

City Council Questions from Animal Services Contact

1. How does RCDAS currently track where animals are picked up?

The department uses a shelter software system called Chameleon. Officers use a mobile version of this in the field and log intake/call location. This is recorded as addresses, cross streets, and GPS coordinates depending on the situation.

2. What are the credentials and training hours required by the individuals who decide on: adoptability, behavioral evaluations, and/or red list for euthanasia? Will the tracking data include which employees are involved with intake, diagnosing illnesses, determining adoptability or decision to euthanize?

Any animal that is available (not on a stray, quarantine, or confiscate hold) is able to be adopted. In some cases, a behavior or medical waiver must be signed to adopt. The only animals that do not fit into this category are those with documented serious aggression (on a case-by-case basis) or substantial illness or injury as deemed by staff under the supervision of a veterinarian.

Behavior evaluations are not conducted. Research has shown that behavior in the shelter environment cannot be used as a predictor of how an animal will behave outside of the shelter. Behavior in the shelter is based on observations at points in time and is not decided by one person.

The red list is a tool the department uses to communicate to rescues and potential adopters which animals are a risk for euthanasia. Animals that are red listed are those who are not fairing well in the shelter environment and showing signs of distress, usually brought on by long length of stay and limited space to hold them in the shelter. These dogs are reviewed and listed by shelter supervision and management with decades of experience. Final sign off for shelter euthanasia is done at the executive management level. Training on animal handling and behavior is required for all shelter staff, multiple trainings are offered per year during onboarding and as ongoing education.

Shelter software, Chameleon, tracks stages of all sheltered animals and who has performed which steps from intake to outcome.

3. How did other cities end up with such a sharp increase in projected 2025-26 costs? Were they being under-billed until the fee study was conducted?

The fee study uses different parameters to determine costs - number of animals impounded, length of stay in the shelter, and city population, divided in a piece of the pie model based on the percentage of each city's burden. The amount that is shared is the whole cost of county services, minus the cost the county would shoulder to provide unincorporated services, in the absence of city contracts. The county previously charged based on number of animals and kenneling days alone- all cities were charged at the same rate. These are not equivalent methods for determining fees and cannot be compared alongside. The fee study showed the department was not charging any of the cities enough to support shelter life-saving programs.

4. Is there a plan to hire Animal Behavior Specialists?

Currently, there is none. Behavior is based on an animal's observed actions in the shelter or previous documented history (such as a bite to a person or attacking another animal, Etc.). Behavior that puts an animal at risk of euthanasia is generally not thriving in the shelter environment, often caused by a long length of stay and the need to exit. The only remedy for this behavior is getting out of the shelter. RCDAS cannot offer behavior rehabilitation in the shelter, based on the volume of animals housed.

Note that behaviors exhibited in the shelter environment do not predict how an animal will behave out of the shelter. Peer reviewed research has shown it is not the best practice to perform behavior evaluations in a shelter. [Article HERE](#).

Animal enrichment, to reduce stress and maintain adoptability, is important to the department. RCDAS is working on building an enrichment team to increase these activities including playgroups.

5. How many cats have been turned away since May? Director Mary Martin told a volunteer that CVAC is not accepting any more kittens for the summer.

RCDAS does not accept cats in traps except on Feral Fridays unless sick or injured and the department follows best practices and all applicable laws as it relates to accepting animals. Cats are triaged to determine the best outcome for each situation. Community members are offered support for trap-neuter-return for healthy adult cats that don't require intake. Finders of underage kittens are offered support to participate in the foster program. Cats that are sick or injured are triaged

based on need and could be impounded for treatment. CVAC accepts kittens that need our services.

We understand that the community needs more services and RCDAS is working to reduce this gap through onboarding more veterinary staff and investing in life-saving programs.

6. Description of Standard Field Services, Exhibit B, Section B1: The COUNTY may post an animal's picture on the Department's website to assist residents in reclaiming a lost or missing pet or finding a new one. Is this not a current practice? Has it ever been a policy in the past?

It is standard practice that all animals impounded have a photo uploaded. These are updated hourly through our Chameleon software system. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, such as animals that have a substantial injury or if confiscated in a legal case. Lost animals can be viewed [HERE](#).

7. Description of Standard Field Services, Exhibit B, Section C 10, provides a detailed policy for dogs. What is the policy on cats?

RCDAS follows best practices and all applicable laws as it relates to accepting animals. The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to no longer impound healthy adult cats. This is an industry best practice. Cats are allowed to legally free roam.

Cats are triaged to determine the best outcome for each situation. Community members are offered support for trap-neuter-return for healthy adult cats that don't require intake. Finders of underage kittens are offered support to participate in the foster program. Cats that are sick or injured are triaged based on need and could be impounded for treatment.

8. How many dogs and cats were spayed per calendar year since 2019?

2019: 13,401

2020: 8,642

2021: 8,217

2022: 9,849

2023: 11,161

2024: 15,597

2025: to date - 8,017

Total: 74,858

9. Plans to have large dog spay/neuter clinics?

With the high number of impounds impacting RCDAS shelters, the department has been primarily focused on ensuring adopted animals are spayed/neutered. Community services are being provided as the department is able. The department recently completed renovations at the Coachella Valley Animal Campus to build a clinic. With this and the recruitment of more spay/neuter surgeons, partnering with other organizations, and more, we are hoping to increase spay/neuter services to the public.

10. Has RCDAS spent any of the funding in Sub-fund 11102 and Sub-fund 11109 since 2020, and how were the funds applied from each? What are the four project codes/purpose assigned to funds that come into Sub-fund 11109?

Sub-fund 11102 - Since 2020 the department has spent \$23,041 on surgical and medical supplies for the spay/neuter mobile units.

The donation funds that go into Sub-fund 11109 include:

a. The Care Fund

Donations to this fund help RCDAS go above and beyond to help our homeless pets. By contributing to the Care Fund, animal lovers can help us improve care for thousands of homeless and abandoned pets and promote their adoption into loving homes by allowing us to use the funds in areas of greatest need.

\$40,792 - For equipment, operational supplies, collars and leashes, educational materials, volunteer recognition, shelter signs.

b. Disaster Relief Fund

This fund assists RCDAS in helping animals when a disaster occurs. Donating to the Disaster Relief Fund helps with the rescue, sheltering and treatment of animals in the event of a disaster. Funds also help train volunteers to provide life-saving tasks for animals rescued during disaster response and recovery and educate the community about disaster preparedness.

\$775 - For disaster supply trailer.

c. Animal Health Fund

This Fund is dedicated to raising support for the treatment of many injured or ill animals each year. The Fund pays for medical care provided by veterinarians in our shelters and for emergency treatment and/or hospitalization in outside institutions. It also covers behavior programs, materials and support. The Fund

additionally covers special care for animals suffering from cruelty or neglect, and for those in our Foster Care Program.

\$100 - Professional services.

d. Pet Zone Fund

Donating to this fund allows us the opportunity to provide pet owners with programs that help them retain their pets and become responsible pet owners. This not only helps keep animals in their loving homes it also prevents animals from coming into the shelter. Programs include but are not limited to pet spay or neuter, education and outreach, community cats, diversion and safety net programs, and other programs dedicated to the human animal bond and supporting pet owners in crisis.

\$62.2 5- Dog food.

11. When does RCDAS plan to go back to reporting performance metrics in place for years, such as a) Live dog release rate, b) Live cat release rate, c) Licenses in unincorporated areas per 1,000 residents, d) Priority 1 call response times, e) annual spay and neuter procedures for cats and dogs?

Currently intake and outcome data are posted on our website [HERE](#). Information about programs and progress on goals can be found on the Creating Positive Change link [HERE](#). A daily report card including live release information can be found on our website homepage [HERE](#). The department is in the process of creating a dashboard to display statistics and create reports to update city partners.

12. How many adopted animals were not spayed or neutered? If any, how many were later brought back by their owners for the procedure?

All adopted animals are spayed or neutered. If they are not altered, they are sent out on foster and get an appointment to return for spay/neuter and to finalize the adoption.

13. Are animals licensed at the time of adoption?

Yes, if old enough to be vaccinated - which is the requirement for licensing. Dogs can be licensed at the age of four months when they are vaccinated for rabies.

14. When animals are brought in, are they tested for Parvo and rabies? [There are reports from volunteers that this is not being done.]

These diseases are only tested for when symptoms are present. Dogs not showing symptoms of parvo can have a false positive result if recently vaccinated. Also, dogs in the early stages of infection can have a false negative test result if they are not yet shedding traceable amounts of the virus. Parvo virus has an incubation period that can range from 2-14 days, where the dog will not show symptoms, but could be infected, but not showing symptoms. Therefore, it is not recommended to test every animal that enters the shelter. Rabies virus can only be tested through samples of brain tissue sent to a state laboratory - this testing cannot be performed on a live animal.

15. Who determines whether an animal is healthy and adoptable, or should be euthanized?

Medical euthanasia decisions are made by the Veterinary Services Team by under the supervision and direction of the department's veterinarians. Animals are reviewed for euthanasia by shelter supervision and management with decades of experience. Final sign off for shelter euthanasia is done at the executive management level.

16. Why doesn't the contract reference compliance with the Hayden Act?

Provisions of the Hayden Act are suspended as an unfunded mandate. The department complies with all provisions which have not been suspended. The department follows all applicable laws.

17. Can photos of all stray animals be posted online? The contract currently states they "may" be posted—can this be made mandatory?

All animals are posted online, excepting special circumstances. There are times it is not feasible to post photos - such as an injured animal under treatment that may be uncomfortable for the average public to view or an animal in protective custody.

18. Is facial recognition technology, such as the program used by Petco, being utilized?

Yes. Petco Love Lost is used for all stray animals entering the shelters.

19. Why are cats no longer being accepted at CVAC? [There are reports from volunteers that this is not occurring.]

The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to no longer impound healthy adult cats. This is an industry best practice. Cats are allowed to legally free roam.

Cats are triaged to determine the best outcome for each situation. Community members are offered support for trap-neuter-return for healthy adult cats that don't require intake. Finders of underage kittens are offered support to participate in the foster program. Cats that are sick or injured are triaged based on need and could be impounded for treatment.

20. Can it be made mandatory that all adopted animals are spayed/neutered, microchipped, and licensed?

This is already done where required. Dogs over four months are required to be vaccinated for rabies and licensed in the state of California. All dogs and cats of age are vaccinated upon exit.

All adopted animals are spayed and neutered. Based on shelter holding capacity, animals may be sent home on foster to return later for a spay/neuter appointment and completion of the adoption process.

Microchipping is a state law and county ordinance. All animals leaving the shelter are microchipped.

21. What happens when an unlicensed animal is picked up and reunited with its owner?

In general, the owner is educated on licensing and is required to license in the moment or within a specified timeframe. Licensing is enforced, along with spay/neuter, and microchipping when needed. People with a stray dog or cat at large are given a 'fix it' ticket to ensure these requirements are done. The department can help with low or no-cost services depending on the situation.

22. What is the amount of money RCDAS receives annually from rendering plants where euthanized dogs and cats are sent?

None. Animals in RCDAS care, that have died or found dead and brought into a shelter, are not sent to a rendering plant; they are buried and RCDAS pays for contracted services for burial.