

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



ITEM: 2.2
(ID # 29448)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, January 27, 2026

FROM : SUPERVISOR V. MANUEL PEREZ AND SUPERVISOR YXSTIAN GUTIERREZ

SUBJECT: SUPERVISOR V. MANUEL PEREZ AND SUPERVISOR YXSTIAN GUTIERREZ:
Receive and File this update from the Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc for the Continuous Improvement of Animal Services in Riverside County. All Districts [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and file this update from the Board of Supervisors Ad-Hoc for the Continuous Improvement of Animal Services in Riverside County;
2. Direct the Department of Animal Services to return to the Board with periodic updates in 2026 to continue to track and monitor progress.

ACTION:Consent

Lorena Santa Cruz
Lorena Santa Cruz

1/22/2026

V. Manuel Perez
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez, Supervisor 4th. District

1/22/2026

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

Ayes: Medina, Spiegel, Washington, Perez, and Gutierrez
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: January 27, 2026
xc: BOS-D4, BOS-D5, Animal Services

Kimberly A. Rector
Clerk of the Board
By: *[Signature]*
Deputy

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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: 25/26	

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

On July 30, 2024 (Item 3.5), the Board of Supervisors approved the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee for the continuous improvement of Animal Services. This committee was tasked with working with the Department of Animal Services (DAS), the Executive Office, and interested parties to improve Department operations and respond to community expectations. The County of Riverside is committed to protecting the safety, health and welfare of the public and animals in our care.

Since its creation the committee has taken a structured approach to addressing the issues that DAS has been facing, including the high number of animals coming into our shelters, the limited availability of veterinary care, staff recruitment and retention, facility needs, relationships with stakeholders, and other issues raised by the community. Under the guidance of this committee and through the hire of Mary Martin as our new Director of Animal Services in March of 2025, many notable improvements have been made, and many more continue to be worked on.

To assist with a major system transformation, the County enlisted the services of Outcomes for Pets Consulting, LLC, which has brought a wealth of expertise to assist in numerous improvement initiatives, with a strong focus on data-driven strategies for lifesaving. The Outcomes Team of eight professionals has been boots on the ground and has been instrumental in providing the desired support to the ad hoc committee and to RCDAS.

Additionally, the Board of Supervisors has made significant budget investments to increase department capabilities. An additional 38 staff positions have been on-boarded in the last 60 days and are undergoing training to help us hit the ground running on our continuous improvement efforts entering 2026.

The Ad Hoc Committee, with Director Martin, DAS staff and the assistance of the Outcomes, determined that a solution to the issues that RCDAS has been facing would be a multifaceted strategic approach, by:

1. Affirming the County's commitment toward becoming a no kill community, by striving to save every dog and cat in a shelter who can be saved and where 90% of the companion animals that enter its facilities leave alive.
2. Pledging to work collaboratively with public and private partners, animal welfare organizations, veterinary professionals, contract cities, and residents to implement

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programs and policies that reduce euthanasia and increase the live release rate of shelter animals.

3. Supporting continued investment in resources, staffing, and infrastructure to support lifesaving programs and ensure the humane treatment of all animals in our care.
4. Committing to working in close partnership with all contract cities that rely on County shelter services, encouraging alignment on lifesaving policies, resource investment, and coordinated outreach to reduce intake and improve outcomes.
5. Prioritizing efforts to reduce shelter intake.
6. Implementing and promoting community engagement measures.
7. Investing in RCDAS to increase the Life-Saving Programs staff.

The following highlights some of the transformation work that has been completed, January through October of 2025, based on recommendations identified and considered as part of the Ad Hoc Committee's work efforts. More detailed reports are included as Attachments to this Form 11. Also note that, data reconciliation for November and December is underway for the 2025 Annual Report. That report will be released at the end of February. Overall, the trends for 2025 show improvements for the dog and cat live release rates compared to 2024.

New and Expanded Initiatives

- Extended shelter operating days to six days a week in April, including Sundays, resulting in approximately 65% more animals leaving than entering.
- Adjusted the shelter operating hours to 11 am - 6 pm Tuesday through Friday and 10 am - 4 pm on weekends. This has resulted in 196 more pets leaving than entering the shelter in the month of October alone, through adoption, foster, and pet reunification.
- In May 2025, DAS began increasing the frequency of fee-waived adoption events to get more pets into homes and has continued with the practice.
- Launched a pre-adoption program (DIBS for Dogs) allowing those interested in adopting a dog on legal stray hold to place "dibs" on the pet, should it not be reclaimed by family.
- The Ticket to Ride program was launched to provide pets who have confirmed placement out of state with 2-4 weeks in a foster home until they can be transported.
- A Daily Report Card was added to the DAS website, showing up-to-date stats on the number of pets taken in or no longer in care, the number of pets in foster care, live release rates, and the number of animals in the shelter.
- Data collection and transparency were improved by providing monthly data snapshots, comprehensive quarterly detailed analyses, and trend reports for public presentations.
- Coordinated monthly cross-country pet transfer flights, increasing placement opportunities and reducing overcrowding in shelters.
- Identified new nationwide transport partners, resulting in the transfer of 4,733 cats and dogs to other shelters and rescues, which is 22% of all animals leaving the shelter.

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- Safety supply stations were created with clear instructions inside kennel areas to give staff and volunteers immediate access to essential tools.
- Key Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were modernized and updated to reflect current best practices and streamline daily operations.
- The Dog Day Out field trip program was launched in June at the San Jacinto and Jurupa Valley campuses to complement the Fido program at the Coachella Valley campus, resulting in more than 1,000 dogs spending time outside the shelter.
- The RCDAS Facebook page reached 7.2 million people and saw a 100% increase in engagement on posts.

RESULTS:

The collective implementation of these and other initiatives and operational changes is already being reflected in increased positive outcomes. These outcomes will continue to be monitored over time, as we seek to make continuous improvements in our operation.

Increased the Number of Reunited Lost Pets

- Increased its lost pet reunification rate to the highest on record by fully implementing Petco Love Lost. Implementation included staff training, updated signage, embedding the Petco Love Lost map on the DAS website, and updating the lost-and-found SOP.
- Permanently waived the Return-to-Owner fees, in most cases to remove financial barriers for pet owners and increase the number of pets reunited with their families.
- Reunited 2,538 dogs with their families, which represents 17% of the total dog outcomes.

Increased Live Outcomes

- Increase the percentage of cats and dogs leaving the shelters alive (Live Release Rate) at every campus in 2025, reaching 81% for dogs and 73% for cats.
- Reduced the number of animals euthanized by 35% compared to non-live outcomes in 2024.

Increased the Number of Spay and Neuter Surgeries

- DAS Veterinarians performed 15,706 spay and neuter surgeries for shelter and community-owned pets, approximately 1,000 more than in that same period of 2024.
- Developed and implemented a countywide spay/neuter (S/N) communications strategy with area-specific partnerships.
- Collaborated with local and national partners to increase spay/neuter access for animals most at risk.
- Upgraded equipment for spay/neuter surgeries at the Blythe campus

Increase Microchipping and Pet licensing

- Developed Intake Vaccination and Microchipping Policy recommendations.
- Expanded low-cost vaccination and microchipping clinics at shelter locations and through mobile community wellness deployments.
- Continued collaboration with DocuPet to improve pet licensing compliance.

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Increased Fosters and Volunteer Hours

- 4,121 pets went to foster homes, including approximately 50% who were waiting for spay/neuter surgery to finalize an adoption.
- 677 volunteers contributed 27,994 hours, including 19,544 hours in Jurupa Valley, 4,000 hours in Coachella Valley, and 3,814 hours in San Jacinto.

Next Steps

Although much work has been completed, or is in process, to improve on our delivery of services to our County's pets, more must be done. It is critically important that we embrace a culture of continuous improvement, data-driven decision making, and willingness to adjust our operations as we encounter challenges to seek to deliver the best service possible.

The Ad-Hoc Committee will continue to monitor progress and re-convene with DAS, as appropriate, for additional updates and action items. The Department of Animal Services will continue to bring periodic updates to the Board as well on our progress.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

The County has and will continue to take significant steps towards ensuring that we remain committed to the welfare of animals under our care

ATTACHMENTS:

- a. Attachment 1 - Year to Date Highlights
- b. Attachment 2 – Operational Highlights
- c. Attachment 3 – Progress and Measurable Accomplishments



YEAR-TO-DATE HIGHLIGHTS

January - October 2025



THE STORY BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Riverside County Department of Animal Services has partnered with Outcomes Consulting Group over the last nine months, identifying and implementing proven lifesaving strategies at one of the busiest animal sheltering systems in the country, serving more than 35,000 animals annually across four shelter locations. This report provides a comparative snapshot of progress made, for cats and dogs, from January through October 2025, compared to the same period in 2024.

The commitment to saving lives has yielded positive results. The Live Release Rate has increased incrementally while we've seen unnecessary euthanizations decline, with cat lifesaving making the most substantial progress in seven years.

These measurable gains reflect the unwavering dedication of our staff, volunteers, foster families, and community partners. Through strategic operational improvements, targeted adoption initiatives, and deeper community engagement, we've created a powerful coalition for change.

The numbers tell a compelling story, but behind each statistic is a life saved. The following sections reveal the tangible impact of our collective efforts, demonstrating how collaboration and innovation translate directly into lifesaving.



ONGOING OPERATIONAL CHANGES



Implemented Dog Day Out field trip program to reduce kennel stress, improve behavior, and boost adoption visibility.



Launched Ticket to Ride, a short-term foster program for pets scheduled for cross-country transfer or adoption.



Added Daily Report Cards to increase transparency and regularly issue urgent pleas during periods of over-capacity.



Extended public hours by opening on Sundays and extending hours on Wednesday, making it easier for the community to reclaim and adopt pets.*



Waived Return-to-Owner (RTO) fees, removing financial barriers for pet owners and increasing the number of pets returned home.*



Increased frequency of fee-waived adoption events, helping more animals find homes faster.



Completed cross-country pet transfer flights and enhanced partner outreach, creating more placement opportunities and reducing overcrowding



Enhanced marketing efforts, leading to better visibility for adoptable pets and increased community engagement.



ONGOING OPERATIONAL CHANGES



Secured multiple grants, including funding from Best Friends, the ASPCA, and PetSmart Charities



Safety supply stations with clear instructions were added inside kennel areas to give staff and volunteers immediate access to essential tools.



Key SOPs were modernized and updated to reflect current best practices and streamline daily operations.



A new MVP (Most Vulnerable Pets) Facebook group was created to boost visibility and support for pets needing extra help.



Launched new staff trainings and a Pet Support Resource Guide to help teams offer consistent, effective support to pet owners.



DIBS program allows for people to pre-adopt a dog still on stray hold, reserving them to adopt as soon as the hold ends. It helps dogs move into homes faster.



LIVE RELEASE RATE

The combined Live Release Rate (LRR) for cats and dogs improved from 71.2% in 2024 to **78.5%** in 2025.

 **6.5**
percentage
points for dogs

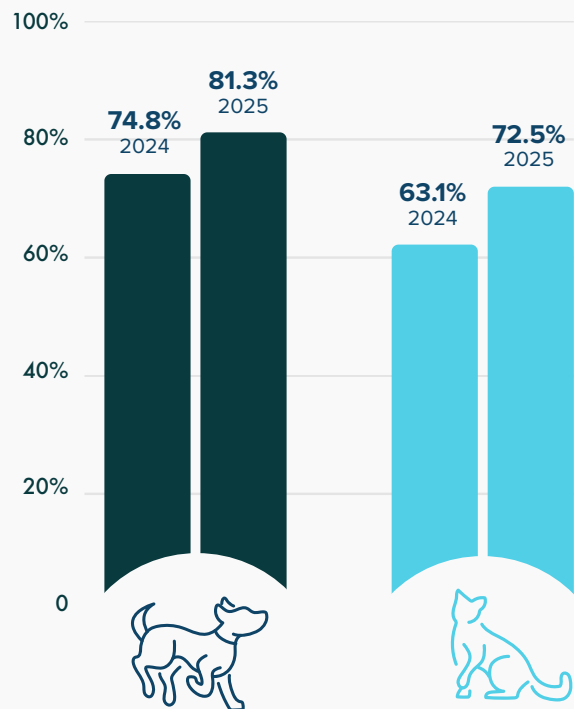
 **9.4**
percentage
points for cats

The dog LRR of 81.3% marks the strongest ten-month start in 4 years.



2025 Live Release Rate Compared to 2024

January - October



Data compares January-October 2025 to January-October 2024. To view more data for Riverside County Department of Animal Services visit rcdas.org/statistics



INTAKE TRENDS

Intake decreased by **2,868 animals** (10% overall), averaging about 8 fewer dogs and cats entering the shelter per day. Roughly, 65% of the decrease was due to contract timing in Fontana, Colton, and Rialto (affecting both dogs and cats).



2,831

fewer intakes for **dogs**.
This is a **15% decrease** compared to 2024

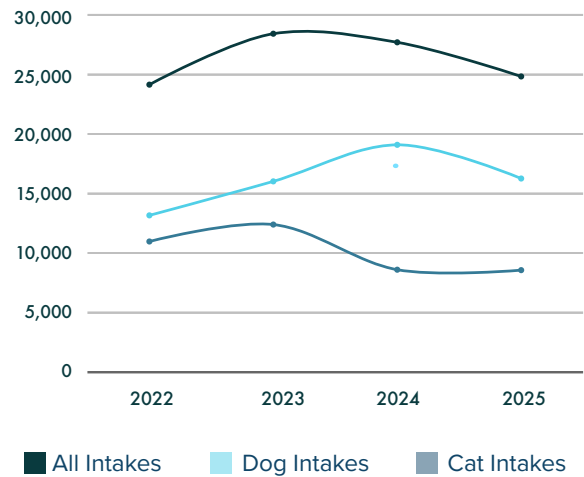


37

fewer intakes for **cats**.
The overall percentage remained unchanged compared to 2024.

Stray animals made up 82.35% of total intake.


Intakes January-October



Data compares January-October 2025 to January-October 2024. To view more data for Riverside County Department of Animal Services visit rcdas.org/statistics

LIVE OUTCOMES

When comparing the number of adoptions to the number of intakes, the rate of cat and dog adoptions increased in January - October 2025, climbing from **31% to 37%**, compared to 2024.

 **5**
percentage point
increase in dog
adoption rates

 **9**
percentage point
increase in cat
adoption rates

Transfers

This refers to the movement of animals from one shelter, rescue, or agency to another organization.

Riverside's transfer rates are above the national average, with **23% for dogs** (vs. 15% nationally) and **12% for cats** (vs. 11%) transferred so far in 2025.



3,669 dogs were transferred to partners and rescue groups for placement.



1,064 cats were transferred to partners and rescue groups for placement.

Data compares January-October 2025 to January-October 2024. To view more data for Riverside County Department of Animal Services visit rcdas.org/statistics



FIRST

From January - October 2025, **2,166 fewer animals euthanized** compared to the same period last year. This reduction was consistent across all shelters.

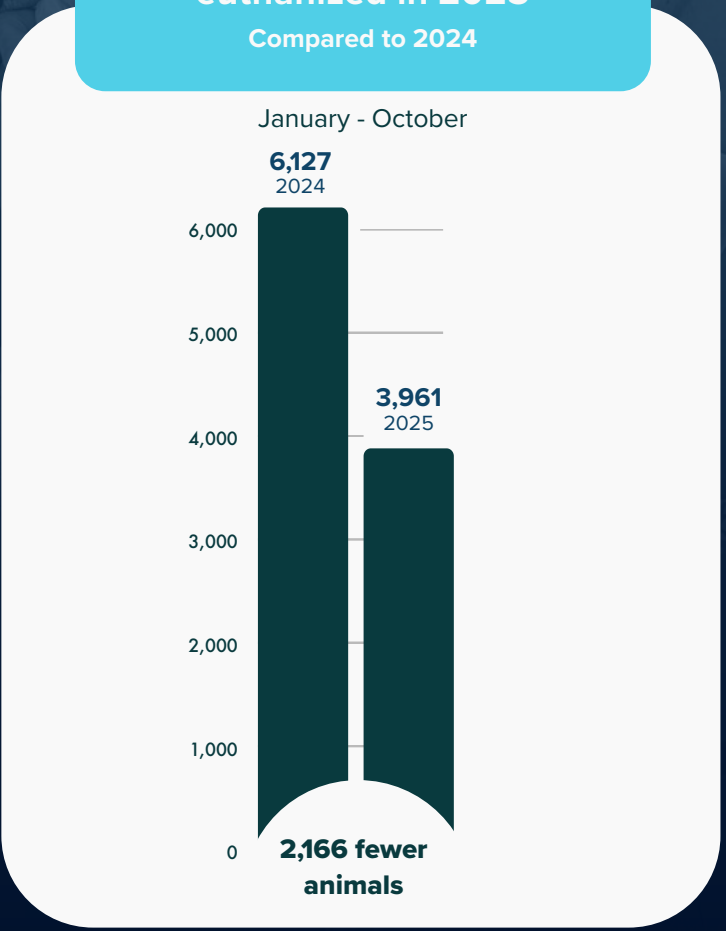
1,562

fewer **dogs** euthanized.
This is a **38% decrease** compared to 2024.

604

fewer **cats** euthanized.
This is a **30% decrease** compared to 2024.

Number of animals euthanized in 2025
Compared to 2024



The dog euthanasia rate decreased to 15%, the lowest since 2021.



Data compares January-October 2025 to January-October 2024. To view more data for Riverside County Department of Animal Services visit rcdas.org/statistics



RCDAS.ORG



@RiversideCountyAnimalServices

Western Riverside County/City Animal Shelter

6851 Van Buren Blvd
Jurupa Valley, CA 92509
(951) 358-7387 (PETS)

Coachella Valley Animal Campus

72-050 Pet Land Place
Thousand Palms, CA 92276
(760) 343-3644

San Jacinto Valley Animal Campus

581 S. Grand Ave.
San Jacinto, CA 92582
(951) 358-7387 (PETS)

Blythe Animal Shelter

245 S Carlton
Blythe, CA 92225
(760) 921-7857

Hours

Tuesday - Friday 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Blythe Animal Shelter Only

Monday - Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

January - October 2025 Riverside County Department of Animal Services Operational Highlights

Adoptions

- 9,308 pets were adopted from RCDAS, which was an increase of 750 animals over the same period last year. 5,896 were dogs, and 3,412 were cats.
- The [shelter extended its operating days to six days a week](#) in April, including Sundays, resulting in approximately 65% more animals leaving than entering.
- In May, RCDAS began increasing the frequency of fee-waived adoption events to get more pets into homes.
- A pre-adoption program, called [DIBS for Dogs](#), was launched in September that allows those interested in adopting a dog on its legal stray hold to place “dibs” on the pet, should the pet not be reclaimed by its family.
- In October, [shelter operating hours](#) were adjusted to 11 am - 6 pm Tuesday through Friday and 10 am - 4 pm on weekends, resulting in 196 more pets leaving the shelter that month through adoption, foster, or pet reunification than entering.

Lost Pet Reunification

- RCDAS has increased its lost pet reunification rate to the highest on record by fully implementing Petco Love Lost. Implementation included staff training and quizzes, updated signage, embedding the Petco Love Lost map on the RCDAS website, and updating the lost-and-found SOP.
- In May, [Return-to-Owner \(RTO\) fees were waived indefinitely](#) in most cases to remove financial barriers for pet owners and increase the number of pets reunited with their families.
- 2,538 dogs have been reunited with their families, which represents 17% of the total dog outcomes.

Transports and Transfers

- In March, monthly [cross-country pet transfer flights](#) began, increasing placement opportunities and reducing overcrowding in shelters.
- New United States transport partners were identified, resulting in the transfer of 4,733

cats and dogs to other shelters and rescues, which is 22% of all animals leaving the shelter.

Live Outcomes

- The percent of cats and dogs leaving the shelters alive (Live Release Rate) increased at every campus in 2025, reaching 81% for dogs and 73% for cats.
- In July, the Board of Supervisors approved 38 new staff positions to allow RCDAS to provide staff dedicated solely to live-outcomes duties, such as adoption, foster, and rescue. Outcomes assisted in developing staff onboarding recommendations, participated in the employee recruitment process, and provided recommendations for an ideal staff organizational chart.

Intakes and Non-Live Outcomes

- RCDAS took in 24,848 pets, a decrease of 2,868 animals.
- 4,733 animals were euthanized, died in care, or lost. This number decreased by 35% compared to non-live outcomes in 2024.

Veterinary Services

- Veterinarians performed 15,706 spay and neuter surgeries for shelter and community-owned pets, approximately 1,000 more than in 2024.

Foster and Volunteer

- 4,121 pets went to foster homes, including approximately 50% who were waiting for spay/neuter surgery to finalize an adoption.
- 677 volunteers contributed 27,994 hours, including 19,544 in Jurupa Valley, 4,000 in Coachella Valley, and 3,814 in San Jacinto.
- In April, a Dog Day Out training workshop was held for Animal Service Counselors and Supervisors, during which staff developed processes, SOPs, tracking, and communications plans with assistance from VCA Charities instructors.
- [Dog Day Out field trip program was launched](#) in June at the San Jacinto and Jurupa Valley campuses to complement the Fido program at the Coachella Valley campus, resulting in more than 1,000 field trips so dogs can spend time outside the shelter.
- In May, the [Ticket to Ride program](#) was launched to provide pets who have confirmed out-of-state placement with 2-4 weeks in a foster home until they can be transported.

Marketing and Communications

- The Riverside Animal Services Facebook page reached 7.2 million people and saw a 100% increase in engagement on posts.
- In April, a Daily Report Card was added to the RCDAS website, where anyone can find up-to-date stats on the number of pets taken in or no longer in care, the number of pets in foster care, live release rates, and the number of animals in the shelter.
- Implemented the Most Vulnerable Pet (MVP) program to increase transparency and visibility of the pets most in need while engaging the community.

Grants, SOPs, and Data

- Secured multiple grants totalling \$146,610, including funding from Best Friends, the ASPCA, and PetSmart Charities.
- Set up safety supply stations with clear instructions inside kennel areas to give staff and volunteers immediate access to essential tools.
- Key SOPs were modernized and updated to reflect current best practices and streamline daily operations. SOPs include at-risk animals, euthanasia processes, community cat intake and TNR/SNR, cat and kitten intake, lost and found pets, kennel housing, Dog Day Out, DIBS, Rescue Concierge, Pet Support, and call center scripts.
- Improved data collection and transparency by providing monthly data snapshots, comprehensive quarterly detailed analyses, and trend reports for public presentations.
- In September, added monthly data for 2024 and 2025 to the national shelter data platforms, Shelter Animals Count and Best Friends' Shelter Pet Data Alliance, to increase transparency.

Chameleon data as of 11/12/2025

JAN-OCT 2025	RCDAS TOTAL		CANINES		FELINES	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
Total Intake	27,716	24,848	19,104	16,273	8,612	8,575
Seizure/Confiscate	1,417	1,215	1,147	1,077	270	138
Owner Surrender	3,705	3,125	3,078	2,485	627	640
Stray	22,507	20,468	14,806	12,672	7,701	7,796

Transfer In	87	40	73	39	14	1
Total Live Outcomes	17,845	17,258	12,932	12,103	4,913	5,155
Return to Owner (RTO)	2,745	2,643	2,563	2,538	182	105
Adoption	8,558	9,308	5,917	5,896	2,641	3,412
Transfer Out	5,480	4,733	4,452	3,669	1,028	1,064
Return to Field (Community Cats)	1,062	574			1,062	574
Total Euthanasia	6,127	3,961	4,083	2,521	2,044	1,440
Euthanasia - ORE	1,202	859	1,051	758	151	101
Euthanasia - Shelter	4,925	3,102	3,032	1,763	1,893	1,339
Died in Care	543	698	174	223	369	475
Missing, Lost, Stolen in Care	562	74	106	33	456	41
Total Non-Live Outcomes	7,232	4,733	4,363	2,777	2,869	1,956
Total Outcomes	25,077	21,991	17,295	14,880	7,782	7,111
Rates						
Live Release Rate (SAC)	71.2%	78.5%	74.8%	81.3%	63.1%	72.5%

Progress and Measurable Accomplishments Resulting from Priority Areas Established by the Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Committee for the Continuous Improvement of Animal Services

This attachment outlines the progress and measurable accomplishments achieved in alignment with the priority areas established by the Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Committee for the Continuous Improvement of Animal Services. These efforts reflect a coordinated effort of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Department of Animal Services and Consultant, Outcomes for Pets. The strategy was a data-informed approach to strengthening prevention, expanding community-based pet support, improving operational efficiency, and advancing humane outcomes across Riverside County Animal Services (RCDAS). The initiatives and accomplishments described herein demonstrate measurable progress toward increasing lifesaving capacity, enhancing public trust and transparency, supporting a skilled and resilient workforce, and fostering meaningful partnerships with municipalities, rescue organizations, and community stakeholders. Collectively, this work represents a sustained commitment to continuous improvement and long-term system transformation.

Priority 1: PREVENTION, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY PET SERVICES

Increase access to spay/neuter services

- Developed and implemented a countywide spay/neuter (S/N) communications strategy with area-specific partnerships.
- Designed pathways to expand surgical capacity, including external partnerships, clinic training, events, vouchers, and a spay/neuter capacity calculator tool.
- Collaborated with local and national partners to increase spay/neuter access for animals most at risk.
- Identified a potential partner to provide clinic staff with high-quality, high-volume (HQHV) training and facility flow assessments.
- Contracted with Animal Balance and San Diego Humane to deliver large-scale spay/neuter events across all shelter campuses.
- Expanded walk-up trap neuter release services for cats.
- Upgraded equipment to be able to enable spay/neuter surgeries at the Blythe campus
- Partnered with Loving All Animals to bring out-of-state veterinarians to increase surgical capacity.
- Increased veterinary staffing, including hiring additional veterinarians, registered veterinary technicians, veterinary assistants, and per diem professionals.
- Appointed a new Chief Veterinarian to oversee clinical operations and standards of care.

Increase microchipping and pet licensing

- Developed Intake Vaccination and Microchipping Policy recommendations.
- expanded low-cost vaccination and microchipping clinics at shelter locations and through mobile community wellness deployments.
- Continued collaboration with DocuPet to improve pet licensing compliance.

Increase lost pet reunification efforts

- Implemented the Petco Love Lost program, including bilingual (English/Spanish) flyers at all locations and an interactive lost-pet map on the Department website.
- Updated Lost and Found Pet protocols and implemented a Finder-to-Foster Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- Provided staff training on increasing reunification rates.
- Assigned dedicated staff members to conduct intake support including lost pet reunification.
- Began Offering free pet identification tags at all shelters.

Increase resources to help pets stay with their families

- Completed comprehensive Pet Support Evaluation and Summary Report with operational recommendations
- Hosted 7-week Leadership Virtual Pet Support Training Sessions
- Created a pet support resources tracking sheet, intake diversion scripts, and quick-grab public resources
- Developed new employee onboarding training for customer-facing staff
- Drafted fence-fixing program SOP
- Assigned dedicated staff members to conduct intake support including offering resources to keep pets in homes

Improve access to affordable veterinary and wellness services

- Connected with national partners: Bissell, San Diego Humane, Orphan Kitten Club, Michelson Found Animals, UC Davis, VCA Charities, ASPCA.
- Created a GIS mapping project to determine areas of greatest need.
- Expanded Healthy Pet Zone program to offer in-house, low cost, veterinary care on a case-by-case basis to the public.

Priority 2: PET SUPPORT SERVICES TO INCREASE PET RETENTION

Reduce shelter intakes

- Completed GIS-based intake evaluation, identifying where and how animals enter the system.
- Created a Field Services report to analyze animals brought in by animal control officers.
- Audited shelter, dispatch, and law enforcement responses to animal inquiries.
- Developed operational recommendations for increased intake diversion.
- Drafted intake support guide with local and national support resources.

Provide training for pets and pet owners

- Established a working relationship with Petszel to provide free, post-adoption support to all pet adopters.

Priority 3: FOSTER POSITIVE CONNECTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy (*Substantially complete*)

- Conducted a communications audit and developed a strategic, month-by-month communications calendar encompassing website, social media, public relations, print, billboards, radio, television, and events.
- Drafted a rolling 30-day communications plan to promote adoptable pets and themed adoption events.
- Established strategies and staff guidelines for story-led content, improved pet bios and photographs, and the "First Family Photos" initiative.
- Completed a social media audit and developed a social media toolkit.
- Completed a website audit and produced recommendations to enhance user experience and Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Expand foster, adoption, and transport programs

- Extended shelter operating days to six days a week in April, including Sundays, resulting in approximately 65% more animals leaving than entering.
- Adjusted the shelter operating hours to 11 am - 6 pm Tuesday through Friday and 10 am - 4 pm on weekends.
- Developed and facilitated Dog Day Out field trip foster program training for staff and volunteers
- Planned and executed the RCDAS holiday adoption promotion with national partner support.
- Identified and connected RCDAS to potential transport partners
- Increased out-of-state transfer flights and ground transportation.
- Developed ideal staffing recommendations for Foster and Matchmaking roles.
- Identified barriers to fostering and developed a comprehensive foster program initiative.
- The Ticket to Ride program was launched to provide pets who have confirmed placement out of state with 2-4 weeks in a foster home until they can be transported.
- Created Ticket to Ride Implementation Checklist and transport partner list.
- Re-established a pre-adoption process for stray-hold pets through the Dibs program.
- Drafted Foster-to-Adopt communications and coordinated spay/neuter scheduling to address sterilization backlogs.
- Created and updated the field trip report card.
- Hired 34 staff members to promote lifesaving through support of adoptions, foster, rescue, pet support, and enrichment programs.
- Expanded fee-waived adoption events to reduce barriers to lifesaving outcomes.

Build relationships with media and partners

- Created a plan for a media monitoring platform (Meltwater) and a crisis communications plan.
- Distributed stakeholder input survey to volunteers, staff, foster caregivers, and rescue groups.
- Created a standard plan for responding to media inquiries.
- Incorporated proactive media outreach into rolling communications plan, increasing earned media coverage.
- Strengthened relationships with Chameleon, San Diego Humane, Bissell, Petco Love, Petzel, and Adopt a pet.

Improve public communication and outreach

- Created public-facing progress weekly reports.
- Produced quarterly and annual reports outlining data and operational progress.
- Created Rivco Rise rollout plan and FAQ materials.
- developed response templates for community member inquiries.
- Enhanced branding and messaging across public platforms, including social media, flyers, website content, Nextdoor, billboards, and other outreach channels.
- Increased social media engagement by 100% over the prior year and distributed more than 40 news releases in 2025.
- Strengthened partner-city engagement through weekly update emails and bi-monthly newsletters.

Foster community trust through excellent customer service

- Produced Customer Experience Reports for all shelter locations, including implementation action items.
- Developed customer service signage, pathway planning, and kennel card update recommendations.
- Created Customer Service Guidelines and Call Center Reference Guide.
- Facilitated staff training on customer service best practices.
- Increased staffing levels to support service delivery.

Improve data transparency

- Established a comprehensive monthly reporting process, both systemwide and by facility.
- Completed quarterly data summary reports and annual data analysis.
- Standardized templates for Director's Report, CVAC Commission Meetings, and Ad Hoc meetings.
- Implemented a publicly available daily report card to improve transparency around intakes, outcomes, shelter capacity, and live release rates.

Priority 4: CREATE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS

Engage Contract cities and local businesses

- Developed survey and outreach materials for the contract cities' semi-regular meetings.
- Created unique reports for each partner city.
- Completed a city contract fee study to advance full cost recovery, implemented a new fee structure, and renewed updated contracts with all partner cities.

Increase collaboration with rescue and advocate groups

- Updated at-risk animals' plea processes with capacity-based recommendations.
- Collected stakeholder feedback to refine the at-risk process.
- Supported the creation of an "MVP" Facebook group for adoptable pets.
- Ensured all at-risk dogs were made available for foster, adoption, or rescue placement.

- Launched the Ironwood Dog Foster Program, placing large, overrepresented dogs with state penitentiary inmates to improve live outcomes and reduce shelter crowding.

Improve access for rescue partners

- Establishing a policy for fee removal or waivers.
- Implemented updated Return-to-Owner (RTO) fee-waived directives and policy.

Work towards 90% live release rate

- Set 2025 live release rate goals based on historical data trends.
- Removed barriers and bottlenecks to expedite animal movement through shelters.
- Created an adoption interest questionnaire to improve matchmaking.
- Drafted updated cat and dog intake forms to collect more comprehensive pet data.

Priority 5: MAINTAIN A HEALTHY AND CAPABLE WORKFORCE

Enhance staffing and recruitment

- Assessment and implementations of staffing needs for foster coordinators, councilors, and veterinary roles.
- Contracted with on-site implementation specialists.
- Contracted with an on-site social media content specialist.
- Completed three large hiring events.

Support employee development and retention

- Created Volunteer Workplace Culture Agreement and working on a handbook.
- Created plans for the expansion of the volunteer program and streamlining of the onboarding process
- Drafted telecommuting policy.
- Hosted Town Hall meetings at each shelter facility to obtain feedback from staff and increase communications and held an annual meeting.

Improve training and safety protocols

- Distributed safety supplies in dog kennel areas and provided usage guidelines.
- Created policy and SOP recommendations for behavior documentation, feeding and care, dog co-housing, and daily shelter rounds.
- Developed dog handling and enrichment recommendations.
- Created training for the use of the Chameleon "animal evaluation window."
- Created a leash carry policy for staff assigned to dog areas.
- Created dog kennel cleaning checklist and poster.
- Held an animal handling workshop with Dogs Playing for Life to increase handling safety and starting a direct mentorship on site monthly.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Capacity Management

- Facilitated Animal Arts facility assessment to determine right-size kennel capacity.
- Partnered with UC Davis on capacity for care assessment.
- Created recommendations for operating within capacity for humane care.
- Updated euthanasia policy and SOP.
- Provided extended open hours recommendations and updated schedule (Sundays open, Mondays closed, extended mid-week hours).

Strategic Planning

- Finalized 2025 strategic objectives plan, integrating Ad Hoc committee priorities
- Prepared the 2024 annual report
- Created RCDAS fundraising model analysis with a grant/foundation opportunities list
- Providing ongoing grant writing support and ongoing opportunities for grant funding

The accomplishments detailed in this attachment reflect significant, system-wide progress toward the Ad Hoc Committee's established priorities and the County's broader animal welfare goals. Through strategic planning, cross-sector collaboration, and a focus on data-driven decision-making, RCDAS has strengthened its capacity to prevent unnecessary shelter intake, increase live outcomes, improve customer service, and deliver equitable access to animal care and support services. While important milestones have been achieved, continued investment, partnership, and oversight will remain critical to sustaining momentum and addressing ongoing challenges. The County remains committed to continuous improvement and to advancing humane, effective, and community-centered animal services for Riverside County residents.