both of whom agreed. For these reasons, the requirement to complete a behavior temperament test should be changed.

Identifying physical abnormalities is very important and why training staff to do basic physical exams is imperative (see attached SOP). The medical team simply does not have time to examine the volume of animals coming into the shelter and worse yet, staff commented that during the assessment week was a 'slow time'. This is expected as it is common for shelters to see a much higher increase in intake in the summer months. The system to alert the medical team when a pet is in need is already in place, however, these needs are being overshadowed by the requirement to do a physical exam on each.

Consultants are very appreciative that ARC staff want to help pets in need through the SAFE PET program. However, this program should be discontinued until further notice as pets are not cared for properly, kept in acceptable spaces, vaccinated appropriately or provided with needed medical care, kept clean or provided with enrichment. With all shelter pets, regardless of how they entered, there must be a plan in place for their live outcome whenever possible. ARC leadership should instead collaborate with SISCA and the Greater Dayton Humane Society who already participate in the program and to create a crisis foster program for those pets for a finite period of time such as one month.

Team Rounds is a system designed to improve animal flow-through efficiency, decrease wasted animal care days, decrease length of stay to live outcome and provide early recognition of the needs of individual animals. Team Rounds should be conducted 7 days a week with trained staff to stand in when the regular participants are not available. While this initially sounds overwhelming and time consuming, once this system is in place, Team Rounds should take no more than 30 minutes to cage check each pet. The key is to identify high level needs that are addressed at a later time with all follow up recorded in Chameleon and reported the following day during Team Rounds to confirm tasks are completed.

To be effective, Team Rounds requires:

- A key staff person from the medical team, adoption/rescue/foster team (when hired) and enforcement
- A lap top or tablet to look up/update notes in Chameleon
- A walk through of the assigned team to cage check each pet
- A system to communicate decisions and follow up on action steps
- Prompt actions on decisions
- Clear lines of authority, responsibility and accountability

During Team Rounds the staff physically walks through the shelter and asks for each animal:

- Who are you?
- How are you?
- Are you where you should be?
- Do you need something today?
- Do you need something scheduled for later, such as spay/neuter?
- What could we do today that increases your chance of a live outcome?

The effective use of Chameleon software streamlines population management. With proper data entry, reports can be generated for pets who need medical care, rescue, foster, surgery and pets in the shelter longer than 10 days who may need enhanced marketing. If Team Rounds was in place, the shelter pets in the examples above could have been rehomed in a shorter period of time.

Exposure to potential adopters has already been discussed. Trends indicate that rehoming is the most likely pathway for all pets since only a small percentage are reunited with their owners. This also supports the recommendation that animals unlikely to be placed in the adoption area be posted for transfer when they enter the shelter. Again, this will provide the greatest chance to decrease their length of stay.

Finally, when all options and partnerships are exhausted or live outcome is not appropriate because of severe behavioral or medical issues, *the team* can discuss a euthanasia decision. If euthanasia is the destined outcome, this should be expedited quickly to avoid suffering. When strategic Best Practices are implemented, this should happen less than 10% of the time.

## SHELTER MEDICINE & SURGERY

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Requirement for medical team (made up of 2.5 staff, the veterinarian, one fulltime technician and one part time technician) to do a physical exam prior to pet moving to adoptions has created overwhelming backlog and overshadowed pets in need of medical attention
- On one day during the assessment week 37 canines and 13 felines were pending a physical exam
- All cats were symptomatic with upper respiratory infections with several waiting since November 3 and 6 for a physical exam
- Doing fecal tests even though protocol to give Strongid on intake treats zoonotic intestinal parasites
- Using fecal loop to acquire fecal sample during vet exam and if none available, container goes with dog for an animal care provider to collect at a later date
- Not all pets vaccinated and given Strongid at the point of intake and none receiving follow up boosters and dewomers, though part of SOPs
- As per SOP, parvo positive test requires automatic euthanasia
  - *Example:* A 3-month old bright, alert, responsive puppy entered the shelter (ID A053286) on November 27 and consultant noted that the puppy was very clean and highly adoptable so posted a picture on Facebook highlighting an example of an adoptable puppy at ARC in an effort to gain positive publicity. Within an hour, however, the puppy vomited once, was tested for parvo virus and euthanized.
  - *Example:* A 1-year old highly adoptable Labradoodle mix, ID A053208 was not vaccinated on intake. 1 week later, while still in stray hold she began vomiting and having diarrhea that was not treated in a timely manner. The following day when the dog continued to have issues with vomiting and diarrhea, a parvo test was done and was positive. As per SOP, this dog would have been euthanized but consultants intervened during a meeting with the SISCA director and the Assistant County Administrator, who stated that a medical fund was available. The dog was transferred to a SISCA partner veterinarian to receive treatment that afternoon.
- Process in place to alert veterinarian about a pet in need of attention through Chameleon but medical team overwhelmed with physical exam backlog
- Using Clavamox, an antibiotic, to treat early viral upper respiratory infections that could have been prevented with humane housing and shorter lengths of stay
- Several cases of shelter pets with unmet medical needs including pain relief:
  - *Example:* Buddy (ID A049214) listed as 1.6 years but 10 years old as per owner who surrendered, emaciated, exposed bone at the end of his tail, placed on doxycycline but no pain medication, no indication that he should receive food more than once daily (but note in Chameleon that staff was looking for a transfer partner)
- Tramadol, a controlled drug, should be replaced with other non-controlled drugs that can provide broader pain relief
- Digital x-ray unit from Sinclair Community College's Veterinary Technician program that is limited to teaching students as opposed to diagnosing shelter pets when needed.

According to staff, the machine can only be used when students are present at the shelter (which is 2 times per week for 4 week intervals while classes are in session)

- *Example:* (ID A053200) had arrived in the shelter the week before and a handwritten note on the cage stated the dog was injured and needs assistance walking with a towel or leash under abdomen. Staff reported that if they move her too fast she snaps so was likely in pain. The dog was prescribed Tramadol while looking for rescue but was a prime candidate for an x-ray to isolate the painful injury.
- Students from Purdue University veterinary school do 7 to 10 surgeries daily 75% of the time (note: at the current save rate, an average of 20 surgeries per day are needed but as life-saving improves and the RTF program begins, increased surgery capacity will be needed)
- Wasted animal care days due to surgery bottleneck with adopters waiting to pick up pet for one week or more
- No recovery areas in surgery so medical team waits for pets to recover/wake up in 1 of 3 dog kennels or 1 bank of cages for cats
- Veterinary and technician students not exposed to Best Practice sheltering

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Consultants are encouraged that ARC has onsite surgery with 2 surgery tables and a caring medical team. However, with one 1 veterinarian and 1.5 technicians, it is not possible to perform a physical exam on each pet, complete the daily spay/neuter list and provide the appropriate attention for sick and injured animals. In addition, because there is no designated Rescue Coordinator, the technician often is involved in that process in an attempt to help more shelter pets. During the assessment week, county leadership reported that the current vacant outreach specialist will be used to coordinate transfers, a very welcome and needed position.

The veterinarian should train all staff, in particular intake staff, to perform a nose to tail physical exam. This exam can be done in just a few minutes with the goal of staff learning how to identify normal versus abnormal findings. Pets with normal physical exams and no signs of medical issues or aggression, would be eligible for the adoption program, even during their stray hold. The system is already in place for staff to record abnormalities in Chameleon so the medical team can print the list of pets in need of medical attention on a daily basis, however, there must also be a system for the veterinarian to be alerted to emergency needs and a plan to provide medical care on the weekends when the medical team is not working. The shelter is large enough to warrant 7-day veterinary coverage and leadership should consider hiring a per diem or part time veterinarian 2 days a week for shelter medicine cases and surgery.

Providing Strongid covers treatment for intestinal parasites that pose a threat to people. Therefore, it is not necessary for staff to take the time to perform fecal tests on all shelter pets as their time can be used more productively. Equally as important is to prevent the discomfort a pet feels when a fecal loop is inserted into their anus to acquire a sample. The shelter environment already poses enormous challenges, both physically and emotionally for pets, so eliminating unnecessary and uncomfortable procedures is crucial in the quest to provide a Fear Free environment.



Note that less than 1% of the practicing veterinarians in the United States devote their careers to shelter medicine. The identification and hiring of a part time shelter veterinarian/surgeon is challenging for all shelters so leadership should be open to hiring a private practice veterinarian willing to learn the nuances of shelter medicine. All veterinarians utilized as surgeons should be performing at least 30 spay/neuter surgeries per day with 2 support staff.

Leadership must ensure that the medical team has all basic medications to treat issues commonly seen in shelter pets. While Tramadol does provide pain relief, it is best to replace it with non-controlled medications. A better option with broader pain coverage for canines could be a combination of Gabapentin and generic Rimadyl, neither of which are controlled. On the other hand, there is a limited selection of easily administered pain medications in cats. Buprenex is available in both oral and injectable forms and is controlled. The oral amount prescribed for cats is a very small and the injectable lasts 3 days so lowers the treatment burden on the medical team.

While it is very common for veterinarians to use the antibiotic Clavamox for upper respiratory infections, antibiotics are designed for bacterial infections and have no effect on viruses. The key is to implement the Best Practices in this assessment report, prevent intake of cats, provide humane housing if they do enter the shelter and place them as quickly as possible. Once this system is in place, upper respiratory infections will be infrequent. Cats should never be held in the shelter 'to get better' as it is the shelter environment that is making them sick.

In the current state of the shelter operation it is understandable that puppies and dogs testing positive for parvo virus are euthanized immediately, for fear of the disease spreading. However, progressive shelters are putting treatment programs in place to treat this virus in the shelter and ARC can consider that in the *future* when effective Population Management and disease control measures are in place. In the meantime, partner agencies may be willing to transfer/treat early parvo cases and the ARC medical fund used to subsidize care especially with highly adoptable puppies and dogs.

A digital x-ray unit is a tool that most shelters do not have and a very welcome addition for ARC, although it appears there are restrictions for use and limited to teaching veterinary/technician students as opposed to diagnosing issues for shelter pets. This may be a function of the limited medical team and should be revisited. Diagnostic x-rays can help pathway planning for each pet in need as well as cost savings for transfer partners and adopters.

The desire to teach veterinary students is exceptionally admirable but this program has dwarfed the surgery capacity at ARC and should be postponed until surgery capacity is stabilized. Also of concern is that veterinary and technician students are not learning about standard Best Practices in animal welfare at ARC.

Due to the limited number of runs for dogs and cages for cats in surgery, the medical team is doing only the number of pets who can fit in those cages and wait for them to recover before doing more. The following are the recommendations to improve surgery protocols, flow and therefore capacity:

1. Create the surgery list the night before and place NPO (no food/water) sign on kennel so adults are not fed breakfast
2. Adults should eat the night before surgery
3. Kittens and puppies under 5-month should not be fasted and must be kept warm while under anesthesia
4. Surgery runs (dogs) and cages (cats) should be filled in the morning so cats and dogs are kept separate
5. Canines:
  - a. Pre-medicate with acepromazine subcutaneously
  - b. To induce, give telazol intravenously then continue to intubate (adults) or continue to mask (puppies) and maintain on isoflurane
  - c. Give morphine and meloxicam for (adults and puppies) for pain relief
6. Felines:
  - a. To induce give a combination of torbugesic/telazol and dexdomitor intramuscularly
  - b. Mask with isoflurane
  - c. Give meloxicam for pain relief
7. One towel should follow the pet from induction through recovery
8. Surgery tables should be disinfected with accelerated hydrogen peroxide
9. Trach tubes, masks and any other tools/instruments should be disinfected between patients (nolvasan scrub is an excellent choice with all surgical instruments appropriately autoclaved with tape to ensure sterilization, if not already done)
10. Recover surgery patients on floor with heating pads and blankets to keep warm
11. When ambulatory, return to shelter run/cage

Please note that it would not be acceptable to return dogs and cats to filthy cages post operatively so this recommended surgery recovery protocol must be done in combination with other recommendations. Pets should be returned to their enclosure once it is clean and they are provided soft bedding. A sign on the cage can communicate to staff and the public that the pet may be sleepy after surgery and not behaving normally.

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***ALL DRUG PROTOCOLS MUST INCLUDE PAIN RELIEF FOR ALL ANIMALS HAVING SPAY/NEUTER OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF SURGERY OR FOR TREATMENT OF PAIN.***

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To address the current and prevent future surgery backlog, pets should be sent to their new homes with a Foster to Adopt or Spay/Neuter release and leadership should enlist the help of area Service Providers such as Greater Dayton Humane Society, SISCA and private veterinarians.

When these improvements are made, local veterinarians will be more willing to help and partner with the shelter. These relationships will take time to re-build but crucial to help more dogs and cats in the community.



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## EUTHANASIA PROCESS

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Euthanasia solution (Fatal Plus) not tracked with ending balance as per the DEA or Ohio State Statute 479-9-14
- Unacceptable inhumane animal handling practices:
  - *Example:* Chain link fence hinged to wall in euthanasia room and leadership reported that it was used to trap fractious dogs while injecting Fatal Plus
  - *Example:* Observed staff person carry a cat in a net to transfer from the stray holding room to the euthanasia room
  - *Example:* Observed dogs being dragged by the neck with a rabies pole
  - *Example:* Staff attempted to handle fractious cat (ID A053219) that scratched staff person resulting in a 10-day hold
- Do not disinfect between pets to remove odors and current sanitizers not enzymatic
- Deceased bodies thawing in freezer with strong stench smelled in euthanasia room and nearby hallways
- Staff, volunteers and many transfer partners in community suffering from severe Compassion Fatigue and burn out

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

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Controlled drugs are regulated by the federal Drug Enforcement Agency and the Ohio State Statute. As discussed during the exit interview, an audit should be done to ensure all controlled drugs are tracked appropriately as consultants did not see logs with a running balance of drugs on the property. Controlled drugs are kept double locked and leadership reported that the volume given to each pet is recorded in Chameleon.

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#### ***STAFF MUST BE TRAINED TO HANDLE ALL ANIMALS HUMANELY AND CHEMICAL RESTRAINT USED ROUTINELY WITH PETS SHOWING SIGNS OF AGGRESSION***

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When proven Best Practices are implemented, the euthanasia pool of 10% or less will include only large dangerous dogs that cannot be rehabilitated and medical cases beyond hope. But regardless of the number or behavior of any pet, excessive force should never be used as a means of restraint. Protocols should be in place for staff to administer oral sedatives in a meatball of canned food, for example, or use an injection pole to give a sedative. Current practices are terrifying for animals and dangerous for the staff, opening the county up for the liability and cost of worker's compensation claims. The chain link fence should be removed without delay.

Once the RTF programs are in place, few feral cats will be housed at the shelter and therefore euthanized but these handling methods apply to surgery as well. Feral cats should never be handled. Transport should be done only in a feral den and if a feral cat needs to be anesthetized for surgery or euthanized, an injection pole can be used while the cat remains in the den or a trap divider (sometimes referred to as a fork) used to hold the cat on the end of the trap (see **Housing, Sanitation and Enrichment~Cats**).

Currently, there is a fractious cat in the stray hold room that scratched the staff person who tried to handle him. The cat was being held for a 10-day rabies hold. Since the RTF program did not start yet, and this incident occurred and the cat scheduled to be euthanized after the hold, a better solution for the cat and the staff would have been to euthanize the cat and test for rabies.

Staff reports that they do not test for rabies and will hold animals for a 10 day quarantine instead of sending sample off for testing. Staff did report that health department employees come to the shelter and use their facility to remove the head of wildlife when needed. It is unclear if the current policy of the 10 day hold for a pet scheduled to be euthanized is one made for budgetary reasons but leadership is encouraged to find out.

Accelerated hydrogen peroxide is recommended as the sanitizer to use throughout the shelter and for enforcement vehicles. This sanitizer has the added benefit of enzymatically breaking down bodily fluids, such as urine, that have high levels of cortisol from stressed animals. Sanitizing between pets will decrease those odors.

In a follow up call after the emergency list was provided to county leadership, the freezer issue was being addressed and fixed. Consultants appreciate that this issue was addressed as the stench of deceased bodies was overwhelming for staff and even worse for animals with more sensitive olfactory systems.

As euthanasia numbers decrease, the obvious benefit for the animals is life-saving. By doing that, it lifts the devastating burden of euthanizing animals who entered the shelter healthy. Staff, volunteers, rescue and transfer partners and the community all benefit.

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## HOUSING, SANITATION & ENRICHMENT~CANINES

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Appropriately designed double sided dog runs in most areas of the shelter but due to the lack of effective Population Management, divider doors kept closed at all times, which has led to many negative consequences:
  - Dogs have no place to lay down without laying in their own feces and urine
  - On Tuesday, November 27, 4 Animal Care Providers scheduled, 2 were assigned euthanasia and at 5pm kennels were not yet cleaned and shelter pets not yet fed
  - Staff have no good options to sanitize kennel forcing them to tether dogs next to each other (same for other single enclosure runs with no divider doors)
  - Staff are forced to handle aggressive dogs, which is a liability for the county with respect to worker's comp claims
  - When divider doors closed, many sides of runs too small yet medium to large dogs housed in them
  - Smaller dogs may be housed in larger enclosures, while larger dogs are housed in smaller enclosures with inadequate space
- Automatic water bowls challenging to sanitize properly

- Several automatic water bowls broken and flooding kennel (IDA052165 in D3-34 and A053007 in D3-48A both unnamed in Chameleon)
- Large drain troughs covered with slatted decking that is a challenge to sanitize properly
- Slatted decking warped due to lack of support underneath forcing dogs to lay in uncomfortable positions
- Using 2 disinfectants not effective against common shelter pathogens (Trifectant and Vetanall)
- Using bleach with water but not diluting or using properly
- Do not always sanitize enclosures between pets due to overwhelming workload
- Varied responses given when asked if dogs were fed once or twice a day
- Limited enrichment only for dogs in adoptions as volunteers not allowed in stray hold
- No outside play yards with grass or soft surface like Astro Turf, limited to cement play yard which can be damaging to paw pads
- Toys seen in adoption center during the assessment week but none in kennels
- Dogs in stray hold or quarantine/ISO do not receive toys or enrichment
- 106 decibels in kennels dangerous for staff who are at risk of hearing loss with chronic exposure and uncomfortable for potential adopters
- Only a few dogs with soft bedding, several dogs observed shivering in cages with no bedding provided
- Many dogs exhibited signs of severe anxiety, stress and mental breakdown such as excessive barking, spinning, jumping, growling and shivering
  - *Example:* An enforcement case involving 13 dogs (and 1 cat) were admitted to the shelter on April 23. During the assessment, they were housed in single enclosures, provided with no bedding, toys or enrichment of any kind. All dogs exhibiting severe signs of stress and anxiety (as below)
- Staff reports many enforcement cases from the city of Dayton take long periods of time to settle. Currently 3 court cases are pending involving 18 dogs and 1 cat housed at ARC.



*Figure 16: These 2 dogs have been held as part of a court case since April 23, 2018 and exhibiting severe signs of stress and frustration such as spinning and jumping when they saw a person in the doorway to the kennel*





*Figure 17: Several examples of dogs in cages/runs too small surrounded by their own feces*



*Figure 18: More examples of dogs housed in unclean runs in the afternoon because of understaffing*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing, sanitation and enrichment are discussed together as they are intricately related to one another along with effective Population Management. Double sided dog runs with divider doors are the best design, as is natural light in many animal holding areas as seen at ARC. Having access to the food bowl without opening the run door is also an effective design feature for dog runs.

Animal Care Providers do their best to scoop feces, scrub and dry enclosures before putting dogs and puppies back and some were provided with something soft to lay on. Unfortunately, without the effective flow of animals through the sheltering system and sections of single enclosures for dogs, staff do not have good choices and are forced to tether dogs next to one another during the sanitation process.

***IF ARC ADMITS AN ANIMAL TO THE SHELTER, STAFF IS OBLIGATED TO HOUSE AND CARE FOR THEM PROPERLY***





*Figure 19: Because the double sided runs are not being utilized as designed, shelter staff is forced to tether dogs next to other dogs' kennels.*

Once Safety Net, Managed Admissions and Team Rounds is instituted, staff will be able to house 1 dog or puppy in a run with the divider door kept open. A soft bed should be placed on one side of the run and all shelter pets provided with interactive toys that can be disinfected. The Kong company has a shelter donation program that ARC leadership should register for ([kong.com](http://kong.com)). Kongs may be stuffed by volunteers with peanut butter or other soft food, frozen then given to dogs once daily as an interactive toy to combat boredom.

Another excellent tactic involves attaching small cups on the outside of each run and allocating a certain number of treats per dog. Staff and the public could then offer a treat or kibble to a dog who sat down or was quiet at the front of the kennel as positive reinforcement.

While sequestered on one side, dogs can be fed breakfast while the opposite side of the run is sanitized then the dog switched to the other side to repeat. The only time the divider door should be closed is during the sanitation process.

Leadership should consider removing the automatic water bowls that are very difficult to disinfect between pets. A better option would be to attach stainless steel buckets (by the handle to a clip attaching it to the run wall) as water bowls. The buckets could be removed for cleaning then re-attached and filled with water. In the meantime, broken automatic watering systems must be fixed.

Another improvement would be to have covers directly over the drains in each run as the current slatted hard plastic is not only difficult to clean but does not provide a soft surface for rest. It also takes up space preventing the addition of Kuranda beds, for example. All shelter pets need a soft surface to rest as an option.



*Figure 20: The only place for this dog to lay in on the hard decking which is warped and sunken into the open drain*



Accelerated hydrogen peroxide such as Rescue® is considered the most efficacious, is a one-step cleaner disinfectant, is effective on contact and safe for canines and felines (product sheet attached). Accelerated hydrogen peroxide products do not need to be rinsed with water thus staff can work more efficiently. All areas of the shelter should be sanitized with Rescue® and during this transition, a company representative can set up automatic dispensers to eliminate human error.

Rescue® can be used in spray bottles as well and every container of disinfectant must be labeled appropriately. Staff must be educated about the location of MSDS labels and the handling of the disinfectant. Disinfectant must never be hosed or sprayed near animals. Solid material on flooring such as feces and vomit should be discarded in a designated receptacle using a Pooper Scooper which is ergonomically healthier for staff and eliminates the aerosolization of feces that is made up of bacteria and often times zoonotic intestinal parasites. This also prevents feces from causing plumbing issue. Rescue® should replace the current group of disinfectants.

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*ALL SHELTER DOGS SHOULD BE FED A MIXTURE OF DRY AND CANNED FOOD TWICE DAILY WITH HIGH NEED PETS SUCH AS UNDERWEIGHT/EMACIATED DOGS AND NURSING MOMS AND PUPPIES FED 3 TIMES A DAY*

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Food, water, medical care and enrichment of all of equal importance for shelter pets. Dogs should be fed a mixture of dry and canned food twice daily while nursing moms and young puppies fed 3 times daily and provided with a higher ratio of canned food. If known dogs are co-housed together, each must receive their own bowl of food as providing one bowl invites dominant behavior. Nursing moms, sick and injured and puppies have higher caloric needs and should be fed 3 times daily.

Many ARC staff care very deeply about the shelter dogs but simply do not have time to walk and provide individual attention. This makes the development of the volunteer program crucial as nothing replaces regular exercise and volunteers can provide this basic service. Programs such as Dogs Playing for Life™ trains staff and volunteers how to create safe play groups for dogs so they can exercise and socialize in outside play groups (dogsplayingforlife.com). It is also an excellent opportunity for dog-loving businesses and individuals to support the shelter with in kind or financial donations for additional fencing that would be needed at ARC since the cement fenced in areas would damage paw pads during such play groups.

Dogs on stray hold are in as much need of attention and enrichment as the dogs in adoptions. With the transition to allow the public to view all pets, even on their stray hold, both subtypes can be treated equally. As mentioned several times, enforcement cases and/or dangerous and contagious pets would not be accessible to public viewing without a staff person.

Barking is a sign of stress in shelter dogs and a result of lack of exercise and visual/auditory stimulation. Each of these interventions will alleviate the noise level of barking, however, sound mitigation panels/foam should be installed without delay in each of the dog kennels. This will immediately provide a much more comfortable environment for the dogs, barking will decrease and therefore be more comfortable for the public and safer for the staff who are at risk of hearing damage.

All of these steps are important for shelter dogs but even more crucial for enforcement cases housed long term. When appropriate and with the permission of the County Attorney, long term foster volunteers should be identified. For cases where there is no foster available or not appropriate due to behavior concerns, daily enrichment is even more important. Monitoring pets housed long term is a key function of Team Rounds who can provide early intervention.

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## HOUSING, SANITATION & ENRICHMENT~FELINES

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Most cages in stray hold below 11 square foot minimum *per cat*, defined as inhumane by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians
- Within small cages, step stool added that takes up more space
- Cages below 11 square foot minimum directly correlated to stress that directly correlates to upper respiratory infections yet staff report towels in cages contributing (and therefore not permitted)
- Some cages in stray hold below minimum standard for 1 cat, housed 2 adult cats
- Cats in stray hold waiting for physical exam by medical team, several for up to 3 weeks at time of assessment
- High rate of upper respiratory infections with 100% of the cats affected in both rooms
- Incoming healthy cat placed in cat stray hold destined to succumb to an upper respiratory infection quickly
- Cat from court case held in small cage in stray hold with no enrichment since April 23
- Litter boxes too small
- No hide boxes or dens for feral cats (cardboard hide boxes were found in another room covered in dust, but none given to cats, consultants provided to some cats and they immediately went inside)
- Using nets and cat grabber to remove cats
- At 4:30pm on one day of the assessment, cat holding had not yet been cleaned and many cats were without food or water
- Immediately after cleaning, small amount of water in each bowl so appears to be offered in limited amounts
- When questioning staff about the reason for feeding cats once daily, consultants were told by staff it was to limit the amount of feces
- Variety of responses regarding what cats are fed with most staff saying feed only dry food and others saying they provide some canned food
- Even though inadequate housing and care at ARC with high rate of upper respiratory infections, accept cats into SAFE PET program and house in cat stray hold:
  - *Example:* Oscar, (ID A052082) entered ARC on November 14 since the owner is homeless. Oscar is underweight, unthrifty with possible dental issues but no medical care is provided (although he is being fed canned food)
  - *Example:* Pepsi (ID A053188) and Kitty B (ID A053189) entered the shelter on November 19

- Not using Trifectant disinfectant correctly which needs to be diluted according to the manufacturer's guidelines, stable only for specified time once mixed and needs appropriate contact time
- Litter boxes not sanitized after emptying to 'keep the scent' for the cat
- No spot cleaning done
- No enrichment provided such as toys, hiding options or soft bedding but when provided with these items were noticeably more content, rubbing head into bed, playing with toys, etc.
- No options for staff to move cats from stray hold to the lobby or adoption area without walking through a dog kennel

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The absence of Safety Net, targeted spay/neuter, Return to Field, inhumane housing for cats, not vaccinating in a timely manner or not vaccinating at all on intake, along with the lack of Population Management has led to an excessively high rate of upper respiratory infections, as expected. Staff is commended for increasing the cat save rate from a reported 35% in 2017 to 56% as of October 31, 2018. As mentioned, the variety of stray hold requirements for cats has yielded less than a 3% return to owner rate, in line with the national average and consultants highly encouraged about the 2019 plans for the new approach to community cat management with the municipalities.

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**THE RTF PROGRAM IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROGRAM TO IMPLEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THIS WILL DECREASE CAT INTAKE BY AN ESTIMATED 1,000 CATS PER YEAR AND RESOLVE MANY OF SYMPTOMATIC ISSUES LISTED ABOVE. IMPLEMENTING SAFETY NET WILL DECREASE INTAKE EVEN FURTHER.**

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Some Shor-line condos in the cat stray hold room are of appropriate size and the balance of the high-quality stainless-steel cages can easily be retrofit with a \$70 portal. This will solve many problems and the negative sequelae that staff deal with on a daily basis.



Figure 21: The upper right corner cage is the appropriate layout; however, the cage on the top left is too small. Installing a portal between the 2 would provide the recommended square footage



Figure 22: Most of the cages in the cat stray hold rooms are too small and do not meet the needs of the cats. Again, a portal installed between these 2 cats would provide the recommended square footage for 1 cat.



Double sided cages, just like the dog runs, will allow staff to sequester a cat on one side while the other side is spot cleaned. Spot cleaning is recommended for cats as removing them from their enclosures to disinfect is not only unnecessary but stressful for the cat. Items in the cage should stay with the cat such as bedding and newspaper, unless soiled. Once the cat leaves the enclosure for good, the cages can be fully disinfected. Rescue®, the accelerated hydrogen peroxide should replace the quaternary ammonia products and bleach. Only items that can be disinfected or are disposable should be used throughout the shelter. Paper disposable litter boxes should replace the plastic litter boxes as it will decrease risk of cross contamination and save time during the cleaning process.



*Figure 23: Shows an example of stainless-steel cages retrofitted with one porthole between two cages so food, water and bed can be placed on one side and the litter box is on the other. Staff can then close the portal to spot clean while the cat is on the opposite side.*

Cats are most comfortable when they have options. When housed in the very unnatural setting of a shelter, the design of their environment is crucial. All shelter pets must be afforded the opportunity to make normal postural. Cats are fastidious and prefer their food, water and bedding as far away from their litter box as possible. All cat housing should include soft bedding and a place to hide.

Ideally feral cats should stay in their trap until their release day 3. If the transport container is not appropriate or must be returned to the Good Samaritan, feral cats should be transferred via a feral den. This should be done by opening the end of the feral den so the cat has no other option but to enter the feral den. The den can then be placed in a cage with access to food, water and a litter box. *Feral cats should never be handled unless under anesthesia and the use of cat grabbers discontinued. A feral den is meant to transport the cat but not for long term housing of the cat.* Feral dens also provide a safe space for cats to hide. Trap forks should also be ordered so cats can gently be sequestered on one side of the trap when anesthetized for surgery.

Shelving should be set up to temporarily house RTF cats. The shelves should be lined with plastic trays with lips for feral cats in traps. Traps should be elevated on top of the trays with PVC pipes cut lengthwise so urine and feces can fall through the trap. Nothing should be placed inside the trap with the cat except food and water. Double sided traps with the doors that lift straight up are easier to feed and care for the cats as opposed to the single door traps that lift out providing an avenue for escape.



*Figure 24: Sample shelving unit with PVC risers for elevation and removable trays lined with newspaper for catching waste. Traps should be covered so neighboring cats cannot see one another.*



*Figure 25: Sample cat housing utilizing a feral cat den for short term housing*

Proper nutrition is essential and cats and kittens should be offered free choice dry food in a bowl as cats are grazers and prefer to eat small amounts throughout the day. They should also be offered a second bowl with canned food twice daily and 3 times daily for kittens.

Enrichment for shelter cats is just as important as it is for dogs. Simple inexpensive items can be used as interactive toys such as ping pong balls and providing an area for cats to scratch and express normal behaviors is beneficial ([www.imperialcat.com](http://www.imperialcat.com)). Finally, there can never be enough attention to sound abatement in shelters not designed for cats as well as avoiding pathways where cats are exposed to dogs in the shelter building.

Well-meaning staff and volunteers transfer pathogens between shelter pets exponentially more than the public. Part of enrichment for all shelter pets is human interaction so people should be encouraged to pet the cats. Signs for the public can include the message, 'Help us keep the shelter pets healthy. Please use this hand sanitizer between pets!' as opposed to negative signs telling the public not to do something.

The current lack of knowledge regarding cat behavior has led to the misconception that cats are 'feral' when they are acting in response to fear. Staff must be trained to recognize a feral from a friendly cat that is afraid as friendly cats eligible for the RTF program can be placed in a regular cage (see Alley Cat Allies, Feral and Stray Cats – an Important Difference, **Resources and Recommended Reading**).

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## LIVE OUTCOME PROGRAMS

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The importance of the length of stay as it correlates to negative outcomes has been repeated and well documented throughout this report. When considering difficult to place pets, focus should be on alternatives other than shelter intake. Effective live outcome programs are crucial to the Population Management and flow of animals to their permanent placement and part of a successful life-saving system. This includes return to owner, RTF, adoption, transfer to rescue or private shelter and foster care.

Leadership communicated pressure to balance the budget by ensuring revenue goals are met through adoption fees, yet those fees are correlated to increased length of stay and therefore costs of care. The cost of care to house shelter pets for months is far more expensive than the current adoption fee revenue potential. In addition to productively decreasing intake and therefore costs of care in several areas, life-saving organizations attract more donations, volunteers, partnership and collaboration opportunities and grants when promoting low or fee waived adoptions as the norm.

## RETURN TO OWNER PROGRAM (RTO)

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- Return to owner rate of stray dogs not determined during the assessment week as number is combined with enforcement cases returned to their owners (less than 26%)
- ACOs may admit dogs to the shelter without checking for microchip in the field
- Not posting stray pets on website and search engines on intake/real time (saved as unavailable or evaluation while waiting for physical exam or behavior evaluation, as discussed)
- Stray hold for cats according to municipality despite less than 3% return to owner (resolved as of 2019 when cat contracts will not be renewed, municipal ordinances are revised and because no mandated stray hold in state statute)
- Limited hours for owners to search for their pets
- If owner comes to the shelter and does not have identification, not allowed to look in stray hold for their pet so staff brings possible matches to the lobby (this is an issue since all pets are not posted online, breed is often not accurate and wastes valuable staff time)
- Owners who lost their pets are instructed to place a flyer in the Lost and found notebook in the lobby yet no follow up is done with no flyers that gives owners a false sense of security

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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Consultants were encouraged to learn from the website that all shelter dogs are registered on the Finding Rover app and that owners in search of their lost pets have access to the shelter at least partial hours 7 days a week.

Implementation of the RTF program that will return most cats to their home location should be considered the RTO program for cats. For dogs, statistically, chances are that another live outcome opportunity must be found. To increase the RTO rate for dogs, there are several key steps.

ACOs should be attempting to reunite dogs in the field and Datamars universal scanners should be mandatory in all enforcement vehicles so the team has the tools they need. Leadership should also consider using microchips from the non-profit Found Animal Foundation. These chips are not only cost effective but the mission of this non-profit is to reunite pets. There is no additional fee to register pets, transfer owners or update information that presents barriers with other chips and accurate owner information.

As discussed, mobile Chameleon can be used by ACOs in the field who can be instructed to enter information about the dog during the call. This will increase the likelihood of reunification and prevent a shelter intake. All pictures whether taken by an ACO or intake staff, should be posted in real time and set up to auto populate the website, Petharbor and search engines.

County leadership should design all policies and procedures with the ultimate goal of compliance and structure programs that set up pet owners for success. Allowing the public to view pets on



and off their stray hold will decrease the workload for the Animal Care Providers. Owners in search of their lost pets should not have to provide identification but rather proof of ownership, to reclaim their pet. Finally, hours of operation should be convenient for the public and the shelter open 10am to 6pm 7 days a week.

When owners attempt to reclaim their pet at the shelter they should be given a financial incentive to spay/neuter, microchip, rabies vaccinate and license their pet for a low fee similar to adoption recommendations as opposed to providing barriers with high fees and citations viewed as necessary revenue. Punitive action should be reserved for perpetrators of cruelty, neglect, abandonment and intentional non-compliance. Sterilized pets are less likely to roam looking for a mate, create a nuisance and a rabies vaccination is a public health incentive. Such a program is mutually beneficial.

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## ADOPTION PROGRAMS

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- No designated adoption counselors
- Excessively high adoption fees starting at \$65 for felines to \$165 for canines that correlated to higher lengths of stay
- Shelter pets not posted on the website and search engine for days or weeks
- **Many** missed adoption opportunities observed during the assessment week
- On November 27, 3 dogs were available for adoption despite 96 in holding area (not including court cases or SAFE PETS) that were potentially adoptable (the few dogs housed in the adoption area were already adopted yet waiting for spay/neuter)
- On November 27, no cats were in either adoption room and visitors told none available even though many in stray hold potentially adoptable but waiting for physical exam
- Public not allowed to view pets on stray hold and no Foster to Adopt program
- If do not bring entire family including current dog(s) to the shelter to meet potential new dog and need to return then not eligible for a refund
- Not providing rabies vaccinations for shelter pets and instructions not clearly communicated at time of adoption about need
- Heartworm test added to adoption fee if requested
- Recently started testing cats for Feline Immunodeficiency and Leukemia viruses before moving to community/group adoption rooms
- Community/group housing for unfamiliar cats recommended for long term housing only
- When using community/group housing, sterilizing males before moving up but not females

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The concept of open adoptions means that shelter staff and volunteers welcome all potential adopters and work together towards making the right match for both pets and people, making the assumption that there are more good than bad pet owners.

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THE ADOPTERS WELCOME GUIDELINES BY THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE REQUIRED READING FOR ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS (SEE **RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDED READING**).

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We now know that adoption fees are not correlated to a proper placement and should not be viewed as an attempt to recoup money spent for the care of a shelter pet. Low and fee waived adoptions are correlated with lower lengths of stay and now considered Best Practice. Competition for adoption is 'free from the street', in particular with cats. With the current excessively high adoption fees, ARC is accumulating higher costs of care due to longer lengths of stay so the assessment team recommends implementing low and/or fee waived adoptions for all cats and dogs until further notice.

An application should be used to capture the potential adopter's information and information about the type of pet they are looking for and their lifestyle. This may be done with a simple 1-page form. All staff should be retrained and taught the open adoption philosophy so they are able to educate people pre and post adoption. Consultants can link leadership to other shelter directors who have transitioned to successful open adoption programs as well as many excellent webinars (see **Resources and Recommended Reading**).

The term 'pit bull' is slang for a bully breed and these dogs are over-represented in all shelters in the United States for the simple reason that they are the most common mix. Unfortunately the media has created a very negative bias against these types of dogs that is unfounded. The American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Bar Association and even State Farm insurance along with many other professional organizations that include all national animal welfare groups, agree that breed or the way a dog looks is *not* associated with aggression.

In an effort to correct this misconception, many shelters are eliminating the use of breeds when a dog does not look like a true pure bred. A mixed breed would simply be listed as 'mixed'. PAWS in Anderson County, South Carolina, Memphis Animal Services in Tennessee and the Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services in Florida are just a few examples of shelters who have made this transition.

As discussed, the public should have the opportunity to view all pets online and in the shelter, including those on stray hold, with the exception of court cases, quarantine, dangerous dogs, etc. This is another strategy that will decrease the length of stay. The public should not have access to where enforcement cases, dangerous dogs, etc. are housed. There are many missed adoption opportunities as potential adopters inquire about pets during their stray hold and are told to return to the shelter to check on the status at a future date.

The adoption process should be welcoming and user friendly. Conversational adoptions, without judgement, are now considered the standard and best way to make permanent placements in appropriate homes. Staff should be trained to counsel potential adopters in the interest of making the right match and any policy in place should be with that in mind. Current family dogs should *not* be brought to the shelter as it is a very unnatural and intimidating environment. The reaction between the dogs in the shelter setting is not indicative of their potential to bond. What is important is to have adoption follow up to assist adopters ensure a smooth transition.

It has been well documented in this report that the majority of the pets entering the shelter will *not* be reunited with their original owner and will ultimately need to be rehomed. A Foster to Adopt program, decreases the dog's exposure to infectious disease, stress of shelter housing and the cost of care for the shelter. After the legal stray hold, the pet can then be sterilized and the adoption processed. Should the owner be found, the Foster to Adopt contract would mandate that the dog be returned to the shelter to be reunited with the rightful owner. This is an especially helpful program while the surgery program is operating under capacity.

As discussed, as Best Practice standards are implemented, proper Population Management will ultimately allow for pre-adoption spay/neuter but in the meantime, other processes can be put in place to decrease the length of stay. As a temporary measure, adopted pets should be released with a spay/neuter agreement and an appointment for surgery made at ARC or a Service Provider. A staff person should be assigned to follow up on each pet to ensure they are sterilized.

When ARC accepts a pet into the shelter, there is a baseline of care that must be provided during their stay and for adoption. All pets over 3 months of age should receive a rabies vaccination. ARC is an organization created to protect animals and people and this should not be optional. A heartworm test for dogs over 6 months should be included and positive dogs going to rescue or adoption be treated with Immiticide. Asking the community for donations for the medical fund, that already exists, can be used for medical cases like heartworm. When medical issues are resolved or included in the adoption, there is a higher likelihood of placement quickly.

On the other hand, recommendations for testing of Feline Immunodeficiency and Feline Leukemia viruses (FIV/FelV) are evolving. These viruses are no longer considered as serious as once thought. Consultants applaud the medical team for testing cats prior to moving them into the community adoption rooms but early research is showing the transmission rates between cats that are sterilized are negligible. Adopters can be counseled about FIV/FelV and instructed to have their new cat tested at their own veterinarian.

In any event, community rooms should be reserved for bonded cats as research has shown that it takes at least 3 weeks for cats to become accustomed to one another. The length of stay for any cat should be much shorter, with the exception of enforcement cases. If cats are co-housed together in a community room, it should be in a space providing 18 square feet per cat, while the need for individual housing is 11 square feet per cat.

During the assessment week, consultants moved a bank of cat cages into the large cat adoption room. Another bank of cages should be moved from stray hold that include the Shor-line condos with appropriate space or stainless-steel cages with portals as described in **Housing, Sanitation and Enrichment~Felines**. The smaller cat adoption room can be used for one litter of kittens or bonded adults as litters should not be mixed to minimize cross contamination if there are any incubating viruses.

Staff appointed to social media must capitalize on all available technology to promote adoptions as hosting events or promotions are useless if the public does not know about them. Important avenues to publicize adoptions and/or events include but are not limited to:

- Post on website
- Request that local animal welfare organizations share information through their social media channels and consider a community adoption event with open adoptions
- Contact local news media and community newspapers
- Create and utilize Twitter and Instagram accounts to showcase shelter pets using flattering pictures and entertaining videos
- Signs in the lobby

With some basic changes in the philosophy of Population Management and low fee adoptions, ARC will quickly realize the great life-saving adoption potential.

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## TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- No designated Rescue Coordinator so Operations Manager and veterinary technician do their best to manage
- Hostile and challenging relationships between many rescue groups and ARC leadership that has resulted in fewer animals transferred
- Variety of chronic complaints from rescue groups regarding multiple issues so groups not welcome at ARC or have chosen to work with other shelters in need
- Pets in adoptions not eligible for rescue transfer unless over 14 days
- Due to the issues with Population Management and length of stay, many pets with infectious diseases that make it more challenging for rescue partners to transfer in addition to added costs of treatment for diseases that could have been prevented
- Rescue partners often denied pets that ARC staff believe they can adopt and due to fear that the shelter will not have enough highly adoptable pets left
- Pets on stray hold not eligible for rescue transfer since no foster care program (unless serious medical)
- May have fees to transfer
- Ask rescues to take challenged animals with medical, behavioral or other issues
- Cage cards not labeled if other groups have tagged the pet or are interested so some rescues are told after they committed that there was a previous hold
- Fear in rescue community that if they complain about an ARC policy will be denied transfer privileges
- Due to strained relations with rescue groups, some now required to have an escort when viewing potential pets to transfer
- After identifying potential pets to transfer, rescue partners must wait in line in lobby with the general public to transfer pets

- At least one transfer partner suggested that groups outside the area have preference over local groups resulting in longer lengths of stay when holds are placed

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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In 2017, the majority of pets were not reunited with their original owners and almost half of the pets that entered the shelter were euthanized. As of October 2018, the live release rate has increased to 62% and there remains much life-saving potential. ARC must examine and therefore eliminate all self-imposed barriers to live outcome discussed at length throughout this assessment report. The shelter is large enough to warrant a dedicated staff person as a rescue partnership coordinator and consultants applaud county leadership for adding an Outreach Specialist that will fill that crucial role. Transfer partners include 501c3 organizations that may be rescue groups, the Greater Dayton Humane Society, SISCA or other private shelters.

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**THERE IS A LONG AND DEEP HISTORY OF MISTRUST BETWEEN THE RESCUE COMMUNITY AND ARC. THESE RELATIONSHIPS MUST BE HEALED ON BEHALF OF THE LIVES OF SHELTER PETS AND IN THEIR NAME, BOTH SIDES MUST COME TOGETHER TO CREATE A PLAN TO MOVE FORWARD IN UNITY.**

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County leadership is advised to create a survey that can be answered anonymously to capture relevant information from 501c3 partners. Partners can answer a combination of multiple choice questions with space to ask why or why not certain policies are in place and how a specific issue will be handled in the future, for example. The responses can be used to formulate an agenda for a meeting with county leadership when answers to the questions in the survey can be answered in addition to any other business.

This can also be a forum for county leadership to outline steps to improve the operation. Transfer partners can then offer feedback to county leadership in an effort to create mutually beneficial policies and procedures with respect to transfer partnerships. There should be a formal approval process for 501c3 organizations to ensure all are operating legally and caring for animals properly.

Once approved, transfer partners should be able to transfer any and all pets they think they can place quickly on a first come/first serve basis at no charge. This will decrease the overall length of stay and therefore cost of care for shelter pets at ARC. Providing basic procedures and covering current medical costs will enable partners to transfer more pets quickly. Transfer partners should also be eligible for the Foster to Adopt program for pets during their stray hold and commit to transferring pets within 24 hours of a commitment when appropriate.

Transfer partners must also embrace an open adoption philosophy in order to save the most pets and all are encouraged to read and embrace the HSUS guidelines, *Adopters Welcome*. Many groups are also willing to take pets with medical and behavioral issues but understandably must move animals through their own systems quickly so they can reach their life-saving potential as well.

In summary, some key ideas for the county include:

- Streamline communication with transfer partners using the Postmaster add-on in Chameleon so partners get auto emails about pets twice daily
- Identify Rescue Coordinator so groups have 1 point of contact and do not have to wait in line at the front desk
- Provide contact on the 2 days that the Rescue Coordinator is off
- Allow partners to view all pets in the shelter and enter Foster to Adopt contract when appropriate
- Assist/provide medical assistance to include x-rays if needed
- Do not charge transfer fee
- Create a system for transfer partners to resolve issues if the Rescue Coordinator is unable

In summary, some key ideas for transfer partners include:

- Assign 1 representative to communicate directly with the Rescue Coordinator (once hired)
- Provide any requested follow up in a timely manner
- If enter into a Foster to Adopt contract, return pet as instructed if owner found within the stray hold period
- Transfer shelter pet within 24 hours of commitment
- Join coalition of Safety Net to help streamline and amplify work already being done by all groups
- Help market shelter pets when unable to transfer

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## HIGHLIGHTS~RESOURCE ALLOCATION & COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

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### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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- No attention to productively decreasing intake that will decrease costs of care by:
  - Finding alternatives for pets through Safety Net program
  - Creating foster care programs (Good Samaritan, Foster to Adopt, Foster Care Ambassador)
  - Returning community cats to their home location
- Punitive approach to enforcement as opposed to community-minded engagement
- Self-imposed barriers, discussed throughout this report, that lead to increased length of stay, high rates of infectious disease and therefore increased costs of care:
  - Not posting all pets on intake
  - No Population Management
  - Limited viewing for owners in search of their lost pets and potential adopters
  - Minimal to no follow up on current pets in SAFE PET program
  - Minimal to no follow up on current Enforcement cases (although it is understood that this is mostly in the control of the attorneys and legal process)

- Requirement for physical exam and behavior temperament test prior to making pets available
  - Surgery bottleneck
  - Non-productive stray hold period for cats
- Understaffed in key areas of shelter operation preventing basic animal care and customer service
- High adoption fees that have contributed to increased lengths of stay
- Vaccines not stored appropriately so not as effective, waste of resources
- Many staff forced to deal with symptomatic issues that could be prevented with effective Population Management leading to overwhelming workload and understandable Compassion Fatigue and burnout that in turn decreases productivity and threatens collaborative relationships
- Many missed adoption opportunities
- Limiting/denying life-saving assistance from partners along with lack of transparency that has led to hostile, challenging and strained relations with rescue and transfer partners
- Minimal pursuit of grants
- Questions raised regarding use of donations/bequests since 2014 (audit not completed during assessment week)

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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ARC appears to have good working relationships with the municipalities, the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine, Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, Sinclair College, Wright State University, and some transfer partners. The community of animal advocates and many willing potential adopters are eager to help save shelter pets and ensure they receive the care they need. The County Administrator's team, all commissioners and many ARC staff are equally committed.

The opportunities listed above have been discussed at length throughout the assessment report with Best Practice recommendations presented. Some suggestions will result in decreasing costs, some will prove to be budget neutral while others, such as the addition of staff will likely increase the need for budget allocations as the Table of Organization is missing key positions. The universal commonality embedded in each recommendation is to ensure there is no waste of resources whether capital, human or shelter space.

Funding is a challenge for every shelter organization, public or private, so it is crucial to utilize existing funding to strategically maximize impact. Part of that goal is to leverage other animal welfare organizations in true partnership that is mutually beneficial.

The Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services has maintained a 90%+ save rate for years despite facing budget cuts each year. This has been made possible in Jacksonville and in many places around the country, like Aiken County, South Carolina where strong public~private collaborations have capitalized on the strengths of all types of organizations. The non-profit Friends of the Animal Shelter in Aiken County oversee the volunteer, rescue and adoption



programs. In the Cincinnati area, groups began working together and a short year later were awarded a \$100,000+ PetSmart Charities community collaboration grant.

Animal welfare funders favor groups that collaborate as they understand their donor dollars can be more impactful when organizations work together towards the same life-saving goals. All national animal welfare funders and even the largest grant applications are basic and are not as labor intensive as the human sector. PetSmart Charities, Best Friends and the Petco Foundation are examples of groups that award significant amounts of money to all types of shelters as does Maddie's Fund, while groups like the Million Cat Challenge may have links to smaller scale donations.

National and other animal welfare funders have now recognized the difference funding public shelters can make in a community where pets are most at risk. All opportunities should be pursued for grants. In addition, the County Administrator is encouraged to audit the use of donations since 2014 to confirm that all have been used appropriately.

In addition to animal welfare funders, leadership is encouraged to approach businesses, foundations and funders outside of the animal welfare sector. Philanthropists may have an interest in helping animals but not be aware of the needs.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The consulting team truly appreciates the opportunity to assist Montgomery County leadership implement proven Best Practice standards at ARC. While the volume and depth of recommendations may initially seem daunting, even small steps in the right direction will lead to positive outcomes in a short period of time.

Many of the recommendations require a new perspective and corporate culture shift regarding how the shelter assists constituents. Yet Best Practice standards have proven to provide sustainable resolution in communities larger, smaller, more rural, more urban and with much higher poverty rates when compared to Montgomery County. Best Practices allow staff to work smarter not harder. Because of this shift in philosophy regarding many programs, it is imperative that commissioners, county administrators, ARC staff and local animal advocates are educated regarding ongoing improvements. As indicated throughout the assessment, there are several steps that must precede others.

County leadership is encouraged to create new vision and mission statements for ARC with input from staff, volunteers and the community. Creating and developing partnerships from this point forward will require trust, mutual respect and constant communication to all stakeholders and even small wins should be celebrated. The consulting team is confident that the Montgomery County team and community can come together and move forward in a productive way on behalf of the animals in need.

Team Shelter USA and the University of Florida assessment team looks forward to helping the Ohio Animal Resource Center become a national model of Best Practice standards and promises that a 90%+ live release rate along with effective public and animal safety responsibilities can be achieved within 2019.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

INTRODUCTION	
Appoint Interim Director to oversee implementation of Best Practice recommendations	Done 11/30/18
ARC staff and volunteers to watch Best Practice presentation if did not attend November 27 (link)	
Use <i>Humane Animal Control</i> manual as a resource (link)	
Send key staff member to HSUS Expo in April 2019 or the Best Friends conference in July 2019	
Read Association of Shelter Veterinarians <i>Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters</i>	
Read Association of Shelter Veterinarians <i>Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-neuter Programs</i>	
Ensure all ARC staff and volunteers are Fear Free Shelter certified when available in 2019	
ADVISORY BOARD	
Consider dissolving the current Advisory Board structure and replace with ARC Task Force	
Create vision and mission statements for ARC Task Force that includes keeping current on Best Practice standards with input from the staff, volunteers and community	
Clearly define purpose and function of Task Force	
Create staggered term limits, governance structure	
Create committees to work in subgroups and report back to the Task Force (see page 8)	
TECHNOLOGY	
Enlist Chameleon staff to do onsite visit, ensure clean database and provide staff training on features not yet utilized	
Ensure complete transparency of accurate data with ARC staff, commissioners and community advocates	
View Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center stats report at <a href="http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/residents/animals-and-pets/pet-advocacy/pet-resources-reports-and-statistics">http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/residents/animals-and-pets/pet-advocacy/pet-resources-reports-and-statistics</a> .	
Allow pictures and information of each pet to be posted in real time on website and search engines	
Assign staff person to post pictures, videos and updates on Facebook page	
Ensure all follow up information and updates are entered in each pet's Chameleon record in real time	
Purchase tablets for each ACO and implement mobile Chameleon	

Train staff to use Visual Kennel	
Train staff to use scanner/bar code system	
Use Postmaster add-on to auto-communicate with transfer partners	
In addition to Shelter Animals Count matrix, track number of strays brought in by the public versus ACOs	
In addition to Shelter Animals Count matrix, track number of pets helped through Safety Net	
In addition to Shelter Animals Count matrix categories, track number of cats part of RTF program	
In addition to Shelter Animals Count matrix, track number of stray dogs versus resolved enforcement cases returned to their owner separately	
With the assistance of the Chameleon team, create helpful templates with input from staff	
With the assistance of the Chameleon team, create helpful reports with input from staff	
<b>STAFFING FOR 7 DAYS PER WEEK SHELTER OPERATION</b>	
Fast track filling of vacancies	
Complete analysis of each staff person's job duties and assignments	
Analyze Table of Organization with respect to balance of supervisory oversight	
Ensure enough staff to sanitize enclosures and feed all shelter pets by 10am	
Reassign Outreach Specialist (now Rescue Coordinator) to answer to a supervisor other than the director	
Reclassify vacant ACO position to a veterinary technician	
Add 2 Behavior/enrichment Coordinators	
Add 1 Foster Care Coordinator	
Add 2 Adoption Team Leaders	
Add 1 full time operator	
Add Safety Net coordinator to schedule owner surrender appointments and identify alternatives for intake	
Hire per diem veterinarian 2 days a week to cover shelter medicine and surgery	
Update all Standard Operating Procedures in line with Best Practices	
Add 2 Adoption Team Leaders	
<b>REVISE HOURS OF OPERATION~ENFORCEMENT</b>	
8am to 6pm for all calls, Mon.-Fri.	
6pm to 8am on call for emergencies only, Mon.-Fri.	

6pm Fri.-8am Mon. on call for emergencies only	
<b>REVISE HOURS OF OPERATION~LIVE OUTCOME</b>	
10am-6pm, 7 days a week	
<b>REVISE HOURS OF OPERATION~OWNER SURRENDER APPOINTMENT ONLY</b>	
11am-1pm Tues. and Thurs. if no alternative found and space in the shelter	
<b>PUBLIC POLICY REVISIONS FOR UNIFORM MUNICIPAL CODES</b>	
Eliminate stray hold for puppies under 3 months	
Eliminate stray hold for felines	
Define community cat	
Define community cat caregiver	
Create guidelines for feeding	
Define Return to Field	
Define ear tip	
Define Trap Neuter Return	
Establish provision/incentive for owners reclaiming dogs	
<b>COMMUNITY TARGETED SPAY/NEUTER</b>	
Determine number of surgeries accessible for socioeconomically disadvantaged pet owners (under \$20) community wide	
Ensure 2,650 surgeries accessible for socioeconomically disadvantaged pet owners between all Service Providers	
Consider funding targeted spay/neuter through Service Provider partnership	
<b>SAFETY NET</b>	
As part of local coalition, develop Intake Diversion programs already in place in community	
Require that owners in need of assistance/surrender call for an appointment	
Attempt to identify alternatives to intake to help pet owners keep their pets or place their pets directly	
Refer callers to Adopt-a-Pet/Rehome online (forgot to include in Safety Net section)	

<b>ENFORCEMENT</b>	
Revisit guidelines for the issuance of citations	
Implement mobile Chameleon	
Purchase each ACO a tablet	
Ensure every attempt is made to reunite dogs in the field including scanning for and following up on microchip	
Retrain ACOs on use of rabies poles and cat nets	
Establish sanitation protocol for vehicles	
Order small squeegees	
<b>MANAGED ADMISSION</b>	
Consider not accepting pets from other counties	
Create Good Samaritan Foster Care Program	
Create Foster Care Ambassador Program	
Work with County Attorney to create contracts for foster care programs (see sample attached)	
Create RTF program for cats	
Ensure all municipalities supporting RTF programs in their communities	
<b>POPULATION MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>INTAKE PROTOCOLS</b>	
Ensure all pets receiving core vaccinations and deworming on intake	
Keep all vaccinations refrigerated	
Booster all pets 2 weeks after initial vaccination	
Discontinue routine fecal tests on all pets (and reserve for pets with clinical signs)	
Discontinue reusing syringes	
Weigh each pet at intake	
Discontinue testing all cats for FIV/FelV and educate adopters	
Test all dogs over 6 months for heartworm disease on intake so can plan appropriate pathway to live outcome	
<b>DAILY LIVE OUTCOME TEAM ROUNDS</b>	
Assign key staff to do Daily Team Rounds	
Create Plan of Action and quickest pathway to live outcome	
Ensure each enclosure has plastic cage card holder and cage card that follows pet	
Train staff to use scanner/bar code Chameleon system for inventory and reconciliation of discrepancies	

Create pathway for cats to be transported from the back of the shelter to the front without hearing/visualizing dogs	
Discontinue the requirement for all dogs to have a behavior temperament test	
Allow public to view all pets even if on stray hold (with the exception of enforcement cases, dangerous dogs or zoonotic cases)	
Discontinue housing SAFE PETs at the shelter and instead recruit foster volunteers and collaborate with animal welfare partners	
Ensure any euthanasia decisions are made by rounds team when placement is not appropriate	
<b>SHELTER MEDICINE AND SURGERY</b>	
Veterinarian to train all staff to do a basic physical exam and record abnormalities (SOP example attached)	
Ensure system in place utilized to alert medical team about a pet in need and if emergency care is needed	
Ensure all pets appearing to be or at risk for pain are treated appropriately	
Add Gabapentin, Buprenex and Morphine to inventory	
Discontinue using antibiotics for early URI in cats	
Revisit use of digital x-ray machine with partner organization so able to use for shelter pets in need	
Add special note to cage card for special needs or warning regarding aggression	
Update surgery protocols	
Minimize cross contamination in surgery by sanitizing items appropriately, keeping same towel with pet throughout surgery day	
Designate area on floor in surgery suite to recover pets and make sure their temperatures remain normal	
Discontinue allowing veterinary students to do spay/neuter surgery until program at capacity	
Allow veterinary students to assist in prepping, surgery and recovery of surgical patients	
Until surgery capacity achieved, send adopted pets home with spay/neuter release, appointment scheduled and follow up to confirm compliance	
Test for parvo virus when appropriate	
If parvovirus positive, isolate and limit staff/volunteer exposure until live outcome opportunity identified (worried about this recommendation)	
Create guideline for use of medical fund	



<b>EUTHANASIA</b>	
Audit controlled substance use as per DEA guidelines	
Remove chain link gate in euthanasia room	
Create protocol with veterinarian to use oral or injectable sedatives with fractious pets	
Eliminate the use of force when handling animals	
Sanitize euthanasia table/floor between pets with Rescue® (accelerated hydrogen peroxide)	
Fix walk in freezer	In progress as of 12/3/18
<b>HOUSING~CANINES</b>	
Add divider doors between each 2 single enclosures throughout the shelter	
While automatic water dispensers in place, ensure all are working properly (fix D3, # 3 and #48A)	
Replace automatic water dispensers with stainless-steel buckets and attach handle to side of kennel (so can be removed and cleaned appropriately)	
Replace current drain covers with ones that lie flat over trough	
<b>SANITATION ~CANINES</b>	
Discontinue current disinfectant products	
Use Rescue® (accelerated hydrogen peroxide)	
Close divider doors only to sequester dog on one side while the opposite side is cleaned then keep open for access to both sides	
Clean all enclosures by 10am	
Spot clean all enclosures throughout the day	
Sanitize enclosures between pets	
<b>ENRICHMENT ~CANINES</b>	
Feed all dogs twice daily with a mixture of canned and dry food	
Feed puppies, underweight, nursing or injured a 3rd meal of canned food	
Provide enrichment for <b>all</b> shelter pets including soft bedding and toys	
Allow volunteers to walk and exercise all dogs (except dangerous dogs)	
Create outdoor play yards with grass or Astro Turf so can do organized play groups	
Install sound mitigation in all dog areas	
Register for Kong shelter donation program	

Register for Kuranda bed shelter donation program	
Add disinfectable toys and fleece blankets to wish list	
<b>HOUSING~FELINES</b>	
Install portals between each 2 stainless-steel cat cages	
Use cage banks in front cat adoption room instead of free roaming	
Use small cat adoption room for 1 litter of kittens or bonded adults	
Purchase paper litter boxes	
Provide enrichment for <b>all</b> shelter pets including soft bedding and toys	
Use feral dens to transport cats in the shelter and for hiding	
Discontinue using cat grabbers	
Create shelving to house feral community cats for RTF program in quiet area	
<b>SANITATION ~FELINES</b>	
Replace all current disinfectants with Rescue® (accelerated hydrogen peroxide)	
Ensure all cats are spot cleaned and fed by 10am	
<b>ENRICHMENT ~FELINES</b>	
Feed all cats dry food ad lib and canned food twice daily	
Feed all kittens, nursing moms, underweight or injured cats a 3rd meal of canned food	
Provide full bowl of water for cats at all times	
Post Alley Cat Allies flyer <i>Feral and Stray Cats - An Important Difference</i>	
Order brochure from Alley Cat Allies, <i>Wait Until 8</i>	
Order disposable cat scratchers at <a href="http://imperialcat.com">imperialcat.com</a>	
<b>LIVE OUTCOME PROGRAMS</b>	
<b>RETURN TO OWNER (RTO)</b>	
Switch to Found Animal Microchips	
Allow all owners to view all pets in the shelter (escort through enforcement holding areas and isolation)	
Provide financial incentive for owners reclaiming that includes sterilization, rabies vaccination and microchip	
Post flyers of found pets where the public admits pets and ask them to check the bulletin board for a potential match	
(the balance of the RTO recommendations have been made in a variety of sections above)	

<b>ADOPTIONS</b>	
Ensure all leadership, staff and volunteers read <i>Adopters Welcome</i> by HSUS	
Implement low or fee waived adoptions until further notice	
Discontinue practice of having all family members and current dog visit the shelter	
Provide rabies vaccine for all pets before leaving the shelter	
Test all dogs over 6 months for heartworm disease and develop program to treat with Immiticide at no extra cost	
Discontinue testing all cats routinely for FIV/FelV and educate adopters and local veterinarians	
Utilize appropriate cages in large cat adoption room	
Use small cat adoption room for 1 litter of kittens or bonded adults	
<b>TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
Send anonymous survey via Survey Monkey to all transfer partners	
Schedule community meeting inviting all transfer partners to discuss concerns after creating time line/plan of action for implementation of Best Practices	
When Rescue Coordinator hired, announce to public	
Allow adopters or transfer partners to transfer pets on a first come/first serve basis	
Allow transfer partners (same as adopters) to view all pets in the shelter (with the exception of court cases)	
Do not charge transfer fee	
Create system to place marker on cage card if transfer partner picking up in addition to note in Chameleon	

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## RESOURCES & RECOMMENDED READING

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### WEBSITES

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- sheltervet.org (The Association of Shelter Veterinarians)
- aspcapro.org (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)
- animalsheltering.org (Humane Society of the United States)
- bestfriends.org (Best Friends Animal Society)
- MaddiesFund.org (Maddie's Fund)
- alleycatallies.org (Alley Cat Allies)
- millioncatchallenge.org (Million Cat Challenge)
- petmicrochiplookup.org (AAHA Universal Pet Microchip Look Up)
- shelteranimalscount.org (Shelter Animals Count)
- atts.org (American Temperament Testing Society)
- target-zero.org (Target Zero)
- fearfreepets.com (Fear Free Certification)
- kittenlady.org (Kitten Lady)

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### WEBINARS

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- Best Practice Strategies presented by Dr. Sara Pizano, November 27, 2018  
Powerpoint: [https://www.mcoho.org/departments/animal\\_resource\\_center/news\\_and\\_events.php](https://www.mcoho.org/departments/animal_resource_center/news_and_events.php)
- Return to Field: Putting Theory into Action Saving Cats presented by Cameron Moore
- Creating Responsible Lifesaving Public Policy: Solutions for Community Cats presented by Dr. Sara Pizano
- Stress Reduction: Happy and Healthy Shelter Cats on a Fast Track to Adoption presented by Dr. Brenda Griffin

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### BOOKS

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- Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters, Lila Miller, DVM & Kate Hurley, DVM
- Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff, Lila Miller, DVM & Steven Zawistowski, PhD, CAAB
- Getting to Zero, Peter Marsh
- Replacing Myth with Math, Peter Marsh

- Every Nose Counts: A Guide to Using Metrics in Animal Shelters, J. Scarlett; M. Greenberg; T. Hoshizaki

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## GUIDES

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- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians *Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-neuter Programs*
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*
- Million Cat Challenge Initiatives
- National Animal Control Association Guidelines [https://cdn.ymaws.com/nacanet.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Docs/NACA\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/nacanet.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Docs/NACA_Guidelines.pdf)
- Best Friends Animal Society (indent 2 highlighted as those are from BF)
  - *Humane Animal Control*
  - *Community Cat Programs Handbook*
- The Five Freedoms
- Managing Heartworm Disease in Shelter Animals
- Humane Society of the United States:
  - *Volunteer Management for Animal Care Organizations*
  - *Adopters Welcome Guidelines*
- Maddie's Pet Assistant
- American Animal Hospital Association, Vaccine Guidelines

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## OTHER REFERENCES

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- Frequency of lost dogs and cats in the United States and the methods used to locate them; Weiss, Slater, Lord <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4494319/>
- ACC&D Position Statement: Modeling Study Advocating Use of Vasectomies and Hysterectomies in Feral Cat Management <http://www.acc-d.org/resource-library/position-statements/acc-d-position-statement-on-mccarthy-et-al>
- Rabies Surveillance in the United States during 2015, Mesert G. Birhane <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28467751>
- Feral and Stray Cats – An Important Difference; Alley Cat Allies <https://www.alleycat.org/resources/feral-and-stray-cats-an-important-difference/>
- Putting a Friendly Face on Animal Control <https://www.animalsheltering.org/magazine/articles/putting-friendly-face-animal-control>

## ATTACHMENTS

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## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE: PHYSICAL EXAMS

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**Purpose-** To evaluate the medical/behavior status of each pet entering the shelter

**Effective Date/Revision History**

**Staff Responsible**  
Shelter and enforcement

**Staff Affected**  
All

### Policy

It is essential that each pet entering the shelter receive a complete physical examination, and any problems or abnormalities noted in Chameleon to be brought to the attention of the medical team for follow up. Identifying issues with a pet at intake will enable the staff to create the best Plan of Action resulting in the shortest length of stay to live outcome.

### Responsibilities

- Intake staff (shelter and enforcement) should perform a complete physical exam on each pet entering the shelter
- If the pet is too aggressive to be handled, a note should be made the Chameleon record that the exam was visual
- Medical problems noted on the physical exam should be brought to the attention of the veterinarian prior to placing the pet in the adoption area

### Procedures-Performing the Physical Exam

#### Aging

- Unless the animal's birth date is known, we cannot determine the exact age of the pet. Examining the teeth is the most accurate method in puppies and kittens. In adult animals, teeth are only 50% accurate in determining age.

#### Teeth

- Teeth start coming in about 3 weeks of age
- By 7 weeks all baby teeth should be in place

	Deciduous Teeth (weeks)		Permanent Teeth (months)	
	Dog	Cat	Dog	Cat
Incisors	3-4	2-3	3-5	3-4
Canines	3	3-4	4-6	4-5
Pre-molars	4-12	3-6	4-6	4-6
Molars	-	-	5-7	4-5

- In adults, tartar starts to accumulate at about a year and a half and can progress to severe periodontal disease. Progression of dental disease varies depending on diet, genetics and previous dental care.

### Eyes

- With kittens and puppies, the eyes open at 10-14 days
- Eye color usually changes from blue-grey to adult color at 5 to 6 weeks of age
- At 6 years of age, cats and dogs have a slight haziness to their eyes that is seen due to the thickening of the lens

## **SKIN**

### Fleas

- Some fleas are infected with tape worm eggs and when an animal ingests an infected flea, tapeworms are introduced into the intestinal tract
- Some pets have flea allergies (from even one flea bite!) that can cause skin disease. Any skin disease should be checked by the veterinarian.
- Fleas can make puppies and kittens anemic and can transmit a fatal blood parasite (Hemobartonella) to cats
- Although fleas prefer to live on pets, people can be bit by fleas as well

## Ticks

- Ticks start out as small black dots, but when filled with blood, they become engorged and visible
- Specific ticks carry certain diseases like Lyme Disease and Ehrlichia
- To remove a tick, get as close to the pet's skin as possible in order to remove the mouth parts of the tick

## Demodex (also called Demodectic Mange)

- Non-contagious to other pets or people, does not live in the environment
- Mites normally found in hair follicles, hair falls out or becomes thin where the mite overpopulates
- This is most commonly seen in puppies with immature immune systems and if mild signs, can resolve on its own as the puppy matures. If the whole coat is involved, or an adult dog is infected, treatment takes a longer period of time. Signs include patchy hair loss, especially around the eyes, tips of the ears, elbows, and hocks, and can be seen with crusting and secondary skin infections.
- Difficult to diagnose but may do a skin scrape and see the mite under the microscope
- Easily treated under veterinarian's instructions with Ivomec at 0.10cc per 10lbs. of body weight by mouth once daily for 4-5 weeks, with repeat skin scrapes performed every 2 weeks. Treatment is continued until two consecutive negative skin scrapes are obtained. Collie/collie mixes cannot be given Ivomec and must be treated with topical medications.
- May be placed in the adoption area depending on severity of disease and adopted with a signed consent form so the new owner understands they are responsible for medical care of skin condition.

## Sarcops (scabies or sarcoptic mange)

- Contagious to some people and animals so should not be placed with other pets or in the adoption area
- Place a sign on the cage that says "Wear Gloves-Contagious Scabies"
- Does not contaminate the environment
- Very itchy
- Treated under the direction of the veterinarian with once weekly subcutaneous injection of Ivomec at 0.10cc per 10 lbs. for 4-5 weeks
- Collie/collie mixes cannot be given Ivomec and must be treated with topical medications
- Scaly skin and hair loss typically around ear pinnas, elbows and hocks
- May go to a rescue group, foster care or adopter with a signed consent form

## Ringworm

- Fungal skin infection
- Contagious to some people and animals so if suspect, should not be placed in the general adoption area or with other pets
- Place a sign on the cage that says “Wear Gloves-Possible Ringworm”
- Can live in hair follicles and environment for up to 18 months
- Approximately 50% of one species of ringworm will fluoresce under ultraviolet light (Woods Lamp). Thus, a negative Woods Lamp does not rule out ringworm. False positives are possible with crusts, cotton fibers, milk replacer, and certain ointments
- PCR test takes 1-3 days (but expect some false positives), traditional fungal culture that takes up to two weeks
- A procedure called a *trichogram* examines individual hairs under the microscope to potentially identify fungal spores; this test is difficult to interpret, and a negative test does not rule out ringworm
- Can form any pattern of hair loss in animals
- Hair loss and scaly skin can be anywhere on the body
- May go to an adopter, rescue or foster with a signed consent form but treatment in the shelter not preferred due to length of time needed for a negative culture
- Treatment protocol includes twice weekly Lime Sulfur dips for 8 weeks and oral Terbinafine

## Skin infection (Superficial Pyoderma)

- Usually most obvious on belly but can be anywhere on body
- Pimples (called papules), or raised red areas
- Itchy
- Not contagious to other animals or people
- Not contagious in environment
- Happens when normal bacteria or yeast on the surface of the skin overpopulates
- Common in puppies and does not always need to be treated
- May go to rescue, foster care or adoptions when room and treated with antibiotics or medicated shampoos if needed as per veterinarian's direction

## **EYES**

- Should be free of discharge or redness. Discharge from eyes could indicate a viral or bacterial infection, abnormal eyelashes, disease of the globe, etc.
- The cornea (or the top layer of the eye) should be clear
- There is a thickening of the lens in the eyes at approximately 6 years of age in dogs and cats but does not affect the sight. In contrast, cataracts do decrease vision or cause blindness
- If an animal is squinting, it could be suffering from a corneal ulcer, a viral infection or other problems and should be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible since squinting indicates a painful condition
- All eye problems should be checked by the veterinarian

## EARS

- Dark discharge in the ears could be dirt, wax, a bacterial or yeast infection, or ear mites
- Ear mites can be diagnosed visually with an otoscope, or by sampling the ear discharge and examining it under the microscope
- A cytology of the discharge is needed to accurately diagnose and treat ear infections (*otitis*)
- The inside of the ear canal should be smooth, skin colored and non-painful
- If there is any thickening of the skin in the ear canal, the animal should be seen by the veterinarian as this indicates a chronic problem
- Ear infections can be painful and must be treated without delay

## COLOR OF MUCOUS MEMBRANE (MM)

- The color of the mucous membranes should be pink in all animals
- Some pets have pigmented gums (black) and tongues which can confuse the assessment
- Puppies and kittens normally have light pink mucous membranes
- When a finger is pressed into the mucous membrane, the area should immediately return to its original color (in 2 seconds or less). This is called the Capillary Refill Time (CRT)
- The animal's color can also be monitored by looking at the conjunctiva around the eyes, or the mucous membranes of the anus, the vulva in females, or the prepuce around the penis in the males

Pink	Normal
Pale or White	Anemia, shock, poor perfusion
Blue	Cyanosis from loss of oxygen
Brick Red	Shock, sepsis, fever
Yellow	Jaundice from liver failure or destruction of blood cells
Brown	Poisoning
Petechia	Red splotching from clotting problems

## HYDRATION STATUS

- Dehydration is the loss of body water. The first sign of dehydration is the loss of skin elasticity, called 'skin turgor'. This is tested by tenting the skin of the neck or upper eyelids.
- If the pet is hydrated, the skin will fall back immediately
- If an animal is very debilitated with minimal body fat, the skin may also tent

## LYMPH NODES

- Located on both sides of the body
- Submandibular-under the corners of the jaw
- Suprascapular- in front of the scapula
- Axillary-under the arm pits
- Inguinal-inner thighs near the abdomen
- Popliteal-behind the knees
- Difficult to feel lymph nodes when normal
- If lymph nodes enlarge, it is indicative of an inflammatory or infectious process, immune mediated problem, or cancer (if all lymph nodes elevated).

## HEART

- Heart rates: Listen for 15 seconds and count the number of heart beats (each "Lub-Dub" is one beat). Multiply this value by 4 and the result is the beats per minute (bpm)
- Small puppies and kittens-120/150 beats per minutes or higher when excited
- Cats = 110-240 bpm
- Adult Dogs = 60-160 bpm
- The smaller the animal the higher the normal heart rate
- The heart rate should beat at normal and consistent intervals. In dogs, there may be a slight break in the normal rhythm called a sinus arrhythmia, which coincides with inhalation.
- Pulses should match the heart beat
- Animals with heart disease from defects as in young animals, can compensate physically for a surprisingly long period of time, i.e. months
- A heart murmur is heard when the valves in the heart do not open and close completely, and the blood leaking results in a 'whoosh-whoosh' sound during the heart beat
- A false heart murmur can be made when the stethoscope is pushed too hard on the side of the animal's chest especially in a puppy or kitten
- Young animals can have an "innocent murmur" that resolves as they get older. Innocent murmurs all resolve by 16 weeks of age; if a murmur persists after that age, it is mostly likely associated with disease.
- Animals with heart failure have weak femoral pulses, pale or blue gums, increased respiratory rate, and can be exercise-intolerant
- Intake staff should listen to every animal's heart, on both the left and right sides



- Intake staff are not expected to make a diagnosis, but should be able to identify abnormal heart sounds to be brought to the attention of the veterinarian

## **LUNGS**

- An animal with lung disease (such as pneumonia), will take short shallow breaths
- Dogs with lung disease usually cough, cats rarely cough
- Animals with severe respiratory problems usually have pale or blue gums are exercise intolerant, have poor appetites, breathe quickly (*tachypnea*) and extend their necks out
- Normal respiratory rates (RR) for dogs is 15-30 breaths per minute
- Normal respiratory rates (RR) for cats is 20-40 breaths per minute
- A breath is composed of two phases: inspiration and expiration (also called inhalation and exhalation)
- Loud lung sounds, crackles, or wheezes may be signs of disease and need to be brought to the attention of the veterinarian

## **ABDOMEN**

- Puppies and kittens often have “pot bellies” due to worms and normal fluid in their abdominal cavities
- Kidneys are located in the upper abdomen, to the left and right side of the abdomen, just behind the ribs
- The bladder is located in the caudal region of the abdomen. Cats with large, distended bladders may have a urinary blockage, which is an emergency situation and must be brought to the attention of the veterinarian immediately
- No firm or painful areas should be felt in the abdomen when palpated

## **SKELETAL SYSTEM/GAIT**

- Animals should put weight on all 4 limbs
- Old injuries, fractures, pulled muscles, ligaments, or orthopedic problems can cause lameness
- Dogs or puppies who walk with their knees pointed out, who have trouble getting up on their hind legs, are most likely suffering from Hip Dysplasia. This condition (arthritis in the hips) is most common in large breed dogs.
- When there is laxity or looseness in the hip joint, arthritis will occur as the animal ages because the joint is not stable
- Small breed dogs often suffer from Patellar Luxation or loose knee caps
- Animals with a fractured bone usually do not put weight on that limb. With other injuries, the animal is usually partially weight bearing

**Foster Care Agreement - Nov 7 2018****Tel.: 864-260-4151 | Fax:864-260-1054****Anderson County P.A.W.S.**

1320 Highway 29 S  
 Anderson, South Carolina 29626 USA  
[pawsrescue@andersoncountysc.org](mailto:pawsrescue@andersoncountysc.org)  
[www.andersoncountysc.org](http://www.andersoncountysc.org)

**Animal Information****Animal ID:****ARN:****Chip #:****Type:****Name:****DOB:****Current Age:****Age Group:****Types:****Breeds:****Colors:****Pattern:****Gender:****Altered:****Size:****Weight:**

**Important notice!** Please read and sign. I understand that I will be given a return appointment for my foster animal(s). Should I miss that appointment as well as second appointment, or fail to bring in for spay/neuter, Anderson County PAWS may rescind this agreement resulting in either immediate return of the foster, completed adoption with all applicable fees being billed if altered, or the penalty under SC law of \$250 for failure/refusal to return an animal to be altered.

YOUR NEXT APPT WILL BE ON: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident causing the animal(s) to be in considered for temporary foster care (hereafter Incident"):

☐ Foster-to-Wellness☐ Adoption Ambassador☐ Foster to Adopt☐ Too Small/Young for Surgery

Contact number (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number (home/other): \_\_\_\_\_

Special Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Authorized Shelter Representatives:****Contact Phone: 864-260-4151****Email: [pawsfoster@andersoncountysc.org](mailto:pawsfoster@andersoncountysc.org)**

I have read this Agreement in its entirety (including the terms and conditions on the back of this form), and I agree that all statements and stated agreements contained in this document are made by me, and are truthful, under penalty of perjury under law.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL TERMS AND CONDITIONS MUST BE MET**

- I agree that I am 18 years of age or older.
- I agree to work in support of the mission and goals of the organization and will work harmoniously with PAWS, the County of Anderson, its employees and volunteers to help animals in a proactive, professional, and positive way.
- I understand that routine veterinary care, including wellness exams, flea prevention, and current required and recommended vaccinations will be provided by PAWS at the facility while the animal is in foster care and still on its legal hold. I must make arrangements to bring my foster pet in to receive this routine veterinary care. This does not apply to Foster to Adopt animals.

- I will contact the Authorized Shelter Representative and/or the Shelter Supervisor on duty to receive information on where to take my foster pet if it should require immediate urgent care. But further understand that PAWS will not reimburse for vet bills for foster pets.
- I understand that PAWS provides no guarantee as to the health of my foster animal, and that my foster animal may have significant medical needs, socialization problems, and may not be housebroken. Should my personal pets become ill as a result of fostering, PAWS will not provide medication or reimburse for vet expenses to treat my animals.
- I will not arrange or pay for, or otherwise cause, any elective veterinary procedure to be performed on my foster animal during the period covered by this agreement, without the express written consent of the Authorized Shelter Representative, or his/her designate.
- I understand that I am fostering only temporarily, generally for 2 – 3 weeks. If I am fostering to adopt, the adoption will be completed upon pick up after spay/neuter.
- I agree that I am fostering this animal for PAWS, and that I do not have any right of ownership over my foster animal. I further agree that PAW's rights in and to my foster animal are superior to mine. I understand that this is not an adoption agreement and that an adoption is not implied by this agreement.
- I agree to immediately return any foster animal in my care to PAWS, at the request of the Authorized Shelter Representative, or his/her designate, at any time and for any reason.
- I understand that, as long as I provide foster care to my foster animal to PAWS' satisfaction, I will be given the first right of adoption/rescue of my foster animal, if and when PAWS decides to offer my foster animal for adoption/rescue provided placement has not already been secured. I understand and agree that my foster animal will be spayed/neutered immediately upon my adoption/rescue of the animal if not already complete.
- If at any point I can no longer, or do not want to continue to, provide care, food, shelter or veterinary care for my foster animal, I agree to contact the Authorized Shelter Representative, or his/her designate, and arrange for surrender and return of my foster animal back to PAWS.
- I will not transfer possession or custody of my foster animal to any other person at any time, except for temporary, short-term possession for the purpose of vet care, grooming, etc.
- I agree to contact the Authorized Shelter Representative with any and all questions or concerns about my foster animal or the fostering program, as well as with updated contact information.
- I agree that if I refuse to comply with any provision of this agreement, PAWS has the right to terminate this agreement and also has the right to the immediate surrender and return of my foster animal and any other animals for whom I am providing foster care for PAWS. I further consent to provide PAWS with access to my premises if necessary to facilitate the return.
- I agree that the opportunity given to me to help rehabilitate my foster animal, as well as the chance of a potential future adoption/rescue, is of significant benefit to me, and serves as proper legal consideration in exchange for my agreements stated in this contract.
- This serves as a release and hold harmless agreement as there is no guarantee on a foster animal's health, behavior or actions. I hereby release, indemnify and hold Anderson County PAWS and Anderson County and their employees and agents free and harmless from all liability to person or property arising out of any and all claims of loss, damage of every kind arising while fostering this animal.

Initials \_\_\_\_\_

## Vaccination Recommendations for Shelter Cats

Vaccine	Adult Cats ( <i>&gt;20 weeks old</i> )	Kittens ( <i>4-20 weeks old</i> )	Where to Administer	Notes
Modified live virus Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia (FVRCP)  (This is the same as Herpesvirus-1)	Administer one dose at or prior to intake. Administer a second dose 2-3 weeks later.	Administer one dose at or prior to intake. Administer additional doses every 2-3 weeks until the kitten is 20 weeks old.	Subcutaneous, right forelimb	Intranasal FVRCP vaccines may be given simultaneously, but should not be given in place of injectable panleukopenia vaccines.
Rabies	Administer one dose either on intake or prior to exit.	Administer one dose at legal age (>12 weeks) either on intake or prior to exit.	Subcutaneous, right hindlimb	Administration of rabies vaccine is directed by state or local law.

## Vaccination Recommendations for Shelter Dogs

Vaccine	Adult Dogs (>20 weeks old)	Puppies (4-20 weeks old)	Where to Administer	Notes
Recombinant or modified-live Canine Distemper Virus, Adenovirus-2 and Parvovirus (DA2P)	Administer one dose at or prior to intake. Administer a second dose 2-3 weeks later.	Administer one dose at or prior to intake. Administer additional doses every 2-3 weeks until the puppy is 20 weeks old.	Subcutaneous, right forelimb	Repeat in one year and every 3 years thereafter.
Intranasal <i>Bordetella bronchiseptica</i> + Canine Parainfluenza Virus	Administer one dose at or prior to intake.	Administer one dose at or prior to intake. (May be administered as early as 3 weeks of age.)	Intranasal	Repeat intranasal vaccination every year.  Some intranasal products may also contain canine adenovirus-2.  Intranasal products are live vaccines and cannot be given by other routes; serious complications may occur.  Oral and injectable products are not recommended.
Rabies	Administer one dose either on intake or prior to exit.	Administer one dose at legal age (>12 weeks) either on intake or prior to exit.	Subcutaneous, right hind limb	Administration of rabies vaccine is directed by state or local law.