

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



ITEM: 2.33
(ID # 19895)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, August 30, 2022

FROM : ANIMAL SERVICES:

SUBJECT: ANIMAL SERVICES: Animal Services Director's 90-Day Report; All Districts. [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and File the Director's 90-Day Report from the Riverside County Department of Animal Services.

ACTION: Consent

Erin Gettis


Erin Gettis, Director of Animal Services

8/25/2022

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Spiegel, seconded by Supervisor Perez and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is received and filed recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Hewitt
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: August 30, 2022
xc: Animal Services

Kecia R. Harper
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A			Budget Adjustment: No	
			For Fiscal Year: 22/23	

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

Summary

Pursuant to Board Policy C-1, the attached 90-Day Report was prepared by Erin Gettis, Director of Animal Services, who was appointed on March 10, 2022. The Report includes an overview of the Department's services and operations, challenges facing Animal Services, and a summary of goals and objective for the next year.

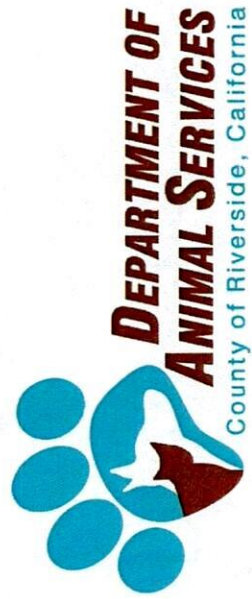
ATTACHMENT:

90-Day Report for the Department of Animal Services


 Jason Farin, Principal Management Analyst 8/25/2022



*Mission: Working together to improve Riverside
County for people and animals*



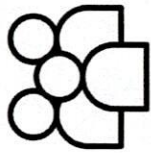
90 Day Report

Department of Animal Services

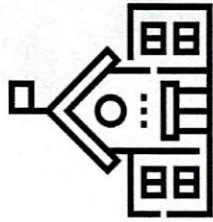
Presented by Erin Gettis, Director
August 30, 2022



Department Statistics



167 Total
Employees



4 Campuses
3 open to
the Public



\$27.5M
Operating Budget
FY 22/23

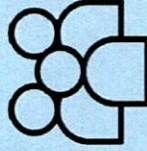
MANAGEMENT TEAM



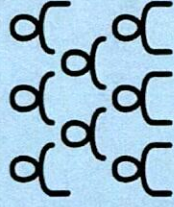
Director
Erin Gettis



Assistant Director
Kimberly Youngberg



**3 Executive
Administration**

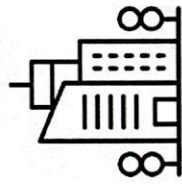


**9 Chief
Equivalents**

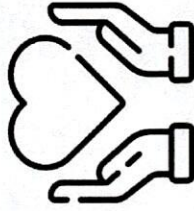


Mission: Working together to improve Riverside County for people and animals.

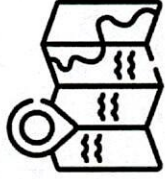
Service Statistics in RivCo



17 Contract Cities
13 in RivCo



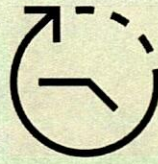
1.69 M Residents Served
1.30M RivCo Residents Served



6,584 Sq Miles Field Service Area
7303 Sq Miles RivCo



46.2K Calls at Call Center Annually*



48 Minutes
Average Field Response Time for Priority 1 calls*



31.4 field service requests per day*

2.46M
RivCo Residents

55%
RivCo Residents served

90%
Square Miles in RivCo Served

= KPI

*2021



Mission: Working together to improve Riverside County for people and animals.

Pet Ownership Statistics



452,157 dogs
in RivCo*



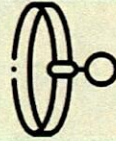
336,540 cats
in RivCo*



11,046 horses
in RivCo*



418,282
Households with
Pets in RivCo*



81,917 RivCo Dog
Current Licenses in
FY 21/21

57%

RivCo Residents
own pets*

18%

Estimated Dogs
Licensed in RivCo
Service Areas

736,413

RivCo Households

* AVMA Pet Ownership Statistics



Mission: Working together to improve Riverside County for people and animals.

Incoming Statistics



34 Average Daily
Dog Intake



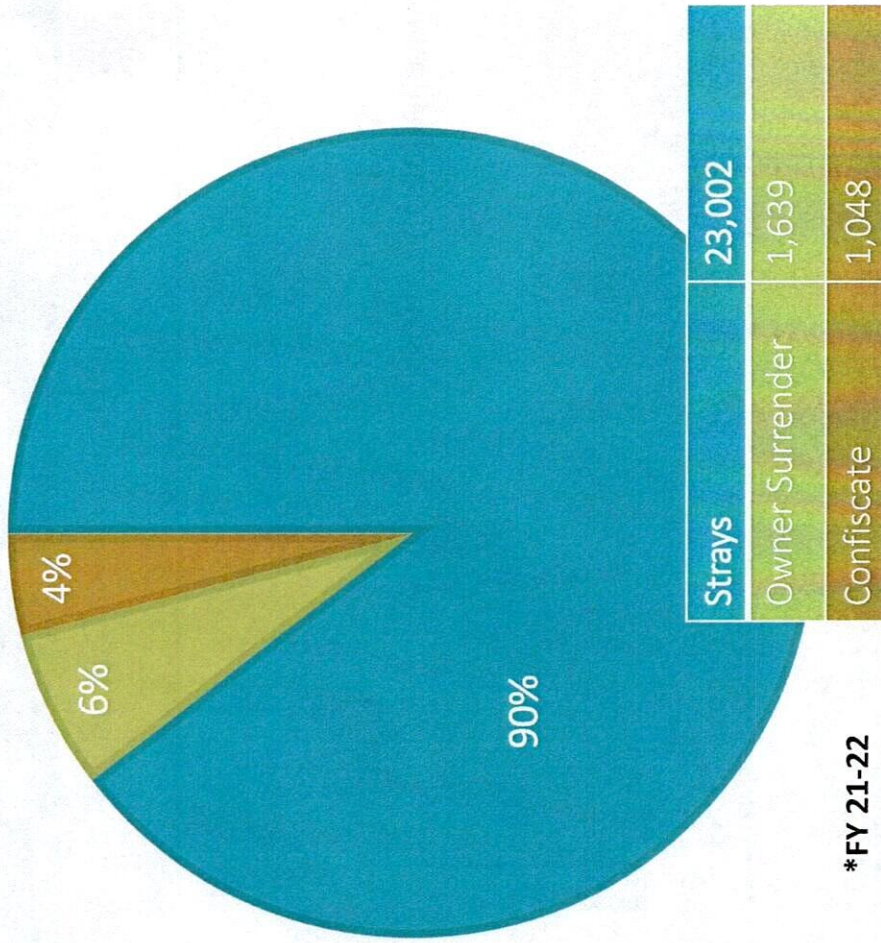
31 Average Daily
Cat Intake



25,689 Annual
Animal Intake*



90% Stray
Animals*



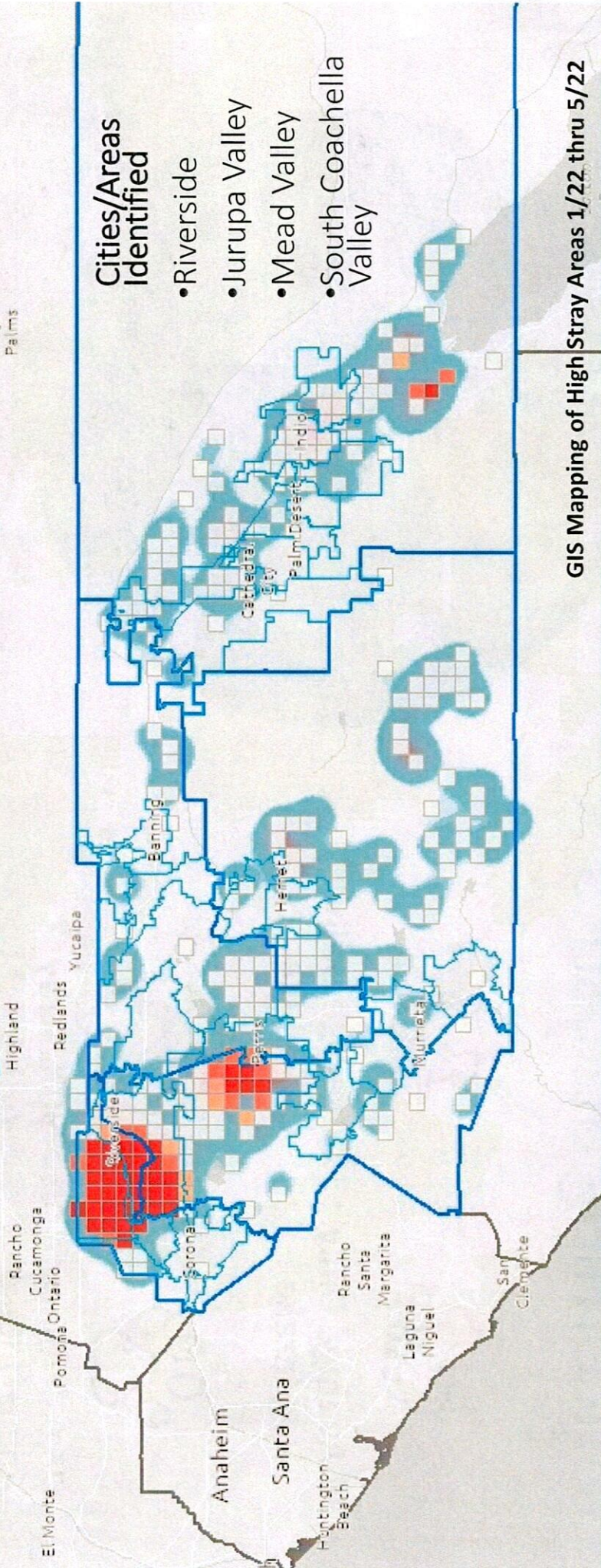
*FY 21-22



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Dog Impound Hot Spots

Twentynine Palms



Cities/Areas Identified

- Riverside
- Jurupa Valley
- Mead Valley
- South Coachella Valley

GIS Mapping of High Stray Areas 1/22 thru 5/22



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Outgoing Statistics



92% of Dog Live Outcome*



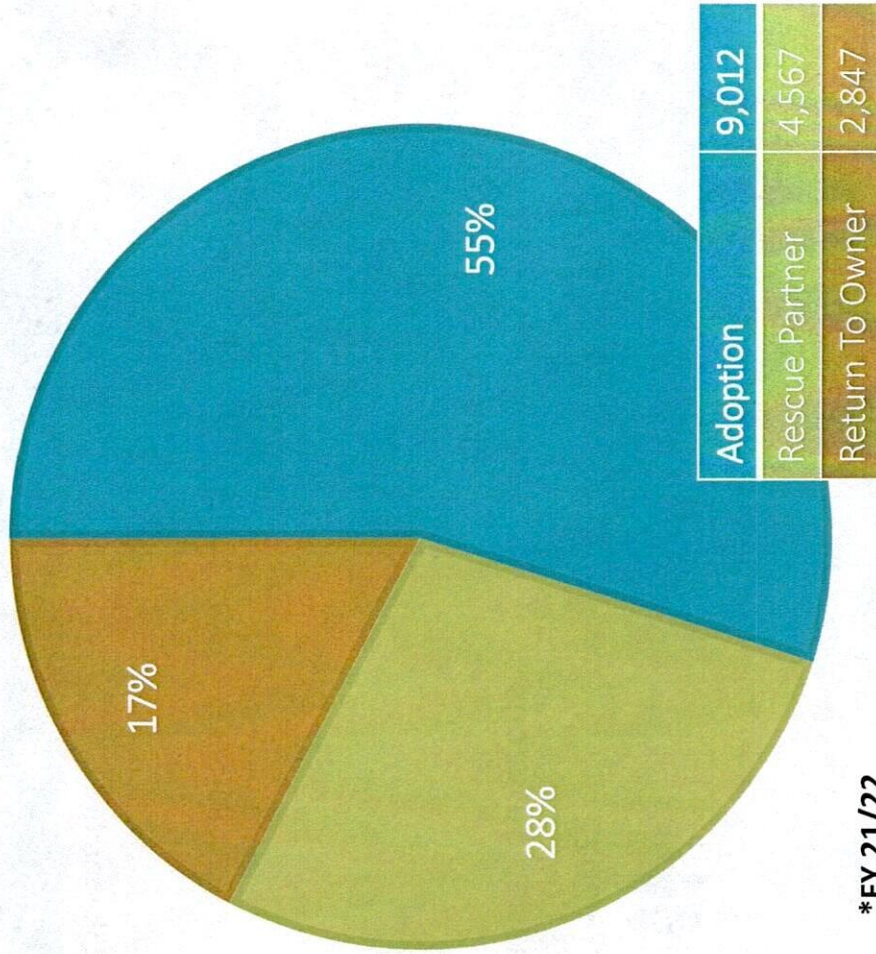
46% of Cat Live Outcome*

90%

Industry standard for No Kill*



16,426 Live Animal Outcomes*

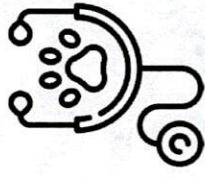


*FY 21/22



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Veterinarian Shortage



4 Staff Veterinarian Surgeons



In 2019
15-16 Contract Veterinarian Surgeons



In 2022
2-3 Contract Veterinarian Surgeons

National Top 5 "pet help" search terms recently**

1. Pet Food Pantries
2. Veterinary Financial Help
3. Spay & Neuter
4. Vaccinations
5. Emergency Vet Care

** Pets.findhelp.com data from 5/23-8/1/22 and nearly 26k searches



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NATIONAL STATISTICS

18 jobs

For every current Veterinarian applicant

75M

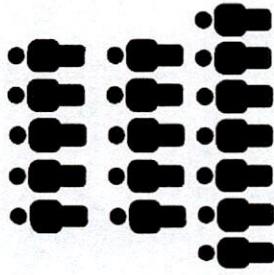
Pets without care in the US by 2030*

15,000

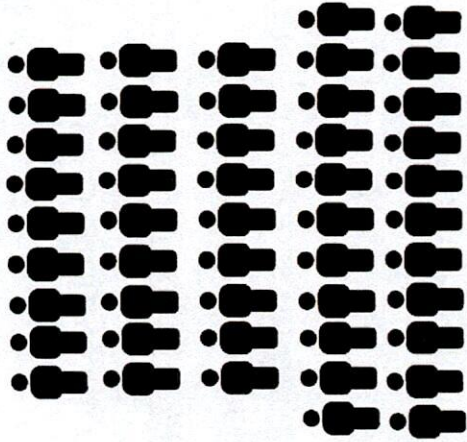
Veterinarian shortage in US by 2030*

*HSUS Statistics on Crisis

Capacity for Care Analysis



17 ACTs needed
for a 5 day
Length of Stay*



49 ACTs needed
for a 15 day
Length of Stay*

18.31 days
Average Length of
Stay at DAS**

904 animals
Average daily
inventory shelter-wide

12 ACTS
Average number of DAS
Animal Care Technicians
per day at Riverside

15 minutes
Industry standard for
care per animal per day

*National Animal Care and Control Association Data

**FY21/22



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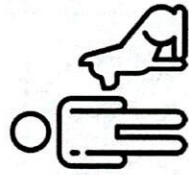
Three Year Strategic Plan

- GOAL 1:** Create and implement a three-year plan for strategic workforce development, staff education and training, that includes activities for employee appreciation.
- GOAL 2:** Community focused prevention, education, and service.
- GOAL 3:** Implement means for reduction of intake of animals.
- GOAL 4:** Addressing the needs of the unincorporated county regions through focused services.
- GOAL 5:** Implement a sustainable funding stream over time, including robust fundraising strategy to support Department programs and initiatives.
- GOAL 6:** Develop and deploy an effective organizational communications plan
- GOAL 7:** Develop a media and public relations plan.

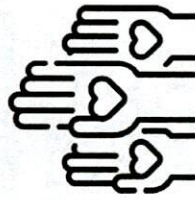


Mission: Working together to improve Riverside County for people and animals.

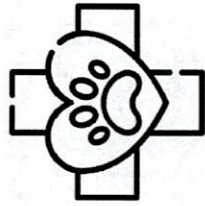
Improve Incoming Statistics



Increase intake intercept staff



Increase help for pet owners in need



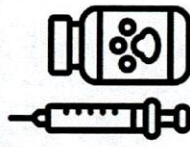
Increase spay/neuter in high stray areas



Increase research for uniting lost pets with owners



Increase return to owner in the field



Increase vaccine and microchip access to reduce vet care need

34
Average Daily Intake Dogs*

538
Average Daily Dog Population Shelter-wide*

31
Average Daily Intake Cats*

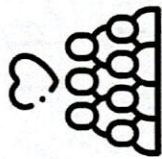
366
Average Daily Cat Population Shelter-wide*

*FY 21-22



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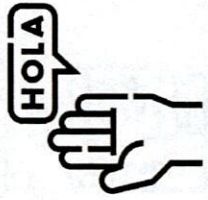
Service Improvements Needed



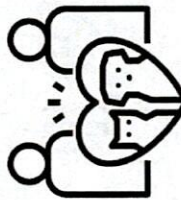
Community Engagement
in Unincorporated
Communities



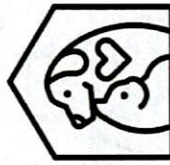
Targeted
outreach in high
stray areas



Spanish language
outreach and
information



Connecting pet
owners with training
and information



Return more
lost animals to
their homes



Reporting on
statistics for
transparency

34.5%
Spanish speaking
RivCo residents**

8971
Spay/Neuter Surgeries
Performed*

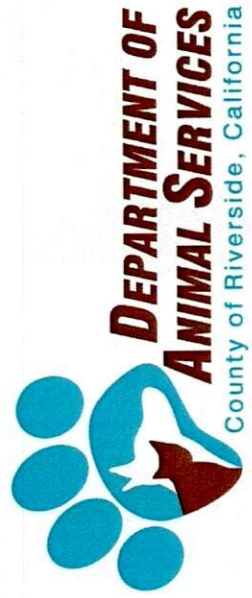
11,765
Microchips
Administered*

24,084
Vaccines Provided*

*FY 21-22 **2019



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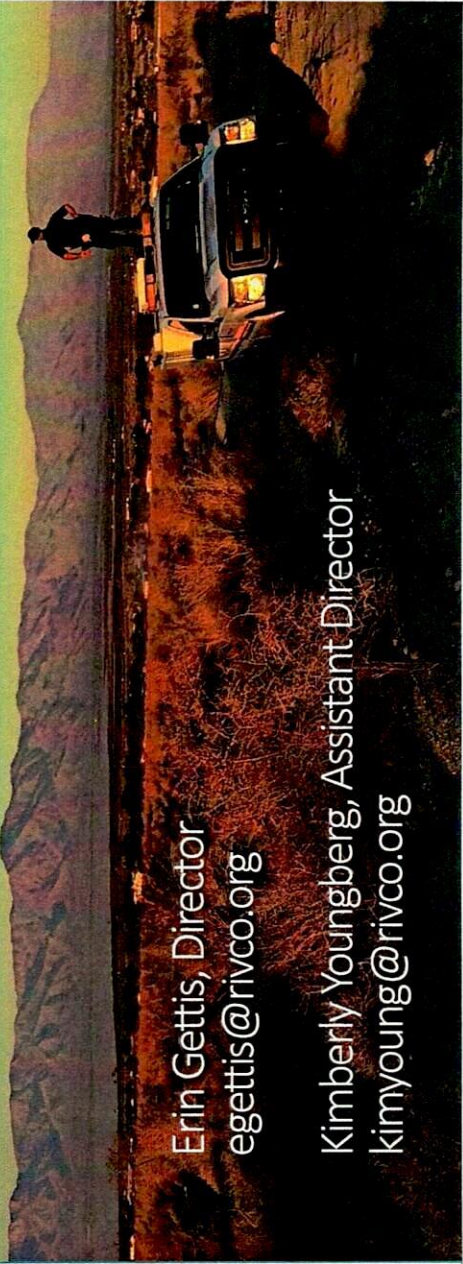


**DEPARTMENT OF
ANIMAL SERVICES**
County of Riverside, California

Questions?

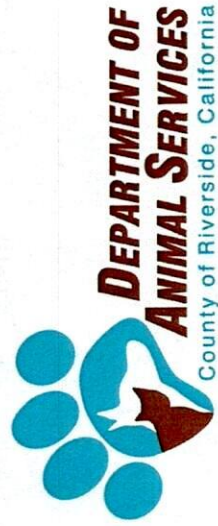
Erin Gettis, Director
ergettis@rivco.org

Kimberly Youngberg, Assistant Director
kimyoung@rivco.org





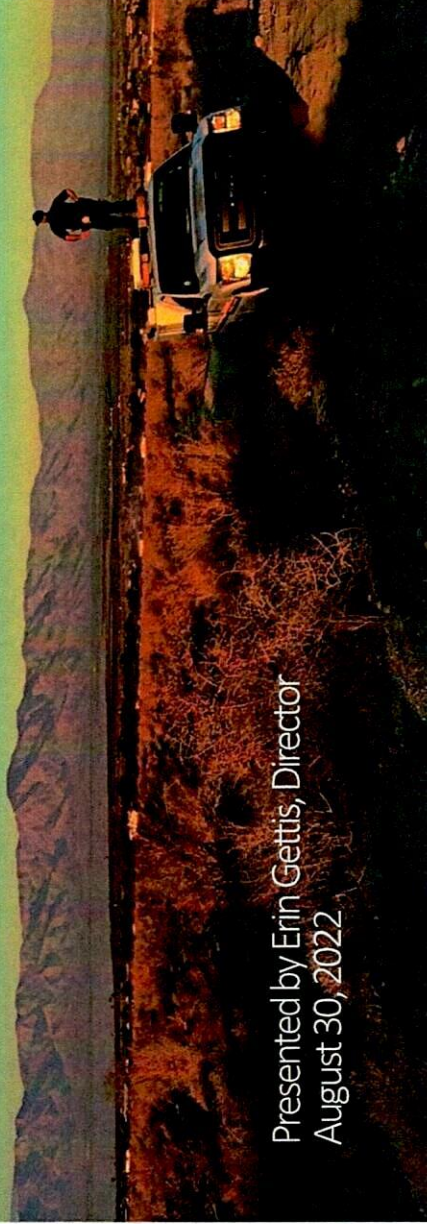
*Mission: Working together to improve Riverside
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90 Day Report

Department of Animal Services

Presented by Erin Gettis, Director
August 30, 2022



The First 90 Days as Department Director

Presented by Erin Gettis, Director

Start date March 10, 2022

Report date August 30, 2022



DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Riverside County Department of Animal Services (Department) is a dynamic organization, originally established for rabies control, that has been servicing the citizens of Riverside County since 1957. The Department provides animal care and control for unincorporated Riverside County areas and 17 contract cities. The 167 employees comprise four Divisions within the Department (Shelter Services, Field Services, Veterinary Services and Administration) to provide sheltering of stray or lost impounded animals, rabies control, public safety, emergency response, animal law enforcement, veterinary care, and other various programs that support the community.

Shelter Services Division

The Shelter Services Division provides direct oversight of the County's state-of-the-art animal shelters at three locations throughout the County, providing temporary shelter for animals in need while functioning as community resources for animal care and service programs for the public. Animals housed at the facilities include dogs, cats, horses, livestock, and rabbits, along with other small animals, such as guinea pigs, hamsters, and reptiles. In addition to caring for animals, shelter staff support the public with pet adoptions, placement of animals with rescue partner organizations, connecting the public with opportunities to foster pets and providing information for placement on behavior-related dogs through a newly dedicated team. The guest services team provides public information, licensing services, adoption processing, scheduling of services, animal "over-the-counter" intake and reuniting lost pets with owners.

BUDGETED APPROPRIATION LEVELS LAST 5 YEARS



FY 22/23

■ Salaries & Benefits ■ Services & Supplies ■ Other Charges ■ Intrafund Transfers



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Field Services Division

The Field Services Division consists of skilled animal control officers equipped to ensure public health and safety, enforcement of state and local animal welfare laws and ordinances, educational outreach, emergency response, animal rescue, public assistance, and animal cruelty investigations. The Department's animal control officers have a high success rate in bringing cruelty cases to prosecution up to felony charges. These officers are request-driven, responding to the public and other first responders (police, fire, emergency management), to assist with lost-and-found stray pets, rabies control, animal bites, emergencies including wildfires, protecting the public from potentially dangerous animals, and more. Riverside County animal control officers responded to more than 11,000 calls for service in FY 21/22.

The shelter veterinarian's positive impact to overcrowding of the shelter system is most prominently seen in conducting high volume spay and neuter surgery.

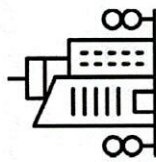
Veterinary Services Division

The Veterinary Services Division is responsible for the health of the thousands of animals entering Riverside County shelters each year. All animals impounded are examined and receive prompt and necessary care immediately upon arrival. In addition, Veterinary Services provides a typical annual average of more than 10,000 spay/neuter surgeries per year for the public and adopted or rescued shelter pets. The Veterinary Services Division plays an integral role in community public health encompassing: rabies control efforts (disease screening, animal bite reporting, and prevention); zoonotic disease surveillance activities; and reporting of suspected disease outbreaks in the animal population. The Veterinary Services Division partners with the education/outreach program to offer spay/neuter for the public, vaccinations, and microchips via mobile unit in communities or at shelter locations. Future outreach activities will rely heavily on the veterinary team to perform targeted services in high animal intake/resource poor regions of the county.

Administration Division

The Administration Division encompasses executive functions, fiscal services, fundraising and grants, contract management, human resources, public information office, marketing, education/outreach programs, and volunteer services. Fiscal services includes accounts payable/receivable, collections, budget, fleet management and developing fees that seek full cost recovery for contracts. A newly formed administrative services team oversees philanthropy, grants, contract management, and human resources utilizing

Service Statistics in RivCo



17 Contract Cities

13 in RivCo



1.69 M Residents Served

1.30M RivCo Residents Served



6,584 Sq Miles Field Service Area

7303 Sq Miles RivCo



46.2K Calls at Call Center Annually*



48 Minutes

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31.4 field service requests per day*

2.46M

RivCo Residents

55%

RivCo Residents served

90%

Square Miles in RivCo Served

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Mission: Working together to improve Riverside County for people and animals.

systems that ensure consistency with the Department's goals and strategies. The public information/marketing team provides all press releases, media relations, filming and social media interface, and provides marketing materials to the Department. The education and outreach programs specifically focus on bringing needed services to the community at large but in particular at risk, vulnerable, and underserved regions of Riverside County. To supplement the workforce, the volunteer program ensures ample opportunities for volunteers to assist in needed areas including dog walking, cat socializing, dog socializing and play groups, guest services, special events, pet grooming, cleaning, photography, and veterinary services assistance.

DEPARTMENT MISSION, VISION and CORE VALUES

The Department relies on a strong mission statement to define the Department's daily purpose in a way that can be understood by all, acknowledging that there is always room for improvement, while serving not only animals but the people of Riverside County. The vision statement provides the Department with the context to effect goals and strategies that expand the reach and impact of the Department over time. The Department utilizes core values to underly all activity - in particular, critical strategic planning - to provide customer-focused service, stewardship, teamwork, and partnership necessary to implement these strategies.

Mission

Working together to improve Riverside County for people and animals.

Vision

Promoting an environment of responsible pet ownership through progressive animal welfare initiatives, community outreach, and humane education in a culture of compassion, creativity, and integrity.

Core Values

We believe the character of our organization is best reflected in the strong dedication of each of us to strive to meet the highest standards of performance and compassion on behalf of the animals and people we serve.

As stewards of those who cannot speak for themselves, we recognize society has entrusted us with a great responsibility. Our community's expectations and trust give us the courage to perform our duties with transparency, honor, empathy, and compassion.

We meet this vision by our shared commitment to:

- Demonstrating respect, sensitivity, and understanding toward all people and animals.
- Improving Riverside County through education, humane sheltering, responsible pet placement, progressive law enforcement, and reduction of pet overpopulation.
- Using adoption, education, and veterinary medical programs as an alternative to euthanasia.
- Seeking lifetime homes for the pets we place.
- Providing the tools, environment, and information to foster a safe and healthy workplace with an emphasis on teamwork.
- Collaborating to improve Riverside County for its people and animals.

CHALLENGES TO DEPARTMENT

The Department has tackled many challenges in the last few years. The main complications over-arching all recently have been the instability of leadership and the impacts of the pandemic, both positive and negative. The challenges included herein are issue-based and are generally unrelated to the pandemic and previous changing leadership. These issues are what impact the staff of the Department consistently, issues that will involve teamwork and analysis for appropriate solutions, and most importantly are challenges that if not addressed could diminish or thwart goals and strategies the Department might be planning in the future.

Open admission shelter

Municipal shelters are 'open admission' shelters, meaning they are required to take in whatever comes in the door. Animals arrive at the shelter most commonly over the counter as strays, followed by strays in the field. Owner surrender of animals are also accepted with a fee, and during periods of shelter over-crowding on a case-by-case basis, though not required by law. Whereas animal service non-profits can be selective about the animals that enter their shelter system, open admission municipal shelters cannot. What this means is that shelter populations are impacted by current trends of breed popularity and not necessarily what is most adoptable or appropriate for adoption success. Recently, the Department has seen a rise in adolescent large male dogs in a limited variety of breeds that are known for high drive, athletic energy and extra effort for owners and adopters. This trend toward large dogs is a contributor to shelter over-crowding and animals' length of stay (LOS) due to the added challenges of over-representation of a few breeds, space required for large dogs, and the reduced interest of adopters wanting these dogs, seen not only here, but nationwide.

Pet Ownership Statistics



452,157 dogs
in RivCo*



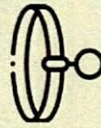
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*AVMA Pet Ownership Statistics



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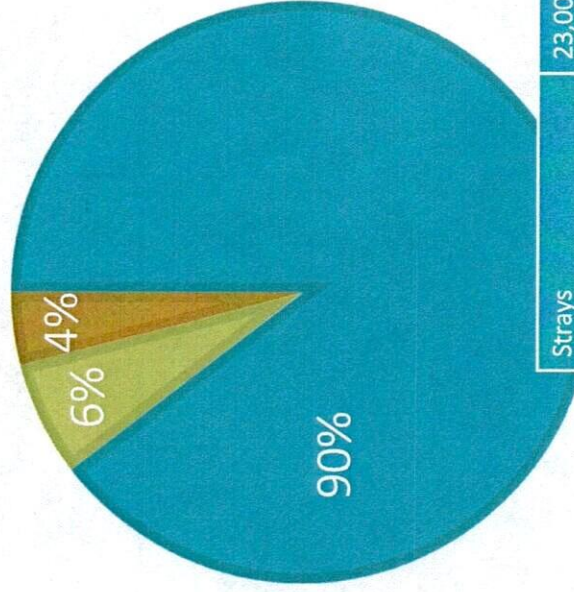
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25,689 Annual
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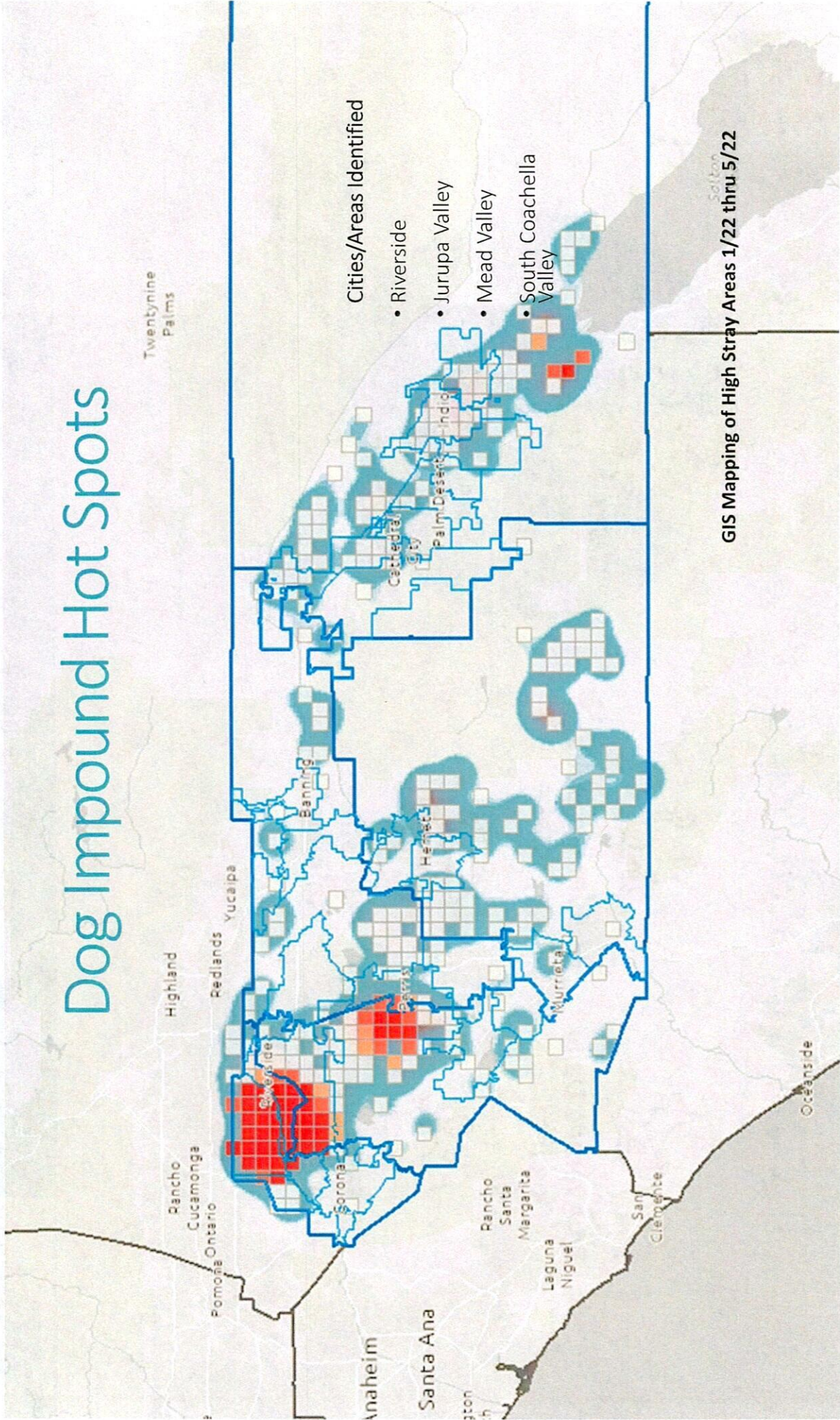
90% Stray
Animals*



Strays	23,002
Owner Surrender	1,639
Confiscate	1,048

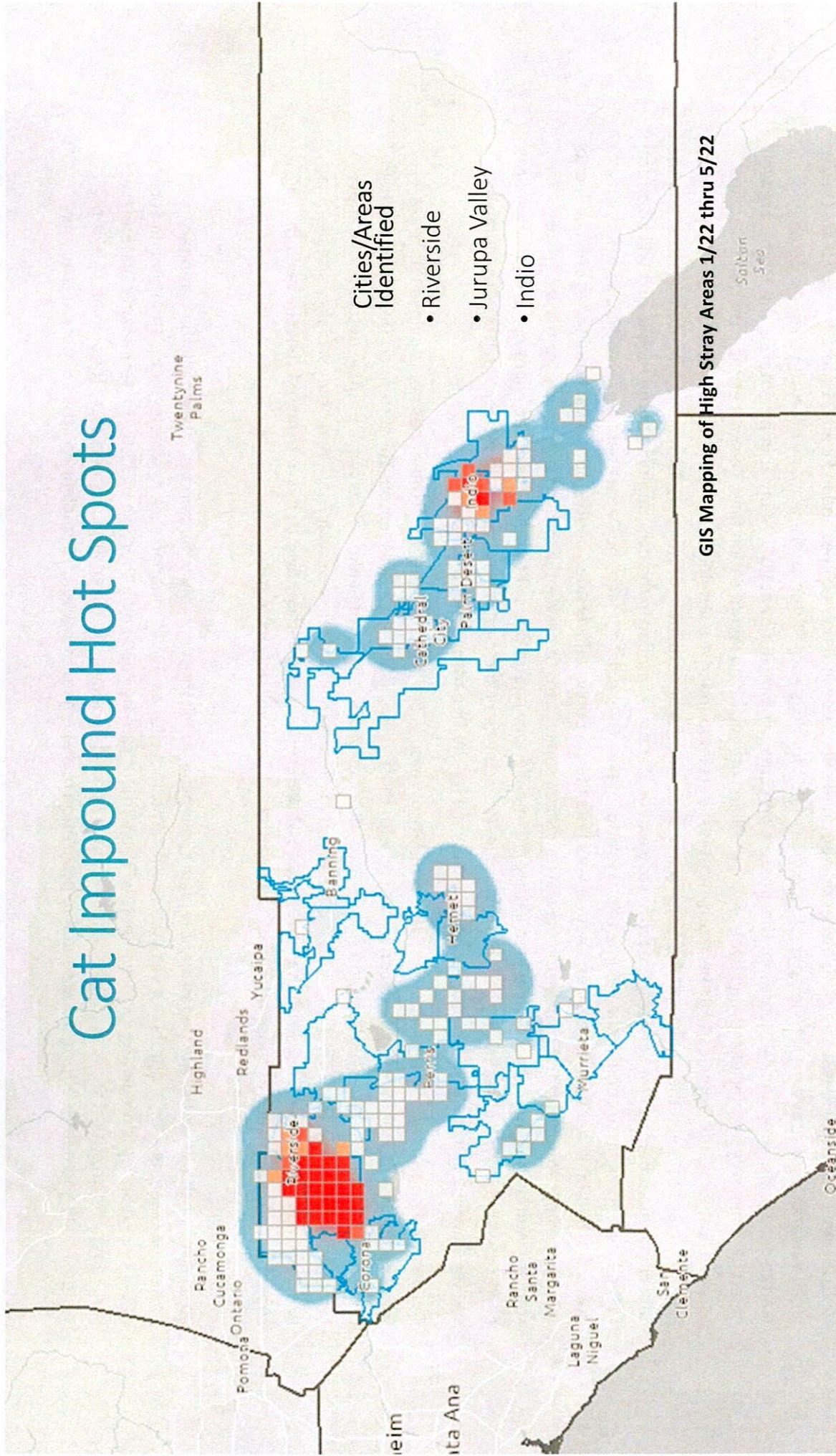
*FY 21-22

Dog Impound Hot Spots



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Cat Impound Hot Spots



Mission: Working together to improve Riverside County for people and animals.

Intake volume + shelter over-crowding

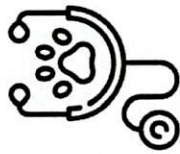
In 2019, more than 40,000 lost stray and owner relinquished pets came into our facilities and in FY 20/21 more than 30,000. Only a small percentage of strays are reclaimed by their owners (11% for dogs and .5% for cats) and many microchips are outdated and lead to dead ends. Stray animals represent the greatest percentage of impounds at 90%. Many animals entering the shelter are well cared for, obviously fed, socialized, and even wearing collars, often with no identification tags. This makes the case that these are escaped 'lost' pets, not homeless. Furthermore, most lost pets impounded are not microchipped nor spayed/neutered. Clearly there is a disconnect between the public and the Department in terms of where to look for lost pets, how to find needed services, and the capacity to meet demand for services. Proactive spay and neuter programming in the community with the mobile unit will be critical in the future to begin to combat the volume of strays and intake. Over a decade ago the Department received NCC contributions upward of \$300,000 per year for spay and neuter vouchers for the public in Riverside County. Additional funding has been added to the Department to support the mobile unit via CID funding in some of the supervisorial districts and grants from a variety of sources. Additional funding would help with getting the mobile spay neuter bus out into regions of the county where these services and access to this type of veterinary care is unavailable. Providing spay and neuter is necessary to prevent high intake volume and shelter crowding in a proactive way, a necessary expansion for the Department going forward.

Owners who do surrender their animals provide a variety of reasons and currently the Department has not provided intake intercept programs, nor individualized conversations with those relinquishing, to assess reasons for surrender. Doing so could help owners by providing services and/or gathering needed information to assist in the animal receiving a positive outcome as it moves through the shelter system. There is a great unmet need for access to affordable veterinary care and other social services for many experiencing financial hardship. With the current state of the economy and current events, it is anticipated that the need for supportive programs such as those offered by the Healthy Pet Zone will only increase.

Veterinarian crisis

Specialized positions within the Department remain challenging to fill, most notably veterinarians. Nationally the veterinary profession is seeing a large number of vacancies with 18 positions for every veterinarian seeking employment. The Humane Society of the United States is predicting 75 million pets will be without care by 2030 and a shortage of 15,000 veterinarians. Veterinary surgeons perform critical services to the shelter system by providing spay and neuter surgeries necessary for animals to exit the system. Spay and neuter efforts are essential to population management by preventing unplanned litters of pets and further

Veterinarian Shortage



4 Staff
Veterinarian
Surgeons



In 2019
15-16 Contract
Veterinarian Surgeons



In 2022
2-3 Contract
Veterinarian Surgeons

NATIONAL
STATISTICS

18 jobs

For every current
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75M

Pets without care in
the US by 2030*

15,000

Veterinarian shortage
in US by 2030*

* HSUS Statistics on Crisis

National Top 5 "pet help" search terms recently**

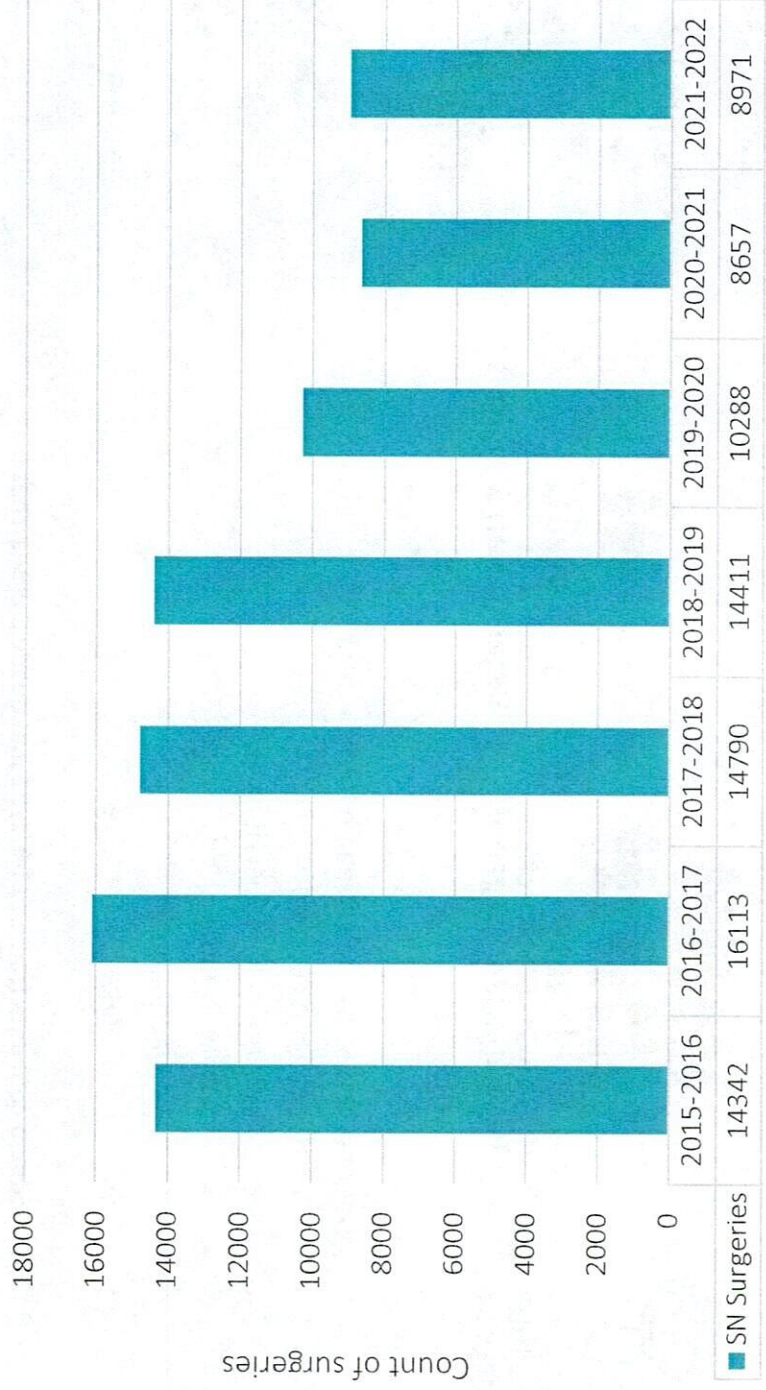
1. Pet Food Pantries
2. Veterinary Financial Help
3. Spay & Neuter
4. Vaccinations
5. Emergency Vet Care

** Pets.findhelp.com data from 5/23-8/1/22 and nearly 26k searches



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Spay/Neuter Surgeries By Fiscal Year



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reducing a drain on resources in shelter systems. The Department utilized contract veterinarians prior to the pandemic as well as an additional clinic within the system to meet the demand. However, since FY 15/16 there has been a steady decrease in the surgeries performed by the Department year after year resulting in the FY 21/22 spay/neuter total at 36% of the peak in FY 15/16 (more than 16,000 surgeries) to just under 6,000 surgeries. In the marketplace, veterinarians and the companion registered veterinarian technicians are seeing rising salaries and benefit costs as organizations compete for fewer candidates. As a municipal shelter, remaining competitive with private practice will become even more of a challenge.

Length of stay + animal languishing

Open admission and high-volume shelters differ from animal service non-profits that can entertain no kill policies and retain animals until they have a positive outcome. With approximately 65 animals coming in every day - during the peak season far more - a completely empty shelter would fill up in a span of weeks. Since the shelter never starts at empty, controlling the shelter population remains an ongoing challenge when there are not enough adopters and rescues to secure positive outcomes for animals. Even if the Department filled up all kennels at every campus currently within the shelter system, including those non-operational, there is not enough space to address the volume. This problem is exacerbated by an increased length of stay over previous years. In FY 19/20 the length of stay per animal was 15.45 days, and in 20/21 it was 13 days. The reduction in days correlates to the success of clearing out animal populations during the pandemic, and a great reduction in impounds, but also accompanied a reduction in staffing. In FY 21/22 the average length of stay per animal is more than it has ever been at 18.3 days, more than a five day increase for every animal. What this means is that while the animal population is reaching pre-pandemic levels the length of stay has risen to a level of negatively impacting the health and mental well-being of the animal. Animals that are in the shelter longer are more susceptible to exposure to disease, stress, and suffering from reduced immunity due to such close proximity in kenneling. Kennel stress and behavior challenges are higher in those that stay at the shelter longer and languish. Long length of stay also impacts the capacity for care by shelter staff.

Capacity for care


Animal control originated out of rabies control in communities, and in the beginning, agencies did little more than catch and dispose of animals, mostly dogs. This is no longer acceptable in society. Many government agencies have changed department names to

In the aftermath of the pandemic, shelter systems have struggled to balance the expectations of all animals receiving the positive outcome the pandemic became known for, with a backslide to pre-pandemic shelter intake volume, yet fewer resources due to pandemic cost-cutting measures.

Outgoing Statistics



92% of Dog Live Outcome*

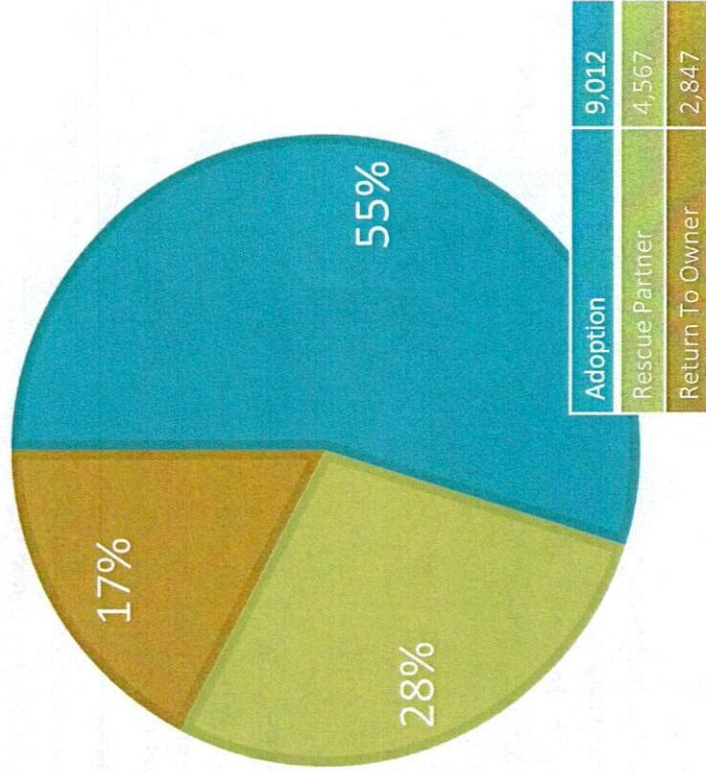


46% of Cat Live Outcome*

90%
Industry standard for No Kill*

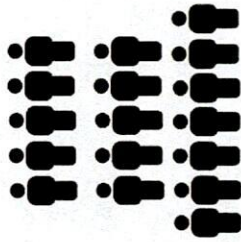


16,426 Live Animal Outcomes*

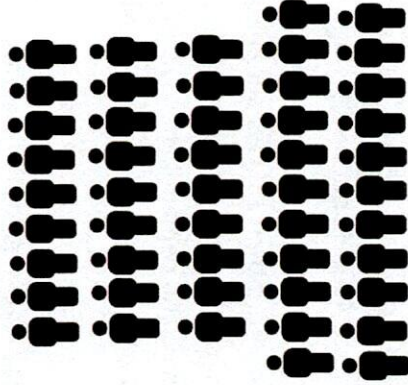


*FY 21/22

Capacity for Care Analysis



17 ACTs needed
for a 5 day
Length of Stay*



49 ACTs needed
for a 15 day
Length of Stay*

* National Animal Care and Control Association Data

18.31 days
Average Length of
Stay at DAS**

904 animals
Average daily
inventory shelter-wide

12 ACTS
Average number of DAS
Animal Care Technicians
per day at Riverside

15 minutes
Industry standard for
care per animal per day

** FY21/22

reflect more softened and redefined roles in the community, such as changing 'animal control' to 'animal care' or 'animal services' designations. Moving beyond animal control has increased costs to animal welfare organizations. Animals impounded may stay longer in shelters while staff search for outcomes other than euthanasia. Most organizations have expanded services beyond the scope of animal control. Additional services require increased staffing to perform the functions of implemented programs such as, but not limited to, pet adoptions, spay neuter, vaccinations, foster care, increased veterinary care for sick or injured animals impounded, and volunteer management. Therefore, while technically not essential as defined by federal, state, or county codes and ordinances, these programs are the expected norm from community members and stakeholders within the animal welfare community. All of these additional expectations contribute to stretching of already limited resources which can impact other

aspects of care. Industry standards have identified the capacity for care for each shelter animal to be 15 minutes of care per day (from the National Animal Care and Control Association). In FY 21/22 dogs at the Jurupa Valley campus totaled 14,563. If each dog stayed at the facility for 5 days that would require 17 Animal Care Technicians (ACT) on site to meet the capacity for care. If that dog stayed 15 days that capacity for care goes up to 49 ACTs per day. Jurupa Valley currently has 12 ACTs per day, not even meeting the standard for care with a 5-day length of stay, and no where near the capacity needed for the average length of stay of more than 18 days per animal. The same is true of the Coachella Valley campus where there are 3 ACTs per day, a need for 6 ACTs if the length of stay is 5 days and 17 ACTs for 15 days. Stretching these resources and demanding expansion of programs negatively impacts all aspects of the shelter system, not just ACTs but those providing customer service, those providing veterinary care and more.

Outreach to unincorporated + high stray areas

In 2019 approximately 14,000 animals were impounded from unincorporated County areas – roughly 35% of all impounded animals. Some of the most urgent services that need support include, spay/neuter,

microchipping, and vaccines for owned animals in our communities. Pet overpopulation is still a burden on Riverside County animal shelters and several high stray areas are also unincorporated areas. Many of these areas are remote, and while spay and neuter can be targeted using the mobile unit, gaining access to high stray volume regions for engagement is time and resource intensive. Rising costs for transport and maintenance of large heavy mobile units burdens already strained resources.

The nature of the landscape and hot weather, the distribution of the highly populated and rural areas, combined with the sheer geographic size of Riverside County creates challenges that are difficult to address without focused effort and collaboration.

Riverside County is now predominantly a Spanish speaking county, where more than 50% of the population speaks Spanish as a primary language. The Spanish speaking population is under served by the Department where nearly all of the literature and online communication is done in English. Providing appropriate outreach and access to the mobile unit for families with low-cost and, oftentimes, free sterilization surgeries, microchips, and vaccinations will be key to improvement in high stray areas throughout Riverside County.

Community engagement

Municipal organizations across the country have changed business practices to include adoption programs, partnering with rescue groups, innovative animal rehoming policies and procedures, altered adoption fees, veterinary care, and housing policies, in order to increase the numbers of animals saved. Also, programming has been designed to promote efforts to keep pets and families together, increasing returns of lost pets and removing barriers to pets staying in homes, in addition to assisting animals owned by unhouseed persons or those experiencing crisis. In addition, programs to expand access to affordable veterinary care will continue to be a community need. Ensuring that these programs and services are actively shared with the community and meeting the community where they are, continues to remain a challenge for the Department. The lack of robust community engagement means many programs, such as the Healthy Pet Zone, are underutilized and less effective at making sustainable lasting change.

Barriers to Ordinance compliance

The Department continues to be challenged with Ordinance compliance throughout the various service and contract areas. The volume of nuanced differences and inconsistencies between the Ordinance of the Department and contract cities creates confusion and the public is often unsure of regulatory specifics and applicability. In addition, fees within the Ordinance, in particular owner surrender fees, serve as barriers to information and proper data collection for the Department. Over the counter (OTC) stray numbers were two to three times greater in the last three years than strays collected in the field. Because the Ordinance charges fees to owners who surrender their animals, it has long been surmised (though unverified) that the volume of the OTC strays is due to fee avoidance. Though also unknown, it is possible animals found in the field are also not retrieved by their owners from the shelter due to the inability to pay the fee for impoundment. If reuniting pets with their owners from the shelter to reduce shelter overcrowding is important, an elimination of punitive charges to owners should be considered. Verification processes online for rabies and spay/neuter certificates are time consuming which provides a barrier to owners achieving license compliance. Alignment with customer-focused strategies should be considered to simplify the online process for license compliance.

Volunteerism + Foster Program



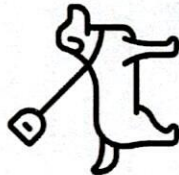
1,661 number of volunteers*



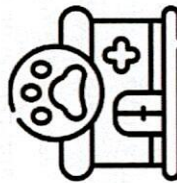
2,011 Animals Fostered*

9,928 Hours for volunteers

3,788 Hors of Dog walking*



Dog Walking is the most common form of volunteer activity



Veterinarian clinic is second most popular for volunteer work



Kitten fostering is the second most common type of volunteer activity

INCREASE NEEDED

\$26.45
Hourly value rate in California for Volunteer

2100 Hrs
Hours worked by the top working volunteer*

1000
Kittens currently being fostered**

*FY 21-22

Transparency about euthanasia

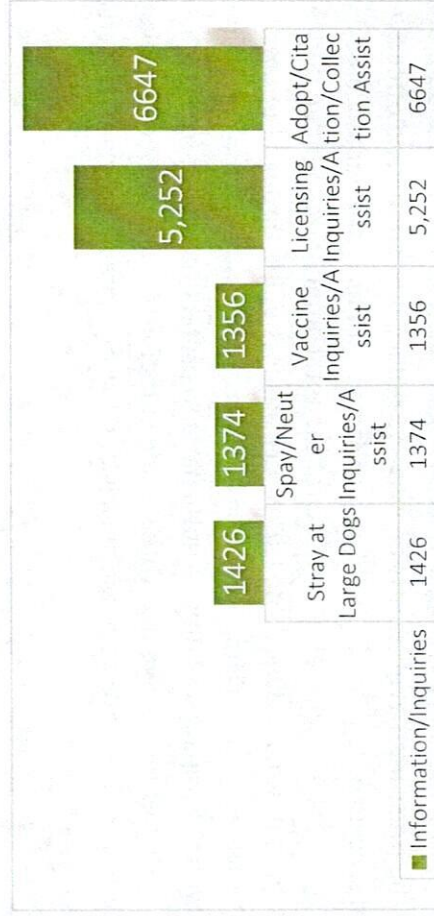
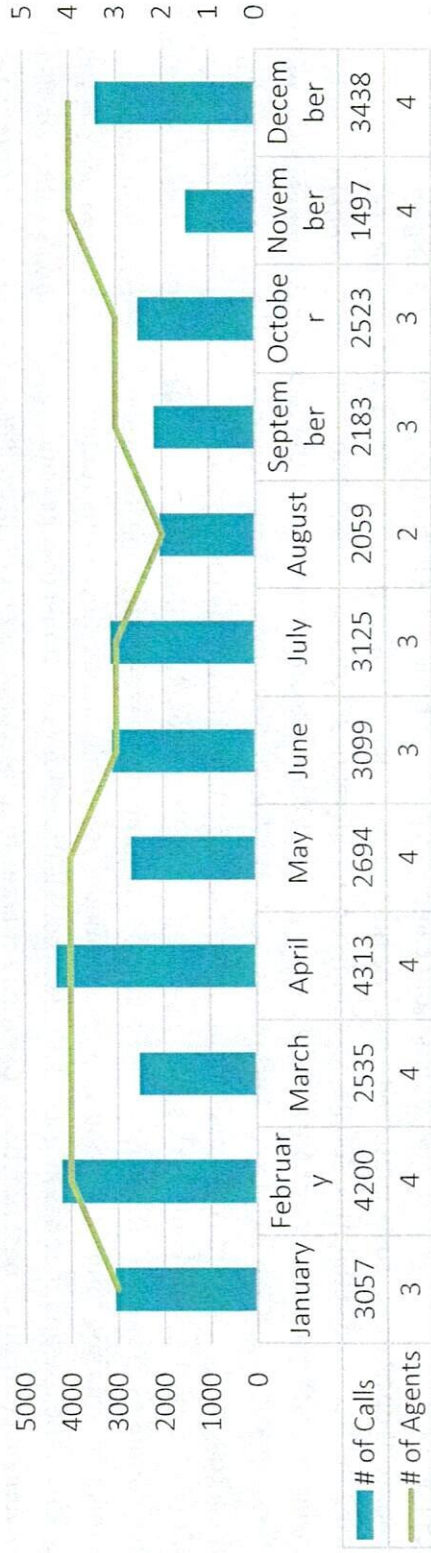
Within the past few decades, the field of animal sheltering has changed dramatically. The expectations from community stakeholders of animal control agencies have evolved from simply impounding and disposing of nuisance animals for public health and safety for purposes of controlling rabies, toward the pressure that all efforts be made to reduce euthanasia and offer every animal the chance of a positive outcome. Determined success or failure of animal welfare organizations is now largely based on an agency's save rate or the percentage of animals that leave the animal shelter alive out of the total number impounded during a defined period. Mounting pressures from the vocal community lean toward "no kill" where any loss of life through humane euthanasia is considered unacceptable. Organizations such as the Department of Animal Services must balance the community desire for transparency of published euthanasia lists with the impact on humane euthanasia to protect the public from dangerous animals, staffing resources, length of stay, and ongoing shelter overcrowding. Threatening euthanasia is a tool used to fuel desire of rescues, the public, media outlets, and social media networkers to save dogs specifically and has become a dominant conversation by the body public regarding perceived shelter success or failure.

Rising costs of maintenance + campus improvements

The Department has struggled to maintain the four campuses purpose-built as shelters throughout the County as operational costs continue to rise. As the Department continues to be challenged with reducing the NCC funds utilized to supplement Department operational costs, and expectations of balancing operational costs with charging service fees for a net zero outcome, maintaining the two campuses in Blythe and San Jacinto has become particularly difficult. Since intake numbers and resulting contract fees do not cover operational costs, the Department has made the decision in recent years to seek partial campus closures. As the infrastructure throughout the shelter campus system continues to age, and the ways shelters are used continues to change, covering increasing maintenance costs and funding needed upgrades continues to remain challenging. Construction costs are on the rise and that has impacted needed modifications for operational changes and improvements to support best practices. Overhead charges for project management, prevailing wage, and fewer bidders through the pre-approved list continues to increase costs for maintenance and improvements at the various campuses.

Rising costs in construction and operations, combined with a competitive workforce that is requiring higher compensation means the Department over time will have to innovate new ways to achieve strategic goals with a smaller workforce that costs more.

Call Center Calls Received for Calendar Year 2021



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Staff retention + customer service

Similar to many departments in the County, Animal Services has seen a significant shift in the post-pandemic job market as the work force continues to evolve. The Department saw a significant rise in separations in FY 20/21 due to pandemic uncertainty further undermined by leadership uncertainty. Nearly 42 separations (29% turnover rate) happened in FY 20/21, the highest turnover rate in the last 10 years. As pandemic and leadership change stabilized toward the latter half of FY 21/22, the number of separations has reduced but remains second highest of the decade. Similar to other County departments, and as seen regionally and nationally, employee loss continues to be greatest in entry-level positions, notably animal care technicians and animal services representative positions in the Department. The turnover rate for the Department remains highest in those who have worked for the Department 1-3 years and are 30 years of age and younger. Continuous staffing turnover impacts the ability to deliver quality customer service when the effort required to keep the position filled overshadows all things.

Fiscal sustainability + full cost recovery for city contracts

For the 10 years prior to the FY 21/22, the Department saw annual cuts to the Net County Cost (NCC) funds which largely led to deferred maintenance and cuts to any programming beyond basic animal care. As the Department began to work with decision makers to adjust fees with the 17 contract cities, providing fees for services at full cost recovery rather than subsidy, the overall budget health of the Department began to improve. NCC funds had also remained largely unchanged for the last decade despite rising costs and innovative adjustments made to programs and services to a demanding public in keeping with animal service trends across the country. Through careful work with county leaders and decision makers, NCC contributions have increased to mirror regional economic growth which also has improved the overall financial outlook for the Department going forward, this practice must be sustained. Continued effort to seek additional funds through grants, fundraising and gifting, plus building partnerships internally and externally for shared expenses and funding will be key in the growth of programming and outreach the Department seeks through the strategic plan to reduce pet overpopulation and thus shelter overcrowding in Riverside County.

Contract City	Field	Shelter	Licensing	Integrated Canine Licensing Program
Blythe		X		
Cathedral City	X	X	X	
Coachella	X	X	X	
Colton		X		
Desert Hot Springs		X		
Eastvale	X	X	X	
Fontana		X		
Grand Terrace		X		
Indian Wells	X	X	X	
Indio	X	X	X	
Jurupa Valley	X	X	X	
La Quinta	X	X	X	
Palm Desert	X	X	X	
Perris		X		
Rancho Mirage	X	X	X	
Rialto		X	X	
Riverside	X	X	X	X



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Three Year Strategic Plan

- GOAL 1: Create and implement a three-year plan for strategic workforce development, staff education and training, that includes activities for employee appreciation.
- GOAL 2: Community focused prevention, education, and service.
- GOAL 3: Implement means for reduction of intake of animals.
- GOAL 4: Addressing the needs of the unincorporated county regions through focused services.
- GOAL 5: Implement a sustainable funding stream over time, including robust fundraising strategy to support Department programs and initiatives.
- GOAL 6: Develop and deploy an effective organizational communications plan
- GOAL 7: Develop a media and public relations plan.

DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN & PROGRESS TO MEET CHALLENGES

The Executive Team, led by the collaborative effort of the Management team, prepared an organizational strategic plan with goals intended to guide the Department for the next three years during a critical time in growth and development. This plan, the first since 2010, was underway and completed during the first three months of new Director leadership. With a strong and flexible strategic plan, the Department has created a sound road map for the future that can adjust as the Department continues to reimagine past practices and look toward an innovative future.

GOAL 1: Create and implement a three-year plan for strategic workforce development, staff education and training, that includes activities for employee appreciation.

GOAL 1 Progress to meet challenges:

- ✓ Hire a veterinarian at the start of FY 22/23 to address the lack of spay and neuter capacity due to the veterinarian crisis and limited contract veterinarians.
- ✓ Provide salary increases via a recent union negotiated minimum market adjustment combined with current salary studies underway which are seeking to inform the Department on adjustment of pay rates to be comparable with similar jurisdictions.
- ✓ Improve orientation at the time of starting employment to set the tone for an employee's future with the Department. A new orientation video is nearing completion to provide this important messaging.
- ✓ Complete first ever Department management retreat to review progress toward strategic goals, succession planning, and identification of team strengths in order to assist in development of leaders for the future.
- Research of potential for adding additional veterinarians either by contract or on staff, and associated incentives, will be key to address adding capacity for needed spay/neuter services.
- Establish emphasis on the customer service experience, where improvement is needed, especially with the current staff turnover rate at entry level jobs. Staff training on customer focused service is being investigated.
- Recognize the ongoing challenges countywide with retention and recruitment of County and Department employees. Ongoing efforts to improve recruitment and retention (BOTH are needed) is ongoing.
- Address staff burnout due to continued challenges with capacity for care in an open admission shelter with overcrowding and high volume. Correction of the capacity for care can be done in two ways: by hiring more staff or reducing the animal LOS. The latter is preferred since it also reduces costs.

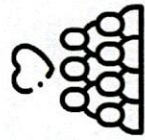
- Expand and continue recognition programs at all staff meetings to improve connection and communication within the Department.
- Create training programs and career advancement pathways to continue to expand growth opportunities for the work force.

GOAL 2: Community focused prevention, education, and service.

GOAL 2 Progress to meet challenges:

- ✓ Partner with the County's GIS team to design an integrated fee map for customers showing fees and jurisdiction based on address or location within the boundary of Riverside County has been employed on the website.
- ✓ Improve the call center interface for the customer to be more easily navigated in less time.
- ✓ Hire bilingual graphic arts illustrator to prepare materials and campaigns for Department services in areas of need.
- ✓ Research and identify target communities in need of services.
- ✓ Provide a service calendar for Spay/Neuter/Microchip/Vaccine/Licensing (SNMVL) mobile clinics within each supervisorial district and in particular in areas of high stray intake posted on the Department website.
- ✓ Receive support from the ASK Foundation, and CID funds from two supervisorial districts to provide \$60,000 to specifically fund more mobile clinics.
- Provide necessary work with contract cities to embrace the strategic plan goals, and in addition broader countywide messaging to expand community focused prevention, education, and service.
- Create community focused public service announcements as part of new branding efforts within the Department.
- Provide Department focus on spay/neuter in all things, but especially with service gaps in the County, as well as access to vaccines + microchipping to reduce the public need of veterinarian services, reunite pets with families, reduce unwanted animals, and create a healthier pet community.
- Analyze the customer experience lens through process mapping of the steps needed by both the community while receiving service, and the animals while in care, to look for step reduction, automation, and opportunities for efficiencies.
- Review and modify nuanced differences and inconsistencies in the Ordinance in cooperation with the contract cities to reduce confusion, improve compliance, and provide needed community support. In particular, changes needed for cat trap/shelter neuter release programs to support Department goals should be pursued.

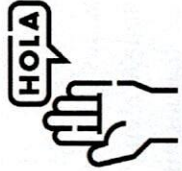
Service Improvements Needed



Community Engagement
in Unincorporated
Communities



Targeted
outreach in high
stray areas



Spanish language
outreach and
information



Connecting pet
owners with training
and information



Return more
lost animals to
their homes



Reporting on
statistics for
transparency

34.5%
Spanish speaking
RivCo residents**

8971
Spay/Neuter Surgeries
Performed*

11,765
Microchips
Administered*

24,084
Vaccines Provided*

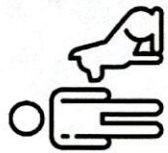
*FY 21-22 **2019

GOAL 3: Implement means for reduction of intake of animals.

GOAL 3 Progress to meet challenges:

- ✓ Conduct rescue focus group to learn how rescues can be better supported and ideas for communication improvement.
- ✓ Propose modified notification of public and rescue pleas (formerly red list) to provide revised assistance to animals with the most urgent need, in the midst of the highest intake numbers in three years.
- ✓ Receive UC Davis award for a \$200,000 grant to provide programming and temporary staffing to address the largest animal life saving gap in the Department, healthy cats.
- ✓ Utilize funding for microchips at vaccine clinics by the Department to prevent unknown owner pets in Riverside County.
 - Pursue funding and partnerships to expand microchip scanner program to more community locations, already at CALFire/RivCo Fire Department stations.
 - Research best practices nationwide on creation of a team to conduct more individualized intake and intervention.
 - Build partnerships with nonprofit organizations to create intervention programs to prevent animals from entering the shelter during times of high intake volume, overcrowding, and disease.
 - Ongoing and continued pursuit of grants by the Department for important programs that reduce intake such as Healthy Pet Zone (financial assistance to pet owners), Integrated Canine Licensing Program (ICLP) and SNMVL mobile unit.
 - Increase Department focus toward online research, networking, and detective work necessary to improve lost pet reunification percentage.
- Avoid capacity for care gap by multi-pronged effort to reduce LOS and impact to Department resources in the following ways:
 - Implementation of the Volunteer Services plan to grow the program and increase volunteerism for the Department's most needed areas (such as daily dog walking).
 - Continue to grow rescue network by redirecting staffing to further pursue rescue support.
 - Pursue Ordinance changes to remove barriers to exit, such as the 'owner known' hold period, to match the state.
 - Improve fostering program capacity by partnering with nonprofit organizations for foster education and recruitment.
 - Implement staff support for a routine dog play yard program to improve animal mental health.
 - Develop transport partnership programs to deliver animals to other areas of the country and continent with interest.
 - Improve information available on animals to potential adopters and rescues.

Improve Incoming Statistics



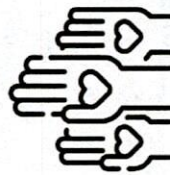
Increase intake intercept staff



Increase spay/neuter in high stray areas



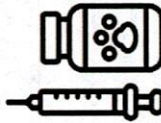
Increase return to owner in the field



Increase help for pet owners in need



Increase research for unifying lost pets with owners



Increase vaccine and microchip access to reduce vet care need

34

Average Daily Intake Dogs*

538

Average Daily Dog Population Shelter-wide*

31

Average Daily Intake Cats*

366

Average Daily Cat Population Shelter-wide*

*FY 21-22

GOAL 4: Addressing the needs of the unincorporated county regions through focused services.

GOAL 4 Progress to meet challenges:

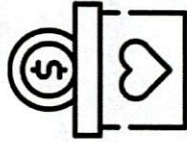
- ✓ Identify areas of opportunity to determine where SNVML clinics are needed in high stray unincorporated areas.
- ✓ Purchase additional mobile truck unit to increase spay and neuter surgeries available to communities of need, strategize on large dog spay and neuter in design process.
- ✓ Increase and sustain attendance at community events, such as Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC) meetings to learn of needs and share Department services available.
- Increase access to SPVML through seeking support for unincorporated communities initiative funding for service expansion
- Continue to grow the Riverside Emergency Animal Rescue System (REARS) program by seeking volunteers and committing to training to better service rural areas during emergencies.
- Partner with the Department of Public Health and Emergency Management Department on health equity partnership teams - currently being developed to provide community engagement and directed services to areas of need and identify community leaders for assistance in messaging of Department goals and strategies.
- Identify messaging needs for target communities.
- Work with organizations on messaging to Spanish speaking communities to increase proactive education and prevention.

GOAL 5: Implement a sustainable funding stream over time, including robust fundraising strategy to support Department programs and initiatives.


GOAL 5 Progress to meet challenges:

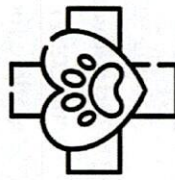
- ✓ Initiate a fee study to thoroughly investigate fees, costs, and charges to the Department to ensure contract holders are funding full cost recovery and community service costs.
- ✓ Complete deferred maintenance items throughout the shelter system, including notably generators for emergencies.
- ✓ Fund a surgery suite at Coachella Valley Animal Campus (CVAC) to address access to spay/neuter surgeries in a post-pandemic environment.
- ✓ Establish team under an elevated Administrative Services Officer to expand grants/funding/gifting/bequests in new and creative ways to drive more targeted efforts.

Grants and Funding


8667 donors*

\$499k
Grant Funding
Received*


330% increase in
grant applications
over previous FY



\$307K Support for
Spay/Neuter



13 Grants
Received*

103%
increase of donors
over previous FY

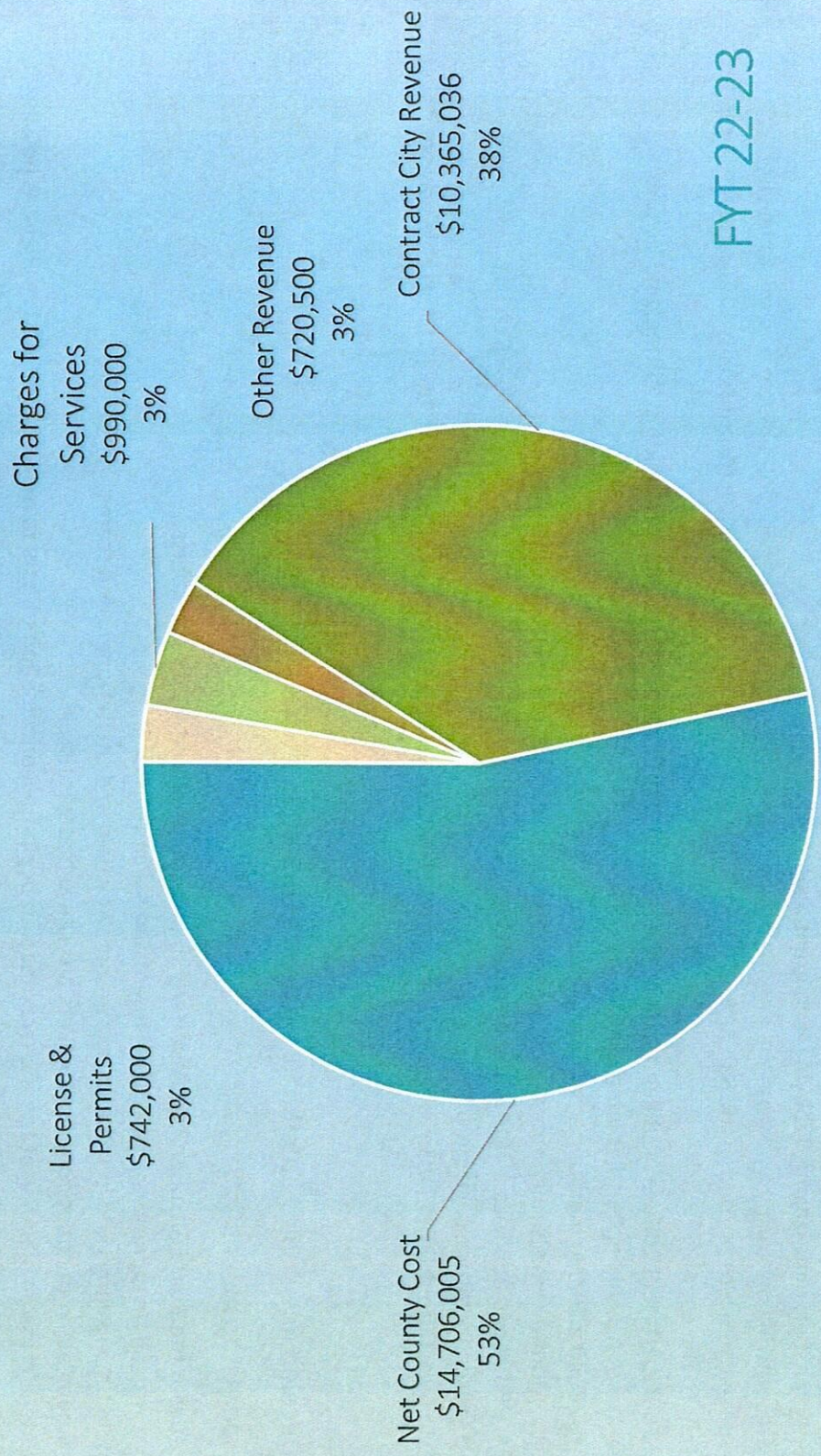
50
Average listserve
emails added per
month

\$110k
Web Donations*

140.1k
Subscribers to
listserve emails*

INCREASE NEEDED

BUDGETED REVENUE AND NET COUNTY COST



FYT 22-23



Mission: Working together to improve Riverside County for people and animals.

- ✓ Establish a legal transfer timeline of the Blythe campus to the City of Blythe to address the most serious funding gap in the shelter system.
- ✓ Continually build partnerships with other animal welfare organizations by way of the Animal Welfare Coalition of Riverside County for shared messaging, lobbying, and grant proposals.
- Create lobbying platform to address the importance of state support of animal services at a macro and micro level.
- Pursue partnerships to reopen the San Jacinto campus in a way that demonstrates fiscal responsibility to the Department and benefit to the community.
- Build a Department culture of philanthropy to increase fundraising and messaging for donating, gifting, and bequests in several ways, including but not limited to:
 - Build a 10,000 member email list.
 - Monthly emails to adopters, volunteers and listserve identified interested people.
 - Build and publicize a virtual and physical donor recognition system.
 - Prepare gifting package with new branding.
- Create a cost replacement plan to determine ongoing costs for asset replacement at end of life in a predictable way year over year.

GOAL 6: Develop and deploy an effective organizational communications plan.

GOAL 6 Progress to meet challenges:

- ✓ Meet with the Board of Supervisors quarterly to determine shared vision and goals.
- ✓ Meet with all Divisions within the Department and solicit feedback.
- ✓ Conduct ride-a-longs and job shadows with some key field and shelter operation teams.
- ✓ Communicate with county decision makers on critical matters timely.
- ✓ Initiate succession planning at the manager level to begin the conversation of how to make Divisions as resilient as possible.
- ✓ Initiate regular on-site all staff and management meetings to provide consistent information and strategic goals.
- Establish Department intranet site to create clearinghouse for communication, staff bulletins, policies, SOPs, etc. so everyone has access to consistent information from the top down.

- Provide supervisor level framework to be shared with employees regularly on customer service goals in conjunction with Department goals to ensure customers gets consistent messaging.
- Establish a communication strategy and regular team meeting schedule that is commonly known within each Division.
- Increase cross collaboration of Divisions via bridge building and collaborating toward strategic goals for the betterment of the Department.
- Expand succession planning per Division to include leadership growth, standard operating procedures, cross-training, and resiliency to address any crisis that may come.

GOAL 7: Develop a media and public relations plan.

GOAL 7 Progress to meet challenges:

- ✓ Hire a Graphic Arts Illustrator to assist in branding, in particular redesign all brochures, handouts, website and digital media in English and Spanish.
- ✓ Create a video on the veterinarian crisis illustrating impact to shelter operations and exacerbation of pet overpopulation.
- ✓ Provide consistent and sustained posting of available animals, in particular those that are adoptable with LOS indicators.
- Create additional short videos to address challenges facing the Department.
- Revamp communications plan to be more strategic in support of Department goals, and consistently planned throughout the year. Include crisis communications plan and emergency media contacts list in the communications plan.
- Publish an annual report to provide the story of the Department, to balance the currently published live release rate, euthanasia statistics, and other similar information on the website for public consumption. In the absence of better storytelling the Department is allowing others to tell the Department story without Department directed messaging.
- Provide proactive social media stories that illustrate the breadth and function of the Department, education of available services and programs, and information about how the community can partner with the Department to impact animal welfare.
- Update the website to current and forward-thinking standards with a commitment to keep the content fresh and relevant.
- Consider review of Department key performance indicators (KPIs) to better reflect dynamic strategic goals and animal overpopulation solutions.
- Improve transparency of Department information, removing barriers to public information.

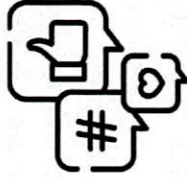
Public Information



16 Press Releases*



17,700 impressions/month
141,482 impressions in 2022



400K people reached per month

18,000
Arrow Dog Viral Story Reach on Twitter

45
Average posts per month across platforms



22,582 Likes
Combined 30,186



2,823 Followers

*FY 21/22



6,882 Followers
up 8% last 90 days

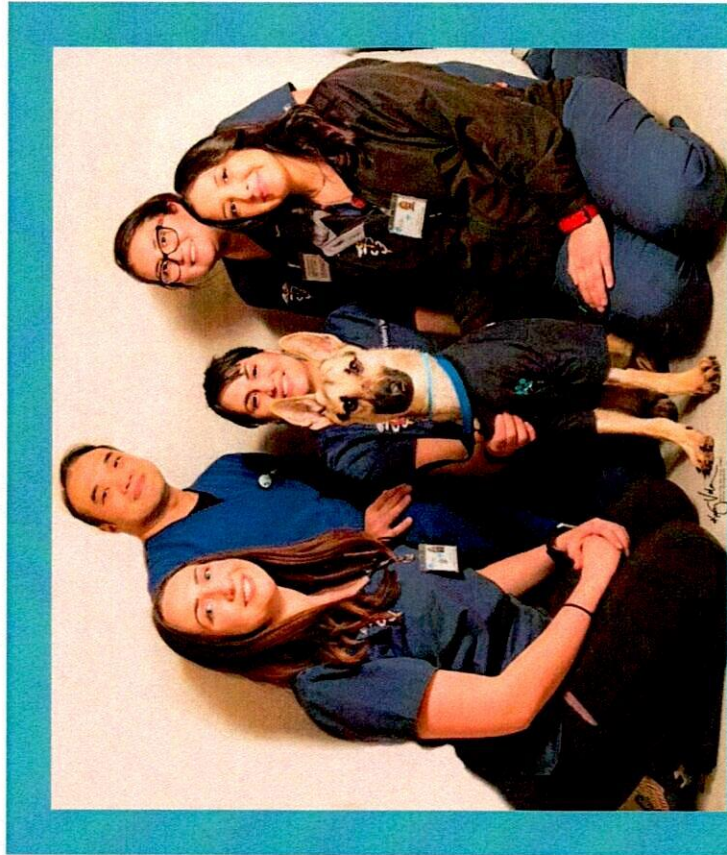
100+
Press Contacts

ON THE HORIZON IS STABILITY AND GROWTH

The Department is moving on to stability after several seasons of change that impacted funding, staffing, continuity and morale. This stability would not be possible without staff who work hard day in and day out and the managers and supervisors that carried the Department through instability, establishing the strategic plan you see more fleshed out in this document. As the Department has moved on to a more optimistic path, other county directors and departments offered support and collaboration, the Board of Supervisors provided suggestions and advice for improvements for the constituents, while the county's Executive Leadership provided direct assistance to the Department through all things. It is this combined and unfailing effort with continued partnership both inside and outside that will increase the success and reach of the Department of Animal Services for not only improvement of the Department, but more importantly the community of people and animals served in Riverside County.

*Optimism is a strategy for making a better future.
Because unless you believe that the future can be
better, you are unlikely to step up and take
responsibility for making it so.*

– Noam Chomsky



Kelly Vela, Dos Velas Images