



Animal Services Office

Don Bland, Chief Animal Services Officer
October 25, 2022 Austin City Council Work Session

Animal Services Office Mission Statement

- To provide public service and **a safety net for lost and homeless animals** in the community by providing necessary food, water, shelter, and standard municipal veterinary care for animals in need.
- To provide placement services that will assist lost, homeless, or sheltered animals to return to their homes, find new homes or rescue transfer when necessary, and **provide live outcomes for at least 95% of sheltered animals**.
- To **enforce animal regulations** and assist the public with animal-related concerns, including impoundment, quarantine, and other rabies control services in order to protect citizens and animals in our community.
- To provide services to the public in order to educate and prevent animal homelessness and **promote humane, compassionate treatment of animals and responsible pet ownership**.



Services Provided

To residents of Austin and unincorporated Travis County (through an Interlocal Agreement)

Impounded Animals

- Veterinary Services
- Shelter Care & Enrichment
- Outcome
 - Return to Owner
 - Adoption
 - Foster
 - Transfer

Animal Protection

- Rabies Control Authority
- Quarantine Facility
- Dangerous & Vicious Dog Response & Compliance
- Wildlife Education & Response

Community

- Microchipping
- Rabies Vaccination Clinics
- Neighborhood Level Program
- Pet Retention
- Community Cats

History

| 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2017 | 2019 |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Council adopted the No-Kill Implementation Plan</p> <p>Imposed a moratorium on killing any animal when there are cages or kennels available</p> | <p>Attained No-Kill Status</p> <p>No-Kill is defined as maintaining a live outcome percentage of at least 90%</p> <p>Moved from Town Lake Animal Center (TLAC) to Austin Animal Center (AAC)</p> <p>Maintained 60 kennels at TLAC for overflow</p> | <p>Animal Services Office created</p> <p>2014</p> <p>Animal Control transitioned to Animal Protection model</p> | <p>Kennel expansion project completed</p> <p>Building with 44 large kennels constructed onsite with additional play yards</p> <p>No longer utilized the 60 kennels at TLAC for overflow</p> | <p>City Council increased mandated live outcome rate to 95%</p> |

ASO has maintained a live outcome rate above 96% since 2016.

Facility

- Funded through 2006 voter bond
- Designed prior to No-Kill
- Designed to accommodate
 - 252 medium/large dogs
 - 32 small dogs
 - 148 cats
- Modifications & Improvements:
 - Small dogs housed in cat kennels
 - Original rabbit area reallocated for kittens
 - Small animals & exotic pets housed in dog kennel until 2020
 - Upcoming surgery recovery kennel expansion
 - Two additional play yards added in 2021
 - Saloon doors in all kennel buildings

Staffing



Regular positions: 115 full-time / 2 part-time

| 6 added FY 23 | 8 added FY 16-22 |
|---|--|
| 2 Animal Protection Officers 4 Pet Resource Center Staff | 6 Animal Protection Officers 1 Veterinarian 1 Public Health Educator |

Temporary positions: 57 temporary positions

Volunteerism



43,665 volunteer hours donated in FY 22

| Most popular roles | Most needed roles |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dog walking• Cat kennel cleaning & socialization | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adoption matchmaking• Dog kennel cleaning• Pet Resource Center |

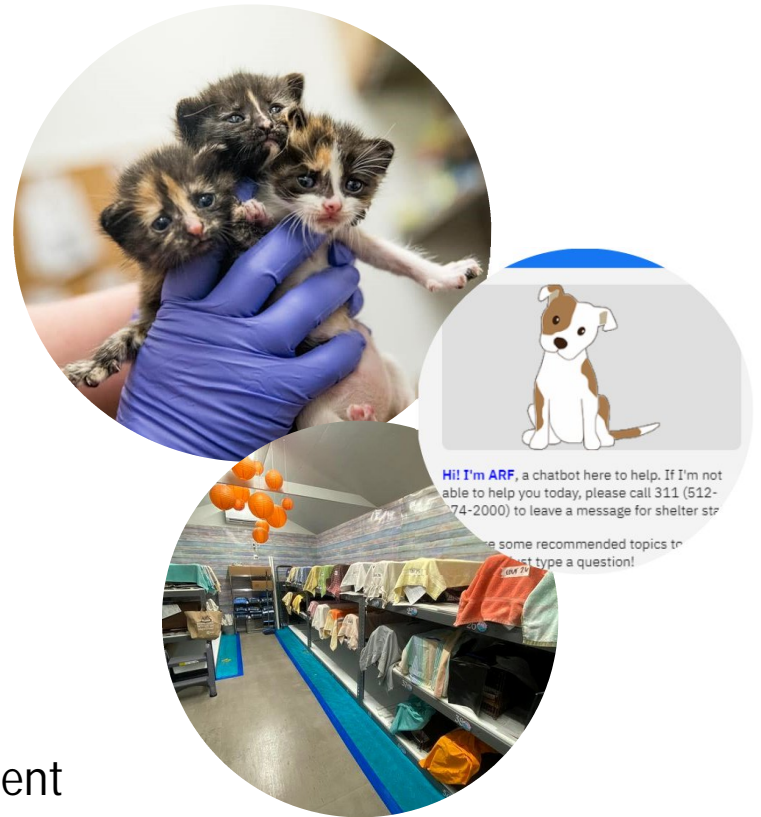
Innovation & Improvement

Specialty Shelter Programs

- Neonatal Kitten Nursery
- Cactus Cats
- Exotic & Small Pet Area
- Foster Matchmaking
- Out-of-State Transport
- Cattyshack TNR Building

Improved Processes

- Faster adoption process
- Laptops for Animal Protection trucks
- Foster telemedicine program
- Chatbot on website - first City of Austin department to implement





Intake Prevention Efforts

- Neighborhood Level Program
- Owner surrender consultations
- Resources such as food, crates, harnesses
- Financial assistance
 - Behavioral
 - Medical
- Community-based pet reunification tools
 - Microchip scanner partnership with AFD & PARD
 - Pet Reunification Guide
 - Lost & Found text program
- Microchipping
 - Drive-thru clinics
 - In the field



National Sheltering Trends

- National Shelter Crisis
- Texas Shelter Crisis
- Pet retention barriers
- Shelter staffing shortages
- Veterinarian Shortage
- Pet Neutering
- Overcrowding

Local Challenges to Pet Ownership

- Cost to own and care for pets
- Increased surrenders & decreased adoptions
 - 427 more owner surrenders in FY2022 than in FY2021
- Reuniting with lost pets is more difficult due to large jurisdictional area
- Low reclaim rate (~20% for med/lg dogs)



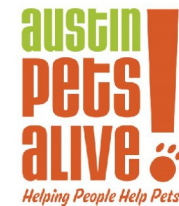


Challenges to AAC Operations

- Rapid growth in Austin area
- Lack of pet identification on a pet a barrier for reclaim process
- Difficulty finding fosters and adopters for specific animal types
- Bulk of resources spent on animal care instead of owner pet retention
- Managing space safely and humanely

No-Kill Takes a Village

- Over 150 rescue partners
- Agreements with local non-profits to offer services to pets and their owners
- Regular outreach to transient and unhoused population for pet needs



Community support is crucial to maintaining a No-Kill Community.



We need the community's help in keeping found animals, especially medium-large dogs, out of the shelter.

Community members are almost **twice as likely** to find a home for a pet than the shelter is.

Next Steps for ASO



- Continue to grow the foster and volunteer programs
- Place Customer Service staff in the kennel runs
- Complete consultation with a veterinarian behaviorist & City Audit
- Monitor and adapt our Neighborhood Level Program
- Work on innovative ways to increase adoptions and rescue transfers
- Continue to solicit, review, and implement ideas from staff and volunteers