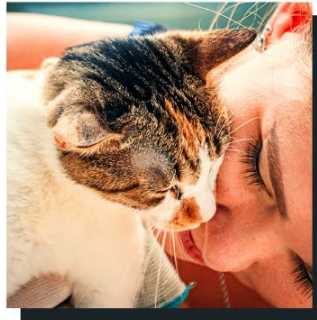
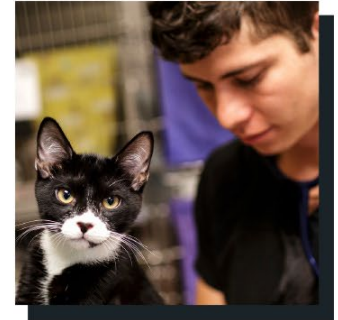
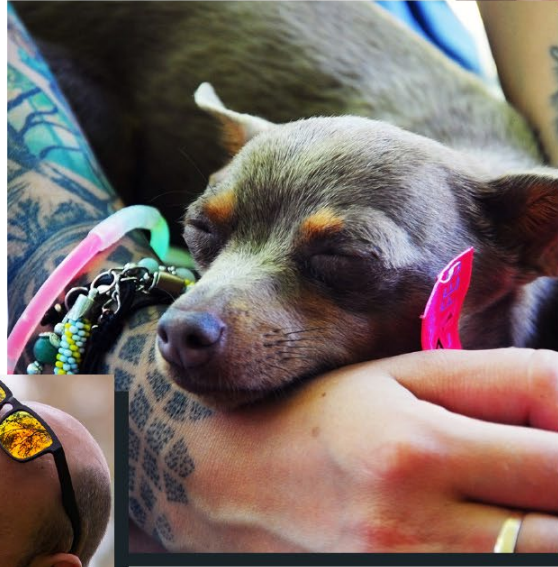
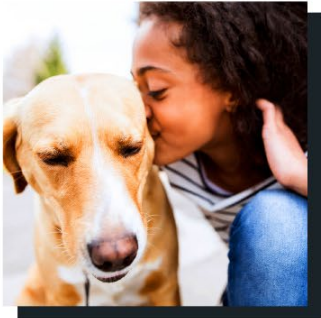
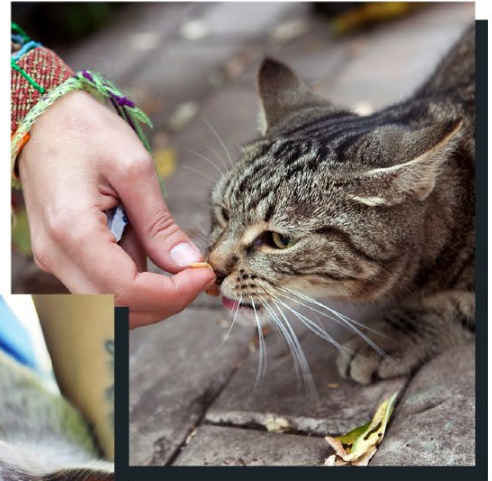




MADDIE'S[®]
**MILLION PET
CHALLENGE**



October 2024

Operational Consult Levy County Animal Services



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Introduction to Maddie's Million Pet Challenge Process

Maddie's Million Pet Challenge (MMPC) is a partnership between the University of Florida and University of California at Davis' Shelter Medicine Programs, Team Shelter USA and Open Door Veterinary Collective. MMPC awarded Levy County Animal Services (LCAS) a pro bono consult at the request of county leadership. Research was completed before the onsite visit that included a review of the Florida State Statute, local ordinances, historical statistical trends, record keeping, website and social media along with discussions with partner agencies. During the onsite visit, the MMPC consultant toured the shelter property and met with individual staff and the leadership team to learn more about the processes in place for both shelter staff and field services from the point of intake to outcome.

This report is written for the shelter staff and county leadership. All recommendations are based on research and/or successful programs in Florida and nationwide and are in line with all reputable national animal welfare organizations. Many recommendations are simple policy decisions that can be made quickly while others will take several steps, and may require budget adjustments, or other actions before implementation. This report should be utilized as a road map and the expectations of implementation should remain realistic within the existing framework until such time changes can be made.

In addition to the Maddie's Fund partners, these best practices include the Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) updated *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*, the National Animal Control Association (NACA), the ASPCA, the Humane Society of the United States, Best Friends and Fear Free Sheltering. This report should be considered an addendum to *The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters*, where additional research and detailed information can be found. Two copies of the Playbook were provided to leadership during the visit.

Human Animal Support Services (HASS) also published an online playbook with a plethora of information and training opportunities that should also be utilized and can be found here: <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/hass-playbook/> (see Resources).

The updated ASV guidelines checklist should be used to track recommendations and progress: <https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/guidelines/2022-ASV-GL-Checklist.pdf>.

This report will focus on needed improvements but there are many reasons to celebrate progress and the accomplishments of Levy County Animal Services.

Positives

- Dedicated county leadership, staff, community advocates and area animal welfare groups all sharing the same goal of improving the care of pets at the shelter
- Spay/neuter grant funding available through partnerships with Operation Catnip for cats and Humane Society of North Central Florida for dogs
- Large dog kennels with divider doors

- Private donor funding play yard expansion project

Recommendations can be distilled into several main goals that should guide and prioritize all leadership decisions:

1. Exhaust all options to intake (with the exception of enforcement cases and sick or injured pets)
2. If pets do enter the shelter, provide appropriate space for each, create a one-touch system and plan of action for their shortest length of stay
3. Discontinue accepting visually healthy cats who were outside (see Admissions) and instead create a pathway for the public to take directly to clinics offering TNR services (this practice is currently in place through a collaboration with Operation Catnip in Gainesville).
4. Advocate immediately for the placement of all pets back with their owners, into foster, adoption or with rescue. Obvious exceptions are enforcement cases, aggressive dogs or pets who will be euthanized for humane reasons. Enforcement cases should have appropriate petitions filed for custody within 10 days to avoid lengthy stays and to move animals quickly to their proper outcome.
5. Ensure marketing messages are closely aligned with the ever-changing challenges at the shelter

Our program is inspired by the vision of the county leadership team for LCAS to be a resource to the community and their desire to keep pets and people together. We are impressed by the dedication of the shelter staff that care for the animals and their eagerness to incorporate practices to increase animal health and wellbeing. We look forward to continuing our collaborative partnership in support of your lifesaving mission.

Record Keeping, Technology, Statistics and Trends

Data and trends tell important stories but are only a part of the overall picture. Record keeping and statistics are vital to every sheltering organization. Statistics guide the organization in determining needs, measuring success, and predicting where change is needed. Analyzing data allows the organization to create an accurate budget, identify areas of need, create model programs, and justify staffing and resource requests. It is a way to measure your success, determine program efficacy, and illustrate needs to funders. Grant funders require both data and financial information to determine the legitimacy of the organization and to maximize the impact of their donor dollars.

The use of technology provides opportunities not possible through any other means of communication and LCAS should capitalize on every avenue. LCAS is currently utilizing an outdated software system that does not fully capture basic animal data causing staff to duplicate efforts and be inefficient in their daily tasks. Staff is spending an incredible amount of time creating paper records, manually transcribing data into multiple programs, and creating Excel documents due to not being able to rely on the accuracy of the software. Consultant witnessed staff update animal records in real-time, yet software-generated reports did not reflect the changes. Staff reported that this is a frequent occurrence which is both frustrating and wastes time. Additional time is spent compiling manual lists that could be provided in seconds with an updated software system.

Levy County Animal Services - Cat Intake and Outcome								
Year	Intake	Live Release	Adoption	Transfer	RTF	RTO	Euthanasia	LRR
2021	785	393	95	292	2	4	377	50.06%
2022	574	323	55	261	0	7	244	56.27%
2023	563	268	53	203	0	12	260	47.60%
2024 YTD-Sept	232	200	47	138	13	2	28	86.21%
Levy County Animal Services- Dog Intake and Outcome								
Year	Intake	Live Release	Adoption	Transfer	Other	RTO	Euthanasia	LRR
2021	658	599	247	194	0	158	38	91.03%
2022	736	629	216	237	0	176	69	85.46%
2023	655	533	204	175	0	154	88	81.37%
2024 YTD-Sept	411	363	174	130	8	51	45	88.32%
Levy County Animal Services - Combined Dog and Cat Intake and Outcome								
Year	Intake	Live Release	Adoption	Transfer	RTF	RTO	Euthanasia	LRR
2021	1,443	992	342	486	2	162	415	68.75%
2022	1,310	952	271	498	0	183	313	72.67%
2023	1,218	801	257	378	0	166	348	65.76%
2024 YTD-Sept	643	563	221	268	21	53	73	87.56%

Figure 1: RTO = Return to Owner; LRR=live release rate. LRR is calculated as live release divided by total live intake. Charts were created using data provided by LCAS; however, there is little confidence in the current data due to the known software program glitches and staff's inability to keep records updated in real-time.

Positives

- County leadership is supportive of LCAS acquiring modern shelter software
- There has been a dramatic increase in cat lifesaving from 48% in 2023 to 86% year to date 2024 due to the partnership with Operation Catnip
- There is great potential within the existing framework to increase lifesaving, improve animal husbandry and provide increased safety net opportunities to constituents through system efficiencies

Action Steps

- Consultant has connected LCAS with Shelter Luv to receive a free online demonstration (<https://www.shelterluv.com/>). Shelter Luv is a cloud-based software that is extremely easy to use and will eliminate the need for paper records while increasing staff efficiency. The annual fee is nominal as it is based on the number of adoptions done at the shelter (LCAS has averaged 275 adoptions annually since 2021). It also includes a fundraising component that allows the adopter to cover the processing fee and include a donation which typically results in covering the costs for most organizations while also increasing donation revenue. Shelter Luv is currently waiving fees for the first 18 months to new customers who sign up by November 30th. Shelter Luv also offers continued assistance with their knowledgeable team to help resolve issues and maximize efficiency for staff. In addition, several neighboring shelter partners such as WAG, Operation Catnip and the Jacksonville Humane Society also utilize this software and are willing to assist with training.

- When speaking with Shelter Luv, LCAS is encouraged to inquire about grants available to provide tablets for the shelter to facilitate adoptions.
- Shelter Luv is also rolling out a program soon where they will be offering affordable microchips to their users and a free registration platform that will automatically update with each adoption.
- Minimize Length of Stay (LOS). Even the nicest shelters are stressful places for animals and long lengths of stay lead to negative impacts on physical and behavioral health. Every effort should be made for each animal to have as short a length of stay as possible. There needs to be a sense of urgency among all staff for animals to move quickly through the shelter to their live outcome. Currently, staff is hindered by the inability to post animals on the website or social media platforms although we are encouraged by the county's plans to remedy this soon. For many years, the shelter was assisted by a private, volunteer-run Facebook page called The Animal Allies Of Levy County Animal Services which was a tremendous resource to the community; however, the shelter should have its own Facebook and website to communicate directly with the community (see Website and Marketing).
- Length of stay should be tracked from the point of intake to the point of permanent placement separated by dogs, puppies, cats, kittens for shelter pets and foster pets. All pets should have a plan of action started on intake with a target goal of less than 14 days in shelter. For those pets in the shelter past 14 days, staff need to identify barriers and brainstorm to expedite live outcomes through marketing, foster, networking, etc. This recommendation is a target goal to minimize LOS and is not intended to increase euthanasia but to increase the organization's ability to assist pets in need in a streamlined manner. Euthanasia should continue to be reserved for large breed aggressive dogs that are unsafe for the public and medical cases that are beyond hope.
- Record intake and outcome of every animal entering the shelter in real-time in shelter software. This task may seem overwhelming because of the current outdated software system; however, once Shelter Luv is in place it will save staff time and allow the organization to run more smoothly. When utilizing modern shelter software, a pet can be entered directly into the system within minutes during the intake process while a brief exam and preventive care are given, a photo taken and uploaded, and a cage card printed which will follow the pet through his shelter stay.
- All information that changes about a pet in the care of LCAS must be updated in software in real-time, including the location of the pet. This can only be confirmed by reconciling the physical location of a pet and its location in the software program. The effective management of individuals and the population is dependent on this practice.
- Inventory should be done daily. Once software is in place, staff can print the kennel inventory and confirm the presence of each pet in their area. Any discrepancies are then brought to the attention of the supervisor to follow up and reconcile if the staff is unable to.

Website, Social Media and Marketing

Social media and marketing is critical to every organization. Utilizing online platforms is the best way to reach people in the community who can help you as adopters, fosters, volunteers, donors, or general supporters. Transparency is key to gaining support and sharing organizational changes helps people understand that you are still available to help, just in a different way. Leadership reported that Levy County will be launching a new website next month and that LCAS staff will have the ability to update and modify their department's information.

Action Steps:

- Create a Facebook page for Levy County Animal Services and post pictures of all new intakes
- Create engaging Facebook posts with photos and videos of pets available for adoption or foster
- Add link to LCAS' Facebook page on website once created
- Don't be afraid to ask the public to foster or adopt sick animals. Create posts on LCAS's Facebook page with photos of the actual pets in need to recruit new community fosters once the program is established
- Ask staff and volunteers to create short TikTok or Reels videos of the animals as they see them being cute and awesome.
 - Watch KC Pet Project's TikTok Tutorial webinar where Katie Grissum shares how she grew the shelter's TikTok following to over 1.2 million in a short period garnering support & donations from across the country. <https://youtu.be/eql0TGj4pk8>
 - Recruit creative social media millennials or Gen Z from local high schools or colleges to complete class projects using LCAS pets as their subject
- Update the website with key information that will ultimately reduce phone calls and intake and increase live outcome that include but are not limited to:
 - Lost and found
 - Update to include pictures of new intakes to increase reunification (this process will be automatic when ShelterLuv is in place)
 - Sign up with Petco Love Lost to increase reunification through photo-matching technology. https://petcolove.org/lost/partner-application/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=lead-b2b&utm_campaign=lost-partnership-form-2024-v1
 - Review Cabot Animal Support Services' website about helping pets get home and the First 48 program: <https://cabotanimalsupportservices.com/services/found-pets/>
 - Review Rochester Animal Services' Found pet guide <https://www.cityofrochester.gov/FoundAPet/>
 - Incorporate ideas from Rochester Animal Services' lost pets page https://www.cityofrochester.gov/departments/departments-recreation-and-human-services/rochester-animal-services-lost-pet-guide?check_logged_in=1
 - Pets available for adoption

- Ensure pictures and information of shelter pets are auto-uploaded to the website and search engines in real-time. This is an automatic feature of all shelter-specific software.
- Add information about options on supportive self-rehoming for owners needing to find direct placement of their pets
 - <https://home-home.org/>
 - rehome.adoptapet.com
- Partner with a local animal welfare group such as WAG to sign up for home-home.org and recruit a virtual volunteer to manage that platform. Home to Home integrates into the shelter's website and Facebook page to provide rehoming assistance including pets in foster care. There is a nominal monthly fee (±\$60/month) which pays for itself when pets find direct placement instead of entering the shelter.
- Include information on the website on living with community cats, the benefits of TNR, what to do if you find kittens and other valuable resources. Resources include:
 - <https://www.charlottenc.gov/cmpd/Animal-Care-and-Control/Resources/Community-Cats>
 - Don't Kit-nap Kittens <https://www.azhumane.org/events/dont-kit-nap-kittens/>
 - Found a Kitten Outside? Here's how to determine what to do <http://www.kittenlady.org/FPACa>
 - Identifying Kittens That Need Help <https://ocgainesville.org/kitten-shelter-diversion>
 - How to live with cats in your neighborhood <https://www.alleycat.org/resources/how-to-live-with-cats-in-your-neighborhood/>

Capacity for Care

Capacity for Care refers to the ability of an organization to provide appropriate double-compartment (or larger) housing, ample enrichment, care, etc. Staff work extremely hard to provide the best care possible, but when a shelter is over that capacity it reduces the ability of the staff to provide appropriate space and enrichment and there remains a high risk of an infectious disease outbreak.

To remain under or within Capacity for Care, there must be:

- Accurate, real-time data management in the computer software system
- Proactive Safety Net (helping people and pets with resources to keep them out of the shelter)
- Community-based foster care, Good Samaritan foster care, foster on deck, etc.
- Minimal barriers to live outcome
- Active advocacy starting on intake and while in foster care
- Intentional enrichment within and out of the kennel for canines and in-cage for felines

Again, operating over the Capacity for Care correlates with the inability of the staff to provide appropriate housing and care, increased risk of infectious disease transmission and outbreaks, higher levels of stress

for pets and therefore negative behaviors, Compassion Fatigue for people, and wasted resources. All lifesaving strategies presented will lead to operating within Capacity for Care.

Housing Capacity

All pets in confinement must be provided with enough space to turn around, lay down and make normal postural movements without the risk of lying in their own urine and feces. Double-sided compartments are the industry standard for both canines and felines since they provide an area for a pet to sleep and eat and an alternate area to relieve themselves if needed. A double compartment is meant for one pet, a bonded pair or a litter. This is for the comfort of the pets, the ease of cleaning/spot cleaning, and decreases liability for staff and volunteers. The divider door should remain open except during cleaning and possibly during feeding if familiar dogs are sharing a kennel.

The recommendation is to stay within 80% (or less) of the maximum physical pet spaces through proactive and lifesaving programs to have space for pets with no other options, emergencies, enforcement cases, etc. The idea of ‘open admission’ should be replaced with ‘Triaged Coordinated Intake’ as accepting all pets into the shelter overwhelms the system, and leads to overcrowding and the associated negative consequences. Empty kennels should not be looked at as a bad thing or an opportunity to fill them with pets who have other resources and do not need to be in the shelter.

Housing Area - Dogs	#	Description
Left	25	Double-sided, indoor/outdoor kennels
Right	25	Double-sided, indoor/outdoor kennels
# housing units	50	
80% capacity	40	Recommend staying within 80% capacity (40 dogs) or less to allow for unexpected essential intake
Housing Area - Cats	#	Description
Cat Room	15	Existing ferret cages are too small to meet the minimum requirements for adequate housing due to design and square footage. Slatted flooring is not acceptable per ASV. LCAS should work towards replacing kennels as the budget allows. Consultant to provide recommendations on stainless-steel or other approved kennels.
# housing units	15	
80% capacity	12	Recommend staying within 80% capacity or less to allow for unexpected essential intake

Figure 2: Housing areas with a specific use such as clinic surgery holding or the old single-sided outdoor dog kennels are not included in shelter housing capacity. This chart is meant as a guide based on housing units meeting ASV guidelines, actual animal inventory numbers may fluctuate depending on a variety of factors including litter size.

Staffing Capacity

In addition to knowing housing capacity, organizations must remain within capacity based on staffing levels as well. Per the ASV Guidelines, trained personnel must be scheduled to meet daily animal care needs and efficiently and effectively accomplish each critical task. Animal care staffing (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, to be completed within a 3-hour timeframe*. The reason for the 3-hour completion time is that it does not include time spent administering preventive care to new animal intakes, computer record keeping, performing general sanitation including laundry, food preparation, dishes, mopping common areas, handling livestock or other farm animals, assisting public visitors with reclaims and adoptions, playgroups and enrichment, and carrying out euthanasia.

LCAS currently has no dedicated animal care/kennel positions. The responsibility falls on 3 animal control officers who are tasked to provide daily care 7 days per week while also being responsible for responding to enforcement calls which can take them away from these shelter duties. In addition, LCAS utilizes 2 trustees to assist with cleaning Monday-Thursday (and only if there is a male staff member on-site to supervise). During the onsite visit, there were 65 dogs and ± 10 cats in the shelter which requires 5 animal care staff (based on the formula above). On most days, only 2 ACOs fill the role of kennel staff in addition to the trustees. It should be noted the trustee program was suspended during the week of the consult visit due to staffing issues. When analyzing staffing needs, LCAS should consider the following:

- Staffing is a huge issue faced in shelters across the country. These positions are physically and emotionally demanding with low compensation. For these reasons, it is critical now more than ever for shelters to remain within their capacity for care.
- Staff callouts and approved leaves of absence in organizations across the country are a frequent occurrence and often leave stretched teams even more short-staffed causing supervisors and those with specialized roles to fill these gaps instead of performing their specific job duties as was witnessed at LCAS during consult visit.
- Utilizing trustee labor does not provide reliable staffing as they may not be allowed to leave the facility for a variety of reasons (illness, weather, holidays, unplanned lockdowns, etc.) The trustee program also requires a male staff member onsite to supervise which is not always possible with the current staffing dynamics at the shelter.
- Staffing needs may fluctuate depending on the level of care needed for the population (more staff would be needed for example in the event of an outbreak where animals require daily medications and increased care, a large hoarding case of unsocialized animals or in the event of a court hold requiring specialized handling). The shelter for example has been housing 10 dogs on a court hold since June 7, 2024 with no foreseeable outcome date. MMPC consultant was advised that trustees are not allowed to handle these dogs which means their daily care falls on the animal control officers. In addition, these dogs are being housed in the old outdoor single-sided kennels which do not meet minimum housing requirements and require additional work to remove the animal during sanitation.
 - Leadership may want to review if trustees can assist with the daily feeding and care of these particular dogs since they are not aggressive or dangerous
 - Leadership should create a system for the resolution of court cases promptly and allow for pets to be cared for in a foster home on a case-by-case basis. LCAS and most shelters are challenged to provide appropriate enrichment for long-term pets involved in a court case. Other jurisdictions across the country have streamlined the processing of these

cases and have successful foster programs for non-aggressive long-termers. Consultants will introduce the leadership team to other municipal agencies who have made this happen.

- Leadership should work with local authorities and the judicial system to expedite the surrender of these pets.
- As dogs are adopted or transferred out in the main kennel building, move case dogs over into double-sided kennels so they have more space and allow access to play yards. These dogs are in the care of LCAS due to neglect by their owner, yet they have been kept in isolation for 5 months with little improvement to their overall living situation.

Hours and Staffing

Strategic goal

Baseline staffing should be in place to ensure that all alternatives to intake are discussed with owners and Good Samaritans and shelter pets are cared for appropriately for a minimum of 12 hours per day. This is a stretch goal as positions can be added to the budget as current staffing level is not sufficient to cover this many hours. Staff, trustees and future volunteers need the tools to provide appropriate care. Hours need to be convenient for the public to access, including evenings and weekends. The shelter is currently open Monday through Friday from 8am to 4pm and has recently started opening on Saturdays from 9am-1pm.

Positives

- Staff is extremely compassionate, hard-working and dedicated to helping pets
- Leadership is open to reviewing hours to align with Florida Statute and to better serve the community
- LCAS recently started opening on Saturdays from 9am-1pm
- Trustee labor is budget neutral

Action Steps:

- Consider shifting hours of operation to be open later in the evening during the week, so that working people and families have the opportunity to adopt and/or search for their lost pet. Leadership should explore offering staff work 4 10-hour shifts or by staggering work shifts once additional staff is added
- LCAS is not currently in compliance with Ponce's Law passed in 2018 which requires that all Florida shelters that intake lost or stray animals remain open one weekday night after 5:00pm and one weekend day.
 - Access for owners to retrieve dogs and cats at least 1 weekend day per week and after 5:00 p.m. 1 weekday per week, provided that complying with the requirements of this subparagraph does not require an increase in total operating hours.
 - Section 0823.151
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0800-0899/0823/Sections/0823.151.html
- Consider opening Sundays for adoptions and other live outcome opportunities. Staff is already scheduled onsite to provide care to the animals and can be cross-trained to handle adoptions. Reserve the weekends for live outcomes only as there are fewer staff to handle new intakes.

- Create a plan to ensure shelter pets are not left alone for more than 12 hours. Animals are currently left alone without care for more than 15 hours daily and longer on the weekends.
- Create a plan to ensure shelter staff are not left to work alone while on shift. This is especially important when cleaning kennels and working around the animals as there would be no one to call for help in the event of an emergency. Leadership is commended for purchasing radios for staff to easily communicate. Once radios are received, staff should test the radios in the kennel area to ensure they can be heard over the barking dogs.
- As discussed in the previous section regarding staffing capacity, analyze staffing and volunteer work hours to ensure that the basic needs of animals are met each day and that staff is compensated for their hours worked. Staff reported they are regularly scheduled on the weekends by themselves and only allotted 4 hours to complete all kennel duties. Due to being over capacity, staff reported they often work longer hours without compensation.
- Analyze the job descriptions and duties of staff members in every department to ensure that the workload is balanced and that staff skills are being utilized in appropriate roles.
- Recruit additional volunteers and/or temporary workers to assist with daily cleaning, dog walking, dog and cat enrichment, adoption ambassadors, greeting visitors and other activities. Recruit morning dog walkers and pair them with staff to walk dogs during sanitation to expedite the process. Playgroup volunteers are also helpful in running dogs to playgroups so kennels can be cleaned while the dogs enjoy the yards.
- Create a veterinary technician or veterinary assistant position to assist the veterinarian with medical and surgical procedures. Currently, the veterinarian is asked to perform sterilization surgeries without anyone to assist with sedation, surgical preparation, and monitoring throughout recovery. This practice is highly inefficient, is a poor use of the veterinarian's skillset, and most importantly puts patient health and safety at risk. In addition, Fear-Free animal handling is unable to be achieved while working alone and patient anesthetic monitoring is unable to be performed adequately while the veterinarian is handling multiple patients.
 - Consider recruiting a technician on a per diem or contract basis to work with the vet on the days she is at the shelter.
 - Consider training an existing staff member who may have a desire to learn to assist in surgery on the two days the vet is at the shelter. Leadership at Operation Catnip and Citrus County Animal Services has offered to have staff visit their facilities to train in this capacity. If the opening of the shelter to the public is delayed until after Noon, surgeries could be completed in the morning before opening leaving the afternoons for the vet to focus on shelter medicine while the staff member focuses on adoptions and other duties.
- As time allows and/or during the onboarding process, have staff complete Fear Free training which is offered online, on-demand and at no cost (this should be recommended to volunteers as well and is also free to them). In addition to taking the course, ensure that staff and volunteers are incorporating fear-free methods to the best of their abilities while completing daily tasks. <https://fearfreeselters.com/>
- Due to the nature of the animal welfare industry, many staff are understandably suffering from Compassion Fatigue. Explore options offered by the county to see if counselors can be brought to the shelter or made available to staff. Other excellent resources available to help staff are the UF

Shelter Medicine Program's Compassion Fatigue course offered by Jessica Dolce <https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/education/continuing-education/compassion-fatigue-strategies/> along with other options available at <https://www.jessicadolce.com/> however these resources require staff to be given appropriate time within their workday to participate (which is often an issue with staff who are already stretched thin).

Field Services

Strategic goal

Overall, there is an industry-wide shift towards community-minded enforcement in municipal shelters. This is because we now know the majority of wellness or neglect complaints stem from lack of access and not malintent. Examining the category of calls of animals brought to the shelter by field services will help LCAS leadership formulate the best plan for community outreach. Addressing access to care issues will allow the field services team to concentrate on true public and animal safety issues.

Positives

- Compassionate and dedicated team in place
- LCAS is a member of the Florida Animal Protection and Advocacy Association (FAPAA) formerly FACA

Action Steps

- Review safety tools and equipment available to officers to ensure they are outfitted with basic needs to fulfill their duties while remaining safe in the community
- Consider installing an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system in ACO trucks to easily track the location of vehicles and monitor staff safety
- Review recent changes to Florida statute. This information was shared by FAPAA earlier this year; however, staff was unaware that adopter and rescue group's contact information is now protected when public records requests are made. Consultant will forward recent updates.
- Encourage leadership to rotate sending field services team to FAPAA's annual conference for continued education. The conference is typically held in February in Orlando.
- Encourage field services team to join the National Animal Care and Control Association (NACA) to provide online training for animal control officers and to keep up with industry standards (if not currently a member).
- Recommend field services team follow the latest NACA position statements on operating post pandemic, especially their position on essential intake and appointment-based intake <https://www.nacanet.org/category/position-statements/>
- Recommend field services team review call volume and types of calls received to determine staffing needs. This is critical since the team is also responsible for the daily care and sanitation of the animals.
- Recommend field services team review Best Friends Animal Society's *Humane Animal Control* manual which should be used as a vital reference to supplement this assessment report. <https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/humane-animal-control-manual>

Population Management & Pathway Planning

Strategic goal

Effective population management and pathway planning should result in the shortest length of stay through lifesaving means.

Action Steps

- Due to the small size of the LCAS team, everyone should be working together on Population Management and the flow of animals through the shelter system. The team should do rounds daily and include medical surveillance. Staff may rotate as long as they are trained on the process. *The idea is for the team to do a walk-through daily (cage check) to ensure there is a dynamic plan of action for each pet updated as appropriate that will result in the shortest length of stay.* That means they are taking and/or planning an action step during rounds by visually checking each pet.

Key questions to be asked for each pet:

- Who are you? Are you in the right place?
- How are you physically?
- Are you showing any signs of illness?
- Are you receiving the care that has been prescribed?
- How are you mentally?
- Do you need anything scheduled such as a vet check, spay/neuter, a foster plea or something else?
- How long have you been here? Do we need to do any extra advocacy for you?

This process will ensure that all pets receive the care they need and intervention when appropriate that results in the shortest length of stay. Not all issues will be resolved during rounds, which is meant for high-level planning purposes. Follow-up to ensure those tasks are completed the following day or designated time is required.

Once the habit of daily Population Management rounds is established, the process should not exceed 30 minutes.

- The goal of the daily population management rounds team is to ensure there is an active plan of action for each pet. At key intervals, for example, every 2 weeks, if a pet is still in the shelter there should be advanced advocacy for their placement (marketing videos, search for foster care).
- Minimize Length of Stay (LOS) (some recommendations are intentionally repeated throughout report)
 - Fast-track all highly adoptable animals with exceptional personality/appearance regardless of intake date or medical hold status. Pets that are underage or not medically ready for adoption can be placed in a Foster to Adopt home where they would get more attention.

- Fast track pets at intake to their ultimate destination and reduce overall movement of pets within the shelter system
- Encourage the public to foster healthy dogs without behavior issues (not just the medically needy), especially those who have been in the shelter for more than 2 weeks
- Create and promote a field trip program with the general public. Consultant to provide more information from model programs.
- Encourage the public to foster or adopt sick animals
- Reduce adoption fees and offer fun promotions regularly
- Leadership is commended for posting signage in the shelter lobby advertising fee-waived adoptions through the end of the year. Since LCAS does not have a social media platform or ability to update the website, the community is unaware of this promotion unless they happen to visit the shelter. Until LCAS can create its own Facebook page, this message should be posted on the county's main Facebook page along with photos of adoptable pets
- Increase visibility on social media outlets for adoptable pets
- It is important that the location of pets in shelter software is accurate and confirmed daily. Once modern software is used, the kennel inventory can be printed and handed out to staff assigned to each area to confirm the presence of each pet, update locations in software if needed and reconcile any missing pets.
- Have staff review the capacity score chart to better understand C4C:
<https://www.californiaforallanimals.com/resources/capacity-score-chart/>
- Have key staff watch webinar Counting All Paws: Mastering Daily Population Rounds by Dr. Erin Katrube: <https://network.bestfriends.org/education/counting-all-paws-mastering-daily-population-rounds>
- Create a decision tree for appropriate euthanasia. While euthanasia is not a common outcome for pets at LCAS, it will always be necessary for unsafe large-breed aggressive dogs and medical cases beyond hope. Some examples to help with the development of these protocols include:
 - At Risk Dog Flow Process by Kristen Hassen
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FZzEBTHKtsLwbEPaVhSXVFbbY4UPPyE-Pu2J-E3BqcM/edit>
 - Dr. Ian Dunbar's dog bite scale
<https://apdt.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ian-dunbar-dog-bite-scale.pdf>

Admissions and Animal Intake Protocols

Strategic Goal

Provide basic preventive care for each pet at the point of intake and create an action plan that leads to the shortest length of stay.

Action Steps

- Update medical intake protocols to align with industry standards. Sample SOPs will be provided by the University of Florida.

- Include Bordatella vaccine in the dog intake protocol as it is considered a core vaccine for shelter animals
- Include Ponazuril for puppies, kittens and nursing mothers as part of routine intake to reduce the incidence of coccidia (it is easier to prevent than it is to treat)
- Consider adding monthly flea prevention for dogs and cats
- Train all animal care and medical staff to perform a cursory physical exam when providing preventive care so they can recognize normal from abnormal and flag for a vet check. The veterinarian is currently onsite two days per week (Monday and Thursday) and her limited time at the shelter should be reserved exclusively for vet checks, diagnostics and surgery.
- Once modern software is in place, record all medical and preventive care provided for each pet in database including weight, vaccines, dewormer, flea prevention in real time.
- Vaccinations and other preventive care must be performed on intake when the animal first arrives at the shelter and before they are placed into a kennel. Per the ASV Guidelines, a timely vaccination program is fundamental to preventing severe disease outbreaks in animal shelters.
 - Staff reported cats are not being vaccinated until the time of spay/neuter surgery. Vaccinations on intake should be implemented immediately for all cats and kittens over 4 weeks of age.
 - Staff reported that animals wearing collars or other forms of identification might not be vaccinated on intake even though they have no proof of vaccination and may spend days or weeks at the shelter. This practice should be discontinued and all animals vaccinated on intake (for their safety as well as those around them).
- All puppies and kittens should be revaccinated every 2 weeks until they are 5-6 months of age (adult incisors fully erupted). Many pets at the time of consult had missing vaccines and other preventive care not properly recorded in the computer. This is most likely due to a lack of computers in the shelter along with staff not being provided adequate time to finish their duties before being called to other tasks.
- Generate daily list from computer software (once modern program is in place) advising staff which pets are due for follow-up boosters, dewormer or other medication. Similar reports can be run for the veterinarian to see which animals need exams or diagnostics.
- All dogs and cats must be vaccinated, including pregnant and nursing animals, animals with mild disease, injured animals, and cruelty cases. No animal should be excluded because the risk of exposure to lethal pathogens such as distemper virus, parvovirus, and panleukopenia virus is too high. Animals that are too sick or severely injured to vaccinate should not stay in the shelter, but rather be transferred to a veterinary hospital for appropriate care.
- LCAS is legally responsible for stray pets that enter the shelter, as well as owned pets who require admission and those involved in court cases due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. Every pet with the exception of neonates, feral cats and dangerous dogs must have a neckband with their ID number that correlates to the software record to prevent any confusion regarding their identity. TabBands are an excellent choice and can be stapled end over end to ensure the neckband stays in place.
- Discontinue the practice of accepting visually healthy outdoor cats and instead create a pathway for the public to take cats directly to clinics offering TNR services. LCAS is very fortunate to have

a close working relationship with Operation Catnip in Gainesville which has provided sterilization and TNR services to LCAS' cats for the past year at no cost to the county. Operation Catnip can provide this free assistance through grants designed to increase cat lifesaving at LCAS. The success of this relationship is evident when looking at the dramatic decrease in cat intake from 2023 (563 cats) to year-to-date 2024 (232 cats). Not only has cat intake and euthanasia decreased dramatically, but the live release rate for cats has also increased from 48% in 2023 to 86% year to date in 2024 through September. This is an incredible achievement that should be celebrated. Moving forward, the county should fund some public TNR as a proactive measure that will ultimately resolve constituent complaints while productively decreasing shelter intake.

- Create a formal kitten diversion program to assist finders of kittens instead of shelter intake. Neonatal kittens should not be removed from the environment unless the resident knows the mother cat has died or the kittens are sick or injured. Operation Catnip can share information on their Kitten Shelter Diversion program and provide SOPs and training.
- Include information on the website to educate the public about what to do if they find kittens. (Intentionally repeated) Resources include:
 - Found a Kitten Outside? Here's how to determine what to do <http://www.kittenlady.org/FPACa>
 - Identifying Kittens That Need Help <https://ocgainesville.org/kitten-shelter-diversion>
- Have key staff download and review the Managed Intake or Admissions Training Playbook: <https://network.bestfriends.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Managed%20Intake-Admissions%20Training%20Playbook%208.17.2022.pdf>
- Have key staff download and review Cat Intake and Pathway Planning document created by HASS <https://resources.humananimalsupportservices.org/hubfs/Cat%20Intake%20and%20Pathway%20Planning.docx.pdf?hsLang=en>
- Review references regarding managed coordinated intake:
 - National Animal Control Association position statements highlighting the importance of managed coordinated intake and the benefits of community cat programs that provide more effective services for constituents: <https://www.nacanet.org/category/position-statements/>
 - Position statement by the National Animal Control Association: <https://www.nacanet.org/naca-guideline-on-appointment-based-pet-intake-into-shelters/>
 - Recommendation by Best Friends Animal Society: <https://network.bestfriends.org/education/manuals-handbooks-playbooks/managed-intake-or-admissions-training-playbook>
 - Recently published article by Dr. Kate Hurley; [The Evolving Role of Triage and Appointment-Based Admission to Improve Service, Care and Outcomes in Animal Shelters](https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2022.809340) Front. Vet. Sci., 04 March 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2022.809340>

Animal Handling

It should be the goal of every organization to utilize low-stress handling/gentle restraint whenever possible. Restraint with unnecessary force typically creates more stress and fear, resulting in more aggressive behavior and increasing the likelihood of human and/or animal injury. Staff should avoid creating loud noises when talking, closing kennels, or playing music. Here is a link to an ASPCApro gentle cat handling technique webinar: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=325246071731586>

Recommendations:

- Create/build out an intake room in the garage area that is climate-controlled.
- The intake room should be equipped with a computer for data entry, a walk-on-dog scale that is big enough to accommodate large dogs, a cat scale, a refrigerator for vaccines, an exam table and all other intake medical supplies (dewormers, flea prevention, syringes, needles, sharps container, etc).
 - Consultant donated a digital baby scale during visit to be used for cats and kittens since shelter did not have one. Walk-on dog scales are often not reliable for weighing small cats and kittens and can create a flight risk.
- The intake room should be clean, quiet, and free of distractions such as free-roaming cats and dogs, loud music and a variety of people passing through. Calming music is acceptable.
- Provide low-stress animal handling training to teach staff how to recognize normal vs stressed behavior in dogs and cats.
- Discontinue storing vaccines and medicine in refrigerators used for human food and drinks. A separate refrigerator must be used to comply with DBPR and Public Health requirements. It is advised against using a dorm-style refrigerator or storing vaccines in a vegetable drawer as they are unreliable in regulating temperature. The refrigerator unit must maintain temperatures between 36° to 46°F (2° and 8°C) year-round (or according to vaccine manufacturer label).
 - Staff reported that refrigerator in garage area was not maintaining appropriate temperatures and refrigerator in medical room is too small to meet the shelter's needs
- Purchase neighborhood cat dens to use for safely handling fractious cats during cleaning and/or transport. When carrying cats in a feral den or carrier, make sure cat remains horizontal and is not tipped on its end or swung around haphazardly (see Feline Housing section for more information).
- Staff should review euthanasia protocols with the veterinarian to ensure proper animal handling procedures and protocols are in place including adequate drug protocols used for sedation, methods used and recording of controlled substances. While LCAS has a very low euthanasia rate that is reserved for public and animal safety reasons along with medical cases beyond hope, reviewing policies and procedures is important to ensure staff has the most current knowledge and training available. Consultant can connect the team with both the leaders at Marion & Citrus County Animal Services who are both certified to teach the euthanasia certification and have offered to help.

Sanitation

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians 2022 Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters states that proper cleaning and disinfection not only reduces disease transmission to both animals and people, but also provides a more comfortable environment for the animals. Additionally, a clean, odor-free shelter creates a more positive image to the public.

Action Steps

- Work with staff veterinarian to create sanitation SOPs. UF to provide sample SOPs that can be easily branded and modified for LCAS.
- Create and post the step-by-step sanitation protocol in each housing section. This will reduce staff time spent training new trustees and volunteers as they rotate through the shelter. Here are the basic steps:
 - Remove organic debris (feces, food, toys containing food). Feces should be picked up and disposed of in the garbage and not the drainage system.
 - Hosing the run without removing organic material aerosolizes feces, potentially spreading disease. Additionally, organic material may cause drains to clog.
 - Clean the surfaces with a detergent. No disinfectants work well on dirty surfaces. We recommend Dawn dish detergent as a good cleaner and degreaser. This can be applied to runs with a garden hose sprayer attached to the end of the hose and to cages with a spray bottle.
 - Rinse with water to remove the cleaner
 - Apply the disinfectant to the clean surface
 - Let the disinfectant sit for 10 minutes
 - Rinse with water
 - Dry the surface with a squeegee or clean towel
- During sanitation, dogs in double-sided runs should be coaxed to one side, the divider door lowered, and the opposite side cleaned and disinfected. After the first side is dried, the door is opened and the process repeated on side 2. Dogs in single-sided enclosures should be removed (ideally walked or placed in an outdoor pen) during sanitation. If divider doors are inoperable, the dogs should be removed from the kennel prior to cleaning. This can be accomplished by utilizing the play yards or by recruiting volunteer dog walkers.
- Repair divider doors in dog housing area. Staff reported that the divider doors are not operational and cannot be easily opened and closed; therefore dogs are not sequestered on one side of the kennel during sanitation. This practice is unacceptable by ASV Guidelines and poses a safety risk to staff and animals.
- Staff reported that kennels are currently spot-treated with bleach as needed in place of full daily cleaning and disinfection. Staff reported that detergent may be used first; however, it is often avoided due to the inadequate drainage system (shelter was built with drains only on the exterior portion of the kennels). The building's poor design creates a huge barrier to efficient cleaning; however, adequate sanitation cannot be accomplished by using water alone, by spraying and quickly wiping off a disinfectant, or by using a disinfectant with no detergent properties (i.e. bleach) without cleaning first.

- Select a disinfectant that is effective against canine parvovirus, feline panleukopenia virus, and feline calicivirus. Currently, 4 disinfectants reliably kill these common pathogens: bleach, Wysiwash, Trifectant, and Rescue. Rescue (accelerated hydrogen peroxide) is most often recommended in shelters; however, due to budget constraints consultant is recommending Wysiwash for the LCAS dog kennels and Rescue in the cat housing and medical areas.
 - Household bleach (sodium hypochlorite)
 - Correct dilution is 4 oz/gal water
 - Here is a helpful guide for diluting bleach: <https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspca-bleach-poster.pdf>
 - Bleach solution must be made fresh each day. Bleach solutions degrade within 24 hours.
 - Required contact time is 10 minutes
 - Least expensive disinfectant (pennies per gallon of diluted solution)
 - Wysiwash (calcium hypochlorite). Supplied as tablet in a hose-end applicator that is automatically diluted to the correct concentration
 - Requires contact time of 10 minutes
 - Slightly more expensive than bleach, but still pennies per gallon of diluted solution.
 - This would be an affordable and easy-to-use option for LCAS.
 - Trifectant (potassium peroxymonosulfate)
 - Must be diluted to a 1% solution according to manufacturer directions. Solution is stable for at least 7 days.
 - Requires 10 minute contact time
 - More expensive than bleach or Wysiwash (costs more than \$1/gallon of diluted solution)
 - Trifectant powder is a health hazard for people
 - Trifectant tablets can be safely used for spot-cleaning cat enclosures, stainless steel cat cages, tabletops, carts, and floors. These tablets are not a safety hazard for people and can be added to spray bottles to make a 1% solution.
 - Rescue (accelerated hydrogen peroxide)
 - Most useful and cost-effective dilution is 4 oz/gallon (not 2 oz/gallon)
 - Requires contact time of 10 minutes at this dilution
 - Most expensive disinfectant (dollars/gallon of diluted solution)
 - Recommended in cat housing and medical areas.
 - Quaternary ammonium chloride products (Top Performance 256, Parvosol, Roccal, Triple Two, Parvo-Clear) are NOT effective against parvovirus, panleukopenia virus, and calicivirus, so should not be used as a disinfectant in the shelter. These products are also toxic to cats.
- Sanitation products must be diluted and used according to label instructions or published recommendations. Solutions that are too weak may be ineffective, and those that are too strong may be harmful to animals and people. Rescue® and Wysiwash should be used at the proper concentration and contact time as directed by your veterinarian.

- Please see ASPCApro’s Shelter Disinfectant Quick Reference:
<https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/shelterdisinfectantposter.pdf>
- Cat enclosures: continue the spot cleaning method for individually housed cats that are remaining in the cage and only deep clean when a cat vacates the space.
 - Consider using Rescue in the cat housing and medical areas.
 - Cleaning is made easier when the cages are portalized so the cat has one side for the litterbox and the other side for food, water and bedding (to be discussed further in the cat housing section).
 - Do not remove bedding, bowls, or toys unless they are soiled. Familiar smells decrease anxiety and stress in cats – stripping all of the items from the cage removes these sources of comfort.
 - Unless visibly dirty, there is no need to use disinfectant in each occupied cage on a daily basis as long as the same animal remains in the enclosure.
 - Review the Spot Cleaning for Cat Kennels video by ASPCApro.
<https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/video-how-spot-clean-cat-kennels>
 - If a cage cannot be spot-cleaned, place each cat or litter of kittens in their own assigned crate or carrier while the cage is cleaned. Cats should not share crates or carriers as this promotes spread of disease. Disinfection of crates or carriers between cats is required. Cleaning is more efficient and takes less time when each cat has its own dedicated carrier.
 - Disinfect vacated cages with a 4 oz/gallon dilution of Rescue with a 10-minute contact time.
- Clean litter boxes separately from food/water bowls and toys.
 - Litter boxes can be contaminated with intestinal pathogens such as panleukopenia virus and coccidia. They should never be mixed with bowls and toys for cleaning.
 - Bowls and toys should be cleaned and disinfected first, as follows:
 - Remove organic material
 - Clean with detergent
 - Rinse
 - Remove from Rescue and allow to air dry
 - Staff reported dog bowls cleaned weekly due to lack of staffing, this should be done in between each feeding
 - LCAS should discard all plastic litter boxes that are scratched, cracked and broken as they cannot be properly disinfected
 - Clean litterboxes following the above steps
 - The sink/tub should be cleaned with a detergent, rinsed, and disinfected with Bleach or Rescue after cleaning litter boxes.
 - Alternatively, horse bedding/pine litter (\$6.99 for a 40lb bag at Tractor Supply) and disposable litter boxes may be used, and the entire litter box discarded daily (to be discussed more in cat housing section)
- Ensure each kennel area and medical space are equipped with cleaning tools such as brooms, dustpans, squeegees, etc. Staff should have everything necessary to perform sanitation duties

without leaving the area. These tools should not be shared between areas (ex: broom used in cat room should not be used to sweep surgery and medical area).

Canine Housing and Enrichment

Strategic Goal

When dogs enter the shelter, they should have a double compartment run with the divider door closed only during sanitation, a soft place to rest and provided exercise, ample food and interactive toys. The functional design purpose of the divider door (sometimes referred to as a guillotine door) is to provide separation between bed/food/water and a place to eliminate. These doors should be kept open except during sanitation with one dog, litter or bonded pair having access to both sides of the kennel.

Any time the shelter is over capacity as it is now, increased efforts should be made to move animals quickly to temporary foster homes, transfer partners or through adoption.

Positives

- Primary dog kennels are double-sided with indoor/outdoor access
- Kuranda beds (elevated dog beds) provided in most dog kennels
- 2 small outdoor play yards
- Donor on standby wanting to donate to a large play yard expansion project
- Staff has received training from Dogs Playing For Life (this was provided at no charge to LCAS through a grant from Florida Leaders in Lifesaving)

Action Steps

- Feed dogs twice daily. Puppies and nursing moms should be fed more frequently.
- Repair divider doors so they can be used appropriately during sanitation
- Repair or replace broken Kuranda beds. During the visit some beds were missing legs or were otherwise damaged. Ensure each dog has a Kuranda bed and discontinue the use of elevated plank decking that provides no comfort or relief from lying on a hard surface.
- Sign up for Kuranda shelter bed donation program and advertise the link on website and social media platforms so the public can purchase beds on behalf of LCAS.
<https://shelterbeds.org/shelterRegistration>
- Leadership is strongly encouraged to move forward with the donor's generous offer to create play yards so dogs can relax and exercise in play groups. Playgroups have been proven to reduce the length of stay and stress hormones in dogs and increase adoptions (dogsplayingforlife.com). Shade must be provided for people and pets and small kiddie pools should be provided as well as water buckets attached to the fence so there is a constant water source. Volunteers should be recruited for play groups asap.
- Another small play yard should be created near the old kennels so the court case dogs have the opportunity for playtime outside of their single-sided kennel. The ground will need to be addressed as the sand spurs in the grass are harmful to people and pets (consultant learned this firsthand while walking in the area to identify opportunities). Another option would be to fence in and level the

concrete-covered kennel next door that is being used for storage. Concrete is easy to disinfect and would alleviate the issues with the sand spurs.

- Consider adding misters to the exterior portion of the dog kennels for use in the summer months. Consultant can connect you with Hernando County Animal Services to discuss the ease of installation and products used.
- Hang cage cards on kennels to provide information to visitors. These can be printed directly from the software program to include their name, a photo and basic information.
- Consider using martingale collars for all dogs while in the shelter. This will make it easier for staff and volunteers to walk dogs and escort them to the yards for playgroup. The following link is a favorite collar among shelter staff that is affordable and has a clip/lock which makes fitting them on dogs an easy process, especially for fearful dogs that do not enjoy having a collar taken on and off multiple times while attempting to correct the fit <https://www.maxandneo.com/collections/bulk-collars-and-leashes>
- Provide puzzle feeders or lick mats for single-housed dogs as a means of enrichment (do not use when dogs are doubled up as this may lead to fighting). Staff reported that toys are not given to the dogs due to concerns about toys clogging the drains. A simple solution is to install drain covers to prevent inappropriate items from entering the drains.
- Provide appropriate toys to all puppies and dogs. Puppies for example need chew toys. Chewing allows puppies to ease teething pain, and it alleviates boredom.
- Provide Kongs to single-housed dogs (these can be frozen or stuffed). Sign up with Kong shelter donation program if not already enrolled <https://www.kongcompany.com/shelter-registration>
- Contact Benebone to inquire about their donation program and add Benebone products to Amazon Wish List for public supporters to donate <https://www.benebone.com/contact/>
- Implement a treat cup program so staff, volunteers and visitors can give a dog a treat when they walk by. This is a great way to interact and provides a positive experience for dogs when people pass by their kennel. Staff reported concerns of hanging treat cups on the kennels, so an alternative would be to hand out small treat pails to visitors so they can interact positively with dogs as they walk through the kennel making it a happy experience for both people and pets. Tin treat pails can be purchased at Dollar Tree inexpensively.



Figure 3: Sample treat cup options

- Create safety toolkits and ensure they are easily accessible throughout shelter to staff and volunteers. Safety tools such as a break stick, Pet Corrector (canned air which makes a hissing sound) and some type of barrier that can be used to separate dogs safely should be on hand (such as a 'pig sorting panel') to break up dog fights in both kennels and play yards. Staff should also have leashes handy to remove a dog from the area when needed. Consultant can provide more detailed information on this.
- Create dog field trip program to allow the general public to take a dog out for an adventure or sleepover. Consultant to share protocols and handouts from City of Jacksonville Animal Care & Protective Services (ACPS) and Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department Animal Services (CMPD) who both have robust programs that have lead to increased adoptions and decreased overall LOS for dogs.

Feline Housing and Enrichment

Cats in confinement require ample square footage and separation of litter box and bed/food/water. Square footage is directly correlated to Fear Anxiety & Stress (FAS) which is directly related to the incidence of upper respiratory infection in cats in confinement. For cats housed alone, a minimum of 11 square feet per cat is recommended. For shelters using stainless steel cages, portals resolve the issue of square footage by connecting one cage to a second cage. The door to the portal should be closed only during spot cleaning.

It is not necessary to remove a cat from their enclosure each day to fully disinfect it as that should be reserved for when the cat leaves the enclosure permanently. Moving the cat in and out of the cage increases FAS and also removes any familiar smells the cat became accustomed to. Cage cages should be spot-cleaned daily which means that the cat is sequestered on one side of the cage while the other side is tidied then the process repeated on the opposite side. Any papers or bedding that is not soiled should stay in the cage and litter box, food and water bowls changed.

Positives

- Cat housing area is separate from dog kennel minimizing exposure to barking dogs

Action Steps

- Disconnect the exhaust fan in cat room from the light switch so it can be turned on and off separately. The fan is excessively loud which increases the stress level for cats. There is currently no alternative to turn the fan off without keeping the cats in the dark (which is unacceptable as they need light during the day to regulate their circadian rhythm).
- Replace all cat housing with stainless steel, portalized cages as soon as possible. This is a big budget ask and may take time to identify funding sources. Leadership should measure cat room and obtain quotes so that a plan can be put in place to seek grant opportunities, private donors or incorporate into future budget. Consultant can provide suggestions for ordering.
- Until new cat housing can be secured, consider purchasing replacement shelves for existing ferret cages so that cats can easily access the upper and lower levels. The current setup requires cats to jump straight up or pull themselves up by the cage bars through a tiny opening that was meant for a small critter.

- Place a rug or mat on the floor of the cage to cover the slatted flooring of existing cages (slatted flooring does not meet ASV Guidelines). The public can be asked to purchase thin mats from the Dollar Store which would be used only for that cat and sent with them or discarded after use. Washable rugs could also be used and volunteers recruited to help keep up with laundry needs.
- Discontinue the use of carpeted cat trees or items that cannot be washed or disinfected (this is a contributing factor of ringworm outbreaks in shelters). If carpeted cat trees are donated to shelter and appear to be in good condition, recommend gifting to an adopter.
- Hang sheets or towels on the sides of existing kennels to provide a barrier from the neighboring kennels to minimize exposure to illness. Do not completely cover the kennel as cats need to be able to see out.

- Utilize clamp-on coop cups for food/water in cages to maximize floor space and minimize having water bowls tipped. Placement on the cage door will also allow staff the ability to easily notice when refills are needed and can refill using a watering can without opening the cage door. Consultant donated 18 coop cups during visit. These items can be added to the Amazon Wish List or purchased directly when more are needed <https://www.amazon.com/Mimorou-Pieces-Removable-Stainless-Hanging/dp/B0BCK7WMZV/>



- Provide hiding spaces and options for cats. For shy cats who are scared or nursing moms who may be stressed, placing a pillowcase over one side of the kennel can help lower stress.
 - Ask volunteers to assist in making a variety of cat accessory projects <https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/diy-housing-accessories/projects-for-feline-housing/>
- Provide cats with full size litter boxes that are appropriate for their size. There will be room in the kennel when each cat is able to have a portalized double compartment cage (litter box on one side, food/water and soft bedding on the other).
 - Consider utilizing disposable cardboard trays to be used as litter boxes. Disposable litter boxes provide a sanitary option and also save staff time.
 - Work with local partners such as Tractor Supply, Walmart, Petco and other pet supply stores to have them save the cardboard trays that canned food comes in and have a volunteer or staff member pick up
 - Ask supporters who may work at grocery, convenience or liquor stores to save these boxes and ask volunteers to pick up and drop off at shelter



- Consider switching from clay litter to horse bedding/pine pellets. A 40lb bag is roughly \$6.99 at Tractor Supply. Less litter can be used in the box, it has a pleasant smell and provides a cost-saving.
- All cats should be consistently provided with in-cage enrichment such as toys and scratchers.
 - Ask supporters to donate cat toys such as ping pong balls which are both affordable and can be disinfected in between cats
 - Other types of cat toys which cannot be disinfected can also be provided to the cats and simply sent home with them at time of adoption
 - Ask supporters to purchase cat scratchers to provide entertainment for cats in cages
 - Imperial Cat has a donation program where the public can purchase a box of 'scratch n bits' which are leftover cardboard pieces from their larger scratchers and have them shipped directly to the shelter. <https://imperialcat.com/adoptacat.php>
- Purchase break-away collars for easy identification of co-housed cats/kittens
- Purchase 5 neighborhood cat dens so the staff is not forced to 'handle' fractious cats which is dangerous for all involved. The den should be positioned sideways in the cage rather than facing forward (see photo below). In addition to safety, the main purpose of the den is to provide a space to hide where the cat does not feel exposed. Neighborhood cat dens can also be used to safely transport a cat from a humane trap to a cage or to transport to surgery for TNR. When purchasing, choose the option with the handle that lays flat instead of the hard plastic handle as this 'den' doubles as an elevated perch as well. Dens can be purchased at: https://www.livetrapp.com/index.php?dispatch=products.view&product_id=30203



Figure 4: This picture depicts the appropriate set up for a cat in a double-sided kennel with a towel lined den, food and water on one side and the litter box in the other compartment.

Medical Care, Disease Control and Surgical Programs

Strategic Goal

Ensure all processes are in place to minimize the spread of common infectious diseases. Besides alternatives to intake, the best way to do that is to vaccinate all pets on intake, sanitize effectively and place pets as quickly as possible. Medical issues must be addressed without delay.

Positives

- Part-time shelter veterinarian onsite 2 days per week
- Onsite surgery suite

Action Steps

- Ensure that all intake, medical and sanitation protocols are written by or reviewed by LCAS shelter veterinarian (UF to provide sample SOPs)
- If LCAS accepts an injured or sick pet into the care of the shelter, there is an obligation to provide basic care. With extreme cases, euthanasia may be the best option but for others, a MOU should be created with an outside veterinary clinic or emergency clinic so that the pet can receive appropriate care when the staff veterinarian is not on site. It is not acceptable to allow pets to suffer with no treatment or relief nor is it realistic that the part-time staff veterinarian be on call 24/7. Protocols should be created by the staff veterinarian and options explored.
- In a cursory look at current pricing for some pharmaceutical items and supplies, consultant identified potential areas of opportunity to save money. In 2023, the shelter handled 1,218 animals (563 cats and 655 dogs) so even a small cost savings per unit adds up to a significant amount of money. Staff reported not being able to purchase certain preventive care or medical supplies due to lack of funds; however, by securing shelter pricing LCAS will have funds available to purchase core items needed such as Bordatella vaccine for dogs and flea prevention for both dogs and cats. The chart below lists a few common items purchased by LCAS compared to pricing received at Citrus County Animal Services (CCAS):

Product	LCAS Price	CCAS Price	Savings
FVRCP	\$7.55	\$2.69	\$4.86
DAPP	\$8.53	\$2.70	\$5.83
Rabies, 1 year	\$4.12	\$1.21	\$2.91
Bordatella	not using	\$2.71	

- Sign up with Vetcove (a free service) to compare pricing of commonly used medical supplies from your existing vendors and to ensure lowest price being received (vetcove.com)
- In addition to Patterson and Zoetis, recommend creating accounts with Boehringer Ingelheim, MWI and IDEXX and ensure shelter pricing is in place.
- Discontinue using VetScan (Abaxis) heartworm tests (\$3.33 each) which are known to provide unreliable results and instead order through IDEXX (\$3.58). While the IDEXX heartworm snap test is slightly more expensive, consultants do not recommend price shopping for items ordered through IDEXX as their tests are considered accurate and reliable.
- Consider discontinuing routine testing for FeLV/FIV and advise adopters to see their veterinarians for recommendations around testing. The 2020 American Association of Feline Practitioners Guidelines can be found here: <https://catvets.com/resource/feline-retrovirus-management-guidelines/>. A helpful summary webinar regarding these recommendations and guidelines presented by Dr. Julie Levy from the Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdsMiZjwdpo>.

- Discontinuing the practice of routine testing for FIV/FELV will result in a savings of \$16.66 per cat. These savings could be used to purchase other necessary products such as flea prevention not currently in use due to budget constraints.
- Tests should be available for use at the veterinarian's discretion
- Meet with veterinarian to determine other basic equipment and supplies needed to provide routine medical care
- Consider purchasing a microscope and supplies for trained staff/vet to do skin scrapes and fecal checks if needed so pets do not have to be transported to the veterinarian's office for simple procedures

Surgical recommendations:

The current layout of the medical area does not lend itself to surgical efficiency. The surgical suite has 1 makeshift table upon which patients are prepped and operated. An area just outside of the surgery room (in the current holding and treatment area) should be utilized to prep patients. Dr. Meaghan Mielo of Citrus County Animal Services and Dr. Lynn Samatulski of Marion County Animal Services have both offered for staff to visit and see their setups and are willing to be a resource. We encourage the medical staff to witness the efficiency of a small surgical space in these municipal shelters. Efficiency will also be improved with at least one additional support staff. In this way, the support staff can safely anesthetize and monitor each patient, allowing the surgeon to continue operating without interruption.

Consultant understands many of these recommendations are longer-term goals that require additional budgetary resources; however, it should be noted for strategic planning.

- Have medical staff review The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' 2016 Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs
<https://avmajournals.avma.org/view/journals/javma/249/2/javma.249.2.165.xml>
- Provide a minimum of 2 support staff for the surgeon to increase efficiency.
- Reimagine your surgical holding areas to minimize stress and maximize efficiency. Visit with the Medical Director at Citrus County Animal Services for ideas on efficiently using the small space designated for medical.
- Prep animals in the room immediately outside of the surgery suite (this can only be done once support staff is provided to the veterinarian).
- Recover animals outside of the surgery suite and monitor closely for 3 hours post-op (this is the period of greatest mortality). This recommendation can only be done once support staff is provided to the veterinarian.
- Continue to utilize LCAS' spay-neuter partners (Operation Catnip and Humane Society of North Central Florida) until trained staff can be hired to assist the veterinarian.
 - Operation Catnip has grant funding available to assist with spay/neuter of community cats for TNR, pet cats available for adoption and kittens that are part of a kitten diversion program
 - Humane Society of North Central Florida has grant funding available to assist with spay/neuter of shelter dogs who are eligible for adoption or return to owner. Consultant will

- connect LCAS with leadership at HSNCFL to discuss scheduling. LCAS would be responsible for transporting the dogs, this could be a volunteer position.
- The University of Florida's Veterinary Community Outreach Program (VCOP) can potentially assist with adoptable dog and cat surgeries at no charge to LCAS. LCAS would be responsible for transporting the pets, this could be a volunteer position.
 - County leadership should identify a cargo van with rear air conditioning to be used for transporting animals to partnering clinics. All seats should be removed from the back of the van so that crates and carriers can be loaded for the number of animals being transported. Kennels should be cleaned and disinfected in between use.

Return to Owner (Dogs)

Strategic goal

Current research has shown that most dogs at large are found in their own neighborhoods so goals should include equipping neighbors with avenues to help find the owner along with minimizing barriers to reclaim.

Positives

- RTO for dogs in 2023 was 25%, which is slightly higher than the national average of 22%
- There is great potential to increase reunification with the creation of the LCAS shelter Facebook page and updated website that will feature photos of lost pets brought into the shelter

Action Steps

- Consider recent research showing that dogs found at large were in their own neighborhoods and revert to emergency-only response if there is a true public and animal safety issue. Keeping dogs in their neighborhoods provides the best opportunities for them to make it home. Information on the website should be easily accessible when someone finds a dog explaining all the steps to take including walking the dog around the neighborhood, checking for a microchip and posting on NextDoor and Petco Love Lost (<https://petcolove.org/lost/>). See the First 48 program at Cabot Arkansas which has been adopted by many municipal shelters across the country since the pandemic: <https://cabotanimalsupportservices.com/program/helping-pets-get-home/>)
- Post photos of all stray or lost dogs entering shelter on website in real time. This can be achieved automatically once Shelter Luv software is implemented.
- Post photos of all stray or lost dogs entering shelter on shelter's Facebook in real time once Facebook page is created (this cannot be handled automatically through the software but can be handled by either staff or trained volunteers).
- Mirror the RTO program with the St Lucie Police Department in Florida who has a 75-80% RTO rate for dogs. Consultants can connect leadership with the St. Lucie field services team to learn more about their program which involves providing low-cost microchips and a lifetime pet license.
- Consider waiving fees for a first-time reclaim when an owner agrees to spay/neuter, rabies vaccinate and microchip and subsidize if the owner is unable.
- Note: The RTO program for cats includes leaving them in their home location or returning them to their home location after spay/neuter and rabies vaccination

- Consider asking field services officers to post yard signs in areas where lost dogs are picked up to increase reunification (as long as this does not conflict with the county's sign ordinance)

Figure 5: Sample sign used by the municipal shelter in Nashville, TN

- Post Lost & Found Pets guide (which show most dogs are found less than 1 mile from their home) and other infographics from HASS toolkit on the website and Facebook page. <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/blog/5-kits-infographics-tools-lost-pets-home/>



Figure 6: Sample infographics available from HASS toolkits

Finder Foster, Foster on Deck & Transfer Partner Program

Strategic goal

Foster care should be the pathway for adoptions. Advertising the foster program widely and encouraging current fosters and volunteers to get others involved will help increase this vital lifesaving pathway and should be the goal for each pet. Good Samaritans can exponentially increase the foster care pool.

Positives

- Leadership is interested in creating a robust volunteer program
- There are many willing community members with an interest in fostering for the shelter

Action Steps

- LCAS needs to make helping through foster care an easy and simple pathway. As per Maddie's Fund, foster care is the most important avenue to adoptions. The animal welfare industry has transitioned to a more community foster-centric model, growing this program is essential as confining pets in a shelter should be the last resort. LCAS should establish this goal and continue to take steps in this direction.
- All pets should be considered for a foster track as a pathway to their adoption with both the foster family and the shelter advocating for them. Fosters must have a plan of action, receive follow-up preventive care (boosters and dewormer) every 2-3 weeks, and be scheduled for sterilization when appropriate.
- Categories of foster care that should not require orientations and excessive barriers include:
 - Good Samaritan/Foster Finder who foster strays in order to prevent a shelter intake
 - Fosters-on-Deck are an important part of the program so pets do not stay in the shelter long and move quickly into foster care.
 - Foster to Adopt if for some reason the pet cannot be sterilized yet or the person wants to do a trial with the pet to make sure they are a good fit
- Allow all pets in the shelter to be available for rescue/transfer on a first come first served basis
- Proactively communicate with partner organizations via text/email about a variety of pets needing transfer and do not limit requests to only pets with issues or those who are on a deadline. Follow up with transfer partners to ensure they are also operating within their capacity.
- Provide link to Kitten Lady's free Orphan Kitten Guide along with kitten supplies <http://www.kittenlady.org/booklet>
- Create kitten kits so Good Samaritans can be provided with supplies and more likely to assist (<https://bestfriends.org/stories/features/kitten-kits-prepare-public-save-lives>)
- The MMPC team is happy to connect LCAS with municipal shelters around the state small teams manage a robust foster program
- Grow the Adoption Ambassador program by ensuring all foster volunteers are informed, encouraged, equipped, and provided with an easy process with opportunities to place their

fosterlings so they do not re-enter the shelter (except for spay/neuter) and can go straight into an adoptive home.

Adoptions

Strategic goal

To increase lifesaving capacity and position the organization to help more pets in the community, LCAS must prioritize proactive strategies to shorten the length of stay for each animal without compromising their health. The longer an animal stays in the shelter, the more likely they will be exposed to an infectious disease or develop a behavioral concern that adversely affects their opportunity to be adopted. The goal is to reduce the length of stay by removing any barriers to rapid release on an adoption pathway to help more animals in need.

Positives

- Fee-waived adoptions recently offered through the end of the year
- Staff has created a friendly adoption process that focuses on helping make the right match for people and pets

Opportunities

- Add welcoming signage directing the public to the shelter indicating that pets are available for adoption. Consider using adoption flags or banners (if allowed) to garner attention from the road.
- High adoption fees are correlated with higher lengths of stay. Fee waived or as close to free for dogs and cats is considered the best way to increase adoptions and will decrease the length of stay (LOS) in the shelter. Offering BOGO specials for cats and kittens will also encourage the adoption of pairs (which is awesome for most cats). While LCAS is commended for recently eliminating adoption fees, this message has not been promoted within the community and the public is unaware.
- If fee-waived adoptions are not in effect, offer specials and promotions regularly to generate excitement within the community. Take advantage of fun holidays (<https://nationaltoday.com/>) to promote adopter interest. Follow social media campaigns from other successful shelters for ideas.
- All staff and volunteers should read *Adopters Welcome* by the Humane Society of the United States which can be found here: https://humanepro.org/sites/default/files/documents/Adopters_Welcome_Manual_5-15-2020.pdf
- Send a follow up email or phone call 2-3 days post-adoption to inquire how the new pet is adjusting and if the adopter has any questions or concerns. Ask adopter to share a photo with you to post on social media.
 - This is a great task for volunteers to assist with and will not only increase the organization's reputation as being helpful and caring but will reduce adoption returns by heading off potential issues.
 - If LCAS proceeds with ShelterLuv software, sign up with Petsel to streamline post-adoption follow-ups (in place of using volunteers). This is a free service that interfaces

with ShelterLuv, PetPoint, Shelter Buddy and Chameleon. MMPC can also connect GCHS leadership with other busy shelters utilizing this free service: www.petszel.com

Volunteer Program

Strategic goal

A volunteer program engages the community and enhances the care of shelter pets at no cost.

Positives

- Leadership is interested in creating a robust volunteer program
- There are many willing community members with an interest in volunteering at the shelter

Opportunities

- Create a user-friendly, easy and simple onboarding process for volunteers so that people interested in helping can do so with minimal barriers
 - Provide helpful information on the spot that volunteers need to know to start helping today while staying safe such as the basic dos and don'ts, map of the facility, etc.
 - Consider posting a video orientation on the website for volunteers to review once requirements have been achieved instead of attending an in-person training which is only offered twice a month with cat-specific orientations offered on alternating weeks
 - Discontinue requiring potential volunteers to go through an invasive application process that reads like a job interview
- Volunteer assistance should be developed in the following areas where staff is struggling and are considered high priority:
 - Playgroups for dogs so can be done daily. Some shelters have play groups run exclusively by volunteers or in combination with 1-2 trained staff
 - Dog walkers/Dog Day Out Adoption Ambassadors
 - Kennel enrichment for both dogs and cats at LCAS
 - Adoption helpers
 - Pet photographers
 - Laundry and dishes
- Consultant to connect leadership team with Citrus and Marion County Animal Services to learn about their robust volunteer programs
- Encourage volunteers to complete Fear Free training which is offered online and at no cost (they can do this from their home as time allows, this should not be a requirement but an opportunity for them to receive additional training) <https://fearfreeshelters.com/>
- Use Best Friends' Foundations of Volunteer Engagement online course as the basis for training on volunteer issues and emphasize removing barriers to onboarding volunteers, the relationship between volunteers and staff, creating job descriptions for volunteers, and communicating with volunteers. <https://rise.articulate.com/share/zZgXRDyGOHfrDCDwXxB0VVerRq5bU9g1#/>

Facility Design & Maintenance

Action Steps

- Consider removing glass partition at the front desk to create a more welcoming atmosphere and to increase communication with visitors without having to raise voices to be heard through the glass. If leadership decides to leave the floating wall in place, consider removing the glass from the section to the right of the entryway where sensitive conversations are often held.
- Rewire lighting and fan in cat room so that fan can be controlled on a separate switch
- Install covers on dog kennel drains to prevent toys from entering drains. The director at Marion County Animal Services has offered to share pictures of what they used since they have the same kennel drainage design
- Create/build out an intake room in the garage area that is climate-controlled and includes a sink
- Consider retrofitting the garage area to provide climate-controlled isolation spaces for dogs and cats and include a sink in each space.
 - Ideally separate spaces should be used for canine parvovirus and canine infectious respiratory disease (CIRD) although the current space may not be large enough to allow this
 - Ideally separate spaces should be used for feline panleukopenia and ringworm although the current space may not be large enough to allow this
- Consider adding a utility sink with multiple large compartments to separate the cleaning of dishes and litterboxes with room to soak, disinfect and rinse. An additional sink is also needed in the medical area to clean surgical instruments away from litter boxes and food dishes.
- Consider moving entrance gate so the public can access the shelter on Sundays without staff having to manually open/close the gate to prevent the public from accessing the landfill

Moving Forward

The University of Florida Shelter Medicine Program and Maddie's Million Pet Challenge team appreciate the willingness of LCAS leadership and staff to learn and implement recommendations to help more people and pets. The intent and purpose of this report is to identify key systems and strategies to help staff streamline the operation. At the core of this mission is transitioning from a shelter-centric animal sheltering system to a community-centric system. There are many encouraging opportunities that will allow LCAS to increase the number of people and pets helped within the existing framework.

The MMPC team applauds LCAS for the tremendous progress and dedication to animal welfare and is grateful to the leadership and staff for the commitment to continue to improve and looks forward to working together into the future. **#ThankstoMaddie**

General Resource List

National Animal Welfare Organizations

- Association of Shelter Veterinarians (sheltervet.org)
- Best Friends (bestfriends.org)
- Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (careawo.org)
- Fear Free Shelters (fearfreeshelters.com)
- Human Animal Support Services - HASS (humaneanimalsupportservices.org)
- Humane Society of the United States (hsus.org and animalsheltering.org)
- Jessica Dolce Compassion Fatigue (jessicadolce.com)
- Maddie's Fund (maddiesfund.org)
- Maddie's Million Pet Challenge team (maddiesmillionpetchallenge.org)
- National Animal Control Association (naca.net)

National Statistics

- Best Friend Dashboards (<https://bestfriends.org/no-kill-2025/animal-shelter-statistics>)
- Shelter Animals Count (<https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/>)
- American Pet Products Association Survey 2021-2022: <https://humanepro.org/page/pets-by-the-numbers> FFA Cessed 3/29/22

Guidelines

- *Adopter's Welcome*, by the Humane Society of the United States
<https://humanepro.org/page/adopters-welcome-manual>
- 2020 American Association of Feline Practitioners guidelines (Informational webinar by Dr. Julie Levy, Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, University of Florida, <https://youtu.be/KdsMiZjwdpo>)
- Human Animal Support Services (HASS) Playbook
<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/hass-playbook/>
- Shelter Care Checklists: Putting ASV Guidelines Into Action
https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/2022-asv-gl-checklist_0.pdf
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' 2016 Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs
<https://avmajournals.avma.org/view/journals/javma/249/2/javma.249.2.165.xml>
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters
<https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/asvguidelinessecondedition-2022.pdf>

Surrender Prevention and Safety Net

- Those surrendering needed temporary help (<https://www.aspca.org/about-us/press-releases/more-1-million-households-forced-give-their-beloved-pet-each-year-aspca>)
- Home to Home (<https://home-home.org/>)
- Rehome by Adopt-A-Pet (<https://rehome.adoptapet.com/>)

- Rehoming Comparison Tool (<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/wordpress/files/2021/03/Rehoming-Tool-Comparison-1-27-21.pdf>)
- PetPoint.com, Points of Care for tracking Safety Net data (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBvr9XF42FA>)

Foster Care

- HASS Intake to Placement Tool Kit (<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/toolkit/intake-to-placement/>)
- Doobert/FosterSpace (<https://www.doobert.com/>)

Community Cat Programming

- Informational webinar by the Million Cat Challenge team: <https://youtu.be/9FVHcYTXrgI> by Dr.'s Kate Hurley and Julie Levy entitled [Rethinking the Animal Shelter's Role in Free Roaming Cat Management](#)
- Best Friends Animal Society (<https://resources.bestfriends.org/advocacy/community-cats>)
- The National Animal Control Association (<https://www.nacanet.org/animal-control-intake-of-free-roaming-cats/>)
- The Humane Society of the United States (<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/community-cat-program>)
- Humane Animal Support Services (<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/?s=community+cats>)

Managed Admission; Appointment Based System

- Best Friends Managed Intake or Admissions Training Playbook (<https://network.bestfriends.org/education/manuals-handbooks-playbooks/managed-intake-or-admissions-training-playbook>)

Portal instructions

- Puppies https://shor-line.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Puppy_Portal-1.pdf
- Cats <https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/?r=cat-portals-order-information-and-instruction-for-installation>

Canines (How to help large dogs in shelters)

- Big Dog Master Class <https://maddiesmillionpetchallenge.org/big-dog-master-class/#1648138892891-049ac83b-f195>

Dog Play Groups

- Dogs Playing for Life (dogsplayingforlife.com)
- Shelter Playgroup Alliance for small playgroups (sheltdogsplay.org)

Adoptions

- Adoptapet (adoptapet.com)
- Adoptimize (adoptimize.com)
- The 2021-022 American Pet Products Association Survey showed that only 40% of dogs and 43% of cats are adopted from an animal shelter or rescue group
- <https://humanepro.org/page/pets-by-the-numbers>
- Why people went to breeders after shelter/rescue
<https://modernmagazine.com/articles/best-friends-animal-society-survey-exposes-why-people-opt-adopt-or-not/108382>.
- Conversations from the Field: Journey to Open Adoptions by Chrissy Sedgley
<https://youtu.be/TAYAojqDH4o>
- Is Your Adoption Process Really Working by Sue Cosby
https://aspc.zoom.us/recording/play/NAvZ9ClE0sAAhmE-V_TcWq1TSn5kAa6n4HgPJMixYyMKBSINpAuxfWSIWPxfnm6?continueMode=true
- Petfinder.com

Shelter Donation Programs

- Kuranda dog and cat beds (Kuranda.com)
- Kong (<https://www.kongcompany.com/kong-cares-application/>)
- Cat Scratchers (<https://imperialcat.com/giveback.php>)

Recommended Reading

- [The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters](#)
- [Animal Behavior for Shelter Veterinarians and Staff](#)
- [BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Shelter Medicine: Principles of Health and Welfare in a Multi-animal Environment](#)
- [Every Nose Counts: Using Metrics in Animal Shelters](#)
- [Field Manual for Small Animal Medicine](#)
- [High-Quality, High-Volume Spay and Neuter and Other Shelter Surgeries](#)
- [Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters](#)
- Infectious Disease Control <https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/shelter-services/disease-management/>
- [Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff](#)
- Replacing Myth with Math, Peter Marsh
(http://www.shelteroverpopulation.org/Books/Replacing_Myth_with_Math.pdf)
- Reference for Large Scale Social Change [Switch by Dan and Chip Heath](#)

Return to Owner (RTO) Research

- Dallas, Texas: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2021.669428/full>

Rescue/Transfers Research

- Pasco County, FL <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/blog/county-shelter-transfer-partners/>

Staffing

- Field Services <https://www.nacanet.org/determining-field-staffing-needs/>
- Kennel cleaning and feeding <https://www.nacanet.org/determining-kennel-staffing-needs/>

Networking and Information

- [ASPCApro Newsletter and Blog](#)
- [Association of Shelter Veterinarians Private Facebook Group](#)
- [Greater Good](#)
- Human Animal Support Services - HASS (<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/>) sign up for weekly Zoom calls and working groups
- [HSUS Animal Sheltering Blog](#)
- [Maddie's Fund Chew on This Blog](#)
- Maddie's Pet Forum (<https://forum.maddiesfund.org/home>)
- [Shelter Medicine Veterinarians Private Facebook Group](#)
- [UF Shelter Medicine Newsletter](#)

Education and Certification

- Compassion in Balance Program (<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/education/continuing-education/compassion-in-balance-cib-program/>)
- Fear Free Shelter Certification (<https://fearfreeshelters.com/>)
- National Animal Control Association (<https://www.nacanet.org/>)
- Maddie's University (<https://university.maddiesfund.org/>)