

A Note to Our Community

Dear friends and supporters,

In fall 2025, Flagler Humane Society asked Maddie's Million Pet Challenge, a partnership that includes the University of Florida's Shelter Medicine Program, for an independent review of our operations. This was a pro bono consultation that we requested because we believe outside perspective makes us better.

We are sharing the full report, with the consultant's findings unedited, along with our written responses to each recommendation. Below, we highlight the progress we have made since the consultant's visit.

Our Progress Since the Consultation

The biggest change is how quickly animals now move into homes. Comparing the animals in our care at the time of the consultant's visit with those in our care when we prepared our responses:

Average length of stay	At consultant's visit	At time of our response (2026)
Dogs	81 days	37 days
Cats	52 days	36 days

For animals taken in from January 1 through September 1, 2026, the average length of stay was 17.2 days for dogs and 25.2 days for cats.

Other progress since the visit includes:

- **Faster pathways to homes:** Stray animals are placed on Care Pathway Plans starting on day 3.
- **Support for long-term residents:** Our longest-stay animals get dedicated social media promotions and features to help them find the right home.
- **New community events:** We hosted our first annual Dog Show, connecting more families with FHS and our adoptable animals.
- **TREAT app:** FHS joined TREAT, a free mobile game where players earn food and treats for our shelter dogs.
- **Daily population rounds:** Our Animal Care Manager conducts daily population rounds, and we added weekly rounds with our medical manager.
- **Spay/neuter capacity:** We applied for a grant to host a weekend of high-volume spay/neuter surgeries.

- **Staffing and training:** We hired additional staff with tiered shifts, added another day of public hours until 7pm, cross-trained recent hires, and our staff completed Fear Free training.
- **Volunteers:** We launched volunteer management software on October 1, moved orientation fully online, and opened morning dog walking shifts.
- **Lost pets:** A Lost Pets link is now on our homepage, we added a link to Petco Love Lost, and we purchased microchip scanners for Flagler Beach Police Department patrol vehicles.
- **Kitten care:** We joined the national Kitten College coalition and are planning a program to grow community kitten fostering.

We will continue working through the remaining recommendations and reporting our progress.

Thank You

We are grateful to the Maddie's Million Pet Challenge team for their time and expertise, and to our staff, volunteers, fosters, and supporters who make this progress possible. If you have questions about this report, please contact us through our website, flaglerhumanesociety.org.

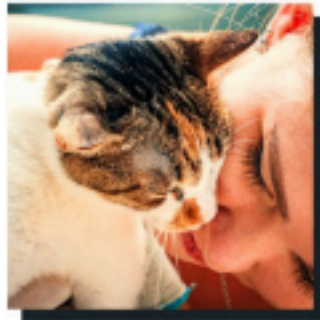
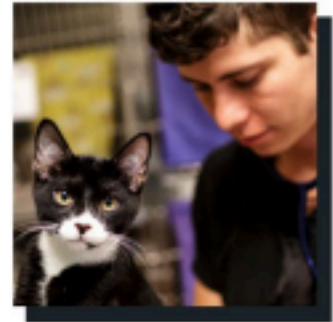
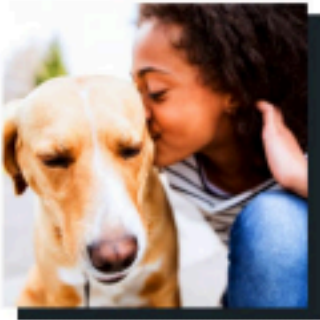
With gratitude,

Amy Wade-Carotenuto

Executive Director, Flagler Humane Society



— MADDIE'S® —
**MILLION PET
CHALLENGE**



October 2025

Operational Consult Flagler Humane Society

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Introduction to Maddie's Million Pet Challenge Process

Maddie's Million Pet Challenge (MMPC) is a partnership between the University of Florida and University of California at Davis' shelter medicine programs, Team Shelter USA and Open Door Veterinary Collective. MMPC awarded the Flagler Humane Society (FHS) a pro bono consult at the request of shelter leadership. Research was completed before the onsite visit that included a review of the Florida State Statute, local ordinances, historical statistical trends, record keeping, written standard operating procedures, website

and social media along with meetings with leaders and staff. During the on-site visit, the MMPC consultant toured the campus, offsite adoption locations and met with individual staff and the leadership team to learn more about the processes in place from intake through to outcome.

The MMPC consultant previously visited FHS in August 2017 to provide an assessment. A detailed report was provided at that time, including many recommendations to enhance lifesaving at FHS within the scope of public and animal safety responsibilities.

This report is prepared for shelter leadership, staff, and the board of directors. All recommendations are based on research and successful programs in Florida and across the country, and they align with the positions of all reputable national animal welfare organizations. Some suggestions are simple policy decisions that can be implemented quickly, while others will require several steps, budget adjustments, or additional actions before they can be put into effect.

In addition to the Maddie's Fund partners, these best practices include the Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) updated *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*, the National Animal Control Association (NACA), the ASPCA, Humane World for Animals, Best Friends and Fear Free Sheltering. Human Animal Support Services (HASS) also published an online playbook with a plethora of information and training opportunities that should also be utilized and can be found here: <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/hass-playbook/> (see Resources). The updated ASV guidelines checklist should also be used to track recommendations and progress: <https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/guidelines/2022-ASV-GL-Checklist.pdf>.

This report will focus on opportunities to improve operational systems; however, many positive attributes must be celebrated first, including but not limited to:

- Motivated leadership and board of directors with a deep desire to continuously improve
- Well-respected reputation in the community serving Flagler County since 1982
- Many caring and dedicated staff and volunteers
- Robust social media presence with ±20,000 Facebook followers
- Open daily with convenient hours to assist the community, open late until 7pm on Mondays and Fridays
- Community outreach programs in place, including regularly held vaccine and microchip clinics
- Subsidized spay/neuter program to assist low-income pet owners



- Community Cat (TNVR) program in place
- Safety net program to help citizens keep their pets by offering resources or finding direct placement options
- Safekeeping program to help pet owners with temporary crisis foster care
- Pet food pantry program to assist residents in need
- Partnership with Florida Leaders in Lifesaving with access to potential grant funding for lifesaving programs
- Leadership serves on the board of the Florida Animal Protection and Advocacy Association and is involved on the state level, promoting laws impacting animal welfare
- Thriving thrift store generating revenue to support FHS' mission
- Partnerships with Petco, PetSmart and PetSupermarket to promote in-store adoptions
- Large outdoor play yards for dogs
- Beautiful campus setting with walking trails for dogs
- Dogs Playing for Life playgroup program offered 4-5 times per week for dogs in shelter

Recommendations can be distilled into several main goals that should guide and prioritize all leadership decisions:

1. Exhaust all options to intake (with the exception of enforcement cases and sick or injured pets)

We already have several programs in place to exhaust options other than intake. We have set it in our budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 to create a full time admissions department dealing solely with Lost and Found Reunification and focus on Pet Retention in their current home whenever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Our current system allows for private telephone conversations regarding surrender, and we have also created a private space off the lobby for in-person conversations when accepting animals for intake. This allows us to obtain more comprehensive information about each animal and the circumstances surrounding the surrender, including animals being brought in as strays.

2. If pets do enter the shelter, provide appropriate space for each, create a one-touch system and plan of action for their shortest length of stay

We already have the data that allows us to project intake volume based on recent trends. This gives us a better understanding of what we can realistically manage from month to month and week to week. However, we cannot fully predict what animals will walk through our doors, and our responsibility to the community is to provide access to appropriate care for animals in need rather than turn them away when safe alternatives are not available. We will continue to work to improve the efficiency of our intake-to-outcome process. We continue to identify opportunities to reduce length of stay while balancing maintaining appropriate standards of care with public and animal safety.

3. Continue providing a pathway for the public to take healthy outdoor cats directly to the clinic for TNVR services in lieu of shelter intake and if healthy outdoor cats do enter the shelter, expedite their sterilization process to avoid increasing LOS

Our staff consistently recommends that healthy cats be returned to their established environment once they have been sterilized if there is evidence they are being fed and have access to shelter. However, the current language in the City of Palm Coast Code presents limitations regarding outdoor cats. Most animal welfare

organizations across the nation also support returning age appropriate, healthy, friendly cats to their outdoor environment when that is in their best interest. We have encountered significant pushback from the City of Palm Coast regarding this approach, which creates an additional challenge in implementing this recommendation.

4. Advocate immediately for the placement of all pets back with their owners, into foster, adoption, or with rescue to address the overcapacity issue. Obvious exceptions are enforcement cases, aggressive dogs or pets who will be euthanized for humane reasons.

We already actively pursue these options whenever they are appropriate and in the best interest of the animal. This includes working to return animals to their homes of origin, identifying foster placements, promoting adoption and seeking rescue placement. We have placed several dogs in breed-specific rescues or contact shelters of origin who may be eligible to return to shortly after intake. We continue to prioritize these pathways whenever possible while also considering the individual animal's safety, behavior, medical needs and overall quality of life.

5. Ensure marketing messages are closely aligned with the ever-changing challenges at the shelter .

We post regularly across multiple platforms and continually adjust our messaging based on current shelter needs. At the same time, we try to avoid constantly sharing the most upsetting circumstances individual animals may be experiencing or using language that makes assumptions or could shame members of the community. Our goal is to communicate the shelter's needs honestly while maintaining a message that encourages community engagement, support and responsible pet ownership.

6. Schedule a follow up Dogs Playing for Life training to provide additional training to new staff and volunteers and to increase confidence and skill levels of existing staff (dogsplayingforlife.com). Grants are often available through Florida Leaders in Lifesaving for municipal shelters to receive Dogs Playing for Life training at no cost. If DPFL cannot come to FHS directly, consider sending staff to scheduled trainings at other shelters.

Rather than immediately scheduling another full seminar, we had mentorships and staff exchanges planned to provide additional hands-on training and experience. Unfortunately, these opportunities were postponed following a natural disaster that left DPFL without a facility. There is also a specific timeframe in which you can receive grant funded seminars, and we are approaching the point where FHS will be eligible to reapply. We intend to continue pursuing these training opportunities as they become available.

7. Visit other shelters with robust playgroup programs such as Jacksonville Humane Society (JHS) and Jacksonville Animal Care & Protective Services (ACPS) to learn from these teams how they have increased their existing playgroup programs and to see large playgroups in action. The goal should be every dog, every day.

FHS leadership attended the Jacksonville Humane Society's Leaders in Lifesaving Conference in April, providing the opportunity to observe and ask questions about their playgroup program. We continue to pursue opportunities to visit and learn from other shelters with established playgroup programs that may be adapted to benefit the program already in place at FHS.

Our program is inspired by the vision of the leadership team to be a resource to the community and their desire to keep pets and people together. We are impressed by the dedication of the shelter staff who care for the animals and their eagerness to incorporate practices to increase animal

health and well-being. We look forward to continuing our collaborative partnership in support of your lifesaving mission.

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Record Keeping, Technology, Statistics and Trends

Record keeping and statistics are essential for every shelter organization. Shelter software acts as the common language for staff communication in real time and allows leaders to create budgets and adjust programs. Statistics help the organization identify needs, measure success, and forecast where change is necessary.

Positives

- Shelter intake has remained stable despite the influx of new residents into the community (population has increased $\pm 14\%$ in the past 3 years)
- FHS has maintained high live release rate for many years and reserves euthanasia for extreme medical cases and large breed aggressive dogs who pose a public safety issue
- Utilizing Pet Point software
- Shelter statistics posted on FHS website for transparency
- There is great potential to continue increasing lifesaving within the existing framework through system efficiencies



Recommendations

- The goal is a DECREASE in these trends:

- Intake of healthy community cats when an appropriate TNVR program is in place

As stated previously, there is ongoing controversy regarding outdoor cats within the City of Palm Coast. While FHS supports appropriate TNVR practices and recognizes the importance of this recommendation, current municipal regulations create limitations on this approach.

- Intake of non-enforcement/dogs at large through Finder Foster/Good Samaritan Foster Care

We have successfully utilized Finder Foster placements for some adult dogs out, however, we evaluate these situations on an individual basis. When the behavior of a large dog is concerning, we do not believe it is appropriate to place that animal with a finder without further assessment. There are also situations involving identification, such as tags or microchips, where we may have concerns about whether a finder will reliably return the animal to its rightful owner.

- Length of stay

We continue to look for ways to reduce length of stay while maintaining appropriate standards for animal welfare and public safety. This year has been very successful in this regard.

- Euthanasia of pets who could have had another pathway

This is always our primary goal. We make every effort to exhaust all options before considering euthanasia.

- The goal is an INCREASE in these trends:

- Return to owner

The addition of our new Admissions Department will devote more energy to proactively finding a pathway to return animals to their original home.

- The number of pets and people helped through proactive programs

While we aren't currently tracking the raw data of these programs, we are very proud of the many animals we have helped to remain in their homes through low-cost or free medical care, providing free food, sterilization, behavior consultations, and private rehoming options.

- Achieve Capacity for Care for both the canine and feline population (to be discussed in greater detail in the Capacity for Care section). The goal should be to have 20% of the kennels empty and available for unexpected arrivals of pets with no other option (such as enforcement cases and sick or injured pets).

Throughout 2026, FHS has maintained 20% or more of our available cages open as often as possible. While we experience larger influxes during certain times of the year, we have continued to maintain a meaningful amount of available space to accommodate unexpected arrivals and emergency situations.

- Minimize Length of Stay (LOS). Even the nicest shelters can be stressful for animals and long stays negatively affect their physical and behavioral health. Every effort should be made to keep each animal's stay as short as possible. A sense of urgency must be instilled in all staff to ensure animals move quickly through the shelter to their final live outcome. In 2024, 45% of dogs entering the shelter came in as strays and had to stay for a 5-day stray hold, aiming to be reunited with their owners. While 38% of stray dogs were reunited in 2024, 62% depended on FHS for new homes or other outcomes. These initial 5 days should be used to develop a plan of action for live outcome if the dog is not reunited with its owner, rather than waiting until the stray hold period ends.

We have seen a significant improvement in length of stay through more effective marketing, improved efficiency with obtaining quality photos and prioritizing spay and neuter during stray periods. Animals are also being made available on the website as quickly as possible. We have developed Care Pathway Plans for “groupings” of animals that we start on Day 3. Examples include Group A: highly adoptable, ready-to-go small dogs, puppies, friendly young cats; Group B: Large-breed or bully-type dogs without identified behavioral or medical issues; Group C: Animals with more complex medical or behavioral needs requiring additional planning and proactive marketing. As this process develops, these pathways will be further individualized based on each animal’s specific needs, barriers to placement and available resources.

- FHS should attempt to work with leadership at the City of Palm Coast to update ordinances to reduce the stray hold for adult dogs without identification from 5 days to 3 days (to live outcome) to match state statute. Adult cats without identification should not have a stray hold to live outcome. While the goal of the stray hold is to increase reunification with owners, this is not happening 62% of the time, and it increases the overall length of stay (LOS). Nationally, cats have a RTO rate of less than 2% which is why the stray hold is unnecessary and does not lead to the intended goal. With historical issues of overcrowding and inadequate staffing levels at FHS, every day in the shelter matters and every attempt should be made to minimize LOS.

City of Palm Coast officials have been presented with data on how reducing the strayhold period could benefit the animals, the shelter, and the city budget. At this time, they declined to proceed with the changes.

- Length of stay should be tracked from the point of intake to the point of permanent placement, separated by dogs, puppies, cats, and kittens for both shelter and foster pets. All pets should have a plan of action initiated upon intake, with a target goal of less than 14 days in the shelter. For pets in the shelter for over 14 days, staff need to identify barriers and brainstorm ways to expedite live outcomes through marketing, fostering, networking, and other means. This recommendation is a target goal to minimize LOS and is not intended to increase euthanasia but to increase the organization’s ability to assist pets in need in a streamlined manner. Euthanasia should continue to be reserved for large breed aggressive dogs that are unsafe for the public and medical cases that are beyond hope.

It should be noted that at the time of the visit, FHS housed 77 dogs in the shelter with an average LOS of 81 days and 11 dogs in a foster or foster-to-adopt status outside of the shelter. In addition,

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there were 146 cats in the shelter and offsite adoption partners with an average LOS of 52 days and 93 in a foster or foster-to-adopt status outside of the shelter.

Our tracking for 2026 has improved significantly. We currently utilize two different reports to evaluate length of stay. For 2026 year-to-date, based on intake dates January 1 through September 1, the average length of stay has decreased to 25.2 days for cats and 17.2 days for dogs, for a combined average of 21.2 days. The current animal inventory reflects the animals presently in our care. At the time of this report, the current inventory average is 36 days for cats and 37 days for dogs, for a combined average of 35.5 days. We continue to use these reports to monitor both overall LOS and the LOS of the current population so that staff can identify barriers and develop appropriate placement strategies.

- All information that changes about a pet in the care of FHS must be updated in PetPoint in

real time, including the location of the pet and its outcome.

PetPoint tracking has become substantially more accurate regarding current stage and outcome. Real-time tracking of movement from one location to another is an area where we are still working to improve. Laptops have been provided to the animal care staff to improve our accuracy.

- Inventory should be done daily. Supervisors can print the kennel inventory and hand out paper copies so staff in each section can confirm the presence of each pet in their area. Any discrepancies are then brought to the attention of the supervisor to follow up and reconcile if the staff is unable to. Many pets listed on the inventory at offsite locations or in foster care have been adopted but not updated in PetPoint. Staff reported that inventory is performed weekly; however, it does not appear that reconciliations are made in the software. The effective management of individuals and the pet population depends on this practice (especially in the event of a fire or natural disaster, it is imperative to know exactly how many animals are in the shelter).

The Animal Care Manager conducts a daily population round, and staff in each department are responsible for checking their area throughout the day and to report any changes or movements. Weekly rounds with the medical manager have also been implemented. We continue to improve the process for promptly updating adoptions from offsite locations. Our Thrift Store now sends photos of the application as they get adopted so it can be processed right away. Petsmart now uses a tablet to process adoptions and we have access to their system to update our system. We are still working with Pet Supermarket and Petco volunteers to provide adoption information right away. A monthly double-check of offsite adoptions is also conducted for reporting and reconciled as needed.

- Work with the medical team to review reports available in PetPoint to ensure that they are easily accessible and can be run to identify which animals need vaccine boosters and other preventive care, medication, tech exams, vet exams, sterilization, etc. Consultant can connect FHS with other PetPoint users to compare the reports they generate daily to ensure care is not missed.

The triage team has implemented the use of PetPoint generated reports to identify daily medical care needs. This is intended to gradually phase out the use of handwritten logs. This change is designed to reduce the possibility of care items being overlooked.

- Update the medical templates in PetPoint to accurately reflect the preventive care provided, such as the types of vaccinations, names of deworming products, and flea treatments administered. During a brief review of animal medical records, it was noted that the system indicates some cats received a FVRCP+FELV vaccine, but staff reported that this vaccine is not actually administered.
 - Another example: A0059752616-Ham Bone (canine). Records state this dog tested negative for a Feline FIV/FELV combo test, received a DHPP, intranasal bordatella, rabies, Advantage Multi and was dewormed with Panacur on 11/7/25, and the exam notes template states that he received a DHLPP (with leptos), Strongid as a dewormer and was heartworm negative. These entries in his medical records contradict each other. Staff also reported that the Lepto vaccine is not carried or given. The accuracy of each pet's medical record is very important, and staff should make every attempt to ensure correct information is recorded.

The medical templates were updated immediately following the consultant's visit. We also created intake bundle items based on age and species to streamline data entry on intake and eliminate the selection of incorrect items mentioned here.

Website, Social Media and Marketing

Social media and marketing is critical to every organization. Utilizing online platforms is the best way to reach people in the community who can help you as adopters, fosters, volunteers, donors, or general supporters. Transparency is key to gaining support and sharing organizational changes helps people understand that you are still available to help, just in a different way.

Positives

- ±20k followers on Facebook (up 12k followers since 2017)
- Small following on Instagram and YouTube with room for expansion
- Website is easy to navigate, contains useful information, and is currently being updated
- Beautiful photographs of pets posted online
- Engaging posts highlighting adoptable pets, celebrating adoptions and local events

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- Many ways to donate online, including an Amazon Wishlist, Humane Hero Program, and monetary donations

Recommendations

- Update the website with key information that will ultimately reduce phone calls and intake and increase live outcomes that include but are not limited to:

Updates have been made to the website to offer more information and be more user friendly. We continue to evaluate the website and add resources that can help the public resolve common concerns without requiring direct assistance.

- Add information about options on supportive self-rehoming for owners needing to find direct placement of their pets

We already provide links to established rehoming sites.

- <https://home-home.org/>
- <rehome.adoptapet.com>
- Consider signing up for home-home.org and recruit a virtual volunteer to manage that platform. Home to Home integrates into the shelter's website and Facebook page to provide rehoming assistance including pets in foster care. There is a nominal monthly fee (±\$60/month) which pays for itself when pets find direct placement instead of entering the shelter. Leadership was connected via email to H2H representative to learn more about the program.

We have already signed up for this partnership and our adoptable animals are listed on the site. We also recommend this to those requesting to surrender their animal(s).

- Lost and found
 - Make the Lost and Found page more prominent on the main page. Currently located as a drop-down field under animal control, which is not where people who have lost their pets may think to look.

The “Lost Pets” link is now on the homepage

- Add information on what to do if you have lost a pet and what to do if you have found a pet
- Add links to local lost and found pages on Facebook and Petco Love Lost
 - Post the Lost & Found Pets guide (which shows most dogs are found less than 1 mile from their home) and other infographics from the HASS toolkit on the website and Facebook page.

We have added the Petco Love Lost link.

<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/blog/5-kits-infographics-tools-lost-pets-home/>.



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Figure 2: Sample infographics available from HASS toolkits

- Include information on the website on living with community cats, the benefits of TNR, what to do if you find kittens and other valuable resources. This could also live on the Lost and Found page. Resources include:
 - <https://www.charlottenc.gov/cmpd/Animal-Care-and-Control/Resources/Community-Cats>
 - Don't Kit-nap Kittens <https://www.azhumane.org/events/dont-kit-nap-kittens/>

Found a Kitten Outside? Here's how to determine what to do

<http://www.kittenlady.org/FPACa>

- Identifying Kittens That Need Help <https://ocgainesville.org/kitten-shelter-diversion>
- How to live with cats in your neighborhood

<https://www.alleycat.org/resources/how-to-live-with-cats-in-your-neighborhood/>

We continue to expand the educational information available to the public regarding TNVR and community cats.

- Sign up for the Kuranda shelter bed program (if not already done) and promote the need for cat towers and dog beds on the website and Facebook page so that supporters can donate directly to FHS <https://shelterbeds.org/shelterRegistration>

We are already enrolled in the Kuranda shelter bed program. We are currently evaluating how we can more effectively utilize these for the cat rooms.

- Sign up and promote other online Wish Lists such as Chewy and Walmart

We currently have a Chewy wishlist and are working to establish a Walmart Wishlist.

- Update donation pages to include all the ways supporters can donate (monetary gifts, Amazon, Chewy, Walmart, Kuranda, etc)..

Links are being updated on the "Ways to Donate" page on the website to go straight to the wishlists

- Don't be afraid to ask the public to foster or adopt sick animals. Create posts on FHS's Facebook page with photos of the actual pets in need to recruit new community fosters instead of relying solely on the small pool of existing fosters.

We already utilize social media to recruit fosters with photos of individual animals needing foster care.

Capacity for Care

Capacity for Care refers to an organization's ability to provide appropriate double-compartment (or larger) housing, ample enrichment, and enough staff to provide daily care. Staff and volunteers work extremely hard to provide the best care possible, but when a shelter is over its housing capacity and does not have enough staff to complete daily tasks, it reduces the staff's ability to provide appropriate care and enrichment, and there remains a high risk of an infectious disease outbreak.

To remain under or within Capacity for Care, there must be:

- Accurate, real-time data management in the computer software system
- Proactive Safety Net

- Community-based foster care, Good Samaritan foster care, foster on deck, etc.
- Minimal barriers to live outcome
- Active advocacy starting on intake and while in foster care
- Intentional enrichment within and out of the kennel for canines and in-cage for felines

Again, operating over the Capacity for Care correlates with the inability of the staff to provide appropriate housing and care, increased risk of infectious disease transmission and outbreaks, higher levels of stress for pets and therefore negative behaviors, Compassion Fatigue for people, and wasted resources. All lifesaving strategies presented will lead to operating within Capacity for Care.

Housing Capacity and Recommendations

All pets in confinement must be provided with enough space to turn around, lie down, and make normal postural movements without the risk of lying in their own urine and feces. Double-sided compartments are the industry standard for both canines and felines since they provide an area for a pet to sleep and eat, and an alternate area to relieve themselves if needed. A double compartment is meant for one pet, a bonded pair or a litter. This is for the comfort of the pets, for easier cleaning/spot cleaning, and to decrease liability for staff and volunteers. The divider door should remain open except during cleaning and possibly during feeding if familiar dogs are sharing a kennel. While FHS offers some double compartment housing for cats and has the ability to retrofit existing cat housing, double-compartment

housing is not an option for dogs due to the original design, where multiple kennels share a common area on the other side of the divider door. However, this should be a top priority in any future renovation plans or new building designs.

Rules of thumb for dog housing designs:

- Indoor/outdoor runs are preferable to indoor/indoor runs

Design for additions or renovations to the facility will take these recommendations into consideration, including the potential use of indoor/outdoor runs for the appropriate areas. We still believe that indoor/indoor is the safest and healthiest option particularly for containment, climate control, and protecting animals from extreme weather and storms. Any future design will need to balance these considerations.

- Dogs staying longer need larger housing

We already prioritize larger housing for larger dogs. Dogs with longer lengths of stay are also moved to larger kennel suites or an office space. We utilize both sides of the runs when available for the smaller kennels.

- Dogs in indoor/outdoor runs need larger housing
- 10' is the shortest reasonable length for a double-compartment kennel, 12' long is ideal
- Wider is better. 4' wide is an absolute minimum for a medium-sized dog, and 5'-6' wide is better for large dogs or dogs staying for longer periods
- Small dogs also need double-compartment housing, although smaller kennels or cages may be okay when they have short lengths of stay

Small dogs are not housed in the general kennel area. They are housed in offices where they can be provided with a quieter environment.



Recommendation for cat housing areas (ideas for future renovation plans):

- Replace all wooden kennels with portalized 30" stainless steel kennels

Future facility renovations and additions would ideally include use of MidMark Raintree Cat Condos and creating colony rooms with outdoor catio access. The move to stainless steel would be appropriate for new intake holding as we watch them for signs of illness, but we'd rather keep the softer type of cages for the adoption area to limit stress created by noise and keep a homey feel for the cats and potential adopters.

- Install cat portals in stainless kennels in ISO (just like dogs, cats staying longer need larger housing)

Since the visit, we have replaced several cages in ISO with larger suites to accommodate longer stays.

- Install cat portals in wooden cages in Interior and Exterior intake rooms (initial design offers portalized kennels on the bottom kennels, but single kennels on top which do not provide enough square footage)

We have explored utilizing portals for the holding cages that do not currently have them and this appears to be feasible. However, implementing portals at this time would reduce the number of individual housing spaces available.

- Discontinue using ferret cages for cats

We have discontinued use of actual ferret cages for cats. These had been previously used only during high intake times for kittens that had an incredibly brief length of stay of approximately 3 days. We continue to utilize monkey cages during the summer time for the kittens. These provide more space and more levels for play and feeling safe on elevated surfaces.

The recommendation for housing is not to exceed 80% of the maximum physical pet spaces through proactive, lifesaving programs, ensuring space for pets with no other options, such as during emergencies or enforcement cases. The idea of 'open admission' should be replaced with 'Triaged Coordinated Intake' as accepting all pets into the shelter overwhelms the system, leads to overcrowding, and the associated negative consequences, such as exposure to infectious disease and behavioral decline. While it is appreciated that the board and staff want to help everyone, FHS has finite space and resources and needs to understand that exceeding capacity prevents staff from providing adequate care. Helping people in other ways outside of the shelter is not turning them away.

We understand the thought behind the Triaged Coordinated Intake model and agree that proactive intake management is important to maintaining capacity and ensuring that animals already in our care receive appropriate housing and attention. However, FHS also serves as a resource for emergency situations that cannot always be anticipated in advance. In the past year, we have received four seizure cases from the City of Palm Coast that required us to accept a large amount of animals with no advance notice. We do not want to move to a system of Coordinated Intake that will leave emergency cases without a safe placement option. Our current approach is to coordinate and plan whenever circumstances allow while maintaining the ability to respond to emergencies, enforcement cases and animals requiring immediate care. We also recognize that asking members of the public to schedule an appointment for relinquishment can create frustration and negative perceptions when they are seeking immediate assistance.

Location	# Kennels	Type	Use
Zones 1-3	56	Single-sided	Used for general housing, bite quarantine, and confiscations
Glass suites	2	Single room	Used for general housing
Subtotal	58		
80% Capacity	46		Recommend staying within 80% capacity (46 dogs) or less to allow for unexpected essential intake

General Housing - Felines

Location	# Kennels	Type	Use
Cat adoptions	10	Double compartment	Built-in wooden kennels used for general housing
Cat adoptions	10	Free Standing	Ferret cages and free-standing kennels are used for general housing; a cat housed in the ferret cages should be given access to both levels
Cat adoption free roam rooms (5)	30	Free Roam	Max capacity, 6 cats per room per ASV guidelines

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Intake (inside room) 3 Double compartment

General housing for new intake

Intake (outside room)	3	Double compartment	General housing for new intake
Subtotal	56		Each double-compartment kennel is appropriate for 1 cat, a bonded pair, or a litter
80% Capacity	45		Recommend staying within 80% capacity (45 cats) or less to allow for unexpected essential intake

Specialized housing and suggested uses - not calculated into general housing capacity

Location	# Kennels	Type	Use
ISO	6	Stainless steel	4 - 30" single sided kennels and 2 double-wide (2x4) kennels
Intake (inside room)	6	Single compartment	Not enough square footage so not included in general housing; if portals are installed, it would add 3 additional housing units to the room
Intake (inside room)	6	Single compartment	Not enough square footage so not included in general housing; if portals are installed, it would add 3 additional housing units to the room

Figure 3: Housing areas with a specific use, such as clinic spaces, surgery holding and staff offices are not included in shelter housing capacity. This chart is meant as a guide based on housing units meeting ASV guidelines (or as close as possible); actual animal inventory numbers may fluctuate depending on a variety of factors including litter size.

Staffing Capacity

In addition to knowing housing capacity, organizations must remain within capacity based on staffing levels as well. Per the ASV Guidelines, trained personnel must be scheduled to meet daily animal care needs and efficiently and effectively accomplish each critical task. Animal care staffing (to provide basic morning sanitation, spot cleaning throughout the day and twice daily feeding only) can be roughly calculated by using the formula: *number of animals in the shelter per day x 15 minutes per animal = number of minutes per day, to be completed within a 3-hour timeframe*. This does not include time spent administering preventive care to new animal intakes, performing general sanitation, including laundry, food preparation, dishes, mopping common areas, assisting public visitors with reclaims and adoptions, playgroups and enrichment, and other required duties.

FHS currently has 8 FT and 6 PT animal care/kennel (ACA) positions and 1 supervisor on staff, all tasked with providing daily care 7 days per week. During the onsite visit, there were an average of 199 animals on site (77 dogs, 116 cats and 6 pocket pets) which requires 17 animal care staff (based on the formula above). On most days, there were only 4 ACA staff members to provide care for dogs and 2 for cats (with one cat staff member only scheduled until 2pm). These staffing levels are well below what is needed to

provide appropriate daily care, which can lead to poor work performance, low morale, and high turnover. When analyzing staffing needs, FHS should consider the following:

- Staffing is a huge issue faced in shelters across the country. These positions are physically and emotionally demanding with low compensation. For these reasons, it is critical now more than ever for shelters to remain within their capacity for care.
- Staff callouts in organizations across the country are a frequent occurrence and often leave stretched teams even more short-staffed.
- Staffing needs may fluctuate depending on the level of care needed for animals (more staff would be needed for example in the event of an outbreak where animals require daily medications and specialized care or a large hoarding case of unsocialized animals).

We have added additional workers in both animal care departments on higher traffic days and periods of increased workloads. We are also utilizing volunteers more extensively to bridge the gaps. We are developing more structured and divided task type shifts to accommodate more cattery attendants throughout the day. We will continue evaluating staffing needs as intake volume and level of care required fluctuates.

Hours and Staffing

Strategic goal

Baseline staffing should be in place to ensure that all alternatives to intake are discussed with owners and Good Samaritans and shelter pets are cared for appropriately for a minimum of 12 hours per day. Staff and volunteers need the tools to provide appropriate care. Hours need to be convenient for the public to access including evenings and weekends.

Current hours open to the public: every day 10am-5pm, Mondays and Fridays open late until 7pm

Animal care hours: the majority of animal care staff work 8am-5pm, with some working 7am-4pm and others 8am-2pm (animals are typically left without care for 15 hours per day)

Positives

- Staff are extremely compassionate, hard-working and dedicated to helping pets
- Volunteer greeter positioned in the lobby helps with the flow of visitors
- Many long-time employees on staff who have dedicated their careers to FHS

Recommendations

- Create an onboarding process for new staff to learn about the organization's history and have them train in all areas of the shelter to better understand the roles of each department and the services offered.

Most days there are staff members at FHS until at least 7pm if not later. Certain animal care and maintenance staff arrive at 7am each morning. When we have animals who have specific needs that require attention after hours, those animals are either fostered with volunteers or staff or a staff member comes to FHS during the night to provide the care needed to the animal(s) in question. With the implementation of online volunteer orientations that include the history of the organization and its impact on the community, all new staff is now required to take the orientation as part of onboarding. Recent hires have been cross trained in additional departments.

- Review the Living Wage Calculator for Flagler County to see how FHS' compensation compares <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/12035>

Our current payscale does not meet the Living Wage benchmark for Flagler County. We have given more merit-based raises this year than in previous years and we continue to include a yearly increase for all

staff as the minimum wage has increased each year.

- If initial cleaning and care of the animals cannot be completed by 10am, delay opening shelter to the public daily so staff have time to clean and feed the animals without interruption (for example, open 11am-6pm or Noon to 7pm).

With the recent changes in scheduling, we are able to accomplish the cleaning of public areas by 10am.

- Shift existing kennel staff hours to remain open later to the public while providing more time for spot cleaning and care of the animals. Animals are currently left alone without care for over 15 hours per day, the goal is to shorten that gap.

We have added an additional day with public hours extending until 7pm day and have hired additional staff with tiered shifts to cover the hours. We are working towards more extended hour days.

- Recruit additional volunteers and/or temporary workers to assist with daily cleaning, dog walking, dog and cat enrichment, adoption ambassadors, greeting visitors and other activities.

We intentionally hired more staff in animal care areas to allow for part time staff to be available to cover shifts when there is a callout. We have utilized additional staff for hoarding cases and outbreaks. We have also increased our use of volunteers for daily care during these times.

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- Allow volunteers to access the shelter in the mornings to help with dog walking and playgroups while staff is cleaning. Staff expressed concerns that volunteers might interrupt the cleaning or cause confusion; however, this approach works well in shelters across the country and volunteers play a crucial role, especially when budgets prevent hiring enough staff.

Our dog walking hours have been increased to start in the morning. We have also extended the opportunity to all volunteers, including teenagers, to participate in the morning cleaning process.

- Consider having all staff including the Animal Services Officers participate in the cleaning of the kennels and/or running playgroups before responding to non-essential calls to expedite care. Customer service staff, for example, could be assigned to cleaning cat housing (in addition to the pocket pets) since there are typically only 2 staff currently assigned to cats. Cats represent a larger portion of the animal inventory and have fewer staff assigned to their care, resulting in them going many more hours without care.

Animal Services Officers do already participate in daily cleaning and care of animals in the office area and when we have livestock on site. In addition, customer service staff have been cross-trained for cattery.

- Empower the Animal Services Officers to complete the medical intake procedures for any animals they bring into the shelter, especially after hours or when the triage team is not available to process the pet immediately

Animal Services Officers do assist in medical intakes when they are able to do so. They ensure vaccines are administered in a timely manner for kittens and pups as they bring them into the building if the medical team is not available. During FHS open hours the medical team completes veterinary intakes, allowing the officers to return to their primary jobs.

- Reserve the weekends for live outcome only (other than essential intake from the animal services officers) as there is an imbalance of animals to staff.

We avoid scheduling intakes during the busy Saturday clinic. However, we find that Sunday is actually a quieter day to perform intake and be able to get them settled. We actually have more staff scheduled in several departments on the weekends. Members of the public often request weekend appointments because of their work schedule..

- As discussed in the previous section regarding staffing capacity, analyze staffing and volunteer work hours to ensure that the basic needs of animals are met each day and that the workload is evenly balanced.

Our new volunteer management software provides the ability to schedule and track shifts and will help us to collect this data and take steps to balance and time care appropriately.

- As time allows and/or during the onboarding process, have staff complete Fear Free training which is offered online, on demand, and at no cost (this should be recommended to volunteers as well and is also free to them). In addition to taking the course, ensure that staff and volunteers are incorporating fear-free methods to the best of their abilities while completing daily tasks. <https://fearfreeshelters.com/>

Staff have completed the Fear Free Training. Part time employees are able to complete these from home and receive hours for completion. The new laptops/tablets provided for the animal care staff will allow new staff to complete it.

- Encourage staff to review the free online training courses offered through Maddie's University covering hot topics such as using social media to help shelter pets shine, foster programs for adult dogs, helping dogs build resilience against shelter stress, the fundamentals of canine communication and safe animal handling <https://university.maddiesfund.org/>

Links to sign up to Maddie's University were sent to all staff last November, with links to specific courses recommended. Once we incorporate scheduled learning times during their shifts, these will be required.

- Due to the nature of the animal welfare industry, many staff are understandably suffering from Compassion Fatigue. Explore options for bringing counselors into the shelter or making them available to staff.

Counselors for this specific need are not readily available in our area, but we have explored online resources.

Field Services

Strategic goal

Focus resources on public and animal safety concerns. Exhaust all options to reunite lost pets in the field in lieu of shelter intake by working together with pet owners and Good Samaritans.

Positives

- Very knowledgeable and community-minded field services staff in place
- Officers mitigate citizen complaints and attempt to reunite lost pets when responding to calls
- Members of NACA and FAPAA
- In-house dispatch on staff to assist callers with resolutions before dispatching an officer



Recommendations

- Recruit the Animal Services Officers to complete the medical intake procedures for any animals they bring into the shelter, especially after hours or when the triage team is not available to process the pet immediately (this recommendation is intentionally repeated)

Animal Services Officers do assist in medical intakes when they are able to do so. They ensure vaccines are administered in a timely manner for kittens and pups as they bring them into the building if the medical team is not available. During FHS open hours the medical team completes veterinary intakes, allowing the officers to return to their primary jobs..

- Acquire a large monitor and headset for the dispatcher to create a more ergonomic work environment. Leadership is commended for their quick action in providing a large computer monitor from the thrift store and having it installed immediately.

This recommendation was completed during the time of the UF visit.

- Recommend that the field services team and key shelter staff attend the upcoming Florida Animal Protection and Advocacy Association (FAPAA, formerly known as FACA) annual education and training conference in Orlando from March 3-5, 2026. This event provides an excellent opportunity to stay current on animal welfare issues and earn the continuing education credits required by the state.

<https://floridaanimalprotection.org/page/Conference>.

Relief staff was provided for AC operations during the FAPAA conference so all officers could attend alongwith our ED who was the president of FAPAA at the time.

- Encourage the field services team to sign up for free trainings and webinars hosted by National Animal Care and Control Association (NACA) to keep up with advancements in the field. The MMPC consultant can connect the FHS team with the local NACA representative (in Pasco County) to discuss training options. NACA will also have representatives attending the FAPAA conference in Orlando in March.

Links to these webinars have been provided to the officers. Several have been completed in accordance with continuing education required by the state. Both officers have also recently attended several webinars from Humane World for Animals.

- Recommend the field services team review Best Friends Animal Society's *Humane Animal Control* manual which should be used as a vital reference to supplement this assessment report. This is a great resource for newly hired officers.

<https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/humane-animal-control-manual>

The Best Friends resources were provided to the officers for use as an additional reference and training resource.

- Recommend the field services team and leadership connect with Bryan Lloyd, Animal Control Operations Manager for the Port St. Lucie Police Department, to discuss the City's impressive reunification program for dogs, which consistently reunites 75-80% of dogs with their owner. The MMPC consultant can facilitate this introduction if needed.

We have not yet reached out to Port St Lucie PD, but we will continue to look to partner with other entities and facilities to learn more about how their operational practices could be adapted here.

Population Management &

Pathway Planning

Strategic goal

Effective population management and pathway planning should result in the shortest length of stay through lifesaving means.

Recommendations

- Leadership should assign a Population Management team of a few key staff. This team should conduct daily rounds and include medical surveillance. Staff may rotate as long as they are trained on the process. *The idea is for the team to do a walk-through daily (cage check) to ensure there is a dynamic plan of action for each pet updated as appropriate that will result in the shortest length of stay.* That means they are taking and/or planning an action step during rounds by visually checking each pet. Key questions to be asked for each pet:

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- Who are you? Are you in the right place?
- How are you physically?
- Are you showing any signs of illness?
- Are you receiving the care that has been prescribed?
- How are you mentally?
- Do you need anything scheduled such as a vet check, spay/neuter, a foster plea or something else?
- How long have you been here? Do we need to do any extra advocacy for you?

This process will ensure that all pets receive the care they need and intervention when appropriate, resulting in the shortest length of stay. Not all issues will be resolved during rounds, which are meant for high-level planning purposes. Follow up to ensure those tasks are completed the following day or at the designated time.

Once the habit of daily Population Management rounds is established, the process should not exceed 30-45 minutes.

[As stated previously, this has been implemented and the team is asking those questions.](#)

- The goal of the daily population management rounds team is to ensure there is an active plan of action for each pet. The population rounds team should meet weekly to discuss a plan of action for pets that need extra help. At key intervals, for example, every 2 weeks, if a pet is still in the shelter there should be advanced advocacy for their placement (such as creating marketing videos, spotlighting pet on the radio show, promoting for foster care, possible shelter swap with rescue partners, etc).

[We have yet fully implemented the Care Pathway Planning recommended here but a general outline has been created and we are working towards sticking to them, increasing visibility when an animal stays longer than expected.](#)

- Minimize Length of Stay (LOS) (some recommendations are intentionally repeated

throughout report)

- Fast-track all highly adoptable animals with exceptional personality/appearance regardless of intake date or medical hold status. Pets that are underage or not medically ready for adoption can be placed in a Foster to Adopt home where they would get more attention.

We prioritize highly adoptable/desirable breeds and ages for spay/neuter. As the Return-to-Owner rate is less than 1% for animals under 6 months of age, our stray period in the City of Flagler Beach, The City of Bunnell and Flagler County is now only 24 hours, so the most adoptable animals can be sterilized and made available the very next day—given that that they are old enough to do so.

- Fast-track pets at intake to their ultimate destination and reduce overall movement of pets within the shelter system

These animals often are selected to go to outreach events and offsite pet stores, if not already on hold.

- Encourage the public to foster healthy dogs without behavior issues (not just the medically needy), especially those who have been in the shelter for more than 2 weeks

We offer short-term foster opportunities for many animals. Animals who have been in our care for over 30 days are eligible for foster or sleepover opportunities with a potential adopter. We have found that people are often more willing to work through behavioral or adjustment issues in the home when they have already committed to adoption. In some cases, placing an animal into a general foster home can make it more difficult to coordinate meetings with prospective adopters and may ultimately extend the animal's time in the system. We use the 30 day mark as a general guideline rather than an absolute requirement, recognizing that animals who remain in the shelter for an extended period may benefit from additional placement options.

- Create and promote a field trip program with the general public

We already offer a Dog's Day Out program for members of the public that have completed our dog walker training program. We regularly post these outings on social media to encourage more engagement in the program. We post videos that volunteers create during field trips. A dog playing in the incoming waves shows off his happy personality.

- Encourage the public to foster or adopt sick animals

We do already encourage the public to foster or adopt animals with medical needs, while we continue to cover their treatment costs through the shelter.

- Reduce adoption fees and offer fun promotions regularly (FHS regularly participates in adoption promotions and should continue this practice)

We regularly have adoption specials with reduced fees and will continue to do so.

- Increase visibility on social media outlets for adoptable pets

We are posting adoptable animals more consistently than ever, with at least one post each day featuring an animal currently in our care.

- It is important that the location of pets in shelter software is accurate and confirmed on a daily basis. Supervisors should print the kennel inventory daily and hand it out to staff assigned to each area. Staff should then confirm the presence of each pet, update locations in PetPoint if needed and give the paper back to the supervisor to reconcile any missing pets. Pets adopted at offsite locations should be processed out of PetPoint once adoption paperwork is received. Follow-ups



with partner locations should be made at least weekly to ensure that applications are not lost and that animals who are already adopted are not left on the inventory.

- Have staff review the capacity score chart to better understand C4C:
<https://www.californiaforallanimals.com/resources/capacity-score-chart/>
- Have key staff watch webinar Counting All Paws: Mastering Daily Population Rounds by Dr. Erin Katribe:
<https://network.bestfriends.org/education/counting-all-paws-mastering-daily-population-rounds>
- Create a decision tree for appropriate euthanasia. While euthanasia is not a common outcome for pets at FHS, it will always be necessary for unsafe, large-breed aggressive dogs and medical cases beyond hope. Some examples to help with the development of these protocols include:
 - At Risk Dog Flow Process by Kristen Hassen
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FZzEBTHKTSLwbEPaVhSXVFbbY4UPPyE-Pu2J E3BqcM/edit>
 - Dr. Ian Dunbar's dog bite scale
<https://apdt.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ian-dunbar-dog-bite-scale.pdf>

We utilize multiple decision making tools when evaluating euthanasia decisions, particularly in cases involving significant behavioral concerns or quality-of-life considerations. For high risk behavior or incidents involving actual bites, we have relied upon a decision making chart developed by Dr. Sheila Segurson, as well as a quality of life scale and calendar to help evaluate the individual circumstances of each animal. We have now incorporated information from the At-Risk Flow Process and have created a mock decision making tree for internal use. The decision-making process considers the totality of the available information, including the severity and nature of the behavior or medical concern, patterns of behavior, response to intervention, quality of life, safety considerations and the feasibility of continued management. These criteria are considered within an individualized assessment rather than an automatic determination based on one document.

For behavioral euthanasia, we do maintain specific circumstances in which the level of risk and inability to safely manage the animal may support that outcome. These include:

- severe (level 4 or 5) bite history to people or animals (2 or more deep punctures, sustained attack with multiple bites in one incident, biting down and holding, shaking, tearing or ripping)
- offensive/predatory aggression towards people, children or other animals often paired with escaping behavior to get to the target of aggression
- resource guarding to the point of leaving the object or area of resource to move towards someone entering the nearby space, with little or no progress in behavior modification plans
- severely injuring or killing another animal, often paired with unintermittible drive to seek out the animals even when a person is present attempting to stop them
- unpredictable aggression with no warnings (no clear pattern as to the underlying cause)
- poor bite inhibition causing injury to humans during handling or play with very little or no progress with behavior modification plans
- other factors making it difficult or impossible to handle the animal safely in the kennel environment, with very little or no progress in behavior modification plans

Admissions and Animal Intake

Protocols

Strategic Goal

Provide basic preventive care for each pet at the point of intake and create an action plan that leads to the shortest length of stay.

Positives

- Staff attempts to provide resources and helpful tips to owners needing to rehome their pets
- Triage staff provide the initial preventive healthcare protocols on intake, including vaccinations, dewormer, flea prevention, and heartworm test

Recommendations

- Recruit the Animal Services Officers to complete the medical intake procedures for any animals they bring into the shelter, especially after hours or when the triage team is not available to process the pet immediately (this recommendation is intentionally repeated)

Animal Services Officers do assist in medical intakes when able, however, we had pushback from the veterinarian at the time on this point, as they have a full, capable medical team. If they are unable to restrain an unruly or aggressive animal, the animal services officers are called in to help, as they have the most experience with this type of animal.

- Review intake protocols shared by the UF shelter medicine team and consider deworming all adult dogs and cats with Pyrantel on intake and repeat in 2 weeks. Puppies, kittens and nursing moms should receive both Pyrantel and Ponazuril on intake and repeat in 2 weeks. Reserve Panacur for dogs as needed, as this dewormer requires a 3-5 day treatment, which increases staff workload.

We have updated our intake protocols to change the dewormer used for cats to Pyrantel.

- Update medical intake templates in PetPoint to reflect the preventive care given (correct the types of vaccinations, dewormer and other preventive care administered as previously discussed on page 17). Current individual entries contradict the information provided in the exam template.

Templates were updated accordingly immediately following the change to ensure that the documented preventative care more accurately reflects the care being provided.

- When photographing cats at intake, train staff to avoid holding or restraining them around the neck, as this can give the appearance that the cat is being choked and is not flattering.

The quality of photographs taken of cats on intake has improved significantly. We have assigned cattery staff to get more flattering photos up on the site sooner.



- Encourage customer service staff to have the same conversation with finders that is happening with owners needing to rehome their pets. Convert finders into fosters and ask if they can hold the pet through the stray hold.

We have counseled customer service staff to have these conversations with finders. In our upcoming implementation of the separate admissions department, these will be done in a private room with a counselor specialized in this training. We have shied away from fostering adult animals with unknown histories and have been burned before with finders unwilling to return the animal to the owner. In other cases the finder has returned the pet privately without getting their information so we could speak to the owner about additional resources such as spay/neuter and microchipping services.

- Create a formal kitten diversion program to assist kitten finders instead of shelter intake. Neonatal kittens should not be removed from the environment unless the finder absolutely knows the mother cat has died or the kittens are sick or injured.

We already attempt to divert neonatal and young kittens from shelter intake whenever it is appropriate to do so. However, many members of the public feel unprepared when asked to temporarily care for kittens or return them to the location where they were found while monitoring for their mother. The Animal Care has attended a Maddie's University course focused on the development of a Kitten College through our shelter. We are now part of the national coalition of Kitten Colleges and are already planning a roll out of a program to engage our community in kitten fostering. We continue to encounter significant resistance when we ask the public to return neonatal kittens to where they found them and wait for the mother. Many times we will accept the kittens and offer them a trap to safely contain the mother. We recognize that continued public education and preparation will be important to increasing acceptance of these diversion strategies.

- Include information on the website to educate the public about what to do if they find kittens. (Intentionally repeated)

This information is already available on our website, has been posted on our FB page, discussed on our "Speaking of Animals" podcast and is also posted in the shelter lobby.

Resources include:

- Don't Kit-nap Kittens

<https://www.azhumane.org/events/dont-kit-nap-kittens/>

- Found a Kitten Outside? Here's how to determine what to do

<http://www.kittenlady.org/FPACa>

- Identifying Kittens That Need Help

<https://ocgainesville.org/kitten-shelter-diversion>

- Have key staff download and review the Managed Intake or Admissions

Training Playbook:

<https://network.bestfriends.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Managed%20Intake%20Admissions%20Training%20Playbook%208.17.2022.pdf>

- Have key staff download and review Cat Intake and Pathway Planning document created by HASS

<https://resources.humananimalsupportservices.org/hubfs/Cat%20Intake%20and%20Pathway%20Planning.docx.pdf?hsLang=en>

- Review references regarding managed coordinated intake:

- Position statement by the National Animal Control Association:

<https://www.nacanet.org/naca-guideline-on-appointment-based-pet-intake-into-shelters/>

- Recommendation by Best Friends Animal Society:

<https://network.bestfriends.org/education/manuals-handbooks-playbooks/managed-intake-or-admissions-training-playbook>

- Recently published article by Dr. Kate Hurley; [The Evolving Role of Triage and Appointment-Based Admission to Improve Service, Care and Outcomes in](#)

We will continue incorporating the recommended managed-intake and admissions resources into our development of the new Admissions Department and associated intake procedures. These resources will help inform the structure of our intake conversations, alternatives to shelter intake and pathway planning. At the same time, our intake model must continue to account for emergency situations and the shelter's role as a community resource.

Canine Housing, Husbandry and Enrichment

Strategic Goal

Any time the shelter is over capacity as it is now, increased efforts should be made to move animals quickly to temporary foster homes, transfer partners or through adoption.

Positives

- Informative and attractive bios hung on each kennel
- Kuranda beds, blankets and toys provided in most adoption kennels
- Volunteer dog walking program in place with access to walking paths
- Playgroups offered 5 days per week with group trainings on Wednesday with a local trainer
- Dogs Playing for Life previously provided playgroup training for staff and volunteers in 2024

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- Treats and Kongs are sometimes provided

Recommendations

- Discontinue housing dogs and cats together in the conference room at the same time.
According to ASV Guidelines, the shelter must provide for proper separation of animals by species, predator/prey status, health status, and behavior. Housing different species together can lead to increased fear, anxiety and stress as well as pose a danger to the safety and welfare of some pets.

This practice occurred only once in a temporary space shortage associated with the large-scale hoarding case of cats from Palm Coast. The practice was discontinued even before the consultant's visit and has not been repeated.

- Consider signing up with Adopt a Pet Shelter Plus feeding program which offers Pedigree dog food at deep discounts and includes sample bags for adopters. The MMPC consultant to connect leadership with program representative.

<https://shelterplus.adoptapet.com/>

We are signed up for this program, however, have not yet used it because of its exclusivity clause and large amounts of high quality pet food that is continually donated by our local pet stores and more.

- Sign up for Kuranda shelter bed donation program (if not already done), choose the size, style and colors preferred, and advertise the link on website and social media platforms

so the public can purchase beds on behalf of FHS.

<https://shelterbeds.org/shelterRegistration>

- Schedule follow up Dogs Playing for Life training (when available) to provide additional training to new staff and volunteers to increase confidence and skill levels (dogsplayingforlife.com). Grants are available through Florida Leaders in Lifesaving for municipal shelters to receive Dogs Playing for Life training at no cost. DPFL often provides follow-up visits to shelters that have implemented the program to help with advanced training and a refresher course for staff and volunteers. This recommendation is intentionally repeated from page 4.

We received the Willan Fund grant for DPFL onsite training in 2024. We recently attempted to reapply but found that the grant is now limited to only Mentorships. We do qualify for this but it only provides for one staff member at a time at JHS once per year. We are instead having new staff training with DPFL trained FHS staff and providing the links for the seminar on YouTube with access to their Learning Library.

- Create an Enrichment Coordinator position and/or enrichment team to provide daily playgroups and in-kennel enrichment for the dogs. The ultimate goal should be that every dog receives enrichment every day. It is recommended to send key staff and volunteers to visit neighboring shelters with robust playgroup programs, such as the Jacksonville Humane Society and Jacksonville Animal Care & Protective Services to exchange ideas. MMPC consultants can provide recommendations for many other Florida municipal shelters with excellent playgroup programs.

We have not yet established this as a full time position, though this remains a long-term goal. We currently have specific staff designated to provide enrichment through playgroup 5 days per week. All staff is responsible for in-kennel enrichment, as well as utilizing volunteers to fill the gaps for those that are staying longer or struggling more than others.

- Consider using martingale collars for all dogs while in the shelter. This will make it easier for staff and volunteers to walk dogs and escort them to the yards for playgroup. The following link features a collar that is popular among shelter staff, affordable, and equipped with a clip/lock, making it easier to fit on dogs—especially for fearful dogs that dislike having a collar put on and taken off multiple times while adjusting the fit.

<https://www.maxandneo.com/collections/bulk-collars-and-leashes>

We already use martingales on all dogs upon shelter intake and have been using this practice for at least two years prior to the UF visit.

- Provide puzzle feeders or lick mats for single-housed dogs as a means of enrichment (do not use when dogs are doubled up as this may lead to fighting).

We use these tools each day for specified dogs marked for extra enrichment. These typically include dogs that have remained at the shelter longer or those who are experiencing greater difficulty adjusting to the shelter environment. Our goal is to provide this type of enrichment to every dog every day. At present, however, available supplies and staffing limit our ability to do so consistently.

- Provide appropriate toys to all puppies and dogs. Puppies for example need chew toys. Chewing allows puppies to ease teething pain, and it alleviates boredom.

We already provide appropriate toys to every dog every day, with special consideration given to the developmental and chewing needs of puppies.

- Provide Kongs to single-housed dogs (these can be frozen or stuffed). Sign up with Kong shelter donation program if not already enrolled

<https://www.kongcompany.com/shelter-registration>

Stuffed and or frozen kongs are already provided to many dogs each day.

- Contact Benebone to inquire about their donation program and add Benebone products to Amazon Wish List for public supporters to donate <https://www.benebone.com/contact/>

We received a large donation of Benebones from the company's display at the Daytona International Speedway during Speedweeks. The donation was so substantial that we have not yet had to open all the boxes! For those that enjoy these or super chewers needing the outlet, we provide new Benebones to adopters to take home.

- Implement a treat cup program so staff, volunteers, and visitors can give dogs a treat when they walk by. This is a great way to encourage positive interaction and create a pleasant experience for dogs when people pass their kennels. Alternatively, small treat pails could be handed out to visitors, allowing them to interact positively with the dogs as they walk through the kennel,

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making it a happy experience for both people and pets. Tin treat pails can be purchased inexpensively at Dollar Tree. Treats should be large enough to give to the dogs comfortably, without fingers getting in the way (avoid using dog kibble as it is too small).

We currently have a treat-bag program where treat bags are assembled and placed on the cart at the entrance to the kennel area. Signage encourages visitors to reward calm behavior. We discontinued the treat buckets attached to the kennels years ago because moisture from daily cleaning created conditions that encouraged unsanitary conditions. The current system allows for positive interactions while providing a more sanitary and manageable approach.

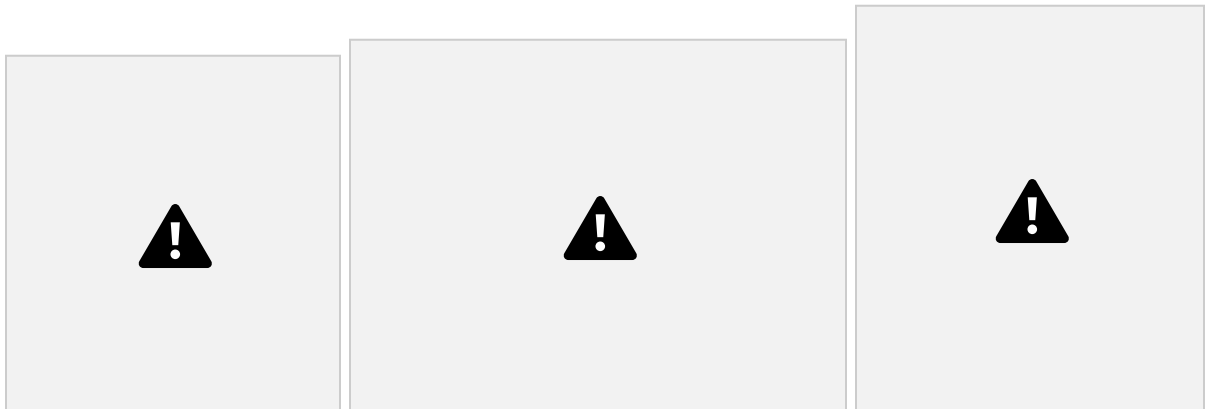


Figure 4: Sample treat cup options

- Ensure safety toolkits are easily accessible throughout the shelter for staff and volunteers. Safety tools such as a break stick, Pet Corrector (canned air that makes a hissing sound), and some type of barrier, like a pig sorting panel, that can be used to separate dogs safely, should be on hand to break up dog fights in both kennels and play yards. Staff should also have leashes readily available to remove a dog from the area when needed. Staff reported that some of these items are available on-site and are encouraged to check them regularly to ensure they are accessible as they can often be misplaced or go missing.

We already maintain emergency buckets in each kennel area, as well as in the outdoor play yards. We also have emergency leashes on each kennel to be used for evacuation purposes. We have hooks for extra leashes in each kennel area as well.

- Create a dog field trip program to allow the general public to take a dog out for an adventure or sleepover. Consultant to share protocols and handouts from City of Jacksonville Animal Care & Protective Services (ACPS) and Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department Animal Services (CMPD), which both have robust programs that have led to increased adoptions and decreased overall LOS for dogs.

We do already offer this program to registered dog walker volunteers. Participants are provided with a preapproved list of eligible dogs, along with supplies needed for the outing.

Feline Housing, Husbandry and Enrichment

Positives

- Many cat kennels have portals providing double-compartment housing
- Many cats are provided with soft bedding and toys in the kennel
- Dedicated volunteer team assisting with transport and daily care of cats at offsite adoption locations

Recommendations

- Discontinue housing dogs and cats together in the conference room at the same time. According to ASV Guidelines, the shelter must provide for proper separation of animals by species,

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predator/prey status, health status, and behavior. Housing different species together can lead to increased fear, anxiety and stress as well as pose a danger to the safety and welfare of some pets.

This practice occurred only once in a temporary space shortage associated with the large-scale hoarding case of cats from Palm Coast. The practice was discontinued even before the consultant's visit and has not been repeated.

- Discard any carpeted cat trees used in cat housing areas and replace with Kuranda towers or similar products that can be disinfected. Sign up for the Kuranda shelter bed program (if not already done) and promote the need for cat towers and dog beds on the website and Facebook page so that supporters can donate directly to FHS

<https://shelterbeds.org/shelterRegistration>

We continue to utilize donated cat trees for short-term use and discard them when groups of cats are adopted. We have also purchased cat towers with easier cleanable surfaces. We have a steam cleaner to help with disinfection of any scratching posts and all surfaces when needed.

- Consider signing up with Adopt a Pet Shelter Plus feeding program which offers Iams cat food at deep discounts and includes sample bags for adopters. The MMPC consultant to connect leadership with program representative. <https://shelterplus.adoptapet.com/> • Fast-track all healthy intake (not including TNVR candidates) to the adoption rooms, even while on stray hold, since the RTO rate for cats is so low. All cats should be available for

foster and adoption, including cats awaiting spay/neuter.

We have signed up for this program but haven't utilized it due to its exclusivity clause and the fact that we have had so much high quality food donated over the past year that we have challenges storing so much donated product. This makes it difficult to justify purchasing additional food while our existing donated supply is sufficient. .

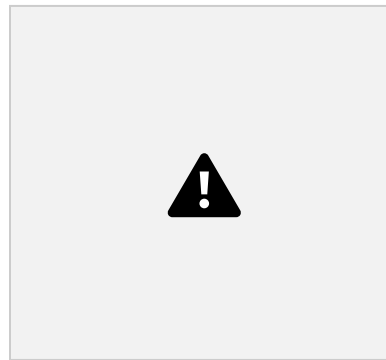
- Create attractive cage cards and bios, including pictures, to hang on kennels and use in offsite adoption stores. Most cage cards for cats lack pictures or useful information for adopters.

We have implemented this in the cattery area with the help of our marketing department!

- Purchase 9x6 ticket holders from U-line and hang cage cards directly on kennels in intake and adoption rooms instead of hanging on a bulletin board or on the sides of the kennels. <https://www.uline.com/Product/Detail/S-5511BLU/Vinyl-Envelopes-Job-Ticket-Holders/Job-Ticket-Holders-9-x-6-Neon-Blue>. These ticket holders are durable and can be used on kennels throughout the shelter (very similar to what is used in the dog kennel, only smaller).

We already use these ticket holders in the cattery adoption area.

- Work with the facilities team or handy supporters to install portal openings in the single wooden kennels in the intake rooms (interior and exterior) to allow one cat to have double compartments.



We have explored this and have someone willing to complete the modifications. The primary consideration is determining how to reconfigure the available space to compensate for the housing capacity that would be lost by adding the portals. We will continue evaluating this as part of future modifications to the intake areas.

- Purchase clamp-on coop cups for food/water in cages to maximize floor space and minimize having water bowls tipped. Placement on the cage door will also allow staff the ability to easily notice when refills are needed and can refill using a watering can without opening the cage door. These items can be added to the Amazon Wish List or purchased directly <https://www.amazon.com/Mimorou-Pieces-Removable-Stainless-Hanging/dp/B0BCK7WMZV/>

We use these on specific kennels, however their use can be difficult on the cages that have the wire on the inside cage doors.

- Provide hiding spaces and options for cats. For shy cats who are scared or nursing moms who may be stressed, placing a pillowcase over one side of the kennel can help lower stress.

We do already utilize pillow cases for this reason. They are also used when appropriate for cats being treated for upper respiratory symptoms.

- Ask volunteers to assist in making a variety of cat accessory projects <https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/diy-housing-accessories/projects-for-feline-housing/>
- Provide a hide box or feral den for fractious cats. This is much easier in portalized cages so there is separation from the litter box and the cat is not cramped in square footage that is too small.

We have explored ordering cardboard hidey boxes from ACES. These could be discarded when necessary or sent home with the cat at adoption. This option may prove to be more fiscally achievable than the feral dens that run \$90-120 per box. We have 2 of these that are donated that we use when we must house a feral cat prior to sterilization and we recently purchased more. .

- Provide cats with full-size litter boxes that are appropriate for their size. There will be room in the kennel when each cat is able to have a portalized double compartment cage (litter box on one side, food/water and soft bedding on the other). Ask the public to donate sturdy cardboard trays to be used as disposable litter boxes.

We utilize cardboard trays when appropriate. This recommendation is contradictory as the cardboard trays are much smaller than the medium sized litter pans they recommend we replace with larger ones. We primarily use the smaller pans in those single housing cages intended for temporary stays, where the typical length of stay is approximately 1-5 days.

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- Advise staff to discontinue overfilling litter boxes, especially when using clay litter that is meant to be discarded daily.

Specific measurement cups/scoops for litter have been provided along with instructions to use the appropriate amount.

- Discard plastic litter boxes as they become scratched or broken since they can no longer be disinfected. Consider switching to disposable litter boxes to reduce staff cleaning time and to minimize the risk of spreading infectious disease.

We have transitioned to disposable litterboxes for kittens who are the appropriate size to use for these. We have also purchased stainless steel litter pans and scoops when possible for easier disinfection.

- Work with local partners such as Tractor Supply, Walmart, Petco and other pet supply stores to have them save the cardboard trays that canned food comes in and have a volunteer or staff member pick up



We do receive cardboard trays regularly from PetSmart and we pick them up ourselves from other stores

- Ask supporters who may work at grocery, convenience or liquor stores to save these boxes and ask volunteers to pick up and drop off at shelter

We regularly receive donations of cardboard trays from the public.

- All cats should be consistently provided with in-cage enrichment such as toys and scratchers.

Each cat is provided with at least two types of toys in their cage. Kittens receive a larger variety.

- Ask supporters to donate cat toys such as ping pong balls which are both affordable and can be disinfected in between cats

- Other types of cat toys which cannot be disinfected can also be provided to the cats and simply sent home with them at time of adoption
- Ask supporters to purchase cat scratchers to provide entertainment for cats in cages
- Imperial Cat has a donation program where the public can purchase a box of 'scratch n bits' which are leftover cardboard pieces from their larger scratchers and have them shipped directly to the shelter. <https://imperialcat.com/adoptacat.php>

We have explored purchasing these from Imperial Cat to hang in the cat kennels. The cost associated with this particular program is being evaluated. We have large amounts of donated toys that are used daily.

- Purchase a couple of neighborhood cat dens so the staff is not forced to 'handle' fractious cats which is dangerous for all involved. The den should be positioned sideways in the cage rather than facing forward (see photo below). In addition to safety, the main purpose of the den is to provide a space to hide where the cat does not feel exposed. These can also be used to safely transport a cat from a humane trap to a cage or to transport to surgery for TNVR. When making purchases, choose the option with the handle that lies flat instead of the hard plastic handle, as this 'den' doubles as an elevated perch as well. Dens can be purchased at:

https://www.livetrapp.com/index.php?dispatch=products.view&product_id=3

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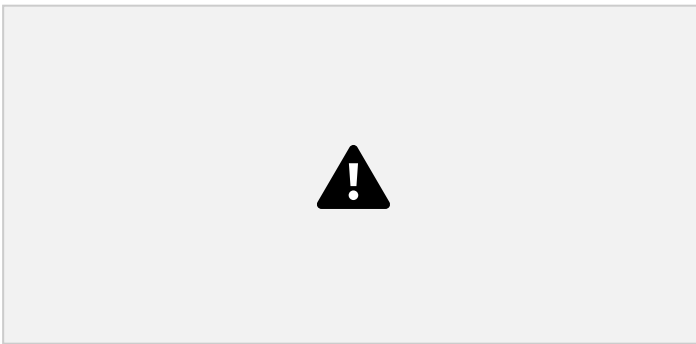


Figure 5: This picture depicts the appropriate set up for a cat in a double-sided kennel with a towel lined den, food and water on one side and the litter box in the other compartment.

We currently have two neighborhood cat dens that were donated and have purchased more..

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- Healthy outdoor cats entering the shelter as "strays" should be sterilized and returned to their home location with a 3-day turnaround process or as quickly as spay/neuter can be arranged. Prolonging their stay in the shelter is stressful and can lead to increased risk of illness.

We are strong advocates for returning cats that appear healthy and well-fed and the area is not known for traffic or predators. We support sterilization and return as quickly as services can be arranged. However, we continue to receive pushback from the City of Palm Coast due to the language of its current ordinances.

Small Mammal Housing, Husbandry and Enrichment

Recommendations

- Discontinue housing small mammals in the lobby where they are exposed to barking dogs.

We did begin housing small mammals in the conference room, however, it extended our normal length of stay as there was no visibility to adopters.

- Review the recently published ASV Guidelines for Humane Rabbit Housing in Animal Shelters <https://jsmcah.org/index.php/jasv/article/view/149/321>
- Consider moving small mammal housing in the conference/training room once that room is no longer housing cats and set up exercise pens or overside cat kennels to provide mini apartments/suites for rabbits and guinea pigs. The existing magnum kennels used for cats would also be a great option once the middle door is closed to provide two large areas.

We did use the larger runs for rabbits for a while in the conference room, but it extended our normal length of stay for rabbits as there was no visibility to adopters.

- Consider using the banks of portalized kennels currently used in the cat adoption hallway for rabbit housing so that rabbits have double-sided compartments (litter box on one side and food/water/bedding on the other).

We have moved one bank of cat adoption cages and converted it for use of rabbits and guinea pigs.

- Discontinue using the glass kennel enclosure with the fiberboard bottom that is no longer able to be disinfected (the material has lost its protective coating and is now soaked in urine). If flooring can be replaced, consider using for guinea pigs and not rabbits as it does not provide enough space.

We discontinued the use of the glass kennel enclosures for rabbits and now only use the one we had resealed for guinea pigs.

- Provide full sized litter boxes for rabbits, fill half with non-scented recycled paper pellet litter (such as Yesterday's News or other generic brand) and fill the other half with timothy hay for them to eat. More information can be found at <https://rabbit.org/care/litter-training/#litter>

We have moved to full sized litter boxes for rabbits.

- Ensure rabbits have access to fresh water daily and a balanced diet including fresh veggies

We already provide this for all rabbits and other "pocket pets."

- Reach out to local rabbit rescues to recruit volunteers to help with the daily care and exercise needs of the rabbits

We don't currently have a rabbit rescue in the area. However, we utilize exercise pens and have the customer service staff help to give them outdoor time and exercise under supervision when able to do so.

- Partner with local PetSmart to host in-store rabbit adoptions (this is allowed per the PetSmart Charities team). Rabbits must be vaccinated with the RHDV2 vaccine and be provided with a cage and supplies to stay in the store.

Our current veterinarian was not receptive to administering the vaccine for rabbits, because he is not an exotic-animal veterinarian. We have explored the use of the vaccine with another veterinarian to be able to utilize this. When speaking with PetSmart at the time, there was also a concern about another rabbit borne virus that could require a 30 day holding period prior to being placed there for adoption and we felt that wasn't in the best interest of the rabbits. If they end up staying that long, then they would be eligible.

- Partner with local libraries to host a rabbit for their children's reading program where libraries act as a foster to the rabbit and provide care and enrichment until they are adopted.

Our current partnership with the library hosts dogs and we have intentionally avoided having dogs and rabbits participate at the same time. However, the library may be willing to explore additional times and dates for rabbits that are child-friendly.

- Partner with elementary school teachers to foster/adopt small mammals such as rabbits and guinea pigs as a classroom pet or 4H learning projects.

We have successfully placed several small mammals to elementary school teachers over the years, some recently too.



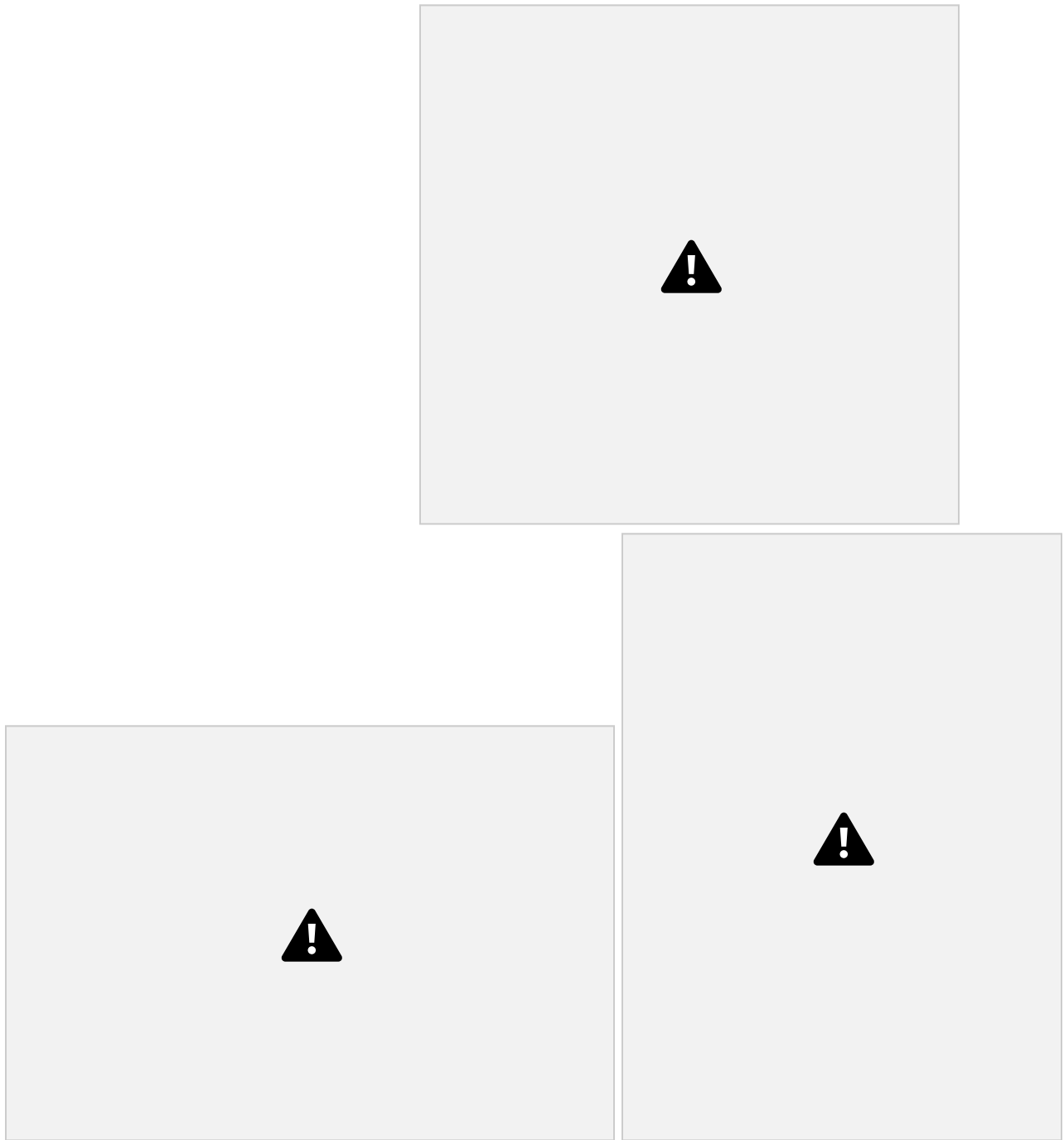


Figure 6: Options for rabbit and guinea pig housing using exercise pens and cat housing options at SPCA Tampa Bay, Humane Society Tampa Bay and Humane Society Pinellas



Medical Care, Disease Control, Surgical Programs and Community Outreach Strategic Goal

Ensure all processes are in place to minimize the spread of common infectious diseases. Besides alternatives to intake, the best way to do that is to vaccinate all pets on intake, sanitize effectively, and place pets as quickly as possible. Medical issues must be addressed without delay.

Positives

- Veterinary coverage for surgery and shelter medicine available 5-6 days a week with 1 full-time and 2 part-time per diem veterinarians
- Medical manager and 6 veterinary medical technicians on staff handling surgery assistance, admissions triage, and shelter medicine treatments
- Templates used in PetPoint to record routine spay/neuter procedures
- Medical staff oversees inmate training program for dogs
- TNR services offered on Tuesdays
- Wellness clinic appointments available to the public
- Vaccine clinics offered most Saturdays
- Subsidized sterilization program in place for low-income pet owners

Recommendations

- Consider allowing an MMPC HVSN consultant to assist with follow-up evaluation and training of the medical staff, with an emphasis on veterinary technicians and assistants, increasing efficiency and surgical flow. FHS is fortunate to have a large number of veterinary technicians/assistants on staff; however, the observed surgery flow revealed that there are often lags in between surgeries. *This assistance is included in the MMPC pro bono consultation awarded to FHS and is offered at no charge.* The MMPC consultant will make the introduction to the FHS leadership to schedule a visit.

This consultation has been completed when Meredith Hippert spent a week at FHS. Then our medical team traveled to Jacksonville to observe the expertise of the team at EveryPet (Formerly First Coast No More Homeless Pets)

- Increase daily surgical capacity to proactively sterilize pets on a pathway for adoption and TNVR. A target goal of 35 per day should be established and can easily be

accomplished with the skilled staff in place. During the consult visit, the surgical team performed very few procedures while many animals wait in the shelter and foster care for surgery on their pathway to adoption, and TNR services are limited to 6 on Tuesdays.

*According to the ASPCA® Spay/Neuter Alliance, 1 surgeon with 3 support staff should be able to perform 30-35 surgeries in a 5-hour surgical period. **Note that to achieve this, the surgical team's entire focus must be on surgery. Surgical team members must not be interrupted for non emergency concerns.** If this is accomplished, FHS could readily handle more TNVR/RTF cats. With 260 surgery days (52 weeks in a year X 5 days/week), performing an average of 30 sterilizations per surgery day will result in 7,800 surgeries/year. Even allowing for vacations/sick days/holidays, FHS should be able to greatly increase its surgical capacity.*

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- The goal should be for all pets on an adoption or other live outcome path to be sterilized and ready to go as soon as they are off their stray hold and old enough for surgery.

This is always the goal and almost always achieved immediately following the end of the stray period.

- Continue reviewing surgery reports to monitor how many are getting done daily versus how many are awaiting surgery and adjust the medical team and surgery goals accordingly. This is critical as surgery capacity is currently the limiting factor to lifesaving (this recommendation is intentionally duplicated as it touches various departments). Leadership reported that an agreement is in place with the lead veterinarian for 24 surgeries per surgical day (6 female dogs, 6 male dogs, 6 female cats, 6 male cats). However, a cursory review of the surgical schedule showed that this goal is not being achieved.

Reviews are completed weekly to ensure we are meeting these goals and the needs of the shelter. For weeks when schedules are light, we have supplemented with public owned animals to meet the needs of the community as well. .

- Due to the current veterinarian shortage and the inability of many organizations to hire a full-time shelter medicine veterinarian, recruit additional per diem vets to help FHS maximize its veterinary coverage and surgical capacity. Consider partnering with other organizations, such as Slomba Shelter Solutions, to establish pop-up clinics on days when the surgery suite is not in use to meet the surgical demand and to remove current barriers to surgery.

For times, like the summer in the height of kitten season, we recruited other outside veterinarians to come in for surgery only and ensure we were meeting the shelter's demand for spay/neuter and other speciality surgeries needed prior to adoption. We have applied for a grant to have the Slomba Shelter Solutions team come to the shelter for a weekend of high volume spay neuter surgeries. If the grant is received we will publicize and target the lower income geographical areas with the highest need. The goal is also for our team to observe and assist, which may help our team's efficiency moving forward

- Recommend the medical team utilize the services of Dr. Cynda Crawford DVM, PhD of the Shelter Medicine Program/College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Florida to discuss a variety of shelter medicine topics that may come up, including but not limited to sanitation, disease prevention, and shelter medicine protocols, etc.

This resource has been reviewed in the creation of our protocols.

- Discontinue requiring owned pets to undergo a separate pre-op physical exam before booking the surgical appointment and replace it with an exam on the morning of surgery. This is common practice in high-volume, high-quality spay/neuter clinic settings, and introductions can be made with the veterinary staff at Every Pet (formerly known as First Coast No More Homeless Pets) to discuss this practice. The percentage of pets declined for surgery should be small and will expedite the s/n process.

We have waived the necessity of the pre-operative physical exam for all animals under 5 years of age, but are still requiring current vaccination status. Our medical director provides a brief exam

- In surgery, patients should be provided with their own fleece blanket or towel, which follows them throughout the surgical procedure to address heat loss and prevent cross-contamination.

We do utilize blankets and towels for each animal.

- Add heat source to surgical tables

This has been explored but our primary surgeon works so efficiently and quickly that the patients are not on the surgery table for more than a few minutes. For more complex surgeries, we have heating pads that are used when the surgeon wishes.

- Pets should be recovered on a heat source on the floor in surgery or the medical treatment area (the beach) so groups can be monitored together until they are sternal and ready to be moved back to their kennel. The beach typically consists of padded floor mats covered with a blanket with each pet on their own towel on top of the blanket and a heat source. There are a variety of heat sources available, from large heating pads to free-standing floor heaters. MMPC consultants can provide additional information.

This has been explored in purchasing a bear hugger for this purpose. Staff is shopping different sites to find the preferred style.

- Review patient monitoring protocols. Staff were observed leaving anesthetized pets unmonitored as they walked away to perform other tasks.

The protocols have been reviewed. During surgery we have always used electronic pulseoxymeters. The staff routinely visually observes and checks vitals throughout recovery. While animals are intubated they have the “chirper” connected which monitors breathing.

- Consider having the entire surgery team watch the following video from Heather Sartorelli which illustrates how a team of 1 doctor, 1 tech and 2 assistants can run surgical flow and use good communication techniques. <https://youtu.be/tbFc6A2K7gM>
- As a refresher and to keep current on skills, consider having surgery staff review the following dog and cat patient prep videos from the ASPCA.
 - Patient Prep – Canine: - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aESC0VrWIZA>
 - Patient Prep - Feline: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ilj564LLhy0>

Staff has reviewed these videos.



- Have surgery staff review ASV Medical Care Guidelines for Spay/Neuter Programs (2016). This can be broken into sections and discussed at weekly team meetings or at a ‘lunch and learn’.

These materials have been reviewed and updates have been implemented as needed.

- Once surgery capacity is maximized and extends into the afternoon, ensure that doctors and technicians receive lunch breaks. Depending on whether 1 or 2 veterinarians are in surgery that day, the techs can be split into teams so that each team and their vet takes a lunch break while the other continues working. Or, depending on the surgery schedule, there may be a natural break in the workflow between finishing dogs and starting cats, where everyone can break together.

As the single veterinarian system is still in place, it makes more sense for the team to take a break all at the same time between morning dogs and afternoon cats.

- Generate reports in PetPoint to identify which animals need vaccine boosters and other preventive care, medication, tech exams, vet exams, sterilization, etc. Consultant can connect FHS with other PetPoint users to compare the reports they generate daily to ensure care is not missed.

This has been implemented in the triage department.

- Sign up with Vetcove (a free service) to compare pricing of commonly used medical supplies from your existing vendors and to ensure lowest price is being received (vetcove.com)

We have signed up with this service.

- Follow up with IDEXX and other distributors to ensure shelter pricing is in place

Pricing has been reviewed and points and discounts are being utilized.

- Work with the Volunteer Coordinator to recruit reliable volunteers to assist in surgery. Volunteers can be trained to help with cleaning instruments, preparing surgery packs, monitoring beach recovery, acting as runners for animals to and from kennels, cleaning kennels in the surgery holding area, and a variety of other tasks.

This option had been explored in the past, but the current veterinarian wasn't comfortable with this.

- Become a [Petco Love Vaccine partner](#), which provides free and low-cost vaccines (typically FVRCP and DHPP) for shelters to serve pets in care as well as the community. These events would be separate from your regular vaccine clinic events (or in combination with a regular rabies and microchip clinic) and would target low-income pet owners who might not otherwise be able to afford to vaccinate their pets.

We have applied for this grant and are awaiting a decision. If accepted, we would provide a free vaccination clinic in addition to our regular Saturday clinics.

- Enroll in the Feeding America & PetSmart Charities program to expand the pet food pantry and increase FHS' ability to provide pet food to families in need
<https://www.feedingamerica.org/partners/food-and-fund-partners>

A Partnership Inquiry form has been submitted to Feeding America.

Sanitation

Strategic goal

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians 2022 Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters states that proper cleaning and disinfection not only reduces disease transmission to both animals and people but also creates a more comfortable environment for the animals. Additionally, a clean, odor-free shelter projects a more positive image to the public.

Positives

- Staff is commended for their hard work in maintaining the facility's cleanliness • Oxivir Five 16 Concentrate (accelerated hydrogen peroxide) disinfectant primarily used in kennels

Recommendations

- Discontinue using Kennel Care (a quaternary product) in the medical areas and switch to using Oxivir Five 16 Concentrate. Quaternary products are not effective against non-enveloped viruses (such as parvovirus, panleukopenia, and calicivirus) and do not provide the level of disinfection needed. See shelter disinfectant comparison chart: <https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/shelterdisinfectantposter.pdf>

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- Work with UF medical team to update existing written sanitation protocols
- The use of Oxivir Five 16 Concentrate (accelerated hydrogen peroxide) is commended as it is considered the most effective disinfectant on the market. Sanitation products must be diluted and used according to label instructions or published recommendations. Solutions that are too weak may be ineffective, and those that are too strong may be harmful to animals and people. Oxivir should be used at the proper concentration and contact time as directed by your veterinarian.

The protocols have been reviewed and updated, now using the Oxivir Five 16 Concentrate.

- Test Oxivir concentrate monthly to ensure proper dilution is being used for various needs, such as general cleaning versus disinfection against specific viruses. Test strips can be ordered through FHS' regular distributor (can use same test strips used for Rescue).
 - <https://catalog.hollandcleaning.com/p/540166/AHP1750-Virox-Oxivir-Test-Strips-50-ct Bottle/>
 - https://learnaboutrescue.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/REF095_AHP425-Ref sheet-Insert-PreciseTest-Strip_OCT-2018.pdf
 - https://learnaboutrescue.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Reference-Sheet_Rescue Concentrate.pdf
- Create and post the step-by-step sanitation protocol in each housing section. Consider using photos and/or a checklist. This will be extremely helpful for new staff or volunteers so they can jump in and help with minimal supervision while adhering to the proper standards.
- Remove all organic material, including feces and food, and dispose of them in the trash. This should be done periodically throughout the day to maintain a clean and safe environment for the animals and to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Hosing down the run without first removing organic material aerosolizes feces, increasing the risk of disease transmission. Additionally, organic material may cause drains to clog.
- For dogs, clean the surfaces with a detergent. No disinfectants work well on dirty surfaces. Staff have access to Liquid Dish-Washing Detergent which serves this purpose. This can be applied to runs with a garden hose sprayer attached to the end of the hose and to cages with a spray bottle. All dogs should be removed from their kennel prior to cleaning.
 - Since double-compartment kennels are not available, remove the dog from kennel

before cleaning

- Remove any organic debris like feces, vomit, etc., and discard in a receptacle and discontinue hosing debris down the drains. Purchase multiple canine poop scoopers to pick up solids. Rinse or soak scoopers in a bucket of detergent between uses to avoid cross-contamination.
- Scrub kennel and bed with dish soap then rinse with water
- Apply the disinfectant to the clean surface (do not mix the detergent in with the disinfectant)
- Let the disinfectant sit for 5-10 minutes (or manufacturer's recommended contact time)
- Rinse with water
- Dry the surface with a squeegee or clean towel
- Spot clean throughout the balance of the day

Our SOPs have always included these basic steps. Checklists have been updated and posted in the kennel areas to clearly outline the three-step process. Previously, we combined the cleaning and disinfection steps by incorporating the degreaser into the sanitizer, a practice used in many shelters to reduce cleaning time. Following the recommendation, we determined it was important to separate these steps to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the cleaning and disinfection process and have updated our procedures accordingly.

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- Implement the spot cleaning method for individually housed cats that are remaining in the cage (only deep clean once the cat has left the shelter permanently such as through adoption, reclaim or rescue transfer).
 - This is made easier when all cages are portalized, so the cat has one side for the litterbox and the other side for food, water, and bedding.
 - Do not remove bedding, bowls, or toys unless they are soiled. Familiar smells decrease anxiety and stress in cats, stripping all the items from the cage removes these sources of comfort.
 - Unless visibly dirty, there is no need to use a disinfectant in each occupied cage daily if the same animal remains in the enclosure.
- Remove food and water bowls during the cleaning process to avoid having chemicals sprayed into them. Provide clean bowls daily.
- Have a supervisor spot-checking kennels throughout the day and ensure staff are completing their duties. This will also help ensure that animals are not without food and water or need additional care.

The spot cleaning method has long been a part of our daily cattery cleaning, reserving deep cleans and now use of steam cleaner in between cats. The supervisor walks through several times a day to ensure that the protocols are being followed and identify additional needs.

Return to Owner (Dogs)

Strategic goal

Current research has shown that most dogs at large are in their own neighborhoods, so goals

should include equipping neighbors with avenues to help find the owner, along with minimizing barriers to reclaim.

Positives

- RTO for dogs in 2024 was 38%, which is higher than the national average of 22%
- Pictures of new intakes are posted on website in real-time

Recommendations

- Make the Lost and Found page more prominent on the main page. Currently located as a drop down field under animal control, which is not where people who have lost their pets may think to look.

The “Lost Pets” link is now visible on the homepage of the FHS website.

- Consider setting up a microchip scanning station outside of the shelter or in a location easily accessible to the community after hours. Consultant can connect leadership with other organizations who have done this successfully for tips and suggestions.

We have spoken to leadership at local fire, police and rescue stations to implement this. The only ones who were receptive were the leaders at Flagler Beach Police Department. We purchased a microchip scanner for each of their patrol vehicles. We are coordinating a time to train their officers on proper scanning techniques and will provide them with the scanners at that time.

- Continue to offer low-cost microchip clinics and encourage pet owners to keep their microchip registry up to date

We offer free microchipping every Monday, and always offer low cost microchips and encourage owners to get them at our vaccine clinics, wellness clinics and during spay/neuter surgery.

- Sign up with Petco Love Lost to increase reunification through photo-matching technology https://petcolove.org/lost/partner-application/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=lead_b2b&utm_campaign=lost-partnership-form-2024-v1

We are already a partner with Petco Love Lost and review potential matches regularly.

- Review Cabot Animal Support Services’ website about helping pets get home and the First 48 program: <https://cabotanimalsupportservices.com/services/found-pets/>
- Incorporate ideas from Rochester Animal Services’ lost and found pets page <https://www.cityofrochester.gov/FoundAPet/>

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- Mirror the RTO program with the St Lucie Police Department in Florida, which has a 75-80% RTO rate. Consultants can connect leadership with the St. Lucie field services team to learn more about their program, which involves providing low-cost microchips and a lifetime pet license (intentionally repeated from previous section).
- If not already in place, consider waiving fees for a first-time reclaim when an owner agrees to spay/neuter, rabies vaccinate and microchip and subsidize if the owner is unable.

This is a regular practice and listed on our website as an option for any reclaims, regardless of if its the animal's first offense. Multiple time offenders are reported to local animal control agencies. We are working with local law makers in Flagler County to make it a requirement on their 3rd offense to leave sterilized.

- Note: The RTO program for cats includes leaving them in their home location or returning them to their home location after spay/neuter and rabies vaccination

We advocate for this each time, but receive pushback from Animal Control Officers in the City of Palm Coast because of the language in their current ordinances regarding cats.

- Consider asking field services officers to post yard signs in areas where lost dogs are picked up to increase reunification (as long as this does not conflict with any local sign ordinances)

The City of Palm Coast does have local sign ordinances that this may conflict with. We have explored having reusable signs printed for other service areas when an animal is picked up, however, the time consuming task of picking up the signs proved to be too much at this time.

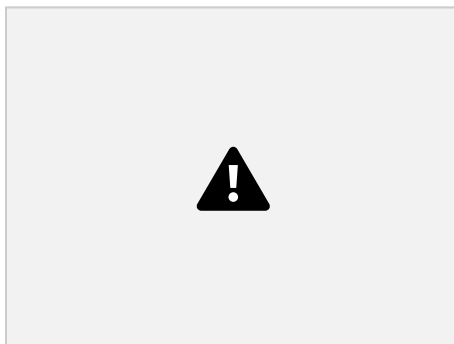


Figure 7: Sample sign used by the municipal shelter in Nashville, TN

Finder Foster, Foster on Deck & Transfer Partner Program

Strategic goal

Foster care should be the pathway for adoptions. Advertising the foster program widely and encouraging current fosters and volunteers to get others involved will help increase this vital lifesaving pathway and should be the goal for each pet. Good Samaritans can exponentially increase the foster care pool. The newly added adoption/placement staff can oversee this program.

Positives

- Limited foster program currently in place focusing on underage kittens and pets with medical needs

Recommendations

- Implement finder to foster program to recruit the public to provide temporary foster care to the pets they find in the community. This can often lead to increased reunification because the pet is kept in the neighborhood where it is found, can keep the pet healthy and not exposed to infectious disease in the shelter, and can also increase adoption since the finder will know more information about the pet in a more comfortable setting.

We have had some successful cases involving Finder Foster placements for adult dogs, but we are selective about who is offered this program. In cases where the behavior of a large dog is questionable, we don't feel it is always safe to have a finder foster them in their home. In other cases involving identification, such as tags or microchips, we feel the finder may not always give the animal back to the rightful owner. There are also situations that have given us concerns about maintaining an appropriate reunification process. For example, a recent case involving an unspayed female cat that was fostered to the finder. The finder returned the cat to the owner without

notifying the shelter or providing us any information to confirm it was their cat, or to follow up with them about spaying her.

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- FHS needs to make helping through foster care an easy and simple pathway. As per Maddie's Fund, foster care is the most important avenue to adoptions. The animal welfare industry has transitioned to a more community foster-centric model, growing this program is essential as confining pets in a shelter should be the last resort. FHS should establish this goal and continue to take steps in this direction.

We do offer foster opportunities to all underage animals, senior animals, medically needy animals that don't require consistent veterinary supervision and any animal in our care for over 30 days. We have established guidelines for minor behavior issues that may be environment-related and those we feel most adopters/fosters could handle continue to support the animal through outlined protocols for behavior modification while in the home.

- All pets should be considered for a foster track as a pathway to their adoption, with both the foster family and the shelter advocating for them. Fosters must have a plan of action, receive follow-up preventive care (boosters and dewormer) every 2-3 weeks, and be scheduled for sterilization when appropriate.

All of our fosters are on a schedule for rechecks usually around every 2 weeks for underage animals. Adults come in monthly for weight checks and preventions or as needed for medical care.

- Review current inventory of pets in foster care and outcome those that have been adopted.

This is already done regularly. There are cases when a foster has not returned the underage pet for sterilization so we continue to try to contact the foster and maintain follow-up until the animal returns for surgery and can be formally adopted.

- Categories of foster care that should not require orientations and excessive barriers include:
 - Good Samaritan/Foster Finder who foster strays in order to prevent a shelter intake
 - Fosters-on-Deck are an important part of the program so pets do not stay in the shelter long and move quickly into foster care.
 - Foster to Adopt if for some reason the pet cannot be sterilized yet or the person wants to do a trial with the pet to make sure they are a good fit

We do not currently require any orientations for fosters. Instead, we provide written or digital materials to review to ensure the foster understands the expectations and have the information necessary to provide the best possible care.

- Allow all pets in the shelter to be available for rescue/transfer on a first come first served basis

We carefully evaluate rescue and transfer organizations before placing animals with them, particularly given a recent local case involving cruelty and neglect associated with an individual representing herself as a rescue. We do our homework before just transferring out animals to anyone claiming to be a rescue. We do utilize them when appropriate. Our shelter is open seven days a week and has at least 100 visitors each day, most days much more than that. The animals that rescue groups are willing to take are

often the highly adoptable animals who get adopted quickly from FHS into permanent homes. Sending those animals to rescue groups is placing them in temporary, foster homes, not a permanent home, creating more stress for the animal.

- Continue developing relationships with partner organizations that have strong adoption programs and might be able to pull animals for immediate placement. Follow up with transfer partners to confirm they are operating within their capacity. During the visit, the MMPC consultant pulled 6 cats for placement through Lucky Cat Adoptions in Jacksonville, and all were adopted within days. These supportive partnerships are very valuable since no single organization has all the resources.

We are currently asked by many organizations, including non-profits in Palm Coast, like Community Cats, to take animals when they are full. During our quarantine period this summer with panleukopenia, they were helpful with a few emergency intakes of newborns with mothers that we called them about. We have not found local organizations willing or able to take animals when asked. Though, we do contact origin facilities for animals surrendered or found that have been adopted through another organization. Halifax Humane Society and S.A.F.E. are usually willing to take their animals back.

- Provide link to Kitten Lady's free Orphan Kitten Guide along with kitten supplies <http://www.kittenlady.org/booklet>

We use a different booklet through the kitten college, but can include this link in the materials.

- Create kitten kits so Good Samaritans can be provided with supplies and more likely to assist (<https://bestfriends.org/stories/features/kitten-kits-prepare-public-save-lives>)

We do have pre-made kitten kits during the height of our kitten season, and we are working towards having them readily available in the lobby at all times to offer the finders at the time they are being asked to temporarily foster with the litter they have found.

- Grow the Adoption Ambassador program by ensuring all fosters are empowered, encouraged, equipped and provided with an easy process with opportunities to place their fosterlings so they do not re-enter the shelter (except for spay/neuter) and can go straight into an adoptive home.

We encourage fosters to share their fosters with their family and friends and on social media. We have a Flagler Fosters group on Facebook where people can share updates on their kittens. We also have an Adoptable Pets of Flagler County page to advertise foster animals. Many times, they already have homes identified by the time an animal returns for spay/neuter, allowing them to move directly into their adoptive home without spending any additional time at the shelter. Last summer we began a kitten foster program with our local sheriff's department which uses inmates in a specialized rehabilitation program to raise and socialize animals for us. Several adoptions have come from family of the inmates and sheriff's staff.

- As the program grows, leadership is encouraged to research Doobert Connect <https://doobert.com/fosterspace/> or Vidaah <https://vidaah.vet/> to support the foster program. These platforms provide a dashboard-type system to streamline communication with all parties and can be linked with modern shelter software and include medical tele-triage, which provides direct access to a veterinarian to address after-hours medical concerns. It also preserves the shelter staff (foster coordinator and medical team) from being on call 24/7. The cost associated with these programs is minimal and significantly less than what would be spent on an additional staff member or overtime.

We have signed up for Doobert and are currently exploring how to use it more effectively within our foster program. Because it does not automatically integrate with PetPoint, we are looking into recruiting a volunteer who can assist with entering and updating animals in the system as needed.

Adoptions

Strategic goal

To increase lifesaving capacity and position the organization to help more pets in the community, FHS must prioritize proactive strategies to shorten the length of stay for each animal without compromising

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their health. The longer an animal stays in the shelter, the more likely they will be exposed to an infectious disease or develop a behavioral concern that adversely affects their opportunity to be adopted. The goal is to reduce the length of stay by removing any barriers to rapid release on an adoption pathway to help more animals in need.

Positives

- Regularly promote adoption specials and reduced-fee adoption events
- Adoption partnership for cats with Petco, PetSmart and PetSupermarket stores
- Adoption opportunities daily at FHS' bustling thrift store
- Foster-to-adopt option given to potential adopters to ensure the pet is a good match

Recommendations

- Update cage cards for cats with a picture and bio similar to the ones used for dogs to help get them adopted. Many cage cards in the cat adoption area did not include a photo and were simply a printout of their medical records, which is confusing to visitors. Update cage cards and bios at offsite stores (may have to use store's own cards) that market the pet to prospective adopters, understand the difference between marketing and counseling and discontinue using language that may deter adopters. Ex: don't say the cat came from a hoarding situation with 100 other cats and instead say – has lived with other cats.

We utilize a more visitor-friendly version of kennel cards for most cats in the adoption area with the assistance of our marketing team. Given the volume of cats in our care and the fact that many cats are adopted very quickly, it's difficult to keep up with creating these cards for each animal. The specific card referenced here regarding the hoarding situation comment was handwritten by a volunteer at PetSmart. We have since begun providing additional information directly to the PetSmart staff so they have appropriate, adoption-focused information to use when they now complete the cage cards.

- Consider renaming dog kennels Zone 1-3 to local street names that are relevant to the history and charm of the community. Jacksonville ACPS recently added street signs to their housing areas reflecting popular street names from the neighborhoods of Historic 5 Points and Downtown (sample picture sent to leadership).

We renamed our Zones to "Woof Street," "Pooch Place," "Bark Avenue," "Wiggle Way," and "Sit-Stay Parkway," and installed street signs in each area to create a more welcoming and engaging environment for visitors and volunteers.

- Expand area where visitors are allowed to view dogs to include the new intake area. A barrier chain or curtain can be used when needed to section off bite cases and confiscations; however, more often the dogs waiting in this area are simply on their stray hold (note that 62% of the time FHS is not able to reunite them with their owner, so creating an action plan for them

while they are on stray hold is key).

We currently provide each stray dog in holding a color coded sleeve after 3 days in our care, as statistics show they will most likely not be reclaimed by their owner at this point. This means that the volunteers can walk them and we can begin showing them to potential adopters. When kennels are available, they are moved to the adoption area at this point. When space in adoptable areas is not yet available, staff walk interested adopters through the holding area to view eligible dogs when appropriate.

- Recruit adoption ambassador volunteers to be available to assist visitors in the kennels with basic questions and to help take dogs outside for meet and greets.

Several volunteers are already involved in this process inside the kennels. Some volunteers prefer to focus their time walking additional dogs instead.

Volunteer Program

Strategic goal

A volunteer program engages the community and enhances the care of shelter pets at no cost.

Positives

- Designated full-time coordinator
- Dedicated core group of volunteers who assist both at the shelter and at offsite adoption locations
- Online orientation available for initial recruitment
- Group waivers available for large groups such as corporate volunteers
- There are many willing community members with an interest in volunteering at the shelter

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Recommendations

- Create a user-friendly, easy and simple onboarding process for volunteers so that people interested in helping can do so with minimal barriers
 - Provide helpful information on the spot that volunteers need to know to start helping today while staying safe such as the basic dos and don'ts, map of the facility, etc.

We have counseled customer service and animal care staff to provide this information on the spot to prospective volunteers in order to help them get started as soon as possible.

- Consider posting a more detailed video orientation on the website for volunteers to review once requirements have been achieved, instead of attending in-person trainings, which require a huge time commitment from the volunteer coordinator.

We have offered an online volunteer orientation as an option since 2024. We have just eliminated our in person volunteer orientation, replaced completely by an updated online orientation, followed by a personal scheduled tour with our new part time volunteer coordinator. For new dog walkers, they are matched up with experienced dog walkers for Buddy walks as training.

- Create a buddy system for new volunteers to pair up with an existing volunteer mentor (who happens to be at the shelter during the same time frame) during their first few visits

We already have this system in place and have developed better ways to ensure its use.

- Allow volunteers to access the shelter in the mornings to help with dog walking and playgroups while staff is cleaning. Staff expressed concerns that volunteers might interrupt

the cleaning or cause confusion; however, this approach works well in shelters across the country and volunteers play a crucial role, especially when budgets prevent hiring enough staff. This recommendation intentionally repeated from earlier section.

We have extended dog walking hours into the morning.

- Allow volunteers to take a dog to an outdoor play yard for off leash time. Provide whistles, radios or other safety tools, if leadership has concerns about the safety of staff and volunteers when outside.

We already offer this opportunity. We have modified the process so that first-time “green” lanyard dog walkers are not utilizing this space with an off leash dog until they are more comfortable and familiar with the facility, the procedures and individual dogs and behavior.

- Consider using volunteer management software to make it easier for volunteers to sign up for shifts, while also allowing the coordinator to more easily share volunteer needs and opportunities, and better track volunteer hours.

We purchased the volunteer management software. The learning curve and data entry of existing volunteers took several weeks. Officially rolled out on October 1, now it's just getting the volunteers used to the new process.

- Volunteer assistance should be developed in the following areas where staff are struggling and are considered high priority:
 - Playgroups for dogs so can be done daily. Some shelters have play groups run exclusively by volunteers or in combination with 1-2 trained staff
 - Dog walkers/Dog Day Out Adoption Ambassadors
 - Kennel enrichment for both dogs and cats
 - Adoption helpers
 - Photographers (especially for cats since the dog volunteers are doing a great job capturing pictures)

We have made helping in these areas easier for volunteers.

- Recommend Volunteer Coordinator meet with other shelter partners, such as Jacksonville Humane Society and Jacksonville Animal Care & Protective Services to learn about their robust volunteer programs. There are many other shelters around the state with robust volunteer programs, these two are mentioned because of their proximity and ease of travel for staff to visit.

While at the leadership summit, management spoke with JHS about how they encourage local businesses to volunteer as a group regularly and it has been discussed with our volunteer team. Our new volunteer coordinator assistant will be scheduling visits.

- Encourage volunteers to complete Fear Free training which is offered online and at no cost (they can do this from their home as time allows) <https://fearfreeshelters.com/>

This is always encouraged and regularly brought up in each orientation for new volunteers.

Facility Design & Maintenance

Recommendations

- Install cat portals in all 2x2 kennels used for housing cats (this does not include those used for surgery hold)

As stated previously, this has been explored but without adding additional holding somewhere else, we will be unable to house as many cats.

- Remove clutter and debris throughout entire shelter

This is addressed as part of our ongoing daily operations and significant improvements have been made in maintaining the facility and reducing unnecessary clutter.

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- Ensure dryer vents in laundry room are cleaned daily and routinely vacuum out exhaust hoses to prevent fire hazards

A new safety filter was added in the cat room laundry area.

- Add benches and shade structures to larger play yards so staff and volunteers can sit while interacting with dogs off leash.

Seating and additional shades have been installed in the play yards. The addition of permanent physical shade structures has been submitted for consideration.

- Add bench or seating option in office off the adoptions lobby for staff to have conversations with adopters needing to rehome their pets

We have added this feature into an adjoining room off the lobby.

- Add donation bins outside for people to easily drop off supplies and wheel them into the conference room for distribution to free up clutter in lobby. Sample products shown below or similar items can be found at uline.com [https://www.uline.com/BL_1841/Poly-Box Trucks?keywords=Rolling+Laundry+Cart](https://www.uline.com/BL_1841/Poly-Box-Trucks?keywords=Rolling+Laundry+Cart)

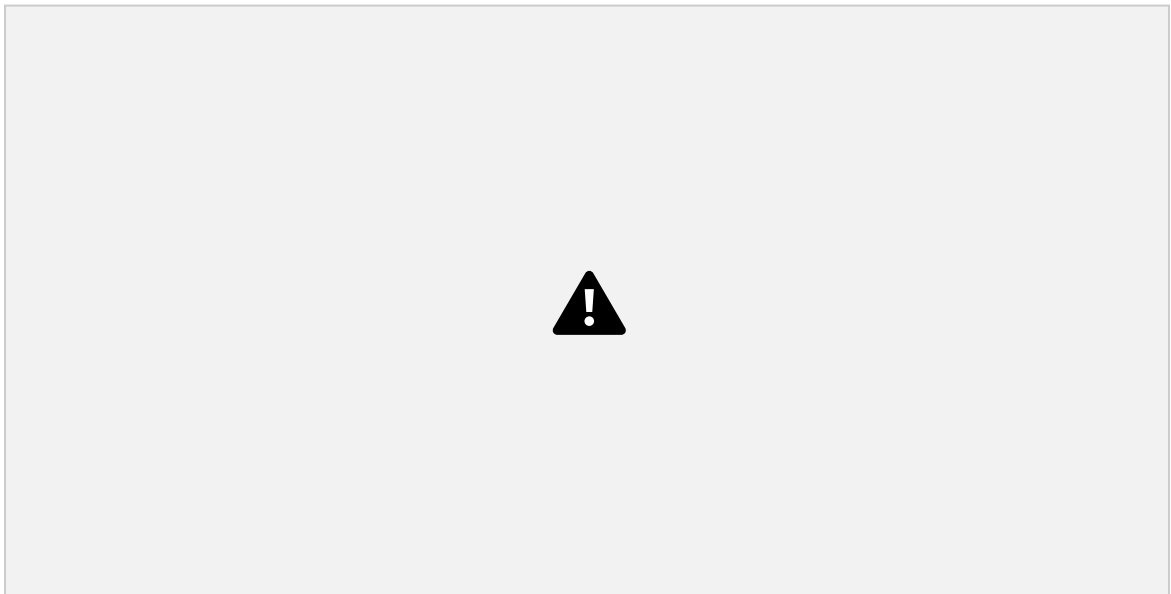


Figure 8: Donation bins and signage outside of Humane Society of Sarasota County

Moving Forward

The University of Florida Shelter Medicine Program and Maddie's Million Pet Challenge team appreciate FHS leadership and staff for their willingness to learn and implement recommendations to help more people and pets. The purpose of this report is to identify key systems and strategies that can help staff streamline operations. At its core, this mission aims to shift from a shelter-centric animal sheltering system to a community-centric one. Many promising opportunities exist for FHS to increase the number of people and pets helped within the current framework.

The MMPC team applauds FHS for the tremendous progress and dedication to animal welfare and is grateful to the leadership and staff for their commitment to continual improvement. We look forward to continue working together in the future. #ThankstoMaddie



General Resource List

National Animal Welfare Organizations

- Association of Shelter Veterinarians (sheltervet.org)
- Best Friends (bestfriends.org)
- Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (careawo.org)
- Fear Free Shelters (fearfreeshelters.com)
- Human Animal Support Services - HASS (humaneanimalsupportservices.org) • Humane World for Animals (humaneworld.org and animalsheltering.org)
- Jessica Dolce Compassion Fatigue (jessicadolce.com)
- Maddie's Fund (maddiesfund.org)
- Maddie's Million Pet Challenge team (maddiesmillionpetchallenge.org)
- National Animal Control Association (nacanet.org)

National Statistics

- Best Friend Dashboards (<https://bestfriends.org/no-kill-2025/animal-shelter-statistics>) • Shelter Animals Count (<https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/>)

Guidelines

- *Adopter's Welcome*, by Humane World for Animals <https://humanepro.org/page/adopters-welcome-manual>
- 2020 American Association of Feline Practitioners guidelines (Informational webinar by Dr. Julie Levy, Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, University of Florida, <https://youtu.be/KdsMiZjwdpo>) • Human Animal Support Services (HASS) Playbook <https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/hass-playbook/>
- Shelter Care Checklists: Putting ASV Guidelines Into Action https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/2022-asv-gl-checklist_0.pdf • The Association of Shelter Veterinarians' 2016 Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay Neuter Programs <https://avmajournals.avma.org/view/journals/javma/249/2/javma.249.2.165.xml> • The Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters <https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/asvguidelinessecondedition-2022.pdf>

Surrender Prevention and Safety Net

- Those surrendering needed temporary help
(<https://www.aspca.org/about-us/press-releases/more-1-million-households-forced-give-their-beloved-pet-each-year-aspca>)
- Home to Home (<https://home-home.org/>)
- Rehome by Adopt-A-Pet (<https://rehome.adoptapet.com/>)
- Rehoming Comparison Tool
(<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/wordpress/files/2021/03/Rehoming-Tool-Comparison-1-27-21.pdf>)

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- PetPoint.com, Points of Care for tracking Safety Net data
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBvr9XF42FA>)

Foster Care

- HASS Intake to Placement Tool Kit
<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/toolkit/intake-to-placement/>
- Doobert/FosterSpace (<https://www.doobert.com/>)

Community Cat Programming

- Informational webinar by the Million Cat Challenge team: <https://youtu.be/9FVHcYTXrgI> by Dr.'s Kate Hurley and Julie Levy entitled [Rethinking the Animal Shelter's Role in Free Roaming Cat Management](#)
- Best Friends Animal Society
(<https://resources.bestfriends.org/advocacy/community-cats>)
- The National Animal Control Association (<https://www.nacanet.org/animal-control-intake-of-free-roaming-cats/>)
- The Humane Society of the United States
(<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/community-cat-program>)
- Humane Animal Support Services
(<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/?s=community+cats>)

Managed Admission; Appointment Based System

- Best Friends Managed Intake or Admissions Training Playbook
<https://network.bestfriends.org/education/manuals-handbooks-playbooks/managed-intake-or-admissions-training-playbook>

Portal instructions

- Puppies https://shor-line.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Puppy_Portal-1.pdf
- Cats <https://www.sheltermedicine.com/library/resources/?r=cat-portals-order-information-and-instruction-for-installation>

Canines (How to help large dogs in shelters)

- Big Dog Master Class
<https://maddiesmillionpetchallenge.org/big-dog-master-class/#1648138892891-049ac83b-f195>

Dog Play Groups

- Dogs Playing for Life (dogsplayingforlife.com)
- Shelter Playgroup Alliance for small playgroups (shelteredogsplay.org)

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Adoptions

- Adoptapet (adoptapet.com)
- Adoptimize (adoptimize.com)
- The 2021-022 American Pet Products Association Survey showed that only 40% of dogs and 43% of cats are adopted from an animal shelter or rescue group
<https://humanepro.org/page/pets-by-the-numbers>
- Why people went to breeders after shelter/rescue
<https://moderndogmagazine.com/articles/best-friends-animal-society-survey-expose-s-why-people-opt-adopt-or-not/108382>.
- Conversations from the Field: Journey to Open Adoptions by Chrissy Sedgley <https://youtu.be/TAYAoqiDH4o>
- Is Your Adoption Process Really Working by Sue Cosby
https://aspca.zoom.us/recording/play/NAvZ9CitEOsAAhmEV_TcWq1TSn5kAa6n4HgPJMixYyMKBSINpAuxfWSIWPxfnm6?continueM ode=true
- Petfinder (petfinder.com/)

Shelter Donation Programs

- Kuranda dog and cat beds ([Kuranda.com](https://kuranda.com))
- Kong (<https://www.kongcompany.com/kong-cares-application/>)
- Cat Scratchers (<https://imperialcat.com/giveback.php>)

Recommended Reading

- [The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters](#)
- [Animal Behavior for Shelter Veterinarians and Staff](#)
- [BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Shelter Medicine: Principles of Health and Welfare in a Multi-animal Environment](#)
- [Every Nose Counts: Using Metrics in Animal Shelters](#)
- [Field Manual for Small Animal Medicine](#)
- [High-Quality, High-Volume Spay and Neuter and Other Shelter Surgeries](#)
- [Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters](#)

- Infectious Disease Control
<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/shelter-services/disease-management/>
- [Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff](#)
- Replacing Myth with Math, Peter Marsh
(http://www.shelteroverpopulation.org/Books/Replacing_Myth_with_Math.pdf) • Reference for Large Scale Social Change [Switch by Dan and Chip Heath](#)

Return to Owner (RTO) Research

- Dallas, Texas: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2021.669428/full>

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Rescue/Transfers Research

- Pasco County, FL
<https://www.humananimalsupportservices.org/blog/county-shelter-transfer-partners/>

Staffing

- Field Services <https://www.nacanet.org/determining-field-staffing-needs/> • Kennel cleaning and feeding <https://www.nacanet.org/determining-kennel-staffing-needs/>

Networking and Information

- [ASPCApr Newsletter and Blog](#)
- [Association of Shelter Veterinarians Private Facebook Group](#)
- [Greater Good](#)
- [Maddie's Fund Chew on This Blog](#)
- Maddie's Pet Forum (<https://forum.maddiesfund.org/home>)
- [Shelter Medicine Veterinarians Private Facebook Group](#)
- [UF Shelter Medicine Newsletter](#)

Education and Certification

- Compassion in Balance Program
(<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/education/continuing-education/compassion-in-balance-cib-program/>)
- Fear Free Shelter Certification (<https://fearfreeshelters.com/>)
- National Animal Control Association (<https://www.nacanet.org/>)
- Maddie's University (<https://university.maddiesfund.org/>)

