

FY 2026-2027 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Austin Animal Services;

CBQ NO.: 102

REQUESTED BY: (District 6) Krista Laine

DATE REQUESTED: Wednesday, July 29, 2026 1:08 PM

DATE POSTED:

REQUEST:

How much would it cost to run an animal shelter that is fully open intake, meets or exceeds our no-kill percentage requirement, and provides humane care for each animal?

RESPONSE:

Austin Animal Services currently operates as a fully open-intake shelter and continues to work toward meeting or exceeding the City's no-kill benchmark while providing humane standards of care. However, the shelter is operating within existing facility and staffing constraints, and the cost to sustainably maintain this level of service over the long term cannot be fully determined until future capacity needs are addressed.

To support continued open-intake operations while maintaining humane standards of care and the City's no-kill benchmark, two primary investments would be required:

- Expanded shelter capacity to safely accommodate fluctuations in animal intake, reduce reliance on temporary housing solutions, and maintain humane standards of care; and
- Additional staffing to operate and support the expanded facility.

Staff supports a proposed \$3.0 million bond investment to evaluate and address the Austin Animal Shelter's current capacity limitations. Once the facility expansion is planned and the operational model is established, Austin Animal Services will be able to determine the staffing requirements and estimate the ongoing operating costs needed to maintain a fully open-intake shelter while meeting the City's no-kill benchmark and humane care standards.

