



Contra Costa Animal Services

STRATEGIC PLAN



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“Our strategic plan provides a clear roadmap for Contra Costa Animal Services’ future. At its core, the plan paints the path towards utilizing our challenges, opportunities and partnerships as a nexus for innovation in animal services. ”

Director's Note

Today's challenges are tomorrow's opportunities. The challenges of addressing pet overpopulation, disease and other animal welfare issues are growing along with the County's population. The pressures on Contra Costa County's already stressed animal welfare capacity are mounting. Today's decisions will determine the health, safety and welfare of our County's population, both human and animal, for years to come.

Contra Costa Animal Services is at the forefront of identifying solutions to these critical issues through innovative approaches and strategic partnerships that transcend traditional boundaries. At each stage, our opportunities for innovation and collaboration have been born from the challenges we've faced. Each challenge has presented a unique set of opportunities that has driven our department's efforts to become a leader among municipal animal welfare agencies.

Thirty two years after its creation, Contra Costa Animal Services is at an exciting stage in its development. To guide this next stage of growth, we conducted a major strategic planning process. We solicited input from a broad range of stakeholders including staff, volunteers, transfer partners, County officials and other animal welfare agencies. Based on this process, we developed a distinct long-term approach to expanding the range and impact of our work.

Our strategic plan provides a clear roadmap for Contra Costa Animal Services' future. At its core, the plan paints the path towards utilizing our challenges, opportunities and partnerships as a nexus for innovation in animal services. It outlines a focused direction for building an animal services department that is able to address the most critical issues of today, as well as the challenges of the future.

Moving forward, we remain committed to putting ideas into action that will result in a safer and healthier public and the best outcomes for animals.

Sincerely,

Beth Ward
Director, Contra Costa Animal Services



Introduction

The Strategic Plan is intended to guide the work of Contra Costa Animal Services (CCAS) towards a positive and meaningful impact on the community. It will ensure that the organization is serving the best interest of the citizens and the animals. It is a living document and should be periodically reviewed and revised. Continued commitment to action based on the strategies and strategic actions will be necessary to achieve the outlined goals.

One of the many challenges for municipal animal welfare agencies is increasing the Live Release Rate of shelter animals while maintaining a high quality of care for them within the shelter. As the number of animals entering the shelter increases, so does the potential for health issues. The CCAS Strategic Plan focuses on improving organizational efficiencies with the current resources so that a balance may be achieved between the two objectives. The Plan provides a roadmap for CCAS' organizational direction and decision making regarding resource allocation to carry out this direction.

As the population continues to grow in Contra Costa County, planning of this kind becomes even more critical, as it is expected that there will be an increasing number of surplus pets—that is, cats, dogs and other animals needing to be sheltered. In the absence of a vigorous effort to be proactive toward this dynamic of population growth, there will be growing costs associated with caring for and sheltering animal companions. Indeed, it is a widely held belief among animal welfare professionals that the actual costs of reactive approaches to pet overpopulation problems exceed the costs of more positive and proactive interventions.

History

The Animal Services Department has a long history in Contra Costa County, dating back to the 1950's. Originally a function of the Sheriff's Department, in 1959, animal control officers were re-assigned from the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department to the County Department of Agriculture, where Animal Services became its own division. At the time, the department consisted of five employees and focused primarily on animal and rabies control. The County operated only one shelter at that time, a medium-sized facility located in Martinez, roughly one block from the current shelter.

In 1985, Contra Costa Animal Services became its own County department, due to an increased demand for animal services as a result of the population boom at the time. In 2005, the County commissioned the construction of the current Martinez shelter, a beautiful two-acre state-of-the-art shelter complex and six-stall barn. Within a year, the County built the Pinole shelter to provide West County residents with better access to our department and animals looking to reunite with their families or finding new homes.

Today, Contra Costa Animal Services is comprised of two shelters and nearly 80 employees, including: field officers, medical and shelter staff, student workers and administration. The department's operations are also supported by over 200 committed volunteers who play a variety of critical roles that contribute to the enrichment, wellbeing and placement of our shelter residents. The department serves a population of over one million people (compared to 298,000 in 1959) and sees approximately 11,000 animals pass through our doors each year, with nearly 84% of animals currently leaving the shelter alive.

Mission Statement

Contra Costa Animal Services Department is committed to protecting the health, safety and well-being of the people and animals in our community through enforcement of state and local laws, providing compassionate care regardless of temperament or condition, and increasing the number of animals that stay in their homes instead of entering our County shelters.

We will prioritize life saving. We will shelter homeless, abandoned and lost animals, work to keep and place animals in safe, caring homes, and provide education and services to enhance the lives of people, their animal companions, and to strengthen the human-animal bond.



How We Accomplish Our Mission

Contra Costa Animal Services Department will accomplish our mission by:

- Protecting the citizens of Contra Costa County from animal-related diseases and from animal injury.
- Preventing animal cruelty, abuse and neglect.
- Keeping animals in their homes by providing resources and active counseling for owners looking to surrender their family companions.
- Striving to decrease our shelter intake, increase our live release rates and to reserve euthanasia only for animals that have serious medical conditions with great suffering, or behavior issues that pose a threat to the public's health and safety and the animal's well-being.
- Providing humane care and treatment of all animals in accordance with the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines and striving to follow the Five Freedoms.
- Increasing licensing and micro-chipping efforts to assist owners in reuniting with their lost pets.
- Providing spay/neuter services to reduce pet overpopulation.
- Educating the public about responsible pet ownership, including preventative medicine, spay/neuter, and vaccinations.
- Providing high-quality customer service and treating our customers with respect, professional courtesy, and integrity.
- Creating collaborative partnerships that further our mission and increase our ability to serve the people and animals of Contra Costa County.



Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles reflect the organization's vision, mission, brand promise and core values that all team members share and embrace. They are the law that serves as a basis of reasoning and action, a personal code of conduct that leads, shows the way and directs the movements of our organization. Guiding principles are a broad philosophy that guides the organization throughout its life in all circumstances, regardless of changes in its goals, strategies, type of work, or management.

BE COLLABORATIVE



BE THE SERVICE YOU WANT



**PRACTICE THE THREE E'S: EXCITE,
EDUCATE, EMPOWER**



APPLY JUDGEMENT



SEIZE THE INITIATIVE



MAKE THE MOST OF RESOURCES



The Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process helps to identify an organization's vision, or future state, along with the path to achieve the vision. The plan covers areas that require improvements and areas that should be reevaluated. It also involves and considers the interests of all key stakeholders. A measurable implementation plan to achieve goals moving towards the vision is also critical.

Below is an overview of the Strategic Planning Process:





The Strategic Planning Process

The Three Areas of Focus

After reviewing external resources to discover factors that impact the organization, seven Strategic Priorities were identified and placed into three key areas of focus: **Act**, **Care**, and **Collaborate**. The chart below describes these three areas.



Strategic Priorities, Long-term Goals, Activities & Metrics

The Strategic Plan focuses on the overall priorities of CCAS over the next five years. Strategic priorities target areas that CCAS has identified as high priority, resulting in action taken to make improvements. Strategic partnerships with other animal welfare organizations in Contra Costa County are seen as critical to success. Collaboration with other organizations to achieve these goals is considered a part of nearly every strategic priority.

The goal of the Strategic Plan is to maximize efficiency with existing resources and expand relationships with outside agencies to allow for a high quality of care at CCAS while saving as many lives as possible. Saving lives is a dynamic balance between quality of care (capacity for care) and the number of animals rehomed – measured in the Live Release Rate. CCAS seeks to build and maintain a high level of quality care for all animals in its charge. The Strategic Plan focuses CCAS on the efforts most likely to advance the goals of quality care and saving lives through work with additional resources and partners.

Each Strategic Priority includes one or more Long Range Goals that describe specific areas to change and/or improve. Each Long Range Goal has specific activities starting in FY 2017-18 and continuing into future years - with a description of metrics to be used to measure progress against the goals.

Strategic Priorities

01



Public Safety

Ensure public health and safety. Enforce state/local laws while educating owners to best practices.

02



Medical Services & Resources

Prevent unwanted pet births by developing medical partnerships to increase spay/neuter services.

03



Education

Through educational efforts and discussions with pet owners, keep pets in their homes and provide resources to improve pet care.

04



Animal Care

Shelter, treat and rehabilitate abandoned pets to prepare them for their forever homes.

05



Operational Excellence

Build and maintain CCAS operational excellence and ensure that is is fiscally responsible. Improve shelter management policies, procedures, and efficiency.

06



Community Engagement

Increase community engagement and humane education to influence the Contra Costa public to treat animals more humanely and to adopt more pets.

07



Rehoming Programs

Build and expand relationships and programs with transfer partners to find homes for rehabilitated animals and improve their ongoing quality of life.

Strategic Priorities



Strategic Priority 1

Ensure public health and safety through enforcement of state/local laws while educating owners to pet ownership best practices.

CCAS is the only legal authority within Contra Costa County that addresses animal issues in the 18 cities and the unincorporated areas with the exception of Antioch. Field Service Officers have a broad mandate to ensure public safety regarding animal issues. The County spans 804 square miles with a population of 1.1 million people and a severe pet overpopulation issue. Officers engage with the public in many ways from impounding stray, sick or injured animals, to investigating animal-related crimes and other issues. This affords officers a key role in providing direct humane education to the public.

Goal 1A - Review and update current policies, define measureable results, identify areas of improvement, and begin implementing changes.



FY 2018-19 Activities



- Improve ability to see where officers are located in real time using a Geographic Information System (GIS) and use that information to improve dispatching officers efficiently with GPS coordinates – which should also reveal root cause issues.
- Review public safety-related metrics to determine if there are any unidentified safety or response time issues or any unknown risks.
- Evaluate field efficiencies, response time data, and priority goals to ensure that services being rendered to cities are adequate.
- Evaluate the need for additional shelter locations.
- Establish regular contacts between the department director and all 18 city managers; establish regular and scheduled exchanges between field staff personnel.
- Provide monthly reports to all contracted cities that document animal services activities provided by the County.
- Consider entering into discussions to revise, by addendum, current city contracts to reflect the full scope of animal services provided by CCAS.

Strategic Priorities

-  • Provide clarity to CCAS' contract cities regarding the way that mandated services are provided and the methodology through which their costs are determined.
-  • Review and clarify expectations for officers to provide educational materials when interacting with the public.
-  • Revise enforcement policies/expectations and consider key additional ordinances.
-  • Continue to build and/or establish collaborative relationships with local health and safety agencies in the country and in our contract cities.
-  • Create or obtain better educational handouts including bilingual versions as needed.

Future Activities

-  • Explore the establishment of an Enterprise Fund for CCAS' operations.

Strategic Priority 2

Prevent unwanted pet births. Increase spay and neuter services.



Pet overpopulation is a community problem and must be addressed by targeting and preventing unwanted litters of puppies and kittens. Our approach to reducing overpopulation involves working with additional community resources to provide low-cost spay/neuter services to Contra Costa residents in a timely manner. Additionally, raising community awareness about the benefits of spaying and neutering is a critical element of responsible pet ownership. The County has identified hot spots of pet overpopulation where pit bulls and Chihuahuas are frequently found roaming throughout the neighborhoods. Addressing these hot spots will be a priority.

This strategic priority also includes a Return To Field component where healthy community cats are spayed or neutered and then returned to stable environments where they can live out their lives without negatively impacting wildlife or adding to the overpopulation problem.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 2A - Increase the availability of low-cost and/or no-cost spay/neuter services in the shelter and for the public. Provide spay/neuter options in partnership with Contra Costa partners and other Bay Area partners (including some Alameda County Partners.)



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  Partner with all low-cost spay/neuter clinics – mobile or stationary – operating in Contra Costa (and Alameda).
-  At the same time of spay/neuter, provide low-cost and/or free basic preventive services including vaccinations, license tags and/or chips as appropriate. Implement first at CCAS and later with partners where possible.
-  Assess the impact of limiting low-cost spay/neuter to Contra Costa County residents only – determine the usage of in vs. out of county usage then change the residence policy as makes sense.
-  Given the ease and importance of preventing rabbit and cat reproduction, continue efforts to spay or neuter before stray hold expires.

Future Activities

-  With partners, help fill gaps where spay/neuter services are most needed in the county and explore the option of spaying/neutering animals before owner surrender to reduce shelter stay once surrendered (also called foster to relinquish).
-  Conduct needs analysis to determine need for additional spay/neuter resources in Contra Costa County.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 2B - In conjunction with the spay/neuter program, provide targeted programs to Contra Costa communities where overpopulation of pit bull and Chihuahua mixes exist.



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Develop and map data to identify neighborhoods (or zip codes) with pit bull and/or Chihuahua overpopulation problems.
-  • Develop community education and support programs as needed.
-  • Identify transfer partner(s) for Chihuahua spay/neuter services.

Future Activities

-  • Work closely with Transfer Partners to focus on mobile spay/neuter for pit bull mixes. Support partners' spay/neuter outreach efforts.

Goal 2C - Expand and improve the Community Cat Trap, Spay/Neuter and Return To Field program in tight collaboration with partners.



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Continue to provide free community cat spay/neuter for transfer partners and the public willing to trap and return the cats.
-  • Include community education and CCAS institutional support to reduce community concerns about the Community Cat Program – and where possible encourage neighborhood adoption of the cats.
-  • Support Transfer Partners when they seek additional support so they can better work with CCAS and help community cats in specific geographic areas where additional help is needed.
-  • Educate local veterinarians about the Community Cat Program to make them aware of resources for community cats coming into their practices.

Future Activities

- Seek grant funding opportunities and create a plan to develop a sustainable spay/neuter fund through pet licensing.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 3

Through educational efforts and discussions with pet owners, keep pets in their homes.



Many situations put companion animals at risk of losing their forever home. Renters move and find the new landlord doesn't accept pets. A medical emergency arises that costs more than the pet owner can afford. An untrained animal proves too difficult for the owner to handle. These and other problems cause people to think their only option is to surrender their pet. CCAS and partners will continue to provide and expand the robust services we offer to address these problems and educate the public about their availability with the goal of keeping pets in their forever home.

Goal 3A - Implement a broad range of services to reduce shelter intake from the public by intervening and helping before owners decide to surrender their pet(s).



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Provide low-cost behavioral support and/or modification resources.
-  • Conduct Humane Education Outreach to improve the general quality-of-life for animals in Contra Costa and to increase the number of potential adopters and fosters.
-  • As warranted, develop programs for specific populations to be able to keep their pets and keep them healthy. (Example: homeless individuals)

Strategic Priorities

Goal 3A Activities Continued

Future Activities

-  • Develop and disseminate landlord education materials. Educate and collaborate with property owners, managers, and insurance companies to reduce and eliminate breed-specific restrictions on property rentals.
-  • Provide low-cost medical services and work to expand and/or find partners to provide low-cost medical services for routine health exams (Wellness Clinic) and major medical needs.
-  • Explore behavioral consulting hotline through partners and training to help owners keep their pets home.
-  • Working with partners, seek grants to fund collaborative medical services and behavioral training efforts above – such as a stipend program or mobile community medical program.

Goal 3B - Build a robust retention program to allow owners to keep their pet(s). Expand upon the current pilot effort and integrate the services available through partner organizations. *This program also includes services mentioned in Goal 3A above.



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Provide pet care education and resources to pet owners.
-  • With partners, provide information and referral services for pet issues to address the needs of owners caring for their pets.

Future Activities

-  • Whenever possible, provide low-cost services primarily to Contra Costa residents.
-  • Expand pet retention partnerships and leverage resources to identify additional innovative ideas to keep animals out of the shelter.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 4

Shelter, treat, and rehabilitate abandoned pets to prepare them for their forever homes.



Many animals that enter shelters have medical or behavioral problems that must be addressed by CCAS or a transfer partner before they can be successfully adopted into forever homes. Humane sheltering and socialization are keys to successful adoption. Our shelter will continue to improve the quality of shelter care using the Five Freedoms and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians(ASV) *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*. Improvements will be implemented throughout the organization to improve the quality of life for CCAS shelter residents.

Goal 4A - Review existing standards of care and programs to provide high quality sheltering of animals at CCAS and determine where to improve efforts and/or add new initiatives.



The goal of these measures is to improve the consistency of achieving the Five Freedoms. ASV guidelines will provide the detailed standards needed in specific situations.

FY 2018-19 Activities



- Limit kennel capacity by the size of a given kennel that accounts for the type, species and size of animals housed (consistent with Five Freedoms).



- Institutionalize the recent change to make cleared animals immediately available for adoption on a first come, first served basis and make improvements as needed.

THE 5 FREEDOMS

5

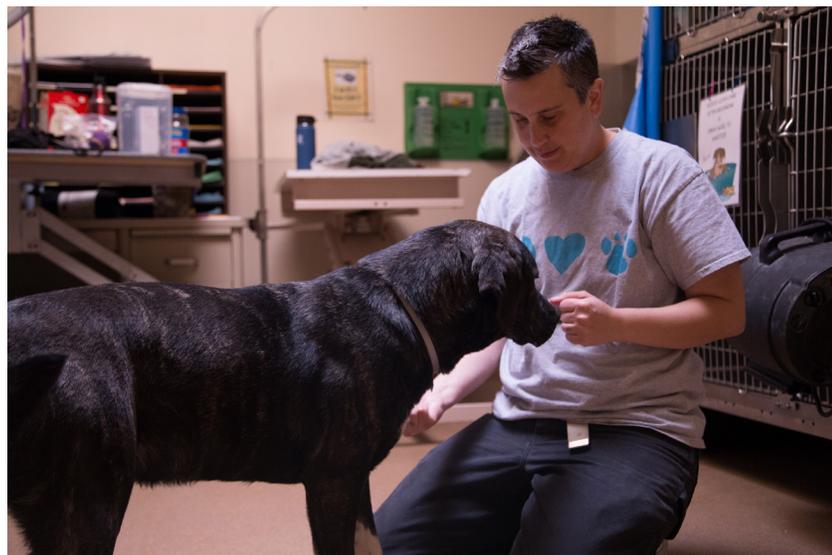
Freedom

- from Hunger and Thirst
- from Discomfort
- from Pain, Injury, and Disease
- from Fear and Distress
- to Express Normal Behavior

Strategic Priorities

Goal 4A Activities Continued

-  Institutionalize the recent change to spay or neuter animals early in their stay at CCAS and improve policies and/or procedures if needed. Success is dependent on adequate resources and subject to increased volumes (i.e. kitten season)
-  Review and improve behavioral evaluation methods. Explore the option of developing a dog foster program (ensuring this or other similar programs are NOT used simply to increase shelter capacity using offsite “warehousing”)
-  Review staffing and efficiency issues to consistently reduce the time it takes to clear animals for adoption or transfer – this may involve additional staff training or using some staff to improve the efficiency of the clearance process.
-  With partners, seek grants to fund collaborative medical services and behavioral training efforts – like a stipend program or mobile community spay/neuter program – this includes targeted help with animals experiencing shelter stress or shy animals.



Strategic Priorities

Goal 4B - After evaluating needs and facilities, seek capital funding from the County to make one-time major improvements at the Martinez and Pinole shelters and any other facilities deemed needed (i.e. Adoption Centers in South County).



Improvements should not require increased staffing, but rather make managing the shelters less labor intense.

FY 2018-19 Activities

- Continue to evaluate facility needs and deficiencies and continue to make improvements as resources allow.
- Explore the possibility of establishing “satellite” adoption centers (possibly with partners).

Future Activities

- Evaluate current shelter needs (coverage and adoption) and existing buildings (and shelter design deficiencies) in the system (Martinez and Pinole) against expected county growth over the next 5-10 years (includes evaluating needs in South and East county).

Strategic Priority 5

Build and maintain CCAS Operational Excellence. Improve shelter management policies, procedures, and efficiency.



All aspects of shelter operations will be reviewed to determine how they may be improved with operational excellence, customer service, and high quality animal care as the primary considerations. Policies and procedures will be established and adhered to in order to ensure consistently high performance.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 5A - Review and address safety concerns for employees and volunteers as well as the public who have business with CCAS. Identify current and potential future safety concerns. Establish and implement a plan to address concerns now and prevent or mitigate those in the future.



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Identify, assess and respond to current safety concerns.
-  • Assess staff/volunteer interactions with the public for potential safety risks to anyone involved (including public-to-public safety concerns).
-  • Craft initial and routine messages to staff, volunteers and the public to educate on potential concerns and set expectations for civil behavior – in person, on line, or by phone.

Goal 5B - Ensure CCAS operational excellence by improving shelter management policies, procedures and efficiency using the Five Freedoms and ASV Guidelines as the critical criteria for success. Review all aspects of shelter operations with animal quality of life (capacity for care) and customer service as primary considerations.



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Ensure all staff and volunteers are trained on and up-to-date on the Five Freedoms and ASV Guidelines.
-  • Establish and implement policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for staff and volunteers in all areas of shelter, medical and field services departments as needed and maintain a central electronic repository easily available to all staff (and volunteers as appropriate).
-  • Institute a routine process for updating or changing policies. Ensure adequate communication and training throughout, and include changes immediately in a central repository. Ensure new policies are implemented in a uniform manner.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 5B FY 2018-19 Activities Continued

-  • Increase efficiency and lower cost whenever possible.
-  • Ensure employees and volunteers have the authority needed to accomplish their tasks.
-  • Continue to implement policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for staff and volunteers in all areas of shelter, medical and field services departments as needed and maintain a central electronic repository easily available to all staff (and volunteers as appropriate).
-  • Review current practices to ensure maximum use of shelter space and maximum customer access to the Pinole and Martinez shelters.

Goal 5C - Improve Customer Service in all areas where Contra Costa residents and partners (transfer partners, municipal police, Fish and Wildlife, etc.) interact with CCAS. Interactions will be measured with areas of improvement addressed. Training and support to be provided to CCAS staff and volunteers as needed to implement improvements.



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Set clear customer service expectations for staff and volunteers and determine methods for measurement.
-  • Provide customer service training to staff and volunteers, with major push in 2018 and ongoing training after that, including training on how to respond to difficult people and situations.
-  • Institute ongoing metrics systems to assess customer service results from the customer's point-of-view.

Future Activities

-  • Continue to provide customer service training to staff and volunteers, with continued emphasis in 2019 and ongoing training after that, including training on how to respond to difficult people and situations.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 5D - Improve overall shelter-wide metrics tracking. Develop a routine metrics system that tracks the right key measures and can be used to report them out (built on the Chameleon® Shelter Case Management System currently in use).



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  Establish guidelines (pet evaluation matrix) for tracking animals from intake to outcome – this includes confirming and consistently using descriptions for animal medical and behavioral conditions so that tracking metrics are consistent (includes specifics to define “treatable” conditions for example). The guidelines need to be dynamic and change as needed while also simple enough to effectively implement.
-  Identify metrics when instituting any policy or procedure changes.
-  Establish metrics that help understand the drivers of surrender and adoption. For surrender seek to capture the factors that lead to the decision to surrender an animal to the shelter. For adoption find out why some animals are chosen and others passed over (including data on transfer partner decision).
-  Continue to track the factors leading to each euthanasia. Review what is currently gathered and decide what additional information would be helpful to understand euthanasia decisions with the aim to reduce them over time.

Future Activities

-  Hire a consultant to help develop guidelines then implement a metrics input and results system to deliver metrics information for manager’s use in decision-making.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 5E - Strengthen core financial activities through improved forecasting, budgeting, and licensing procedures. Increase employee hiring and retention through improved recruiting, training, and education on policies and procedures.



FY 2018-19 Activities



- Reduce variance occurring in the department's budgeted revenues and expenditures; use multi-year data to develop both revenue and expenditure trends; review with internal and external sources.



- Review results of HR department exit interviews, recruitment practices and results, workers' compensation practices, and compensation information to determine any barriers to retention and recruitment efforts. Address these directly or in combination with County resources.



- Evaluate all contracted services for effectiveness and cost, including enrichment team, veterinary services team, and foster and transfer partner role; use temporary assistance workers as needed while recruiting for open positions.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 6

Increase community engagement and humane education to influence the Contra Costa public to treat animals more humanely and adopt more pets.



Promote adoptions and responsible pet ownership by providing the public with inspiring animal stories and stories of the work being done at CCAS to save animals. Build a strong relationship within the community by communicating CCAS' services and accomplishments in animal welfare. This relationship will allow for better informed and educated community members on caring for animals in a humane manner.

Goal 6A - Increase Communication and Humane Education efforts to the Contra Costa public.



Focus the effort keeping in mind Maddie's Fund Contra Costa Community Assessment that there should be room to expand the population of potential adopters. Some of the communication by CCAS staff should be in support of partners as well as CCAS directly. Humane Education efforts should occur in tight partnership with Contra Costa partners who have a similar interest and capability.

FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Develop a multi-year communication plan to support the mission of CCAS and the implementation of the seven strategic priorities, including communication support for partners where possible.
-  • Promote adoption/responsible pet ownership through humane education.
-  • Inform the public of resources available to support pet ownership including the pet owner intervention program, which includes low-cost medical services available.
-  • Inform the public on requirements and best practices for pet ownership (spay/neuter, licensing, chipping, vaccinations, wellness, flea control, etc.) and how/where to report problem animals (dangerous dogs, wildlife, animals at risk).

Strategic Priorities



- For all humane education and public relations efforts track the number of people reached by the effort.



- Keep a broad channel of communication open to advocates and others with particularly strong interest in animal issues and CCAS.



- In addition to CCAS focus, market partner organization efforts that help the county overall including:

- Recruiting fosters, focusing on the need for and benefits of fostering
- Recruiting volunteers
- Community cat trap and return programs

Future Activities



- Identify the humane education/responsible pet education needs of specific geographic populations and begin to meet them in conjunction with efforts like the targeted pit bull mix and Chihuahua spay/neuter program.



- Provide humane education and how best to work with and support field officers.

Strategic Priority 7

Find new homes for rehabilitated animals and improve their ongoing quality of life.



Once available to move out of the shelter, companion animals can be placed directly in forever homes or transferred to one of our partners (particularly if additional care or rehabilitation beyond what CCAS can provide is needed). By working with Transfer Partners, CCAS can save more animals within the community. Transfer Partners help find new forever homes for CCAS animals so this priority is tightly dependent on successful collaboration. Throughout this process a high quality of care needs to be built and maintained for companion animals in CCAS's care.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 7A - Increase county-wide adoptions through a strengthened Contra Costa-wide collaborative partnership that may include Alameda County partners since they transfer animals from CCAS. Plan and implement ambitious countywide goals consistent with these strategic priorities.



FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Improve total program coverage of Contra Costa partners and seek to identify gaps in services, if any.
-  • Develop partnerships to focus on targeted programs such as Trap, Spay or Neuter and Return for community cats or dog breed-specific programs (for pit bulls and Chihuahuas).
-  • Continue and cultivate partnerships with rescue organizations focused on small mammals, birds and reptiles that have high live release results (such as rabbit rescue). Working with partners, establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to better focus the partnerships, set expectations and improve the relationship and commitment of staff across the partner organizations (and reduce conflict).
-  • Improve and streamline the transfer process of moving animals from CCAS to partner organizations. This includes the following components:
 -  • Transferring before an animal goes offline and is at risk of euthanasia. Taking difficult to adopt animals out of the shelter earlier than currently done.
 -  • Ensuring accountability across both organizations.
 -  • As needed, agreeing to service to be provided both before and after transfer.
 -  • Sharing metrics and results.
 -  • Pursue specific activities and programs with partners.
 -  • Seek collaborative grants to fund work with partners.
 -  • Create a shared matrix of Contra Costa County stats to aid a county-wide view of animal rescue issues.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 7A Activities Continued



- Adopt collective marketing strategies.



- Consider option to provide one CCC Help Desk to refer clients that all partners can use.



- Given the large geography of the county, explore transportation options to improve the efficiency and ease of transferring animals to partners.



- Build and expand the bridge stipend program to support transfer partners who take animals with treatable medical and behavioral conditions. For example, consider a \$100-200 stipend for transfer partners who take animals requiring longer term care for treatment of medical conditions that are outside the scope of CCAS's medical services.



- Build and expand current partnerships with UC Davis, Encino, EBVS and Carrington College to provide services to CCAS through veterinarians and Registered Veterinary Technicians in training.



- Within reason, support state-wide and national efforts to improve animal welfare with the expectation that some benefits will also accrue to CCAS and Contra Costa (for instance, the Shelter Count initiative, which will also ensure focus on monthly results monitoring).



- Consider resource-sharing options like central purchasing to lower per unit costs for needed items.

Future Activities



- Explore options for innovative programs that keep up with evolving best practices - including programs focused on prisoners (dog training), veterans or homeless populations.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 7B - Continually work to increase the overall Live Release Rate while maintaining high quality standards of care based on the Five Freedoms and ASV Guidelines.



This last Goal is the cumulative result of all other efforts to do the most possible with existing resources (use them as efficiently as possible) and work to expand resources (like finding more homes willing to adopt) in order to build and maintain a high quality of care at CCAS while saving as many lives as possible. This is the dynamic balance between quality of care (capacity for care) and the Live Release Rate.

FY 2018-19 Activities

-  • Increase the CCAS Live Release Rate every year over the next five years (with the understanding that improvements in large part depends on resources available and that at some point a relative maximum rate will be achieved and the goal shifts to maintaining a high Live Release Rate).
-  • Ensure that quality of care for the animals is maintained using the Five Freedoms as a broad guide and ASV Guidelines for detailed standards.
-  • Standard of care should encompass all species in the shelter including cats, dogs, rabbits, small mammals, birds, reptiles, etc.
-  • Knowing resources are not infinite, maximize the use of available resources including staff and volunteer expertise, shared partner resources, budget dollars and willing adopters to save the highest number of animal lives possible and seek to expand resources when possible.

Future Activities

-  • Continue to increase the CCAS Live Release Rate utilizing programs, innovations and interventions in animal care and sheltering.

Plan Implementation & Tracking

The Strategic Plan is a living document that will change over time as efforts are made to implement changes. Some changes may come more easily than anticipated, some with more difficulty. Some timelines may prove unrealistic. Tracking ensures that progress is made towards the specific goals outlined in this plan.

Implementation

A key to successful implementation of this plan is to embed changes and improvements into the existing fabric of the organization. Strategic Plan activities should become part of the existing management and culture of the organization. Organizational rewards should be used to encourage achievement of these goals.

The implementation of this plan will include checkpoints for assessing progress towards goal. The effective implementation will depend upon good program management throughout the organization. Program management will include oversight, but also evaluation and monitoring of each program area. As with any plan, these changes are fluid and dynamic and may require changes over time. There will need to be a realistic appreciation of what is possible to accomplish given present commitments and time constraints.

Core services such as fieldwork, animal care, and animal placement/recovery cannot be compromised by new duties and responsibilities for which there are no additional resources. It is imperative that the plan be implemented on the basis of careful planning.

Plan Implementation & Tracking

Metrics and Management Review of Progress by Division and by Executive Team

- Monthly CCAS Metrics - Use existing metrics reports and later use improved reports that are more aligned to Long Range Goals and FY 2018-19 Activities to provide managers and their teams metrics assessing progress toward goals.
- Department Managers - Review progress with their teams and report status and results in existing management team meetings – each department to provide a brief written summary of progress toward goals, obstacles encountered, plans to overcome obstacles and help needed.
- Executive Team - Meet and review overall progress and make strategic plan adjustments (if needed) according to the following calendar. For at least the first year of plan implementation, engage an organizational consultant to drive the process.

Date	Activities
November	Review plan progress and provide guidance throughout the organization and across to partners as appropriate. Also set initial funding priorities for the next fiscal year.
February	Again review plan progress and provide guidance throughout the organization and across to partners as appropriate. Set final funding priorities for the Strategic Plan in the budget request for the next fiscal year.
June	Again review plan progress and provide guidance throughout the organization and across to partners as appropriate. Set final annual changes/updates to the strategic plan including a full listing of Activities for the next fiscal year. The intent is to be clear and communicate activities prior to the Fiscal Year start.

Plan Implementation & Tracking

Cultural Change

In some cases an organization's culture must change to accomplish new and different goals. CCAS is on a path to improve its effectiveness in achieving a challenging and important mission. It's not clear at this point whether this requires a major change in organization culture or more of an evolution of that culture. In order to achieve the many specific long-term goals, several programs may experience significant staff turnover during the transition period.

Some of the actions planned will provide an indication of what will be required to make significant changes. Ensuring policies and procedures are in place for all departments will keep a focus on internal processes. Tracking and improving customer service will help focus on existing strengths and shortcomings to address. Working more closely with Transfer Partners and others will test CCAS's ability to work in tight collaboration with other organizations. Efforts in these and other areas will provide guidance about where the current organization's culture works and where it needs to change.

Change Management

Throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan, change management will be a major key to success. Paradigm shifts have to be managed internally at all levels of the organization and externally on a community-wide basis.

Implementing the Plan – Next Steps

Change Management Continued

Since the Strategic Plan anticipates making many changes to CCAS' practices and procedures, change management principles will need to be included when making those changes.

- Implement routine processes to announce and implement changes in shelter management practices including communication, training and management (sponsor) support.
- Create a routine process for making changes so that there is consistency for frequent but smaller changes. An example might be to switch over changes only on Mondays.
- Ensure that communication about change is as simple as possible and delivered through a consistent mechanism (such as email). Think through the balance between an overwhelming number of changes and a limited consistent cycle of communication every other Monday.
- Involve trained staff in internal/external communications – the Community and Media Relations Officer owns overall responsibility.
- Set expectations with department managers in terms of their role in managing change.
- Communicate significant changes that impact Transfer Partners and provide training as needed.

Collaborative Effort with Partners

Effective implementation measurement should include the efforts of both CCAS and local partners. For example, tracking the number of spays/neuters completed can be measured by totalling those conducted by CCAS plus those conducted by CCAS's partners.

To the degree this kind of funding can be obtained, there will be another driver for measuring outcomes across multiple organizations.

Conclusion

CCAS is committed to serving the best interest of the community and its companion animals. This plan is a manifestation of that commitment and tangibly shows how this organization can achieve that commitment. The Strategic Plan will guide the actions of the staff and volunteers of the organization and is intended to help the organization have a greater impact in the community than ever before. Continued involvement from individuals who care about the work of the organization will be necessary to achieve the goals outlined herein.

As CCAS moves forward, we will continue to assess our customers' needs, both animal and human, and offer the highest quality services available. When valuable resources do not exist, we will evaluate the opportunities to develop plans for how those gaps can be filled. Reassessment and revision will be needed in time as environments and resource availability changes. CCAS is committed to making this plan play a key role in its continued success.

