

From: [Wendy Walker](#)
To: [CityClerk](#)
Subject: Animal Services
Date: Thursday, July 10, 2025 1:02:45 PM



To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for putting focus on the ongoing crisis within Riverside County animal services. As a volunteer at the Coachella Campus, I am writing to echo the urgency of this situation and add my observations.

The shelter is critically overcapacity. Kennels are packed, and dogs are frequently housed together in unsafe conditions that elevate stress and can lead to fights. Yesterday I observed unaltered males and females in the same kennel, which will lead to the females getting pregnant. This is wrong and irresponsible on the part of shelter staff. People can unknowingly adopt a pregnant female.

A key contributing factor is the delay in spay/neuter surgeries, which limits the dogs' ability to be adopted or transferred in a timely manner.

The shelter has a responsibility to invest in the health and safety of the animals in their care. and that means neutering and spaying them. The effort to avoid euthanasia for healthy, adoptable dogs is admirable—but "kennel stacking" is a deeply flawed and dangerous solution.

This is not just a crisis for the animals. It's also a crisis of management. Staff are overwhelmed and, in many cases, undertrained in safe animal handling and modern shelter operations. This impacts not only safety but also the emotional well-being of both the animals and the staff who care for them. Stronger, more compassionate leadership and clear, well-funded systems are urgently needed.

Visitors to the shelter—potential adopters—are often overwhelmed and discouraged by the chaotic and heartbreaking environment in the large dog kennels. The high stress levels of the dogs cause them to display poorly, hurting their chances of being adopted. These dogs are loving and deserving—but few people can see past the noise and distress to realize it.

There are better alternatives:

- Robust transport programs to less crowded shelters or rescue partners
- Expanded offsite adoption events and partnerships with local businesses or community spaces
- Volunteer recruitment incentives and broader public engagement
- A budget increase for spay/neuter of shelter animals and follow through on spaying and neutering within a certain time frame of intake.
- Improved shelter leadership that is proactive, not reactive

I share this because I care deeply about these animals and believe our county can do better.

This system is broken, but not beyond repair. With transparency, community support, and bold leadership, we can create a humane and effective shelter system that truly serves animals and adopters alike.

Sincerely,

Wendy Walker

Volunteer, Riverside County Animal Services – Coachella Campus