# Lufkin Animal Services
# Operational Assessment Report

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# Section 1 - Introduction and Background Information

## Introduction

Animal services operations are unique from any other local governmental department. They were originally formed to provide the health-related service of rabies control, to protect citizens from dangerous dogs and to enforce local animal ordinances. They evolved to also offer animal adoption services. Over the past two decades there has been a strong emphasis on reducing the numbers of animals euthanized, along with growing public expectations regarding the manner in which the animals are housed and treated. Government animal services shelters also often attract the interest of a large number of animal welfare advocates who care deeply about the impounded animals. Therefore, animal services operations must provide a vast array of services and must work in conjunction with a wide variety of public stakeholders.

Recently, there have been complaints from Lufkin Animal Services' (LAS) volunteers and friction between management/staff and volunteers. In order to get a better picture of the issues and solutions, the City of Lufkin (City) contracted with Susan Feingold, a consultant with over fifteen years of animal services consulting experience and a background as an animal services Director, in order to perform a comprehensive animal services operational evaluation. The evaluation includes identifying areas that need improvement for efficiency, to bring operations up to standard or best practices, to correct operational issues and to improve the live release rate. Also included in the project is an assessment of the physical shelter facility, an overview of the financial arrangements with contracting jurisdictions, and an explanation of the various ways that animal services operations can be managed.

Prior to the onsite visit, Ms. Feingold requested a variety of information, documentation and software statistical reports from LAS. She also received input from staff, volunteers, rescuers and other stakeholders in a short online survey. Ms. Feingold also spoke by phone to three volunteers prior to the onsite visit, two of which were arranged by LAS. Ms. Feingold spent three days onsite at LAS (February 14 - 16, 2023) observing operations. Areas of the operation observed included but were not limited to: front office procedures, animal intake procedures, software system usage, cleaning and disinfecting, feeding, adoptions, reclaims, owner surrenders, stray turn-ins, and dispatch.

Recommendations in this report are identified under the heading "RECOMMENDATION." Also included are "ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION," which are items which the City should strongly consider implementing. Recommendations in several sections of this final report, including in euthanasia, veterinary care, and a specific cleaning hazard, were provided to LAS and the City prior to issuing this report. Some of the recommendations in this report should be implemented right away or within a few months, while others may require additional funding or physical modifications so may take longer to implement.

## Background Information

Lufkin Animal Services provides field services within the City limits and also operates the City managed animal shelter that provides sheltering services for the City, Angelina County (County) and four other cities located within the County. The City's animal services operation is referred to as Lufkin Animal Services, or sometimes Lufkin Animal Control, however, the shelter operates under a different name - the Kurth Memorial Animal Services and Adoption Center, the Kurth Memorial Animal Shelter or just the Kurth Shelter. For simplicity sake, this report will refer to the entire City operation as Lufkin Animal Services (LAS).

Angelina County, Texas has a population of 86,501 residents, including 34,074 residents that live in the City of Lufkin. The poverty rate in Lufkin is 20.9%, which is considered a high rate of poverty. Nationally, most animal services operations impound between 7 to 20 dogs and cats per thousand residents. Over the past five years, LAS has impounded an average of 4300 live dogs and cats per year. This equates to an average of 50 dogs and cats impounded per thousand County residents, which is *an astronomically high number of dog and cat intakes relative to the human population*. For some comparisons:

- Sandy City, Utah has a population of 96,903 residents and in 2021 impounded 659 live dogs and cats (6.8 animals per 1000 population)
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, North Carolina has a population of 1,122,276 and in 2022 took in 8650 live dogs and cats (7.7 animals per 1000 population)
- Spalding County, Georgia has a population of 67,909 and in 2021 impounded 529 live dogs and cats (7.8 animals per 1000 residents)
- Houston, Texas has a population of 2,228,250 and in 2021 impounded 18,614 live dogs and cats (8.4 animals per 1000 population)
- City of Austin/Travis County, Texas has a population of 1,305,154 and in 2022 impounded 11,105 live dogs and cats (8.5 animals per 1000 population)
- City of Sacramento, California has a population of 525,041 and impounded 7632 live dogs and cats in 2022 (14.5 animals per 1000 residents);
- Hall County, Georgia has a population of 207,369 and in 2021 impounded 3539 live dogs and cats (17 animals per 1000 population)
- Burke County, North Carolina has a population of 87,611 and in 2021 impounded 1734 live dogs and cats (19 animals per 1000 population)

If LAS took in 8 live dogs and cats per thousand County residents, then the total animal intake per year would be 692 dogs and cats. If LAS took in 20 animals per thousand residents, which is considered a very high rate of impound nationally, the total annual intake would be 1730 dogs and cats.

The extremely high rate of intake at LAS relative to the low population illustrates a dire need for low cost and free spay/neuter programs in the community. It also displays the extreme financial burden on the small City of Lufkin since it must support a shelter operation that in other areas of the country might be serving a population of 400,000-500,000 residents. In addition, the City is

currently providing sheltering services for the residents of the County and other contracted cities without anywhere near adequate financial compensation from those jurisdictions.

## Sheltering Agreements with Other Jurisdictions

There are no laws or ordinances that require the City of Lufkin to provide animal sheltering services for any other jurisdiction. In many areas of the country, including some in Texas, there are separate county and city animal shelters and intake of animals at each shelter is restricted to only animals originating from each jurisdiction. In many other areas, the county provides both animal services field and shelter services to all the cities within it.

The City of Lufkin currently has contractual agreements to provide animal sheltering services for Angelina County, City of Diboll, City of Hudson, City of Huntington, and City of Zavalla. All of the agreements are twenty years old (signed in 2003) except Zavalla's, which is sixteen years old (signed in 2007). There used to be a contract with the City of Groveton (signed in 2001), however, I was told that contract is no longer in effect. (Statistics do show that LAS took in 18 animals from Groveton Animal Control in 2022.) These contracts state that they can be terminated by either party at any time with thirty days written notice.

These agreements are written using extremely low payment amounts per animal, apply to only certain animals originating from the jurisdiction and not others, and contain outdated language that was common 25 or more years ago when animals were often only held for three days and then euthanized. For instance, the contract with the County requires the City to hold County animals for three days after which "the City shall dispose of those animals in a manner consistent with its protocol." I am unaware of other animal services operations that still provide sheltering services to other jurisdictions using contracts with this type of outdated language and with these extremely low payment amounts.

First, contracts written in this manner do not equitably share the financial burden of operating a modern animal services shelter. Public expectations and standards in the industry today require animal services shelters to hold on to animals much longer to give them a chance to be adopted or rescued, rather than euthanizing them after three days. Therefore, much more staff, care, resources and veterinary services are required than they were 25+ years ago.

Second, this type of agreement is extremely cumbersome to manage since the fee for each animal must be individually calculated by the LAS clerk or another staff member based on a number of different items in the contract. It also requires LAS to have to keep up with jurisdictions using a method based on whether a resident or an ACO turns the animal in. This calculation method is needlessly time consuming and LAS' staff time could be better spent on lifesaving efforts.

For an example of the financial inequities, the chart below is based on statistical and financial reports provided by LAS. It  shows the number of animals sheltered by LAS that originated from Angelina County (excluding Lufkin and the other contracted cities such as Diboll) for the past two

years and the amount that was paid by the County. As can be seen, Angelina County was responsible for 30-40% of total intake of animals, while the percentage of the sheltering budget that was paid by Angelina County equated to 2-4%.

**LAS Animal Intake from Angelina County (excluding other contracted cities) and Financial Amount Contributed**

| Year | LAS Total Number of Animal Intakes for the Year* | Number of Animal Intakes from Angelina County* | **Percentage of LAS Animal Intake from Angelina County** | LAS Current Approximate Sheltering Budget** | Total Amount Paid by Angelina County for the Year | **Percentage of Sheltering Budget Paid by Angelina County** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2022 | 3483 | 1061 | **30%** | $700,000 | $18,811 | **2.7%** |
| 2021 | 4792 | 1984 | **41%** | $700,000 | $28,195 | **4%** |

*Includes dogs, cats and other species.
**This is an estimate of the current total LAS budget minus the approximate cost of Lufkin field operations (ex: salaries for three Animal Control Officers, fuel, vehicle maintenance costs and other field costs) in order to get an approximate sheltering budget.

I am familiar with three main methods that animal services operations use to charge other jurisdictions for their services, though there are probably others: 1) a percentage of the operation's budget payment based on their percentage of animal intake and/or field calls per jurisdiction (if also providing field service) 2) a percentage of the operation's budget payment based on their human population percentage or 3) a flat per animal fee for all animals that come from the jurisdiction, regardless of who turns in the animal, if they pay any fees or whether it a stray, confiscate or owner surrender. The flat fee method is rarely used anymore because it requires contractual revisions to increase fees for equitable contributions as sheltering budget costs go up.

For example, Travis County, Texas pays a percentage of Austin Animal Center's budget based on a combination of Travis County's human population percentage and the percentage of intake of animals originating from Travis County. And unless it has recently changed, McLennan County, Texas and the incorporated cities within the county each pay towards the City of Waco's animal shelter budget based upon the percentage of animal intakes originating from each jurisdiction. For another example, Parker County, Texas' contract with the City of Weatherford stipulates that they must pay 75% of Weatherford Parker County Animal Services shelter's budget every year after subtracting kennel/adoption revenue. This percentage amount is based on the percentage of the estimated annual shelter intake of animals from Parker County.

The total kennel and adoption fees collected at LAS in 2022 were approximately $50,000 and the total sheltering budget amount (excluding Field Officers and field expenses) for the year was approximately $700,000, so each jurisdiction could pay their percentage portion of the $650,000 for

the next year. Using that method, Angelina County would have paid 41% or $266,500 for 2022 and 30% or $195,000 for 2023. Each City would be similarly charged by percentage. *However, keep in mind that the LAS budget needs to be increased to well over a million dollars (Weatherford Parker County Shelter's annual budget is between $1.3- $1.5 million and they have been taking in a similar number of animals to LAS), so if that happens then Angelina County and the cities should pay their portion of that higher budget amount.*

In the third method, a flat fee per animal, such as $175, would be charged to the County and other cities for every animal that originates from each jurisdiction, regardless of  who brought it in, whether it is a surrender, confiscate or stray, or whether any individual fees had been paid for turn in or reclaim. If the jurisdictions are charged monthly, then a Chameleon Intake by Jurisdiction report would be run monthly and the jurisdiction would be charged the flat fee (EX:  $175) times the number of animals originating from their jurisdiction during that time period. However, as previously mentioned, this method is considered outdated and is not recommended.

**RECOMMENDATION: <mark>[All High Priority]</mark>**

➔ Rewrite and implement new contracts with Angelina County and the other contracting cities which more fairly and equitably share the financial burden of operating a modern animal services shelter, which do not require LAS to perform any individual animal fee calculations and which are based on the total number of animals that originate from each jurisdiction, regardless of who brings the animal in, whether the animals are confiscated, stray or owner surrenders or whether any reclaim fees have been paid for that individual animal. The recommended method is for each contracted jurisdiction to pay a percentage of LAS' total sheltering budget, less total annual kennel fees collected, based on the percentage of total animals impounded that originate from their jurisdiction annually. The sheltering budget amount that should be used for calculations should include increases in budget for more staff members and for other areas recommended in this report.

➔ For disease prevention reasons, ensure the new contracts require all of the jurisdictions' ACOs to disinfect their vehicle's animal holding compartments after each use at LAS' truck washing station using procedures provided by LAS. See Vehicle Cleaning Section for more information.

➔ Once the new contracts are implemented, LAS should discontinue using two codes per jurisdiction in the Chameleon software system and instead implement new jurisdictions named: Lufkin, Angelina County, Diboll, Hudson, Huntington, and Zavalla.

## Stakeholder Survey

The City requested an online survey in order to get input from stakeholders. The link to the online survey was sent out to stakeholders by LAS. The survey was online for a month. Twenty-four people responded consisting of 41% volunteers, 29% employees, 8% animal rescuers and other assorted

stakeholders. The survey was short and asked stakeholders to describe their recent interactions with LAS, share what they perceive to be going well at LAS, and share specific situations or areas of concern in their direct interactions with LAS that they felt need improvement.

Some of the top themes and concerns seen in the survey are listed below in no particular order. These issues will be discussed later on in this report.

- Everyone is happy that the shelter has begun vaccinating on intake.
- The shelter is understaffed.
- Volunteers can do whatever they want at the shelter and make their own decisions without any oversight or management, including having keys to the building and going into the shelter at night.
- Management does not consistently enforce policies or procedures.
- Staff is very frequently absent and brings their children to work.
- The operation is chaotic and unorganized and information can not be found about animals.
- Volunteers are made to feel unwelcome.
- Animals are not being properly cared for.
- Some animals are not being humanely euthanized.
- Management leaves everything regarding improving the live release rate entirely up to the volunteers.

## Shelter Statistics

It is standard in the industry to separate statistics about live intakes and their outcomes from animals that were taken in already deceased, such as animal disposal requests, dead animal pickup, etc. If desired, deceased animal intake can be reported in separate shelter statistical reports. Therefore, as is standard in the industry, this section will mostly focus on live dog and cat statistics.

LAS uses the Chameleon animal management software system for their operation. The Chameleon shelter statistical reports provided by LAS did include a small number of deceased animal intakes and their outcomes, so those numbers were deducted in the statistical charts in this section. In addition, Chameleon software allows its users to outcome animals going to foster homes as "Foster." However, since "Foster" is a temporary situation and is not considered a final intake or outcome it should not be counted in live intake/outcome statistics because if used, it is double counting animals. LAS' statistics provided by LAS did include a small number of foster intakes/outcomes, so those numbers were also deducted from the charts below.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ LAS management should request new kennel intake and outcome reports from Chameleon that separate live animal intakes and their outcomes from already deceased animal intakes and that exclude foster home intakes/outcomes since they are not considered permanent.

➔ LAS management should provide City officials and the Animal Advisory Board with monthly and annual (full calendar year) live intake and outcome statistical charts similar to the ones in the following sections, or in Basic Data Matrix format, including calculating the monthly and annual Asilomar Lite Live Release Rates. These can be set up to be automatically generated and emailed monthly and annually using Chameleon's Postmaster feature.

## Intakes

Most animal services operations experienced much lower intake during 2020 and 2021 due to Covid and experienced much higher intake in 2022. However, that was not the case at LAS and intake was down significantly in 2022. LAS indicated that this was because they stopped taking in animals from citizens who lived outside the County and because they started practicing managed intake of both owner surrenders and stray turn-ins.

**Lufkin Animal Services Intakes of Live Dogs and Cats by Year**

| Live Dog & Cat Intakes by Year | Confiscate | Owner Surrender and Returns | Stray | Euthanasia Request | Total Live Intakes Dog & Cat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2022** | 125 (4%) | 713 (21%) | 2534 (75%) | 21 | **3393** |
| **2021** | 160 (3%) | 1191 (25%) | 3361 (71%) | 15 | **4712** |
| **2020** | 133 (3%) | 763 (19%) | 3007 (77%) | 19 | **3922** |
| **2019** | 187 (4%) | 1023 (20%) | 3798 (76%) | 19 | **5027** |
| **2018** | 108 (2%) | 1001 (23%) | 3275 (74%) | 56 | **4440** |

All percentages rounded.

## Outcomes and Live Release Rates

The term "no-kill" does not mean that an animal services shelter is not euthanizing any animals. A 90% or better Live Release Rate (LRR) for animal services shelters is considered no-kill by many national animal welfare organizations because the animal services shelters are accepting sick, injured, and aggressive animals and the 10% or less euthanasia reflects the animals that are truly unadoptable and untreatable.

There are several different LRR calculations used by the animal welfare industry, each measuring slightly different factors. The most widely used LRR calculation is probably the Asilomar LRR. One version of this rate is the Asilomar Lite LRR, which is Live Outcomes divided by (All Outcomes minus all Owner Requested Euthanasia). The Asilomar LRR measures the animals that leave the shelter alive as a percentage of outcomes, but it does not compare it to intakes. Not all Owner

Requested Euthanasias are euthanized by animal services shelters and some shelters do hold on to OREs they consider treatable. LAS does not record any euthanasia outcomes as Owner Requested Euthanasia so I was unable to determine the number of actual OREs euthanized in order to deduct those amounts when calculating the LRR. However, this is a very small number of animals at LAS and would not impact percentage rates.

Another widely used LRR is the ASPCA LRR. This formula is calculated as Live Outcomes divided by Intakes. This calculation measures the percentage of animals that leave the shelter alive as compared to intakes. At times, the ASPCA LRR may show rates over 100 percent. ASPCA provides a more detailed discussion of the most commonly used LRRs and what is measured in each one at the following link:
https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/What%20is%20your%20Rate%2010_2013.pdf
The LRR is calculated using both the Asilomar Lite and ASPCA Live Release Rate in the chart below.

While there has been improvement in the LRR over the past few years due to the increase in transfers to rescue, even the most recent live release rates below are still considered very low. The live release rates prior to 2021 are considered *exceptionally low* in the industry. In addition, the return to owner rate is also consistently very low compared to national averages.

**Lufkin Animal Services Outcomes of Live Dog and Cats by Year**

| Outcomes Dogs & Cats by Year | Adoption | Return to Owner | Transfer to Rescue | Died | Lost or Missing | Euthanasia | Total Outcomes | ASPCA Live Release Rate | Asilomar Lite Live Release Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2022 | 654 (19%) | 283 (8%) | 1420 (42%) | 47 (1%) | 18 | 940 (28%) | 3362 | **69%** | **70%** |
| 2021 | 657 (14%) | 349 (8%) | 1952 (43%) | 90 (2%) | 29 | 1491 (33%) | 4568 | **63%** | **65%** |
| 2020 | 705 (18%) | 303 (8%) | 1252 (31%) | 63 (2%) | 29 | 1651 (41%) | 4003 | **58%** | **56%** |
| 2019 | 937 (19%) | 421 (8%) | 465 (9%) | 81 (2%) | 50 | 3002 (61%) | 4956 | **36%** | **37%** |
| 2018 | 1141 (26%) | 373 (8%) | 257 (6%) | 35 | 45 (1%) | 2557 (58%) | 4408 | **40%** | **40%** |

All percentages rounded.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Add owner requested euthanasia as a Chameleon euthanasia outcome subtype and have staff use that outcome subtype when euthanizing animals for owners who come to the shelter with the intent of having their animals euthanized. Ensure those owners sign an Owner Request for Euthanasia form.

The following chart shows that LAS has a 15% higher live release rate of dogs than cats, though the dog live release rate is still considered very low.

**2022 Outcomes of Live Intakes by Species**

| 2022 Outcomes by Species | Adoption | Return to Owner | Transfer to Rescue | Relocate | Died | Lost or Missing | Euthanasia | Total Outcomes | **Asilomar Live Release Rate** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All Species** | 675 | 287 | 1423 | 24 | 51 | 18 | 964 | 3442 | **70%** |
| **Dogs** | 401 | 270 | 1113 | 0 | 35 | 11 | 564 | 2394 | **75%** |
| **Cats** | 253 | 13 | 307 | 0 | 12 | 7 | 376 | 968 | **60%** |
| **Other*** | 21 | 4 | 3 | 24 | 4 | 0 | 24 | 80 | **65%** |

All percentages rounded.
*This category includes other domestic animals, livestock and wildlife. Euthanasia of wildlife is usually because they are sick, injured or are rabies suspects.

## Length of Stay

A shelter's capacity to hold animals does not solely depend on how many animals are impounded but also on the shelter's flow through rate. The problem of being over capacity can often be mitigated by decreasing the number of animals impounded (managed admission of owner surrenders with surrender counseling, policies that limit intake of certain animals such as feral cats, returning stray animals with microchips or identification tags to owners in the field, etc.) and by ensuring that the animals that do require sheltering pass through the shelter as quickly as possible to a positive outcome (reclaim, adoption, transfer), thus shortening their length of stay (LOS).

LOS directly impacts the number of animals sheltered at any given time. For example, if there are two same-sized shelters that each receive 10 new animals each day and Shelter 1 holds its animals for 10 days, then there will be 100 animals in Shelter 1 at any given time. However, if Shelter 2 holds its animals for 20 days, then it will have 200 animals in its shelter at any given time.

To reduce the length of stay, efficient animal services operations operate with a sense of urgency, trying to get animals reclaimed, adopted, or rescued as expeditiously as possible. Moving animals out of the shelter quickly is important for many reasons, including: (1) more animals held in the shelter requires more supplies and more staff members to care for the animals, thus more money; (2) the longer an animal stays in the shelter, the more likely it is to become sick and treating the animal for illness requires more veterinary staff time, medication and may extend the length of stay even further; and (3) moving the animals out quickly means that there is more room in the shelter, so the shelter will not run out of space for incoming animals.

The average LOS shown in the following table are considered fairly high for a shelter with only a 3 day stray hold for animals without identification and only a 70% live release rate. LAS should strive to more quickly adopt, transfer to rescue and get animals reclaimed in order to lower the length of stay.

**LAS Average Length of Stay by Year**

| Year | Dogs | Cats | Others |
|------|------|------|--------|
| 2022 | 18 | 24 | 11 |
| 2021 | 18 | 13 | 3 |
| 2020 | 16 | 18 | 10 |
| 2019 | 17 | 13 | 6 |
| 2018 | 17 | 12 | 6 |

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ LAS should operate with a sense of urgency in order to shorten the length of stay, with staff and management working to get animals reclaimed, adopted, or rescued as expeditiously as possible.

## Field Statistics

**Field Response Times**

The following Chameleon report displays Animal Control Officer (ACO) response times for calls for service in 2022. It is clear from this report that the dispatch and response time portions of the Chameleon software system are not being used properly. In most operations, field priorities are labeled 1-5 (or more) and have certain target response times (EX: 30 minutes, 1 hour, 4 hours, 8 hours, 24 hours) assigned to each priority based on the urgency of the response that is needed. Most animal services operations frequently run response time reports to ensure all calls are being responded to and that their ACOs are meeting their required response time for each priority.

At LAS, almost every field activity for the entire year is categorized as a low Priority 5 call, which is inaccurate, since there are cruelty/neglect investigations, police assist and bite calls that would not fall under such a low priority. In addition, the average response time for all calls in Priority 5 is over one day and the maximum is 369 days, which are also probably inaccurate. There are also calls that either do not have any response time or that have 2 minute response times, which would also be inaccurate. In addition, there are over 200 field activities not shown in the report below because they either have no jurisdiction or have misspelled the jurisdiction in the software system (EX: Ludkin, Lufin, Lufkkin, Lukfin, etc.).

Nowadays, many field operations have laptops in their animal control vehicles and the ACOs are able to input their arrival and departure times themselves. Operations that don't have laptops in the vehicles usually have their ACOs radio their Dispatchers when they arrive on scene and when they complete a call and the Dispatchers input those times into Chameleon. Recommendations in this area will be covered in the [Field Operations](#) portion of this report.

## LAS 2022 Field Activity Calls by Priority

**LUFKIN**

| Priority | Calls | Average Response Time | Maximum Response Time | Minimum Response Time | Target Compliance | N/I |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | 2m | 2m | 2m | 100.00 % | 83 % |
| 2 | 2 | | | | - | 100 % |
| 3 | 5 | | | | | 100 % |
| 4 | 1 | 1d 8h 24m | 1d 8h 24m | 1d 8h 24m | 0.00 % | 0 % |
| 5 | 1,549 | 1d 16h 48m | 369d 13h 46m | 0m | 62.74 % | 66 % |
| 6 | 1 | | | | | 100 % |

1564 - Total Calls for LUFKIN

## Field Activities by Type

The following chart shows the number and type of field calls for 2022. The total number of calls is 1771, which equates to 4.8 calls per day based on seven days a week or 6.8 calls per day based on five days a week. This number of field calls per day could usually be completed by one ACO per day since Lufkin only has 34 square miles and little traffic. However, LAS needs overnight coverage, coverage seven days a week and there may also be times of higher call volume, such as during the summer.

### Field Activity Call Types for 2022

| Type of Field Activity Call | Number of Activity Calls in 2022 |
|---|---|
| Assist Police or Other Agency | 136 |
| Dead Animal Pickup | 116 |
| Investigate Cruelty, Neglect, Dangerous Dog | 116 |
| Other | 5 |
| Owned Pickup | 34 |
| Stray | 1018 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Stray Fowl | 8 |
| Stray Livestock | 13 |
| Trap | 119 |
| Wildlife | 80 |
| Yard Check | 126 |
| Total | 1771 |

## Citations

The following are the number and type of citations written by each of the three Animal Control Officers at LAS for 2022. This data is from the court system since citations are not being logged into Chameleon. It is clear that LAS management isn't ensuring the ACOs are equally enforcing the ordinances and one officer is rarely writing any citations.

## Citations Issued by ACOs in 2022

| Type of Citation | ACO 1 | ACO 2 | ACO 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dog at Large | 4 | 35 | 41 |
| Inhumane Treatment | 0 | 19 | 3 |
| Sterilization Required | 0 | 16 | 0 |
| Potentially Dangerous Dog | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Tethering Prohibited | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Unlawful Restraint | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Multiple Pet Permit | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Failure to Appear | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Rabies Vaccination | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Livestock/fowl minimum space | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Warrant to seize animals treated cruelly | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Livestock Running at Large | 0 | 1 | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Failure to dispose of dead animal | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Health Hazard | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| No Kennel License | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| **Total Citations** | **4** | **103** | **55** |

## Alternatives for Animal Services Management

The City requested a description of the alternatives for management of animal services operations in this report. This section provides a general overview of management models that are most commonly used around the country to provide animal services.

**All Animal Services Operations Provided by Local Government** – This is the current model at LAS, which is the local government providing all animal services operations, including shelter and field services. In some areas, cities and counties have separate animal services shelter/field operations servicing only the residents in their jurisdiction. In other areas, counties provide sheltering and/or field services to the cities within them or some cities, like Lufkin, provide sheltering and/or field services to their county.

**All Animal Services Operations Provided by Local Government; Special Services from Non-Profit** – This model is very similar to the first model; however, there is an understanding with a non-profit that has agreed to provide some specific service to benefit the animal services operation, often at no cost to the local government. In this model, for example, the non-profit may agree to accept all owner-surrenders in the community, or they may agree to transfer a large percentage of the animal services' animals into their private shelter or adoption center every year, or they may agree to provide another service to benefit the animal services shelter, such as handling all neonatal kittens. These types of agreements can be informal or there can be a written Memorandum of Understanding. Whether this is a possibility often depends on if the shelter is located in fairly close proximity to a good sized non-profit rescue or humane organization.

**All Shelter and Field Operations Provided by a Non-Profit** – In this model, a city or county outsources the entire animal services operation to a non-profit organization. The non-profit handles all of the shelter operations and also handles all field services, including Animal Control Officers, writing citations, and cruelty investigations. The entire operation can be operated out of a government animal shelter building or it can be operated out of a private animal shelter building owned by the non-profit. If the non-profit operates out of a government building or the non-profit was formed specifically for the purpose of managing the program, then the non-profit sometimes operates using a government type name (EX: Animal Care and Control of Philadelphia, Animal Care Centers of New York). Outsourcing to a non-profit requires the county to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) and the non-profit is paid for its services under contract with the local government.

**All Field Operations Provided by Local Government; All Shelter Operations Provided by Non-Profit** – In this model, the local government retains the field operations, including providing Animal Control Officers, writing citations and performing cruelty investigations, but outsources the operation of the shelter to a non-profit. The non-profit can operate out of a government animal shelter building or the ACOs can bring animals picked up in the field to an animal shelter that is owned by the non-profit. If the non-profit operates out of a government shelter, then it sometimes operates the shelter using the government name (EX: Buncombe County Animal Shelter). Outsourcing shelter operations to a non-profit requires the county to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) and the non-profit is paid for its services under contract with the local government.

**All Field and Limited Shelter Operations Provided by Local Government; All Adoptions Handled by Non-Profit** – In this model, the local government animal services shelter handles all of the field services and also handles the intake of stray, bite and confiscated animals and reclaim of animals. All adoptable animals are then transferred to the non-profit, which is often located in an adjacent building or in a building close by. The non-profit then handles all adoptions for the animal services operation. The adoption center building may be owned by the county or by the non-profit. If and how the non-profit is paid for the service depends on the operation.

**Another Local Government Provides the Service** – While many counties provide animal control services for the cities within them and some cities provide animal control services for the county that they are located in, occasionally some cities and counties pay a nearby city or county in the region to provide animal services for their jurisdiction.

**Joint Powers Authority or Commission** – A Joint Powers Authority (JPA), also sometimes called a Commission, is created by the formation of a new entity that operates both shelter and/or field services for two or more governments that desire the service. The JPA or Commission sometimes provides services for a large region. Governance is usually provided by a commission made up of representatives from each local government and each of the local governments contribute a portion of the cost of the operation. The JPA or Commission usually operates out of an animal shelter building either owned by one member or owned jointly by all members.

## Section 2 - Executive Summary

The following is a summary of the major areas that need improvement at LAS. By correcting these areas and the additional areas identified throughout this report, LAS can improve operational processes and improve the live release rate. Methods to correct all of the areas that need improvement will be found later on in this report.

- LAS has been euthanizing animals for lack of space reasons when half of the cages and kennels in the shelter are always kept empty and there is plenty of space available. This is because of LAS' highly unusual cleaning method of always keeping one cage/kennel empty for every one occupied cage/kennel, which should be discontinued.

- There are currently not enough staff members to properly clean and care for the animals. Animal Control Officers should be assigned to morning shelter cleaning duties and additional Kennel Attendants should also be hired. This will be especially important once the 1:1 ratio of occupied-to-empty cages is discontinued because more animals will be able to be held in the shelter. Additional new job positions should also be hired, including a Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator.

- LAS' Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were last updated in 2009, are not up to date in many areas, are missing many critical sections and many current areas are not being enforced.

- LAS is not assigning accurate cage numbers to animals and is also not performing a daily animal inventory to ensure that the Chameleon software database is kept accurate. This results in LAS' inability to look up where an animal is located and also results in many animals shown as being in the shelter's software system that have not been there for months or even longer. Because of this, the animals displayed on the 24Petconnect website are not all accurate. In addition, if LAS starts performing automatic uploads from the Chameleon software system to numerous adoption marketing websites like Petfinder, the information uploaded would also not all be accurate.

- Staff and management are not fully trained in the Chameleon software system and LAS is not using Chameleon properly in several critical areas. Among other things, this results in LAS' inability to look up important information about the animals, to print out their medical history, to accurately determine their accurate length of stay, to determine the accurate response time on a field call, to look up field citations and warnings, etc.

- During observations, critical steps including scanning for microchips were omitted during the shelter intake process and the intake process may have potentially exposed some animals to disease. Shelter intake of animals was also unnecessarily crowded and chaotic, instead of being a calm and orderly process.

- During observations, none of the kennels or cages in any areas of the shelter were being cleaned and disinfected properly.

- Animals at LAS are only being fed once per day, even though puppies, kittens and underweight animals should be fed three times per day and emaciated/starved animals should be fed numerous small meals for the first week to avoid refeeding syndrome, which can kill them.

- Euthanasia procedures need to be updated in order to ensure that drug logs are accurate, that all necessary steps have been performed prior to euthanasia, that all fearful, anxious, unsocialized, distressed and aggressive animals are being pre-sedated and that best practices for euthanasia are being followed. In addition, LAS management needs to ensure

that LAS has attempted and exhausted every lifesaving effort prior to euthanizing any animal for space reasons.

- Animals are not being provided with veterinary care during the three day stray hold, including pain medication, unless they have a life threatening illness or injury. LAS also has no money for baseline sick and injured animal veterinary care allocated in their budget and must instead rely solely on a nonprofit organization's fundraising efforts.

- Little effort is currently being made by LAS in order to market pets for adoption, to write grants or to implement proactive programs that will help increase adoptions, increase reclaims or decrease intake of animals.


# Section 3 - Facility Overview

The LAS campus consists of three building structures:

1. Main Building
2. Intake Building (also known as "New" Building)
3. Barn

The main building houses the Director's office, the Assistant Director's office, a room with desks for each of the three animal control officers, the front desk/lobby and a public animal drop-off room. There is also a break room, a dish cleaning area, a laundry room, a grooming tub area, a food prep room, a medication closet/room, a multipurpose room where donations are sorted/stored, a meet and greet room, a euthanasia room with an incinerator located outside and a few other areas.

I am unfamiliar with any animal services operations that provide individual desks for each of their Animal Control Officers (ACOs). At most operations, ACOs are on the road all day and either have laptops in their vehicles or else have a shared computer station (or a shared bank of computers for larger operations) usually located in the animal unloading area that they use to input their field activity call data. However, the Field Supervisor or their equivalent is usually given a desk.

The rooms that hold or house animals in the main building are the:

- Dog Adoption Room
- Cat Adoption Room
- Puppy Adoption Room
- Cat Isolation
- Cat Quarantine
- Dog Isolation
- Dog Quarantine
- Two holding dog kennels and a few stainless cages nearby

The newer Intake building consists of:

- Dog kennels for stray holding, half of which are outdoor-only kennels
- Cat cages for stray holding

The barn has an indoor livestock pen and during observations, seemed to mainly serve as a storage area. In addition, the barn has only a regular house-sized door which doesn't provide large enough access for horses, cows and other large livestock. This is a problem because emaciated and starved horses and livestock should not be exposed to extreme weather. This space could instead include a horse stall, chicken coop and/or be remodeled for additional medical isolation areas for dogs and cats. There are also three outdoor covered livestock holding pens in the yard across from the barn.

It is clear that LAS' buildings were not designed by an architect experienced in animal shelter design and there are numerous problems with their design. Best practices for decades are for all dog kennels to be double-sided for ease of cleaning, for safety in handling aggressive animals and so that dogs can eat, drink and rest on one side and eliminate on the other side. All of the dog kennels in the main kennel at LAS are single-sided even though most are actually big enough to be double-sided. The dog kennels in the quarantine room are especially troublesome because potentially aggressive dogs must be removed and put into another kennel in order to properly clean them. Quarantine kennels should always be double-sided to avoid this issue or at the very least, they should have guillotine doors on the sides of each kennel so that the "move down" method can be used to move quarantine dogs to another clean kennel without directly handling them.

This is a drawing from the Association of Shelter Veterinarians of a dog kennel that meets best practices:
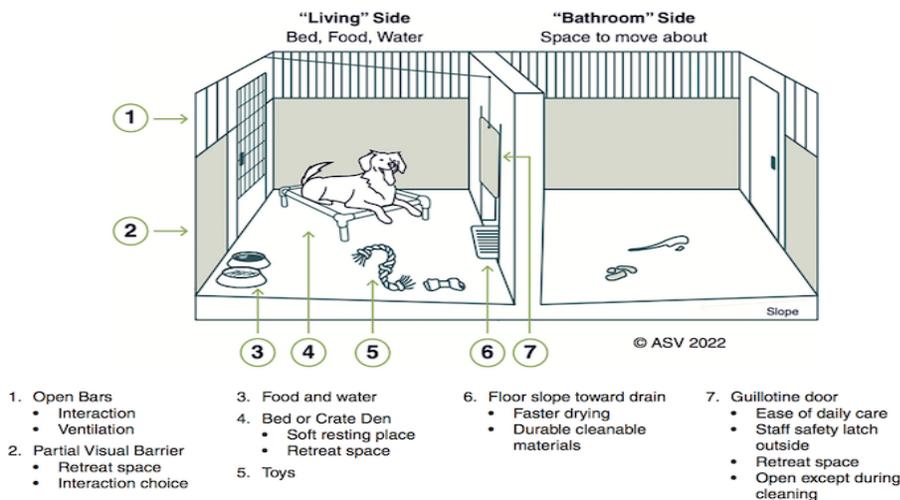


All of the dog kennels in the newer Intake building were originally double-sided, however, the guillotine doors were removed and the passageway blocked up because LAS management said that the guillotine doors didn't work well. LAS is currently keeping half of their dog kennels empty in all

areas to use during cleaning. Therefore, even with the transfer doors blocked up, a maximum of only 24 kennels are currently being used in the Intake Building. This is the same number of kennels available if the brick was removed and guillotine doors reinstalled. The passageway block should be removed as soon as possible and new guillotine doors reinstalled as soon as possible for ease of cleaning and for more space for each dog so that the kennels could be used as double-sided, indoor-outdoor kennels. This will also allow animals to be kept inside the kennel and the guillotine door kept closed during extreme hot and cold weather, except when cleaning kennels. During times of extremely high intake, the guillotine doors could also be kept down and used as two kennels.

In the meantime, because the guillotine door passageway is blocked up, it means that all of the outdoor kennels are exposed to outdoor temperatures. This is especially concerning during very cold weather. During observations, the weather did get below freezing and the only thing LAS did was put a tarp half way up the cage door (though during observations half of the tarps had blown/torn off on one side) and provide a blanket to sleep on. Animals housed outside during very cold weather must be provided with a way to stay warm. Though the tarp does provide a wind break, neither the tarp nor the blanket provides any protection from the extreme cold temperatures. Subchapter E of Texas law (Sec. 821.101) requires that all animals must be provided with "Adequate shelter." The definition of adequate shelter is a sturdy structure that (1) provides the dog protection of inclement weather (4) including extreme low or high temperatures.

Most shelters that I'm familiar with that have outdoor-only dog kennels have larger outdoor runs, only keep medium-large adult dogs of healthy weight in them and keep plastic, disinfectable dog houses in each kennel appropriate for the dogs' size so dogs can get inside and generate body heat. They also put up tarps as windbreaks and put blankets in the dog houses when the weather gets cold. However, LAS' outdoor kennels are very small (3 1/2' x 5') and there doesn't really seem to be room for a dog house, except for perhaps a small dog house for puppies, though puppies should not be kept outside in extreme weather.

Until new guillotine doors can be reinstalled, LAS should discontinue housing dogs in the Intake building's outside kennels during extreme temperatures and should house them all in the Intake building's inside kennels instead of leaving half of the inside kennels empty for convenience of use during the cleaning process. Since LAS is only using half of the kennels, the exact same number of dogs would still be able to be housed in the Intake building even if they are all kept inside.



The drainage in the Intake building is very poorly designed. None of the drains in the intake building have any kind of automatic flushers, which are necessary in shelters to reduce odor and prevent blockages, and none of the drains are covered. There are metal drain covers that almost look like cup holders that are often not being put back into place by staff after cleaning. This creates an unsafe environment for young puppies that might get

stuck or fall into them. In addition, during observations debris was seen in the drains accessible to the dogs even after the cleaning process. These drains should instead be covered with a circular drain cover (see photo of one design). Most experts recommend picking up and disposing of fecal matter, rather than hosing them down a drain, especially a drain in a shelter that doesn't flush:

"Dispose of fecal material in the proper manner (into clinical sinks and flush or into the garbage or compost if allowed – outside of the kennel room and away from the kennel housing area and any public areas). Picking up the solids helps reduce the risk of clogged drains and prevents the aerosolization of fecal material by overzealous power washing."[1]

The very first kennel seen upon entering the dog adoption room in the Main building is a tremendous dog pen that housed one adult dog during observations. On the original shelter floor plans it states that this was designed to be the shelter's "Puppy Pen," which may have meant to keep litters of puppies in it.

Near this pen is a large room with newer looking flooring that is currently being used as an adoption "Meet and Greet" room and is also used as a dog photography room. This room is more than double the size of a typical meet and greet room. I saw potential adopters using this meet and greet room to visit with several different puppies, however, the room was not disinfected between visits.

I was told that there are sometimes disagreements between staff and volunteers over this one meet and greet room because the volunteers need to use the room in order to photograph dogs, while the staff members need to use this room in order for potential adopters to meet with animals. The current meet and greet room is more than big enough to be subdivided into two rooms. In addition, the "puppy pen" (see photo) is big enough to be used as a dog meet and greet area instead of housing one dog and it would be even better for disease prevention since it could be easily disinfected with Wysiwash after each use.

Some of the cat cages used at LAS do not meet best practices for size. The Association of Shelter Veterinarians states:

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[1] https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/?r=which-drain-type-is-best

"In cats, sufficiently sized housing reduces stress and respiratory disease incidence. Individual adult cat housing that is less than 8 square feet of floor space is unacceptable. Ideally, individual cat housing provides 11 square feet or more of floor space."[2]

This diagram from the Association of Shelter Veterinarians shows best practices for cat space:
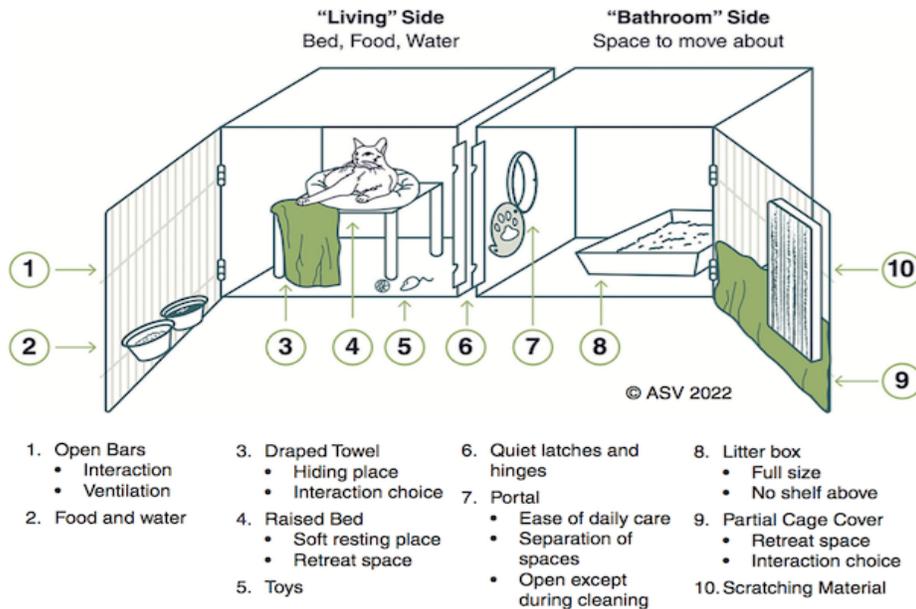


Many shelters install portals between two smaller cat cages in order to meet best practices, however, LAS' current stainless steel cages are odd shaped and do not fit neatly next to each other so a normal type of cat portal can not be installed. In addition, these cages are often precariously stacked on top of each other and lean backwards. This looks like it could be a hazard and they could potentially fall over in some conditions. The cages should be affixed to each other and if necessary, propped up with something underneath each compartment. In the future, LAS should purchase banks of stainless steel cages, preferably on wheels, and not individual cages that are randomly stacked.

The area that ACOs unload animals in is uncovered, which means that the ACOs may be unloading animals in pouring rain. In addition, the same area doesn't provide a covered walkway for staff, volunteers and visitors to access the Intake building, so, for instance, people looking for their lost pets get soaking wet when it is raining. A relatively inexpensive garage or carport type structure and inexpensive covered walkways could be installed in order to provide some cover. A few examples of prefab garages are here, here and here. An example of places to purchase covered walkways are here and here.

There are also quite a few rooms or areas that are either required at animal shelters for best practices or that are now considered standard at animal shelters. These areas/rooms include:

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[2] Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, 2022, page 16

- Additional medical isolation rooms for each species
- Additional space for aggressive and bite quarantine dogs
- Intake room - this should be an enclosed room with no outdoor access where intake of animals takes place
- Adoption counseling and owner surrender counseling rooms
- Volunteer room - this should include a place for volunteers to keep supplies and to create enrichment toys and treats
- Small animal room (rabbits, guinea pigs, etc.)
- Kitten nursery room
- Cat ringworm treatment room
- Feral cat room
- Rescue Coordinator's office
- Volunteer/Foster Coordinator's office and foster supply storage
- Veterinary clinic including surgical suite, recovery area, and treatment room (often designed with a separate public access entrance for public shot and spay/neuter clinics)
- Chicken coop or chicken holding area
- Indoor horse stall
- Photography room specifically used to take photos and videos
- Community cat coordinator/TNR office and trap room
- Shelter Supervisor's office
- Covered outside dog pens (on cement) where dogs can be put during cleaning or to get fresh air
- Small outdoor meet and greet fenced areas for potential adopters to use with a shade cover, on cement for ease of cleaning
- Fenced yards for dog play groups (there is a very large fenced area, but in order to properly supervise play groups the yard needs to be smaller).

LAS should either start making long range plans to build a new shelter to include the areas listed above and to have properly designed cat space and double-sided dog kennels or the shelter should make plans to extensively remodel and expand the current shelter and purchase new cages to meet best practices. If a new shelter is built, it should be located in an area with higher visibility and traffic. If a remodel is selected, it would need to be an extensive remodel with additional spaces added and would require the dog adoption room to be redesigned/reconfigured including drainage systems to create double-sided dog kennels, so it may be cost prohibitive and not operationally feasible. *Regardless, it is extremely important that an architect be selected that has experience in animal shelter design for any major remodel or for building a new shelter.*

In the meantime, there are several things that LAS can do now as a stop gap measure to help meet some of the shelter's needs until a new, more modern shelter can be built or remodeled. The first recommendation would be to bring in inexpensive, used, office trailers for veterinary clinic space and additional medical isolation space.

In some other areas of the country, I sometimes recommend attempting to increase adoptions by renting a space or using a space already owned by the City to serve as a small offsite adoption center until a new shelter can be built. However, half of the kennels and cages at LAS are currently not being used when they could be and LAS can improve their marketing efforts to attempt to increase adoptions. In addition, while the shelter is not in a high traffic area it is still within a short driving distance of anywhere in the City. Finally, the demand for adoption in this area is lower than in some other areas just because the population in the County is low.  Therefore, while a small offsite adoption center is something that the City may want to consider, it is not strongly recommended.

Additional recommendations and items to consider are listed below.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ In order to meet best practices and have the necessary animal holding and other required spaces to function as a modern, progressive shelter, the City should start the planning process to build a new animal shelter or the process to extensively remodel and add on to the current shelter. An architect that specializes in animal shelters should be chosen. A list of some animal shelter architects can be found in Appendix IX – Animal Shelter Architects.

➔ To temporarily add veterinary clinic space so that a full or part-time veterinarian could be



hired to spay/neuter and treat animals at LAS, rent an inexpensive, possibly used, hard floored large office trailer with bathroom (for water) or use a surplus City trailer that is already owned. A three room trailer design with a bathroom often works well so that one room can be the surgical suite, one room the veterinary treatment room and one room the recovery room. Some office trailer rental places will let you install a veterinary type sink in the main room. Park the trailer in the gravel area between the barn and the livestock pens. Hook up to power and water. Additional staff and veterinary equipment would need to be obtained for this space. A business that often has very inexpensive, used office trailers for rent is:
 https://www.willscot.com/locations/houston-east
I also noticed this similar company in Diboll that may also have used three room office trailers for rent:
https://www.atco.com/en-us/contact-us/structures-united-states/structures-diboll.html

➔ Put disinfectable plastic chairs or plastic benches in the extra large kennel originally designed to house puppies (first kennel in the adoption room) and use it as the main dog "Meet and Greet" room instead of using it to house one adult dog. Remove the top fencing, if needed, so people can stand up in this room. Write and enforce procedures to ensure that all

puppies must use this pen for meets and greets and to ensure that it is disinfected after each use. [High Priority]

➔ Subdivide the current "Meet and Greet" room into two rooms with separate hallway entrances for additional meet and greet space. Put disinfectable plastic chairs or benches in each room for visitors to sit on.

➔ Remove the blocked off passageways in the Intake building kennels and reinstall new guillotine transfer doors to create double sided kennels. Until the new guillotine doors are installed, during extreme weather (including cold temperatures) all dogs should be housed in the inside kennels in the Intake building instead of leaving those inside kennels empty for convenience of use during the cleaning process. [High Priority]

➔ Install flat top drain covers on top of all of the kennel drains in the Intake building. Ensure dogs' claws can not get stuck in whatever design is chosen.

➔ Move the cages in the current Cat Isolation room to the multipurpose room or another room (or a trailer when it is obtained) and use that new room for cat isolation. Use the current Cat Isolation room as the shelter's Intake room. Much more information about the need for an Intake room and what it should contain can be found in the Intake Section. [High Priority]

➔ To prevent the stacked stainless steel cages that are not secured from possibly falling, affix the cages to each other using metal t-bracket/brace plates in the corners as designed. Place a piece of metal, wood or a brick under each cage to prop it up, if needed, so that the cage doesn't float and potentially bend the piece of metal used to affix the cages. If any new stainless cages are purchased, ensure they meet best practices for size and that they stack neatly on top/to the side of each other (purchase a bank of cages on wheels, not individual cages). Most shelters purchase stainless steel cages from Shor-line.

➔ Cut a barn door into the barn for large livestock access and build a horse stall inside the barn in order to keep sick, emaciated or underweight horses or other livestock indoors during extreme weather conditions or else board sick, emaciated or underweight horses and other livestock elsewhere during extreme weather conditions.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➜ For safety reasons, if possible, install guillotine doors in the side of each dog kennel in the dog quarantine room so that the "move down" method can be used without handling the dogs during kennel cleaning.

➜ Consider remodeling the barn for additional animal medical isolation spaces.

➜ To add additional medical isolation space to house sick/injured animals, rent an additional inexpensive, possibly used, hard floored office trailer with bathroom (for water) or use a surplus City trailer that is already owned, in order to house and medically treat additional animals. New stainless cages will need to be purchased and staff will need to be assigned to clean and care for these animals. A three or more room space so species and illnesses can be separated is best. Park the trailer in the gravel area between the barn and the livestock pens. Hook up to power and water.

➜ Partition off a small section inside the barn with sides, top and entrance door using wood and hardware cloth fencing to serve as an indoor chicken coop.

➜ Add covered outdoor dog runs on a cement pad outside of the main kennel to put dogs in during morning kennel cleaning. These dog runs should be cleaned and disinfected with Wysiwash between use. If a trench drain is installed ensure it is either covered with a trench drain cover or is located outside of the fenced area.

➜ Once all dog kennels are being used instead of keeping half empty, consider installing metal panels or rigid, opaque plastic or pvc disinfectable sheets on the bottom half chainlink of the dog kennels that face each other, especially in the intake building where the aisles are narrow, for disease prevention reasons and to curtail dogs from barking at each other.

➜ Install prefab covered garage and walkway structures between the main building and the Intake building to protect animals and people from rain.

➜ To increase adoptions, open a small, offsite adoption center (EX: 8 dogs kennels, small community cat room, 6 puppy cages, 6 kitten cages) in a visible, high traffic area of the City that is accessible to green space for dog walking. House highly adoptable animals that are already spay/neutered, rabies vaccinated and ready to go home in the adoption center. Preferably have the adoption center open to the public Tuesday through Saturday or Wednesday through Sunday. Since animals need to be taken care of seven days a week, this will most likely require hiring one adoption center manager and at least two additional kennel staff members, plus will require the use of volunteers to walk the dogs and assist with cleaning. More information about exactly what would be needed in this center can be provided if it is seriously considered.

# Section 4 - General Operations

## Hours of Operation

LAS is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 12pm to 5pm and on Saturdays from 1pm to 5pm. LAS does not accept owner surrenders or stray turn-ins on Saturdays.

While it is fantastic that LAS is open to the public on Saturdays, the trend nationally for many years is for government animal shelters to be open more hours during the week in order to be convenient to people that work. Therefore many shelters open by 11am and stay open until 6pm or 7pm at least two days during the week. Many animal services shelters are also open for longer hours on Saturday and on Sundays for adoption and rescue. For example, Plano Animal Services is open Monday through Friday until 6pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm. LAS used to open earlier, but said they changed the hours to open later to give staff more time to clean.

**ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➔ Once LAS is fully staffed, consider increasing the number of hours that LAS is open to the public.

## Phones and Communication

LAS is the only animal services shelter that I've ever been to that doesn't have any kind of automated phone message that allows callers to leave messages or to be routed to the correct area. At LAS, either the front desk clerk or another staff member picks up the phone or else it rings and rings until the caller hangs up. This is also true for overnight callers.

A typical animal services operation has an auto-attendant or phone tree system set up that automatically picks up all calls and says something like this during the day: "If you are calling about a life threatening situation, please hang up and dial 911. Press 1 if you need an animal control officer dispatched to your location or need to speak to someone in field operations, Press 2 for adoptions, Press 3 for volunteering or fostering, Press 4 for the rescue coordinator, Press 5 for hours and directions or Press 6 to speak to a customer service agent."

On weekends and overnight until field dispatchers arrive, the auto-attendant system normally has a different message that says something like "If you are calling about a life threatening situation, please hang up and dial 911. If you are experiencing a non-life threatening animal related emergency, Press 1 to have an animal control officer sent to your location. All other callers, including those who have found healthy stray animals, please call back during normal business hours."

All phone calls at LAS are being routed to the front desk.  During observations, most calls were answered by the front desk clerk but there were times that a manager or an ACO picked up the front

desk phone. Everyone answered the phone using a different greeting including: "Animal Services," "Lufkin Animal Services," "Kurth Shelter, "Kurth Animal Shelter," "Animal Control" and "Lufkin Animal Control." Most animal services operations have their staff members answer the phone with a standard greeting and some even include the proper phone greeting in their SOPs.

A typical animal services operation also has an intercom system so that staff members can be paged by the front desk when they are needed. LAS does not have an intercom so the front desk clerk has to call or text staff members. In addition, staff members must walk around to try to find another staff member when they need assistance. For safety and communication reasons, LAS should obtain clip-on rechargeable walkie-talkies for the staff and management to wear so staff can easily call someone if they need emergency assistance and so staff, the front office, and managers can easily communicate throughout the day. Some walkie talkies also come with an emergency alarm. Some shelters use walkie-talkies similar to this model or this model, but LAS may need to shop around to find one that works best.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ For communications and safety reasons, purchase rechargeable walkie-talkies for staff and management to wear. [High Priority]

➔ Implement a phone auto-attendant system that routes callers directly to the correct person. Ensure a different message is set up for at night when field services is only providing emergency services.

➔ Have the staff answer the phone using a consistent name and greeting.

## Software System and Computers

LAS has used the Chameleon animal management software system for over a decade. Chameleon is a very robust software system that provides management of shelter operations, field operations, veterinary record keeping, cashiering and much more. However, one of LAS' biggest problems operationally is that no one is fully trained in how to use Chameleon, including some of the most basic tasks, and LAS isn't using it properly or to its full potential in many areas.

For one example, I asked staff members and a manager to look up two confiscated puppies by name in order to find out why they were confiscated and their status. Searching animals in the shelter by name is a very basic, everyday task that everyone should know how to do. However, no one knew how to do it properly. They only knew how to look up all the animals that had ever been in the shelter with that name, so had difficulty finding the animals that I was looking for because there were so many. There is a special search animal name field in the kennel window that allows staff to look up only current animals in the shelter based on the name and to search back for a certain

number of days to look for animals that have recently left. When a manager was finally able to pull these puppies up, it showed they didn't even have an associated field call. For another example, staff does not seem to always be searching for Person IDs prior to creating a new one when performing some functions, so they often have numerous Person ID records for the same person, instead of just one. For instance, one of the LAS managers said he has seen upward of a dozen different Person IDs in Chameleon for the same person.

Prior to the use of animal shelter management software, shelters often used a half-page sized card that served as the animal's permanent cage card for the entire time they were kept in the shelter. Shelters that vaccinated animals would peel off the vaccine sticker and put it on the card to signify the animal was vaccinated and they would also write notes about veterinary treatment directly on the card. Shelters would staple important paperwork like bite reports to the card because it was a permanent record that would eventually be filed. However, once animal shelter management software is implemented, none of that is necessary or recommended because all of that information is kept digitally. With a software system, cage cards can be frequently reprinted whenever an animal is moved to a different cage, to use different card designs for different stages (numerous designs are available or can be designed) or for other reasons. Important paperwork that needs to be filed/kept should not be attached to a cage card since it is not permanent. Some shelters do still handwrite or stamp a few designated things on the card so staff can readily know them without having to look it up, such as "Adoption Pending" or "Rescue Pending," but others use laminated "Adoption Pending" or "Rescue Pending" signs which they put into the cage card holder to designate these things.

LAS is still acting like they have a permanent cage card and are putting vaccine stickers on the cage card, handwriting medication information and the dates given on the card and are making a copy of the cage card for adopters instead of inputting that information and printing out a Chameleon medical history report. They also are not running daily medical and vaccine treatment reports that state what animals need what medication and what follow up vaccines each day. Instead, they hand write the animals on a board and discuss the animals that need medication in their morning meeting so that they don't forget any.

LAS also isn't writing memos about the status of animals often enough in the software system. Memos should be always be written about animals' behavior, health, owners who say they plan to reclaim, potential adopters, potential rescuers, attempts to contact owners of tagged or chipped animals and more. That way all staff members can look up an animal's status and always know what is going on with it. Chameleon gives the ability to put "holds" on animals, meaning that the animal can not be outcomed (adopted, rescued, euthanized) until the hold is read and taken off. LAS also isn't currently writing Chameleon web memos about each animal's personality for adoption marketing reasons that are displayed online with the animal's photo.

I also noticed that LAS also isn't currently outcoming foster animals' permanent outcomes the way Chameleon recommends (which is important for length of stay reports), isn't making Chameleon cage assignments properly, that management doesn't know how to change/update animal intake or outcome types or subtypes, isn't logging in bite animals or citations, and isn't properly using field dispatch priorities. Management is also allowing some staff members to have access to the

Administrator login and password, which would normally be restricted to management since that login allows users to modify the entire setup and permanently delete records.

On top of all these basics, Chameleon also has numerous automation tools which can be implemented to speed up processes and LAS isn't currently using any of them. For a few examples, Chameleon allows voice-to-text memos in the shelter and field. Chameleon's Quick Kennel and Scan It systems can allow staff to scan in the bar code of drivers licenses so the information is immediately put into Chameleon without staff having to type it in, allows staff to scan in what medication an animal has received so it doesn't have to be typed in and can be set up so that all of the vaccines and dewormers used on intake can be scanned in at once so they don't have to be typed. Emails can be set up to automatically send about animals that need rescuing to rescue groups. Statistical reports including charts and graphs can be set up to be automatically generated and emailed to City officials and advisory board members. Documents can be scanned or photographed and uploaded to Chameleon for permanent records.

One additional thing to mention is that Chameleon has provided automatic uploads to adoption websites like Petfinder for many years. However, volunteers are currently manually inputting that information to Petfinder, which is very cumbersome, time consuming and unnecessary since Chameleon can automatically do it. LAS needs to clean up their database and start performing a daily animal inventory and then should implement the automatic uploads to adoption websites like Petfinder.

LAS also does not currently have enough computer stations accessible to staff. Typically, either computers with Chameleon access are installed (sometimes wall mounted) and available to staff members in the main kennel area, in the holding areas, in the euthanasia room and elsewhere or else wireless access is installed in the shelter and Ipads given to staff so they can access the information. In addition, at most animal services operations, laptops are available in the Animal Control Vehicles and Chameleon web access is installed for access. There are so few field calls at LAS that one laptop could probably be used and shared by the ACOs.

While Chameleon is an excellent, very fast animal management software system, especially in Field Operations and Dispatch, it is more expensive than some other software systems on the market and can be a bit more complicated. Once operational improvements have been made at LAS, the operation has stabilized and the live release rate is high, the City and LAS may want to explore other software systems on the market to determine if they want to switch. Most of the software systems will import all of Chameleon's data into their system, which is important so that historical information isn't lost. The software systems that I would recommend looking at are Shelterbuddy and ShelterLuv. I wouldn't currently recommend using Petpoint software because it is much more cumbersome (takes many more steps and at least twice the time to do any input), though Petpoint may make improvements to speed up processes in the future. However, as mentioned, Chameleon is an excellent software system so LAS may want to just continue using it.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [All High Priority]**

➔ LAS managers and all staff members should take Chameleon training classes. There are numerous webinars that cover the basics available in the Chameleon client area. Contact Chameleon directly with any questions about the best webinars to take and to find out what other training is available.

➔ Discontinue putting vaccines stickers, stamping with a "scanned" stamp or writing medical treatment information on cage cards and instead put all of the vaccination, deworming, "scanned for chip," found microchip information and prescribed medication information into Chameleon. Run a daily medical/vaccine report(s) to ensure that all medications and vaccines due are given daily. Print out medical treatment reports for adopters, rescue groups and the shelter's veterinarian instead of making a copy of the cage card. See the Intake Section for more information and contact Chameleon for instructions.

➔ Write and enforce procedures to always write Chameleon memos about behavior, health, contacting owners of animals with identification, etc. and when to put holds on animals.

➔ Once the Chameleon animal database is cleaned up and an animal inventory is being performed daily, LAS should notify Chameleon to start automatically uploading LAS' animal database to Petfinder and many other adoption websites. Give the volunteers who are currently manually inputting animal records into Petfinder a heads up prior to doing that.

➔ LAS should frequently consult directly with Chameleon to ask their advice about how to best perform certain processes. They can help LAS set up new processes for free via remote access of LAS computers.

➔ Additional computers with Chameleon access should be installed somewhere accessible to the main kennel (such as in the meet and greet or cat room), holding area, euthanasia room and new animal intake room so that staff can easily access information about animals without having to go to the front desk. Additional printers should also be put in the intake room and the main kennel area.

➔ Install WebChameleon and provide one or more laptops for ACOs to use in their vehicles or provide a shared computer for them to use at the shelter.

**ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➔ After many of the recommendations in this report have been implemented, the live release rate is high, and operations are running smoothly, LAS may want to consider comparing Chameleon's functionality and cost to other animal management software systems such as ShelterBuddy, ShelterLuv and ShelterPro to determine if a switch to another system would be desirable.

## Standard Operating Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are step-by-step instructions written by animal services organizations to ensure that employees carry out their jobs in a uniform, correct manner. The vast majority of animal services operations have one Standard Operating Procedure manual with a table of contents subdivided into general areas such as: Field Policies, Kennel Policies, Adoption Policies, Volunteer and Foster Policies, Office Policies, Veterinary Policies, etc. This one SOP is often kept accessible to all employees on a shared computer drive and is also usually printed out and kept in a notebook(s) onsite for staff reference. When individual sections of the SOP are updated, employees are also usually given a copy of, and sign for, the individual sections that are related to their duties.

LAS does have one SOP, however, it was last updated in 2009 and many sections haven't been updated since 2007. Animal Services operations normally update their SOPs fairly frequently as new policies and procedures are implemented. In addition, LAS' SOP is not subdivided into sections, the bulk of LAS' SOP covers field policies and numerous sections are missing including adoptions, intake, feeding (how much, what kind of food per age), foster homes, volunteers, veterinary care, office policies, etc. In addition, many of the policies that are in the current SOP are no longer valid, need major updates, are unusually worded (EX: the SOP refers to "foaming" the kennels using Wysiwash when, unlike other disinfectants, Wysiwash produces no foam) or are not being enforced.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Review and update the SOPs to bring them up-to-date, to make corrections and to add missing sections. Ensure the SOPs are updated in the future whenever policy changes are made and are enforced by management. Numerous suggestions for additions or changes to LAS' SOP are made throughout this report.

## Admission Forms and Contracts

### Animal Admission Forms

It is a standard practice in the industry to use animal admission forms for all animal intakes in order to collect important information from owners or finders. This is also needed in order to gather any known health and behavior information to assist staff and management when making behavior, rescue and medical decisions. For instance, these forms can help catch illnesses such as parvo on intake, since owners and finders can let you know if a puppy has been vomiting or is not eating well. It is also considered standard to ask finders how long they have had the animal and where they found it or originally obtained it from. Some people will state the animal they're turning in is a stray even if they've had it in their possession for six months or a year, so it should be considered a surrender. Some animal services organizations also ask if the finder knows who the animal belongs to, since sometimes people turn in their neighbor's pets if they habitually run loose.

During observations, LAS used no shelter animal admission forms and gathered no health or behavioral information from owners or finders. The only thing they required from people owner

surrendering or turning in a stray animal was a copy of their drivers license and a signature on a form printed out from Chameleon. LAS does have a surrender form that is used in the field, but it also does not gather any behavioral or health information about the animals. That owner surrender form also does not state the owner is surrendering/transferring ownership of their pet from the owner to LAS.

The forms (Owner Surrender, Stray Turn-in and Owner Request for Euthanasia) are usually put on clipboards and given to people to fill out and sign and for staff to review prior to accepting the animal, but they can also be in digital format. *The Owner Request for Euthanasia form should only be used for people who approach the shelter with the intent to euthanize the animal.* The information on these forms are also useful so that people don't try to change their story, like saying they found a stray animal in Lufkin after they wrote down that they found it in another county. The information on these forms is put into the animal management software system and the paper forms are then filed and/or uploaded to the software as a permanent record. These forms are also often provided to ACOs from other jurisdictions that bring in animals to the shelter to use.

Paper admission forms are also necessary to intake animals if the software system temporarily goes down. The shelter should also have paper adoption contracts and reclaim contracts readily available so that animals can still be reclaimed and adopted if the software system is down and also so that offsite adoptions can occur at adoption events. All of the information from these forms and contracts should be added to the Chameleon system as soon as it comes back up. The shelter should not need to be closed just because the computer system goes down.

A sample of a Stray Animal Intake form can be found in [Appendix I – Stray Turn In Form](#). A sample of an Owner Request for Euthanasia form can be found in [Appendix II - Owner Request for Euthanasia](#). A few examples of typical animal services Owner Surrender forms can be found at:

- [http://talgov.com/Uploads/Public/Documents/animals/owner-surrender.pdf](http://talgov.com/Uploads/Public/Documents/animals/owner-surrender.pdf)
- [https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_14481062/File/City%20Hall/Depts/Animal%20Svcs/Pet%20Information/How%20to%20Surrender%20a%20Pet/Owner_Animal_Surrender_Dog.pdf](https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_14481062/File/City%20Hall/Depts/Animal%20Svcs/Pet%20Information/How%20to%20Surrender%20a%20Pet/Owner_Animal_Surrender_Dog.pdf)
- [https://dogs.franklincountyohio.gov/ANCL-website/media/Documents/Owner-Surrender-Form-2022.pdf](https://dogs.franklincountyohio.gov/ANCL-website/media/Documents/Owner-Surrender-Form-2022.pdf)
- [https://cccdn.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/Files/AnimalServices/LASOwnerSurrenderForm20210805.pdf](https://cccdn.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/Files/AnimalServices/LASOwnerSurrenderForm20210805.pdf)
- [https://www.cityoflewisville.com/about-us/city-services/animal-services/owner-release-form](https://www.cityoflewisville.com/about-us/city-services/animal-services/owner-release-form)

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [==All High Priority==]**

➔ Design and implement new Owner Surrender Forms, Stray Intake Forms and Owner Request for Euthanasia Forms for use in the shelter and field. Ensure each form is titled appropriately. Use the new form to gather behavioral and health information that the owner

or finder may know, to determine how long they've had the animal, to determine where they originally got the animal and other important information. Ensure the Owner Request for Euthanasia form is only used for owners who come to the shelter with the intent to euthanize their animal. Language in both the Owner Surrender form and Owner Request for Euthanasia form should transfer ownership from the owner to the shelter. When the owner or finder arrives at the shelter, give them a clipboard with the appropriate form to fill out prior to accepting or logging any animal into the system. Staff should review the form to determine if the animal should be accepted (ex: if the animal is from the City or contracted jurisdiction).

➔ During intake, ensure all pertinent information about the animal's health and behavior from admission forms are logged into the Chameleon software system and a manager or designated staff member is made aware of any known health issues. Upload a copy of the form to Chameleon's digital records and file the form in the intake room. See the Intake Section for more details.

➔ Ensure paper admission, reclaim and adoption forms are available for use in case the software system is down. Ensure the data from those forms are entered into the software system as soon as it comes back up.

**Contracts**

**Adoption Contract** - LAS' adoption contract does not specify that it is transferring ownership from LAS to the new owner. Also, most animal services adoption contracts do not state that the animal must be returned to the shelter if no longer wanted (rescue group/nonprofit shelter contracts do require that, but animal services shelter contracts do not) and most that I'm familiar with also do not allow adopters to get a refund or replacement for health reasons, except in special case-by-case situations.

**Rescue Group Contract** - Most rescue contracts specify that they are transferring ownership from the shelter to the rescue group, as opposed to just releasing the animal to a rescue group. Most also specify that the shelter makes no guarantees about the animal's health or temperament and waive liability.

**Foster Home Contract** - The vast majority of animal services operations do not require the foster home to pay for veterinary care of foster animals since they still are owned by the shelter, though some allow the foster home to pay for veterinary care at the veterinarian of their choice as an option. A stipulation requiring foster homes to pay for veterinary care is not advisable since it may greatly reduce the number of people that are willing to foster. Many foster home contracts also give requirements about how a foster home must get the veterinary care, such as getting pre approval by the shelter's Foster Home Coordinator to take it to a specific veterinarian that will bill the shelter or bringing it to the shelter's veterinarian.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ LAS should review all of their forms and contracts to ensure they include the necessary language and information as indicated in this section.

➔ LAS should provide veterinary care for foster animals, since the animal still belongs to LAS, and foster homes should not be required to pay for veterinary care.

# Section 5 - Staffing and Capacity of Care

## General Issues

During observations, LAS had an all staff meeting at 8:10 AM every morning which lasted approximately 20 minutes. This meant that staff did not start cleaning until about 8:30 AM. While it is very common for field operations to have a morning meeting before the ACOs head out into the field for their shifts, it is uncommon for an animal services shelter to have a morning meeting prior to shelter cleaning. All operations that I'm familiar with, including the ones that I've operated, start cleaning first thing in the morning so that every section in the shelter is clean, disinfected, animals fed, morning medications given, kennel inventory performed, daily walk-through is completed and the shelter is ready-to-go when it opens to the public.

The morning staff meeting discussed which individual animals needed medication that day so that no one forgot, discussed the weather forecast so that they knew to put down blankets in the outside-only kennels if the weather that night was going to be extremely cold, discussed some HR issues such as all staff members needing to sign something from the City, and a few other things. There should be no need to discuss which individual animals need to be medicated at a meeting. Instead, all prescribed medications should be input into Chameleon and the daily medication needed list printed out and assigned to staff as part of their regular daily tasks.

At LAS, staff do not seem to be given much opportunity to learn and grow in their positions. LAS should offer general training classes to staff, not only about the software system, but also occasionally about other topics such as common shelter diseases, disease recognition and prevention; animal behavior and training technique; how to recognize and reduce stress in shelter animals; the importance of enrichment; and much more. These training classes can be led by LAS upper management, LAS' veterinarian, animal behaviorists, consultants or there are numerous webinars and classes that can be found online.

Several survey responders mentioned that staff very frequently calls in sick, sometimes to the point that shelter actually closes to the public for the day and/or volunteers have to help feed the animals because of lack of staff. They also mentioned that staff sometimes bring their children to work and that the children sometimes run through the kennels. LAS management confirmed that some staff members are very frequently absent without any repercussions and that they allow some of the staff to bring their children to work when they have child care issues. LAS management also said

that the City sometimes gives employees extra time off as an incentive, which can make staff coverage difficult when operating with such a small number of staff.

I am unaware of any other animal services operation that allows staff members to bring their children to work, especially for liability reasons at an animal shelter, and this should be discontinued. If a staff member doesn't have childcare for the day they should stay home and if a staff member's child can not be picked up from school or daycare by anyone else the staff member should leave for the day. Staff members and both members of management should be cross trained in the jobs at the shelter, including feeding and cleaning animals, and staff and management should fill in when other staff members are not there (management can help clean and feed animals rather than closing for the day).

Most local governments and animal services operations have policies which do not allow frequent absences, especially when the operation is dependent on them in order to operate properly. The sick leave policy in LAS' current SOP Section 2.02 says:

> Employee's utilization of sick time will be monitored by the Director for potential abuse. If sick time is utilized more than 3 days in a quarter or 12 days in a year, the employee will be counseled with regarding the absences. A pattern of abuse of sick leave is grounds for dismissal. Frequent absence or tardiness will result in termination of employment.

LAS management stated that while they do sometimes counsel staff members about certain problems or issues, there is no progressive discipline used for staff members. The discussions/verbal warnings that they currently give are not documented in the employee's file and there are no write-ups, suspensions or performance improvement plans used.

One thing that is highly unusual at LAS is that both members of management and the front desk clerk, whose job duties include administering the adoption program including adoption application review and adoption processing, only work Monday through Friday even though the shelter is closed on Mondays. Saturday is traditionally the busiest day of the week at an animal shelter and the one with the most adoptions and most volunteers. This leaves only four Kennel Attendants and one Animal Control Officer (if none are absent) to handle the entire shelter and field operation on Saturdays, including all problems or conflicts that arise. At least one member of management should always be working on Saturdays to supervise. In addition, the front desk Clerk should always be scheduled to work on Saturdays to handle the front desk and adoptions. The front desk Clerk currently has until 12pm every weekday and until 1pm on Saturdays before the shelter opens to the public to handle administrative duties. As mentioned in the Phone System section, the shelter should have an auto attendant setup that routes field calls to a certain phone which could be answered by an ACO or a member of management on Mondays.

At many operations, staff wears old clothes during kennel cleaning (it's important that these clothes are washed daily to prevent the spread of disease). After kennel cleaning is complete, they change into their clean work uniform which is often a polo shirt, t-shirt or scrubs shirt of one same color

with the shelter's name/insignia on it. In addition, all other shelter staff members and management also wear this same colored shirt, though ACOs often have a different uniform. Having one standard colored shirt looks professional and allows customers to easily identify who works at the shelter. Many operations also allow shelter staff to wear any other type of pant, including jeans, with the standard colored shirt.

During observations, one Kennel Attendant always wore a knife in a holster in the small of their back. Many animal services operations have policies that do not allow shelter staff members to wear any kind of weapons to work, however, a knife may be acceptable in this region.

Finally, the front desk clerk is having to calculate and input staff time for payroll since LAS uses old fashioned time cards and a punch clock. LAS management said that some other Lufkin departments have different methods to calculate time. Nowadays, most staff time clocks are digital, sometimes based on staff member's fingerprints, so they do not require manual calculations of time.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Discontinue early morning shelter staff meetings and instead schedule any necessary staff meetings after all areas of the shelter are cleaned and ready.

➔ Ensure any medication needed for an animal is input into Chameleon (perhaps by the staff member who transported the animal or by the Intake Coordinator) and a daily animal medication needed report is printed and handled by assigned staff members.

➔ LAS should write and enforce clear SOPs about how often an LAS staff member can be absent or call in sick to work before they are terminated, whether staff is allowed to bring children to work and what progressive discipline policies and/or PIP plans are to be used.

➔ One member of management and the front desk Clerk should always be scheduled to work on Saturdays.

➔ Provide staff members with additional training opportunities.

➔ LAS should bring the SOP's current dress code up to date to remove unnecessary things, such as discussing hair/sideburn/beard styles or length other than saying they must be neat and not unkempt, to add what is allowed such as jeans, to state whether all shelter staff must wear a certain colored shirt with the animal services insignia and to state if staff can wear weapons. LAS should then enforce the SOP.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➔ To save staff time, the City should consider upgrading LAS' punch time clock system to a digital one.

## Staffing Positions

The LAS staff is currently comprised of the Director, Assistant Director, one Clerk, five Laborers (Kennel Attendants) and three Animal Control Officers. In addition, LAS has recently added the new position of Rescue Coordinator, which makes a total of twelve staff positions. Many similarly sized operations that intake between 3000-4000 animals annually have double or more that number of staff positions. For example, I recently consulted at an animal services operation in the Southwest that impounded about 3500 dogs and cats a year, which is the same as LAS. They had 32 FTE staff members, though their field operation was much larger. They also had a live release rate over 90%. For another example, immediately prior to coming to LAS I consulted at an animal service shelter in North Carolina that took in 2000 dogs and cats a year. They had 22 FTE staff members and planned to hire two more staff members. *It is extremely clear that LAS is woefully understaffed and this needs to be corrected as soon as possible.*

### Animal Control Officers

There are three ACOs at LAS. In 2022, LAS received an average of 4.8 field calls per day based on seven days a week or 6.8 field calls per day based on five days a week. During observations, LAS had even fewer field calls for service per day. Because the City is small and there is very little traffic, one ACO could normally handle this volume of daily field calls. However, field service requires overnight emergency coverage and there are usually more field calls in warmer months, especially in the summer. Some of the current LAS field call activities may be able to be eliminated, including some of those being responded to at night, which would reduce the number of field calls even further. See the Field Services section for more details.

During the three days of observations, all three ACOs were scheduled to work. As mentioned, there were very few calls for service. ACOs drove a few animals to/from the veterinary clinic, sometimes performed a few other duties and occasionally assisted at the front desk. However, there were very long stretches of time (many hours) where all three of the ACOs seemed to have no duties and sat at their desks, mostly looking at their phones. [Note - this is not meant as a criticism of the ACOs since LAS management did not assign other duties.]

In some animal services operations, especially those that are operated by the police department or have been operated by the police department in the past, all staff members are considered "Animal Control Officers" and all are trained to handle field calls, even if they mostly work in the shelter. Some of those operations require all Animal Control Officers to assist with morning shelter cleaning unless they have a high priority call come in that morning. In many other animal services operations, only certain trained staff members are considered ACOs and handle field calls, however, many of those operations assign ACOs to perform morning kennel cleaning every day or assign ACOs to work in the shelter for the day if there is low field call volume. At one operation in the Midwest with 12 ACOs that I consulted at not that long ago, about half of the ACOs scheduled each morning shift were assigned to clean certain areas of the shelter before they went out in the field, even though this particular operation had a very high volume of daily field calls to service.

LAS has a very low volume of field calls to service and according to statistics, also has few high priority field calls, such as cruelty cases, bites or aggressive animals loose, that would need to be immediately handled. Therefore, LAS should start scheduling ACOs to perform morning kennel cleaning every day. One of the ACOs could remain in uniform, drive animals to/from the veterinary clinic, as needed, and remain available to go out in the field if a high priority call comes in. However, that one ACO should also be assigned to assist with kennel cleaning in between performing those other duties. When all three ACOs are working, the remaining two ACOs should be assigned areas to clean every morning, except in unusual circumstances when many high priority field calls come in at once. Nonpriority calls, such as if someone has found a stray animal and has it confined or dead animal pickup, could be serviced when kennel cleaning is finished. LAS could determine which calls should be immediately serviced by the one designated ACO and which could wait until after cleaning.

This would immediately add two-to-three staff members to morning kennel cleaning Tuesday through Friday under the current schedule, one-to-two on Mondays and one on Saturdays unless there are high priority field calls (if the Front Desk Clerk is answering phone calls and handling dispatch). In addition, since the volume of field calls is normally so low, all of the ACOs should be assigned additional shelter duties to handle throughout the day whenever they are not out servicing field calls or performing other assigned duties, such as euthanasia. For instance, they could input prescribed medication for animals into Chameleon, assist adoption customers, assist people looking for lost pets, assist with performing kennel inventory,  give additional feedings for puppies/kittens/underweight animals, spot clean throughout the day, give animals extra water, dish washing, laundry, dog walking and training, etc.

Most field operations have a Field Supervisor or Field Manager, though some smaller operations only have a Lead or Senior ACO. The call volume is so low at LAS that a field supervisor position may not be necessary and a Lead ACO adequate, since LAS management could also help supervise. If a supervisor position is hired, they should also still also serve as ACOs and handle field calls. These field supervisory positions ensure that all field calls are being properly handled, that field response time targets are being met for high priority calls, that field calls and warnings which need followup are being followed up on, that citations and warnings are being issued and followed up on when needed, that all field calls are being properly input into the software system, that software memos are being made by the ACOs, that bite cases are being properly handled, that cruelty cases are being properly handled, etc.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Promote one of the three ACOs to a Lead Animal Control Officer position whose duties include overseeing certain aspects of the field operation. Ensure LAS management oversees any aspects of the field operation not overseen by the Lead ACO. Ensure that the Lead ACO has a desk and computer, however, a desk is not necessary for the other ACOs, though they

should have access to a computer (perhaps in the holding area or euthanasia room) when they need to input data about their field calls.

➔ Assign all of the ACOs to perform daily morning kennel cleaning, though have one ACO remain in uniform available to handle high priority field calls and to drive animals to the veterinary clinic, when needed. [High Priority]

➔ Ensure all of the ACOs are assigned additional shelter duties throughout the day instead of having long stretches with no duties assigned.

**ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➔ Consider assigning one of the three ACO positions permanently in the shelter, however, ensure that position is still always given ACO field training so they can fill in if one of the other ACOs is absent, is no longer there or if there are a high number of high priority field calls on some days.

## Kennel Attendants

All of the kennel staff members that I spoke to seemed knowledgeable about animals and seemed to genuinely care about the animals.

The Kennel Attendant's job position is actually called a "Laborer" at LAS. Advertising for a "Laborer" instead of a kennel attendant may limit the number of job applications. The position should be renamed a Kennel Attendant, Animal Care Attendant, Shelter Technician or another job title commonly used in the animal shelter industry. This report will refer to this position as a Kennel Attendant.

During observations, Kennel Attendants were very rarely seen in the Main building's adoption kennel areas, except during morning cleaning. It is important that Kennel Attendants be permanently stationed in all the areas of the shelter to check on the animals, spot clean and care for the animals in their area. It is most important in the Main adoption kennels so that the Kennel Attendants can assist potential adopters. During observations, there were no kennel attendants to assist the three potential adopters that I followed. Two of them left without adopting and one couple was getting ready to leave when I personally showed them a puppy of the breed they were looking for (they didn't even realize there was a puppy room) and they ended up adopting it.

There are currently five kennel attendants, however, only two currently work on Sunday and only three work on Monday. The kennel inventory on 1/23/23 showed 132 dogs and 103 cats in the shelter and the inventory on 2/14/23 (during observations) showed 143 dogs and 117 cats in the shelter. As previously mentioned, LAS' database isn't correct and many of these animals are no longer in the shelter. The inventories also showed raccoons, a horse, goats and ducks, though none of those were in the shelter during observations and many had been impounded almost a year before.

Therefore, it is difficult to determine the true average number of animals kept in the shelter because LAS' software database has not been kept accurate. (Note - lack of accurate software statistics also makes it very difficult to determine the exact number of cages and kennels needed when planning a new shelter.) However, even if there were only 70 canines and 30 felines in the shelter, there are not enough staff members to properly clean and disinfect the shelter. The rule of thumb is that it takes 15 minutes to feed, clean and disinfect each dog kennel or cage. With only 70 canines in the shelter, it would take 1050 minutes or 17.5 hours of work to properly clean and feed the canines. If there are four Kennel Attendants working, which is the most that is currently scheduled on any day at LAS, it would take 4.4 hours just to clean the dog kennels, which is less time than allocated.

This would leave the kennel attendants with no time to clean any of the cat cages and no time to eat lunch before the shelter opened for the day.  If there are only two Kennel Attendants, such as on Sunday, it would take each one 8.75 hours just to properly clean the dog kennels, leaving some dogs unattended and no time to clean any cat cages. If one of those two Kennel Attendants is absent, it would be impossible for that one person to clean and feed all of the animals in the shelter. In addition, animals should not be kept in dirty cages all day long and animals should not be made to wait until the end of the day to get fed. Many operations also attempt to finish all cleaning and related duties within three hours so they can open to the public at 11am or so they can give the full-time kennel staff time to take lunch prior to opening to the public.

It is quite clear that the current number of kennel staff members at LAS do not have the capacity to care for the current number of animals housed and the number of kennel staff members needs to be immediately increased.

Complicating matters is that LAS is currently keeping half of all cages and kennels empty for convenience of use during the cleaning process. This is not an acceptable method to use in a shelter that is still euthanizing for space. Currently at LAS, there are approximately 131 dog enclosures and approximately 60 cat cages that could all contain animals once the current cleaning procedures are modified. Cleaning 131 dog cages would take 32.75 man hours. In order to clean the shelter within four hours, it would take 8.2 Kennel Attendants working. This does not include spot cleaning cat cages, which would take approximately additional 5 minutes per cage x 60 cat cages, or 5 additional hours.

In order to ensure that enough kennel attendants are available to perform kennel cleaning and to care for animals when all cages are occupied, LAS should hire six additional part-time Kennel Attendants that work 8am-12pm for twenty hours a week. These part-time Kennel Attendant positions should not have the same requirements as the full-time Kennel Attendant positions. For instance, they should not be required to answer phone calls, be certified in euthanasia, dispatch animal control officers, complete adoption contracts, administer vaccines, etc. These part-time positions should mainly be used to perform morning kennel cleaning/feeding and related morning duties such as kennel inventory, giving animals their morning dose of medication in their assigned section, laundry, dishwashing, etc.

In order to properly clean the kennels and cages once all of them are being used, three staff members should be assigned to clean the Main Dog Adoption kennels, one assigned to clean the Puppy Adoption room, the Cat Adoption room and Meet and Greet rooms, two assigned to clean the Dog Isolation, Dog Quarantine, Cat Isolation and other holding areas and three assigned to clean the Intake building (dogs and cats), for a total of nine staff members cleaning. This schedule would need to be supplemented by the ACOs when they are working, as described in the previous section, in order to meet the nine staff members cleaning daily.  All staff should help out cleaning in other areas if they finish cleaning their areas first.

The kennel attendants should be evenly scheduled throughout the seven days of the week so that all of the animals are properly taken care of every day, including when the shelter is closed to the public, though more full-time Kennel Attendants should continue to be scheduled Tuesday-Saturday when the shelter is open to the public.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [All High Priority]**

➔ In order to attract more qualified job applicants, change the name of LAS' "Laborer" position to a Kennel Attendant or another similar job title commonly used in the industry.

➔ Hire six additional part-time Kennel Attendants as soon as possible to work from 8am - 12pm. Rewrite their job description so that they do not have the same requirements of a full-time Kennel Attendant.

➔ Ensure that Kennel Attendants are evenly scheduled for kennel cleaning throughout the seven day week since animals must be properly cared for even when the shelter is closed, though continue to schedule more full-time Kennel Attendants on days the shelter is open to the public.

➔ Ensure that two full-time Kennel Attendants are always stationed in the Main kennel at all times when the shelter is open to the public, both to care for the animals and to assist potential adopters. Ensure that all other areas of the shelter also have a Kennel Attendant assigned to care for the animals throughout the day including spot cleaning, refilling water bowls, giving additional feedings to puppies/kittens/underweight animals, medicating animals, checking on the animals' health and welfare, etc.

## Additional Positions

Not all similarly sized animal services operations have an Assistant Director or Operations Manager type of position, though some of them do. Most operations, however, do have a Kennel or Shelter Manager type position, whose main duty is to make sure that kennel operations are running smoothly and all of the animals are being well cared for. LAS operations would greatly benefit from implementing this position.

In addition to the new Kennel Manager position, LAS should also hire an Intake Coordinator, Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator and Adoption Counselor/Social Media Specialist. These positions and the Rescue Coordinator position are typically salaried, work when the shelter is open to the public, are given a desk/computer and pay significantly more than the Kennel Attendant position. These positions and the reasons they are needed will be discussed later on in this report.

This will bring LAS staffing up to 16 FT employees and six PT employees, which would be 19 FTE employees. Having 19 FTE staff at LAS is still a low number compared to many other animal services operations that handle a similar number of animal impounds per year.

In addition to these positions that should be hired as soon as possible, LAS should also work to hire a full time veterinarian, along with one or two supporting veterinary technicians. There is currently a national shortage of shelter veterinarians so it has become difficult for many shelters to hire them. Because of this, the salaries for shelter veterinarians have gotten very high in many areas, often significantly higher than the Director's salary at a shelter. LAS would also need to set up a veterinary clinic area and purchase veterinary and surgical equipment. LAS should also ensure the shelter's veterinarian is trained in high volume, high quality (HVHQ) spay/neuter surgical techniques at the ASPCA in Asheville, NC, both so they can learn to quickly and efficiently spay/neuter shelter animals and so that, if time allows, they may also be able to perform a large number of low cost spay/neuters for the public one day a week. *[FYI - Public animal spay/neuter and shelter animal spay/neuter should not be performed at LAS on the same day because it is against best practices for disease transmission prevention reasons.]*

Shortly before this report was finalized, I was informed that the Director had resigned. *The City should attempt to hire a new Director that has several years of upper level managerial experience at a government animal services shelter with a similar or higher volume of animal intake and a high live release rate.* In order to attract experienced and qualified applicants, the City should advertise the position on national job boards widely used in the industry.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Implement and hire the new position of Shelter or Kennel Manager. Previous animal shelter managerial experience should be a requirement.

➔ Hire an Intake Coordinator, Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator and Adoption Counselor/Social Media Specialist as soon as possible. See the Intake Section, Volunteer Section, Foster Section and Adoption Section for more details.

➔ Work towards hiring a FT veterinarian to medically care for the animals and spay/neuter animals at the shelter, along with full time veterinary technician(s). For efficiency reasons, ensure the veterinarian is trained in high volume, high quality (HVHQ) spay/neuters. See:

https://www.aspcapro.org/training-aspca-veterinary-training/aspca-spayneuter-alliance-veterinarian-training

→ The City should attempt to hire a new Director that has several years of upper level managerial experience at a government animal services shelter with a similar or higher volume of animal intake and a high live release rate.

→ To attract experienced job candidates from out of the area, advertise for all management and specialty positions (such as Volunteer/Foster Coordinator) on widely used animal shelter job sites used in the industry such as:
https://humanepro.org/jobs
https://dashboard.theaawa.org/networking/opening_search.asp
https://nacanet.mcjobboard.net/jobs
https://network.bestfriends.org/join-us/jobs-our-partners#jobs
Also, advertise the veterinarian position on veterinary sites such as:
https://sheltervet.careerwebsite.com/
https://jobs.avma.org/jobs/

## Section 6 - Shelter Operations

## Managed Admission

LAS stated that they were practicing managed admissions of both stray animals and owner surrenders. During onsite observations, finders of stray animals that I heard call in were all told to show up at noon but to get in line earlier because animals in the first four cars would be accepted, while any finders in line after that would be turned away. LAS also allowed for one owner surrender per day by appointment, which during observations was also scheduled at noon. Therefore, while it is very good that LAS has been implementing methods to limit admissions, during onsite observations it was a needlessly crowded and chaotic animal intake process that all took place at noon.

### Owner Surrenders

One method by which many animal services operations save staff time, resources, and taxpayer money and increase the live release rate is by reducing the number of owner-surrendered animals. Alternative solutions can often be found for a significant portion of the animals surrendered. However, to find a viable alternative, someone must provide counseling to the owner. Some owners may need education about topics such as housebreaking, flea prevention, litter box problems, or separating dogs during feeding or when giving special treats. Others may need a referral to a source for lower cost veterinary care, a referral to a pet food bank, a referral to a rescue group or non-profit shelter, or a referral to a non-profit that might assist them with their particular issue, or they may simply need to be informed that the rescue group or shelter where they adopted their pet will take

them back. Some government shelters refer pet owners with dog behavior problems to dog trainers who have agreed to provide one or two free training sessions for shelter referrals. Some shelters even fundraise to help pay for the veterinary care of pets of low-income pet owners who cannot afford a particular veterinary service or to help pay pet deposits at apartments. Some shelters collect donated crates and other supplies to provide to pet owners as an alternative to turning in their pets, or they refer pet owners to local nonprofits that collect and provide donated supplies.

No owner surrender counseling is currently being performed by LAS staff in person or over the phone in order to attempt to find an alternative to surrendering the animal. At many animal services operations, a member of the staff is trained to perform owner surrender counseling.  Many animal shelters also have their surrender appointments available to make online, rather than having to call the shelter. Many also schedule their online surrender appointments at least one-to-two weeks out in order to give the staff member serving as the owner surrender counselor the time to contact and counsel the owner and to give the owner incentive to attempt counseling recommendations. Many animal services websites also give out information so that pet owners can keep their pets, find another solution to their problem or rehome their pet on their own.

During times of very high intake, surrenders should be discontinued except for emergencies or be made for at least a month or more out. All owners who come to the shelters with their animals without an appointment should be assisted in making a surrender appointment and owner surrender counseling should also be provided by the staff at the shelter, unless it is an emergency type situation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Train a staff member(s) to perform owner surrender counseling. Management should create a resource guide, including local and national resources, and a list of humane societies and rescue groups in the region that the staff member can refer to when counseling owners.

➔ Ensure all owner surrender appointments are scheduled at different times of the day from stray intake (not all at noon) and at least a week or two out in order to ensure there is room for the incoming animal and in order to give owner surrender counselors the time to counsel the owners in an attempt to find another solution and time for the owner to try to implement the solution. In times of very high intake, temporarily discontinue accepting owner surrenders except for emergencies or make appointments even further out.

➔ Update LAS' website with tips about how pet owners can find solutions to problems or to rehome their own pet.

**ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➔ Some shelters schedule owner surrender appointments two weeks out, but tell owners to bring their pets in right away for their first set of vaccinations which are recorded in the

software system. That way, if they bring the owned animals back in two weeks (if they don't find another home or a solution themselves) the animals will already be protected from disease and will receive their second set of vaccinations on intake. If LAS decides to do this it should be scheduled by appointment.

## Stray Animals

Managed admission usually refers to intake of owner surrendered animals and does not include stray dogs, however, mainly since Covid-19 some animal services shelters have also been managing some aspects of stray dog intake or promoting what is referred to as a "friendly finder" policy. Besides stray roaming dogs potentially suffering due to a lack of food/care, reproducing and having a risk of being hit by cars, there is also the real risk that some of the stray dogs turned away may be aggressive or may pack up and become aggressive.

Therefore, rather than just turning some finders with stray dogs away like LAS has been doing, if LAS continues to perform managed admission of strays it would be better to schedule them on an appointment basis and to educate the finders about ways to find the owners of stray pets themselves. However, for safety and humane reasons aggressive stray dogs and sick or injured stray animals should be taken in right away. In order to have a more orderly process, the stray animal turn-in appointments should be scheduled throughout the day (EX: a half hour apart). The appointment time also should not be at the same time as the owner surrender appointment. The other option would be to discontinue managed admission of stray dogs and instead accept stray dogs anytime between 12 - 4:30pm. LAS should also put information on their website about how finders can find the owners of stray pets themselves.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ If LAS continues to restrict the admission of strays to four finders per day, the finders should be scheduled by appointment. Exceptions should be made to immediately take in sick, injured or aggressive stray dogs. [<mark>High Priority</mark>]

➔ Provide counseling to the finders over the phone and on the LAS website to give them tips about how they can find the pet's owner themselves including posting the found animal on Nextdoor and lost/found websites/apps, getting the animal scanned for microchips at a veterinary clinic, and printing out and hanging found animal flyers.

## Neonatal Kittens

LAS indicated that during kitten season, they frequently receive neonatal, unweaned, orphaned kittens. LAS is currently euthanizing these kittens unless a rescue or foster home can quickly be found (same day) to take them. LAS management stated that foster homes for neonatal kittens are rarely found during kitten season because they are bombarded with so many kittens.

Kittens this age are very fragile and the youngest often die, even with foster programs designed specifically to bottle feed them. In addition, the mother cat of the neonatal kittens is almost always nearby when the litter is found, often in the process of searching for a new nesting place to keep the kittens because she thinks their current location has become unsuitable. Once she finds a new place, she returns to the kittens and moves them one-at-a-time to the new location. She also may be out hunting.

Because of this, unless they are sick or injured or unless the mother cat is known to be deceased or has been verified as not coming back, experts and animal services operations often advise people who find unweaned kittens not to touch them and not bring them to the shelter. This is often referred to as educating people not to "Kit-nap" kittens. If a citizen does bring in a litter of unweaned, neonatal kittens to the shelter, unless they are sick or injured or unless the mother cat is known to be deceased, many animal services programs instruct people to put the kittens back where they found them so the mother cat can find them. In addition, unless they are sick, injured, or in imminent danger or unless the mother cat is known to be deceased, many field operations will not dispatch ACOs to pick up neonatal kittens or have a policy to attempt to trap the mother so she can nurse them at the shelter until they are old enough to eat on their own.

Many animal services shelters also put this information on their website and have flyers about it to hand out to people coming in with neonatal kittens. Here are some examples of animal services' websites that tell people what to do about neonatal kittens:

- https://tcanimalservices.org/animalservices/posts/dont-kit-nap-kittens/
- https://www.broward.org/Animal/Resources/Pages/FoundKittens.aspx
- https://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589969445
- https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/PRC/Kitten%20Brochure%20English.pdf
- https://bedallas90.org/kittens
- https://www.houstontx.gov/barc/helpful_links.html
- https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/animal-care-services/leaving-found-kittens-alone
- https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/catintake
- https://www.orangecountync.gov/2378/Helping-Kittens
- https://nycacc.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/2018-01/Stray%20cats%20flyer.pdf

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Write and implement new policies for acceptance of neonatal kittens to ensure that people are not removing unweaned kittens from the mother cat (i.e. not to Kit-nap kittens). Make exceptions for sick/injured kittens or situations where the kittens are in a dangerous/unsafe situation, such as inside the wall of a building, in the middle of a highway or at a busy construction site. Exceptions should also be made if the finder brings them in and threatens to drown them or dump them on the side of the road and if the finder first did

ensure that the mother cat did not come back, so they were truly orphaned. In dangerous/unsafe situations where the kittens must be removed, ensure a trap is set to attempt to catch the mother cat so that she can nurse the kittens at the shelter or in a foster home. Explain and distribute the policy to staff.

➔ Create a new LAS webpage called something like "Found Kittens" with the new policies similar to the website examples in this section so callers can be referred to them. Counsel people who call the shelter or come into the shelter to put the unweaned kittens back where they found them to see if the mother cat comes back. Create handouts to give to people who come to the shelter with unweaned kittens which explains why they should put them back until they are weaned.

## TNR Diversion

Many animal services shelters do not accept trapped feral or community cats unless they are sick or injured or unless there is some reason they can not be Trap/Neuter/Returned (TNR), such as if the cats were trapped at a busy construction site. Instead, the animal services shelters divert the feral and semi-feral cats to a TNR program. This is a managed intake strategy that LAS should implement as soon as possible. See the TNR Section for more information.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Implement a TNR program for feral and community cats as soon as possible.

## Intake of Animals

At LAS, animal intake processing is taking place in two different locations. For dogs picked up in the field, ACOs performed vaccinations, deworming and photographs outside of the building. For animals brought in by owners and finders to the shelter, the shelter staff performed intake of animals in the public drop off room.

During observations, one owner surrendered animal was accepted per day in the shelter by appointment at noon. Also during observations, people who called the shelter saying they found a pet were also told to come at noon but were told that LAS would only accept strays in the first four cars and the remaining stray animals would be turned away, so lining up their cars early was advised.

The resulting shelter intake process observed was crowded and chaotic, with a line of finders and the one owner all lining up in their vehicles prior to shelter opening at noon and four Kennel Attendants and a member of LAS management all simultaneously assisting with the intake process of each animal while each owner/finder waited. This is not the standard way that an animal shelter handles animal intake. It resulted in long waits for owners/finders wanting to drop off animals, turning away several finders of stray animals that were in line, some intake processes being performed in a manner that potentially spreads disease and other critical intake processes not

being performed at all. It also resulted in no kennel staff members stationed in the main kennel during this time to assist potential adopters. For some examples:

- None of the animals intaken on the day of intake observations were scanned for a microchip (there wasn't even a scanner in the room), though staff said they later realized they forgot and scanned them at some point later. LAS management indicated that during intake staff is supposed to always stamp the animal's cage card with a red stamp that says "scanned" to indicate they had been scanned for chips, however, numerous cage cards of stray animals intaken on previous days throughout the shelter did not have that "scanned" stamp on their card even though they had the vaccine stickers.
- In the majority of canine intake observed, staff members brought the syringes of vaccinations and dewormers to the public drop off room and placed them directly on the floor next to the dog/puppy before administering them. Numerous visitors, staff and other animals had been walking in this room. Shoes and paws act as fomites, spreading diseases such as Parvo. The Bordetella vaccine and the dewormer that had been sitting on the floor were then administered directly into the mouth of the dogs and puppies, so the canines may have been exposed to disease within the first few minutes of entering the shelter.
- All of the owners and finders that were accepted were made to wait while the staff vaccinated and dewormed each animal, including entire litters of puppies, before the next person was assisted. This added a great deal of time to dropping off animals and is not the standard method for handling animal intake.
- None of the animals were weighed.
- None of the animals were given a brief health exam or checked for fleas or other external parasites. One staff member did notice that one puppy being intaken had a swollen face and mild hair loss, but that puppy received no veterinary care during the three days of observations.
- A large litter of very similar looking puppies were placed in a cart, vaccinated and then placed back into the cart with no method used to identify which ones had just been vaccinated. It can be very easy to miss one puppy and double vaccinate another puppy this way. Either a [paper collar](#) should be used to identify each animal in a litter as they're vaccinated or the animals should be put temporarily into a different crate or cage as they're vaccinated.
- The room currently used for shelter intake has a door to the outside and people were going in and out of the room even though there were unleashed animals that could have easily escaped.
- Some canines were assigned a breed that they didn't look like, such as a "black mouth cur" when they really looked like a lab or shepherd mix or something else.
- One staff member kept a detailed handwritten list of the animals, even though that was unnecessary since they were being intaken in Chameleon and a list of animals taken in that day could easily be printed out.

Intake Procedures

There are two parts of intake that many/most animal services shelters handle separately. First, the Admin staff has the owner or finder fill out admission paperwork to gather behavior, health and other information and obtain their signature. The Admin staff then also collects any owner surrender fees and performs the initial Chameleon intake by putting the information about the person and the animal into Chameleon with a cage number of "Receiving" or "Incoming" or something similar. If the operation also takes in animals from other jurisdiction's ACOs, they also often must fill out the paperwork and have the Admin staff perform the first portion of intake.

Once that portion is completed, the Admin staff will usually page or walkie talkie/radio a member of kennel staff to come get the paperwork and take the animal from the owner. At that point, the kennel attendant staff walks the animal to the private intake room where the rest of intake (vaccination, deworming, photography, health check, etc.) is handled. The staff member assigned to handle the intake process often has veterinary technician or several years of animal shelter experience, is knowledgeable about animal handling, aging and breeds and is good with software systems.

Some large shelters with many staff members have a separate intake desk and entrance where an admin or customer service agent sits and only handles the admin portion of intakes throughout the day. However, smaller shelters and even some larger shelters often have their front desk staff handle this portion of intake. Even some of the newest animal shelters designed by leading animal shelter architects have the front desk staff handle the first portion of intake with a shared front desk between the intake and adoption lobbies so the same Customer Service/Admin staff members can assist either adoption or intake customers, depending on who comes in.

To prevent escape and to ensure a calm environment for the animals, intake rooms should be in a private room not accessible to the outside. At LAS, the current Cat Isolation room (which was always empty during observations) would be ideal to serve as the Intake room. LAS will need to move cat isolation cages to the multipurpose room or another room, area or trailer. The following items should be put inside the Intake room:

- [Stainless steel table](#) used to examine, vaccinate and deworm cats, puppies and small dogs
- Refrigerator with vaccines and dewormer (the fridge can be lockable, if needed). The intake coordinator should not have to leave the room and go to the medication room for vaccines.
- Desk with computer with Chameleon access and a printer to print out cage cards
- Corner or wall area to use as a dog photograph area with a hook to hold the leash
- Step-on scale and a small animal scale
- Shelves hung in the room to hold syringes, gloves and other supplies
- A microchip scanner (not shared, only used in this room), catch pole, muzzles, leashes, squeeze cages and other additional intake room supplies

One field staff member stated he liked to name all animals on intake, but said that no one else did. I recommend naming all animals on intake for two reasons, especially at shelters like LAS with such a low reclaim rate. First, it saves staff time because they don't have to go back later to input the

name in the software. Second, it makes it much easier for staff and customers to identify the animals from the day they arrive, rather than having to refer to them by ID number or broad description since there can be so many dogs or cats with similar descriptions. LAS' website lost and found page should be updated to state that animals are named on intake so a pet owner may see their lost pet with a different name.

Animals were not being examined or treated for fleas or ticks on intake. All animals, including young puppies, should be treated for external parasites like fleas during the intake process. There are several inexpensive products such as Capstar which are safe for puppies as young as four weeks of age. See UC Koret's recommended parasite treatments for options.

Most animal services operations that I'm familiar with perform a full intake including vaccinations on all bite quarantine animals unless they are too aggressive to vaccinate or safely handle.

**Please stop and read** Appendix III - Sample Intake Procedures **to see the steps that typically take place during intake processing.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [<mark>All High Priority</mark>]**

➔ Schedule all owner surrender appointments for a specific time. If LAS continues to perform managed admission of strays, such as four per day, they should also be scheduled throughout the day (EX: every 20-30 minutes) instead of telling everyone to line up at noon.

➔ Hang a sign on or near the door to the public drop off room that says something like: "Please leave your animals in your vehicle (unless it is too hot) and proceed to the main lobby entrance to complete paperwork prior to dropping off your animal."

➔ Have the front desk clerk give the owner/finder the appropriate clipboard with the correct admission paperwork to fill out (Owner Surrender form, Stray Animal Turn-In Form, Owner Request for Euthanasia Form) prior to accepting the animal. *Ensure the Owner Request for Euthanasia form is only given to owners who come to the shelter with the intent to euthanize their owned animal.* Review the completed paperwork and drivers license to ensure the animal should be accepted. If it is, the front desk clerk should collect any fees due and perform the Chameleon portion of the animal intake process as much as possible (breed and other information can be corrected in the intake room) and assign the animal a cage number called "Receiving," "Incoming," or something similar. (This cage will need to be added by the Chameleon Administrator.) Write the Animal ID on the admission form or print out a temporary cage card with the animal ID on it and staple it to the Admission form.

➔ Hand the admission form with Animal ID to the owner/finder and tell them to take the animal and form(s) back outside to the public drop off room door where they will be met by the Intake Coordinator/Kennel Attendant. Radio the Intake Coordinator or a Kennel

Attendant on the walkie-talkie to meet the owner/finder at the door and get the animal and the paperwork. The owner/finder should leave after the handoff of the animal.

➔ To ensure all steps of the intake process are being consistently handled, all animals, whether brought in by the ACOs or an owner/finder, should be taken to the intake room for intake processing by the Intake Coordinator.

➔ An Intake Coordinator should be hired. Specific Kennel Attendants should be trained to serve as backup Intake Coordinators for when the Intake Coordinator is absent and for when ACOs bring in animals on the two days the Intake Coordinator doesn't work. Since the ACOs normally bring in so few animals overnight and in the morning before the shelter opens, the Intake Coordinator may be able to be assigned additional duties such as morning kennel/cage cleaning, administering morning medications, medical record input, etc. The staff members assigned as Intake Coordinators should be very knowledgeable about how to properly handle animals, animal breeds, aging animals, animal health, etc. and also should be experienced/knowledgeable in Chameleon or should be fully trained in Chameleon.

➔ The Intake Coordinator should normally perform intake processing alone. If the animal is difficult to handle, an ACO or kennel attendant should assist for safety reasons. If the dog is aggressive, the ACO or kennel attendant should hold it on a catch pole while as much of intake that can be done safely takes place. Feral cats that will be housed in the shelter should be vaccinated using a small squeeze cage.

➔ The intake room door should be closed during intake processing. For accuracy and consistency, the Intake Coordinator assigned for the day should perform all intake processing including performing vaccinations, deworming, brief health exams, looking for parasites, scanning for chips, photographs, naming the animal and inputting the data into Chameleon. *Important behavior and health information from the admission forms should also be put into Chameleon.* Experts advise that the full intake processing process per animal should take approximately 10-15 minutes per animal, though litters of animals take less time per animal. The typical intake processing steps are listed in [Appendix III - Sample Intake Procedures.](#)

➔ To ensure all animals get promptly vaccinated, ACOs should continue to give vaccines to animals brought in overnight. Ensure the ACO designates that they have given the vaccines on the paperwork and in Chameleon. Those animals can be temporarily housed for a few hours in the intake holding cages until the Intake Coordinators can perform the rest of intake processing in the morning.

➔ The Intake Coordinator should look in Chameleon to see what cages are available. They should assign the animal to a cage in the proper room and print out the cage card with the correct cage number in it. They should then either walk the animal to the cage/kennel or ask a staff member to place the animal in the cage/kennel, along with the cage card that has the

correct, exact cage number printed on it. Cardboard cat carriers with the cat's name and animal ID can be used to carry cats to their cages, placed on top of the cages and can be used later during the cleaning process.

➔ The Intake Coordinator should ensure all vaccines and other medical information are put into Chameleon and should schedule in Chameleon for all puppies and kittens to be revaccinated with a DAPP (puppies) or FVRCP (kittens) and dewormed every two weeks until they are 18-20 weeks old. Also schedule all adult animals to be revaccinated (DAPP or FVRCP) and dewormed one additional time, two weeks after intake. Revaccinating with Bordatella is not necessary.[3] As previously mentioned, barcode scanners can be used to automate this process.

➔ SOPs should be updated to include a full written intake procedure and a vaccination and deworming protocol. LAS management should enforce this policy.

## Deworming on Intake

During observations, LAS was supposed to be deworming all animals on intake and for four sequential days afterwards with a medication called Panacur. The shelter's veterinarian indicated that she prescribed this treatment because of the heavy parasite load in the shelter's animals and because she must ensure that animals that go on interstate transports are parasite free before she can issue interstate health certificates.

Panacur is a very effective broad spectrum dewormer that also treats Giardia, however, it is usually reserved for individual animals and generally not used on intake for all animals simply because it requires multiple days of treatment to be effective. Even well staffed animal services shelters would have a hard time keeping up with providing every animal that enters the shelter with five consecutive days of dewormer. This is especially true at short-staffed LAS and many animals are missing doses of Panacur or are not receiving them in a timely manner.

The most common dewormer used on intake at animal shelters is Pyrantel Pamoate (also known as Strongid). It is less expensive than Panacur and more palatable. Some shelter veterinarians prescribe a higher dose of Pyrantel Pamoate than the label indicates if their shelter's animals have a high parasite load. For puppies and kittens, the Pyrantel Pamoate is repeated every two weeks at the same time they receive their vaccination boosters. Some shelters, such as LAS, also give their adult animals booster vaccinations two weeks after intake and the Pyrantel Pamoate is repeated at that time as well.

If Pyrantel Pamoate is used on intake instead of Panacur at LAS, then once an animal is designated to go on an interstate transport that particular animal could begin the five day Panacur treatment (or be given a different dewormer such as Drontal Plus). The shelter's veterinarian indicated that

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[3] Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, 2022, page 31

she would be fine with changing to this policy of Pyrantel Pamoate on intake for all animals and Panacur only for interstate rescue transport animals that will need health certificates.

LAS does not have any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) written regarding vaccinating and deworming even though staff is now supposed to always be performing these duties. LAS should consult with the shelter veterinarian to develop and approve new deworming protocols, then should write up a vaccination and deworming protocol for staff.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Consult with the shelter's veterinarian to determine if Pyrantel Pamoate can be used instead of Panacur for all dogs and cats on intake, what dosage of Pyrantel Pamoate should be used on intake and if dogs/cats designated to go on interstate transport should receive Panacur, Drontal Plus or another dewormer and for how many days.

➔ Write up the new vaccination and deworming protocol which covers which vaccines and which dewormers per species/age are to be used on intake, when/if they are supposed to be repeated, and what other vaccines and dewormers should be used at other times. Distribute the new protocol to staff. Hang the policy in the room currently being used to intake animals and in the medical supply room.

## Parvovirus Testing on Intake

Canine Parvovirus is definitely an issue at LAS. Parvo is very prevalent in the local community so some puppies may be arriving with it. If puppies at LAS are currently showing symptoms of parvo within the first couple days of arrival, then it might be a good idea to start testing for parvo on intake. However, the parvo tests are expensive and LAS does get in lots of puppies.

If LAS decides to test puppies for parvo on intake, LAS would need to write out a procedure for when and how they would like to test them. Some shelters batch test litters of puppies to save money on tests, using one test per litter of puppies rather than using one test per puppy in a litter. I spoke with the shelter's contract veterinarian about batch testing on intake and she said she was fine with it. In order to batch test, two-to-three puppies in the litter that look the sickliest are chosen to be tested using one parvo test, rather than using one parvo test per puppy in the litter. If parvo testing doesn't catch any or many cases of parvo on intake within a few months, then LAS may want to discontinue this procedure.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Determine if puppies are showing symptoms of parvo within the first couple days of arrival. If they are, consider parvo testing all individual puppies under the age of six or seven months for parvo on intake and batch testing litters of puppies on intake. Write procedures about which canines to test and how to perform the test including batch tests. Distribute the

written policies to staff and hang in the room currently being used for intake and the medication room.

## Housing

### Keeping Half of Cages Empty

The most unusual aspect about shelter operations at LAS is the current use of kennel and cage space. At LAS, in addition to keeping a certain number of cages and kennels empty for daily intake (14 was the number during observations), half of the cages and kennels in the shelter are also always being kept empty in all areas at all times for convenience of use during the cleaning process. This means that animals are being euthanized for space at LAS when half of the cages and kennels in the shelter are unused and available. This is not normal or standard in the industry.

The reason the shelter is keeping the cages and kennels empty is due to LAS' highly unusual method of cleaning. During cleaning, all animals in the shelter are being moved from their current stainless steel cage or kennel to a different designated stainless steel cage or dog kennel that is always being kept empty for that animal's use. The animal's original cage or kennel is then cleaned and left empty for the following day. This is repeated every day. This is not an acceptable method for cleaning cages and kennels in a shelter that is still euthanizing for space.

There are numerous methods that animal services shelters can use to clean without keeping a 1:1 ratio of occupied and unoccupied cages/kennels that will be described in the Cleaning Sections. However, once this 1:1 ratio method is discontinued, there may be significantly more animals kept in the shelter at any given time. **LAS does not currently have enough kennel staff members to clean, feed and care for the current number of animals, much less this additional number. Therefore, it is extremely important that new kennel staff members be hired as soon as possible.** It will also be important to decrease the length of stay in the shelter so that the shelter does not become overcrowded, even with these additional cages and kennels. In the Intake building where the rows are narrow and there are two rows facing each other, it would also be a good idea to install metal sheeting or rigid, opaque PVC or plastic sheeting on the bottom portion of the chainlink facing each other for disease prevention and to help prevent barking.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Ensure additional kennel staff members are hired as soon as possible in order to have the capacity to care for the number of animals housed once LAS discontinues keeping half the kennels and cages empty.  [High Priority]

**ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION:**

→ Once all dog kennels are being used, consider installing metal panels or rigid, opaque plastic on the bottom half chainlink of the dog kennels that face each other for disease prevention reasons and to curtail dogs from barking at each other.

Co-Housing Animals

Many of the dog kennels in the main dog adoption room are large enough to co-house two friendly, compatible adult dogs in one dog kennel. The Association of Shelter Veterinarians says:

> *Cohousing, or keeping more than one animal in an enclosure, can improve animal welfare in some circumstances by facilitating social contact with other animals of the same species.*[4]

LAS is currently cohousing puppies. At LAS, rather than euthanize for space, co-housing could also be considered for same sex adult dogs that originated from the same household, for same sex dogs that are being held until a scheduled transport and for same sex dogs that have been housed for more than two weeks, so have two sets of vaccines. It could also be considered for opposite sex dogs in the same situations if they are both confirmed as being spay/neutered. Because the intake kennels are so much smaller, co-housing should not be considered there except for puppies or small dogs until the guillotine doors are replaced so that kennels are double sided and only in the situations listed above.

During times of extremely high intake, cohousing additional animals could be considered rather than euthanizing for space.

Dogs that are co-housed should be healthy, should be first introduced in a play yard or meet and greet room to ensure they are compatible, should be given separate food bowls and monitored when fed to ensure they are both eating and should be frequently monitored throughout the day to ensure they are getting along. They should also be put in a kennel together in the morning for the first time so the staff has several hours to monitor them before leaving them alone overnight. <u>No food or treats should ever be left in their kennels overnight</u>. Adult cats in similar situations could also be considered for co-housing in the larger cat cages rather than euthanizing for space.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

→ Rather than euthanizing for space, co-house compatible same-sex adult animals scheduled for transport, adult animals originating from the same household, and long term adult animals that have had two sets of vaccinations. Ensure they are carefully selected for compatibility, are both eating and are frequently monitored. Do not leave food or treats in kennels overnight.

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[4] Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, 2022, page 16

➔ Write SOPs regarding co-housing animals. Ensure that unaltered, opposite sex animals are never co-housed.

## Cage Assignments and Daily Animal Inventory

Similarly to how hospitals and hospital software must keep an accurate, exact record of what patients are admitted to the hospital, what room they're currently in, what medications and treatments they've received, when they are discharged, etc. and how prisons and prison software must keep an exact, accurate record of what inmates are in the prison, who brought them in, for what reason, what cell they're located in, when they can be released, etc., so must animal services shelter software keep an accurate, exact record of what animals are impounded, for what reason, who brought them in, where they're located, what medications and treatments they've received, when they leave the shelter and why, etc. At any point in time, animal shelter software should be able to print out an "inventory" of animals in the database and that record should be an exact depiction of what animals are at the shelter and what cage they're in or if they're located at offsite locations. However, at LAS that isn't the case.

Quite a few survey responders complained that LAS was disorganized, that LAS didn't know where animals in the shelter were located and that animals were still showing up in the system as being there when they weren't. It is considered a standard practice in the industry to assign an exact cage number to cages and kennels in the shelter and to always ensure that the exact animal in that cage is reflected in the software system. That way, anyone can look up an animal in the software system by their name or by their animal ID and always know exactly where they are housed. Most animal services shelters assign cage numbers to the cage based on the room's main purpose. For example, the Dog Adoption room kennels would be labeled D-01 through D-54, the Puppy room P-01 through P-20, the Cat Adoption room C-01 through C-20, the Stray Dog Intake rooms SD-01 through SD-24, etc.

It is also considered a standard practice in the industry to perform a daily animal inventory to ensure that all animals in the software database are housed in their actual corresponding cages/kennels in the shelter or corresponding offsite locations such as veterinary clinics and that no animals are missing. However, LAS is not assigning exact cage numbers to animals and is not performing animal inventories. This results in animals being assigned cage numbers that don't reflect where they are located and numerous animals showing up in the software database that are no longer in the shelter.

For example, on 1/23/23 there were seventeen dogs and sixteen cats that were all listed in Chameleon as all being in cage number IK01 and forty-three dogs and twenty-four cats that were all listed as being in cage number IK07. In addition, numerous animals at LAS are showing up as being active in the shelter's inventory even though they have not been in the shelter for months or longer. This is not how an animal shelter is supposed to operate.

Once Chameleon's database is cleaned up so that it is accurate and all kennels and cages have assigned cage numbers, a daily animal inventory should be performed to ensure all animals are in

their correct location. At a shelter the size of LAS, this can be done fairly quickly. Immediately after cleaning, kennel attendants should be assigned to complete the inventory for the sections of the shelter they have cleaned for the day.

At least until the staff and management gets used to the animal inventory process (or possibly permanently), the inventory should be done manually and not using the barcode scanner system. To do this, LAS should print out the inventory report organized by cage number daily and distribute sections to staff. After kennel cleaning, the staff should look at the animal in the cage and the cage card and look at the kennel inventory report to ensure that the correct cage card is on the cage (with the correct cage card number), the animal's stage is correct (available, stray wait, unavailable, etc) and the animal in the cage matches the animal and cage assignment in Chameleon. If the animal isn't in the right cage or is missing, then the staff should handwrite the discrepancy on the inventory report. Once the section is completed, the staff member should give the report to their manager to fix any discrepancies and to make corrections to ensure they don't happen again. If the shelter is being managed properly, there should very rarely be any discrepancies or missing animals.

The staff member in charge of foster homes at LAS should also be in frequent communication with all foster homes (most shelters check in with foster homes via email at least once per week) and should make sure all animals listed as being in foster in Chameleon reports are accurate. LAS will probably need to obtain foster home reports from Chameleon so they are not reliant on paper folders to determine which animals are in foster homes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [**==All High Priority==**]**

➔ Ensure all cage, kennel and holding areas where animals are housed have a cage number assigned and displayed on the cage. Cats and puppies in stainless steel cages will sometimes chew on plastic or laminated tags so it is sometimes necessary to purchase metal tags and affix them with carabiners or metal O-rings that are hinged and open and close. Many shelters purchase the metal tags from [National Band and Tag](). Ensure the cage numbers are all listed in Chameleon and all cages that are no longer being used are deleted in Chameleon.

➔ Ensure the exact, correct cage number assignment where the animal is housed is made on intake for every animal and is also made every time staff moves an animal to a different cage (animals should always stay in their original cages unless there is a valid reason to move animals to new kennels or cages). Ensure cage cards have the correct cage number on them.

➔ For animals still listed in inventory but are no longer in the shelter, outcome them with their correct outcomes on the dates the outcome occurred or outcome them as lost/missing.

➔ Have kennel staff perform a daily animal inventory after kennel cleaning to ensure that the Chameleon kennel inventory exactly matches the animals in the shelter, that all animals are in their correct cages with correct stages and no animals are missing.

➔ Ensure the foster home coordinator communicates with all foster homes on a regular basis to ensure the foster animal is doing well and is still in the home.

## Feeding

LAS is feeding their dogs and cats once per day, including puppies, kittens and very underweight animals. One staff member said that some staff members like to feed before they clean the rows in the main kennel and others feed after they clean. On one day during observations, dogs and puppies in some sections of the Intake Building did not get fed until after 12pm. Litters of puppies were seen with no food in the late afternoon and were also seen eating each other's feces. LAS has no written policies about the amount to feed each animal based on species, age or size or how to feed underweight or emaciated animals.

UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program states:

> Moderately underweight animals, puppies and kittens should be fed **3 times a day** (more frequently for those under eight weeks of age).[5]

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters states:

> The amount and frequency of feeding vary depending on life stage, species, size, activity level, health status of the animal, and the particular diet chosen. Ideally, healthy adult dogs are fed twice daily, and cats are fed multiple small meals or allowed to forage through-out the day. When managing starved animals or those with unique nutritional needs, veterinary input must be sought. [6]

University of California-Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program (UC Davis Koret) states the following about adult animals:

> As a starting point, it is acceptable to feed the high end of the suggested range provided by the food manufacturer for an animal of a given size (usually available on the food bag). In shelters that house animals short term (less than 2 weeks), this will likely prove acceptable. However, when animals are housed longer term, it will be necessary to tailor the amount of food to the individual animal.[7]

Many animal services shelters have a staff member come in one hour early to feed all puppies and dogs prior to beginning the cleaning process. Dogs in shelters eliminate fairly quickly after eating and feeding them prior to cleaning gives them a chance to eliminate before cleaning so the kennel stays cleaner for longer. At LAS, it also would ensure that they are being fed in a timely manner. During feeding, many shelters place the empty food bowls, the food bag feeding chart (usually

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[5] https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/?r=nutritional-recommendations-for-shelter-animals

[6] Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, 2022, page 33

[7] https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/?r=nutritional-recommendations-for-shelter-animals

laminated), a measuring cup and a plastic tub full of food (or just a bag of food) on a cart such as this one. They then wheel the cart down each aisle and feed each dog the correct amount of food based on the feeding chart and the animal's size and condition (if overweight less, if underweight more, if young adult active breed more, etc.) The carts are also used to feed the cats.

A veterinarian must be consulted about starved and emaciated animals, including horses and other livestock, in order to develop a refeeding plan. This is especially important because refeeding starved animals with too much food initially can kill them (refeeding syndrome). Instead, small meals must be provided very frequently to these animals, including horses, often six times a day to start. In addition, no emaciated animals should be kept in LAS' outdoor pens exposed to extreme temperatures. Barn doors should be added to the barn and a horse stall installed inside so emaciated horses and livestock can be kept indoors during extreme cold weather or the horses should be kept at a veterinary facility or some other boarding location.

UC Koret's starvation and refeeding guide states this about starved horses:

> For horses, alfalfa hay is recommended. Initially feed only ¼ of resting energy requirement (RER) divided into six small meals per day. This can be calculated by the formula RER = (30 x BWkgs) + 70, or simply go by the feeding recommendations for the chosen food. Amount should be increased by 1/8 to ¼ of the total requirement over several days. As noted, parenteral thiamine should be provided.

For more information about feeding shelter animals, please read UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program nutritional recommendations and the Starvation and Refeeding Animals Guide (includes horses.) More information about horse refeeding syndrome can be found here.

Several survey responders complained that sometimes animals are not being fed at all when staff members call in sick or that volunteers must feed them to ensure they get fed. While that didn't occur during observations, on Sundays only two kennel attendants are scheduled to work, which is not enough staff members working to ensure the shelter is properly cleaned and that all animals are being fed within eight hours. If one of those staff members is absent, then more animals would run the risk of not being fed. LAS should hire more kennel staff, should ensure that all dogs and puppies are fed first thing in the morning prior to cleaning, should ensure puppies and kittens are fed three times a day and should ensure very underweight and starved animals get fed more frequently.

Science Diet has an animal shelter food program that provides deep discounts to animal shelters for their premium quality food which may save LAS money, plus is delivered directly to the shelter once a week. As can be seen in the recent display below from another animal shelter, it costs that shelter about $14 for a 30lb bag of Science Diet dog food, which is less than LAS is currently paying for dog food purchased from a local feed and seed store. In addition, this shelter program also provides every adopter with a free 5lb bag of Science Diet dog, cat, puppy or kitten food. However, adopters must be asked if the shelter can provide Science Diet with their name and contact information (a Chameleon report can be provided to Science Diet) and there are some additional marketing

requirements for joining the program, though in my experience most shelters don't perform all of them.

**Estimate Your In-Shelter Feeding Costs**

| SKU | Lifestage | Approx. Avg. # Housed Daily | Bag Size Lbs | List Price | Approx. # Weekly Bags Needed | Cost at List Price | % Discount | Program Savings | YOUR ESTIMATED PRICE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2092 | Kitten | 25 | 35 | $52.74 | 1 | $52.74 | 74 % | $39.03 | $13.71 |
| 6801 | Feline adult | 35 | 20 | $30.63 | 2 | $61.26 | 74 % | $45.33 | $15.93 |
| 603920 | Puppy | 12 | 35 | $33.44 | 1 | $33.44 | 56 % | $18.73 | $14.71 |
| 603916 | Canine adult | 85 | 35 | $31.51 | 8 | $252.08 | 56 % | $141.16 | $110.92 |
| **Total Estimate Weekly** | | | | | 12 | $399.52 | 61 % | $244.25 | $155.27 |
| **Total Estimate Annual** | | | | | 624 | $20,775.04 | 61 % | $12,701.00 | $8,074.04 |

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Feed all dogs and puppies first thing in the morning, prior to the kennel and cage cleaning process.

➔ Obtain utility carts and measuring cups or measuring scoops to use in each area of the shelter. Put the food bowls, a feeding chart and a cup measure on each cart. Use the cup to feed each healthy adult dog the recommended amount on the dog food bag based on their size. Tailor the amount up or down based on their age and condition.

➔ Feed all weaned puppies and kittens canned or dry food (as appropriate) at least three times per day. Ensure unweaned puppies and kittens are bottle fed numerous times per day. [IMMEDIATE]

➔ Ensure adult cats are given enough food to graze throughout the day or feed them twice per day.

➔ Feed starved/emaciated/very underweight animals based on UC Koret guidelines (very small amounts up to six times per day) to avoid refeeding syndrome for the first 7-10 days and then after that feed a much larger amount to ensure they rapidly gain weight. Consult with LAS' veterinarian for specific guidelines on refeeding all starved animals, including what to feed and how often. Ensure all emaciated and underweight animals are protected from extreme temperatures. [IMMEDIATE]

➔ Remove food bowls during the kennel cleaning process and discard all leftover food in bowls in trash cans, not by hosing or pouring down the food drains since it can clog up the drains.

➔ Write and enforce an animal feeding SOP.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➔ Consider having a staff member come in one hour early to feed all dogs and puppies prior to cleaning.

➔ Consider joining the Science Diet shelter program for dog, cat, puppy and kitten dry food.

➔ Consider feeding dogs twice per day.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

LAS is providing staff with Wysiwash (Calcium Hypochlorite), bleach (Sodium Hypochlorite) and Rescue (Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide) to use as animal shelter disinfectants. The Standard Operating Policy's cleaning procedures only refers to Wysiwash and there are no written policies about how or when to use Rescue or bleach.

Immediately prior to observations, LAS had a Distemper outbreak which caused the shelter to close for a long period of time. I was told that in the past year and prior to that, LAS had had several Parvovirus outbreaks and that puppies tested positive for parvo fairly frequently. During observations, a seven month old puppy started showing symptoms of parvo on the seventh day it was housed and tested positive for parvo. Based on my shelter experience and knowledge of parvo incubation periods, the odds are very high that the puppy caught the parvo at the shelter or in the ACO vehicle on the way to the shelter and did not have it prior to arriving. In addition, I was told that parvo is very prevalent in the community. When I accompanied an ACO to drop off adopted animals at LAS' contracted veterinarian, a young puppy belonging to a clinic customer was diagnosed with parvo.

In addition, a much higher than typical percentage of animals (10% of outcomes in 2022, 12% of outcomes in 2021) are currently being euthanized at LAS for being "sick," including 17% of puppies euthanized for being sick in 2022.

Even if animals are vaccinated on intake, there is still the risk that diseases such as parvo and distemper can occur if the animal is exposed to the disease before the vaccination has time to take effect. In addition, young puppies are sometimes not immune to the diseases even after two sets of vaccinations because of interference from maternal antibodies. Because of all of this, it is extremely important that LAS cleans and disinfects properly in order to kill diseases like Distemper and to kill nonenveloped viruses (also known as unenveloped viruses) such as Parvovirus, Calicivirus and Panleukopenia.

During observations, LAS did not clean and disinfect any area of the shelter properly. This is not meant as a criticism of the kennel staff members, who all were working very hard to clean each of

the areas, but is due to a lack of proper policies and lack of enforcement of policies. LAS should diligently work to implement improved cleaning and disinfecting procedures to prevent disease.

Potential Hazards

Staff members at LAS seemed to be allowed to decide what disinfectant they wanted to use and half of the staff members observed used more than one disinfectant when cleaning the same cage/kennel. It is recommended not to use more than one disinfectant at a time. While bleach and Wysiwash are both in the bleach family and would not create a hazard if used for one cage/kennel, that is not the case with using Rescue and Wysiwash or bleach or some other disinfectants.

I observed a staff member cleaning stainless steel cages. During cleaning, the staff member sprayed all of the walls and door of the cages with Rescue disinfectant. The staff member then used a water hose to spray out the Rescue, so it poured on the floor. Immediately afterwards, Wysiwash was used to spray out the same cages, which also poured out onto the floor.

If Rescue disinfectant comes into contact with bleach or Wysiwash, it can create a strong chemical reaction creating noxious fumes. I reached out to Wysiwash to ask if they thought the situation at LAS could cause a problem and this is what they emailed back:

> "You would not want the active ingredients of Wysiwash or bleach mixing with Rescue. They are both oxidizers and would react strongly, releasing fumes. The surface being sprayed may not be an issue if it is rinsed well and given time for the hydrogen peroxide to break down. However, my concern is for where any chemicals may mix in the drain system, or where it has dripped on the floor or other areas and may not have been rinsed well. Your concerns are spot on with mixing chemicals/sanitizers. Typically we recommend to only use one product at a time."

I noticed Pinesol cleaner in the shelter and asked what it was used for. LAS indicated that it is used to pour down the kennel drains as a deodorizer and to clean the office areas of the shelter. Pinesol used to always contain phenols, which experts recommend against using at a shelter because it is highly toxic to animals (can cause seizures and death). It is my understanding that the manufacturer of Pinesol has recently changed their formula because of a pine tar shortage and so it may no longer have phenols or may have a much lower amount. However, there are numerous other non-toxic products on the market which are formulated for use in an animal shelter or kennel, so to eliminate the possibility of a problem, one of them should be used as a kennel deodorizer instead of Pinesol type products.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Use only one disinfectant in each area when cleaning and disinfecting. To avoid a hazardous chemical reaction, do not ever disinfect the same cage/kennel/vehicle/room/area with both

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Rescue and either Wysiwash or bleach during the same cleaning and disinfection process. [IMMEDIATE]

➔ In order to avoid the possibility of any animals coming into contact with phenols in the drains or anywhere else, it is best to stop using Pinesol type products in any animal holding areas of the shelter. If a drain deodorizer is desired, use a product formulated for use as a kennel deodorizer.

## Disinfectant Dilution and Contact time

In order to ensure diseases are being killed during the disinfection process, animal services shelters must ensure that disinfectants are being diluted properly, that disinfectants are applied to all surfaces that are accessible to the animals and that the disinfectant is left on those surfaces long enough to disinfect. There are no SOPs at LAS regarding dilution rates and contact time of disinfectants, except for the 2009 SOP which only talks about Wysiwash and incorrectly states the contact time necessary.

In order to disinfect against Parvovirus and other nonenveloped viruses such as Calicivirus and Panleukopenia, animals shelter experts and the Wysiwash company advise that *Wysiwash needs ten minutes of contact time with all surfaces* before it is rinsed. During observations, the Wysiwash was quickly rinsed and was not being left on the surfaces for ten minutes in any area observed. Please see Appendix IV - Shelter Disinfectant Poster for the length of time a disinfectant must remain on the surface in order to kill parvo and other non-enveloped viruses.

A staff member was observed mixing the Rescue disinfectant for use in the Puppy and Cat rooms. The staff member poured water into a spray bottle and then poured some Rescue on top. The amount of Rescue wasn't measured and the amount poured exceeded by about double the recommended dilution rate amount. When the Rescue was sprayed in the room, the concentration was very strong smelling and made me cough even though I was over ten feet away from the spray. Rescue can be an irritant when sprayed and inhaled for both people and pets, especially when used at high concentrations. The Rescue disinfectant was also quickly rinsed and not left on the surfaces for a long enough contact time to kill parvo or other nonenveloped viruses.

For Rescue, there are two different concentrations that can be used to kill nonenveloped viruses. This amount will also kill Distemper:

1) ½ cup per gallon (1:32 dilution ratio), which would equate to one ounce (2 tablespoons) per 32 ounce spray bottle. This concentration must be left on the surfaces for ten minutes.

2) 1 cup per gallon (1:16 dilution ratio), which would equate to two ounces per 32 ounce spray bottle. This concentration must be left on the surfaces for five minutes. This concentration will kill nonenveloped viruses and also kill ringworm if the surface is first thoroughly cleaned.

Bleach must be left on cleaned surfaces for ten minutes in order to disinfect against nonenveloped viruses like Parvo. At LAS, the bleach was always seen sprayed directly on top of urine, feces and dog food, which inactivates it since bleach is inactivated by organic materials, and it was not left on surfaces for ten minutes except in one area of the shelter (however, in that area it was sprayed on top of urine, feces and dog food.)

Two staff members in different areas of the shelter were individually asked how they mix the bleach solution seen in the sprayers. Both indicated that they poured the bleach up until about the first line on the sprayer (see photo) and then filled with water.  The first line of the sprayer looked to be about 20% of the sprayer's full capacity. This amount far exceeds the recommended dilution ratio for bleach, especially because LAS is using concentrated bleach. This is not only a waste of money, but using this extremely strong dilution ratio is caustic and can degrade/erode kennel floor surfaces, drains and equipment.



Recommended bleach dilution rates for 5.25% sodium hypochlorite bleach is ½ cup per gallon. However, during observations LAS was using  concentrated 7.55% sodium hypochlorite bleach, so the dilution rate would be 2.8 ounces per gallon for general disinfecting (1:32 dilution ratio)  and 8.3 ounces per gallon for ringworm disinfecting (1:10 dilution ratio). See the excel bleach calculator located in this link in order to calculate proper dilution rates based on concentration of sodium hypochlorite. More information about how to properly disinfect with bleach can be found at this link.

One staff member indicated that they used the bleach in the sprayer for two days before dumping any left out, while another staff member indicated they dumped it out daily. Mixed bleach loses its effectiveness quickly, especially if it is exposed to light, and it should be dumped out at least once daily. In addition, a gallon of bleach that was used in the Intake Kennel during observations was always kept outside, even though there were overnight freezing temperatures. Bleach stored in freezing temperatures or in temperatures above 77 degrees will degrade and continue to deteriorate, so bottles of bleach should be kept inside.[8]

Good general information about cleaning and sanitation, including recommended contact times at animal shelters, can be found here:
https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/resources/sanitation-in-animal-shelters

**RECOMMENDATION: [==All High Priority==]**

➔ Purchase 1 cup measuring cups to keep in each room or area which also show ounces or purchase cup measure and ounces measuring spoons. Write a policy regarding the proper dilution rates and contact time needed for each type of disinfectant used at LAS and for each

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[8] https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/covid-19-disinfecting-with-bleach

applicator currently being used. In a shelter like LAS where Parvovirus and other deadly diseases are frequently present, this needs to be the dilution rate and contact time to kill nonenveloped viruses. Hang the dilution rate per applicator and disinfectant contact time policy in each area and hand out to staff. *Train the staff about the importance of properly diluting and proper contact time for each disinfectant.* Management should enforce the new disinfectant policy.

➔ Do not leave bottles of bleach outside or in temperatures above 77 degrees. Discard mixed bleach solutions daily. Do not buy bleach in bulk so it is held for long periods of time.

Cat Cage Cleaning

During observations, all occupied stainless steel cat cages in the Cat Adoption room were deep cleaned using an unusual and very time consuming method. First, the staff member moved each of the cats to a clean cage that was being kept empty in the room. Then the original cage was cleaned, disinfected with Rescue in a spray bottle, immediately rinsed with a hose, then one same sponge was used in several cages to scrub caked on material that was still present, then disinfected with Wysiwash (two disinfectants per cage) sprayed in a hose, immediately rinsed with a hose, dried and the original cage was left empty. This method took between 1 ½ - 2 hours just to clean the one Cat Adoption room where a maximum of only half the cages were occupied.

As mentioned, the Rescue ratio used was too strong, it is not recommended to use two disinfectants during the same cleaning process, caked on areas should be scrubbed prior to disinfecting, the same sponge shouldn't have been used in different cages, disinfectants should be left on surfaces long enough to disinfect against noneveloped viruses, it is a hazard to use both Rescue and Wysiwash during the same cleaning process and LAS should not be keeping half of their cages empty just for use during cleaning. ***In addition, it is unnecessary to perform a deep cleaning of cat cages on a daily basis and Wysiwash and water hoses should not be used to clean this room.***

I am unfamiliar with any animal shelters that use Wysiwash to disinfect their stainless steel cages in rooms occupied by animals that are also in cages in the room. At all shelters that I'm familiar with, including the shelters that I've managed, Wysiwash is only used for dog kennels or outdoor areas such as a meet and greet pens. If a stainless steel bank of cages in a puppy or cat room needs to be hosed out or Wysiwashed, the bank of cages is wheeled outside and sprayed out there. At LAS, the cages were hosed out and Wysiwashed while other animals were in cages in the puppy adoption and cat adoption room. During observations, the powerful stream of water from the hose hitting the back of the shallow metal cages sent fine spray across the room and into other cages. I stood between 10-15 feet away and I could feel the spray. Using a hose to spray out a shallow cage is not advisable because it can aerolisize disease that then spreads into other clean cages across the room. *I checked directly with the Wysiwash company to determine if Wysiwash is recommended for use for cleaning stainless steel cages in a cat or puppy room that has other animals in the room and they said it is not.*

The standard approach to cleaning cat cages used to be to perform a full deep cleaning like LAS has been doing, but experts changed that recommendation over a decade ago after research was done on what was causing disease in shelter cats. For many years, experts have said that the pathogens obtained during the full cleaning, the chemical smells, and the stress involved in the process can actually cause the spread of disease and can be detrimental to a cat's health. They instead recommend spot cleaning cat cages unless the cage is very heavily soiled or a new animal is being moved into the cage.[9] [10]

Spot cleaning involves leaving the cat in the cage and tidying up around it rather than removing the cat and disinfecting the cage. Many shelters initially put down a thick layer of newspaper and roll the top sheet up to collect any spilled litter or food and empty or replace litter/litter boxes as needed. Small messes can be cleaned up with soap and water, but no chemicals should be used. To contain litters of kittens during spot cleaning, some shelters place cardboard boxes in cages to serve as a shelf and for the kittens to play in, then placing the kittens in those boxes with the opening flush to the cage side during spot cleaning.

The only time a deep cleaning of a cat cage is necessary is when a cat permanently leaves a cage (before the next cat is put in) or when the cage becomes too heavily soiled to spot clean. If it is too heavily soiled, then the cat can be placed into a cardboard cat carrier on the floor with its name and Animal ID written directly on the carrier. Everything is removed from the cage, it is wiped or scrubbed until visibly clean (using Rescue) and then Rescue disinfectant is sprayed on all surfaces using either a handheld spray bottle or gallon sprayer, including the cage door. The Rescue is allowed to sit on all surfaces for the proper contact time (either five or ten minutes depending on concentration) before it is dried with paper towels. At that point, newspaper, a fresh litter box, food and water, etc. are placed into the cage and the cat returned to its original cage. The cardboard cat carriers are usually stored on top of the bank of cages or on shelves nearby. At many shelters, the cardboard carriers designated for each cat also go home with the cat when they are adopted.

Some shelters have their staff put on one pair of nitrile gloves, then to save money, swap out inexpensive food preparation gloves like these or these on top of those nitrile gloves between each animal handled since they are usually much less expensive. For disease prevention and to eliminate the need to clean and disinfect litter boxes, many shelters also use half size aluminum steam tray pans as litter boxes or sturdy cardboard boxes and throw them away every couple of days. Disposable paper food trays should also be used instead of food bowls.

Once spot cleaning policies are written and implemented, the amount of time it should take to clean the cat rooms at LAS should be reduced in half even if double the number of cats are being kept in each room.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [==All High Priority==]**

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[9] https://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2013/04/the-when-why-and-how-of-spot-cleaning-in-animal-shelters/
[10] https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/?r=spot-cleaning-cat-cages

➔ Discontinue keeping half of cat cages at LAS empty and instead use all cat cages, as needed.

➔ Discontinue using Wysiwash or a hose to clean or disinfect stainless steel cages in the cat rooms.

➔ Discontinue performing a deep clean of cat cages every day unless the cage is very heavily soiled or the cat permanently leaves the cage. Instead leave the cats in their cages and spot clean. If the cat is an escape artist, then it can be placed in a cardboard cat carrier with its name and ID written on it. Litters of kittens can have a cardboard box on its side as a shelf to play in which can be used flush against the wall to contain them in. More information and detailed instructions about the spot cleaning process can be found here and here.

➔ Only perform a deep cleaning if a cat's cage is very heavily soiled or if a cat permanently leaves the cage. If the cage is very heavily soiled, the staff member should put on fresh gloves and put the cat into its designated cardboard cat carrier with the cat's name and ID written in marker on it (a small crate could also be used but would need to be thoroughly disinfected between each use, so a cardboard carrier is best). To deep clean, remove everything in the cage and clean the cage with paper towels and Rescue spray until the cage looks visibly clean. Then spray all surfaces of the cage with Rescue Disinfectant and leave on for the appropriate contact time depending on concentration. After the five or ten minute contact time has fully elapsed (to save time it will probably be best to use the stronger concentration with the five minute contact time), wipe the cage completely dry with paper towels. If a cat is returning to the cage, then set the cage up with fresh newspaper, litterbox, fresh food, water, etc. and return the cat to the cage. Place the cardboard cat carrier on top of the bank of cages or on a shelf for use for that particular cat during future cleanings or when it leaves the shelter.

➔ To prevent the spread of disease, staff members in all areas of the shelter should always clean healthy young animal cages first, then healthy adult animal cages and should always clean sick animal cages last.

➔ Because the shelter will no longer be using Wysiwash to clean, the stainless cages can be moved closer together in the room and additional cages added in the room, if needed.

➔ For disease prevention purposes and to save staff time by eliminating the need to disinfect litter boxes, consider using disposable litter boxes such as half size steam pans or cardboard boxes. Also use paper food trays.

➔ Write SOPs for cat cage cleaning. Enforce the SOPs.

Puppy Cage Cleaning

During observations, the stainless steel puppy cages in the Puppy Adoption room were cleaned using the same time consuming method as cat cages. Puppy cages usually do get very filthy every day so normally do require a daily deep cleaning. However, instead of keeping half the cages in the room empty for convenience during cleaning, another method should be used. LAS should bring in either two small stainless steel cages (like the size of the cat cages) or two or more small metal foldable crates to temporarily use during the cleaning process. I do not recommend using the "move down" method to clean and disinfect the puppy room since parvo is so prevalent in the region.

The cleaning process will be for the staff member to change into new gloves, remove the puppy/puppies from their cage and temporarily put them in a small stainless steel cage or metal crate placed on the floor. Clean out the puppy's original cage by removing all newspaper and bowls and by wiping up all messes up with paper towels. Use Rescue spray with paper towels to clean all dirty or caked on areas until the cage is visibly clean. Then spray all surfaces of the cage including the door with either a handheld bottle or gallon sprayer of Rescue mixed at the correct concentration. In order to save time, it is probably best to use the stronger concentration and wait five minutes. Once the five minutes have elapsed, completely dry out the puppy's cage, set it up with newspaper and a water bowl and return the puppy to its original cage (it should have already had its first feeding for the day prior to cleaning.) The staff member should then clean and spray the temporary cage or crate that was used for the first puppy. The staff member should then move on to change gloves and clean the next puppy's cage using the same process while the Rescue sits for the appropriate contact time in the first puppy's crate or temporary cage before it is dried. This does mean that the staff member will have to clean and disinfect the temporary cages or crates after every time they are used, which is a very common practice in the industry.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [==All High Priority==]**

➔ Discontinue keeping half of puppy cages at LAS empty and instead use all puppy cages, as needed.

➔ Discontinue using Wysiwash or a hose to disinfect stainless steel puppy cages.

➔ Bring two small stainless steel cages or two or more foldable metal crates in the puppy room for use during the cleaning process.

➔ Follow the cleaning and disinfecting process described in this section.

➔ Because the shelter will no longer be using Wysiwash to clean in this area, the stainless cages can be moved closer together in the room and additional cages added, if needed.

➔ Write SOPs for stainless steel puppy cage cleaning. Enforce the SOPs.

Dog Kennel Cleaning

During cleaning observations, the different dog kennel rooms/areas were cleaned differently, seemingly dependent on the staff members preference. This is not meant as a criticism of staff, who were allowed to clean the way that each of them thought was best, but instead was due to a lack of proper policies and policy enforcement. However, none of the staff members observed were properly cleaning and disinfecting the dog kennels.

The proper way to clean and disinfect a dog kennel is a four step process, though steps two and three can be combined if using Rescue disinfectant since it is a combination of a detergent and disinfectant. In a shelter and region like LAS' where parvovirus is very common, it is important to ensure that surfaces are disinfected to kill nonenveloped viruses, which is also an amount that also kills Distemper. The four steps are:

1. Remove dog from enclosure. Remove all feces, dog food, soft bedding, soft toys, dog food, debris and urine so the kennel is mostly, visibly clean. Most experts advise using a pooper scooper to pick up and discard feces, though a hose can be used if there is a flushable drain. Leftover dog food in bowls should be removed and dumped in a trash can (many shelters pull a trash can on wheels as they clean) because large amounts of food can clog up the drains and attract rodents.
2. Apply detergent using a hose end sprayer or garden sprayer and scrub all surfaces with a scrub brush. Rinse the detergent. Ensure the kennel is completely visibly clean. Remove standing water with a squeegee (not the same squeegee as step #4).
3. Apply a disinfectant and allow it to sit for the proper contact time for each disinfectant at its mixed ratio. (Ten minutes for Wysiwash or bleach; five or ten minutes for Rescue depending on dilution rate.)
4. Rinse and squeegee the kennel dry with a squeegee that is only used after kennels are sanitized. (Use this squeegee only used on sanitized surfaces. Do not reuse the same squeegee if it is used in step #2). Put the dog back into its original kennel.

These were the kennel cleaning processes observed at LAS:

● One staff member said they didn't  like to use Wysiwash and only used bleach because they thought it did a better job disinfecting. Their process was to move the dog from their kennel to a designated empty kennel in the room, splash dishwashing detergent on top of the urine, feces and dog food on the floor, spray bleach from a sprayer on top of the feces, urine and food on the floor and on the walls (see photo), let it sit a while, hose the detergent and bleach to create a foam until the kennel was rinsed and then dry.  This staff member indicated that they didn't have time to let the bleach sit when they cleaned the kennels in the isolation building. In the observed kennels, feces/urine/food was not removed before applying detergent and bleach and the surfaces were not being scrubbed. Bleach is inactivated when it comes into contact with organic material such as urine, feces and dog food and therefore, these kennels were not being disinfected.

- In another dog kennel area observed, the staff members used both bleach and Wysiwash. Their process was to move the dog to its designated empty kennel, splash dishwashing detergent on top of the feces, urine and dog food on the floor of the kennel, spray bleach on top of the feces, urine and dog food in the kennel and on the walls, hose the detergent and bleach to create a foam until the kennel was completely rinsed, apply Wysiwash, and then rinse Wysiwash. In these kennels, feces/urine was not removed before applying detergent and bleach and the surfaces were not scrubbed. Wysiwash was also not left for ten minutes in all kennels before being rinsed.



Detergent splashed and bleach sprayed over urine, feces and dog food

- In another dog kennel area observed, the staff member did come very close to cleaning and disinfecting properly. That staff member said they don't like to use bleach so they only used Wysiwash. They moved the dog to its designated empty kennel, dumped out what looked like a full bowl of dog food into the kennel and then hosed the kennel down to remove feces, urine and dog food until it was visibly clean, splashed detergent from the bottle into the kennel, sprayed the detergent to create a foam, scrubbed the detergent using a scrub brush, let the detergent sit for a while because the staff member thought it killed germs (it doesn't), rinsed the detergent, applied Wysiwash, rinsed the Wysiwash and then squeegeed the kennel dry. The only thing this staff member didn't do properly (besides dumping out dog food into the kennel which is against SOPs but all staff seem to be doing it) was letting the detergent sit for a contact period of time instead of letting the Wysiwash disinfectant sit for a ten minute contact time.

Main Kennel and Intake Kennel Cleaning

Because budget is a big issue at LAS and because Rescue is expensive, LAS should probably use Wysiwash as the only disinfectant in the main dog adoption kennels and intake building kennels. However, if it is in the budget, then Rescue could be considered in these areas and steps two and three above combined. If a serious disease such as parvo has been present in any kennel, the kennel should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with any of the disinfectants twice (at different times of the day) before reusing.

In shelters where disease is not as prevalent as it is at LAS, some dog kennels can just be spot cleaned. However, due to the current high prevalence of parvo and other diseases at LAS, this should not be implemented at this time and LAS should continue to do a full cleaning of each dog kennel. In the future if some dog kennels are less heavily soiled (such as if LAS implements a dog walking program), then spot cleaning the dog kennels could be considered for adult dogs who have had two sets of vaccines. It could also be considered in the Intake building on the "clean" side of the dog run once guillotine doors are installed but only for adult dogs who have had two sets of vaccines. Instructions for spot cleaning a dog kennel can be found here: https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/aspca-dog-enclosure-spot.pdf

Instead of keeping dog kennels empty for convenience during the cleaning process, some other method for where the dogs should go while their kennel is being cleaned needs to be implemented (animals should always stay in their original kennel/cage unless there is a valid reason for them to be moved such as moving from intake to adoption kennels). As previously mentioned, the guillotine doors in the intake kennels should be replaced and those kennels used as double-sided indoor/outdoor kennels as originally designed. When that is accomplished, then dogs in the intake kennels should be placed on one side of the kennel and the doors put down while the other side is cleaned and disinfected, then the process repeated for the other side.

The following are other methods that LAS could use in both the main kennels and in the intake kennels until the guillotine doors are replaced. I do not recommend using the "move-down" method in the bigger rooms such as the main kennel and intake kennel because it allows only one kennel to be cleaned at a time so would take up way too much time to clean and disinfect each of the rooms. It is much better to clean a group of kennels at one time so that cleaning can continue in some cages while the disinfectant is sitting for its proper contact time in other kennels and no time is wasted.

1. Extra large foldable metal crates could be used to temporarily hold dogs in each area during the kennel cleaning process (EX: five crates used for each row in the main kennel while three kennel attendants each clean a row). The crates could be placed in the main kennel hallway that leads to the rows during cleaning and stored on top of the kennels on the right side of Row A that has fencing on top. Crates would need to be disinfected between each use. At some animal services shelters, large stainless steel cages are placed around the entire perimeter of the walls in the kennels and used to temporarily hold adult dogs in during the cleaning process, but there doesn't seem to be room in the main kennel for those at LAS.
2. Volunteers and community service workers could take the adult dogs located in the main kennel on short walks (perhaps even inside the fenced yard) while their kennels are being cleaned. Only one dog per person should be walked, they should stay away from other dogs being walked and any feces should be picked up and discarded during the walk. This would require LAS to build the volunteer program to be much larger, implement a scheduled volunteer dog walking program and implement a short dog walking training program.
3. A covered cement pad with approximately 15 outdoor dog runs could be built outside of the main kennel for use to put the dogs temporarily in during kennel cleaning. These dog runs

would need to be disinfected with Wysiwash between each use. If a trench drain is installed, it should be covered with metal trench drain covers and/or the trench should be located outside of the kennel fencing. Depending on where the kennels are located, a covered walkway may also need to be built so that staff and dogs do not get rained on.

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [<mark>All High Priority</mark>]**

➔ Discontinue leaving one dog kennel empty for every dog kennel used. Instead, implement one of the listed methods for where dogs should be placed during kennel cleaning until they can be put back into their original designated cage. It would probably be best to start with metal dog crates and then work towards reinstalling the guillotine doors in the intake kennels, developing a volunteer dog walking program and/or installing outdoor, covered runs.

➔ Write policies to clean and sanitize the dog kennels in the main kennel and intake kennels including which disinfectant to use. Ensure all four steps of cleaning and sanitizing are performed. Supervise and enforce the policies.

➔ As previously mentioned, additional staff members will need to be assigned and hired to clean and care for additional dogs housed in kennels.

## Dog Isolation and Quarantine Cleaning

Dog bite quarantine rooms should always be designed with double-sided kennels or side guillotine doors so that staff members do not have to physically come into contact with the bite dogs or other aggressive dogs kept in the room. This isn't the case at LAS and staff members must remove the dogs from their kennel and put them into another kennel during the cleaning process.

I was told by a staff member that some staff members do not clean dog kennels if they contain aggressive dogs because they are scared of them. LAS needs to implement procedures so that staff members can safely clean all kennels. This means training them either to safely use a catch pole to move the dogs (and always having working catch poles in the room) or by getting another staff member or member of management to remove the dogs for them during the cleaning process. Staff should be encouraged to ask for management's help if they need it rather than just not cleaning the kennel.

I also noticed a lack of catch poles in the shelter. Some of the ones that I did notice were broken and unusable. Catch poles should be kept in every area of the shelter for safety reasons.

In the quarantine dog kennels, the best bet is probably to use the "move down" method to clean even without guillotine doors. The dog isolation room could be cleaned and disinfected using either the move-down method or by bringing in metal dog crates (similar to puppy room cleaning).

With the move down method, one kennel on the end of one of the rows in the room is kept empty at all times with no kennel number designation. Kennel numbers are then affixed to the kennel's cage card holder instead of being affixed to the kennels themselves and the holder or clipboard is affixed using a carabiner or hinged O-ring (or the cage number is also affixed using a hinged O-ring or carabiner).

The cleaning process starts by moving the dog closest to the empty kennel into that empty kennel, along with his cage card holder and designated cage number. That way, his kennel number in the software system stays the same. The dog's dirty kennel is then cleaned and sanitized using the procedures explained in the previous sections. Once the disinfection process is complete and the kennel has been dried, the next dog and its cage card and number are moved into the now clean and sanitized kennel. This process repeats for the whole room until the one kennel on the opposite end of the room is left empty without a cage number designation.

Because only one cage can be cleaned and disinfected at a time using the move-down method, it would probably make most sense to use Rescue disinfectant in this room at the stronger concentration rate that only requires a five minute contact time. Because Rescue is also a detergent, it will also reduce the amount of time to clean because the cleaning and disinfecting steps can be combined.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**: **[==All High Priority==]**

➔ Discontinue keeping half of the kennels empty in the dog quarantine room and instead use all kennels except one that is kept empty.

➔ Use the "move down" method to clean the Dog Quarantine room. Ensure all four steps of cleaning and sanitizing are performed. Ensure the cage numbers move with the dogs. Supervise and enforce the policies.

➔ In the Dog Isolation room, use either the "move down" method or use extra large metal crate(s) to temporarily hold animals in during cleaning.

➔ Write policies to properly clean and sanitize the dog kennels in these two rooms including which disinfectant to use.

➔ Use Rescue disinfectant in a garden spray type applicator with the Rescue already properly mixed or use a hose end disinfectant applicator with the *correct nozzle for appropriate dilution* of Rescue in these two rooms since it will save time by serving as both a detergent and disinfectant. To save time, use the stronger Rescue dilution rate and leave on for five minutes. If for some reason LAS decides not to use Rescue, then all of the kennels would need to be scrubbed with detergent, rinsed and either bleach (mixed properly) or Wysiwash used and left in each kennel for ten full minutes before rinsing.

➔ Ensure that staff members are trained in how to safely move aggressive dogs or are encouraged to get a manager or another staff member to assist them to safely move aggressive dogs during morning cleaning so that all kennels are being cleaned and kennels are not being skipped or hosed down with the animal still in the kennel.

➔ Additional catch poles should be purchased and kept in every area of the shelter.

➔ Consider installing side guillotine doors, if possible, in the walls of the dog quarantine room so that aggressive dogs do not have to be handled.

## Vehicle Cleaning

There are no SOPs regarding cleaning and disinfecting vehicle animal holding compartments. This is a very critical step in preventing disease. At other shelters, outbreaks of deadly diseases have been found to be caused by animal holding compartments in vehicles that were not properly cleaned and disinfected.

LAS management indicated that Animal Control Officers are supposed to clean and disinfect their used animal holding compartments after each animal is brought in. I looked at three random animal holding compartments on two different mornings and all three were visibly dirty. (See photos of two of them.)

*It is also extremely important that all contracted jurisdiction's ACO vehicles are also properly cleaned and disinfected so the animals that they are bringing to LAS' shelter are not being exposed to disease.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS: [==All High Priority==]**

➔ Ensure every vehicle animal holding compartment is cleaned and disinfected using the four step cleaning and disinfecting process after each use (including use by both live and deceased animals). To save time by combining two steps and because Rescue is stable for a

long period after it is mixed, it probably would be best to use Rescue disinfectant for the truck compartment washing station.

➔ Write and enforce vehicle cleaning and sanitation procedures. Enforce the procedures.

➔ Ensure the new contracts with the County and other jurisdictions require their animal control officers to clean and disinfect their animal holding compartment using proper procedures at LAS using LAS' truck compartment washing station after each use.  The current truck washing station may need to be moved closer to the barn or somewhere else for their easy access. Also provide each contracted jurisdiction with a copy of LAS' new vehicle cleaning and sanitation procedures and a copy of  Appendix IV - Shelter Disinfectant Poster.

### Dishwasher, Tools, Laundry and Other Areas

LAS is washing their bowls and litter boxes using a small commercial dishwasher.  Since the number of litter boxes that could fit in the dishwasher and still be thoroughly washed is very limited and to better prevent disease spread, it would be best to use disposable litter boxes such as half size steam pans or sturdy cardboard boxes and discard them every couple of days so that washing litter boxes is no longer needed. It is also always best to use paper food trays as disposable cat food bowls.

All food and water bowls and plastic litter boxes that are used should be disinfected after running them through the dishwasher by soaking them in a tub of Rescue or a bleach solution (properly diluted and left for proper contact time) and then rinsing them.[11]

All floors that dogs come into contact with, including the front lobby, public drop off room and animal intake room, should be mopped daily with Rescue mixed at a concentration that kills unenveloped viruses, and the areas that animals contact during intake, such as the stainless steel table, should be disinfected between animals.

Tools such as catch poles, squeegees, transfer cages, dog crates, etc. should also be disinfected on a regular basis. In order to prevent disease spread, many shelters put colored duct tape on the handle of tools, put tool hangers in each room and only allow use of the color for that room. For instance, all tools used in the main dog kennel could have blue duct tape on their handle, should be disinfected on at least a daily basis and hung in the room after kennel cleaning.

Animal bedding should be discarded if it is very heavily soiled or if it has been located in a kennel with a serious disease such as Distemper, Parvovirus, Calicivirus or Panleukopenia. It can be reused for several days for the same cat and then discarded in cat cages where ringworm is present. All other laundry should be washed and dried with regular detergent and bleach with care not to overfill or stuff washers. Any laundry that is still visibly soiled after washing should be rewashed before using.

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[11] Association of Shelter Veterinarians,  Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, 2022, page 26.

**RECOMMENDATION: [==All High Priority==]**

➔ Ensure all bowls, litter boxes, floors and tools are being properly cleaned and disinfected as indicated in this section. Put color coded duct tape on the handle of all tools, hang them up on wall hangers and only use them in their appropriate room. Use disposable litter boxes and food trays for cats.

➔ Discard any bedding that is very heavily soiled or if it has been located in a cage or kennel where serious disease such as parvo, calicivirus or panleukopenia was present. Also discard bedding after several days of use in a cat cage where ringworm is present.

➔ Review the following information to ensure that all areas of the shelter are being properly cleaned and disinfected:
https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/resources/sanitation-in-animal-shelters

## Length of Stay and Daily Rounds

To improve the live release rate and discontinue euthanizing for space reasons, the LAS Director, Assistant Director and staff should all work diligently every day to move animals out of the shelter to a live outcome as expeditiously as possible. This means being aware of all animals coming in daily, ensuring owners of animals with identification and confiscated animals are being promptly contacted and promptly reclaiming, marketing animals frequently for adoption, contacting rescue groups promptly and frequently and ensuring they quickly pick the animals up or posting for foster homes if rescue is not a possibility. It also means making sure that all animals are receiving proper care so they are as medically and behaviorally healthy as possible and that all proper steps have been made so they can move through the shelter expeditiously.

It also means that kennel staff need to be assisting customers in order to increase adoptions. In addition to morning cleaning, kennel staff members should be assigned specific areas that they are assigned to work in during the day and should remain stationed in those areas throughout the day assisting customers, refilling water bowls and spot cleaning feces and other messes. During observations, there were no kennel staff members to assist customers in the main dog kennel on the three times that I followed potential adopters into the main kennel. One visitor was looking to adopt a puppy but only walked through the main dog kennel and didn't even realize that there was a puppy room and left. Another was looking to adopt an adult dog, there was no staff in the kennel and the man quickly walked through and left. Another couple was looking for a particular small breed dog and looked through the kennel and didn't see any. They also didn't realize there was a puppy room and were getting ready to leave. I personally took them into the puppy room and showed them a puppy of the breed type they were looking for and they ended up adopting it.

As in many areas of operation at LAS, there are no Adoption SOPs so decisions seem to be left to the staff or volunteers. For example, a man asked if he could adopt a dog but not pick it up for two

weeks until he moved into a new home. The staff member told him he could, proceeded with the adoption and made the spay/neuter appointment two weeks out. This should not have been allowed and instead the man should have been told he must pick up the dog immediately.

In addition, LAS management said they are holding most/many puppies for two weeks until they get their second set of shots before they are being moved into the adoption room. This is the wrong approach. Every day that a puppy remains in the shelter it is exposed to more potential disease. Puppies should be moved out of the shelter as quickly as possible. All puppies (excluding confiscated or cruelty cases) should be put into the adoption room as soon as space allows. Because litters of puppies are rarely, if ever, reclaimed, many animal services shelters allow foster homes to hold young puppies during the stray hold period, but keep their photos online and available to view in a notebook in the shelter so that they can still be reclaimed during this time. Many shelters will also transfer young litters of puppies to rescue groups during the stray hold period but will also keep their photos online and available to view in a notebook in the shelter. The rescue paperwork then states that the animals can still be reclaimed until a certain date and that ownership of the animal doesn't transfer to the rescue group until that date.

After morning kennel cleaning was completed on one day during observations, one occupied dog kennel in the dog adoption room had one half of the drain cover left up in the open position, numerous cage cards were not moved to the new cage used, one cage card was missing, drain covers were not being put into place in the intake kennels and one dog did not have any water in their water bowl. It is important that a member of management supervises the shelter daily to ensure the animals receive the care they need and that all necessary steps have been taken for those animals so they are healthy and can be moved out to a live release. To accomplish this, many animal services shelters have the Kennel Supervisor/Manager and/or Assistant Director/Operations Manager perform daily rounds together after kennel cleaning every day in all areas of the shelter. These daily rounds should include the following steps:

- Ensuring the cages are clean and all animals have clean water.
- Ensuring every animal has the proper cage card with the proper cage number designation.
- Ensuring an accurate breed description and photograph(s) of the animal are on the cage card and posted to web
- Ensure the cage does not need repair, everything is in place and there are no hazards (EX: ensuring drain covers are in place)
- Ensuring the room and the drains do not have a foul odor
- Ensuring all animals housed for more than two weeks have enrichment toys and are being walked
- Ensuring any animal past any hold that may be pregnant is immediately spayed unless they are close to giving birth
- Ensuring all animals are being given vaccination, internal and external parasite control on intake and follow up as needed (can be viewed in Chameleon)

- Ensuring animals have been fed properly. For cats, ensuring they have enough food to graze throughout the day. For puppies, ensuring they are fed three times per day. For underweight animals, ensuring they are fed frequent small meals as directed by the veterinarian.
- Ensuring the owners of all animals with identification and confiscated animals have been properly contacted and immediately followed up on if they did not reclaim within the stray hold. (Can be viewed in Chameleon)
- Ensure all animals receive prompt, necessary veterinary care to alleviate suffering and improve well being
- Ensure animals are being moved into adoption rooms promptly
- Ensure foster placement is made when needed for behavioral stress, medical or other reasons
- Ensure rescue groups have been contacted early on in the process and have picked up animals promptly
- Ensure a prompt decision and timeline for euthanasia for animals with egregious aggression

For a list of tasks that normally happens during daily rounds, see:
https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/resources/daily-shelter-rounds
https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/population-wellness-rounds

In addition, the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Veterinary Medicine recommends that at least once a week, daily rounds should also include the Director and other staff such as the Rescue Coordinator to ensure everything is being done to move animals through the system as quickly as possible. Some animal services shelters have this once a week meeting in a conference room or office while looking at the computer records of all of the animals, rather than doing a physical walkthrough.

The Best Friend's Length of Stay Manual states the following about daily rounds/walkthroughs:

> *A helpful strategy is to always include two senior staff members and, when available, a staff member involved in the daily care of the animals. With this many different eyes and ears from the organization included in daily rounds, the entire team can be alerted when an individual animal is starting to succumb to shelter stress. A plan for that animal can then be incorporated to increase enrichment and marketing to push for a positive outcome.[12]*

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ All shelter management and staff should act with urgency to move the animals out of the LAS shelter to a live outcome as quickly as possible.

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[12] https://network.bestfriends.org/education/manuals-handbooks-playbooks/length-stay-manual

➔ Kennel staff members should be stationed in all of the animal holding areas of the shelter throughout the day, spot cleaning any feces or messes, refilling water bowls, ensuring any animals that are co-housed are getting along, disinfecting meet and greet rooms between visitors, monitoring animals' health and assisting potential adopters and people looking for lost pets. [High Priority]

➔ Hang signs from the ceiling pointing out the Cat Adoption room and Puppy Adoption room to visitors.

➔ Puppies should be moved into the puppy adoption room as quickly as possible (even during their stray hold) and should not be held back until their second set of shots. They should also be put into foster homes and transferred to rescue groups during stray holds as long as methods are put into place so an owner can still identify and reclaim them during that time.

➔ LAS management should perform daily rounds to ensure the animals are being properly taken care of and that all steps have been made to ensure they are moving through the shelter expeditiously.

➔ Both members of management and the rescue coordinator should meet at least once a week to perform daily rounds either via walkthrough or by looking through the software records at all animals to ensure everything possible is being done to move animals out as expeditiously as possible.

## Enrichment and Behavior

Animal enrichment is very important at an animal shelter because it reduces stress, provides mental stimulation, prevents boredom and prevents animals' behavior from deteriorating during long stays. During my three days of observations, with the exception of one bite quarantine dog that had play toys, no other animal enrichment activities were observed. Dogs were not being regularly walked or taken outside to play in yards and they did not have toys or enrichment treats.

Most animal services operations that I'm familiar with rely on their volunteers to perform the bulk of enrichment including dog walks, socialization, learning basic obedience commands, providing and disinfecting toys, providing enrichment treats (EX: frozen treats for dogs, kongs stuffed with peanut butter, etc.) LAS should post an Amazon wishlist of enrichment toys on their website (EX: stuffable kongs for dogs, disinfectable toys for cats or inexpensive, single use toys for cats that can be sent home with adopter or thrown away) and on Facebook and regularly ask for people to donate these toys. The manufacturers of kongs also have a shelter kong donation program.

In addition, none of the dogs in any of the kennels were provided dog beds or benches, though in the main kennel there were built-in resting benches that were always kept up/affixed to the walls. Several survey responders mentioned that volunteers had provided dog beds for all of the dog kennels in the main kennel, but they were removed. I did see some dog beds with a hard surface

similar to the ones affixed to the wall in the barn and was told those were the donated beds. I was also told by LAS management that those beds were removed from the main kennel because they added too much time to the cleaning process. I am unsure why those donated beds were even necessary since there are similar resting benches already affixed to the walls in the main kennel. I am also unsure why the donated beds had a hard surface, instead of using a typical, more comfortable Kuranda nylon fabric or netting type bed. Regardless, once enough kennel staff are hired to clean, LAS should either repair/utilize the benches/beds affixed to the wall, utilize the donated beds, ask for Kuranda type fabric beds on an Amazon wishlist and/or get Kuranda type fabric dog beds donated through the [Kuranda Dog Bed Donation](#) program.

Typical enrichment activities for dogs can be found at:
- [https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/resources/enrichment-recommendations-for-both-dogs-and-cats-in-shelters](https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/resources/enrichment-recommendations-for-both-dogs-and-cats-in-shelters)
- [https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/enrichment-dogs-shelters](https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/enrichment-dogs-shelters)
- [https://drive.google.com/file/d/118xV5E9tasxsGRgog2p08a6FsirU0C4w/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/118xV5E9tasxsGRgog2p08a6FsirU0C4w/view)

Typical enrichment activities for cats can be found at:
- [https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/enrichment-shelter-cats](https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/enrichment-shelter-cats)
- [https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/files/2011/11/simple-shelter-enrichment-for-cats.pdf](https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/files/2011/11/simple-shelter-enrichment-for-cats.pdf)

Some survey responders stated that LAS was euthanizing dogs for aggression that were not actually aggressive, while LAS management stated that some volunteers were incorrectly thinking that some dogs were not aggressive when they actually were. Every dog is different and there is really no way for someone to judge after the fact whether a dog previously housed was aggressive or not. While it is extremely important for LAS to protect the public from truly aggressive and dangerous dogs, LAS should ensure that dogs are not being negatively assessed and either made rescue-only or euthanized due to the stress caused at the shelter. The ASPCA gives good guidelines at: [https://www.aspca.org/about-us/aspca-policy-and-position-statements/position-statement-shelter-dog-behavior-assessments](https://www.aspca.org/about-us/aspca-policy-and-position-statements/position-statement-shelter-dog-behavior-assessments)

One thing to note is that barking aggressively at people or other dogs walking past their cage (barrier aggression) is not necessarily a sign of true aggression and can be a common stress behavior in a shelter. Modern animal shelters are now designed to minimize dogs walking past other dogs specifically to reduce this issue. One good article about the effects of shelter stress on dogs' behavior and how some animal services shelters have reduced euthanasia for aggression caused by the stress is at: [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/31/science/dogs-shelters-adoption-behavior-tests.html?_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/31/science/dogs-shelters-adoption-behavior-tests.html?_r=0)

According to most experts, the main determining factor in determining a dog's pathway should be how the dog acts during normal daily interactions such as being walked, socialized, during kennel cleaning, along with behavior information provided by finders and owners. As previously mentioned, LAS should make sure that memos are made during intake with behavioral information

from admission forms about the animal. Staff should also make behavior notes in animal software records about worrisome or serious behavior problems observed and should immediately notify management or the staff member in charge of behavior about any serious behavior problems noticed in any dog.

Several survey responders stated that two young German Shepherd mixes were euthanized because they had killed chickens. A member of LAS management confirmed that was the main reason they were euthanized. Killing chickens should not be a reason to euthanize a dog and the dogs should instead either have been placed in adoptive homes with secure fencing or should have been made available to rescue groups and transport partners. Animals that have bitten should also be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to consider if they should be made available to rescue groups (or adopters if a puppy bite or scratch) if the bites were provoked, accidental or not severe enough to consider the dog truly a danger to people.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Once a Volunteer Coordinator is hired at LAS, they should implement a dog and cat enrichment program which should include having volunteers walk dogs, teach basic obedience commands, make enrichment treats for the dogs, etc. Many animal services operations have a freezer available to the volunteers so they can make frozen treats for the dogs.

➔ Once additional kennel staff are hired for daily cleaning, dogs should be provided with a dog bed or resting bench.

➔ Ensure that LAS is following experts' behavior guidelines, like the ASPCA's, to determine if a dog is truly aggressive and to ensure that dogs are not being negatively assessed and being euthanized for behaviors that do not warrant euthanasia or for behaviors that are caused by the stress of a shelter.

## Reclaim/Lost and Found

LAS has a very low reclaim rate (8% of outcomes) compared to other animal services shelters nationally and should strive to improve it. For one example, Irving Animal Services states on their website that 51% of their stray dogs were reclaimed in 2020.

The most unusual aspect of reclaim at LAS is that owners are not allowed to reclaim their animals brought in by ACOs from other jurisdictions until they first drive to the other jurisdiction and get a written release. Both LAS management and staff said that this sometimes causes the owners not to come back. This is not standard in the industry and this requirement should immediately be discontinued. This also isn't a requirement in the current contracts with jurisdictions and should not be a requirement in any new contract. If an animal is being held on a cruelty charge or some other hold so reclaim shouldn't be allowed, the other jurisdiction should notify LAS on intake and

LAS should not release the animal. Otherwise, the owner should be able to reclaim the animal from LAS immediately.

LAS' reclaim fees may be a barrier to some pet owners. In order to reduce the length of stay, which in turn improves the live release rate, many animal services shelters will reduce or waive reclaim fees on first reclaim and/or in times of high intake as long as the animal seems otherwise well cared for. At my previous animal services shelters, we waived all reclaim fees if the owner couldn't afford it if they agreed to allow us to spay/neuter and microchip the animal first for free. Though LAS may not be able to afford to do that now, a nonprofit organization may be willing to sponsor the spay/neuter or grants may be able to be written. For a few more examples of waiving reclaim fees, see [Franklin County Animal Shelter](#), [Santa Barbara County Animal Services](#) and [Louisville Metro Animal Services](#).

Other shelters will either waive fees or allow a repayment plan and post that information on their website. For instance, [Denver Animal Protection's webpage](#) states:

> *"DAP's priority is to reunite pets and families; therefore, we offer payment plans to pet owners. If DAP determines that payment of fees by a pet's owner would cause significant financial difficulty, or present a barrier to redeeming their pet, DAP may choose to reduce or waive fees."*

If there are any other barriers to reclaim, LAS should work to remove those barriers. For instance, if a pet owner would like to reclaim but works full-time during the week and can only get to the shelter before public opening or after closing or even on the days the shelter is closed to the public, a manager should let them in early/late/days closed and allow them to reclaim. If a pet owner wants to reclaim their pet but doesn't have transportation to the shelter or is unable to drive because they are recovering from a hospital stay, an ACO should drive the animal home since ACOs have few field calls and usually would have time. The pet owner's information could be input into Chameleon and a reclaim form taken with for them to sign.

In addition, LAS should actively strive to find the owners or relatives of any animals that are confiscated due to arrest (not counting cruelty charges), sudden hospital stay or for other reasons the animal was confiscated. Most animal services shelters will call around to hospitals until they find out where the owner has been taken and speak to a nurse in order to find out contact information for the next of kin. Many animal services also send an ACO to jail to make contact with the pet owner to get them to sign a release authorizing a family member to reclaim the pet or an owner surrender form if there is no one available and they are not expected to be released soon. Most animal services shelters that I'm familiar with will hold confiscated animals for up to ten days while owners can make arrangements and will often waive all reclaim fees for animals confiscated due to hospitalization, eviction, etc.

LAS also uses an "intent to reclaim" form. I am unaware of any other animal services shelters that use this form and I am unsure of its necessity. If an owner comes in wanting to reclaim their animal, they should be strongly encouraged to reclaim it immediately and the Director should waive fees or

do whatever it takes to get the animal back home immediately (unless it is a cruelty or neglect type situation). If a pet owner calls in or for some reason the owner can not reclaim right way, a memo should just be made in the software system with the owner's contact information and they should be told by staff that the shelter can only hold for three days (unless the animal was confiscated or there is an unusual situation) before the animal can be adopted, transferred or euthanized. Exceptions can be made by management on a case-by-case basis to hold an animal for reclaim longer if there is some valid reason they can not reclaim right away, such as if their pet sitter lost the pet and they are still out of town on vacation but will be returning soon.

Many animal services shelters do attempt to determine in advance if an owner plans to reclaim their bite quarantine animals and often do that on the bite quarantine form, but LAS' form does not. LAS' form also states that if the animal isn't current on rabies that there is a $40 rabies shot fee, which includes transport to a veterinary clinic. Most animal services shelters that I'm familiar with have an onsite veterinarian perform the rabies vaccinations and/or do not charge to transport the animals to the veterinarian. The form that I was given, which the ACO said he currently used, also had old impoundment fees and not the newer, updated impoundment fees. The LAS Director should waive all or part of the reclaim fees, even for bite animals, if the animal seemed well cared for and the circumstances of the bite warrant it, such as, an accidental or provoked bite, mild bite or a bite or scratch from a puppy (not for dangerous dogs).

I overheard people with lost pets being told to check for their lost pets on LAS' Facebook page. People looking to reclaim should be also told to check the LAS website since it shows more pets in the shelter and also displays them within an hour of arrival, should be told to come to the shelter frequently to look and should be given other tips or hints or a flier about ways to find a lost pet.

In addition, LAS' lost and found web page should not state to go to 24Petconnect.com and search using a zip code since it is cumbersome, unnecessary and also displays pets listed in other nearby rescue groups and humane societies. Instead the LAS website should have **direct links** (graphical links are even better) to all the stray dogs and stray cats at LAS on 24Petconnect or use iframe displays of those pages. Those links should also display all of the animals in the shelter even past the stray hold in case it has been more than three days since the lost animal has been brought in. Contact Chameleon, if necessary, for how to set this up. For some examples, see:
https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Animal-Shelter/Lost-Pets/Lost-Pets-Online
https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/822/I-Lost-My-Pet
https://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Animal-Care/Lost-and-Found

Also, the lost and found webpage should encourage owners who have lost a pet to fill out a 24Petconnect lost pet report (use direct link, do not make them search) and to look at pets that other people have found on 24Petconnect and for people who have found a pet to fill out a 24Petconnect found pet report search through 24Petconnect found pets. Direct links to all of these, as well as other websites and apps they can use, should be on LAS' lost and found page. See:
https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/822/I-Lost-My-Pet

Finally, though it is excellent that LAS has recently implemented a new Facebook page and is posting stray pets on it, the posts are written in a manner that doesn't encourage reclaim. In addition, some of the posts are for each individual puppy in a litter instead of one photo of the entire litter. This is the current LAS text template uses for all stray animal posts, along with the intake photo:

> Date 3/22/2023, ID# A082348, Sex- male, Breed- lab mix, Age- 1 year. Location of pickup- US 69. Available after 72 hour stray hold unless otherwise stated. Adopters you can find the application on our website at https://cms7.revize.com/.../ani.../dog_and_cat_adoptions.php Call (936)-633-0218 for more information or to reclaim. Rescue organizations can review our tag policy and apply to become a new partner at https://cms7.revize.com/.../animal.../rescue_partners.php . All rescue tags must be emailed to animalservices@cityoflufkin.com Use the ID# when applying.

The same text is used for owner surrendered animals, even including the location of their previous home and mentioning the stray hold (both for no reason):

> Date 3/22/2023, ID# A082351, Sex- male, Breed- lab mix, Age- 6 months. Location of pickup- surrender- Park Ln. Available after 72 hour stray hold unless otherwise stated. Adopters you can find the application on our website at https://cms7.revize.com/.../ani.../dog_and_cat_adoptions.php Call (936)-633-0218 for more information or to reclaim. Rescue organizations can review our tag policy and apply to become a new partner at https://cms7.revize.com/.../animal.../rescue_partners.php . All rescue tags must be emailed to animalservices@cityoflufkin.com Use the ID# when applying.

To encourage reclaim of stray animals, text similar to this would be better for stray animal posts:

> Is this your lost pet? This young, medium sized adult male lab mix was found on US 69 on 3/22/23. If this could be your pet, please write down his animal ID #A082348 and call us immediately or come by our shelter immediately to reclaim him! Our address is 1901 Hill Street and our phone is 936-633-0218. We only hold animals for three days before they can be adopted, rescued or euthanized, so it is extremely important that you reclaim your pet immediately or contact us to let us know you're coming. For more information, please email us at animalservices@cityoflufkin.com or visit our website at: www.cityoflufkin.com/departments/animal_services

For owner surrendered dogs, there is no need to post the street where the animal lived, mention the stray hold or use the current template at all and instead LAS Facebook postings should instead be made using a better photo and **with marketing language that encourages adoption or rescue**. See the Marketing Section for more information.

In addition, it would be beneficial if volunteers posted stray pets on Nextdoor (if it is popular in the area), on other lost and found websites/apps and on other Facebook pages such as the [Lost & Found Pets from From Lufkin & Nacogdoches Areas](#) and the [Lost/Found Pets in Lufkin/Nacogdoches & Surrounding Areas](#).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Unless there is a cruelty case, bite quarantine or other legal hold, all pet owners should be allowed to reclaim their pets right away without first having to drive to another jurisdiction for a written release. [High Priority]

➔ LAS management should reduce or waive reclaim fees on first reclaim, including any veterinary care given, when pet owners can't afford full fees as long as the animal seems to be well treated and in the case of a bite, in circumstances such as an accidental, provoked or mild bite or scratch.

➔ LAS should strive to remove other barriers to reclaim, such as the ones listed in this section.

➔ LAS should make every effort to contact the owners and relatives of animals confiscated due to sudden hospitalization of the owner, arrest of the owner, eviction, etc., except for cruelty or neglect type situations.

➔ Ensure owners looking for their lost pets are escorted by staff through the shelter and if they do not find their pets, are told to check the LAS website every day, to return to the shelter frequently to look for their lost pets, to ensure that their microchip contact information is up-to-date if the animal is chipped and are counseled or given a handout with other ways to find their lost pet.

➔ LAS' lost and found page should be updated to have direct 24Petconnect links to the stray dogs being held at the shelter and to the stray cats being held at the shelter or to have iframe displays of those pages instead of the pet owner needing to put in their zip code do a search since zip code searches are cumbersome and show animals at other rescues and shelters. Contact Chameleon for instructions.

➔ Discontinue using the current Facebook template for stray animal and surrendered animal posts. Instead, stray animal posts should be written in a manner that encourages reclaim and only one post should be made per litter of animals. Owner surrender animals should have a new photo and be written/marketed in a manner that encourages adoption or rescue. For more information, see the [Marketing Section](#).

# Section 7 - Euthanasia

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care states:

> "The euthanasia process must be as free from pain, fear, anxiety, and distress as possible."[13]

Some survey responders said that proper procedures and processes regarding euthanasia were not being followed at LAS and they included several examples. I had planned to witness scheduled euthanasia during observations, however, no scheduled euthanasia occurred during that time. Regardless, I can ascertain by speaking with the LAS managers, by reviewing the current euthanasia SOP, by reviewing a sample of euthanized animals records in the Chameleon software system records and by looking at the two Scheduled Drug logs (Fatal Plus and "PreMix"), that there are problems with the current euthanasia process that need to be corrected.

## Euthanasia Selection

During observations, management counted the number of empty dog kennels to ensure there was a certain number available for the next day. If there aren't enough empty kennels available, managers stated that they designate animals selected for euthanasia by writing "1045" and the date on the animals' cage card. They also used to turn the card upside down on the animal's kennel, though they may or may not still be doing that. LAS' SOP, written in 2009, does cover euthanasia but there is nothing in it about which animals to choose, how to designate that an animal has been selected for euthanasia and it also doesn't go into enough detail about what needs to be done prior to choosing the animal.

*It is extremely important that LAS management begins to make every effort possible to find a lifesaving solution prior to euthanizing any animal for space reasons. This includes LAS management ensuring that the animal is first marketed for adoption/rescue repeatedly on LAS social media, ensuring all cages/kennels in the shelter are actually being used and that there is truly no space, ensuring that LAS has posted asking for foster homes for the animal on LAS social media, ensuring that LAS has emailed prior foster homes to see if they could foster the animal, ensuring that LAS has directly called/texted individual rescue groups that might take the animal, ensuring that LAS has sent out group "urgent" or "code red" emails about the animal to rescue groups and transport partners, co-housing the animal with another compatible animal, stopping intake of owner surrender animals, etc.*

It is also important that procedures performed when euthanizing animals for any reason are updated to ensure that things like proper attempts to contact the owners of animals with identification have been made, that proper attempts to contact the owners (or relatives) of confiscated animals able to be reclaimed have been made, that none of the animals scheduled for euthanasia have a rescue pending, that no owners are planning to reclaim prior to euthanasia, etc.

It is also important to ensure that proper procedures are being followed during the euthanasia process of animals, including verifying that the correct animal is in the room. At LAS, animals are

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[13] Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, December 2022, page 52

currently being moved into different cages every day, the shelter's software system doesn't have accurate cage assignments, cage cards are often missing from cages and there is often confusion about where animals are located. In order to ensure the correct animal is being brought into the room, the photo on the cage card and any additional photos in the Chameleon animal shelter software system should be compared to the actual animal being brought into the room. To do this, it is best that a computer or laptop with Chameleon access should be put in the euthanasia room. The euthanasia technician should also use the computer to verify that any microchip found during the pre-euthanasia process was already known and to outcome each animal that is euthanized once euthanasia is completed.

Many animal services shelters use a checklist to ensure that every aspect of the process is performed prior to euthanasia. For an example of a sample Euthanasia SOP and sample Euthanasia Checklist (there are many other kinds of euthanasia checklists as well) that could be modified to meet LAS' needs, please see Appendix V - Sample Euthanasia Policies and Appendix VI - Euthanasia Checklist Form.

Trapped feral cats are also always currently being euthanized on the same day they come in. All staff members are supposed to test the trapped cats first to ensure they are truly feral, however, more recently some staff members have been putting the traps in the euthanasia room for a few hours first to see if the cats calm down enough to be deemed adoptable. One staff member indicated that just by waiting a few hours many cats previously thought to be feral are now being saved this way. LAS seems to be letting the individual staff member decide whether to wait a few hours first to see if they calm down. Until LAS implements a TNR and Working Cat program (both of which should be done as soon as possible), there should be written policies in place to ensure all trapped cats are given the opportunity (waiting a few hours or overnight) to see if they are friendly enough for adoption. That policy should also include feeding the cats while they are in their cage since some cats, especially young ones, calm down considerably once they've been fed.

Other animals are also being euthanized throughout the day because they are sick or injured. LAS management also said that some nursing puppies and kittens are also euthanized unless a foster home that can bottle feed them can be found on the same day, which can be difficult to find during kitten season.

The Lufkin animal ordinance requires a stray hold for all cats with no exception for ferals. The Euthanasia SOP, which was written in 2009, states the following below about ferals, however, SOPs do not supersede the law and animal services shelters all over the country safely handle feral cats without being harmed because they have the proper tools, such as feral cat dens. LAS should obtain feral cat dens such as these:
https://animal-care.com/product/feral-cat-small-mammal-den-by-humaniac/

> "Feral cats will always be euthanized to prevent harm to shelter staff while handling the animal." [LAS Euthanasia SOP 2009]

In addition, stray dogs that bite in the City are being euthanized and the specimen sent for rabies testing prior to completing a stray hold if they do not have identification and are underweight, have skin conditions, wounds, etc. Furthermore, LAS indicated they are euthanizing some/most stray bite dogs that are brought in from the County on intake rather than holding them for a stray hold or quarantine, regardless of their condition, because the County is requesting them to do so. Chapter 6 of LAS' SOP states the following, however, both the Lufkin animal ordinance and state law require a stray hold period without exceptions for bite dogs and cats unless they are severely sick/injured or exhibiting signs of rabies.

> "If the animal is a stray and has no valid rabies tag, identification tag or microchip, the animal will be euthanized and sent to the Rabies Laboratory for rabies testing" [Chapter 6 of LAS SOP]

I am unaware of any other animal services operation that euthanizes stray bite animals prior to a stray hold unless they are severely sick/injured or are exhibiting signs of rabies. LAS also isn't receiving any detailed information from the County about the stray bites, such as if it was provoked, so they can determine if the animal could be made available for rescue after the quarantine hold is up.

In order to send an animal for rabies testing, the animal must be euthanized, decapitated by an LAS staff member and then the head is sent to the state lab for testing. None of the LAS staff members have pre-exposure prophylaxis rabies vaccines as recommended by the CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/prevention/pre-exposure_vaccinations.html, nor does LAS have any written policies for how to safely decapitate specimens and what equipment must be used. LAS does have safety goggles that are supposed to be worn.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Ensure that LAS management makes sure that every lifesaving effort possible has been first attempted by LAS prior to euthanizing any animal for space. [High Priority]

➔ Update the Euthanasia SOPs to ensure that all domestic animals are first being checked for holds, possible reclaims, pending rescue, that memos in Chameleon and on the cage card are read, that proper attempts to contact the owner of confiscated animals able to be reclaimed and animals with identification have been made, that the correct animal has been brought into the room, and that the Director and another manager signs off to approve all euthanasia of all domestic animals, including feral cats, sick or injured animals, neonatal animals, bite animals, etc. Ensure the new policies are distributed and enforced. A sample policy that can be modified to meet LAS' needs can be found at: Appendix V - Sample Euthanasia Policies [High Priority]

➔ Implement the use of a Euthanasia Checklist form to help ensure that all procedures and due diligence is being done before selecting and signing off by management on an animal for

euthanasia and that all procedures are being followed during the euthanasia process. A sample checklist that can be modified to meet LAS's needs can be found at the following link or there are other checklist designs available: [Appendix VI - Euthanasia Checklist Form](#). [High Priority]

➜ Until a TNR and/or Working Cat Program is implemented, ensure that all trapped cats, not just some of them, are being fed and held long enough to determine if they are truly feral. Obtain feral cat dens to use in cages holding feral cats. [High Priority]

➜ Provide staff members with the rabies pre-exposure vaccines and ensure that only staff members with the pre-exposure vaccine decapitates rabies specimens. Write procedures to ensure that the staff who decapitate wear proper protective gear whenever a specimen is taken. [High Priority]

➜ Put a computer with Chameleon software system access into the euthanasia room or install wireless access and use a laptop or iPad with Chameleon access when euthanasia is performed.

➜ Discontinue euthanizing stray bite animals prior to the stray hold unless the animal is severely sick/injured or showing symptoms of rabies and have the City evaluate LAS' current practice of performing euthanasia prior to completing a stray hold on feral cats, on stray bite animals from inside the City limits and on stray bite animals from the County (and other contracting cities) that are not severely sick/injured or showing symptoms of rabies to ensure that LAS is following local and state laws.

➜ Ensure that a copy of the full bite report is being provided by the County and other cities, including the circumstances of the bite, so that LAS can determine if the animal may be suitable for transfer to rescue or adoption after bite quarantine has expired (EX: a provoked bite, a scratch that broke skin, a mild bite, a puppy that bit or scratched during play, etc).

## Weight

During observations, animals were not being weighed by staff during their stay at LAS. A LAS manager said the shelter's one step-on scale's digital reader display was broken and hard to read. There was also no smaller pet scale to weigh cats, puppies and kittens. It is considered a best practice to weigh animals on intake to ensure the proper amount of dewormer and other medications are used and to be able to monitor the animal's weight throughout their stay. This is especially important for monitoring emaciated and underweight animals. It is also considered a best practice to weigh them again prior to euthanasia if it has been more than a week or two since intake, in order to ensure the proper amount of euthanasia fluid and sedation drugs are used since they are based on weight. At the very least, a weight must be obtained at some point prior to euthanasia of an animal.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Obtain a working step-on scale and a small animal scale and ensure that animals are being weighed prior to euthanasia so that proper dosages of euthanasia and sedation drugs are used. Feral cats can be weighed while in their cage and the weight of the cage deducted to determine their weight.  [High Priority]

## Viewing Other Animals

There is nothing in the 2009 Euthanasia SOPs prohibiting euthanasia of animals in front of other live animals or for live animals to view animals that have been euthanized, however, these are considered unacceptable practices and are also against Texas Administrative Code Regulations regarding allowable methods of euthanasia (Rule 169.84) which states:

> "Injection shall be conducted in an area out of public view and out of the view of another animal, except when euthanizing unweaned/nursing animals with their mother; when euthanizing a mother animal with her offspring, the mother animal shall be euthanized first immediately followed by euthanasia of her offspring. Additionally, the carcass(es) of any animal(s) shall be removed from the euthanasia area prior to a live animal(s) entering that area."[14]

An LAS manager did state that some animals are being euthanized outside near the incinerator and that they have always done "one inside and one outside."  Another time a manager stated that they line the animals up outside, but they are brought inside for euthanasia. Regardless, all animals should be brought inside the euthanasia room to be euthanized and none should be euthanized outside, unless it is an emergency situation such as an animal that has just been picked up by the ACOs that is near death that may warrant euthanasia while on the truck. In addition, if animals are being lined up outside the euthanasia room waiting to go in, it is possible they would see a dead animal either when they are brought into the euthanasia room or when the deceased animal is brought out to the incinerator.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** [All High Priority]

➔ Unless it is an emergency situation, all dogs and cats should be brought into the euthanasia room through the building's interior door. All dogs and cats should be euthanized inside the euthanasia room and no dog or cat should be lined up outside near the incinerator or euthanized outside.

➔ No animal should be euthanized within view of a live animal and no live animal should see the bodies of deceased animals.

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[14] https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=25&pt=1&ch=169&sch=D&rl=Y

➔ Ensure the Euthanasia SOPs are updated to reflect the new policies. Distribute the new policies to staff and enforce these policies.

## Pre-euthanasia Sedation

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care states:

> "The use of pre-euthanasia sedation is generally recommended because it improves the experience for animals and personnel. Pre-euthanasia drugs **must** be administered when their use is necessary for a smooth euthanasia process. **Their use is particularly important for animals who are in pain or are showing signs of fear, anxiety, or distress."**[15]

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Position Statement on Euthanasia says:

> "The most humane method of euthanasia should be chosen deliberately based on the individual animal and circumstances. Sedation prior to euthanasia is recommended in most circumstances, and strongly recommended for distressed, dangerous, and fractious animals."[16]

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) states the following about aggressive domestic animals:

> "Animals that are unable to be safely and humanely restrained should be sedated by means of drugs delivered orally (eg, gelatin capsules for delivery of drugs in food, liquid formulations squirted into mouths) or remotely (eg, darts, pole syringes) before administration of euthanasia agents. Doing so will assist in relieving anxiety and pain for the animal, in addition to reducing safety risks for personnel. There is a variety of pre-euthanasia drugs that can be administered PO, SC, or IM, alone or in combination, to render animals unconscious with minimal handling in preparation for euthanasia." [17]

Texas Administrative Code Rule 169.84 states:

> "Prior to using any method of euthanasia, all available measures should be taken to minimize the fear, anxiety, and distress of the animal scheduled for euthanasia."

LAS does have a pre-euthanasia sedation drug combination on site commonly referred to as "PreMix," which is a combination of two drugs: Xylazine and Ketamine. Because PreMix contains a drug regulated by the DEA, it must be properly logged and stored similarly to how the euthanasia drugs are logged and stored. LAS does have a PreMix log, however, it is not keeping the logs

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[15] Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, December 2022, page 52
[16] https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/docs/position-statements/euthanasiaofshelteranimals%202020.pdf
[17] https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Guidelines-on-Euthanasia-2020.pdf

properly. The most current page, which covers approximately a year and a half, does not have any calculations for how much of the product is left in the bottle after each use as required (old and new balance), does not have the full date used (just day and month, not year), some entries do not include an Animal ID, up to 7cc of fluid out of 20cc in bottles are not being accounted for, and the last entry says the drug was given IV (intravenous), when it is supposed to be given IM (intramuscular).

An LAS manager indicated the sedition drugs are rarely, if ever, used. Based on the PreMix log Animal IDs (since year isn't included), it looks as though the PreMix was only used one time in all of 2022 for one dog, while during the same year 940 dogs and cats were euthanized; and was used only five times in 2021 for dogs, while at the same time 1491 dogs and cats were euthanized. According to LAS management, no other sedation drugs are being used.

I reached out to several veterinarians at the country's top veterinary schools' shelter medicine programs and to the veterinarians at ASPCA's shelter outreach program and they all said that pre-medicating with sedatives is especially important for animals that are fearful, anxious, unsocialized or aggressive, but that it is also recommended for all animals, in order to reduce stress and make a smoother euthanasia process. These experts said that the drug used intramuscularly (IM) prior to euthanasia at animal shelters is usually PreMix, but sometimes Telazol mixes or DKT (Dexmedetomidine, Ketamine, and Butorphanol). In addition, drugs sometimes used for aggressive animals in food prior to injecting with sedation include Acepromazine, Gabapentin, Trazodone, Alprazolam, and Clonidine.

LAS' current SOPs also allow euthanasia for aggressive dogs in their cage, however, administering oral sedatives in advance of euthanasia usually make the dog able to safely be brought into the euthanasia room or makes them safe enough to administer an injection of PreMix in their cage and then they can be carried to the euthanasia room.

No animals should be made to struggle or be distressed during the euthanasia process, nor should staff have to try to euthanize animals while they are struggling or fighting the process. Fearful, anxious, unsocialized, distressed and aggressive animals should always be sedated prior to euthanasia so that the euthanasia process is as humane as possible. In addition, aggressive dogs should be given medications, usually orally in their food, prior to injectable sedation to calm them down and make them safer and easier to handle. In addition, most experts also recommend pre-euthanasia sedation drugs for all IP (intraperitoneal) injections, which is the method LAS is using for all cats, kittens and puppies.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** [All High Priority]

➔ LAS management should ensure all Scheduled Drug Logs are being kept properly and that the drug safe meets current DEA standards.

➔ All aggressive, unsocialized, fearful, distressed or anxious dogs should be sedated prior to euthanasia or once it is determined during the euthanasia process that staff can not easily, gently restrain them. In addition, aggressive dogs should be sedated orally prior to a sedation injection, as needed, to calm down or safely handle. LAS should consult with the shelter's contracted veterinarian to determine which drugs and dosage should be used.

➔ After completing the euthanasia training class mentioned in the next section, LAS management should consult with LAS' veterinarian to determine if and when sedation should be performed prior to an IP injection and which drugs and dosage should be used.

## Intracardiac Injections

LAS uses a drug called Fatal Plus (Pentobarbital Sodium) in order to euthanize animals. On every page of the Fatal Plus drug log that I reviewed, every injection of Fatal Plus given intravenous (IV) or intraperitoneal (IP) was followed up with an additional intracardiac (IC) injection of Fatal Plus. So all dogs and cats being euthanized that I reviewed are receiving at least two injections of Fatal Plus, first given IV or IP and then given IC. I noticed one dog euthanized for aggression that received three injections - IP, IV, IC.

I am familiar with shelters that use an IC puncture (not an additional dose of Fatal Plus) with an empty syringe on unconscious animals to monitor the heart until cardiac standstill to verify death. However, I am unfamiliar with any animal shelters that follow all IV and IP injections of Fatal Plus with an additional IC injection of Fatal Plus. Not only is this a waste of money, but staff must be extremely careful to ensure that the animal is fully unconscious prior to an IC injection since it is considered to be extremely painful.

In my experience, an additional injection of Fatal Plus is only given IC only when death is taking longer than expected (after verified unconscious), when the euthanasia technician can not find a vein (only after sedation) or on animals that arrive at the shelter already unconscious, not for every animal. If Fatal Plus is injected IV at the correct dosage and the procedure is performed correctly into the vein, the animal almost immediately becomes unconscious and dies very quickly afterwards, so I don't know why there would be a need to always follow up with an additional dose of Fatal Plus IC:

> "Typically, within five seconds after injection into a vein the animal is unconscious, within 20 seconds the animal stops breathing, within 40 seconds the animal is considered "medically dead" (meaning the heart has ceased circulating blood), and within two minutes the animal is "clinically dead" (meaning all voluntary and involuntary functions have ceased, although muscle twitching may continue for several minutes)."[18]

I asked the veterinary shelter medicine experts previously mentioned if they were familiar with any shelters that always perform an additional injection of Fatal Plus IC after every injection of Fatal

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[18] https://humanepro.org/sites/default/files/documents/euthanasia-reference-manual.pdf

Plus given IV or IC and none of them were. However, one veterinarian stated that some euthanasia classes might teach to use an IC injection of Fatal Plus and leave that syringe in place afterwards to monitor for cardiac standstill instead of using an empty syringe to monitor for death. Another veterinarian, who is considered a top national expert in the subject of animal shelter euthanasia, stated that some euthanasia training classes are based on old procedures originally developed by the Humane Society of the United States, but now some of those recommended procedures are now considered out-of-date and have changed.

In order to ensure the most smooth, humane and up-to-date euthanasia procedures are being followed in the future, I recommend that both the Director and Assistant Director at LAS should immediately, individually take Part 1 of the following online, self-paced euthanasia class for animal shelters offered by the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine. This class is approved by both the National Animal Control Association and the Humane Society of the United States. Part 1 of the class costs $200 (so $400 for both managers) and generally takes fourteen hours, so the managers could perhaps spend two hours a day (EX: one from 8am-10am, the other manager from 10am-12pm) over the next seven business days taking the class. This class is not approved to certify new euthanasia technicians which requires an in person class but it is approved in Texas for Continuing Education hours. It would be an excellent class for LAS management to take online right away since it covers the topics regarding euthanasia in this Preliminary Report, and more: https://maples-center.ufl.edu/shelter-medicine/euthanasia-by-injection-ebi/

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Both the Director and Assistant Director at LAS should individually take Part 1 of the following online, self-paced euthanasia class for animal shelters offered by the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine: [Immediate] https://maples-center.ufl.edu/shelter-medicine/euthanasia-by-injection-ebi/

➔ After completing the euthanasia training class, LAS management should consult with LAS' veterinarian to determine when IC injections of Fatal Plus should be used, if the animal should be sedated first and with what drugs. [High Priority]

➔ Both members of LAS management should manage and oversee the euthanasia process to ensure that all proper procedures regarding keeping scheduled drugs are being followed and all policies and procedures regarding euthanasia are being followed. Update the Euthanasia SOPs to reflect any changes in policy. Distribute policies and train staff. [High Priority]

## Section 8 - Veterinary Care

A much higher than typical percentage of animals (10% of all outcomes in 2022, 12% of all outcomes in 2021) are currently being euthanized at LAS for being "sick," including 17% of puppies outcomed in 2022. In addition, twenty puppies also died in the shelter in 2022. One of the reasons

may be because LAS does not have enough medical isolation rooms to hold these animals. Another reason may have been because LAS wasn't vaccinating animals upon intake for the full year 2022. However, LAS should diligently work to implement improved cleaning and disinfecting procedures to prevent the spread of disease and should also work to ensure that all sick and injured animals with treatable diseases or injuries receive prompt veterinary treatment and only animals with severe diseases or injuries that are not treatable are being euthanized.

To prevent the spread of disease, it is also extremely important that symptoms of disease are noticed early on so that treatment can begin right away, before the disease progresses to become more severe and before the animal can spread the disease to other animals. This would include the Intake Coordinator noticing health problems during intake, the kennel attendants noticing health problems or lack of appetite throughout the day and the LAS managers noticing health problems during their daily walkthroughs and also ensuring that those animals receive prompt veterinary care/treatment.

During observations, animals that were approved for veterinary care and animals that needed spay/neuter and other associated things were driven to the contracted veterinarian's facility by staff. While this does work, it is much more efficient to set up a veterinary clinic at the shelter and have a full or part-time veterinarian perform those services at the shelter. As previously mentioned in the Facility Section, many animal services shelters bring in an office trailer to serve as the veterinary clinic. Additional veterinary technician staff and other medical supplies and equipment would also be needed. A facility like this could also be used for occasional low cost or free spay/neuters for low income pet owners on days when the staff veterinarian isn't performing surgeries on shelter animals, though the City also needs a much more extensive, full-time spay/neuter program.

Until LAS is able to hire a veterinarian to work at the shelter, it would be much more efficient to have the contract veterinarian come to LAS for approximately one hour per day to examine sick and injured animals, rather than having to drive the animals to their clinic. If possible, this should be negotiated with the contract veterinarian. Vet check requests can be made in Chameleon and a daily vet check report printed out of the animals that the veterinarian needs to check on that day.

As previously mentioned, all veterinary care, medications and treatments given to each animal, including where they were given, should be input into the animal's Chameleon record so that a Medical History Report can be printed out for adopters, rescuers and any veterinarian that needs to see the records. A bar code scanner to input treatments given can also be implemented.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ If at all possible, hire a full or part-time veterinarian to provide veterinary exams and treatment and spay/neuters at the LAS shelter. Bring in an office trailer to serve as the veterinary clinic. Also bring in an office trailer for additional medical isolation space. Hire new veterinary technician staff and obtain medical equipment and supplies.

➔ Until a full or part-time veterinarian can be hired, attempt to negotiate to have the contracted veterinarian come to the shelter for approximately one hour per day, or as needed, to examine sick and injured animals rather than having to drive them to the veterinary clinic.

➔ LAS should diligently work to implement improved cleaning and disinfecting procedures to prevent disease and should also work to ensure that all animals with treatable diseases or injuries are treated and/or transferred to rescue and not euthanized.

➔ LAS intake staff, kennel staff and management should notice symptoms of disease early on and ensure all of the animals receive prompt treatment.

➔ All veterinary care, medications and treatments given should always be input into each animal's Chameleon medical records.

## Veterinary Care During Stray Hold

LAS management stated on several occasions that veterinary care was not being provided for animals still under the stray hold (first three days) unless it was a severe, life threatening condition. I was also told that animals that were hit by a car were not being seen by the veterinarian during the stray hold unless it seemed life threatening. I specifically asked if a dog with a broken leg would receive veterinary care during the stray hold and was told it would not, because a broken leg is not a life threatening condition. One member of LAS management indicated that the reason veterinary care was not being provided during the three day stray hold was because of financial reasons.

Many policies at LAS are inconsistent and seem to be left up to each staff member so there may be some circumstances where ACOs do take sick or injured animals still under the stray hold without life threatening conditions to the veterinarian. Regardless, failing to provide baseline veterinary care including pain medications throughout an animal's stay is considered an unacceptable practice.

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care states:

> "Pain must be recognized and treated to alleviate suffering…Failure to provide treatment for pain is unacceptable."[19]

and

> "When a shelter admits an animal, they become responsible for providing all of the medical and wellness care that the animal needs, or promptly finding an outcome that meets those needs. When medical treatment is necessary, it must be provided in a timely fashion." [20]

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[19] Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, December 2022, page 33
[20] Association of Shelter Veterinarians, Guidelines for Standards of Care, Second Edition, December 2022, page 29

There are also numerous medical problems that will quickly worsen to a much more severe condition without prompt veterinary attention. In addition, there are also other conditions which may be highly contagious to other animals that may not be recognized by the staff as being a serious illness early on. It is important that all animals receive veterinary care, including during the stray hold. In the case of a simple broken leg, the treatment can vary from shelter-to-shelter depending on budget. In some animal services shelters that don't have the funding to pay a veterinarian to x-ray and cast the leg, the shelter's veterinarian might simply put a splint on the leg to stabilize it and put the animal on pain medication while the shelter attempts to quickly find the owner or a rescue group that would take the animal as soon as the stray hold was up. *At the very least, animals with broken legs and other painful injuries or painful medical conditions should always be put on pain medication, including during the stray hold.*

Basic or baseline veterinary care means providing sick and injured animals with veterinary care up to a certain dollar amount (EX: $150-$200) that should cover health care minimum basics, such as pain medications, antibiotics, treatments for wounds and skin conditions, treatments for intestinal parasites, etc. Veterinary care beyond that dollar amount is usually decided by management on a case-by-case basis and/or the shelter attempts to find rescue groups that will provide the care. For example, animals with skin conditions like mange, skin infections or open wounds would begin their treatments right away since the medications to treat are usually fairly inexpensive, while other conditions that need more expensive treatments or surgery might just be put on pain medication or a medication that helps to alleviates symptoms while a search is made for the owner or a rescue group willing to pick the animal up shortly after the stray hold and provide the more expensive treatment.

LAS management stated that there is no money in the LAS budget whatsoever for veterinary care other than paying for spay/neuters and related adoption/rescue veterinary costs and that LAS is completely dependent on a nonprofit's fundraising efforts to provide a veterinary fund for any sick or injured veterinary care. While it is fantastic that a nonprofit has been assisting LAS this way, all animal services shelters should have a budget to provide baseline veterinary care for their animals. Non-profit fundraising efforts may be needed to supplement that budget for more expensive veterinary treatments, surgeries, supplies, and other things.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ All animals at LAS should be provided with baseline veterinary care and pain medication throughout their stay, including during the stray hold period. [Immediate]

➔ LAS' budget should include the amount necessary to provide baseline veterinary care, including pain medication, for all sick and injured animals.

## Standing Veterinary Orders

Both full or part-time veterinarians and contracted veterinarians often have standing veterinary orders which allow shelter staff to administer medications for some common conditions. This allows the shelter to begin treatment right away for conditions that are frequently seen at the shelter such as skin conditions, gastrointestinal diseases, internal parasites, mild upper respiratory illnesses, etc. The shelter also should have medications such as antibiotics, panacur, albon, ivermectin, etc. in stock at the shelter that are readily available for use with these conditions.

Many shelters update their SOPs with the initial veterinary treatments allowed and when to administer them. An example can be found in [Appendix VII - Standing Veterinary Orders for Diarrhea](#).

I discussed the situation with LAS' contracted veterinarian during observations and asked if in some cases if LAS management (not staff) could ask/text photos to her or a designated member of her staff to help determine if an animal could be treated at the shelter with certain medications, including pain medications, based on what was in the photo or a description of the problem. She indicated that might be an option in certain situations. She also said that one of her veterinarians can come to the shelter to examine animals rather than them having to be driven to her if there are more than about five or six that need to be seen at a time. I did not discuss standing veterinary orders for common conditions with the contracted veterinarian, but LAS management should discuss it to see if that could be an option.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Until a full or part-time veterinarian is working in the shelter daily, attempt to implement Standing Veterinary Orders, written by or in conjunction with the contracted veterinarian, so that LAS staff can initially treat very common conditions at the shelter without having to drive the animals to an offsite veterinary clinic. Common medications needed to treat these conditions should also be kept on hand at the shelter. If the initial treatment doesn't work or the condition worsens, then the animal should be seen by the veterinarian.

## Section 9 -  Placement and Volunteer Programs

## Adoptions

There are quite a few things that LAS can do in an attempt to improve the adoption rate. The first is to ensure that potential adopters are assisted by a staff member. In order to do that, LAS management should ensure that at least two kennel staff members are *always* stationed in the main kennel area during open hours to care for the animals and to assist customers looking to adopt. Volunteers can also be trained and scheduled throughout the week to assist by serving as Adoption Counseling Assistants. As previously mentioned, the three potential adopters that I followed into the kennel were not assisted by any staff members. Two left without adopting (and one that wanted

a puppy didn't notice there was a puppy room) and one was getting ready to leave (they also didn't notice there was a puppy room) until I personally assisted them and showed them a puppy of the breed mix they wanted to adopt, which they ended up adopting. There would have been an excellent chance that all three of those potential adopters would have adopted if they had been assisted by staff.

Animals at animal services shelters can be looked at as having three main tiers of adoptability:  Tier 1 - highly adoptable (multiple people would probably want to adopt if they knew about it), Tier 2 - moderately adoptable (someone will want to adopt it but it may take a little longer to find that person) or Tier 3 - difficult to adopt (the animal is older, not as attractive, is a breed/mix that is in low demand, or has a behavioral or medical issue that makes them more difficult to adopt.) Fortunately, LAS has a very high number of Tier 1 and 2 animals compared to most other animal services shelters but is not always ensuring that the most highly adoptable animals get out of the shelter as quickly as possible. For example, during observations one potential adopter asked if he could adopt a highly adoptable dog but not pick it up for two weeks until he moved into a new home. He was allowed to do so and the dog's spay/neuter was scheduled two weeks out. Instead, he should have been told that he needed to adopt the dog right away.

In addition, LAS currently allows potential adopters to apply for adoption online and if the application is approved, the shelter then holds the animal for a 24 hour pending adoption period, though one manager said it was a 48 hour pending adoption period. (There are no Adoption SOPs, so no way to tell which is correct). The vast majority of animal services shelters with online adoption applications *do not have this policy because it often needlessly holds animals for an entire day (or more)* that may have otherwise been adopted. Instead, they just use online adoption applications to allow potential adopters to express interest and to pre-approve potential adopters and to urge them to come in to adopt the pet.

Another way to ensure highly adoptable animals are quickly moved out is by marketing them frequently to adopters on social media and to have more frequent adoption price specials that are widely promoted. See the Marketing Section for more information.

In addition, puppies that are old enough to be adopted should be moved as quickly as possible into the Puppy Adoption room and should not be held in the holding areas until they get two shots, as is often happening at LAS. In addition, if space allows, puppies still under the stray hold should also be moved into this room so they can be quickly adopted/pre-adopted as soon as their holds are up.

To facilitate more adoptions, LAS should also begin participating in more offsite dog adoption events. How successful offsite adoption events are can vary widely from region to region. In some areas, they are very successful while in others they are not. Also, in some areas it can be best to go to the same location so potential adopters know where to find you while in other communities, it is best to go to a wide variety of locations.
EX: https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=527484922869507&set=a.490897516528248

Many animal services shelters use software called Adopets in conjunction with their animal shelter management software in order to better market pets on their website and accept applications.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ At least two kennel staff members should always be stationed in the main kennel during open hours to care for the animals and to assist potential adopters. [High Priority]

➔ Fast track highly adoptable animals to move them out of the shelter as expeditiously as possible including requiring adopters to quickly pick up their adopted animals.

➔ Discontinue holding animals for 24 hours for potential adopters who have applied for adoption online. Instead, only use the online applications to pre-approve potential adopters and to urge them to come in to adopt.

➔ Ensure puppies that are old enough to be adopted are being put into the Puppy Adoption room as quickly as possible. Do not first hold them until they get two vaccinations.

➔ Participate in more off-site adoption events.

## Adoptions Process

LAS is currently requiring all potential adopters who rent to provide them with a letter from the landlord allowing them to adopt. Staff indicated that many do not come back after learning about that requirement. LAS staff also said that the current reasons to deny adoption include for breeding purposes, as guard dogs, for hunting or for gifts. The LAS website also says that a fence check is required for adopting certain animals.

In the past, some animal services shelters screened potential pet adopters very strictly to find the "perfect home," including requiring fence checks, landlord checks and veterinary references. This resulted in many potential adopters being turned down for adoption, while at the same time the shelters were euthanizing adoptable animals. To counteract this, the concept of "open adoptions" was promoted by leading animal welfare organizations. With open adoptions, shelters start with the knowledge that no home is perfect and are more welcoming and less judgmental. They try to find a good match for the potential adopter, rather than try to find reasons to turn them down. They also provide all of the educational information that a pet adopter will need to ensure their adoption is successful. Occasionally, applicants will still need to be turned down, but often the discussion and educational information will help the applicant realize this information on their own.

The way open adoptions is implemented can vary from shelter to shelter depending on the shelter, the community they serve, and the number of adoption counselors that they have. With open adoptions, shelters can ask on the application whether the place they rent will allow pets but they should not require a landlord letter or reference. Many shelters also allow adopters to adopt pets as

gifts for family members who live in the same residence. And fence checks are not required, though the potential adopter should be asked if they have a fence and what kind. While it is a good idea to continue to have a written adoption application since it gathers information very efficiently, there are several questions on LAS' adoption application that should be removed, such as the landlord's and veterinarian's phone numbers.

For more information about Open Adoptions, read:
https://humanepro.org/sites/default/files/documents/Adopters_Welcome_Manual_5-15-2020.pdf
https://network.bestfriends.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Adoptions_Training%20PlaybookPDF_8.17.2022_0.pdf
https://humanepro.org/page/adopters-welcome-faqs

LAS has no SOPs regarding adoption, however, an adoption SOP should be written that lists the reasons that a potential adopter can be turned down. It is also a good idea to look in the software system for City residents prior to adopting a pet to ensure there have not been field activity complaints at the potential adopter's home that need to be discussed prior to adoption to ensure the complaints have been resolved. Additional reasons to turn a potential adopter down that could be modified for LAS' needs and included in the SOPs (besides previous cruelty/neglect charges) are:

- Dogs will not be adopted into homes where they will be permanently tethered to a stationary object.
- Dogs will only be adopted into homes where they will be kept as outside dogs if the dog is enclosed in a fenced area, if the dog is a hardy enough breed to withstand the elements and if the owners agree to bring the dog inside or into the garage during extreme weather conditions. Toy and small breed dogs will not be adopted as outside dogs. During cold winter weather months, puppies under 5 months of age will not be adopted into outside only homes regardless of their breed.
- Staff and members of the public may adopt no more than 3 dogs and 3 cats per year.
- Pets will not be adopted to anyone who has a history within the past five years of: losing multiple animals; having accidents happen to multiple animals; not providing adequate veterinary care for multiple animals; turning in multiple animals to the shelter; receiving multiple citations of the animal ordinance (on different occasions) or giving away multiple animals unless the reasons for the issue have been remedied or unless the adopter is adopting a different species or type of animal that won't cause the problem and a manager approves the adoption.
- Animals will not be adopted to anyone who appears to be intoxicated or using drugs.

Which staff member performs the adoption counseling at animal services shelters can vary. Many animal services shelters hire Adoption Counselors to perform adoptions counseling. Some Adoption Counselor positions also have the duty of Social Media Specialists and are responsible for including making well-written social media posts to promote pets for adoption, writing positive sounding short biographies of the adoptable animals in Chameleon so it is displayed on the website, and responding to email inquiries and calls about pets for adoption. This would be very helpful and

beneficial at LAS. The Kennel Attendants should be trained to serve as adoption counselor backups when the Adoption Counselor/Social Media Specialist is off work or on breaks.

At many operations, the Adoption Counselor uses a private room with a desk and computer so they can review the adoption application, provide educational information to the adopter to ensure the adoption is successful and confidentially discuss adoption counseling topics. This does not need to be a long, drawn out process. In most cases, the adoption counselor can review the application and quickly ascertain that the adopter will be a responsible pet owner. In other cases, the Adoption Counselor may need to educate the adopter about heartworm prevention, the importance of annual vaccinations, etc. The Adoption Counselor also often provides educational flyers about housebreaking, heartworm prevention, etc. in a folder that goes home with the animal. The Adoption Counselor also usually processes the adoption in the software system and collects the adoption fees.

LAS current adoption fee does not include a rabies vaccination and the new adopter is required to pay an additional $25 fee directly to the contracted veterinarian in order to obtain the rabies vaccination. This is highly unusual and all other animal services shelters that I'm aware of do include a rabies vaccination with the adoption.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Discontinue requiring a letter from the landlord in order for a renter to adopt and discontinue requiring phone numbers from landlords or veterinarians. Instead, just ask the potential adopter if they are allowed to have pets where they rent and discuss the need to provide veterinary care for adopted animals to ensure that veterinary care will be provided.

➔ Write Adoption SOPs which, among other things, lists the reasons that a potential adopter can be turned down.

➔ Hire an Adoption Counselor/Social Media Specialist position to perform adoption counseling including educating the pet owner to ensure the adoption is successful and the animal will be well cared for, to make social media posts, to write Chameleon memos displayed on the website about animals for adoption and to answer emails and phone calls about animals for adoption from the public. Ensure Kennel Attendants are trained as a backup for when the Adoption Counselor is off work or on lunch breaks. Ensure the Adoption Counselor/Social Media specialist is given a desk with a computer in an area where they can privately counsel potential adopters. See Appendix VIII - Sample Adoption Counselor Job Description .

## Open Selection

In an effort to increase the adoption rate and reduce the length of stay, many shelters allow the public to view and pre-adopt friendly animals that are still under their stray hold periods. This is

often referred to as "open selection." If a potential adopter comes to LAS to adopt but doesn't see an animal they would like to adopt in the adoption rooms, they should be escorted to the Intake building and the Kennel Attendants stationed in the Intake building should show them the animals there, including those still under the stray hold.

How shelters handle allowing potential adopters to interact with stray hold animals can vary. Some animal services shelters allow potential adopters to interact with and pre-adopt all friendly stray animals unless the animal has identification or the shelter has reason to think they will be reclaimed. The potential adopters are allowed to visit with the animal in a safe area that prevents escape, such as in a meet and greet room or in a fenced meet and greet pen outside. Some shelters then actually go ahead and process the adoption (contracts state that the adoption doesn't take effect until after the stray hold) and collect adoption fees or deposits. This allows the animal to be altered on the morning their hold is over and be picked up by the adopter immediately afterwards. This often works well in locations that have low reclaim rates and are often overcrowded. If the animal is reclaimed within the three days, the adopter is called and his adoption fee refunded or credited towards another pet.

Other shelters allow pet owners to interact with the stray animal, to apply for and be approved for adoption and consider the animal "pre-adopted" but do not process the adoption or collect fees at that time. Shelters with in-house veterinarians usually then alter the animal on the day it is due out and then the potential adopter comes back to the shelter on the afternoon the animal is altered, the adoption is processed, adoption fees collected and they take the animal home. Some shelters like Austin Animal Services provide these adopters with a stray hold disclaimer form: https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/AAC/Stray%20Hold%20Disclaimer%202.25.2022.pdf

Since LAS has adopters pick up their adopted animals directly from the veterinary clinic after it is altered, that means that unless the adoption is pre-processed and adoption fees already collected, the adopter will need to make an additional visit to the shelter to complete the adoption process. This could be handled by considering the animal "pre-adopted," sending the animal to the clinic to be altered on the day it is due out, but requiring the adopter to come to the shelter first before picking up at the vet clinic in order to finalize the adoption. Adopters would need to show adoption paperwork at the vet clinic prior to being allowed to pick up the animal.

In all of these methods, cage cards are often stamped (or written) with "Adoption Pending" or an "Adoption Pending" laminated card is put in the cage card holder. "Adoption Pending" is also sometimes written by their name in Chameleon. A hold is also put on the animal and memos are written with the contact info about the pending adoption. The adoption counselor often calls the pending adopter the evening before the animal becomes available to remind them to come in at the specific times and reprints cards and takes holds off of any animal whose pending adopter does not show up within the one hour allotted time.

There are some shelters that allow potential adopters to look at and interact with the stray animals through the cage/kennel doors, but do not allow them to visit in meet and greet rooms/pens with stray animals or consider the animal "pre-adopted" until the stray hold is up. Due to the extremely low reclaim rate at LAS, I think that adopters should be allowed to interact with stray animals. However, if LAS does not want to do that then they could implement a one-person waiting list policy which allows one person to be approved for adoption and be given a one hour time window (12pm-1pm) on the day the stray animal is due-out in order to come back, visit with the animal and decide if they want to adopt it. If they do not adopt it within that one hour time window, then the animal would go back to a first-come, first-serve of adopters or rescuers. A "Waiting List Full" laminated card could be put in the animal's cage card holders or the cage cards could be stamped (or written) with "Waiting List Full" in those cases.

For more information about Open Selection, read:
https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/?r=open-selection
https://news.wttw.com/2019/03/15/new-screening-process-city-shelter-fast-tracking-cat-and-dog-adoptions
https://www.maddiesfund.org/open-selection-putting-dogs-and-cats-on-the-fast-track-to-adoption.htm

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ To increase the adoption rate, if a potential adopter does not see an animal for adoption in the main kennel then ensure that they are escorted by kennel staff to the Intake building so they can look at available animals not yet moved to the adoption floor or that are still under the stray hold period. Also allow them to preadopt the stray animals using one of the methods described in this section or a similar one. If they are placed on a preadoption waiting list, allow them one hour of opening time (12PM-1PM) to come to the shelter to adopt the animal after which it goes back to a first-come, first serve of potential adopters or rescue groups.

## Working Cat Program

Working Cat Programs, also called Barn Cat Programs, are programs that place feral or semi-feral cats and other cats unsuitable for adoption into barns, warehouses, garages, and other similar situations. Working Cats are also adopted to regular homes who agree to provide shelter and keep them in their backyards. The cats are fed, watered and provided shelter by the person adopting the working cat, but are kept mostly as mousers, as opposed to being kept as pets. Working Cat programs usually provide these cats for free, though some suggest an optional donation, and provide their adopters with detailed instructions about how to orientate the cats to their new homes so they don't run off.

Until LAS implements a TNR program, feral and semiferal cats should be eligible for this program. Working Cat adopters must be given very specific instructions about how to acclimate the cats so

they know they are home and do not run off. Some shelters use volunteers to deliver the feral cats and set them up and give instructions to the new adopter.

Examples of working cat programs are below:

- https://weatherfordtx.gov/3304/Barn-Cat-Program
- https://www.collincountytx.gov/public_information/features/Pages/BarnCatz.aspx
- https://www.houstontx.gov/barc/Working%20Cats.html
- https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/regional-animal-services/special-programs/barn-cats-r-us.aspx
- https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/animalservices/adoption/freelancefelines.html
- https://www.kerncountyanimalservices.org/what-we-do/barncat-program
- https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/animalservices/working-cat-program.html

The Working Cat program should be advertised regularly on social media. Flyers and other advertisements should be put out in local feed and seed stores and other places where people who have farms/barns may congregate. Articles should also be written in local media about the program.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Implement a free working cat/barn cat adoption program as soon as possible for feral, semiferal, unfriendly or unsocialized cats. Market the program widely. An optional donation can be asked for at the time of the working cat adoption. [High Priority]

## TNR

Trap/neuter/return (TNR) is a process where healthy feral and community cats are trapped, spayed/neutered, vaccinated, ear tipped, and then returned to their original location. TNR was often formerly referred to as trap/neuter/release and is sometimes also referred to as a community cat program. TNR is endorsed by all leading animal welfare organizations including the Humane Society of the United States, ASPCA, UC Koret, Best Friends Animal Society, PetSmart Charities, Alley Cat Allies, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, and the Million Cat Challenge. Some feral cats that undergo the TNR process are cared for by community caretakers, while most others are able to thrive without human intervention and live in neighborhoods, shopping centers, commercial properties, near dumpsters, etc.

LAS currently provides no TNR and instead, feral cats are euthanized on the day they arrive at the shelter. LAS needs to work to implement a TNR program as soon as possible and to stop accepting feral cats to only euthanize them.

The ways that a TNR program can be implemented can vary. The feral or community cats can be trapped and returned by animal services staff, shelter volunteers, nonaffiliated feral cat caretakers in the community or non-profit organizations. One simple way to implement TNR at LAS is to just provide the funding for the veterinary portion (spay/neuter, vaccinations, ear tipping) at a private

veterinary clinic and to divert all calls about feral cats to nonaffiliated feral cat caretakers in the community or a nonprofit organization who agrees to handles counseling callers, trapping the cats and providing the TNR. Sometimes animal services shelters will also provide a supply of cat traps that they provide to feral cat caretakers with a refundable deposit. Other times, animal services operations handle all aspects of TNR themselves. They have a staff member who is the Feral Cat Coordinator who goes out and traps cats, takes them to the shelter or a vet clinic for the spay/neuter and then releases the cats.

Most animal services shelters in Texas that I am familiar with do have a TNR/Community Cat program. For information about their particular program, see (or contact): Austin Animal Services, Waco Animal Services, Dallas Animal Services, BARC Animal Shelter, Fort Bend Animal Services, and Weatherford Parker County Animal Shelter.

LAS could fundraise and write grants to provide money for the TNR program. Best Friends Animal Society often will completely fund TNR programs in areas where there are none and should also be contacted to see if they can be of assistance. More information about how to start a TNR program can be found at:
https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/outdoor-cats-faq
https://www.maddiesfund.org/how-to-start-a-trap-neuter-return-program.htm
https://www.alleycat.org/resources/how-to-implement-an-organizational-trap-neuter-return-program/

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ LAS should implement a TNR program as soon as possible and should discontinue accepting feral cats only to euthanize them. [High Priority]

## Rescue Program

The percentage of animals transferred to rescue at LAS has increased very significantly in the past few years and is directly responsible for the improvement in the live release rate. However, at LAS this is mostly due to volunteers, one in particular, who handle most aspects of the rescue program. At most other animal services shelters, a staff member is put in charge of rescue (even if they don't have the title of rescue coordinator) or upper management themselves directly handle much of the rescue program, including regularly reaching out to rescue groups to urge them to rescue particular animals.

LAS has very recently hired a Rescue Coordinator, which is excellent. The new Rescue Coordinator should work in conjunction with the current volunteer rescue coordinator in order to ensure a smooth transition.

Because LAS has relied on volunteers to perform duties normally handled by staff members or management, there have been some conflicts between volunteers and staff. This is understandable

since LAS management has been allowing volunteers to make decisions typically handled by a staff member who has authority to make these types of decisions. Now that a Rescue Coordinator has been hired many of these conflicts should naturally dissipate. In the meantime, there are some policy changes that can be made in order to improve the situation.

The first is to differentiate between a rescue group program and a transport program.  Most animal services shelters rely on local rescue groups, or those within a hour or two driving distance, who tag (put a hold on) an animal and then quickly pick them up, usually without the shelter having to provide the spay/neuter except in special cases as an incentive. This is typically considered a rescue group program at a shelter. For example, Weatherford Parker County Animal Services' (WPCAS) rescue policy says that: "Rescue groups must pick up a tagged animal by end of day on day the animal is available and confirmed by WPCAS. Failure to pick up animal or communicate with staff will forfeit the tag on the animal."

At LAS, a large portion of the rescue groups are not local ones but are instead transports to out-of-state shelters or shelters many hours away, which is typically considered a transport program. Therefore, these animals must be held sometimes for two or more weeks until the transport arrangements can be made, interstate health certificates obtained and the animals picked up by either the organization that provides the transport or the organization who will be receiving the animals. LAS has also been paying to spay/neuter, microchip and give rabies vaccination to many of these animals. While it is truly fantastic that animals are being sent on transport programs and these programs should be continued and expanded, LAS is currently treating transport programs the same way as rescue programs and are allowing the transport groups to tag animals and hold them in the shelter for weeks that might have otherwise been adopted. In addition, I was told that sometimes puppies are also being tagged and held in the shelter for two weeks before pickup because some rescue groups require two vaccines prior to rescue.

In order to move as many animals out of the shelter to a final live outcome as quickly as possible, LAS should implement a policy that allows rescue groups to tag any animal at any time including during the stray hold, however, that also requires them to pick up the tagged animals within three days of the tag without LAS shelter spay/neutering it first *if the animal has been housed at the shelter for less than a certain time period, such as 7 days or 10 days.* This means that any stray animal that is tagged on the day it comes in must be picked up on the day it becomes available, since that is three days after the tag. Only animals held over the designated time period (EX: 7 or 10 days) would be allowed to be tagged for transport programs or rescue groups that take longer than three days to pick up. LAS management and the new Rescue Coordinator could make exceptions to this policy in special circumstances, such as when multiple animals are being picked up or transported within four days of tag, or when foster homes can be found to hold the animals until they can be picked up.

A volunteer mentioned that when they make Facebook posts about animals that are in danger of euthanasia, one particular manager tells callers that the animal is not in danger of euthanasia, which then discourages the caller from adopting or rescuing the animal. I personally overheard that manager telling a caller that exact thing about a particular dog that had been posted. This is the

wrong approach. LAS is frequently full and animals are almost always in danger of euthanasia. Even if that particular animal is not on the euthanasia list for the next day, they might be in a few days or in a week or they might catch a disease at the shelter and be euthanized because of it. In addition, getting that animal out of the shelter may create space which will allow another animal to be saved instead of being euthanized. Unless things at LAS change dramatically, if a caller asks if an animal posted as being in danger of euthanasia is going to be euthanized then whoever answers the phone, including management, should say something similar to: "Yes, we are full and either that animal or another one will be euthanized to make space unless we get more animals adopted or rescued." If the caller wants to know exactly what day the animal is going to be euthanized, LAS staff and management should say that they don't know (unless they actually do know) and it really depends on how many animals they can get out of the shelter in the next day or two. They should also urge the caller to come in to adopt or rescue the animal they are calling about.

At many animal services shelters, an "animals in danger" or "urgent" list is provided by the shelter whenever the shelter is overcrowded or on a regular basis to let rescue groups know which animals might be euthanized if the shelter runs out of space. This doesn't mean that the animals on the list will be euthanized on a particular date if they are still there, just that they might be if a critical space situation happens. These are often animals that have been at the shelter over a certain time period, have special needs or treatable behavioral issues (not truly aggressive dogs). LAS should consider providing an "urgent" list to rescue groups, but should provide the list at least five days before the animal might actually be euthanized in order to give rescue groups time to make arrangements.

Some shelters post their animals in danger list on their websites for rescue groups or have a separate Facebook page just for urgent animals or animals that need rescue. Some of these are automatically generated for every animal in the shelter that has been there over a designated time period, such as ten days or two weeks, and for all animals that have health issues. Examples of websites are:
https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/code-compliance/animals/codered
https://www.houstontx.gov/barc/urgent-pets.html
https://rcdas.org/list-animals-need-rescue

Finally, I spoke to the Director at the Winnie Berry Humane Society about rescuing animals from LAS. She indicated that they have not been rescuing animals from LAS mostly due to disease concerns, because so many animals that they have previously rescued have gotten sick. I asked if they could rescue animals, including puppies, that were first placed into foster homes for two weeks and then transferred to their humane society and she said that was something that definitely might work. She also said that Winnie Berry may even be able to reserve a certain number of cages or kennels at their shelter for this LAS rescue program. Because Winnie Berry is a small program this will not involve a large number of animals transferred, however, every little bit helps.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Fast track highly adoptable animals to move them out of the shelter as expeditiously as possible by requiring rescue groups that tag any animal that has been housed at the shelter for less than a certain time period, such as seven or ten days, to pick those animals up (preferably without first having to alter them) within three days of tag, otherwise do not allow the tag. Only allow animals that have been sheltered for over that time period to be available to be tagged for transport programs or for rescue groups that require longer to pickup, including those requiring two vaccines prior to rescue. Exceptions can be made by upper management and/or the Rescue Coordinator on a case-by-case basis.

➔ Discontinue telling adopters and rescuers that individual animals posted by volunteers on Facebook are not in danger of euthanasia if they are not on the euthanasia list for that day and instead say something similar to what is written in this section.

➔ Occasionally provide rescue groups with an "urgent" or "animals in danger" list at least five days in advance of any potential euthanasia. This can be a list of animals that have been there the longest or that have special health or treatable behavioral needs.

➔ Work with the Winnie Berry Humane Society to set up regular transfers from LAS foster homes to the humane society.

## Transport Program

Transport programs drive, or occasionally fly, adoptable animals from shelters where the animals are in abundance to shelters located many hours away where they are in demand, usually because spay/neuter programs are plentiful and more successful. Mostly due to the efforts of the volunteer rescue coordinator, other volunteers and donors, LAS has a thriving transport program and is sending many animals on long distance transports.

Transport programs require drivers, a transport vehicle, often require holding animals in foster homes until the transport and all of the animals must first obtain a veterinary health certificate for interstate travel. I was told that LAS is spay/neutering many of the animals going on interstate transports but most of the receiving shelters that I am familiar with or have personally worked with will spay/neuter the animals after they are received, so that often doesn't need to be done in advance by the shelter. The animals going on a transports are often driven by shelter volunteers (who sign liability waivers) or staff, however, they can also be transported by a nonprofit or by companies that are paid to do the transport. EX:
- https://mightymuttshipping.com/
- https://rescueroadtrips.org/faq/
- https://operationpetsalive.org/programs/transport/
- https://www.projectfreedomride.org/
- https://godsdogsrescue.org/

Young puppies, especially of the breeds seen at LAS, are usually in very high demand in the north and some receiving shelters will take the mother dogs too, but the receiving shelter will provide the criteria of the types of animals they will take and what prerequisites must be met before transport. Many receiving shelters require the sending shelter to perform certain behavior assessment tests on adult dogs. Some of the receiving shelters also require the animal to have been out of the shelter for a minimum of two weeks for health reasons, either in a foster home or boarding facility.

The new LAS Rescue Coordinator should continue to look for additional transport partners. Some of the receiving shelters that I have personally used or know about are in the list below, however, there are receiving shelters all over the northern states, including in Illinois and Indiana, that may be willing to receive LAS' animals. Some of these shelters in the list below may have also made changes since Covid. Several act as transport hubs, moving the animals out from their shelter to their transport receiving shelters. Another good place to find new transport program partners would be to join and reach out to the Best Friends Network to ask for advice on finding receiving shelters willing to take your animals. Be sure to tell all potential transport program partners about LAS' abundance of puppies.

> North Shore Animal League (NY) (known for taking puppies, they have their own transport vehicles but as far as I know also still also take puppies that are driven to them)
> The ASPCA has a transport program that transports from Texas shelters to northern shelters (the Watershed route):
> https://www.aspcapro.org/about-programs-services/shelter-outreach
> Humane Animal Welfare Society (WI) https://hawspets.org/
> Dane County Humane Society (WI) https://www.giveshelter.org/
> https://www.animalleague.org/what-we-do/rescue/national-animal-rescue/
> Dakin Humane Society (MA) https://www.dakinhumane.org/transport-program
> Potter League (RI) https://potterleague.org/resources/transport-program/
> Northeast Animal Shelter (MA) https://www.northeastanimalshelter.org/animalrelocation/
> Connecticut Humane Society (CT) https://cthumane.org/
> St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center (NJ)
> https://www.sthuberts.org/waystation-animal-relocation
> Brandywine Valley SPCA (PA) https://bvspca.org/about-us/second-chance-program

So that LAS doesn't need to euthanize for space or overcrowd the shelter while waiting for animals to leave on a transport, as many animals as possible that are selected for transport programs should be put into foster homes. In addition, a "Friends of" type of group could assist by transferring animals to their own rescue program to hold in their own foster homes until the transport (See Suggestions for Volunteers Section).

Compatible, same sex animals waiting for transport could also be co-housed at LAS if space becomes an issue. Some animal services shelters will even pay to board animals going on transports rather than euthanize other animals for space if a foster home can not be found and if the receiving shelter requires them to be out of the shelter for two weeks prior to transport.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ LAS should look for additional transport receiving shelters and should also work to put as many animals as possible going on transports into foster homes or to find rescue groups willing to hold the animals in their foster homes until transport.

➔ If for some reason a foster home can not be found, LAS should consider co-housing compatible animals being held for transport programs rather than euthanizing any shelter animals for space reasons.

## Volunteer Program

Animal services shelters are not required to have a volunteer program; however, volunteers can be one of an animal services shelter's best assets and a well-managed and well-structured volunteer program can help the shelter save money and operate more effectively. While LAS does have a volunteer program, it is currently unstructured, seems self managed and some volunteers have been given capabilities far beyond a typical volunteer program. In addition, several survey responders complained that some volunteers do not follow rules and have been allowed by LAS management to make most of the decisions at the shelter.

It is true that some of the current volunteers seem to be acting as staff members or rescue group members who are handling and making decisions about animals in their own rescue group, rather than volunteers in a typical animal services volunteer program. For instance, the volunteers take LAS' animals to their own veterinarians and/or bring their own veterinarian to the shelter, which is pretty much unheard of at other animal services shelters. Volunteers also seem to be the only ones at the shelter contacting rescue groups and transport partners, arranging and paying for transports, providing flea treatments and some medications normally kept in stock at shelters, making marketing posts with good photographs of animals for adoption or rescue on social media, deciding where in the shelter to house the animals going on transports, etc.

Up until approximately one week before my onsite visit, some volunteers had been allowed to have keys to the shelter and come in at night after closing, alone, to directly interact with animals. Some volunteers had also permanently removed animals from the building at night without approval from LAS managers. I was told that the locks were changed and volunteers no longer have the ability to come in at night, which I think was a good decision for safety and liability reasons, though the volunteers with keys should have been given a heads up and an explanation.

There are no rules for how a volunteer program must be set up and there may be other animal services volunteer programs that allow volunteers to have these extended capabilities, though I don't personally know of any. All that being said, even though volunteers normally shouldn't be allowed to make shelter decisions or be given some of these extended capabilities, in the case of LAS, it is understandable why it has evolved this way since the volunteers have been the only ones

seemingly focusing on lifesaving efforts and if they didn't perform these duties or make these decisions, it seems that no one else at LAS would.

Once LAS management starts to diligently work to increase lifesaving efforts and to make decisions that supports those efforts, then many of the current problems and conflicts should naturally dissipate. In addition, every volunteer program should have a Volunteer Coordinator or another designated employee to manage, structure and enforce rules for the volunteer program. LAS has no Volunteer Coordinator and no staff member or manager seems to be performing the normal duties of a Volunteer Coordinator, which is also causing some of the problems.

Therefore, LAS should hire a Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator as soon as possible to rectify this situation. This position is typically salaried, also often handles offsite adoption events, and pays significantly more than a Kennel Attendant position. The Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator at LAS should work Tuesday - Saturday and sometimes work on Sundays if there are offsite events scheduled. The Volunteer Coordinator should be given a desk with a computer that is located in an area easily accessible to volunteers. Once a Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator position is hired, LAS should begin to regularly advertise on social media and elsewhere for more volunteers.

LAS' volunteer handbook is almost ten years old, is out of date in areas and is missing some areas that are covered in other handbooks. LAS may want to compare their handbook to some more recent handbooks like the following and make updates:
https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cacc/PDFiles/CACC_Volunteer_Handbook_2022.pdf
https://www.osceolacountypets.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Osceola-County-Animal-Services-Volunteer-Handbook-10-28-18.pdf
https://www.placer.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2373/Volunteer-Handbook-PDF

It would also be helpful for the current Volunteer Handbook to be updated so that volunteers know who they should directly report to if they have a question, issue or concern instead of going to kennel staff members. For example, Houston Animal Services volunteer manual states: (https://www.houstontx.gov/barc/BARC%20Volunteer%20Handbook%20MOST%20UTD.pdf):

> "Your point of contact regarding volunteering or shelter activities is the Volunteer Coordinator. Bring your concerns and questions to him first. If you have a complaint regarding a staff member or an issue with BARC policy, immediately bring it to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator so it can be resolved."

Many animal services operations only allow volunteers over the age of 18 or have other restrictions, such as requiring volunteers between the ages of 13-17 to be restricted to only interacting with cats. Some operations have their Volunteer Coordinator interview all volunteer candidates prior to allowing them to volunteer. This establishes the potential volunteer's interests and ensures that the person will be a good fit for the organization. Some very well intentioned people simply do not consider the stress of volunteering in an open-admission animal services shelter and may become

overly emotional or have a difficult time handling the issues they encounter. Determining that in advance can benefit both the animal services shelter and the person, who might be better suited volunteering at a non-profit shelter or rescue. Some animal services operations also perform a background check on a potential volunteer prior to allowing them to volunteer.

The Volunteer Coordinator should give all new volunteers either group (sometimes held once or twice a month) or individual shelter tours, orientation and safety training prior to anyone being allowed to volunteer. Some shelters also provide portions of the orientation online, usually in training videos. Additional training should be provided prior to some duties.

All volunteers should also always wear a badge and/or t-shirt identifying them as a volunteer. Many animal shelters require volunteers to pay a small fee to cover the cost of a volunteer t-shirt and require their volunteers to wear the t-shirts whenever volunteering at the shelter or offsite events. Other shelters provide one t-shirt for free and allow volunteers to purchase additional ones. The t-shirts are often brightly colored and have "Volunteer" in large lettering on the front and back so that customers can differentiate them from staff members and so that staff members know they are volunteers who have gone through volunteer training and not regular members of the public.

Many animal services volunteer programs schedule their volunteers for shifts for certain duties, such as laundry, dishwashing, dog walking or veterinary clinic assistant, to ensure they have enough volunteers for each of the daily duties. This also ensures that volunteers are spread out evenly throughout the day and week and there are not too many volunteers at any given time. In the case of dog walking, methods should also be put into place so that one dog isn't being walked four times a day while others are overlooked and so that not too many dogs are out of the kennel being walked outside when adopters might be looking to adopt them. Most volunteer programs do not allow volunteers into the animal holding areas during morning shelter cleaning unless the volunteers are assigned/scheduled to assist with cleaning. If walking dogs during cage cleaning is implemented, volunteers who are assigned/scheduled to walk dogs can take photographs of their particular dog during the 15 minutes or so they are each being walked outside while their cage is being cleaned.

A large volume of animal services shelters use an inexpensive software called Volgistics to manage and schedule their volunteers in conjunction with their regular software. Many animal services operations also require a minimum number of volunteer hours per month to be met to remain an active volunteer. Most volunteer programs also require their volunteers to sign in and out.

Some animal services operations also have rules and an additional liability release form for volunteers who use their own vehicles to transport animals from the shelter to adoption events, to rescue groups and on transports. For example:

- http://www.acctphilly.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Transport-Driver-Manual.pdf
- http://www.acctphilly.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Volunteer-Vehicle-Use-Agreement.pdf

Many animal services operate their volunteer program on a tiered basis, first having volunteers perform beginner type tasks, like dishwashing, laundry and office record filing, then if successful proceeding on to the next tier. Longstanding, trustworthy volunteers may progress to become adoption counseling assistants and perform other specialized, approved duties. Example of volunteer programs with tiered levels are:

- [https://www.grapevinetexas.gov/1688/Animal-CareEnrichment-Volunteer](https://www.grapevinetexas.gov/1688/Animal-CareEnrichment-Volunteer)
- [https://www.washoecounty.gov/animal/who_we_are/volunteer.php](https://www.washoecounty.gov/animal/who_we_are/volunteer.php)
- [https://www.sddac.com/content/sdc/das/donate-volunteer/volunteer.html](https://www.sddac.com/content/sdc/das/donate-volunteer/volunteer.html)
- [http://madacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MADACC-Volunteer-Handbook-2017.pdf](http://madacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MADACC-Volunteer-Handbook-2017.pdf)
- [https://montgomerycountymd.gov/animalservices/Resources/Files/MCASACVolunteerManual.pdf](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/animalservices/Resources/Files/MCASACVolunteerManual.pdf)

Some of the most common duties that volunteers perform at animal services operations, depending on the shelter's needs, are listed below. Many of these duties are already being performed by LAS volunteers:

- Walking dogs (this is probably the most common volunteer activity)
- Providing animal enrichment and washing/disinfecting enrichment toys
- Taking better photographs of dogs and cats for the shelter to import into Chameleon and for the shelter and volunteers to post on social media to market pets for adoption and rescue (this is very important for marketing purposes)
- Washing laundry
- Washing food and water bowls
- Bathing and grooming dogs
- Assisting at offsite adoption events
- Driving animals to rescue groups and transport partners
- Posting stray pets on Nextdoor and other lost/found websites and apps
- Taking a few long term resident dogs wearing "adopt me" vests during lunchtime to places where people congregate.
- Front desk/office assistant
- Acting as a shelter greeter
- Networking to obtain donations for the shelter
- Handing out/hanging adoption marketing material in the community
- Assisting with maintenance, painting, cleanup and carpentry projects
- Helping to manage the crowd at low cost vaccination clinics
- Promoting and sharing pets for adoption on their personal social media
- Utilizing volunteers with special skills such as in graphics to create promotion flyers, videography, fundraising, etc.
- Basic dog training or training dogs with mild behavior issues*
- Spot cleaning cages and kennels*
- Acting as adoption counselor assistants*

- Delivering and setting up unfriendly cats adopted to businesses, farms, etc. in their "working cat" or "barn cat" program*
- Veterinary clinic assistance (EX: preparing surgical packs)*
- Supervising dog playgroups*
  (*Usually requires additional volunteer training and/or previous experience)

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Hire a Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator as soon as possible. Ensure the job duty also includes scheduling and attending offsite adoption events. Ensure they are given a desk and computer in a location accessible to volunteers.

➔ Once a Volunteer Coordinator is hired, advertise on social media and other places for more volunteers.

➔ Update the volunteer handbook to ensure it covers all important areas and includes who the volunteers report to. Distribute it to all volunteers.

➔ All new volunteer applications should be approved by the new Volunteer/Foster Coordinator. They should ensure the applicant does not have a history of cruelty or animal ordinance violations that have not been resolved. The Volunteer Coordinator may also want to interview potential volunteers prior to accepting them into the program.

➔ All new approved volunteers should go through volunteer orientation which gives a shelter tour, goes over rules, safety precautions and training for volunteer duties (EX: shown which dogs can be walked, how to properly hold the leash when walking dogs, where to walk them, etc.). Additional training should be provided for certain volunteer positions.

➔ All volunteers should be given a badge, a t-shirt that says "Volunteer" or something else that they must always wear when volunteering which readily identifies them to staff and customers as a volunteer.

➔ Additional volunteer duties such as the ones in the list in this section should be implemented by the new Volunteer Coordinator.

➔ The Volunteer Coordinator should schedule certain daily volunteer duties and should schedule some duties in shifts, as needed.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➔ LAS may want to implement a tiered volunteer program.

➔ LAS may want to use Volgistics to manage the volunteer program and schedule the volunteers.

## Foster Home Program

Foster home caregivers are volunteers who agree to provide care for a shelter animal in their own home. Foster home programs are put into place at animal services shelters in order to alleviate overcrowding and to provide a safe and healthy environment for animals who need to heal, grow or get some extra care or attention. The animals in a foster home still legally belong to the animal services shelter and ownership is not transferred to the foster homes.

A robust foster home program can increase life saving efforts, but it requires oversight to function properly.  A foster home program can be particularly helpful when managing underage animals, dogs that need behavior modification, and animals that may need veterinary treatment or recovery from injury, as well as when the shelter is overcrowded. Some animal services shelters also use trustworthy, longstanding foster homes to hold friendly court case animals until the case is resolved. The foster home must be aware that the court may return the animal back to the original owner in some circumstances.

At LAS it would also be very helpful to build up the foster home program to hold all animals that are going on transport programs so that these animals do not have to be held in the shelter. Because these foster homes are short term (2-3 weeks), they are often easier to find than foster homes for longer term animals.

During observations, LAS management stated that there were between 15-20 animals in the foster program, which is a very small number for a shelter with intake of over 3000 animals. Besides having this limited foster program, there is also little oversight or management of the program. LAS also doesn't provide a Foster Home handbook or provide training for fostering neonatal puppies and kittens, both of which are standard in the industry.

Examples of foster home handbooks can be found all over the internet including:
- https://www.multcopets.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Dog%20Foster%20Handbook.pdf
- https://dallascityhall.com/departments/dallas-animal-services/DCH%20Documents/DAS-PRO-406.pdf
- https://www.memphistn.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MAS-Dog-Foster-Handbook.pdf
- https://www.maricopa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/69492/Foster-Handbook---42121-v2?bidId=
- https://animalservices.columbiasc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Foster-Care-Guide.pdf
- https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcapro-feline-foster-care-guide.pdf
- https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/customizable-guides-cat-dog-foster-homes

- https://elpasoanimalservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Foster-Dog-Guide-2019-v2.pdf

Most animal services operations advertise for foster homes on social media and on their website. LAS does not seem to be doing any advertising for foster homes and seems reliant on volunteers to do so. Some animal services operations also create informational videos about their foster home program to advertise on their website and social media such as: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjTSnE837bs

It is always better to transfer animals to a Rescue Group rather than to a foster home whenever possible so that the burden for their care and eventual adoption is lifted from the shelter and so that the burden of managing, and paying veterinary care for, foster homes is lifted from the shelter. Therefore, animals should only be placed in foster homes if Rescue Groups cannot be found. Another option is to place an animal in a foster home temporarily, while the Rescue Coordinator is attempting to find rescue and then transfer the animal from foster to rescue. Some shelters also place sick animals in foster homes and once the animal is healthy, they transfer them to Rescue Groups, unless a Rescue Group can be found to take the sick animals directly.

LAS currently requires foster homes to pay for veterinary care for their foster animals. This is not standard or typical in the industry and almost all foster care programs provide veterinary care for their foster animals. LAS should correct this policy and should provide veterinary treatment for their foster animals, but require that each foster home get pre-approval from the Foster Home Coordinator and also require the foster homes to take the animals to pre-approved veterinary clinic(s) if they want the shelter to pay.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Hire a Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator as soon as possible.

➔ LAS management should create a foster home handbook giving rules and educational information for the fosters.

➔ A foster home page should be put on the website with a link to the foster home application. Foster homes should be advertised for on social media.

➔ Foster home applications should be screened by the new LAS Volunteer/Foster Home Coordinator to ensure the foster home is responsible, stable and able to house the foster pet in a safe and healthy environment. If they are located in the City, the foster home name and foster home address should also be looked up in the field software system to ensure that there is no history of animal control problems.

➔ To ensure they stay in contact with foster homes, the Volunteer/Foster Coordinator should regularly send out emails, preferably once-per-week, to all foster homes and require them to respond.

➔ LAS should provide pre-approved veterinary care at certain clinic(s) to foster animals and the foster home contract should be updated to remove the requirement that foster homes pay for veterinary care for their foster pets.

➔ As many animals going on transports as possible should be put into foster homes (or transferred to a local group willing to hold them until transport), rather than holding them in the shelter.

➔ The Foster Home Coordinator should provide additional training to foster homes that are willing to provide foster care to neonatal animals, including an additional neonatal care handbook or guide.

## Suggestions for LAS Volunteers and Supporters

There are numerous nonprofit 501C3 organizations all over the country that exist to assist their local animal services organization. For simplicity sake, these will be referred to as "Friends of" organizations in this section since many of those groups name themselves "Friends of XX Animal Services." There is already one nonprofit organization that assists LAS by fundraising for shelter veterinary care, however, that organization could expand to provide additional services or additional volunteers could incorporate, obtain a 501C3 designation and provide some of these services as well.

*Most importantly* in this City and County, a nonprofit humane organization, "Friends of" group or charitable foundation needs to open a low cost spay/neuter clinic or purchase a new or used [spay/neuter mobile van](#) (though mobile units can be limited in space for dogs) to provide low cost spay/neuters. Grants should be obtained or charitable contributions collected so that the spay/neuter can be provided for free to low income pet owners or those experiencing financial hardships. Until that time, the nonprofits, "Friends of" and/or charitable foundations should work to obtain donations and grants and implement a low cost or free spay/neuter voucher program at local veterinary clinics. EX:

> [https://friendsofoas.org/programs/petfix-spay-neuter/](https://friendsofoas.org/programs/petfix-spay-neuter/)
> [https://www.animalfriendswv.org/spayneuter/](https://www.animalfriendswv.org/spayneuter/)
> [https://www.fohcas.org/snap](https://www.fohcas.org/snap)

Some additional suggestions for services nonprofit "Friends of" type group(s) could provide to help LAS reduce the length of stay, improve operations and increase the live release rate are below:

● Serve as rescue groups to pull animals from LAS. Suggestions include:

○ Acting as a middle man/transport hub by pulling dogs and cats from LAS as soon as they are tagged by a rescue (if going on transport or not being picked up within 3 days of tag) and housing them in "Friends of" foster homes until the other rescue

group or transport partner can pick them up or until they are driven to a transport partner. Ownership of these animals would be legally transferred from LAS to the "Friends of" group as a rescue transfer and then, when picked up, ownership would be transferred from the "Friends of" group to the final rescue group or transport partner. This would keep LAS from having to hold the animals in the shelter until transport which overcrowds the shelter. This also keeps LAS from having to hold the animals in their own foster homes, which means that the animals would be off of LAS' "books" and one less animal that LAS would need to pay for veterinary care and keep up with. The "Friends of" group could then use any veterinarian they want to pay in order to obtain necessary veterinary care and health certificates.

○   Pulling litters of puppies from LAS, preferably as soon as they arrive, and housing them in "Friends of" foster homes until a rescue group or transport partner can be found or instead of holding them for two weeks in the shelter in order to get two vaccines for certain rescue groups. Ownership of these puppies would be legally transferred from LAS to the "Friends of" group (after the 3 day hold) as a rescue. If "Friends of" indoor foster homes can not be found for the puppies, then outdoor dog kennels could be purchased from places like Lowes, Home Depot or [Tractor Supply](#) to house the puppies in foster homes except in the winter or in extreme weather conditions. A dog kennel cover or tarp for shade and a dog house would also be needed. The "Friends of" group could then use any veterinarian they want to pay in order to obtain necessary veterinary care.

○   Covered outdoor kennel runs could be built/installed on someone affiliated with the "Friends of" group's property to temporarily house dogs in until they go on a transport. For instance, 10 covered dog runs installed on a cement slab with dog houses. Or, the animals could be temporarily housed inside a building, if one is available, and indoor kennel runs installed. Ownership of these animals would be legally transferred from LAS to the "Friends of" group as a rescue. This would require "Friends of" volunteers to care for those dogs until they leave on a transport. Again, this would keep LAS from having to house those dogs at the shelter or in one of their own foster homes. The "Friends of" group could then use any veterinarian they want to pay in order to obtain necessary veterinary care and health certificates. An example of a nonprofit "Friends of" type organization that holds animals going on transports is: http://www.humanesocietycherokeecounty.com/about.html

○   Open a small, offsite adoption center in a strip mall or other visible area that adopts out animals pulled from LAS. The animals would be legally transferred from LAS to the "Friends of" group and then housed at the "Friends of" adoption center until they can be adopted. Once adopted, ownership of the animals would be transferred from the "Friends of" group to the new adopter. More information about what would be needed in the center can be provided if this is something that is considered.

- Have the "Friends of" group purchase a Sprinter or cargo van, church/transport bus or some other transport vehicle (animal holding area should be heated/cooled) and have "Friends of" volunteers drive LAS animals (preferably from "Friends of" foster homes, but could also be from the LAS shelter or LAS foster homes) to transport partner receiving shelters. Church transport type buses without passenger seats can be good to use on long distance transports because they are tall and wide enough to stack three metal crates of different sizes on top of each other on each side of the aisle and still have room to walk down the middle to check on the animals during the drive.

- Man a "Friends of" pet retention/owner surrender phone line which LAS could refer callers to in order to provide counseling, assistance or diversion to a rescue group to pet owners who say they need to give up their pets. Also provide owners with crates, fencing assistance, dog trainer assistance and other things that may be needed in order for the owner to retain their pets.

- Fundraise and write grants to fund and provide low cost and/or free vaccination and microchipping clinics and to fund free spay/neuter and free microchips to all pets reclaimed from LAS.

- Fundraise and write grants to implement a Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) program.

- Provide humane education through billboards, articles written in papers, social media, flyers hung up where people congregate, TV and radio commercials, speaking engagements, presentations at meetings and other marketing methods in order to educate adults in the community about: 1) the importance of spay/neuter and low cost resources  2) the importance of rabies and distemper/parvo or FVRCP vaccinations 3 )the importance of pet ID tags and microchipping and 4) the importance of adopting an animal from the LAS shelter.

- Manage the TNR program by having LAS refer callers about community or feral cats to a "Friends of" phone number and have "Friends of" volunteers educate callers about the TNR process, and also have the "Friends of" volunteers trap feral cats, drive them to/from the veterinary clinic and return them.

- Collect donated pet food and distribute to low income pet owners as a "Friends of" pet food pantry.

- Fundraise and write grants to provide a "Friends of" community veterinary care monetary assistance for low income pet owners who can not afford to pay for the needed veterinary care in order to keep their pets.

- Fundraise to pay for a dog trainer to go to LAS to work with dogs with treatable behavior problems.

Many nonprofit animal welfare organizations, including "Friends of" organizations, open thrift stores to benefit their cause and are able to raise a very significant amount of funds that way since the items in the thrift store being sold are donated. EX:

> http://www.folcas.com/thrift-store.html
> https://www.friendsncas.org/fncas-thrift-shop.html
> https://www.friendsofuplandanimalshelter.org/2nd-chance-general-info/
> https://monroecountyfriendsofanimals.org/our-programs/thrift-store/
> https://furkids.org/thrift-store/

## Section 10 - Marketing, Fundraising and Proactive Programs

### Social Media

Social media is one of an animal shelter's most important marketing tools to promote pets for adoption. While it is great that LAS has very recently implemented their first Facebook page, most animal services shelters implemented their pages many years ago and have many more followers. At the time of this writing, the LAS Facebook page only has 461 followers. The vast majority of LAS' current Facebook postings are stray animal posts with original intake photos, along with very occasional posts about donations that have been made, pets that have already been adopted or adoption events. However, at the time of this writing LAS doesn't make any posts specifically marketing pets for adoption or anything educational.

It is extremely important that LAS begins to market their pets for adoption by regularly posting adoptable pets on their Facebook page and other social media. I recommend that LAS post at least one dog and one cat for adoption on Facebook every day, including the weekends, and should vary between posting highly adoptables to get them out as quickly as possible, along with long term animals to also move those out. The adoptions posts can be scheduled in advance, though someone needs to be in charge of deleting them from the schedule if an animal is adopted, reclaimed or rescued before the post is made. The individual posts should include a good photo(s) of the pet, the animal's approximate age and positive things about the animal's personality – in other words, something that makes people want to come in and see/adopt the animal. The best posts are not overly long and include something funny or clever about the animal, but basic information works well too. This is an example of a very basic post:

> Meet sweet Frank! Frank is a six-month-old lab mix whose tail is always wagging. He is very friendly, seems to love everyone he meets (even cats!) and walks well on a leash. He is eager to learn and seems like a very smart boy. If you are looking for a fantastic new family member, please come to our shelter at 1901 Hill Street to meet fabulous Frank! We are open Tuesday - Friday from 12pm-5pm and Saturday from 1pm-5pm. For more information about adopting or rescuing Frank, please email adoption@cityoflufkin.com. To view all of the other wonderful pets available for adoption or rescue at our shelter, visit www.cityoflufkin.com/departments/animal_services/dog_and_cat_adoptions.php

LAS should also share marketing posts from volunteer Facebook pages on their page and also occasionally post multiple photos of pets for adoption at once, such as when the shelter is especially overcrowded. Each photo should include the animal's name, ID number and preferably, something positive about the animal. For marketing purposes, the same information, or a variation of it, should also be put into Chameleon so it is displayed on the individual animal's page on 24Petconnect.

Occasional videos of individual pets for adoption should be posted as well. The videos that seem to get the most interest seem to help people envision how the pet would act in their home. For instance, showing the pet snuggling on a person's shoulder, crawling into their lap, giving a "high five" paw to a person, or just acting affectionately.

In addition, the shelter should promote special adoption events and make occasional educational posts, such as urging people to microchip, spay/neuter and vaccinate their pets. Many shelters also occasionally make posts asking for specific donations or for their Amazon wish list. For instance, posts could be made asking for donations of foldable extra-large crates for use to put dogs in at off-site adoptions with an Amazon link to the crates.

The shelter should also create other social media accounts, since many younger people do not use Facebook. Software such as Hootsuite can be used to easily schedule the same post on all social media accounts in one step. Some shelters also find it very helpful to set up shelter Facebook pages strictly for Rescue Groups and post animals that need urgent rescue on that page.

A couple of animal services shelters that usually have good social media which LAS can for examples are:
https://www.facebook.com/FranklinCountyDogs
https://www.facebook.com/FrontStreetAnimalShelter
https://www.instagram.com/frontstreetanimals/?hl=en

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Preferably have the Adoption Counselor/Social Media Specialist, another staff member or a member of management post photos and positive descriptions of dogs and cats for adoption or rescue on social media, preferably at least one dog and cat per day. Ensure that good photos have been taken. Occasionally, also post videos of difficult-to-adopt animals, such as seniors, more than once. The posts should include positive information about the animal's personality so people will want to come in to meet the animal. [High Priority]

## Additional Marketing

It is important that LAS animals be widely promoted to increase awareness. The goal should be to promote pet adoptions from LAS very frequently and in as many ways as possible.

One of the most widely used websites to market adoptable pets is Petfinder, but there are others that are also frequently used. Chameleon exports their adoptable animals to Petfinder and other adoption websites for free, however, at LAS volunteer(s) have been manually uploading them. As soon as the database is cleaned up and is being kept accurate, LAS should notify Chameleon to start uploading to the adoption websites.

Even simple things like animal names can be a marketing tool. To attract attention, staff can name animals after favorite actors, sports figures, video game characters, etc. Litters of animals can all be named after characters in a favorite TV show. Management should also have meetings with staff to brainstorm about how to market long term pets. Some ideas are at: https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/refresh-your-marketing-long-term-shelter-animals

It is also very important that the Mayor and other City officials help by regularly/frequently promote adopting from the shelter and promoting individual pets for adoption on City social media, City emails, City newsletters, putting a pet of the week on the City website homepage, etc. The City could also put simple one-third-page flyers encouraging pet adoption and spay/neuter from LAS in City utility bills.

In addition, the City should provide adoption graphics, press releases and flyers to the officials in the County and contracted cities and ask them to promote pets for adoption on their website, newsletters, emails, etc., as well. This may be something the City may want to include as a requirement in the new contracts with other jurisdictions.

There are numerous other marketing ideas that can help promote adoption including additional frequent reduced fee adoption events like here or here that are advertised in local media, writing articles about responsible pet ownership including the importance of adoption from the shelter, pet ID and spay/neuter for online and print media; highlighting long term animals by decorating their cage; flyers and posters promoting adoption events hung up or on counters at grocery stores, pet supply stores, vet clinics, churches, and health centers, etc.; billboards to promote adoption (many billboard companies will donate free space); television and radio spots or commercials promoting adoption to run on cable channels and local channels (some will donate); and small advertisements in local newspapers and magazines (some will allow it free of charge), etc. Many newspapers will allow animal services shelters to have a "pet of the week" advertised free of charge. Ensure all information for pets of the week and other flyers portray the animals in a positive manner.

Animal services shelters often find that the media can be very helpful to find new homes for pets in the shelter when the shelter is overcrowded. The shelter should develop a good relationship with local media and utilize them to save more pets, especially prior to euthanizing any animals for space. Press releases (or just phone calls if you have a relationship and they allow it) should regularly be sent out to all local media in the area (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.) to promote special pet adoption events and to get pets adopted when the shelter is very crowded. In times that are very overcrowded, local media should be alerted before any animals are euthanized for space.  EX:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ut4mUL2K4g&t=32s

- https://www.wthr.com/article/life/pets/indianapolis-animal-care-services-pet-adoption-overcrowding-dogs-cats-euthanasia/531-f713c234-282c-4f32-b4d5-5a13fb93da3c
- https://www.wbrz.com/news/dozens-of-healthy-dogs-at-risk-of-euthanasia-at-overcrowded-caa-shelter/
- https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/dogs-overcrowded-clayton-county-shelter-dire-need-new-homes-by-thursday/7BEYOJKO2VAWZPSGS4YMIJV4RI/

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ LAS and the City should frequently and regularly market their pets for adoption using suggestions in this section and other suggestions found all over the internet and should send press releases to the media to promote adoption when the shelter is overcrowded, prior to euthanizing any animals for space.

## Website

When Lufkin Animal Services or Kurth Memorial Shelter is googled, the first website displayed is: https://www.kurthmemorialadoptions.com/  The text on this website says: "Kurth Memorial Animal Services & Adoption Center serves as animal control and enforcement for Lufkin, Tx.  We accept animal surrenders from Angelina County."  I assumed this was the official LAS page, however, I noticed that it linked to a "Friends at Kurth Memorial Shelter" Facebook page. It also links to an Instagram page called "Kurth Memorial Animal Shelter." The second website displayed when googled is this one : https://www.cityoflufkin.com/departments/animal_services/

I have no idea why there are two websites that both look like official websites. However, if one of these are a nonprofit's or volunteers' Facebook page then the website should be updated to very clearly and prominently say so and should probably change their page name unless for some reason the City wants two pages, which seems unnecessary and very confusing. For now, I am going to assume that the second website on the City's website is the actual, official one and so the following comments will be about that one.

At the time of this writing there were six page links off of the homepage: Dog and Cat Adoptions, FAQs, How You Can Help, Lost and Found, Rescue Partners and Facebook.

**Dog and Cat Adoption page** - Instead of requiring someone to input their zip code in order to see pets for adoption, which is cumbersome and also displays animals at other rescues and shelters, this webpage should be updated to provide direct links (preferably graphical ones) to only LAS's Dogs for adoption and Cats for adoption pages on 24Petconnect or should display the actual 24Petconnect web pages within iframes. In addition, the webpage should also have direct links or display the foster dogs and cats for adoption. Contact Chameleon for how to implement. This page should also be updated to remove the landlord proof and fence check requirements. Also, update the page to include the normal adoption fees and what they cover.

Also, as mentioned several times, ensure that the Chameleon database is cleaned up so the 24Petconnect listings are up to date. For example, as of this writing, the first five pets displayed on this page are photos of neonatal kittens that say the animals' age is over a year old (since the intake was a year ago), along with other animals that were impounded a year ago and are probably no longer at the shelter.

Also, ensure that the Adoption Counselor/Social Media Specialist or another staff member is making positive sounding Chameleon memos about the animal's personality for marketing purposes so that it shows up on the animal's 24Petconnect listing, as well.

All of the animals that I viewed on 24Petconnect only had one photo displayed, though the photo was usually a very good one taken by volunteers. Chameleon allows for three photos to be displayed on the 24Petconnect website, along with videos. Additional good photos can actually help reduce the length of stay because it better markets the animal for adoption and can catch the eye of a potential adopter. If the intake photo is not good then it should be kept but not displayed, however, when possible two additional photos should be displayed

**How You Can Help Page** - This page says to come by the shelter if someone is interested in volunteering, but should also have a direct link to the volunteer application. This page also links to the Friends at Kurth Memorial Shelter Facebook page. There is no need to link to any other organization's Facebook page and it should be removed. The volunteer page should instead focus on getting people to volunteer at LAS under the LAS volunteer program.

The website should be updated to either have separate volunteer, foster and donate pages off of the main menu or to have separate volunteer, foster and donate pages linked off of the How You Can Help page.

This How You Can Help page also talks about Rescue partners, however, there is already a separate page for Rescue so this is unnecessary. This page also talks about Foster homes and says to fill out a foster home application and contract, however, there are no links to those documents.

The "Donate" page should include a link to an Amazon wish list of items needed and a link to how people can make direct financial donations online to LAS. EX:
https://www.cityofmesquite.com/157/Donations
https://www.cityofirving.org/389/Donate

**Lost and Found Page** - This page should be updated to have 24Petconnect direct links to both the stray and adoptable dogs and cats (for people whose pets have been lost for more than three days) in the LAS shelter, or should display them inside an iframe, instead of requiring users to input their zip code. It should also state that animals are named on intake so the owner may see their own pet with a different name. In addition, tips should be given to pet owners on how they can find the owners of pets that they have found. An example is:
https://www.memphistn.gov/animal-services/i-found-a-pet/

Also update the website with a "Found a Young Kitten?" page which gives instructions about what to do if someone finds young kittens. See the [Neonatal Kittens](#) Section.

**Rescue Page** - This page should be updated to also reference Transport Partners or to state that you work with out-of-state rescue groups and should encourage out-of-state groups to apply. EX: [https://bedallas90.org/rescue/](https://bedallas90.org/rescue/)

**Facebook Page** - There is really no reason to have a link to LAS Facebook page as one of the menu items and I'd recommend a graphical Facebook logo that links to the LAS Facebook page somewhere on the homepage instead.

In addition, information about ways to solve problems or for people to rehome their own pets should be provided to pet owners on LAS' website. Examples:
[https://www.memphistn.gov/animal-services/i-need-help-with-my-pet/](https://www.memphistn.gov/animal-services/i-need-help-with-my-pet/)
[https://www.austintexas.gov/department/rehoming-pet](https://www.austintexas.gov/department/rehoming-pet)

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Provide direct links for 24Petconnect on the adoption and lost and found webpages to go directly to LAS's listings instead of requiring zip code searches. Ensure the Chameleon database is always up-to-date so that 24Petconnect will be up-to-date. Ensure the foster animals available for adoption are also displayed on the animals for adoption page.

➔ Upload and display more than one photograph in Chameleon so it displays on the 24Petconnect website. Also occasionally upload videos so they are displayed, as well. Also keep one original intake photo and display it, unless it isn't good.

➔ Either remove the "How You Can Help" page and implement Donate, Volunteer and Foster webpages or add those pages linked off of the "How You Can Help" page. The Volunteer and Foster pages should include direct links to volunteer and foster applications.

➔ Add information about what to do if someone finds nursing kittens.

➔ Update the Rescue page to encourage out-of-state rescue transport partners to apply.

➔ Add a page that provides solutions to pet owners wanting to give up a pet.

## Proactive Programs

Proactive programs are implemented at animal services shelters to reduce intake, increase reclaims, increase adoptions, and solve pet-related problems in the community, all of which can improve the live release rate. The only LAS proactive programs that I am aware of are occasional reduced fee

adoption promotions and occasional volunteer organized offsite adoption events. Many animal services operations fundraise or write grants to fund their proactive programs. Examples of some proactive programs are:

- Free microchips for all reclaims.
- Free reclaim if the pet owner can not afford it if the owner allows the shelter to spay/neuter and/or microchip the animal for free first.
- Additional offsite adoption events. EX: https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=527484922869507&set=a.490897516528248
- Targetted (low income or special breeds or in certain problem zip codes) low cost or free spay/neuter voucher programs. Examples:
  https://www.muskogeeonline.org/animal_control/snap.php
  https://www.brookhavenny.gov/165/Free-Pit-Spay-Neuter
  https://dogs.franklincountyohio.gov/Services/SNYP-IT,-C-BUS
  https://www.waco-texas.com/Departments/Animal-Services/Spay-Neuter
  https://pulaskicounty.net/pulaski-county-helps-residents-spay-and-neuter-record-number-of-pets/
  https://www.lodi.gov/1192/City-of-Lodi-Animal-Services-SpayNeuter-
- Community Cat/Feral Cat Spay/neuter program EX:
  https://www.pascocountyfl.net/256/Spay-Neuter-in-Pasco
- Vaccination and microchip clinics – These clinics should be held in low-income areas and the price of the vaccinations and microchips should be at cost or free for low-income pet owners. Information about free and low-cost spay/neuters should also be provided.
- Pet owner assistance programs that provide pet owners with veterinary care at a local vet clinic, dog crates, dog houses, dog trainers, fence repair, etc. in order to solve problems and keep pets in their home.
- Microchip Monday – Offer microchips at cost to pet owners at specific times, such as on Mondays from 1 PM - 3PM.
- Dog Walks for Adoption – Have volunteers walk a few long-term resident dogs wearing "adopt me" vests during lunchtime in places where people congregate, possibly accompanied by the Volunteer Coordinator
- Pet Food Pantry - EX: https://dogs.franklincountyohio.gov/Services/Community-Pet-Pantry
- Have volunteers post stray pets on Nextdoor and other lost/found apps and websites in order to try to find their owners.
- Additional pet adoption promotions.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ Implement as many proactive programs as possible to improve the live release rate.


## Fundraising and Grants

Many animal services operations post Amazon wish list links of items they'd like to receive (things like metal crates, leashes, dog treats, enrichment toys, etc.) both on their Facebook page and on

their website. In addition, many also post photos of specific animals on Facebook that need expensive surgeries or heartworm treatment and ask for monetary donations. In addition, many animal services operations ask for direct financial donations on their website. EX:
https://www.austintexas.gov/department/support-animal-center
https://www.plano.gov/234/Donations
https://secure.cpteller.com/terminal/donation/?op=7RuQi1EmAf6p
https://dogs.franklincountyohio.gov/Donate/Donate-Funds

Most importantly in this area, a nonprofit humane organization or charitable foundation needs to open a low cost spay/neuter clinic or to purchase a mobile spay/neuter van (used spay/neuter vans are also sometimes available for purchase) to provide high volume spay/neuter services for the public. Grants should be obtained or charitable contributions collected so that the spay/neuter can be provided for free to low income pet owners or those experiencing financial hardships. The clinic slots available should be prioritized for those animals creating the most problems, such as those belonging to low income pet owners who otherwise would not fix their animals and TNR programs. Until that time, LAS and nonprofits should work to obtain grants for a low cost or free spay/neuter voucher program.

Most animal welfare grants are easy to apply for and do not require previous grant writing experience. The grants usually run on an annual cycle with deadlines for application. Some of the most common national grants are listed below:

- The State of Texas has a grant for low cost spay/neuter services:
  https://www.dshs.texas.gov/animal-safety-zoonosis/zcb-quarantine/animal-friendly-program

- Petco gives millions of dollars in grant awards every year. Sign up to be a Petco partner and apply for grants here:
  https://petcolove.org/for-partners/investment-opportunities/

- Maddie's fund weekly call provides educational information and gives away $10k a week:
  https://forum.maddiesfund.org/communityconversations
  Maddie's Fund provide millions of dollars in grant awards every year:
  https://www.maddiesfund.org/grant-giving.htm
  https://www.maddiesfund.org/grant-opportunities.htm

- Rachel Ray/Best Friends grants:
  https://network.bestfriends.org/join-us/partner-perks/best-friends-partner-exclusives/rachael-ray-grants-2023/save-them-all-grants

- PetSmart Foundation provides numerous animal shelter grants:
  https://petsmartcharities.org/pro/grants

- Bissell provides grants to organizations working to reduce the homeless pet population: https://www.bissellpetfoundation.org/grant-guidelines-eligibility-requirements/

- Banfield Foundation provides grants to non-profit organizations that fund veterinary care for low- income pet owners. CCAS could partner with a non-profit organization which would apply for the grant and then refer low-income pet owners to the non-profit. https://www.banfieldfoundation.org/Banfield-Foundation-Grant-Programs

- Petfinder grants can be found at: https://petfinderfoundation.com/

- Pedigree grants can be found at: https://www.pedigreefoundation.org/shelters-grant/

- Best Friends gives out scholarships for animal services staff to attend their National Conference. These conferences normally cover many sessions about how to improve the live release rate. https://bestfriends.org/events/best-friends-national-conference
Best Friends also often provides some communities with money to start new TNR programs. Email them directly to ask for assistance.

- The Humane Society of the United States gives out scholarships for animal services staff to attend their annual Expo. The Expo normally includes numerous sessions about topics relating to animal services operations. The link to the 2023 Expo information is below but the deadline has passed, however, this is something you may want to apply for next year: https://humanepro.org/expo/scholarship-application

LAS could also partner with a nonprofit organization and have them apply for grants that will benefit LAS or the community that are only available for nonprofit organizations such as:

- https://summerlee.org/animal-protection-program-overview/
- https://ncf-foundation.org/for-nonprofits

Additional animal shelter grant listings can be found at:

- https://www.treatva.com/grants
- https://www.nacanet.org/grant-opportunities/
- https://www.animalsheltering.org/grant-listings
- https://www.aspcapro.org/grants/other-animal-welfare-funders

**RECOMMENDATION:**

➔ LAS should apply for as many grants as possible, especially to implement a TNR program and a low cost or no cost spay/neuter program.

## Section 11 - Field Operations

During observations, I had planned a five hour window to go on field ride alongs with ACOs, however, no field activity calls came in during that time period, though one did come in earlier in the morning. During a large portion of that time, the three ACOs sat at their desks with seemingly nothing to do, often looking at their phones. [This is not meant as a criticism of the ACOs because management didn't assign them duties during that time.] During the time window, I did accompany one ACO to a veterinary clinic to drop off one dog and one cat that were being spay/neutered. Since LAS does not assign cage numbers, the ACO was unsure where the dog was located in the shelter and had to double check with another staff member to make sure he was taking the right dog. The cat's microchip was also missing and the ACO had to go find it as well.

At most animal services operations, ACOs are out in the field most of the day handling field activities (unless some stay back because they are assigned to morning cleaning) and a Field Dispatcher is given a private room or quiet area where they handle all field phone calls and dispatch ACOs via a radio system. ACOs also usually input their field activity arrival times if they have their own laptops in their vehicles or else radio the Dispatcher with their field activity arrival times so the Dispatcher can enter the time. This is necessary in order to determine accurate field service response times by priority of call.

At some operations, ACOs also radio the Dispatcher with a description of every animal they pick up in the field. The Dispatcher then inputs the animal into Chameleon, puts it in a kennel called "Receiving" and radios the ACO with the Animal ID to write on their paperwork. Or if the ACO has a laptop in their vehicle, then they input the animal into Chameleon themselves and put it in the "Receiving" kennel. This saves the Intake Coordinator time and also allows the Intake Coordinator to look in the "Receiving" kennel at any time to know how many animals are on their way to the shelter.

During observations, since LAS received so few field calls, the ACOs spent most of their day in the shelter and the Front Desk Clerk handled the field phone calls and dispatch, along with other duties. ACOs did not have laptops and did not radio in with response times. This resulted in inaccurate response times being recorded for field calls, as can be seen by the response time report in the statistics section. Also, field activities were not being given the correct priority (EX: 1-5) in the system and response time reports were not being generated to ensure ACOs are meeting response time targets for high priority calls. In addition, bite animals were not being input into Chameleon properly and citations and written warnings were also not being input in Chameleon, though one ACO told me that they no longer write warnings and only give verbal warnings (which should also be documented in Chameleon).

Because LAS gets in so few field calls it wouldn't make sense to have a designated Dispatcher, however, it would be helpful for ACOs to either have a shared laptop so that they could enter their own time when they arrive on a scene or else they should write down the time they arrive and begin to accurately record it.

I attempted to view the field activity for two confiscated puppies picked up in the field and there was no field activity for them at all. I was told by LAS management that it was probably because it occurred on a Saturday when the Front Desk Clerk didn't work and the ACO was too busy or forgot to put in the field activity.

In addition, LAS management was unaware that field activity types and subtypes in Chameleon are configurable and thought they had to use whatever types were currently in the system. Some of the field types currently used are a little unusual. For instance, LAS is using "Yard Check" to check on the health and welfare of an animal to ensure they are not being neglected or treated cruelly instead of using the more commonly used "Animal Welfare Check."

As mentioned in the statistics section, the three ACOs are not equally enforcing the ordinances and one ACO is rarely writing citations. SOPs should be updated and enforced by LAS management as to when citations should be written, when written warnings should be given, when verbal warnings are acceptable and how/when the ACOs should follow up on warnings. This is not to say that more citations should be written since there may be many times when a warning would be sufficient, just that a policy should be formed and enforced that should not be dependent on which ACO arrives at the scene.

In 2022, there were 10 animals outcomed as being returned to owner by "animal control." This may mean returned to owner in the field. However, one ACO estimated that about 10% of all stray animals were returned in the field. Most field operations that return animals to their owners in the field intake them and then outcome them in Chameleon with the type of "Returned to Owner" and subtype of "Returned in Field'' so that they can keep up with all reclaims and what animals are habitually running loose.

There were 116 calls or about 10% of all calls logged for dead animal pickup. During observations I became aware that many dead animal pickup calls were being incorrectly logged in as a stray animal calls. When asked about what percentage of calls were for dead animal pickup, both staff and management guessed it was at least 20%. In many animal services operations, dead animal pickup is not provided by animal services and is instead provided by the city's waste management department or another department or is sometimes outsourced to a private company. This is for a multitude of reasons including:

- Some of the deceased animals may have been diseased and some diseases can spread to animals in the vehicles. For instance, distemper in raccoons (which is very common in some areas) can be transmitted to dogs.
- Dead animal pickup doesn't require a skilled Animal Control Officer trained in enforcing local ordinances and instead could be handled by a lower paid laborer
- Dead animal pickup doesn't require a specialized animal control vehicle and instead could be picked up using a pickup truck or trash collection vehicle
- In order to reduce the number of field calls, and therefore the number of ACOs required

In addition, there were 80 calls for wildlife, however, some of the "trap" calls and stray animal calls may have also been for trapped wildlife pickup. It is my understanding that the ACOs are driving healthy, non-bite/non-rabies suspect trapped wildlife a short distance away from where they are picked up and then are releasing the wildlife. Since animal control operations are rabies control and domestic animal control only and the animal ordinance does not apply to healthy wildlife, many, if not most, animal services operations do not handle healthy trapped wildlife field calls unless it is a rabies suspect/bite or unless the wildlife is located inside someone's living quarters, as a courtesy. For instance, the City of Longview Animal Control's website says: "We do not trap and remove healthy wildlife unless it is living in a space occupied by people."

ACOs stated that they must meet County and other jurisdictions overnight at the shelter when they are dropping off animals. Some animal services operations instead provide other jurisdictions with a code and/or key to get into the building or back area and provide them with a designated location or the animals to be dropped off overnight. For instance, at LAS they could be told to leave the animals in certain kennels in the Intake building that the Intake Coordinator would always check first thing in the morning.

Many animal services operations implement pet licensing as a method to increase rabies vaccination compliance and to raise funds for the animal services operation. However, the City is so small that the amount of work and staff it would take to properly implement and maintain the licensing program would probably exceed the funds collected. A licensing program would also require an update to the animal ordinance. If pet licensing is considered, some of the work could be outsourced to Chameleon or to a company called [PetData](#).

LAS currently has three animal control vehicles.  The vehicles have individual animal holding compartments with a fan system, however, the holding compartments do not have air conditioning. This means that the compartments can get very hot, especially in the Texas summer.  These two short videos from Virginia Beach, VA and Washington County, OR below show commonly used animal control vehicles with heated and cooled animal holding compartments, however, some newer models have additional features like ramps and lift gates. The second video also shows common equipment used by ACOs in the field.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JA4z0Mu81bE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JA4z0Mu81bE)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niLxq_qRejk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niLxq_qRejk)

LAS should make a long-range plan to replace at least one of the current ACO vehicles with a vehicle that has cooled animal holding compartments. Since there are so few field calls at LAS, the ACOs could usually share the vehicle during the summer instead of each ACO having their own assigned vehicle. Most animal services organizations drop ship new trucks or drive their current trucks to companies that reconfigure them as animal control vehicles with enclosed animal holding compartments and installed HVAC systems. Some animal services organizations purchase vans and configure them with cages that can only be accessed from the inside, though most organizations and ASOs seem to prefer trucks with exterior cage door access.

Some of the most commonly used vendors for animal control vehicles are below, but there are others not listed. I have personally used both Swab and Mavron in the past and were pleased with their service and the vehicles:

- https://www.swabwagon.com/animal-transport/
- http://mavron.com/contacts/
- http://www.jacksoncreekmfg.com/sscmd17.1.php
- https://deerskinanimalcontrol.com/chassis-mounts-1
- http://www.customfiberglasscoaches.com/
- https://trivan.com/animal-control-truck-bodies/

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➔ Ensure staff and management are fully trained in Chameleon's field activity capabilities. LAS management should update field activity type and subtypes, as needed.

➔ Ensure all field activities are being input in Chameleon at all times, no exceptions for Saturdays or for other reasons. Ensure the field activities are being put in the correct category type and subtype and are prioritized correctly. Ensure field activity memos are being made in Chameleon which summarize what happened on the field call. Ensure field activity response times are being accurately recorded.

➔ Ensure that field policies are written and followed by ACOs regarding when to issue citations, written warnings or verbal warnings and how/when to follow up on warnings. Ensure bites, citations, written and verbal warnings are being input into Chameleon, along with memos.

➔ Outcome all stray animals that are returned directly to the owner in the field without coming into the shelter (which usually occurs because the animal has tags or a microchip that is found in the field) with the outcome type of "RTO" (Returned to Owner) and subtype of "Returned in Field."  This subtype will probably need to be added in Chameleon.

➔ Bring the field SOPs up to date and update them for any changes as recommended in this report, such as what priorities to use and what field types and subtypes for each kind of call.

➔ Because animal control operations are for domestic animals and rabies control only and animal ordinances do not apply to healthy wildlife, LAS should discontinue handling trapped, healthy wildlife calls and instead only handle sick/injured and rabies suspect wildlife and as a courtesy, wildlife inside a person's living quarters (not in the attic, crawl space or unfinished basement). Refer all other callers to the Department of Natural Resources or to a private, wildlife removal company.

➔ Make long range plans to replace one or more of the current Animal Control trucks with a new truck that has air-conditioned animal holding compartments.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

➔ In order to reduce the number of ACOs needed in the field, the City should strongly consider transferring the dead animal pickup responsibility to the City waste management department or another department. In the meantime, to prevent diseased body fluids from entering animal holding compartments, all dead animals picked up by LAS should be placed into thick, extra large black plastic bags that are tied shut before they are put on the ACO vehicle (unless they are too big). The vehicle compartments should also always be thoroughly disinfected after each use, including after holding a deceased animal.

➔ If it is helpful to the Intake Coordinator, have the Dispatcher or ACOs input animals picked up in the field into Chameleon's "Receiving" kennel prior to arrival.

➔ LAS should consider setting up a designated area for other contracted jurisdictions to drop off animals and paperwork overnight, rather than always making an ACO meet the other jurisdictions overnight, unless it is a special circumstance.

## Appendix I - Sample Stray Turn In Form

### Stray Animal Turn In Form

ANIMAL ID (To be filled out by staff): _____

*Please turn in this filled-out form to the front desk, along with your driver's license.*

**FINDER INFORMATION (fill out all lines):**

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Day Phone: _____Cell Phone: _____
Driver's License Number: _____ State of Issue: _____
How long have you had the animal in your possession or on your property? _____
Location/street where the animal was found: _____
Do you know who the owner, guardian or caretaker is? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, owner's name_____
Do you know the owner's address? : _____
**Has the animal bitten anyone in the past ten (10) days that you know of? _____**

**ANIMAL INFORMATION (fill out as much information as you know):**
Type of Animal: Dog ___ Cat ____ Livestock ____ Bird ___ Other _____
Sex: Male ___ Female ____ Breed: _____
Color of animal: _____ Unusual markings: _____
Condition of animal: Good Health ____ Sick/health problem _____ Pregnant/nursing _____
Has this animal been vomiting, have diarrhea or not been eating well? _____
If it is sick or injured, please describe the health problem observed: _____
Please describe the pet's observed temperament: Friendly ___ Aggressive __ Shy ____ Other ____
Does the pet seem good with children? _____ With dogs? _____ With cats? _____
If it is a dog, does it seem housebroken? _____
Has the pet acted aggressively while you have had it? _____
Describe how the animal acted while in your possession: _____

**If you are turning in a litter, please fill out the following:**
Number of animals in litter being turned in: _____ Is the mother animal being turned in?: _____
Do you know where the mother is if she isn't being turned in? _____

**I hereby affirm and swear that I have found this animal(s) at the location above. I also affirm and swear that I do not own this animal and do not know who owns this animal unless otherwise noted on this form. I understand that I will not be given any information as to the disposition of this animal after turning it in.** *My signature is my acknowledgement that I have read and understand the above information and that the information provided on this form is true and accurate.*

Signature: _____ Date: _____

# Appendix II - Sample Owner Request for Euthanasia Form

**Owner Request for Euthanasia Form**

**ANIMAL ID (To be filled out by staff): _____**

*Please turn in this filled-out form to the front desk, along with your driver's license.*

***Owner, please be aware that you are surrendering and giving up all rights to your animal. If we determine that your animal has a treatable condition, it may not be euthanized and may instead be adopted to a new owner or transferred to another organization. We are also unable to allow you to be present with your pet during the euthanasia process, nor are we able to provide you with ashes after cremation. If you do not agree to these stipulations, please contact a veterinarian or another organization to provide the euthanasia.

**Owner Information:**
Name _____ Cell phone: _____
Address _____ Phone: _____
City _____State ____ Zip Code _____County residence: _____
Driver's license number _____ State of Issue _____

**Animal Information:**
Name of animal: _____Age of animal: ____ How long owned?: _____ Type of animal:
Dog ____ Cat _____ Rabbit _____ Bird ____ Other _____Sex: Male ____ Female _____ Breed:
_____Color of animal: _____
Unusual markings: _____
Is this animal microchipped? _____ Is the microchip registered to you? _____
**Has this animal bitten anyone within the last ten days? _____**
**Reason for the euthanasia request:**
Poor health _____ Old age _____ Aggression _____ Other_____
Please explain in detail why you are requesting euthanasia for this animal:
_____

Veterinarian's name and clinic name: _____

**I certify that I am the legal owner for the above described animal, that this is my correct address and that all of the information above is true and accurate. I hereby transfer, assign and convey all rights of ownership of the above described animal to Sample Animal Services. Initial _____**

**I am surrendering this animal for euthanasia but understand that if Sample Animal Services determines that the animal has a treatable condition, the animal may not be euthanized and instead may be treated, adopted to a new owner or transferred to another animal shelter or rescue group. I understand that I will not be given any information as to the disposition of the animal after I surrender it. Initial_____**

Owner Signature: _____ Date: _____

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
To be filled out by Staff ONLY prior to acceptance of animal:

Does animal have a microchip or tag? _____If yes, has chip or tag been traced and does it go back to owner listed on this form? _____*If no, refuse owner request for euthanasia and tell the owner that he/she must fix the discrepancy before euthanasia can be completed*.

Managerial signature approval for ORE: _____

# Appendix III - Sample Intake Procedures

**Sample Intake Procedures**

After being paged to pick up an animal, all animals should be taken to the intake room along with all paperwork (ensure the paperwork has an Animal ID on it or kennel card stapled to it). The intake room door should be closed during intake processing. If the intake room is occupied with another animal, the new animal can be put in a stainless cage or kennel located outside of the intake room for a very brief period of time, along with the paperwork.

For accuracy and to ensure all steps of the process are being performed, the Intake Coordinator should perform all intake processing for all animals, regardless if picked up in field or brought to shelter, including performing vaccinations, health exams and inputting that data into Chameleon. However, ACOs should give core vaccinations (fvrcp, bordetella, distemper/parvo) to animals brought in after closing and those animals can be temporarily housed in the intake cages until the Intake Coordinator arrives in the morning to perform the rest of intake processing. ACOs should update Chameleon and leave a note to indicate they have vaccinated the overnight animals.

If the animal is very easy-to-handle, then the Intake Coordinator can perform intake processing alone. If the animal is more difficult to handle, a Kennel Attendant should assist for safety reasons. If the dog is aggressive, the ACO who brings it in or Kennel Attendant should hold it on a catch pole while as much of intake that can be done safely takes place. (ACOs should not have to stay for intake processing unless the dog they are bringing in is aggressive or difficult to handle.) Feral cats that will be housed in the shelter should be vaccinated using a small squeeze cage.

The assigned Intake Coordinator should perform complete intake processing on every animal. The intake processing steps are:

1.      The animal record should be created in Chameleon if not already done by the office or dispatch staff. The intake form (stray, owner surrender, etc.) should be read and any pertinent information, especially regarding behavior or health, should be recorded in Chameleon. Intake categories and subcategories and any hold periods that have already been assigned by the office or dispatch should be double checked for accuracy and corrected, if needed.

2.      The intake coordinator should put on new gloves for each animal handled.

3.      All animals should be weighed and the weight recorded in Chameleon. Feral cats can be weighed in their cage and the weight of the cage deducted.

4.      Puppies, small dogs, cats and kittens should be placed on the stainless steel table. Dogs can be hooked to the dog photograph wall.

5.	The Intake Coordinator should note gender. Feral and semi-feral cats that are difficult to handle should be labeled as "U" for unsexed. This can be updated at the time of their spay/neuter surgery.

6.	The Intake Coordinator should note breed. This should be based on what the animal most looks like, rather than based on what an owner or finder says.

7.	The Intake Coordinator should determine the age of the animal. This is usually done both by looking at the animal's teeth and by looking at the animal's appearance, especially if it is a young puppy or kitten.

8.	The Intake Coordinator should assign a name to all animals. If the animal is a surrender that already has a name, use its current name unless the name is offensive or negative sounding. If it is offensive or negative sounding, select another name for the animal. If possible, use a similar sounding name (EX: Bubbles instead of Trouble or Milo instead of Kilo), however, if there isn't a similar name then you can pick a completely different name (EX: Maria for Fat Mama or Leonard for Big Head.)

9.	The Intake Coordinator should look for tags and scan for microchips. If an ID tag or chip is found, a hold/notify memo should be put into Chameleon, along with the tag or chip number. The due out date in Chameleon should also be extended.

10.	A photograph of the animal should be taken for identification purposes.

11.	Give the animal a brief health examination looking at their ears, skin including external parasites, teeth and overall health. Request a vet check in the Chameleon software system for any obvious health issues noticed. Alert the shelter veterinarian immediately about any seriously sick or injured animals. Carry the animal to the veterinary office if it is very seriously sick or injured.

12.	All animals, including quarantine and pregnant animals, should be vaccinated and dewormed per protocol (See Vaccination and Deworming SOP) and should receive flea treatment, if fleas are observed. The Intake Coordinator should use Chameleon to automatically create reminders for the veterinary staff per protocol for when any additional vaccinations and dewormings are due.

13.	Any additional diagnostic tests required by the shelter upon admission should be performed. (EX: woods lamp for ringworm)

14.	Input all of the information about the animal into Chameleon, along with the photograph. Information about the animal's behavior during intake should also be noted in Chameleon.

15.	Look in the Chameleon Visual Kennel screen to see what cages are available. Assign the animal to an empty cage in the proper room (if healthy, then the room for healthy animals, if sick, then the room for sick animals, etc.). Print out the cage card with the correct cage number on it. Walk the

animal to the cage or if a Kennel Attendant is available or the ACO is assisting, ask them to place the animal in the cage.

16.   Trace any tag or microchip and input the owner's contact information and the implanting agency's contact information (if microchipped) in the Chameleon hold/notify memo. Make the first attempt to contact owners by phone including leaving messages (make at least three attempts on more than one day) and sending a text. Print out and mail the found animal notification letter if the owner isn't immediately reached by phone. Also attempt to track down the owners of any animals confiscated due to hospitalization, arrest, etc. or ensure someone else should be immediately assigned to track them down. Ensure memos are made in Chameleon about what phone numbers were called, how many times, when the letter was mailed, if the owners responded and what they said about coming in to reclaim, etc.

17.   Communicate any pertinent information about the incoming animal to the proper staff member and make a Chameleon memo about the communication. For example, email the Veterinary team and Kennel Supervisor to give them heads up about a heavily pregnant animal that might go into labor soon or email the Rescue Coordinator if a litter of animals is surrendered that might be able to be quickly transferred to a Rescue Group. If an animal might be pregnant, note that in a Chameleon memo and email the Kennel Supervisor so that the animal can be spayed as soon as her hold is up.

18.   Disinfect tables, crates and cages in the intake processing room with Rescue between each animal to kill unenveloped viruses.

19.   Clean and disinfect the floor and everything in the room with Rescue to kill unenveloped viruses, at least daily.

20.   Run a Chameleon hold/notify memo identification report and make additional attempts to contact animals that have come in with identification over the previous two days. After three days have elapsed, if the microchip implant agency is a nonprofit rescue or shelter, notify them that one of their animals have arrived at the shelter and ask if they will take them back. If they are willing to take the animal back but can't come within 24 hours to pick up, notify management to see if an ACO or one of our volunteers can quickly transport them back to their organization. Make memos about all conversations.

## Appendix IV - Shelter Disinfectant Poster

[Please see Poster on Next Page]

# Shelter Disinfectant Quick Reference

| Disinfectant | Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide | Potassium Peroxymono-sulfate | Quaternary Ammonium Compounds *(Quats)* | Calcium Hypochlorite | Regular Household Bleach* *(Sodium Hypochlorite)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Effective against non-enveloped viruses?** | Yes, dilute 1:32 | Yes at 1% | Not according to independent published research | Yes | Yes, dilute 1:32 (1/2 cup per gallon) |
| **Effective against ringworm following effective pre-cleaning?** | Yes, dilute 1:16 | Yes at 2% | Yes, if labeled fungicidal against *Trichophyton* spp. | Not according to independent published research | Yes, dilute 1:32 (1/2 cup per gallon) |
| **Inactivated by organic material?** | Minimal | Slightly; less inactivation than bleach or quats | Mildly inactivated | Yes | Yes |
| **Requires cleaning as separate step?** | Some detergent activity, but cleaning beforehand recommended for heavily soiled surfaces | Some detergent activity, but cleaning beforehand recommended for heavily soiled surfaces | Variable detergent activity, requires some cleaning beforehand | No detergent activity, always requires extensive cleaning beforehand | No detergent activity, always requires extensive cleaning beforehand |
| **Stability when diluted** | 90 days | 7 days | Varies | 24 hours | 24 hours |
| **Recommended contact time** | 10 minutes for 1:32 dilution 5 minutes for 1:16 dilution | 10 minutes | 10 minutes | 10 minutes | 10 minutes |
| **Rinse required?**** | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |

\* Regular household bleach is most commonly 5.25%, however always check the concentration of the bleach product you are using and prepare dilutions accordingly; use our interactive **Bleach Dilution Calculator** for finding the proper bleach to water ratio for disinfecting.

\** To remove any residual disinfectant, rinsing housing areas and food/water dishes is always recommended regardless of which product is used.

# Appendix V - Sample Animal Services Euthanasia Procedures

1) Unless it is a severe medical emergency or an owner surrender that doesn't require a hold, euthanasia will only take place after any mandatory stray, bite quarantine, court case or other required hold periods have expired.

2) Unless it is an emergency situation, such as the animal has extreme suffering and there is no hope of survival, medical emergency euthanasia may be performed before a hold has expired only upon recommendation by a veterinarian and only with written approval of the Director on the Euthanasia Checklist form. If the medical emergency occurs for a domestic animal overnight, the emergency room veterinarian must make the recommendation.

3) Prior to euthanasia of any domestic animal for any reason, a member of management must write the animal(s) to be euthanized on the Euthanasia Checklist form.

4) Prior to writing the animal on the checklist form, a member of management must check with the Rescue Coordinator first to ensure that there is no rescue group already scheduled or thought to be soon scheduled to rescue the animal.

5) Prior to writing the animal on the checklist, the Bite coordinator must give pre-approval to euthanize animals that have been under bite quarantine. This approval should include ensuring that the owner of any owned dog that has bitten does not plan to reclaim.

6) Prior to writing the animal on the checklist, the members of management should ensure that proper attempts to contact owners for animals having identification/microchip and attempts to contact the owners of confiscated animals available for reclaim have been made using all known contact phone numbers and methods available (email, phone call, text) and that a letter was mailed to the owner's last known address.

7) The Director and an additional member of management must both sign their initials giving approval for each animal on the euthanasia checklist. Prior to initialing, the two members of management shall individually both check that any stray or other hold time has expired and must read Chameleon's hold memos, kennel memos, field activity case record memos, shall examine the kennel card and all other pertinent records for each animal to ensure that there is no reason animal should not be euthanized such as possible reclaim, adoption, rescue, court case, because a hold period has not been completed or for any other reason.

8) Only employees who have been certified to perform euthanasia may euthanize an animal. Except in an emergency situation, two individuals are always required for all euthanasia: a euthanasia technician performing the procedure and an assistant/witness who is responsible for gently restraining and comforting the animal to be euthanized.

9) Animal waste or blood on the floor or table must be cleaned before another animal is brought into the euthanasia room.

10) Animals on the euthanasia list must be brought into the euthanasia room, along with their cage card. The euthanasia room doors shall remain closed at all times when euthanasia is being performed.

11) No animal is to be euthanized in the presence of another animal. No animal may see another animal's deceased body.

12) The pictures on the cage card and in Chameleon software must be checked/verified to ensure that the correct animal has been brought in the euthanasia room.

13) Prior to euthanasia, all animals must be scanned again for microchips.  If a microchip is found that previously was unknown (look in Chameleon to determine), the animal should not be euthanized until proper notification to owners has been made. The new microchip number should be logged into Chameleon with a hold/notify memo about the situation and the animal should instead be returned to their cage.

14) If there are any discrepancies, questions or concerns prior to euthanasia, the animal should not be euthanized and should be returned to their cage. Notify a member of management of the discrepancy or question.

15) Unless the animal has been weighed within the past week, the animal should be reweighed in the euthanasia room to ensure proper dosage of drugs are given.

16) The euthanasia method used should be in accordance with standards approved by the AVMA guidelines for euthanasia. No methods other than lethal injection shall be used for euthanasia, regardless of the species.

17) Fractious, aggressive, fearful, unsocialized and anxious dogs and all animals receiving an IP injection should be sedated prior to euthanasia using a Xylazine/Ketamine mix called PreMix. To make the drug mix, draw up 2cc of 100mg/ml Xylazine and inject it directly into a full bottle of 10ml ketamine. Federal Law requires re-labeling the bottle to reflect the drug combination.  Write the words "Premix – 200mg Xylazine added" to the label for compliance.   The "Premix" should be administered at .5cc per 10 lbs.

18) The Sodium Pentobarbital (Fatal Plus) euthanasia fluid should be removed in numerical order from the double-locked safe using two keys.  It should be administered in the following doses:
      a.      Intravenous (IV) – 1cc per 10 lbs
      b.      Intraperitoneal (IP) – 3 cc per 10 lbs
      c.      Intracardiac (IC) – 1 cc per 10 lbs

19) For dogs, the preferred method of euthanasia is intravenous injection (IV):

- If the dog is friendly/social: IV injection of Fatal Plus without sedation, however, sedation is allowed.

- If the dog is unsocial, fearful, or anxious or a friendly dog acts distressed or anxious when trying to locate a vein: PreMix until unconscious followed by IV injection of Fatal Plus

- If the dog is aggressive, use oral sedation in food based on vet's recommendation one hour prior to euthanasia. Administer PreMix until unconscious, then IV injection of Fatal Plus.

20) Smaller animals, feral cats, wildlife or those animals for which a vein is difficult to locate, may be given intraperitoneal injections (IP) if a vein can not be located, however, they should all be pre-sedated first with PreMix whenever IP injections are administered. Squeeze cages can be used for wildlife and feral cats.

21) Intracardiac injections (IC) should only be performed on animals that are unconscious. IC can be used if the animal arrives already unconscious, when death is taking longer than expected or when vein can not be located, but only after the animal is verifiably unconscious.

22) Death must be verified on each animal using a method approved by the AVMA prior to it being bagged and removed from the euthanasia room. The methods allowed are using a stethoscope, cardiac puncture (only after the animal is verified unconscious) or rigor mortis.

23) The deceased animal shall be placed in a black plastic bag and removed from the room. Do not allow any live animals to view unbagged deceased animals. Do not leave bodies in the euthanasia room for any extended period of time other than the length of time needed to verify death.

24) After euthanasia is completed, the amount of the sodium pentobarbital and "Premix" or any other Scheduled drugs used for each animal must be properly entered into the drug logs and signed by the euthanasia technician and witness. Drugs should be locked back into the double-locked cabinet immediately after euthanasia is completed.

25) Euthanized animal records should be outcomed in Chameleon immediately after euthanasia is completed by the person who performed the euthanasia. The animal's weight and total amount of drug used should also be recorded in Chameleon.

## Appendix VI - Sample Euthanasia Checklist

If there are any discrepancies or concerns (for example: that you may not have the correct animal in the room or that there should be a hold on the animal) then **DO NOT EUTHANIZE** and instead return to cage and bring to the attention of management. *File this form in the Euthanasia Room after Completion.*

**Approved for this date only:** _____

Euthanasia Performed by: _____

Euthanasia Witness/Assistant: _____

**First nine columns to be pre-filled out by Director/Manager**          **Euthanasia Technician to fill out the five columns on right during/after euthanasia.**

| Animal ID | Cage Nbr | Species | Name | Description | Euth Reason | Past Due out Date? Y/N | Chameleon Checked for Holds and Memos? Y/N | Two MGR initials (one must be Director) | Correct animal in room? Y/N | Scan for Chips? Y/N | Weight | Death verified? Y/N | Logged into drug logs and dispo'd in Chameleon? Y/N |
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## Appendix VII - Sample SOP Standing Veterinary Orders for Diarrhea

### *Diarrhea*

In a high-volume environment, it is critical that the majority of the animals are treated in the same consistent way even if their symptoms vary slightly. There are several typical causes of diarrhea in the shelter animals.  We have identified these causes based on treatment response or failure, testing sample groups and observation. We can further break down those causes based on what type of animal they affect. Within each grouping of animals, we've listed the most common diarrhea causes first, with the least common last:

**Neonatal Diarrhea:**
- GI flora changes in response to switch from mothers' milk to formula, or from formula to gruel
- Coccidia, other parasites
- Viral (corona, panleukopenia, etc.)

**Juvenile (eating on their own, less than 4 months of age) Diarrhea:**
- Coccidia, giardia and other parasites
- Viral (parvo, panleukopenia, corona)
- Food change

**Young Adult Diarrhea:**
- Stress/excitement
- Giardia or coccidia
- Diet change
- Viral
- Other (autoimmune, Inflammatory Bowel Disease, allergies, etc.)

**Adult Diarrhea:**
- Stress/excitement
- Diet change or indiscretion (change to a lower quality food)
- Parasites
- Other

To further back up our assumptions based on our own findings, there was one study of pathogen-related diarrhea (1) that showed 68% of tested shelter dogs with diarrhea were positive for giardia and 15% for coccidia. Of shelter cats with diarrhea, 11% tested positive for coccidia, but the majority tested negative for all viral and protozoal pathogens. This study did not test for parasites such as roundworms, hookworms or whipworms which are very common in young animals, and even with negative fecal examinations and deworming, they should be considered

highly possible to be present. Statistical analysis of the causes of diarrhea is important because it shapes how we can treat the group in the most efficient and cost effective way possible.

If a large majority of the animals who have diarrhea are likely to be suffering from the same cause, then that treatment should be the first line of defense against diarrhea in all dogs and cats for the sake of efficiency and lifesaving. For most treatments of diarrhea, there is very little risk in terms of harm to the animal or cost in using the treatment for that problem on animals who have diarrhea, whether or not they have the problem. With that philosophy in mind, we have created protocols for the veterinary care staff to follow, which outline what to do to address the most common causes of diarrhea.

### Getting Started

The first step of any medical protocol is to assess the symptoms of the animal. We characterize the stool, ensure that the animal does not have other, more life-threatening symptoms, and then provide empirical treatment. (Note: protocols for sanitation, not addressed here, also ensure that all caregivers are following standard disease control, such as isolation of affected animals from unrelated animals, washing hands or wearing gloves between animals and cleaning with appropriate disinfectants - all essential in a shelter environment.)

### Young Kittens & Puppies (<6 weeks)

At intake, we treat neonatal puppies and kittens with a dose of routine pyrantel pamoate (Strongid). A baby can die quickly from diarrhea, and providing this at intake prevents many from ever developing it. When diarrhea occurs in neonates, quick action is necessary to prevent malnutrition, dehydration, hypoglycemia and death - much more so than in other animals. A delay of even six hours can cause death. These little babies suffer imperceptible (to the naked eye) weight loss and signs of dehydration before death, and so with any symptom of diarrhea, it is critical to notice and treat immediately. We don't address general neonatal care here, but weighing the animal multiple times per day is also essential to catch illness early enough to intervene.

The treatment protocol that our team uses for what we term "common diarrhea" in neonates is:
Diarrhea alone (appetite present and no vomiting):
● Fortiflora◯ Once daily for 5 days

If no improvement in 12 hours, start medications below:
● Marquis (ponazuril)◯ 0.3 mL/lb PO x 3d
● Panacur (fenbendazole)◯ 0.2 mL/lb SID x 3d
  ● Subcutaneous fluids
  ● Fortiflora
  ○ once daily for 5-7 days

If no improvement in 24 hours or if patient worsens (not eating, lethargic, vomiting, fading), start protocol below:

- ● Contact vet team for immediate appointment
- ● Isolate the pet in a cage bank located away from other animals
- ● Ensure proper disease control is used, such as the use of separate or individualized

disposable gloves and smock per litter, and use of trifectant spray on any and all communal areas between litters, treating sick pets last. If vet appointment is not immediate:

- ● Force feed every 4 hours until eating on own
- ● Test for parvo/panleukopenia
- ● Consider baytril injections subcutaneously
- ○ Inj. – 2.2 mg/lb SID in SQ fluids

**Juveniles and Adults:**

We treat every animal, regardless of age, with pyrantel pamoate at intake, and then again in 2 weeks.

The protocol for any animal over 6 weeks of age who is eating well and has stool that is loose but still formed/not watery:

- ● Ensure that pet has received routine dewormer (Strongid or Panacur) appropriately
- ● Do a trial of kaolin and/or bland diet for 24 hours and reassess If the pet is eating well,

but the stool is watery:

● Start metronidazole (Flagyl)○ 9 mg/lb BID x 5-7 days

If stool is yellow, with or without a grainy texture:
● Start ponazuril; extend if diarrhea improves but then relapses immediately after 5 day course ○ 0.3 mL/lb PO x 5 days

If the pet is a puppy and eating well but bloody diarrhea is present:
● Do a parvo test and then start ponazuril and metronidazole, as above
If no improvement in 48 hours or if patient worsens:
● See vet staff for fecal and physical exam

If an animal has other symptoms such as pain, fever, vomiting or anorexia:
● Have vet evaluate without delay

# Appendix VIII – Sample Adoptions Counselor Job Description

**Job Title: Adoptions Counselor/Social Media Specialist**
**Department: Adoptions**

The Adoptions Counselor is responsible for reviewing adoption inquiries submitted by potential adopters, receiving adoption fees, and updating the software system with information necessary to complete the adoption. The Adoption Counselor must interact with potential adopters with the utmost respect, professionalism, and compassion. This role counsels the public about potential pets for adoption, educates the public about responsible pet ownership and may recommend other pets to the adopter to make a good placement decision. The goal of the Adoption Team is to balance providing an enjoyable experience for the public with making the best placement decisions for the pets in our care.

The Adoptions Counselor must also make social media posts and write website descriptions in order to market pets for adoption.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES include the following:**

● Connect, through matchmaking, potential adopters to their future pets to best ensure positive outcomes.
● May retrieve animals from the kennels to facilitate meet and greets with potential adopters if Kennel Technicians are busy with other customers.
● Positive collaboration with all teams in the shelter and flexibility to learn/promote/initiate lifesaving best practices.
● Answer emails and phone calls from the public regarding pets for adoption in a prompt, professional and informative manner.
● Provide information to potential adopters about house training methods, how to properly introduce new pets to pets already in the household, preventative veterinary care including heartworm prevention and other pet related educational information.
● Answer questions from the public about pets for adoption including the behavior of specific breeds, dog and cat behavior, pet care, and other pertinent information.
● Review adoption applications submitted by the public to determine if the applicant meets written adoption guidelines. Ask questions of the applicant if necessary to clarify information on the adoption application. Approve or deny applications.
● Ensure the animals that are being adopted are spayed/neutered, microchipped, vaccinated, heartworm or combo tested, etc. prior to going to their new home.
● Properly input all information necessary for the adoption transaction into the software system.
● Collect adoption fees and perform daily cash box closing for the adoption cash box.
● Perform tasks to increase the number of adoptions which includes making social media posts about animals available for adoption and updating animal descriptions in the Chameleon software system so they show up on the website. May also include taking photographs of animals.

- May be required to assist with other departments including kennel cleaning, when needed.
- Other duties as assigned.

## QUALIFICATIONS

To perform this job successfully, each essential duty must be performed satisfactorily.

- Excellent customer service skills, with the ability to remain compassionate and clear-minded when faced with challenging situations.
- Extensive knowledge of dog and cat behavior, training and of animal breed recognition is also required.
- Knowledge in animal health and well-being to include nutrition needs, resources for information, knowledge of common animal diseases.
- Ability to identify animal species, breeds, ages and sexes. Ability to identify signs of animal illnesses and injuries. Ability to recognize common animal behavior.
- Demonstrated personal communication knowledge to include effective phone skills, effective interviewing techniques, public speaking and ability to communicate effectively in writing and orally.
- Must be available to work on weekends.
- Must pass background check and drug screening.

## EDUCATION and/or EXPERIENCE

Minimum of high school diploma and 1+ years of experience in animal related field.

## LANGUAGE SKILLS

Must be able to read and interpret policies and procedures. Must be able to communicate effectively to adopters and must provide good customer service skills.

## CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS

None required.

## WORK ENVIRONMENT

While performing the duties of this job, employee may be exposed to a kennel that is not air-conditioned and may be exposed to unpleasant sights and smells.

# Appendix IX - Animal Shelter Architects

❖ Animal Arts: https://www.animalarts.com/

❖ Bacon Group Architecture: http://bgarchitects.com/

❖ Design Learned Engineering: http://www.designlearned.com

❖ Jackson and Ryan Architects:
http://www.jacksonryan.com/our-work/animal-welfare/

❖ Rauhaus Freedenfeld: http://www.rfarchitects.com/animal_care

❖ Shelter Planners of America: http://www.shelterplannersofamerica.com

❖ Swatt | Miers Architects:
https://swattmiers.com/projects/educational/animal-care-facilities/