



# Save Kittens from the Shelter Neuter Return (SNR) Program

REQUESTS AND SOLUTIONS

December 9, 2019  
Cat Champions of Austin, Texas



## Why Save the Kittens?

1. 67% mortality rate for outdoor kittens under 5 months, according to Austin Animal Center's own website
2. 75% mortality rate for kittens under 6 months, according to data cited by Dr. Kate Hurley and Dr. Julie Levy of Maddie's Fund's Million Cat Challenge
3. Maddie's Fund recommends prioritizing adoption pathways for kittens.
4. Kittens under 6 months are ineligible for Austin Pets Alive!'s Barn Cat Program because "they do not have the knowledge, size or skills to live safely outdoors."
5. Kittens living on the streets can suffer terribly.

# High Mortality Rate

- 1. Starvation**
  - A caregiver is not required to be eligible for SNR
- 2. Disease**
  - Kittens' immune systems are not fully developed
- 3. Getting hit by a car**
  - Kittens are returned to unsafe locations such as high traffic intersections
- 4. Being killed by a predator**
  - Coyotes, loose dogs, and other predators pose a threat



## Austin Animal Center (AAC) Protocols

### Special Protocols

- For kittens under 5 months, strict protocols must be followed:
  - Fresh gloves worn to handle them
  - Fresh linens used to hold them
  - Not allowed to touch the ground or go in the visiting cubes
- For kittens under 6 months, must be fed *kitten* food

## Kittens Suffer

These 3-month-old kittens went through the SNR program. A concerned citizen watched them being put out by a dumpster, which is considered a "food source," and notified authorities. A Travis County Sheriff returned the kittens to AAC, where they were adopted.



# REQUESTS





## Code Amendment

### **AMENDMENT TO § 3-1-25 - DISPOSITION OF AN IMPOUNDED ANIMAL**

City Code Section 3-1-25 (*Disposition of an Impounded Animal*) is amended to add the following Subsection:

(K) Subsection (E) does not apply to non-feral kittens under the age of six months.



## Working Group


A Working Group is needed

- ▶ SNR is a complex issue.
- ▶ Stakeholders have a right to be included in determining how SNR can be improved and how the Donations Fund money earmarked for SNR should be used.
- ▶ Speaking at meetings isn't enough. We need to have a dialogue.



SOLUTIONS





## Decreasing AAC's Cat Population

- ▶ Reduce Intake
- ▶ Increase Reclaim Rates
- ▶ Reduce Shelter Cat Population



# Reduce Intake

- ▶ **Microchipping**
  - ▶ Increase public awareness of this free service provided by AAC.
  - ▶ Hold more microchip events.
- ▶ **Public Education**
  - ▶ If citizens knew their cats could go through SNR, it might provide incentive for microchipping their cats.
  - ▶ Educate citizens on alternatives to bringing stray cats to AAC.
- ▶ **Community Outreach**
  - ▶ Create a team of volunteers to go to targeted neighborhoods to ask if their cats are spayed/neutered and microchipped. If not, guide them to Emancipet and AAC.

# Increase Reclaim Rates

- ▶ **Microchipping**
  - ▶ Educate public not only to microchip pets but to keep the contact information current.
  - ▶ If microchip information is a dead end, contact Austin Lost and Found Pets (ALFP) administrators.
- ▶ **Stray Cat Volunteer Team**
  - ▶ Create a team of volunteers to take and upload photos of stray cats to AAC's website daily.
  - ▶ Post stray cats on the ALFP website.
- ▶ **SNR Cat Listings**
  - ▶ Leave SNR cat listings on AAC's website for 14 days, as is done for "Found" listings.
  - ▶ Circulate a nightly report of SNR-eligible cats to stakeholders using the same fields as are already available on the data portal.



# Reduce Shelter Cat Population

- ▶ **Customer Service/Hospitality Staff**
  - ▶ Increase the number of Customer Service/Hospitality staff on weekends, especially during free adoption events.
  - ▶ Reinstate assigning a Customer Service/Hospitality staff member in the cat building on weekends.
- ▶ **Website and Social Media**
  - ▶ Make AAC cat website listings more robust.
  - ▶ Make daily cat posts on Facebook and Instagram.



## Reduce Shelter Cat Population

- ▶ **Off-Site Relief**
  - ▶ Increase off-site adoption locations and events, such as "Caturday."
  - ▶ Expand the Travis County Correctional Complex (TCCC) Jail Foster Program.
- ▶ **Adoption Fees**
  - ▶ Have "BOGO" for kittens year-round, like Austin Humane Society does.
  - ▶ Waive fees when kennel space is limited ("Code Red").
- ▶ **Foster and Transfer SNR-Eligible Cats**



# Change

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

— **Albert Einstein**