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Animal Welfare Feasibility Study: City of Richmond and Wayne County, Indiana

Phase I

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About Team Shelter USA

Team Shelter USA is a national animal welfare consulting firm founded by veterinarian Dr. Sara Pizano (Attachment 1: Curriculum Vitae). Dr. Pizano has completed more than 140 assessments in 27 states as well as multiple feasibility studies around the country including Spartanburg County, South Carolina, Hays County, Texas, Pinal County, Arizona and Palmdale, California. She is the author of *The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters*, an advisor to the Joanie Bernard Foundation and PetSmart Charities and Team Shelter USA is a partner of Maddie's Million Pet Challenge. For more information, see teamshelterusa.com.

Executive Summary

Team Shelter USA was retained to conduct an animal welfare feasibility study and advise the city of Richmond and Wayne County leadership regarding the needs in the community. Research prior to, during and after the onsite visit included the review of state statutes pertaining to animals, local ordinances, meetings with a variety of stakeholders including Pet Friendly Services of Indiana, the Joanie Bernard Foundation, leadership from both municipalities, the task force, the Community Cat Coalition and the Wayne County Community Foundation.

During the onsite visit, the animal welfare organizations toured included:

- Animal Care Alliance
- Help the Animals
- Animal Welfare League
- Whiskers
- Second Chance Rescue
- Henry County Humane Society

This report should be considered Phase I and once the city of Richmond and Wayne County leadership have discussed next steps, Team Shelter USA can provide additional guidance and will return to host a Community Animal Welfare presentation in person.

Core best practice strategies and recommendations are based on national standards, available data and trends and in line with all reputable animal welfare organizations including the National Animal Control Association, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters* and *Spay Neuter Guidelines*, the ASPCA, the Humane Society of the United States, Maddie's Fund, Best Friends Animal Society, Open Door Veterinary Collective and the Human Animal Support Services (**see Resources and References**).

Strategies are outlined in *The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters*, written by Dr. Pizano and provided to the task force members, shelters, the Wayne County Community Foundation team and several municipal leaders for both the city of Richmond and Wayne County.

Key foundational assumptions include the following:

- Providing for public and animal safety can work in tandem with life-saving



- Providing public and animal safety is a service similar to Parks and Recreation and is **not** a profit generating or self-sustaining program
- There are 187 million pets in the US with only 3% entering shelters each year. There is not an overpopulation of pets with no potential homes but the population of pets in need must be managed differently than through the traditional animal sheltering and control system. This begins with the foundational goal of keeping pets and people together whenever possible.
- Euthanizing healthy pets is not acceptable in our society and should be reserved for community unsafe large dogs and medical cases beyond hope or resources
- Proactive programs, often called Safety Net are typically more cost effective than sheltering pets
- Helping pets in need helps people
- The city of Richmond and Wayne County animal control officers handle and respond to approximately the same number of calls per year for approximately equal number of residents
- Designing holding spaces for pets in confinement is more expensive than a typical office building and more in line with a hospital. Price per square foot is higher due to the need for durable surfaces in animal spaces housed 24/7, appropriate HVAC to minimize infectious disease transmission and odors and oversized plumbing to handle animal waste, hair, etc.
- A well designed animal welfare system in a community has positive economic impacts beyond the sector as evidenced by these 2 studies:
<https://www.wellbeingintlstudiesrepository.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=humsrorg> and
<https://www.wellbeingintlstudiesrepository.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=anilleg>

Recommendation #1: Collaborate

There are 35,000 residents in the city of Richmond and 31,000 people living in the unincorporated part of the county. The city of Richmond and Wayne County face the same level of need with respect to animal welfare complaints so the municipalities should **work together** on immediate programming and a future Pet Resource Center.

Recommendation #2: Create Safety Net Programming (immediate)

The city of Richmond and Wayne County should create a community wide, collaborative **Safety Net program**. Helping pets and people in need is more cost effective and mutually beneficial than separating them through a shelter intake and reduces the need for confining pets in a shelter.

Recommendation #3: Create the animal welfare infrastructure

Option 1: Utilize space in an existing shelter (immediate)

For a public-private partnership to be successful, a formal contract that is mutually beneficial to the partners must be in place and the municipality must fund the operation appropriately.

The sheltering organization **must** operate in line with industry standards that includes Safety Net to ensure all options to sheltering are exhausted prior to the decision to intake and a commitment to the shortest length of stay in order to help the greatest number of pets and people.

Option 2: Build a Pet Resource Center (long term):

The city of Richmond and Wayne County could create a **Pet Resource Center** to ensure that all other options to sheltering are exhausted prior to confining pets. A currently owned city or county building could be used for office space with an addition for animal housing (when all alternatives were exhausted) that could minimize costs vs building an entirely new structure. This space would house canines whose owners could not be identified or whose owners were experiencing an emergency, dangerous dogs and canines/felines who are sick/injured/victims of cruelty or neglect.

Approximately 15,600 square feet in animal spaces would be needed with an estimated cost of \$780 per square foot. Reasons for the cost per square foot, in addition to those listed above, include:

- Building costs have increased 50-60% since the beginning of covid/2019
- The estimate of \$780/square foot is supported by recent comps with other municipalities in the region
- The cost per square foot may be reduced to \$722 with extensive value engineering
- Climate/cold weather and need for insulation is a factor in addition to animal housing factors

This report outlines the strategies to ensure that the animal welfare system is as efficient as possible and if a new facility is considered, it is with the right design and size. It should also be noted that the number of cats and dogs currently going into local shelters cannot be used as a predictor of future use/needs.



National Trends

187 million pets live in 99 million households in the U.S. according to the American Veterinary Medical Association (<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/reports-statistics/us-pet-ownership-statistics>) and in 2023, 6.5 million entered shelters (<https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/explore-the-data/data-dashboards/national-animal-welfare-statistics-dashboard/>). This means only 3% of US pets entered shelters. With respect to pet acquisition, more people get pets from sources other than shelters so this data shows that there is not an overpopulation crisis but that we have to help pets and people in need in ways other than a shelter intake that leads to the overcapacity of pets confined in shelters. Reducing the number of free roaming dogs and cats through strategic spay/neuter and other access to care programs is discussed throughout this report.

Equally important is the length of stay in shelter confinement which should be as short as possible. Placing adoptable pets quickly is possible but requires appropriate marketing, counseling and that shelter staff/volunteers release judgement. Enhancing community engagement can resolve most of this need that leaves large, dangerous dogs, injured animals and other true enforcement-type cases to house and deal with. Acceptable euthanasia categories in shelters include large, community unsafe dogs and injured/ill pets with no hope or resources to help them.

The animal welfare industry had been shifting focus prior to the pandemic but since 2020, there have been great strides with respect to a more community-based animal welfare system. This makes sense since the small percentage of pets going into shelters is proof that in addition to acquiring pets, most pet owners are rehoming and finding solutions to their issues without shelter intervention. As a result, Human Animal Support Services or HAAS (humaneanimalsupportservices.org) was created at the beginning of the pandemic and has continued to provide the most up to date information, program successes and support information now available for modern-day animal welfare practices. Extensive informational resources can be found on the HAAS website and in the recently published online playbook here: <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/hass-playbook/>.

Animal welfare systems vary from community to community with some animal sheltering and control programs operating exclusively under a municipality, some operating under a non-profit and yet others that are managed through partnerships with both. There is no norm nor is there a standard budget template as services depend on the investments from both the municipalities and non-profits, and again, vary greatly. The responsibility of a municipality is to provide for public and animal safety and lifesaving and the best way to do that is through effective public-private partnerships when all parties embrace best practice industry standards.



Recommended Strategies and Programming

Public Policy

Key Point: *Public policies should be in line with current best practices. While many state statutes are outdated and difficult to update, local ordinances can be easily revised and support an efficient animal welfare system.*

An all-inclusive list of what to include and what not to include in a local ordinance can be found in *The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters* beginning on page 59 (Attachment 2: Ordinance Revision Recommendations).

The Wayne County ordinance pertaining to animal welfare has not been updated since 2005. Consideration should be made for the Wayne County legislative body to adopt the city of Richmond ordinance **after** recommended revisions have been completed, below. If a word document of the city of Richmond ordinance can be provided for Team Shelter USA, revisions can be redlined directly into that document.

Recommendations for the city of Richmond ordinance:

- Add:
 - 91.0-definitions for free roaming cats
 - 91.06
 - add requirement for the animal control officer to search for the owner or a neighborhood foster who will help search for the owner of a dog at-large (non-enforcement/non-aggressive)
 - add options for disposition that include send to foster, another adoption agency or return a cat to its original home location after spay/neuter
 - 91.07
 - option for owner to spay/neuter, microchip with registration and vaccinate in lieu of fees and fines to reclaim
- Delete
 - Replace the word destroyed/destruction with “humanely euthanized” throughout the ordinance
 - 91.01-exempt free roaming cats from registration, at-large clause and stray hold
 - 91.01-requirement to register a colony of cats
 - 91.02-consider replacing the requirement to register pets with free/low cost microchipping
 - 91.06
 - stray hold requirement for felines or puppies under 5 months with no identification
 - requirement to impound a dog at large
 - Consider frequent, subsidized vaccine/microchip clinics in lieu of requirement for registration/licensing



- 91.15 Dangerous/Vicious Dogs:
 - (a)(1), remove ‘because of its breed’
 - (b)(1) replace ‘shall’ with ‘may’
- 91.18 Free Roaming Cats
 - Replace requirement to register colonies with community cat language provided

Data and Information Management

Key Point: *Data must be tracked and managed for all community, field and sheltering programs associated with Pet Resource Center programming and a shelter so that there is data-driven, fiscally responsible budget development, appropriate allocation of all resources and monitoring of the progression of programming improvements and changes. Leaders should be able to easily retrieve reports which is also crucial information to solicit donors and to support grant applications, in particular for non-profit organizations.*

There are a variety of shelter software companies on the market today and those that are user friendly include the ability to capture all pertinent information for field services, community and Safety Net program through the Pet Resource Center and shelter data (<https://help.petfinder.com/s/article/Shelter-Software-Guide#Which>). The ease by which leaders can monitor data and analyze trends is of paramount importance.

Shelter Animals Count is a national non-profit organization that tracks national shelter data and all sheltering organizations should report their numbers via this matrix: https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/BasicDataMatrix_SAC.pdf. The following Key Performance Indicators are the baseline of data that should be tracked:

Pet Resource Center Community Programs and Safety Net:

- Data categorized by species
- Line item budget for each program
- Number of calls categorized by type/need
- Number of people assisted per program
- Number of pets assisted per program
- Number of subsidized spay/neuter surgeries and the correlation to shelter intake
- Donations-general and restricted
- Number of pets assisted that did not enter the shelter

Field Services/Animal Control Officers:

- Numbers of calls by request type categorized by species:
 - At-large (canines)
 - Police assist
 - Aggressive dog towards human
 - Aggressive dog towards dog
 - Animal Cruelty/Neglect
 - Access to care issue
 - Animal in Danger



- Sick/injured

Sheltered Pets

- Intake
 - Source
 - Species
 - Age
 - Breed
 - Colors
 - Identification (if any)
- Outcome
 - Return to owner/home location
 - Adoption
 - Transfer to another organization
 - Euthanasia by type

The definition of success is not the traditionally accepted 90% and above save rate but rather that the categories of euthanasia are community unsafe large dogs and medical cases beyond hope or resources. The percent saved from a shelter could be 50% for example, but only those categories of pets are euthanized appropriately.

Community-Minded Field Services

Key Point: *Municipalities are tasked with providing for public and animal safety. Therefore, Animal Control Officers (ACOs) should be reserved for punitive action when dealing with true perpetrators of cruelty, neglect, etc. and dangerous animals.*

*It must be noted that the city of Richmond and Wayne County ACOs focus on canines. This **does not** mean there are no cats in need but currently residents must depend exclusively on non-profit organizations for assistance. Statistics regarding the number of cats in need are not tracked community-wide so are unavailable.*



2023 Data Provided by the Wayne County Animal Control Officer

Total Number of Calls Reported: 910

Response to Calls	Responses	# of Dogs in Need of Housing
ACO took to personal home when no other option	57	57
Refused*	34	17
Sick/Injured	26	26
Nuisance Running Loose	16	16
Safety Hazard	15	15
Owner incarceration/death/hospital	8	8
Neglect/Cruelty	10	10
Gone on Arrival	29	0
Totals	195	149

*Figure 1: Response to calls for Wayne County. *The category of “Refused” refers to dogs who were not in need of confiscation or there was no placement option. Since there was no data regarding the difference, an estimate of 50% was used when attempting to calculate the number of dogs in need of sheltering. The balance of calls without an outcome reported in this chart (910-195=715) were not available for analysis.*

2023 Data Provided by the Richmond Animal Control Officer

Total Number of Calls Reported: 1,093

Response to Calls	Responses	Dogs in Need of Housing
ACO took to personal home when no other option	82	82
Refused	71	35
Sick/Injured	8	8
Nuisance Running Loose	23	23
Safety Hazard	11	11
Owner incarceration/death/hospital	8	8
Neglect/Cruelty	19	19
Gone on Arrival	137	0
Totals	359	186

*Figure 2: Response to calls for the city of Richmond. *The category of “Refused” refers to dogs who were not in need of confiscation or there was no placement option. Since there was no data regarding the difference, an estimate of 50% was used when attempting to calculate the number of dogs in need of sheltering.*



2023 Data Provided by the Richmond Animal Control Officer by Month

Response to Calls-Dogs	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Returned Home	5	7	8	6	7	7	10	4	6	9	6	7	82
Refused Pick Up	12	10	16	1	6	1	9	2	7	2	2	3	71
Sick/Injured	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	8
Nuisance Running Loose	1	0	3	1	3	9	2	1	1	0	2	0	23
Safety Hazard	0	2	1	1	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	11
Owner Emergency	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	8
Neglect/Cruelty	0	7	1	1	1	0	5	0	1	0	3	0	19
Unable to Find/Catch	13	24	12	6	14	14	9	14	13	7	8	3	137
													359
Response to Calls-Cats													
Healthy/ Free Roaming	6	2	3	9	12	12	12	19	8	10	6	1	100
Injured/ Sick	0	3	0	0	2	7	1	3	2	3	1	2	24
Hoarding/ Other	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Access to Vet Care Questions	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Spay and Neuter Questions	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Deceased Cats	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	4
													133
Other Calls													
Wild Life	1	3	1	2	4	2	8	1	1	0	1	2	26
Livestock	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	4	9
Assist Law	6	3	8	2	16	3	10	7	7	3	5	1	71
Responded in Person	38	41	45	27	76	75	70	59	54	62	52	33	632
Responded by Phone	26	31	39	26	46	19	51	43	42	32	34	12	461
Bite Calls	2	2	3	2	10	6	4	0	3	2	4	1	39
Total Calls Per Month	64	84	87	53	123	95	122	104	98	94	86	45	

Figure 3: Provides monthly detail of call types.

In an analysis of existing field services statistics provided by the Animal Control Officers, the following recommendations include:

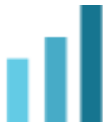
1. The city and county Animal Control Officers are devoted to their jobs and to helping animals. But they have been assigned the responsibility to address animal welfare needs, often with inadequate viable solutions. The city of Richmond and Wayne County are obligated to address these unmet needs as soon as possible.
2. The category of ‘Refused’ was explained by ACOs to be cases where they had no viable location to take the dog OR it was not warranted to take the dog into custody. As a result and without the data to differentiate, 50% of that number was assumed to be a dog who needed temporary housing.
3. For the sick/injured category, ACOs reported there was no budget for veterinary care so Animal Care Alliance was often asked to assist. It should also be noted that ACOs reached out to that organization out of desperation to help but they do not have a full time veterinarian to care for sick/injured pets either and do the best they can.
4. ‘Gone on arrival’ were results from a call to dispatch an ACO for a dog at large. The city ACO estimated those calls took the majority of their time. The Wayne County ACO estimated that category took 15% of their time.

It bears repeating that with 187 million pets in the US and less than 3% going into shelters, more dogs are likely free roaming and returning home on their own without shelter/ACO intervention.

At Dallas Animal Services, a study showed that most free roaming dogs were very close to their homes and prioritized keeping them in their neighborhoods versus an animal control officer taking them to a shelter, where an average of only 15 to 22 percent of the ‘stray’ dogs are reunited with their families, not only decreased intake but increased reunification rates ([A New Web-Based Tool for RTO-Focused Animal Shelter Data Analysis \(nih.g\)](#)). Similar information about free roaming dogs is emerging from Austin and San Antonio, Texas and Memphis Animal Services in Tennessee. Creating community-centric programs like these are transforming the antiquated traditional animal welfare system that has been set up for failure.

At the beginning of the pandemic, when all field services teams went to emergency response only, many did not continue to respond to these non-emergency/non-enforcement dogs at large calls because, as most field teams report, they **do not** find the dog more than 90% of the time. Richmond and Wayne County leaders should consider this as well so the focus can be on true public and animal safety when a pet or person is in danger.

5. In addition to the ACO statistics above, Help the Animals reported they took in 65 dogs at large in 2023 and Second Chance Fund reported that they also took in dogs at large



(estimated by Team Shelter USA at 25 per year) in addition to those they transferred in from other counties where dogs were at risk of euthanasia. Those estimates were used to provide the needed kennel space in a newly designed Pet Resource Center.

Wayne County leadership reported that dogs are now taken (in 2024) to Help the Animals. Though the city of Richmond did contract with Henry County Humane Society in 2023, as of the onsite consult visit, the contract for 2024 was still pending and the ACO left with no options. While this contract was scheduled to be in place soon, taking dogs from Richmond to New Castle 33 miles away is not a sustainable solution for residents or an efficient use of the ACO time and resources.

Lack of access to veterinary care and basic resources is a crisis for many pet owners. Field services teams face that issue commonly so routing all dispatch calls to a Pet Resource Center/Safety Net team first, makes the most sense. As an example, at Memphis Animal Services in Tennessee, the Pet Resource Center team first see how they can help a constituent in need prior to dispatching field services. This reserves field services for true issues around public and animal safety that require punitive enforcement action.

Other key components for an effective field services program is onboard and ongoing training, safety measures in place and temperature controlled vehicles. More information regarding community-based field services can be found here:

<https://network.bestfriends.org/education/operations/field-services-return-owner-education>.

Both city and county leadership is strongly encouraged to apply for the Best Friends Field Services program. This training program includes onsite support by field services experts and provide animal handling, officer safety, recommendations on program design and policies in line with best practices in this report and important networking opportunities. Team Shelter USA can make the introductions. The National Animal Control Association (nacanet.org) and Human Animal Support Services (humananimalsupportservices.org) also has a variety of training opportunities. Recommendations regarding basic equipment for field services vehicles can be found in the playbook as well.

Safety Net Programming

Key Point: *Programs that keep pets and people together, whether temporarily as in foster care (stray dog or owner surrender) or helping an owner keep their pet, reduces the need to confine pets in a shelter, is cost effective and beneficial to both people and pets. Examples of programs are discussed below and should be started immediately.*

All local animal welfare groups are doing the best they can to help pets and people in need but have very limited resources. Warm Paws Cool Claws, for example, has a food pantry and delivery service, provides dog houses, cat condos for free roaming cats and straw for cold weather.

Safety Net programs to exhaust all alternatives to intake are crucial since confining/housing pets and separating them from their owners and caregivers is wasteful if there are other viable options



to assist. With respect to animals, confinement in a shelter will lead to negative consequences that includes the increased risks of overcrowding, stress, anxiety and frustration and infectious disease transmission/outbreaks. For people, this leads to the inability to properly care for pets when the Capacity for Care is exceeded, Compassion Fatigue, poor decision making, increased Worker's Compensation claims and waste of all resources.

The animal welfare industry has experienced a welcome and dramatic shift in the last decade and in particular, since the onset of the pandemic in 2020. The first animal control and sheltering system model was created around 1866 in order to capture, warehouse, and ultimately euthanize free roaming aggressive dogs and those inflicted with the rabies virus (<https://www.asPCA.org/about-us/history-of-the-asPCA>). This system has historically focused on punitive actions and judgment around pet ownership and a shelter intake bias as the sole solution. Until the 1980s, euthanasia was commonly used as a means of controlling the shelter population, which is no longer acceptable in our society.

In 2023, according to Best Friends Animal Society, 83 percent of pets entering shelters in the US were saved, which represent enormous improvements over years past. Judgment and punishment have been largely replaced in many communities across the country with proactive programs like prioritizing reunification, self-rehoming services, Safety Net and surrender prevention assistance, engaging and supporting willing community members to volunteer, foster and collaborate, as well as enhancing access to veterinary care.

Organizations like Open Door Veterinary Collective, Humane Animal Support Services (HASS), and the American Veterinary Medical Association One Health initiative are linking human social services with access to veterinary care services and thinking about both ends of the leash (see **Resources**). Another national organization, Meals on Wheels, created Animeals after realizing clients were feeding food meant for them to their pets (<https://humanepro.org/magazine/articles/meals-wheels-people-and-pets>). All these initiatives have the unified goal of treating the whole family, that includes both people and pets.

Benefits of intertwining human social services and animal welfare have far-reaching economic and public health benefits. In two studies completed by the Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy, Animal Studies Repository, the positive economic impact over several years was \$157,452,503 and \$118,566,405 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Austin, Texas, respectively, as referenced in the Executive Summary. The Oklahoma City report also speaks to the potential positive consequences for people, such as “Increased rates of volunteering, increased brand equity, decreased obesity rates, decreased health care expenditures, increased productivity, decreased mental health expenditures, increased social capital, and improved humane education”.

This crucial link to social services and access to veterinary care often results in decreased enforcement complaints and actions, showing that most punitive actions were not intentional neglect, cruelty, or abandonment but rather lack of access to assistance of some kind. In a 2015 study, the ASPCA found that most of the people surrendering to a shelter who were surveyed, did not want to surrender their pet but did not have access to temporary assistance (Weiss, E. , Gramann, S. , Victor Spain, C. and Slater, M. (2015) Goodbye to a Good Friend: An Exploration of the Re-Homing of Cats and Dogs in the U.S.. *Open Journal of Animal Sciences*, 5, 435-456.

doi: [10.4236/ojas.2015.54046](https://doi.org/10.4236/ojas.2015.54046)). The Humane Society of the United States founded The Pets for Life program and has also consistently reported the endless benefits of community programming and safety net services as well.

(<https://humanepro.org/sites/default/files/documents/pets-for-life-sustainability-guide.pdf>, page 102).

Housing insecurity, the ongoing, deleterious economic effects of the pandemic, the escalating cost of providing veterinary services, and other financial challenges facing pet owners warrant a new approach to social services. For more information regarding equitable animal welfare services and the benefits of a One Health approach, see: <https://airtable.com/shrmziLv7W8KELPQy>.

This is not to suggest that all pet owners should receive subsidized assistance; however, sobering information is documented in the 2018 Access to Care Coalition Report (<https://pphe.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/avcc-report.pdf>). Not only did that study show that there were 29 million pet owners on some sort of government assistance, but 60 percent of all American workers live paycheck to paycheck and even a mid-high income earner cannot pay a \$2,000 emergency veterinary bill. Sadly, those numbers are likely to have become even more dire since the start of the pandemic.

Human Animal Support Services or HAAS was founded with the philosophy of empowering communities around supportive self-rehoming and is the premiere online resource regarding community engagement (humananimalsupportservices.org).

Two online supportive self-rehoming platforms are especially helpful: rehome/adoptapet.com and home-home.org and should be required before accepting an owner surrender into a shelter. However, the municipalities should consider concentrating sheltering options for those pets whose owners are unknown or part of an enforcement case. Owners needing assistance should be assisted through programming as opposed to a shelter intake unless an emergency.

Some excellent examples of website information at the shelter/Pet Resource Center level are:

- Palm Valley Animal Society (TX) <https://www.pvastx.org/rehome>
- City of Rochester Animal Services (NY) <https://www.cityofrochester.gov/PetAssistance.aspx>
- El Paso Animal Services (TX) <https://elpasoanimalservices.org/resources/petresources/>

Subsidized Targeted Spay Neuter

Key Point: *As per Peter Marsh's research, shelter intake is tied to income level and subsidized targeted spay/neuter correlates with the decreasing need to shelter pets (see Resources).*

Most owners want to spay/neuter their pets but do not have financial access to surgery as the cost to provide veterinary care has outpaced inflation. Target groups include pets belonging to financially disadvantaged owners, large breed dogs who have big litters and longer lengths of stay when in a shelter and pets whose litters are at risk of surrender to a shelter. Many municipalities understand and subsidize targeted spay/neuter to minimize the number of canines and felines who would otherwise enter the shelter. Cats allowed access to the outdoors,



commonly referred to as community cats, are an important target group and discussed in the next section.

There is a serious veterinary shortage that is projected to get worse so providing for spay/neuter has become increasingly difficult and communities are becoming more and more creative. Pop up clinics and visiting veterinary surgery teams are now common and the Pub.Vet mobile unit is already visiting the Wayne County area on a regular basis, which is excellent.

The tipping point for a person who is financially disadvantaged varies but more than a \$20 copay can prevent them from using even a lower cost clinic. Qualifying pet owners as low-income can be simple by requiring proof of government assistance, however, the need is greater than just that group of pet owners. Some clinics have a sliding scale and all non-profit programs should ask for a donation to help offset costs.

The starting budget recommendation for owned pets is 5-10 of those subsidized surgeries for those who need assistance per 1,000 residents. For the city of Richmond that would be 175-350 pets per year and for Wayne County, 155-310 per year split between dogs and cats. Cats allowed access to the outdoors are in addition to those numbers.

Residents are fortunate to have a high volume spay/neuter clinic in their community. In 2023, Animal Care Alliance did 1,121 feline and 253 canine surgeries. Data was not available regarding pet owner addresses differentiating them from unincorporated Wayne County vs the city of Richmond, nor were all surgeries targeted, however, this clinic is a crucial partner moving forward and the municipalities are strongly encouraged to subsidize targeted surgeries. As mentioned, the veterinary crisis is serious and if additional high-volume surgeons cannot be identified, there are traveling surgery teams such as those with the Bissell Pet Foundation, Slomba Shelter Solutions, Animal Balance and Greater Good.

The Joanie Bernard Foundation has provided funding for cats through the Pet Friendly Services Indiana program and 100 subsidized surgeries are planned for 2024.



Community Cat Programs

Key Point: *An estimated half of American cat owners allow their cats access to the outdoors yet the public has been erroneously directed to take a cat they see outside to a shelter with the goal of reunification. Nationally, less than 2% of cats entering the shelter in the 'stray' category are reunited. An outdoor or indoor/outdoor cat should be sheltered only if they are sick, injured, in danger or part of enforcement case.*

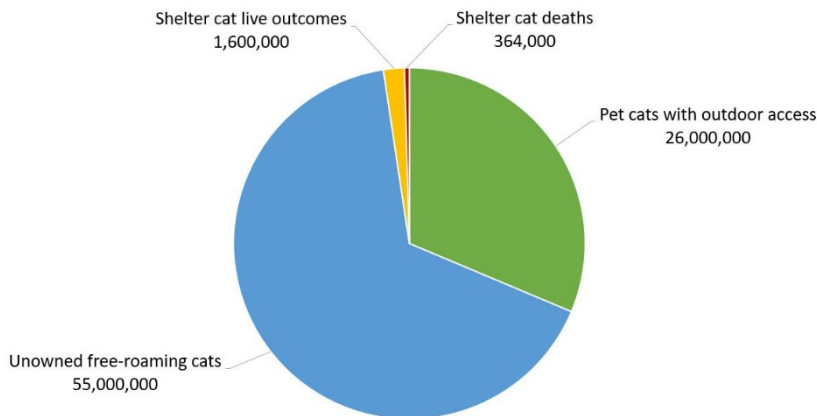


Figure 4: Compares the estimated number of free-roaming cats (unowned and owned) compared to the number of cats entering and dying in shelters in the U.S. (Source: Front. Vet. Sci., 08 March 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2022.847081>)

In the traditional animal control and sheltering system, cats outside were considered ‘stray’ and the public was trained to take the cats to an animal shelter for the purpose of reunification. These cats are often called ‘community cats’ and may be socialized or unsocialized.

Unfortunately, this flawed intake system did not take into account that approximately half of American cat owners allow their cats access to the outside and they were not actually lost. In addition, this foundational practice has resulted in a reunification rate of less than 2% nationally or a 98% failure rate of the intended goal.

In the meantime, the only effective plan for healthy community cats is to link owners and caregivers with subsidized spay/neuter, rabies vaccination and ear tip (or tattoo) to identify the cat as sterilized and return them to their original home location. A healthy body weight and coat are evidence that the cat has adequate food sources. Community cats should only be admitted to the shelter if they are sick, injured or part of an enforcement case.

Ensuring healthy community cats are sterilized and staying in their original home location benefits all stakeholders since it:

- Decreases the number of unwanted births and overall number of community cats
- Simultaneously increases community immunity against rabies as there are less cats but a higher percentage who are vaccinated
- Decreases the negative impact on wildlife
- Eliminates the waste of resources when taking a cat into the shelter who was not in need of assistance
- Eliminates nuisance behaviors associated with mating
- Prevents the formation of colonies of cats

An overwhelming amount of evidence supports the practice of keeping healthy sterilized community cats in their original home locations as the most effective cat management program for all stakeholders. Some examples are:

- An article, referenced in figure 4, summarizing the latest research by Dr. Kate Hurley and Dr. Julie Levy (Front. Vet. Sci., 08 March 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2022.847081>)
- A webinar by the Million Cat Challenge team: <https://youtu.be/9FVHcYTXrgI>
- Best Friends Animal Society (<https://resources.bestfriends.org/advocacy/community-cats>)
- The National Animal Control Association(<https://www.nacanet.org/animal-control-intake-of-free-roaming-cats/>)
- The Humane Society of the United States (<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/community-cat-program>)
- Human Animal Support Services (<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/?s=community+cats>)

A new non-profit, the Community Cat Coalition, has recently been formed to raise funds to spay/neuter cats and the municipalities are encouraged to partner with this group.



Access to Veterinary Care

Key Point: *The escalating costs to provide veterinary care combined with the shortage of veterinarians has created what the American Veterinary Medical Association is calling a crisis. Helping pet owners in need with basic care to keep their pets comfortable can be less expensive than a shelter surrender and intake.*

High-volume vaccine and microchip clinics became more popular during the pandemic since many animal welfare organizations did drive through clinics while pets and people stayed in their cars. This model has many benefits that include increasing community immunity against rabies and common infectious diseases and permanently identifying pets so they can quickly be reunited with their owners if lost so would not have to enter a shelter. Richmond and county leaders are encouraged to collaborate with local animal welfare organizations and fund these types of clinics on a quarterly basis.

Open Door Veterinary Collective is a national non-profit training organization that teaches a business model that can be used in for-profit or non-profit clinics (opendoorconsults.org). All local veterinarians should be encouraged to look at this model that is financially profitable and expands access to care. A blog about this program can be found here: <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/blog/innovators-working-to-make-veterinary-care-more-accessible/> and a peer-reviewed research article about the potential impact of this program can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3bn7Jqw>.

On-Deck Foster Care Volunteers~Rescue Groups

Key Point: *Time in any shelter in confinement is difficult and stressful for pets and therefore people. Creating a volunteer foster program and keeping pets in those homes temporarily (weeks, for example), while providing support in the way of food, litter for felines, medical care, etc. is more cost efficient than sheltering large numbers of pets. With an On-Deck foster system, the pets bypass the shelter or only enter to get their preventive care and leave the same day or next day. This is how traditional rescue groups operate and is an important part of the Safety Net program in every community.*

As per Maddie's Fund (maddiesfund.org), fostering is an excellent pathway for adoption. The idea is that a pet in need comes to a Pet Resource Center program for preventive care and a spay/neuter appointment but stays in the home of a volunteer. Foster volunteers should then be supported virtually and with the help they need to find a permanent placement for their foster pets within a few weeks so they do not have to be confined in a shelter. Municipalities should be funding these programs at some level, with guidelines on qualifications and a timeline for permanent placement.

Other Safety Net Interventions

Key Point: *Animal welfare organizations working together with owners in need of assistance may look to human social services organizations, provide dog training classes and assistance*



and/or raise money to pay housing deposits as just a few examples. Assistance programs must have guidelines.

Pet Resource Center: A Capital Project

Key Point: *A Pet Resource Center focuses on exhausting alternatives to a shelter confinement so the number of pets in confinement is minimized. This is crucial since building spaces for pets in confinement costs more than spaces where people office or the public visits and is more in line with a hospital. Oversized plumbing, HVAC with frequent air exchanges and zones to prevent infectious disease spread and odor control, along with surfaces that can withstand harsh chemical cleaning and 24/7 animal use all contribute to the higher cost per square footage. Sheltering space would be reserved for pets with no other options.*

The number of canine housing spaces needed for a Pet Resource Center, when all other options are exhausted, were based on the following assumptions:

- Current ACO response results (city)
- Current ACO response results (county)
- Help the Animals 2023 numbers
- Second Chance Rescue 2023 assumptions

It is also important to note that the 30 and 90 day length of stay examples are based on life-saving while reserving euthanasia for large, community unsafe dogs and medical cases beyond hope. Needed feline spaces were guesstimated as no statistics were available. Length of stay is the most important variable determining the number of pets who can be helped while operating within the Capacity of Care for the organization.

Shelter Housing: Program Recommendations

Key Point: *The sheltering part of the Pet Resource Center would be reserved for pets with no other alternatives for care and euthanasia candidates. All programs and policies should focus on the shortest length of stay to live outcome whenever possible or euthanasia for large dogs who are community unsafe and medical cases who cannot be reasonably helped with existing resources and/or partnerships.*



Animal Housing Requirements - 30 day LOS

Animal	YEARLY INTAKES	DAILY INTAKE	TARGET LOS	BASE CAPACITY	PEAK FACTOR	REQUIRED CAPACITY
<i>Canines</i>	700	1.9	30	58	1.15	66
<i>Felines</i>	100	0.3	30	8	2.00	16
TOTAL	800	2.2				83

Animal Housing Requirements - 90 day LOS

Animal	YEARLY INTAKES	DAILY INTAKE	TARGET LOS	BASE CAPACITY	PEAK FACTOR	REQUIRED CAPACITY
<i>Canines</i>	700	1.9	90	173	1.15	198
<i>Felines</i>	100	0.3	90	25	2.00	49
TOTAL	800	2.2				248

Program with Animals at 30 Day Length of Stay

Room	Notes	#	Size	Net	Load	Gross	Dogs	Cats
Dog Housing								
Puppy or Small Dog Kennels		2	4 x 7	= 56	2.75	= 154	3	
Medium Dog Kennels	<i>indoor dbl sided design</i>	8	4 x 10	= 320	3.00	= 960	8	
Large Dog Kennels	<i>indoor dbl sided design</i>	48	5 x 10	= 2,400	3.00	= 7,200	48	
XL Dog Kennels	<i>indoor dbl sided design</i>	4	6 x 10	= 240	2.85	= 684	4	
Meet/Greet	<i>other meet and greet outside</i>	1	10 x 12	= 120	1.35	= 162		
Outdoor Dog Play - Large	<i>with some shade covers</i>	1	80 x 80	= 6,400	1.00	=		
Outdoor Dog Play	<i>with some shade covers</i>	6	30 x 50	= 9,000	1.00	=		
Outdoor Meet/Greet	<i>with some shade covers</i>	2	20 x 30	= 1,200	1.00	=		
Cat Housing								
Cat / Kitten Caging		12	3 x 5	= 150	2.50	= 375		12
Meet Greet		1	8 x 10	= 80	1.35	= 108		
Isolation Housing								
Dog Isolation	<i>indoor dbl sided design</i>	4	5 x 10	= 200	2.85	= 570	4	
Cat Isolation		4	3 x 5	= 50	2.50	= 125		4
Staff								
Unisex Restrooms		2	7 x 9	= 126	1.35	= 170		
Laundry / Dishes		1	14 x 20	= 280	1.35	= 378		
Mechanical		1	10 x 16	= 160	1.35	= 216		
Electrical / IT		1	10 x 16	= 160	1.35	= 216		
						11,318	67	16
						GSF	Dogs	Cats
						Interior		
						66	16	
						check	check	
Probable Hard Costs								
Animal Housing Building		11,318	x	\$600	=	\$6,790,860		
Site Improvements					=	\$1,400,000		
						Subtotal		
						\$8,190,860	\$760	per s.f. for the animal spaces incl. site development
						Pricing Contingency	5%	
						\$409,543		
						Total Hard Costs		
						\$8,600,403		
						in 2024 dollars	\$600	per s.f. for the animal spaces without site development
Probable Soft Costs								
Professional			9%	=	\$774,036			
F, F, and E			11%	=	\$946,044			
Owner Contingency			10%	=	\$860,040			
						Total Soft Costs		
						\$2,580,121		
						Total Project Costs		
						\$11,180,524		
						in 2024 dollars		

Program with Animals at 90 Day Length of Stay

Room	Notes	#	Size	Net	Load	Gross	Dogs	Cats	
Dog Housing									
Puppy or Small Dog Kennels		6	4 x 8	= 192	1.75	= 336	8		
Medium Dog Kennels	<i>indoor dbl sided design</i>	40	4 x 10	= 1,600	3.00	= 4,800	40		
Large Dog Kennels	<i>indoor dbl sided design</i>	120	5 x 10	= 6,000	3.00	= 18,000	120		
XL Dog Kennels	<i>indoor dbl sided design</i>	20	6 x 10	= 1,200	2.85	= 3,420	20		
Meet/Greet	<i>other meet and greet outside</i>	2	10 x 12	= 240	1.35	= 324			
Outdoor Dog Play - Large	<i>with some shade covers</i>	1	80 x 80	= 6,400	1.00	=			
Outdoor Dog Play	<i>with some shade covers</i>	8	30 x 50	= 12,000	1.00	=			
Outdoor Meet/Greet	<i>with some shade covers</i>	2	20 x 30	= 1,200	1.00	=			
Cat Housing									
Cat / Kitten Caging		40	3 x 5	= 500	2.50	= 1,250		40	
Meet Greet		1	8 x 10	= 80	1.35	= 108			
Isolation Housing									
Dog Isolation	<i>indoor dbl sided design</i>	10	5 x 10	= 500	2.85	= 1,425	10		
Cat Isolation		8	3 x 5	= 100	2.50	= 250		8	
Staff									
Unisex Restrooms		1	7 x 9	= 63	1.35	= 85			
Gendered Restrooms		2	10 x 16	= 320	1.35	= 432			
Food/Dishes		1	10 x 20	= 200	1.35	= 270			
Central Laundry		1	14 x 20	= 280	1.35	= 378			
Mechanical		1	14 x 20	= 280	1.35	= 378			
Electrical		1	10 x 12	= 120	1.35	= 162			
IT Room		1	10 x 12	= 120	1.35	= 162			
							31,780	198	48
							GSF	Dogs	Cats
							Interior		
							198	49	
							check	check	
Probable Hard Costs									
Animal Housing Building		31,780	x	\$625	=	\$19,862,531			
Site Improvements						\$2,000,000			
						Subtotal			
						\$21,862,531	\$729	per s.f. for the animal spaces incl. site development	
						Pricing Contingency 6%	\$1,311,752		
						Total Hard Costs	\$23,174,283		
						in 2024 dollars	\$625	per s.f. for the animal spaces without site development	
Probable Soft Costs									
Professional			9%			\$2,085,685			
F, F, and E			9%			\$2,085,685			
Owner Contingency			10%			\$2,317,428			
						Total Soft Costs	\$6,488,799		
						Total Project Costs	\$29,663,082		
						in 2024 dollars			

Managed Coordinated Admissions

The role of a municipality is to provide for public and animal safety. However, historically municipal shelters accepted owner surrenders in addition to stray pets. We now know there are more beneficial pathways for owners in need of assistance to keep or place their pets that was discussed in the Safety Net section. Visually healthy cats with access to the outdoors should not be admitted to a shelter unless part of a true enforcement case.

Once a pet/owner has been helped through the Pet Resource Center programming, it should be determined if a shelter intake is the last resort. It is essential to schedule any intakes proactively since emergencies cannot be planned. This would leave the following categories of pets for intake:

- Enforcement cases such as cruelty, neglect, dangerous dogs, etc.
- Stray canines in danger or exhibiting aggressive behavior
- Sick/injured pets
- Rabies suspects (canines/felines) with no known owner
- Owner surrenders only if there is an emergency situation
- Euthanasia for large, community unsafe dogs and medical cases beyond hope or resources

These pathway plans are supported by the reputable national organizations and leaders that include but are not limited to:

The National Animal Control Association: <https://www.nacanet.org/naca-guideline-on-appointment-based-pet-intake-into-shelters/>

Best Friends Animal Society: <https://network.bestfriends.org/education/manuals-handbooks-playbooks/managed-intake-or-admissions-training-playbook>

Dr. Kate Hurley; [The Evolving Role of Triage and Appointment-Based Admission to Improve Service, Care and Outcomes in Animal Shelters](#) Front. Vet. Sci., 04 March 2022
| <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2022.809340>

Intake Policies and Procedures

If the decision is made to accept a pet into the sheltering part of the Pet Resource Center, there must be a dynamic pathway plan from the point of intake that leads to the shortest length of stay. That is because any time spent in a shelter leads to negative consequences such as overcrowding, the inability for staff/volunteers to care appropriately for pets, fear/anxiety/stress and frustration for shelter pets, increased risk of infectious diseases, Compassion Fatigue and stress for people, inhumane housing and waste of resources.



At the point of intake, if a pet is on a live outcome pathway, preventive care should be provided and a plan of action created. This should include scheduling spay/neuter and advocacy for foster and adoption when the owner is not found.

Population Management and Length of Stay

As mentioned, the length of stay is the most important risk factor for pets confined in a shelter so effective population management is required to ensure the action plan is dynamic. Every day staff should make sure that is happening and if euthanasia may be the ultimate pathway, the decision should be made by a team that has evaluated the situation without bias.

Spay/Neuter

As discussed, municipalities should be investing in community targeted spay/neuter as well and providing this service through non-profit organizations is typically more cost effective than utilizing private practice veterinarians. With the Pet Resource Center surgery space could be used for the community programs and in-house surgery for shelter pets.

Enrichment and Wellbeing

Housing pets in confinement requires ample space per pet with recommendations from the Association of Shelter Veterinarians. However, the physical space is only a part of the required care. Attention to the pet's mental and emotional wellbeing is linked to stress and infectious disease rates.

For cats, double compartment housing is least stressful compared to smaller spaces or a free roam room with other unfamiliar cats. For dogs, a double compartment run with access to the outdoors is recommended and most importantly ample free exercise time. Most dogs enjoy the companionship of other dogs in play groups, which require fenced in play yards. Play groups can be run by staff, volunteers or a combination of the two.

Providing a Fear Free Sheltering environment (<http://fearfreeshelters.com/>) reduces the length of stay, negative behaviors that can lead to aggression and reduces stress.

Return to Owner (dogs)

The average national return to owner rate for dogs is 22% (aspca.org). Since the beginning of the pandemic, data has emerged proving that most dogs at large are in their own neighborhoods and getting home on their own. After interviewing hundreds of field services personnel and data from Miami-Dade Animal Services in Florida, Team Shelter USA has found that more than 90% of the time, when an officer responds to a dog at large call, the dog is not found. Therefore, the current recommendation is to consider reserving finite field team time and resources around true animal and public safety issues and not dogs at large who are not in danger themselves or a danger to others.

In the instance when a dog is taken into the sheltering part of the Pet Resource Center there should be few barriers to reunification. Compliance with spay/neuter, vaccinations and microchipping should replace fees and fines for a non-enforcement, dog at large reunification.



Foster Post Intake

The foster on deck program is the most effective proactive program that can engage Good Samaritans to help. Once the pet is admitted to the sheltering part of the Pet Resource Center, there should also be an effort to advocate for foster volunteers who can take pets into their homes and advocate for their placement within a few weeks.

Adoption Programs

Advocacy for adoption should begin at the point of intake. The gold standard recommendations for effective adoption practices is the Humane Society of the United States *Adopters Welcome* guidelines: (https://humanepro.org/sites/default/files/documents/Adopters_Welcome_Manual_5-15-2020.pdf). It bears repeating that there are 187 million pets in the U.S., in Forbes Advisor survey, 97% of pet owners considered their pets family ([https://www.forbes.com/advisor/pet-insurance/pet-ownership-statistics/#:~:text=Nearly all pet owners \(97,sacrifices for their canine companions.\)](https://www.forbes.com/advisor/pet-insurance/pet-ownership-statistics/#:~:text=Nearly all pet owners (97,sacrifices for their canine companions.))) and when people go to shelter and rescue groups to adopt, they should be welcomed and not judged out of an adoption unfairly.

Public Private Partnerships and Grant Funding

There is no norm across the U.S. regarding shelter operations in a community. Some are strictly run by municipalities, some by non-profits while others a blend. But the most successful animal welfare organizations have strong public-private partnerships and are eager to partner with any sector.

Wayne County is fortunate to have General Mills/Blue Buffalo, Purina and Hills with operations in the community. Foundations like the Joanie Bernard Foundation, the Petco Love Foundation, the Purdue Extension and PetSmart Charities are among other large benefactors and potential ongoing partners in the area. National grants are highly competitive so if the city and county move forward with a Pet Resource Center or even programming, it should be more dependent on local collaboration, social services involvement, etc.

As with any programs, there must be clear guidelines and responsibilities between organizations that are established ahead of time with pathways to resolve issues, chain of command, decision making, etc. in a written contract/MOU created by a legal team.

Human Capital

Engaging community members as volunteers in animal welfare programs can help offset staffing costs, build support for proactive programs and expand networks. Depending on the pathway that the city of Richmond and Wayne County chose, Team Shelter USA can further advise on staffing needs.



Phase II

Once all city and county leaders have read this report, a follow up meeting will be planned by the Wayne County Community Foundation for Team Shelter USA to return for a question and answer session(s) and to discuss possible next steps to develop an effective animal control and sheltering infrastructure.

At that time, Team Shelter USA can provide a live presentation regarding basic community-based animal welfare strategies in an effort to engage the community in support of best practices and clarify any misconceptions about recommendations.

Attachments

1. Dr. Pizano Curriculum Vitae and client list
2. Ordinance Revision Recommendations



SARA PIZANO, DVM, MA

VETERINARIAN AND ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGIST

Education

Dr. Sara Pizano is a 1986 graduate of SUNY Oswego in Oswego, New York (BS), a 1988 graduate of Columbia University in New York, New York (MS) and a 1994 graduate of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine in Ithaca, New York (DVM).

Work Experience

Dr. Pizano began her career as a clinic assistant at the Animal Medical Center in New York City in 1987 and returned following veterinary school to complete a rotating internship in 1995. She was then recruited at North Shore Animal League in Port Washington, New York where she enjoyed working in a full-service specialty hospital dedicated exclusively to the shelter animals.

Between 1998 and 2003, Dr. Pizano served as the Director of Veterinary Services at the Humane Society of Broward County in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, a private shelter handling over 28,000 animals a year. With a staff of 18 in her department, Dr. Pizano oversaw the surgery and medical services for the shelter animals, provided ongoing training for staff and volunteers and established a collaborative with local veterinarians.

In 2005, Dr. Pizano was appointed the Director of Miami-Dade Animal Services in Miami, Florida, a public shelter with an intake of 35,000+ animals a year. Among her many accomplishments at Animal Services, Dr. Pizano implemented Standard Operating Procedures, introduced pain medications, increased adoptions by over 178%, broke life-saving records, created volunteer and rescue programs, procured temperature controlled humane enforcement vehicles and spearheaded the entire re-write of Chapter 5 of the Miami-Dade County Code pertaining to animals.

Under Dr. Pizano's leadership, hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant funding was secured for spay/neuter and other progressive programs and Miami-Dade Animal Services was selected as the 10th ASPCA Partner Community in the country. She was also instrumental in securing a building to retrofit and part of the design team that resulted in an award-winning state of the art 70,000 square foot shelter.

Dr. Pizano joined Target Zero in 2013 and was instrumental in creating and developing a holistic model to transform high euthanasia public shelters and end euthanasia as

population control. As Program Director, Dr. Pizano completed community and shelter consults around the country by introducing a step by step approach to implement Best Practices that resulted in drastic increases in save rate percentages, productive decreases in shelter intake, the creation of effective program design and responsible public policy. In a survey of 18 of the organizations, euthanasia of dogs and cats decreased by 47,149 the first year after the assessment when compared to the year prior.

Dr. Pizano created Team Shelter USA, LLC in August of 2017 in an effort to offer a wider scope of services to help shelters of all types and sizes, regardless of their challenges and resources. Her goal is for all animal welfare organizations to implement proven life-saving Best Practices that ultimately provide sustainable resolution for issues long believed to be unsolvable with an emphasis on Safety Net programs to keep pets out of the shelter in the first place.

The wide scope of services provided by Team Shelter USA, LLC includes holistic shelter and community assessments, enhancing non-profit and municipal collaborative efforts, cost effective and life-saving programs, aligning public policy with animal welfare Best Practices, creating efficient field services, proactive community programs reducing the need to shelter pets, effective population management, humane housing, shelter design and enrichment for shelter pets.

Dr. Pizano is considered a leading expert in shelter reform with unprecedented results. As an accomplished public speaker and influencer, in particular with municipal leaders, she is a positive force helping organizations by creating cost effective programs and eliminating waste so they reach their full potential. Dr. Pizano has completed over 120 consults including several feasibility studies for large municipalities that include Hays County, Texas and Spartanburg County, South Carolina.

Dr. Pizano is the author of *The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters* available on Amazon in hard copy and on Amazon, Apple and Kobo in e-book form. She is currently over the assessment and mentorship program at Maddie's Shelter Medicine, University of Florida and a courtesy faculty member, part of Maddie's Million Pet Challenge, a funder advisor for the Joanie Bernard Foundation and Petsmart Charities and has served as an advisor to the Humane Animal Support Services initiative and Best Friends Animal Society.

Dr. Pizano is a trainer for the national Open Door Veterinary Collective mentorship program that creates profitable clinics whether they are operated by a private clinic, a public entity or a non-profit organization and marries services with access to care. To learn more about Open door Veterinary Collective click here: opendoorconsults.org.

Awards and Recognition

Miami-Dade County Manager's Award of Excellence

Consultant, ASPCA Mission Orange

South Florida Veterinary Medical Foundation, Community Partnership Award

ASPCA Partner Community

Florida Animal Control Association Agency of the Year

Florida Animal Control Association Honorable Mention for Outstanding Achievement

Board and Other Appointments

Broward County Veterinary Medical Association

Companion Animal Advisory Council, Humane Society of the United States

Florida Animal Control Association

Task Force to create Shelter Medicine Specialty recognized by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners

Advisor, Best Friends Animal Society

Advisor, Million Cat Challenge

Courtesy Faculty Member, University of Florida

Advisor, Humane Animal Support Services

Board member, Hammer and Heart

Speaking Engagements

EXPO, Humane Society of the United States

Tourism Board, Puerto Rico

University of Florida, Maddie's Fund Shelter Medicine Program, lecturer

University of Florida, Maddie's Fund Shelter Medicine Program, state conference

University of Georgia, Shelter Medicine Club

Cornell University, Shelter Medicine Club

British Columbia SPCA annual conference

Maddie's Fund Webinars

Best Friends Animal Society annual conference

Podcast Guest: Pet World with Steve Dale, Blunt Dissection with Dr. Dave Nicol, Fear Free Community Cats with Stacy LeBaron, Doobert with Chris Roy, Kuranda with Molly Harding

Blue Grass Area District Development, Kentucky, Board of Directors meeting

American Veterinary Board of Practitioners, 23rd Annual Symposium

Kentucky Animal Control Association

Variety of national webinars with sponsors that included Maddie's Fund, Virox Technologies, Fear Free, Royal Canin and Million Cat Challenge

FOUR PAWS International

Community Cats online conference

The Dog Connection Show

Cal Animals online conference

Hubb City Animal Project online conference



Recommendations to include	Reason
Requirement for all entities utilizing shelter services to abide by the same ordinances in line with Best Practices	Ordinances in line with Best Practices are universal. Variations in ordinances within a community creates unnecessary inefficiencies.
Anti-tethering	Tethering dogs as a means of housing/restraint is considered inhumane.
Sterilization if dog designated dangerous	Sterilized pets are less likely to roam to find a mate. Testosterone is linked to aggression and levels lowered when neutered. Nursing mothers are more likely to protect their pups.
Provision for community cats (exclude from leash law)	It is a societal norm for cats to have access to the outdoors or live exclusively outdoors.
Guidelines for feeding community cats and decreasing risk for wildlife	Community cats should be fed at regular times, in containers that are removed after cats eat and in areas least likely to attract or interfere with wildlife.
Define community cat	Any unowned free roaming cat that may be cared for by one or more residents of the immediate area who is/are known or unknown; a community cat may or may not be feral. Community cats that are ear tipped are sterilized and have received at least one vaccination against rabies. Community cats are exempt from any licensing, stray, abandonment and at-large provisions directed towards owned animals. A community cat may also be defined as a cat 'found' outside that is brought to an animal shelter and not yet sterilized/ear tipped.

Define community cat caregiver	<p>A person who provides care, including food, shelter or medical care to a community cat, while not being considered the owner, custodian, harborer, controller or keeper of a community cat or to have care or charge of a community cat. Caregivers must make every effort to minimize the impact on local wildlife, feed the proper quantity of food for the number of cats in appropriate food containers, discard food containers daily and feed only on their property or with the permission of another landowner (city, state or federal public property). Community cat caregivers shall not be deemed to own, have custody, care or control of community cats. Community cat caregivers may redeem community cats from the shelter without proof of ownership and are exempt from any charges and/or fees.</p>
Exclude Return-to-Field program from abandonment clause	<p>The intent of an abandonment clause is to protect pets from being left in an unfamiliar place. A Return-to-Field program involves returning community cats to their home location where they were already cared for.</p>
Housing bite quarantine only if owner unknown (pending dangerous dog investigation is at the discretion of the director)	<p>Shelter space should be reserved for stray pets with no other options or part of an enforcement case. Owners of pets in need of quarantine from a single incidence should be responsible for the quarantine arrangements.</p>
3-day stray hold for dogs over 5 months to live outcome	<p>Most stray dogs are reclaimed by their owners within the first 3 days and LOS leads to negative consequences. Nationally only 20% of stray dogs are reclaimed through a shelter.</p>

No stray hold for kittens and puppies under 5 months to live outcome	Kittens and puppies are at high risk of contracting an infectious disease at the shelter and are not part of the reunification pool. LOS leads to negative consequences.
No stray hold for cats over 5 months to live outcome	Nationally less than 5% of stray cats are reclaimed through a shelter. Studies show that cats are 7 to 13 times more likely to find their way home from the street or find another home when compared to a shelter (Ref Lord and Owen). Trap and euthanize is ineffective at decreasing community cat numbers. LOS leads to negative consequences.
Foster during stray hold	Overall, most of shelter population will not be reclaimed. LOS leads to negative consequences.
Cap on adoption fees	Low adoption fees correlated with lower LOS.
Provision to waive adoption fee	Fee waived adoptions correlate to LOS. Fees do not correlate to responsible pet ownership or human-animal bond.
Financial incentive for services with reclaim (spay/neuter, rabies vaccination and microchip)	Fees, fines and citations prior to reclaim for a stray at large and not part of an enforcement case is a barrier to reclaim. Offering incentive for services is beneficial for pet, owner, shelter and field services and provide sustainable resolution.
Allowance for spay/neuter agreement	If pre-adoption spay/neuter not possible, LOS leads to negative consequences.
Recommendations to exclude	Reason
Memorandum of Understanding or contracts with shelters not linked to number of animals admitted	Shelter space should be reserved for public and animal safety cases and pets with no alternatives.
Field Officers do not convenience transport owner surrenders or healthy community cats for the purpose of shelter intake	Field Officers should focus on public and animal safety and proactive community programs.
Breed Specific Legislation	No evidence that physical characteristics are linked to aggression

Pet Limits	Not correlated to responsible pet ownership or hoarding risk
Regulation of community cat colonies or caregivers	Does not promote partnership efforts with caregivers and feeders, positions animal control entity as the enemy. Resources wasted with no positive outcome.
Mandatory spay/neuter for the general public AVMA and ASPCA agree	No evidence that mandatory spay/neuter linked to decreasing shelter intake, creates a punitive action with no resolution, risk of increasing shelter intake. (AVMA and ASPCApro.org)

Resources

National Animal Welfare Organizations

- American Veterinary Medical Association, One Health (<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/one-health>)
- Association of Shelter Veterinarians (shelternvet.org)
- Best Friends (bestfriends.org)
- Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (careawo.org)
- Fear Free Shelters (fearfreeshelters.com)
- Human Animal Support Services - HASS (humaneanimalsupportservices.org)
- Humane Society of the United States (hsus.org and animalsheltering.org)
- Jessica Dolce Compassion Fatigue (jessicadolce.com)
- Maddie's Fund (maddiesfund.org)
- Maddie's Million Pet Challenge team (maddiesmillionpetchallenge.org)
- National Animal Control Association (naca.net)

National Statistics

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

Guidelines

- *Adopter's Welcome*, by the Humane Society of the United States <https://humanepro.org/page/adopters-welcome-manual>
- 2020 American Association of Feline Practitioners guidelines (Informational webinar by Dr. Julie Levy, Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, University of Florida, <https://youtu.be/KdsMiZjwdpo>)
- Humananimalsupportservices.org <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/toolkits/>)
- Shelter Care Checklists: Putting ASV Guidelines Into Action https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcasv-checklist-2014_0.pdf
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' 2016 Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs <https://avmajournals.avma.org/view/journals/javma/249/2/javma.249.2.165.xml>
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters <https://www.shelternvet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf>



Access to Care Information from Open Door Veterinary Collective

- **Access to Care Coalition Report**
avcc.utk.edu/avcc-report.pdf
- **Pet Owners Perceptions and Experiences with Community Veterinary Clinics**
aspcapro.org/research/study-pet-owners-perceptions-and-experiences-community-veterinary-clinics
- **Meals on Wheels America, Pet Programming and Client Needs Assessment (2021)**
This report identifies the attachment levels of home bound clients of Meals on Wheels programs across the country with their pets and the needs of those pet homes. Survey questions align to the Access to Veterinary Care 2018 study to provide comparison in incidence and barriers to accessing veterinary care.
[View/Download PDF](#)
- **Measuring Changes in Perceptions of Access to Pet Support Care in Underserved Communities** <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2021.745345/full>
- **The Veterinary Care Accessibility Project** www.accesstovetcare.org

Surrender Prevention and Safety Net

- Those surrendering needed temporary help (<https://www.aspca.org/about-us/press-releases/more-1-million-households-forced-give-their-beloved-pet-each-year-aspca>)
- Home to Home (<https://home-home.org/>)
- Rehome by Adopt-A-Pet (<https://rehome.adoptapet.com/>)
- Rehoming Comparison Tool (<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/wordpress/files/2021/03/Rehoming-Tool-Comparison-1-27-21.pdf>)
- PetPoint.com, Points of Care for tracking Safety Net data (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBvr9XF42FA>)

Foster Care

- HASS Intake to Placement Tool Kit
<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/toolkit/intake-to-placement/>



- Doobert/FosterSpace (<https://www.doobert.com/>)

Community Cat Programming

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

Managed Admission; Appointment Based System

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

Portal instructions

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

Canines (How to help large dogs in shelters)

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

Dog Play Groups

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



Adoptions

- Adoptapet (adoptapet.com)
- Adoptimize (adoptimize.com)
- The 2021-022 American Pet Products Association Survey showed that only 40% of dogs and 43% of cats are adopted from an animal shelter or rescue group
- <https://humanepro.org/page/pets-by-the-numbers>
- Why people went to breeders after shelter/rescue
<https://moderndogmagazine.com/articles/best-friends-animal-society-survey-exposes-why-people-opt-adopt-or-not/108382>.
- Conversations from the Field: Journey to Open Adoptions by Chrissy Sedgley
<https://youtu.be/TAYAoqjDH4o>
- Is Your Adoption Process Really Working by Sue Cosby
https://aspca.zoom.us/recording/play/NAvZ9ClEOsAAhmE-V_TcWq1TSn5kAa6n4HgPJMIXYyMKBSINpAuxfWSIWPxfnm6?continueMode=true
- Petfinder.com

Shelter Donation Programs

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

Recommended Reading

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

Return to Owner (RTO) Research

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



Rescue/Transfers Research

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

Staffing

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

Volunteers

- HASS Volunteer Integration
<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/toolkit/volunteer-integration/>

Networking and Information

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

Education and Certification

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

