

ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL AUDIT ACTION PLAN

St. Louis County Animal Care and Control (ACC) division of the Department of Public Health (DPH) recently underwent a third-party audit, regarding the status of shelter operations. The results have indicated multiple areas of improvement and advancement to best practices that will help us provide the best possible care for the animals. DPH is committed to addressing the recommendations of the audit to further the mission of animal welfare in St. Louis County. That is our mission and will continue to be our prioritized focus. The DPH staff at ACC will be supported on multiple levels throughout this process and will be given the tools they need to respond to the results of the audit.

DPH will address major findings:

Operational Functions

- Improved caregiving strategies to prepare animals to be returned to their owners, adopted, or transferred animal to rescue organizations.
- Streamlined improvement of staff time and shelter functionality to allow more time for enrichment activities.
- Executing the following steps to provide staff with additional tools:
 - Hire a contractor, via RFP, to implement training, development, and procedural changes to support the staff.
 - Engage temporary service(s) to perform additional shelter functions such as dog walking, laundry and cleaning to allow additional time for staff development and direct engagement with animals.
 - Pursue the potential of a non-profit partnership, enabling the agency to maintain primary operations, while DPH maintains responsibility for all field services and enforcement of the Saint Louis County Animal Code.
- Addressing the over capacity of the shelter to have a more sanitary, safer environment for both the animals and staff.

Euthanasia Rate

- ACC will prioritize recommendations that decrease the euthanasia rate, particularly in working with rescue partners and improving all marketing and social media for adoptions.
- The shelter euthanasia rate calculation did not meet the national standard and did not include owner returned surrenders that were not a request for euthanasia. This issue was also identified during DPH leadership discussions and has already been changed to reflect the national standard. While this will increase the reported euthanasia rate, it will not actually increase the number of euthanasia cases.

Volunteer Program

- The volunteer program will be transitioned into a fully developed program through a collaborative approach with the volunteers.

In addition to the major findings, DPH has been working to implement changes as identified during the 5-month audit process. The following are examples of specific recommendations that have already been addressed:

- Correcting and clarifying signage directing the Adoption entrance, and the Animal Intake and Lost/Found entrance.
- Defined policy and procedure for the intake of aggressive dogs, including the posting of proper signage to notify individuals of the proper procedures for relinquishment.

DPH has started a website focused on the audit and will continue to provide updates and communication on our progress towards completing audit recommendations