



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

THROUGH: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, LMSW, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Don Bland, CAWA, Chief Animal Services Officer *Don Bland*

DATE: May 8, 2024

SUBJECT: **Urgent Placement List Update**

To help respond to questions you may be receiving from the public about the new Austin Animal Center's (AAC) [Urgent Placement List](#), this memo provides information you can share with other Austinites. The Animal Services Office's (ASO) [March 29 memo](#) introduced the Urgent Placement List which identifies dogs that have significant barriers to adoption to facilitate their placement into appropriate foster or adoptive homes. The list is also designed to help notify stakeholders of which dogs may be at risk. Over the last month, the list has been updated to also include a dog's positive character traits.

Recently, more dogs were added to the list since placement had been found for many animals on the original list. AAC has been at or over critical capacity for the last several years. The Animal Services Office (ASO) has asked the community for help on many occasions, which often provides momentary relief before kennels are filled again. Unfortunately, since ASO has had to issue urgent pleas consistently, the strength of the pleas has waned and the public is no longer responding at the same level as in the past.

On Wednesday, May 1, ASO issued social media posts about dogs on the Urgent Placement list. Despite reaching over 14,000 people per platform, only 22 medium/large dogs left for foster or adoptive homes between May 2-6. In that same period, AAC impounded 41 medium/large dogs. This past month, 270 more animals were taken into the shelter than were fostered or adopted out.

To open large kennel space, ASO has done the following:

1. Adoption fees have been waived since June 2023.
2. To increase rescue transfers, ASO offered partners a financial incentive. Since March 2024, on three occasions, ASO offered rescue partners up to \$500 to pull any dog that would open large kennel space. Unfortunately, these efforts only resulted in six dogs being transferred to partners.

3. ASO is boarding 24 medium/large dogs at other boarding facilities. However, this is not a sustainable solution as ASO is paying a daily fee and if any of the boarded dogs have an issue, they would need to be transported back to AAC.

We are eager to improve the quality of life of all the animals in our care. To immediately assist ASO in opening more space at the AAC, please help by:

- Spreading the word about the need to get medium/large dogs out of the shelter. ASO social media posts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) can be shared and ASO can send you adoptable animals to post on your accounts; and
- If any Council offices are hosting an event in their district, ASO staff would be happy to attend. ASO Outreach staff attend events on a regular basis to bring awareness and provide services such as pet tags, microchips, and off-site adoptions.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Don.Bland@austintexas.gov.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
CMO Executive Team