



Marcia Mayeda, Director

May 22, 2023

TO: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair

Supervisor Hilda L. Solis Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell Supervisor Lindsey Horvath Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Marcia Mayeda MMayeda

Director

MONTHLY REPORT BACK ON BOARD MOTION (ITEM 10, AGENDA OF DECEMBER 20, 2022)

On April 18, 2023, we provided, as directed by your Board in Item 10 of the agenda of December 20, 2022:

- An accounting of the reasons for animals being euthanized including illness, safety, lack of rescue availability, etc., broken down by species and animal care center, and advised your Board that the Department would be providing monthly updates on the status of items directed by the Board motion of December 20, 2022. This is the second monthly report to your Board.
- An assessment on the number of rescue and community partners needed to decrease the euthanasia rate without decreasing the number of intakes to animal care centers.

The committee has worked diligently to provide responses to the following two additional items in the Board motion.

Agoura ACC 29525 Agoura Road Agoura Hills, CA 91301 (818) 991-0071

Lancaster ACC 5210 W. Avenue I Lancaster, CA 93536 (661) 940-4191 Baldwin Park ACC 4275 N. Elton Street Baldwin Park, CA 91706 (626) 962-3577

Palmdale ACC 38550 Sierra Highway Palmdale, CA 93550 (661) 575-2888 Carson/Gardena ACC 216 W. Victoria Street Gardena, CA 90248 (310) 523-9566 Castaic ACC 31044 N. Charlie Canyon Rd. Castaic, CA 91384 (661) 257-3191 Downey ACC 11258 S. Garfield Ave. Downey, CA 90242 (562) 940-6898

Administrative Office 5898 Cherry Avenue Long Beach, CA 90805 (800) 253-3555

Analysis of the Feasibility of Achieving a 90% Live Release Rate

The concept of achieving a 90 percent live release rate (LRR) was introduced in the 1980's to motivate animal care agencies to reimagine how they handled their animal populations. It was a rallying call that generated creative and effective strategies to reduce animal euthanasia in the United States. However, this statistic was not based on research or longitudinal studies of animal care organization outcomes and is not supported by research, mathematical principles, or the nature of current animal care center practices to support that this is exactly the correct percentage to strive towards.

Because of the various reasons animals arrive at animal care centers, their behavioral and medical conditions, community resources, and other factors, reaching a 90 percent LRR is not always feasible nor desirable for some communities. For example, an animal care agency with an 85 percent LRR might be philosophically "no kill" because every placeable animal has been rehomed and those that remain are extremely ill, injured, or dangerous animals that cannot be humanely or safely saved.

The "no-kill" philosophy acknowledges that euthanasia may be an appropriate choice in cases of irremediable canine aggression in which public safety cannot be reasonably assured and other interventions would compromise the animal's quality of life. For some shelters, particularly those offering care and services such as neonatal kitten programs or services for residents with pets in under-resourced communities, the no-kill benchmark may be below 90 percent.

While tracking the LRR is an important measurement, relying exclusively on a 90 percent LRR may not accurately represent the success of the agency or how it is serving its community. There are additional suitable measurements for determining how well an animal care organization is caring for its animal population and protecting public safety. The LRR must be viewed in conjunction with these other measurements to provide the best holistic picture of an agency's success.

Managed Intake has Changed the Population of Incoming Animals

The Department has embraced Managed Intake, which provides alternatives to admission for pets by providing opportunities to pet owners for options other than surrendering their animals. Through DACC's intervention services, pet owners receive support in the form of consultation, financial resources, and referrals – both medical and behavioral – to assist them with their pet-related issues.

It should be noted that an animal care agency that effectively reduces surrendered pets admitted into their animal care system by providing intervention services may actually see their LRR decrease. This is due in large part to the condition of the animals that are then admitted, as the more adoptable animals are deferred from admittance by providing intervention services such as behavioral training, medical assistance, referral to animal rescue groups, or advice on how to keep the pet with the family. The animals that are admitted may have more significant medical or behavior concerns because intervention services were not suitable or available for them, making these animals more difficult to place or unsuitable for adoption. Also, animals that are helped by means other than care center admission are not calculated in the LRR. However, the community and animals are receiving more meaningful resources and support.

Additionally, what animal welfare considers "savable" has shifted through the years as new resources and interventions have been developed. The shifting demographic of incoming animals has also modified the definition of "savable." Animals that were beyond saving twenty years ago may now have life-saving options available due to greater public awareness, more programming and resources, and community support for their live outcomes.

<u>Different Species Must be Tracked Separately</u>

Using the general 90 percent LRR for all animals does not portray an accurate picture of what is happening at an animal care center for several reasons. The factors contributing to the metric and the solutions to changing it vary greatly by species. For example, there are significant differences between lost dog and cat redemption rates when they are reclaimed by their owners. In FY 2021-22, 30 percent of lost dogs were reclaimed by their owners but only two percent of free-roaming cats (consistent with national statistics for lost cat redemption) were reclaimed.

Further, in FY 2021-22 the Department's LRR for dogs was 83.5 percent and 65 percent for cats. Combining the dogs and cats into one lump sum shows a combined live release rate of 76.7 percent total, falsely skewing the results for both species. Including animals such as injured wildlife and fighting roosters, which are euthanized for humane and public health reasons, further drops the LRR for an animal care agency.

Other Important Performance Measurements

The LRR is only one measure of an animal care center's success. More important to know are the reasons for euthanasia. By identifying the reasons for euthanasia, an

agency can make well-informed decisions as to how to reduce that number by devising specific strategies based on the circumstances.

Another important measurement is the Length of Stay (LOS) for animals in an animal care center. Behavioral problems and concerns commonly increase the longer animals are confined, negatively impacting their welfare and making their ultimate live outcome more difficult. These animals require much greater resources to maintain their behavioral and medical health, including additional medical treatments, heightened human interaction opportunities, and enrichment programs.

Pathway Planning is critical to ensuring the animals are properly admitted into care, evaluated for their individual needs, and a placement plan identified at the outset so the animal can move smoothly and as quickly as possible through the care process and into a positive outcome. For example, animals with medical or behavioral needs that require intervention will be placed with Adoption Partners, rescue groups, or fosters as soon as necessary, based on the animals' individual needs. All adoptable animals will have opportunities for adoption, transfer, rescue, or other live outcome. An agency may place all adoptable/placeable animals and have an LRR less than 90 percent but have achieved the philosophical goal of "no kill" because every savable animal had a live outcome. Measuring the gap between those that were released versus those that were euthanized is a better way to identify the needs and where resources should be focused. The Department and its committee are currently developing a Pathway Planning policy to guide this process and expedite the adoption process toward lives outcomes.

The 90 percent LRR benchmark assumes an estimated 10 percent of all animals entering the animal care center will require euthanasia as the right outcome. However, this doesn't fully consider DACC's shift to a community-based animal care center model, where many animals are helped while under the care of their families instead of entering the care centers in the first place. Based on the compilation of the population entering the care centers, it makes sense that the percentage of animals for whom euthanasia is the right outcome may be higher than 10 percent.

For these reasons, using a 90 percent LRR is not suitable as the sole performance measurement. While the LRR rate is important, it must be viewed in context with other performance measurements such as reduction in euthanasia, Length of Stay, Pathway Planning, days in care for each population to positive outcomes, and tracking the placement success of adoptable animals. These are equally important ways to determine an animal care agency's success regarding individualized care for the animals while meeting the community's expectations. Measurable improvement of all of

these performance measures combined will demonstrate the Department's progress and our shared vision for increasing lifesaving.

Further, the LRR must be viewed in conjunction with other benchmarks regarding services. DACC and its committee are developing more in-depth benchmarks regarding all aspects of animal and constituent services, including Managed Intake services, animal helpline services, intervention services and successes, and more. We will report back to your Board on the recommended benchmarks with their current baseline data when they are finalized. We will also be sharing projected goals for those benchmarks in Year One and beyond.

<u>Recommendations for Expanding and Improving Partnerships with Rescues,</u> Fosters, and Volunteers

Rescues (Adoption Partners)

Adoption Partners are qualified rescue groups that adopt, or "pull" pets from animal care centers and place them through their own network of adopters and foster care providers. Adoption Partners are part of a DACC program to work collaboratively with these groups, providing adoption efficiency for Adoption Partners so these groups can more efficiently adopt animals from DACC. While rescues are not required to participate in the Adoption Partner program for general adoptions, more than 400 rescue groups have joined.

Adoption Partners have the added benefits of access to dogs with indemnification waivers that would otherwise make them not placeable due to behavioral or medical reasons, the waiving of spay/neuter trust deposits, and reduced adoption fees. Partnerships with responsible Adoption Partners are essential for maximizing live outcomes for animals in care, particularly animals that are medically or behaviorally disadvantaged and therefore more difficult to place.

The committee is in the process of developing and conducting a survey of its nearly 400 active Adoption Partners to identify potential barriers that prevent them from pulling (or adopting) animals and to gain suggestions on how we can improve our partnership. DACC will use that feedback to further streamline its processes.

For example, there is a waiting period from when an animal is available for adoption to when an Adoption Partner or rescue group may adopt it. The purpose of this waiting period is to give constituents an opportunity to adopt highly desirable animals. Feedback from constituents has expressed frustration that Adoption Partners and

rescue groups adopt the highly desirable animals before the constituent has an opportunity to do so. For this reason, DACC has maintained a 48-hour waiting period to give constituents the ability to adopt animals before Adoption Partners or rescue groups do. However, based on feedback from Adoption Partners regarding the length of the waiting period, DACC reduced the required waiting period to adopt an animal from 48 hours to 24 hours, so Adoption Partners and rescue groups can adopt more quickly.

Fosters and Volunteers

Foster volunteers are a subset of the volunteer program and focus solely on providing in-home care to animals with medical or behavioral needs. Examples include unweaned animals that require nursing care, animals recovering from illness or injury, or animals with behavioral conditions that require further socialization and observation out of the animal care center environment before they can be made available for adoption.

DACC's Volunteer Program is currently in the process of increasing the number of fosters and volunteers by a variety of methods. This includes offering new volunteer opportunities for youth volunteers; recruiting volunteers and fosters at outreach events, on social media, and outside recruitment sites; and assigning lead and mentor volunteers to assist with new volunteer and foster trainings. The orientations are useful to align new volunteers with the needs of the Department based on their level of knowledge and experience with animals. Details about these and additional plans can be found in the attached Volunteer Programs Strategic Plan. The committee will continue to review the engagement of these stakeholders to identify areas for further development and make recommendations for improvements.

The committee continues to work carefully through the remaining items on the Board motion to provide your Board with thoughtful and thorough responses. We will continue reporting back to your Board each month on the status of these items.

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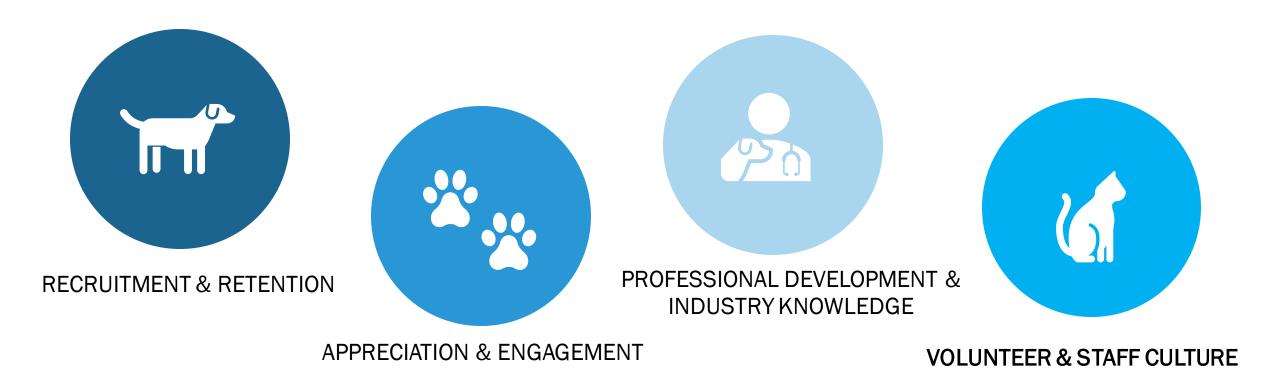
Enclosure(s)

c: Chief Executive Office
 County Counsel
 Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
 Animal Care Board Deputies

DACC VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS STRATEGIC PLAN



CATEGORIES - GOALS & OBJECTIVES





1.1 Explore creative recruitment: Grassroots marketing such as flyers at colleges, reaching out to schools with veterinary and animal behavior degrees. Create pathways for diversity.

2023 - Q1

- Volunteer Director to work on updating the website to include clear information and add a front-page pop up for fosters needed
- Volunteer Director to post on volunteer recruitment sites such as: LA Works, Volunteer Match, D.O. T. S, Deed, Kandou, and The Do Good Bus specific for fosters and skilled volunteers

2023 - Q2

- Volunteer Coordinator and volunteers to distribute Volunteer and Foster Recruitment flyers around the community surrounding each care center
- Volunteer Coordinators to reach out to veterinary schools to recruit medical volunteers

2023 - Q3

Volunteer Director to contact Animal Behavior College about doing Shelter Hours with their students at our care centers

2023 - Q4

Volunteer Coordinators to reach out to college sororities and fraternities about doing project days (cleaning barn area, painting, etc.)

2024

- Volunteer Director and PIO to collaborate on Spanish translations to documents
- Volunteer Coordinators to create a training group of Spanish speaking staff and volunteers that are willing to host trainings for Spanish speakers

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

We will continuously strive to provide each care center with enough volunteer and foster support to excel in care

1.2 Expand program opportunities: Create a community service program that encourages students to fulfill hours requirements by volunteering as Level 1 volunteers. Research ability to offer internships with a stipend provided by a grant. Offer short-term fostering which includes one day dog outings. Extend volunteer hours.

2023 - Q1

- VD to create an internal policy for students who want to volunteer in order to fulfill community service hours. Share this policy on our website
- VC's to create a special truncated orientation/training for these volunteers. These volunteers will not be allowed to handle animals (until after they complete their service hours requirement and agree to commit to continuous volunteering). They will be able to fulfill their hours by cleaning, doing laundry, providing enrichment to the animals, and prepping foster supplement packs and supplies.

2023 - Q2

• VD to explore offering Internships for Marketing & Social Media – review idea with HR Manager to confirm work eligibility – speak with Contracts and Grants Manager about utilizing a Best Friends Grant to offer a stipend to intern. Create DACC Intern Manual and Agreement. Write position description, learning objectives and goals for intern. Post on Handshake.

2023 - Q4

- VD to work with county counsel, Exec Team and ACC managers on ideas to expand volunteer hours beyond open hours
- VD to work on plan for short term fostering



1.3 Commit to quarterly orientations: Each care center that currently has a Volunteer Coordinator will recruit volunteers each season. Establish a core group of volunteer trainers to help with new volunteer on-boarding and foster assistance

2023 - Q1

- VD to post orientation schedule on the website and on the application
- VC's will be held accountable and commit to hosting orientations at least each quarter (excluding Castaic and Agoura which will be twice a year). The ability to host more a year will be determined by support by ACC staff and lead volunteers.

2023 - Q2

- VD to write up position description for Lead/Mentor Volunteers
- VC's and command staff to nominate volunteers for these positions Good opportunity for experienced volunteers/fosters that are unable to come to
 the care center on a regular basis. Volunteers can host orientations, host trainings, bottle feeding demos, and be available for volunteers and fosters
 when they have questions.



1.4 Utilize new technologies and platforms: Upgrade Volunteer Software to system that allows for online trainings and videos. Purchase software that will provide 24/7 medical support to fosters. Auto foster plea emails through Chameleon and mass texting through teams

2023 - Q1

VD working with IT on Postmaster Chameleon Pleas and Q-Minder mass texting

2023 - Q2

- VD to work with Contracts and Grants Manager to use Best Friends grant to purchase medical support service for fosters
- VD to advertise on website that fosters will have 24/7 support as well as all supplies needed this will help with recruitment

2024

• VD and VC's work together to create video trainings – write scripts, recruit volunteers to help, create knowledge quizzes. All of this will be easier if we have advanced programs but until then we can use Microsoft (speak to IT about updating Microsoft forms capabilities)



1.5 Data and tracking: Gather data specific to shift fulfillment and pinpoint key areas for improvement.

2023 - Q1 through Q4

- VC's push volunteers to start registering for shifts
- VC's give staff members access to registration tool and explain/teach how to utilize. Staff members must also communicate gaps in need to VC's so they can post pleas
- VC's to track volunteer retention and reach out those who have not completed hours
- VD to continuously analyze data to determine which shifts are in demand and how to increase shift fulfillment percentage



2.1 Provide continued trainings: Classes for volunteers to keep them informed and confident in their skills. Offer quarterly classes on various topics such as Cat & Dog Body Language, Reactivity, and client interactions. Bottle feeding demos.

2024

- VC's to recruit staff and lead volunteers to host these trainings
- VC's to collaborate with staff and lead volunteers to record special trainings
- VC's to create a schedule and post upcoming trainings on registration tools and advertise on monthly newsletters



2.2 Help build rapport between staff and volunteers: Introductions to staff during trainings. Buddy system with staff members during shifts.

2023 - Q1 through Q4

- VD to work with ACC Managers to make this a reality. ACA's should be scheduled to help volunteer coordinators with trainings.
- VC can schedule new volunteers to be assigned to an ACA for a shift to help as their Assistant. This will build a relationship between staff and volunteer and minimize the "Us vs. Them" culture.



2.3 Create relationships: Send birthday cards. Post fostering thank you cards.

2024

- VD to establish budget for cards and stamps.
- VC's to utilize Volgistics reporting for birthday calendar. Level 1 or Community Service volunteers can assist with addressing and stamping cards.
- VC's will write a personalized card try to reference specific support they gave or an animal they fostered. After a foster completes a foster stay, send a thank you card. If an animal passes in the home while fostering, send a sympathy card.



2.4 Increase communication: Each care will send a monthly newsletter with reminders, accomplishments, recognitions, and pleas for support. The Volunteer Programs Director will send a New Year newsletter to all volunteers.

2023 - Q1

- VC's and Volunteer Leads to start sending monthly newsletters
 - DACC Volunteer Program Monthly Newsletter Guide.docx
- VD to send a 2023 New Year Newsletter to all volunteers and fosters this letter will have highlight accomplishments of the previous year as well as updates and plans for the year to come.

2024 - Q2

VC's start Foster specific newsletters once a quarter



2.5. Encourage feedback: Hosting General Assembly meetings at each care center. Distribute anonymous feedback surveys.

2023 - Q3

VD to create a schedule for each care center General Assembly. Collaborate with leadership at each care center for agenda topics

2023 - Q4

VD to create an anonymous feedback survey for volunteers



2.6 Special recognition for volunteers and fosters who provide unique skills and support.

2023 - Q4

- VC's to nominate volunteers to receive special end of the year awards
- VC's to reach out to command staff for nominations and quotes for volunteer awards
- Plan and host special appreciation events/meetings with all Lead Volunteers for each care center

We will commit to expanding our skills and keeping up with the latest animal welfare advances.

3.1 Work schedule flexibility to allow time to attend trainings and webinars.

2023 and 2024

- VD to establish a coverage system South VC's and North VC's help cover each other's work while the other is at a conference.
- Scheduled conferences should be in the slow season (December-March) if possible
- Allow VC's to work from home during a virtual conference so they can focus

We will commit to expanding our skills and keeping up with the latest animal welfare advances.

3.2 Build relationship with other agencies; municipal and private.

2023 & 2024

- VD will research reports and data from other municipalities to compare best practices and brainstorm ideas for improvement
 - Have connected with Pasadena Humane, Humane Society of Silicone Valley
- VD will reach out to other Volunteer Directors at other agencies to build a support system
- VD will attend bi-weekly California for all meetings when able
- VD will join the National Association of Volunteer Programs in Local Government

We will commit to expanding our skills and keeping up with the latest animal welfare advances.

3.3 Discussions of new trends: Share ideas learned from articles, podcasts, and readings.

2023 & 2024

- Volunteer Director will share resources to staff and discuss topics in weekly meetings
- VC's to subscribe to Animal Sheltering Volunteer Managers Network
- VD to share articles, webinars, etc. from Maddies Fund and other respected Animal Welfare agencies with VC's

We will commit to expanding our skills and keeping up with the latest animal welfare advances.

3.4 Attend national and local conferences: The Volunteer Director and one coordinator per conference, decided by seniority and/or interest

2024 - Q1

- VD will establish budget for this and plan accordingly
- VD will create a tracker/schedule of yearly conferences and who will be attending from DACC Volunteer Services
- VC's will report back after conference on what key points they took away that we can expand upon within our department

We will commit to expanding our skills and keeping up with the latest animal welfare advances.

3.5 Support and create team guided professional and personal improvement plan: Utilize County provided resources from Cornerstone and Eagle Leadership Training Materials and content

2024 - Q1

- VD will update the Performance Evaluations to include VC personal and professional goals
- VD will regularly discuss these goals with staff and provide support where needed
- VC's will complete their Career Preferences on Learning Link (What are your short-term career goals? & What are your long-term career goals?) to help inform VD on best support to be provided.

We will improve staff and volunteer relations and build a culture that thrives through collaboration and respect

4.1 Transparency: Continue to improve and implement transparency and credibility by strengthening communication.

2023 - Q1

- VD to make website improvements include Code of Ethics and expectations of volunteers
- VD to update manual and agreements
- VD to update application

2024

 Once we have updated software, we can store policies for volunteers to have access to – may also use VicNet, until then, we can include links in monthly newsletters as a constant reminder

We will improve staff and volunteer relations and build a culture that thrives through collaboration and respect

4.2 Recognize positive engagement between staff and volunteers: Share stories of collaboration, thank staff members for supporting volunteers. Work together as a team.

2023 - Q1

- VC's to share staff and volunteer spotlights in the newsletter and on social channels
- VD and VC's to emphasize the importance or collaborating with volunteers, showing volunteers they care by working alongside them

2023 - Q2

- VD to create and share a positivity/appreciation tracker
- VD and VC's to host fundraisers designed to use the funds for appreciation

2023 - Q3

- VD to create Kudos cards
- VC's to provide Kudos cards at care center, advertise to staff and vols and post/distribute

We will improve staff and volunteer relations and build a culture that thrives through collaboration and respect

4.3. Staff Training: Staff members are developed, trained, and equipped in how to engage, value, and partner with volunteers and fosters to achieve our goals.

2023 - Q2

VD will work with Exec Team and ACC Managers to involve command staff more in the training of new volunteers

2024

- VD to create new hire on-boarding training for command staff
- VD to work with Executive Team to include value of working with volunteers in employee job descriptions.

We will improve staff and volunteer relations and build a culture that thrives through collaboration and respect

4.4 Communication: Involve staff in the creation of volunteer newsletters. Keep staff informed of new volunteer policies or processes.

2023-01

VC to collaborate with staff when writing stories or reminders for the newsletter

2023 - Q2

VC to regularly notify command staff of volunteer relations, consider sending recap emails each week

2023 - Q3

Involve key staff members in the General Assembly meetings – invite all staff to share topics for meeting and share minutes post
meeting with all care center staff

We will improve staff and volunteer relations and build a culture that thrives through collaboration and respect

4.5 Accountability: Hold staff and volunteers accountable if there is a pattern of disrespect or insubordination.

2023 - Q1 & Q2

- VD to create a step-by-step guide for dealing with conflict
- VD to share clear expectations of command staff when dealing with difficult situations involving volunteers/fosters
- VD to create SOP for dismissing a volunteer from service

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT STRATEGIC PLANS

In order to continue growing and being a leader in the industry we need to seriously consider the following:

- Create a Foster to Adopt Program
 - Volunteer Director will propose the idea to the Executive Team. This program will be led by the ACC command staff.
- Expand the Volunteer Services Team
 - Volunteer Director will be submitting proposals for three new positions
 - Foster Coordinators one for the North and one for the South
 - Volunteer Coordinator for Castaic and Agoura
- Revamping the ERT program
 - VD to create a committee of livestock and emergency response staff members
- Creating a Volunteer Transport Program

Monthly Report back Agenda Item 10 5.22.23 FINAL PKG

Final Audit Report 2023-05-22

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