



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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### **Love at First Sight**

Recently, the Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control (DACC) released a COVID-19 Impact Report detailing the Department's response to the pandemic and resulting operational changes. With the guidance and support of national organizations such as the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Best Friends Animal Society and UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, DACC implemented a community-based approach to keep pets in homes, reunite lost pets with their owners and reserve its seven animal care centers for the animals most in need – those that are sick, injured or pose a risk to public safety. The full report can be viewed at [DACC Response and Impact Report](#). Here are some highlights from the report:

- Intake among all seven County animal care centers has decreased by 46%. In fiscal year 2019-2020 46,135 animals came into the care centers. In fiscal year 2020-2021 only 24,856 animals were impounded.
  - Positive outcomes (adoptions, return to home, adoption by rescue groups) for sheltered animals increased from 54% to 68% for cats and remained steady at 88% for dogs despite the increased population of medically and behaviorally challenged dogs.
  - Respiratory illnesses decreased by 53% in dogs and by 82% in cats. This is attributed not only to fewer animals in the care center, but also fewer people and a more controlled environment through appointment-based services, contributing to a healthier and calmer experience for animals. Less stress means less illness.
  - Fewer incoming animals means that staff and volunteers can dedicate individual time and attention to assess, care for, and socialize the animals most in need. Dog playgroups have expanded to all seven animal care centers, providing enrichment and social times for sheltered dogs.
  - Appointment-based services has allowed DACC to provide better customer service and enhanced adoption services.
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- Virtual training for foster caretakers leading to hundreds of animals placed in temporary homes. Community members can sign up to volunteer at <https://animalcare.lacounty.gov/become-a-foster-caretaker/>.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has been a transformational event in the field of animal welfare, and it required the Department of Animal Care and Control to completely reinvent ways of providing essential services. We rose to this challenge and have emerged stronger and better positioned to be the most effective animal resource centers possible for our communities,” says Director Marcia Mayeda. DACC has received awards from the National Association of Counties and the California State Association of Counties for these programs.

Based on the positive impact to the community, the animals housed at animal care centers and the individualized attention, DACC will continue to operate with a managed intake approach and appointment-based services. Says Dr. Cynthia Karsten, DVM, DABVP of the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, “Implementing a County-wide managed intake program that meets today’s best practices at one of the world’s largest sheltering systems was a Herculean effort that has been closely watched and celebrated by the animal welfare community at large. This moment in animal welfare history will be marked by the bravery and leadership exemplified at Los Angeles County Animal Care Centers.”

Beginning Sunday, August 1, 2021 the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) will pilot an enhanced adoption program called “Love at First Sight.” The purpose of this program is to improve the adoption experience for customers, increase adoption rates, decrease animals’ length of stay in the care center, and increase efficient use of staff time at DACC’s animal care centers.

With Love at First Sight, members of the public will be able to self-schedule appointments on DACC’s website to visit one of its seven animal care centers. During their visit, the potential adopter will be able to view all available animals and adopt on a first-come, first-served basis. This means no more waiting lists that can delay the adoption process – animals that are spayed or neutered and available that day will be listed as “Ready to Go Home.”

“I appreciate the Department of Animal Care and Control for taking my constituents’ concerns seriously and making important changes to improve access to our animal care centers,” said Supervisor Janice Hahn who requested the report back. “Not only will people be able to make walk-up appointments, they will again have the chance to walk through the kennels and make that ‘love at first sight’ connection with their new furry family member.”

To visit DACC’s seven animal care centers, please self-schedule your appointment on the DACC website to come in and meet your new pet. [Click here to schedule an appointment.](#)

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