

The Needs of San Francisco's Homeless Cats

Presented by

Maria Conlon, Co-Director, Give Me Shelter Cat Rescue

Alena Ja, SPCA Volunteer Trapper

September 8, 2022

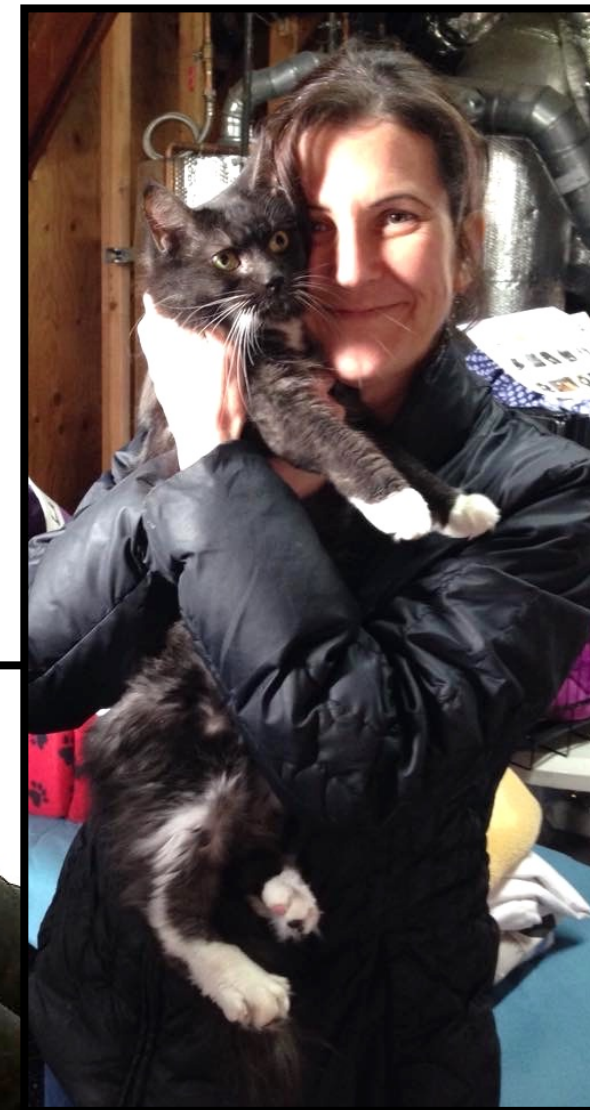
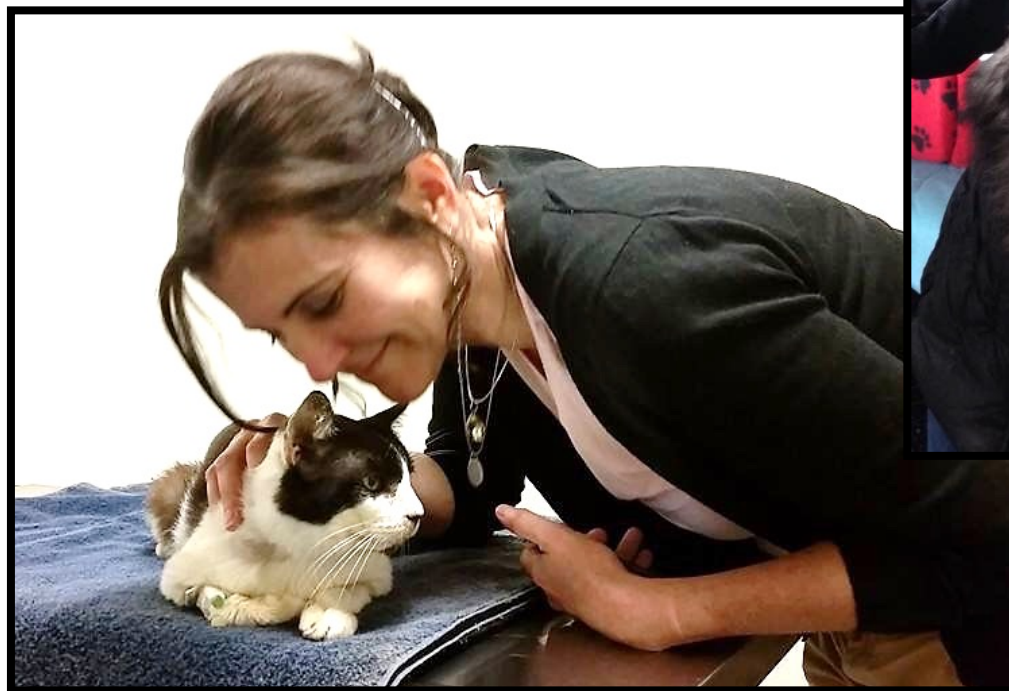


A Little About Us

Maria Conlon, Co-Director, Give Me Shelter Cat Rescue

Maria has been a resident of San Francisco for over 30 years. She started as Red Cat Volunteer at SFACC in 2014, and quickly advanced to an Orange Volunteer. She started fostering kittens for Toni's Kitty Rescue shortly after becoming a SFACC volunteer. During her volunteer service, she met the folks of Give Me Shelter (GMS) when they were in the shelter looking at cats offered to them for rescue. GMS didn't have all of their cats on their website or much of a social media presence, so she began volunteering for them.

8 years later, she now fosters medical and behavioral cats. She is currently treating a cat for FIP and has a diabetic foster. She manages all the foster homes, does all the adoptions, and manages intake of cats and social media. GMS is a grassroots rescue, with only 3 main volunteers, 4 part time roles, and about 20-30 foster homes. She does this while working full-time at a bank with a Design team of 30 people and manages the Design Operations team.



A Little About Us

Alena Ja, SPCA Volunteer

Alena Ja is a San Francisco native and studied Sustainability and Human Rights at Agnes Scott College in Georgia. After graduating, she worked for the Atlanta Mayor's Office in the Sustainability Department.

Her love for wildlife conservation was realized in 2015 when she worked at a biological station on Tortuga Island in Costa Rica, leading sea turtle patrols and mammal surveys. She began rescue work during her Fulbright Malaysia scholarship in 2017, where she taught English and Conservation Biology. Working with the ASPCA in Kota Kinabalu, she was able to get 20 cats and dogs living at her school, SMK Tandek, fixed and vaccinated.

After returning to San Francisco, she worked for Family Dog Rescue, before learning how to TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) with Cat Friends Kalihi on a visit to family in Hawaii. Since learning about the overpopulation problem that San Francisco has in common with Hawaii, she has been a volunteer with the SPCA Community Cat Program, TNRing over 200 cats in 2 years. Recently disabled, she now serves as volunteer Cat Community Director at Andrea's Dream Rescue between treatments.



Overview

- The History of Cat TNR/Rescue in SF
- Benefits of Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR)
- Stories from the Community
- SFACC's New "Healthy, Outdoor Cat Policy"
- Cats and Kittens that Have Been Turned Away by SFACC
- Dangers of Leaving Cats and Kittens Outside
- About SFACC
 - Mission Statement
 - Summary of Statistics
 - Eliminated Programs
 - And More
- Communities that Are Fighting this Policy
- Work with the Community
- Our Goal



The History of TNR/Cat Rescue in San Francisco

- 30 years ago, HUNDREDS of cats in Golden Gate Park.
- Devoted volunteers started humanely trapping them to get them fixed.
- They paid for spay and neuter out of their own pockets.
- Due to this demand, 1993 the SF/SPCA established their free Feral Fix
- There are now hardly any cats in Golden Gate Park.
- Five years ago, San Francisco had gotten very close to ZERO population growth for feral cats in most areas of the city.
- A system that worked! Members of the public who saw unfixed feral cats or homeless mother cats and kittens:
 - Called ACC or SPCA
 - Either trained the finders to trap
 - Or called TNR volunteers who went out and trapped cats and kittens, including unfixed, sick, and injured cats.
- SFACC and SPCA and volunteers worked closely with the public to address this issue.
- San Francisco was on the vanguard, and people from all over the world looked to San Francisco to learn how we care for all the animals in our City.

In 2019, this started to fall apart. Both SFACC and SPCA now have very strict policies regarding intake of cats. SF SPCA does not intake cats with few exceptions. SFACC is not accepting healthy stray, lost, and abandoned cats.



Putting unfixed cats and kittens back on the street means that San Francisco will once again have a huge population of feral cats.

Trapping Cats and Kittens is a Commitment

- Imagine trapping kittens in a dark parking lot at midnight in the Outer Mission with drug dealers all around you.
- Imagine trapping in an alley in the Tenderloin when a homeless person grabs your trap and throws it in a dumpster half a block away
- Imagine getting up at 4:00am, morning after morning, to go to the Western Addition to try to trap a cat who has given birth to multiple litters.
- Imagine getting bitten alive by mosquitoes as you wait in a vacant lot at 5:00am for kittens to go into a trap.
- Imagine sitting in a car **ALL NIGHT** in a tough neighborhood, waiting for a female cat to go in your trap.
- Imagine trapping in a completely vacant construction zone, at night, with no light or bathroom.



Benefits of Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR)

The Impact of Targeted Trap–Neuter–Return Efforts in the San Francisco Bay Area

Daniel D. Spehar ¹ and Peter J. Wolf ^{2,*} ¹ Independent Researcher, 4758 Ridge Road, #409, Cleveland, OH 44144, USA; danspehar9@gmail.com ² Best Friends Animal Society, 5001 Angel Canyon Road, Kanab, UT 84741, USA * Correspondence: peterw@bestfriends.org

“The present study adds to this growing body of evidence by examining the impact of a TNR program on a population of community cats living on a two-mile section of a pedestrian trail adjacent to the San Francisco Bay. An initial population of 175 cats declined by 99.4% over the 16-year program period. Of the 258 total cats enrolled between 2004 and 2020, only one remained at the end of the program period.”



“As of June, 2020, 1 of the 258 cats enrolled in the program (<1%) remained on-site (Figure1); 107(41%) had been adopted, 10 (4%) were admitted into foster care.”

“The adoption of sociable cats and socializable kittens, some of whom first moved into foster care in preparation for adoption, contributed considerably to the observed reductions in population size and was the most common outcome for cats enrolled in the program. Adoption is widely accepted as a fundamental component of TNR best practices [4], in large part because it is effective at expediting reductions in community cat numbers when employed as a complement to sterilization.”

Benefits of TNR

Effect of high-impact targeted trap-neuter-return and adoption of community cats on cat intake to a shelter

J.K. Levy a, *, N.M. Isaza b, K.C. Scott a

a Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32610, USA

b Veterinary Community Outreach Program, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32610, USA

“Many programs combine TNR with adoption of socialized cats and kittens, which creates an immediate reduction in cat colony size, while the permanent, resident cats are gradually reduced by attrition.”

“This study concentrated intensive TNR and adoption in a single urban area with high shelter cat impoundment.”

“Surgical treatment and disposition of 2366 cats admitted to the high-impact TNR program in the target zip code.”

“Approximately half the cats (primarily kittens) were adopted directly from the project or were transferred to rescue agencies for adoption. The adoption of friendly cats is one of the most tangible ways that TNR programs can quickly reduce the number of home-less cats in a community.”

“A program of concentrated community outreach, high-volume TNR and adoption in an 11.9 square km (4.6 square mile) area of high shelter cat intake resulted in a 66% decrease in shelter impoundment over 2 years.”

“The high-impact TNR and adoption rate of approximately 60 cats annually/1000 residents resulted in a reduction in shelter cat impoundment of 66% over 2 years.”



Benefits of TNR

Reproductive capacity of free-roaming SMALL ANIMALS domestic cats and kitten survival rate

Felicia B. Nutter, DVM; Jay F. Levine, DVM, MPH; Michael K. Stoskopf, DVM, PhD, DACZM

“Animals—2,332 female cats brought to a trap-neuter return clinic for neutering and 71 female cats and 171 kittens comprising 50 litters from a cohort study of feral cats in managed colonies.”

“Cats produced a mean of 1.4 litters/y, with a median of 3 kittens/litter (range, 1 to 6).”

“Overall, 127 of 169 (75%) kittens died or disappeared before 6 months of age. Trauma was the most common cause of death.”

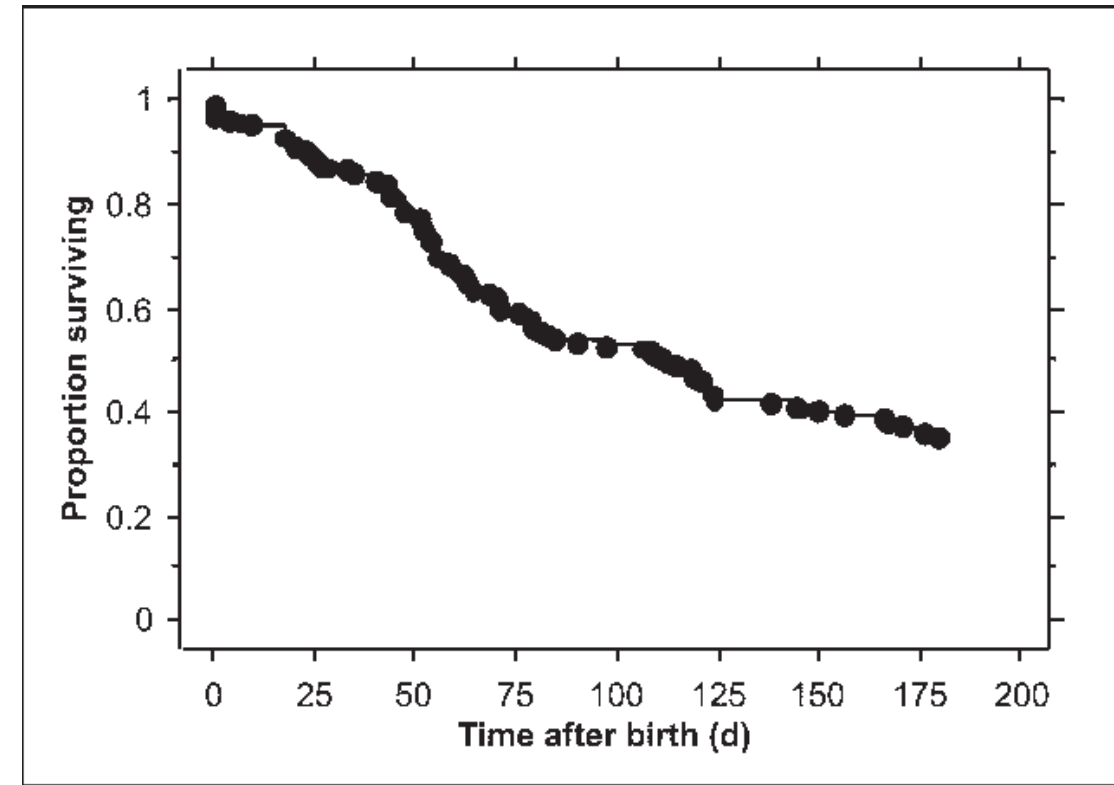


Figure 2—Kaplan-Meier survival curve for 169 kittens born to free-roaming cats. Kittens were observed for 180 days after birth.

Homeless Cats: Not all Cats are Free Roaming or Feral



Stories from the community:

“I was walking down an alley in Chinatown when a young, unneutered orange cat literally ran up to me, climbed up my leg, and wouldn't let go. I called a friend who came to pick me up with the cat, but what would ACC tell us to do according to their new policy?”

“We found a dirty, starving cat wandering on the street. We took her in, washed her and fed her. We took her to the free weekend clinic at Pet Food Express on California to get her vaccinated and checked out. They scanned her and found a chip. We called the chip company and the company put us on hold and called the owners. The bewildered chip company lady came back on the phone after a while and said, “the woman listed said that she had ‘thrown that cat away a long time ago; don't bother calling me about that cat again.’ The customer service lady then asked for our contact information and switched the cat's chip info over to us. We called her “Alley” because we found her in the alley.

Homeless Cats

Stories From the Community:



“Years ago, the people living across the street moved out suddenly and left their cat sitting in front of the apartment building, completely abandoned. We took the cat in immediately, but what would ACC tell us to do according to their new policy?”

“A healthy, friendly orange cat was found living among feral cats in a vacant lot in Visitation Valley. We saw no flyers posted for a missing cat. We posted on Nextdoor and Pawboost. No responses from the ‘owner.’ We called ACC and were told to ‘leave him there in the vacant lot’ so he could ‘find his way home.’ Two weeks later, he was still there.”

Homeless Cats

Stories from the community

“A friend of mine found a cat sitting in front of an apartment building on Lombard Street, a very busy street. Neighbors said the cat had been there for several days. My friend took the cat home and had him scanned for a chip. He was registered to a man who, when contacted, said ‘I don't want him anymore. Just leave him there.’”

“In the midst of half of the units in a housing project in Chinatown being vacated for repairs, with piles of garbage left behind, a friend called me to tell me that a cat was sitting among the furniture left behind. We took the friendly cat inside. He was an unfixed, abandoned cat.”



Homeless Cats

Stories from the community:

People on Next Door posted about a young, scared tabby cat living near homeless people in a parking lot in the Richmond District.

"We posted flyers for blocks around the entire neighborhood. There were no responses from the "owner." When I called Animal Care and Control, they told me to "leave her there in the parking lot."



Homeless Cats



“A very, friendly, handleable, unfixed skinny cat was found among feral cats living in a basement in an alley in Chinatown. When I called ACC about this cat, the person who answered the phone at the front desk told me to ‘leave him there.’”

“My sister's indoor-only, microchipped cat Barney escaped out the front door in Noe Valley. She called ACC to report him as missing and put flyers all around the neighborhood. A neighbor a block away who had not seen the flyers saw Barney in her yard and called ACC to ask what to do. ACC told her to ‘leave him in the backyard, that he would find his way home.’ He didn't and was gone for two weeks. Another neighbor saw Barney and had seen the flyer, so she called my sister and Barney came home safely, no thanks to ACC.”

SFACC New “Healthy Outdoor Cat Policy”

We have heard that the cat rescue community is misleading the public.

We are not.

We are making the public aware of SFACC’s new policy.

Excerpt from Executive Director Donohue in an email to Alena Ja’s inquiry about the SFACC services:

However, **we do not take in healthy cats who are living outside.** Like many shelters we used to do that, but research *has shown that many of those cats were not lost.* Most outdoor cats are within 0.1 miles of the place or person they consider home. Research also demonstrated that animal control officers were *unwittingly picking up people’s pets and bringing them to shelters to find new homes when they actually already had homes.* Multiple studies have now documented that cats are 10-50 times more likely to be reunited with their owners by returning home on their own or being returned to their pick-up location than through a visit or call to the shelter.

Hello,

The information getting passed around about our agency is misleading.

Of course we accept cats. We currently have 16 pages on our website, and more up for adoption:

<https://www.sfanimalcare.org/stray-found-cats/>

The confusion is about a change in our intake policies. People were bringing cats to us that they picked up outdoors. Many of these cats were pets who are allowed to roam - and cats can legally roam in SF. We ask that people do not bring us healthy, friendly cats that they encounter outside.

We always recommend that people keep pet cats indoors to avoid dangers like cars, dogs, coyotes, etc., but many insist that their cat needs to be outside to be happy.

SFACC New “Healthy Outdoor Cat Policy”

From: "Lau, Allen (ADM)" <allen.lau@sfgov.org>

Sent: Thu, Mar 14, 2019 at 12:21 PM

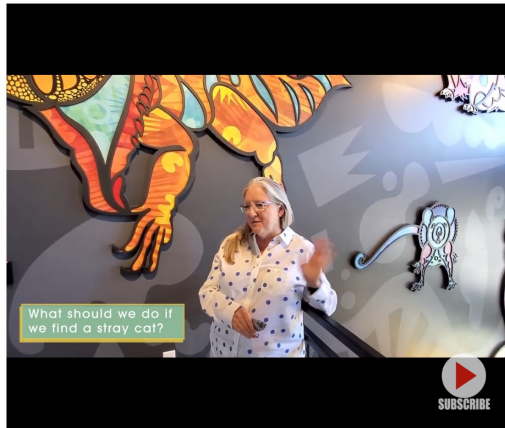
Subject: Cat Impounds at SF/ACC

We are currently revising our standard operating procedures regarding bringing in stray, semi-feral and feral, cats into ACC.

As a municipal shelter with limited resources, we will now be urging all concerned citizens, trappers, and other members of the public not to bring in healthy, stray cats that do not appear to be in distress, especially cats that are happily residing in their communities. This is based on national data that suggests that less than an average of five percent of cats that shelters are re-united with their owners.

Does SFACC have the data to justify this policy regarding how many guardians have complained versus the number of cats that could be saved from living on the streets?

SFACC is Leaving Healthy Cats and Kittens Outside



How long have you been with the organization? What is the SF ACC mission? What sets you apart from other animal care entities in San Francisco?

I have been with SF ACC for 6 years. Our mission is to care for all animals, domestic and wild.

What sets us apart is that we're the only organization with animal control officers, who are on duty from 6 a.m. to midnight to respond to animal emergencies. We're where you



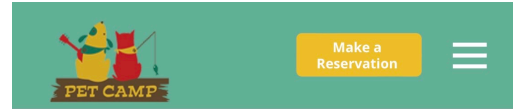
for your lost pets. We're the only organization in the city that has all animals. Here

petcamp.com



What should we do if we find a stray cat?

If you find a stray cat, it's way more complicated. The dogs are just straight forward, you just bring them here and you're good. We don't pick up any stray cats unless they are injured or in distress. Because research shows that most cats are a block and a half from their houses. And a lot of people have outdoor cats. I think you should keep your cat in your house, but a lot of people don't and let the cat out, the cat wanders the neighborhood, knows where it is and isn't actually lost. Whereas, if you pick up the cat and bring it to us or if we pick up the cat, the cat really is then lost. Cats don't have collars, cats should have microchips but a lot of them don't. Then the cat and its family are permanently separated. So we don't do it anymore. We used to do it, all animal controllers used to do it, but research shows that it's not in the cat's best interest. But again, if the cat's injured, not eating or in distress in some way, give the cat to us.



What should we do if we find a stray kitten?

Kittens are an entirely different story. We have a lot of feral cats in the city and those give birth every spring. Last year, we took in about 800 kittens who were found outside. We brought them in, took care of them, fed them, got them spayed and neutered, and adopted.

When you're looking at a group of kittens, you want to make sure that they are really abandoned. Most of the time, the mom is still there, and if she is, the worst thing you can do is separate the kittens from their mom. So you want to wait until you can bring in the entire family once the kittens are weaned (about 4 weeks old), then they can come here.

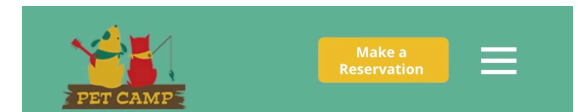
If you wait for 24 hours and the mom does not come back, then maybe the kittens are abandoned and you should call us. We can tell you what to do or we can send an officer out. You can care for them at home or you can bring them to us and we'll find somebody to care for them.

Watch the video at:

<https://www.petcamp.com/what-to-do-if-we-find-a-stray-animal-with-san-francisco-animal-care-and-control/>

People are frantically looking for their dogs.

But not their cats?



Do you always need to surrender a stray animal to SF ACC? Are there rules and regulations?

The best thing to do is to bring the stray animal here because this is where people are trained to look for their lost pet. When you bring it here and you're interested in adopting an animal, you just tell us at the desk and say "if you don't find the owner, can I adopt this animal?". As long as we feel that the animal meets our medical and behavior criteria, as soon as the stray period is up (we have to hold for five days) we'll give you a call and say come on down, take this dog.

SFACC is Leaving Healthy Cats and Kittens Outside



SFACC now believes cats and kittens will find their way home, but what if they don't?

What if they don't have a home?

SFACC has proved how effective they can be at finding cats homes. Their adoption rates and past successes show the system has been working.

A member of the rescue community helped a neighbor with a lost cat that showed up in their backyard meowing. She brought him to SFACC. He was not microchipped or neutered, but his family was able to find him without this. This is a successful reunification that happened in August 2022.

SFACC Turns Away Cats and Kittens in Need

In July 2021, while working on the PG&E yard maimed cats project, Alena Ja tried to bring in four seven-week-old kittens in to ACC in order to make room for fostering one of the injured cats. She was told that ACC's policy was to leave all kittens under three months old outside, and for all kittens over three months to be TNR'd



'It's a mystery': Feral cats in SF colony turn up with unexplained severed legs

The leg of one cat was so badly injured, it fell off after he was rescued.

Tuesday, June 22, 2021



SFACC Turns Away Cats and Kittens in Need

“Sarah found a friendly, stray cat who had a litter of kittens outside. They were weaned and ready to be adopted out. When she was unable to find a home for the mother, she brought her to ACC. An ACC employee told her before she even brought the cat into the shelter, without hearing her story or even looking at the cat who was clearly lactating, that **the mother was a lost owned cat and should be put back outside.** She was able to insist that they take the cat, **but they were extremely rude to her during the process.**”

“Adriana found a friendly, dirty cat wandering in the street, and when she tried to bring the cat into ACC, **she was told it was probably an owned outdoor cat and should be put back outside.** Again, ACC made this decision without even looking at the cat or hearing her story. Adrianna was able to insist they take the cat.”



SFACC Turns Away Cats and Kittens in Need



“A member of the public reached out to me because she had a sweet mother cat with kittens come to her doorstep, then later found a friendly tom cat on the side of the freeway. She had called ACC about them but was told she should try to find the owners on her own in her neighborhood for a month first. She did that, despite the tom cat not being found in her neighborhood, and when she called back after she was unsuccessful for a month, ACC told her she had kept the cats for too long and would need to surrender them as the owner. She was unable to afford the fees, or to find or afford spay or neuter appointments during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the mother cat ended up becoming pregnant again by the tom cat. If she hadn't reached out to me, I don't know how many cats she would've had in her home.”

SFACC Turns Away Cats and Kittens in Need

“On Valentine’s Day 2022, I found a friendly, dirty, and obviously lost and in distress orange tabby **cat running through traffic** on San Bruno Avenue. When I called ACC to get his chip scanned, which I could feel in his neck, they refused to take the cat or even scan the chip, insisting that he was an owned free-roaming cat and should be returned to the intersection I found him at, and that **it was my responsibility rather than ACC’s to reunite the cat to his owners**. I went to a vet on my own for a scan and was on the phone with his owners in less than two minutes. They were overjoyed to have him back.”

REPORT INJURED, SICK, NEGLECTED, ABUSED ANIMALS

Animal Control Officers are available between 6 am and 12 am

If you see an animal that needs help, and that is injured, sick, in distress, or **loose in traffic**, call San Francisco Animal Care & Control dispatch at **(415) 554-9400** between 6 am and 12 am. Calling SFACC ensures that officers can respond in a timely manner. If humans or animals are in immediate physical danger and the situation occurs outside of these hours, call 311 or 911.

To report animal neglect or abuse, please call **(415) 554-9400** or email **acc.dispatch@sfgov.org**

Any information or documentation you can provide will help us investigate your complaint. No reports will be shared with individuals outside of law enforcement without your permission. We ask for your contact information during the report in the event that we need additional information. You may remain anonymous if you choose. Officers will investigate your complaint to ensure that the animal or animals are being treated humanely.

ACO Left Friendly, Unfixed Kitten Outside



Animal Care & Control San Francisco ...

Jul 12 · 🌐

A message from our Executive Director Virginia Donohue: "Our friends at the SFSPCA manage the community cat program. In this unusual case when we had a feral kitten in our hands, we should have brought it over to them for spay / neuter."

Kitten rescue! Officer Clarke reports "Little guy was stuck at the bottom. Must have been about 15 feet down, I tied 3 slip leads together and lowered the loop end down. When he moved his head and shoulders into it I pulled him up. I checked him over and let him go, I had seen a few cats and kittens in the neighboring yard, I think that's where he came from." Thank you Officer Clarke!



"The ACO can easily handle the kitten. If the kitten was friendly, why wasn't he put up for adoption? The kitten had been 15 feet down, yet the kitten wasn't checked by a vet. The kitten was probably unfixed and was returned with other potentially unfixed cats. Why was the kitten returned to an already unsafe situation?"

Author

Animal Care & Control San Francisco

To have a difference of opinion is one thing, but to criticize our Animal Control Officers is another. They work incredibly hard and put themselves in danger to rescue animals in distress, as the kitten in question certainly was. Its life was saved because of the actions of our staff. Did you know that there are only a dozen Animal Control Officers - total - with only two or three in the field at any one time to cover the entire city? Compare that with other first responders... They are brave and dedicated, and residents of the City can be proud of the work they do, we certainly are.



Dangers of Leaving Friendly Cats and Kittens Outside

Lost and abandoned domestic cats and kittens do not know how to survive outside without human support.

Feral cats also face these dangerous conditions:

- Coyotes
- Raccoons
- Humans
- Cars
- Poison
- Dogs
- Birds of prey
- Diseases
 - URI (Upper Respiratory Infection, Panleuk, FIV/FELV, Flea Infestation, etc.)

Ecological degradation also comes from overpopulation.



Coyotes Kill Cats

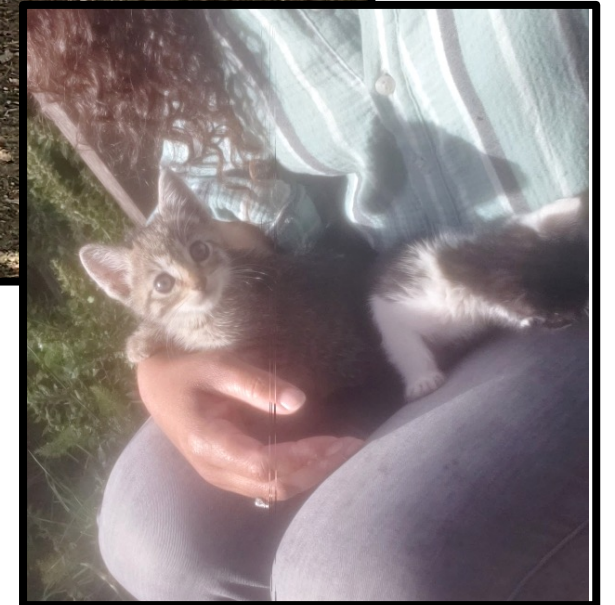


This young, feral cat survived being hunted. Meanwhile, a neighbor's cats was killed by a coyote, and she was only lost for 24 hours.



Animal guardians are advised to keep cats indoors and dogs under control during the day and indoors at night by coyote experts. <https://projectcoyote.org/carnivores/coyote/>

Cats and Kittens are Vulnerable Outside



A member of the public found a mom cat and her six-week-old kittens in her backyard. When she called ACC, she was told to leave them outside.

WARNING: Graphic Image

Outcome of Leaving Vulnerable Cats Outside

Only 3 weeks later the mom was ripped apart by coyotes.

- 2 Kittens Remain Missing
- Only now has SFACC has accepted the remaining 2 kittens



SFACC Mission Statement

The San Francisco Department of Animal Care & Control (SFACC) is a taxpayer-funded, open-admission animal shelter. Since 1989, SFACC has provided housing, care, and medical treatment to wild, exotic and domestic stray, lost, abandoned, sick, injured, and surrendered animals. SFACC's doors are open to all animals in need, regardless of species, medical, or behavioral condition.

The shelter also enforces all state and local Animal Control and Welfare laws and is the first responder for animals in natural disasters and citizen emergencies.

SFACC is the local agency that intends to:

- Shelter homeless, neglected, and abused animals and offer a variety of services to the community.
- Investigate animal cruelty, abuse or neglect, enforce animal welfare laws, rescue wildlife and wild birds in distress, and aid domestic animals in need.
- Adopt, rehome, or reunite domestic animals with their guardians and release wildlife to their native habitat.

<https://www.sfanimalcare.org/about-us/mission/>

A Brand-New Shelter

As stated in the Mayor's Office Press Release:

The shelter is the place to go to take a found pet, or to search for a lost pet.

With nearly double the square footage of the old facility, the new 65,000-square-foot shelter at 1419 Bryant Street includes a modernized veterinary suite, better ventilation, improved cleaning systems to reduce the spread of disease, and mechanisms that more effectively control noise and odors.

The **\$76.4 million** project, which is part of the San Francisco 10-Year Capital Plan, was funded primarily with Certificates of Participation proceeds.

<https://sfmayor.org/article/san-francisco-opens-new-animal-shelter>

SFACC Has Capacity:

Summary of Intake 1994-2021

SFACC is an open admission, tax-payer funded shelter.

SF ACC Live Release Data - Cats Only

Fiscal Year	Cats In	Cats Euthanized	Live Release Rate
2020-2021	2,032	127	94%
2019-2020	2,257	159	93%
2018-2019	2,624	198	92%
2017-2018	2,365	231	90%
2016-2017	2,255	178	92%
2015-2016	2,266	209	91%
2014-2015	2,426	197	92%
2013-2014	2,289	242	89%
2012-2013	2,580	293	89%
2011-2012	2,690	356	87%
2010-2011	3,158	493	84%
2009-2010	3,247	498	85%
2008-2009	4,217	541	87%
2007-2008	3,827	589	85%
2006-2007	4,315	769	82%
2005-2006	4,543	780	83%
2004-2005	4,407	779	82%
2003-2004	4,698	810	83%
2002-2003	4,628	987	79% ← Toni's Kitty Rescue becomes a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
2001-2002	4,611	1,200	74%
2000-2001	4,720	910	81%
1999-2000	4,365	1,112	75% ← Toni Sestak starts kitten foster program June 1999
1998-1999	5,193	1,922	63%
1997-1998	5,339	2,277	57%
1996-1997	5,797	2,544	56%
1995-1996	7,096	3,183	55%
1994-1995	6,750	3,102	54%
1993			← SPCA starts TNR Program
1989			← SF ACC created

NOTE: Records request for intake of kittens has not been received, submitted 7/14/22.

Comparison of Municipal Animal Shelters – Per Capita Budgets/Intake & Live Release Rates

SFACC has more funding and takes in fewer animals than comparable shelters.

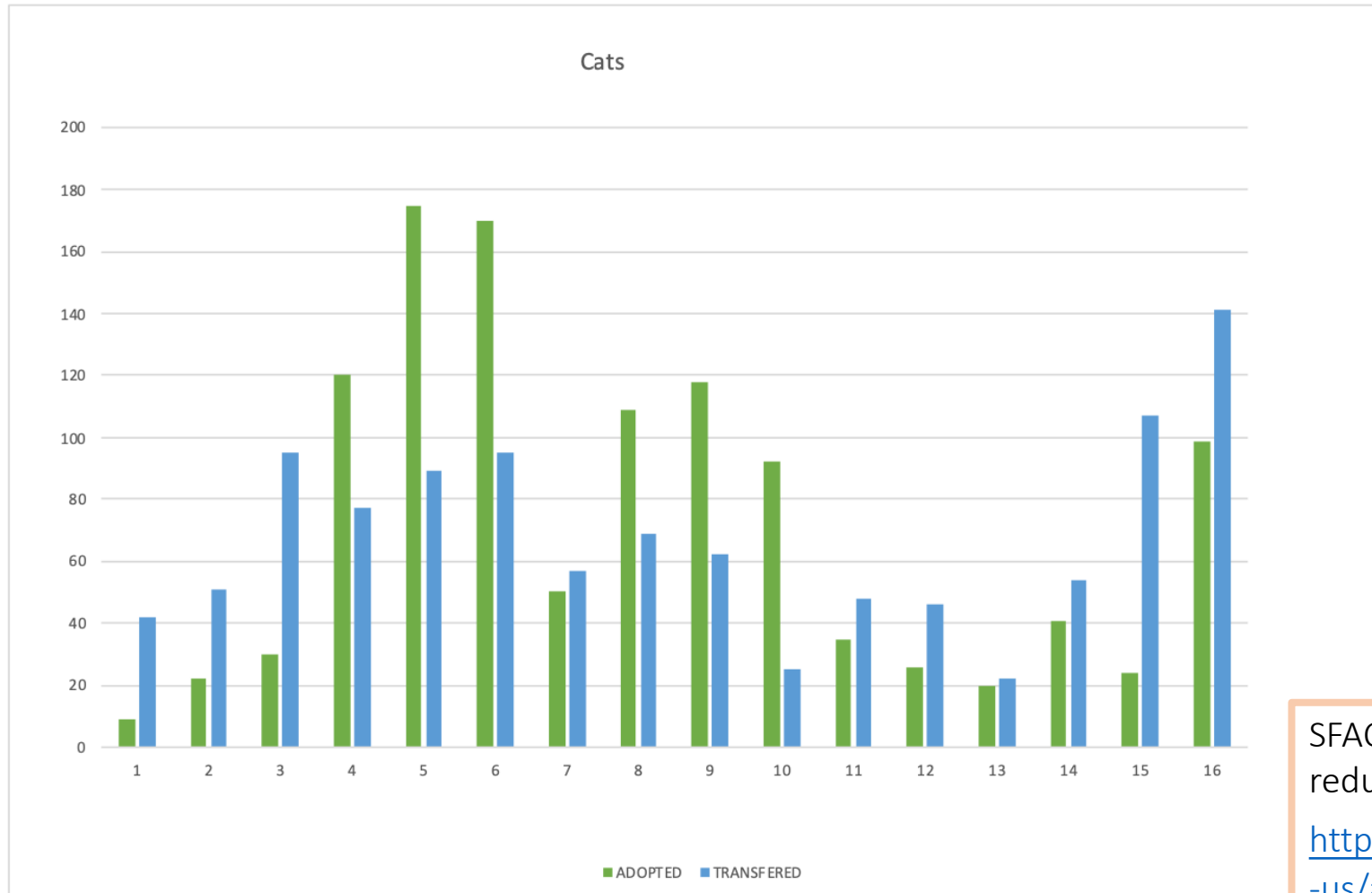
POST-PANDEMIC									
City	State	Population (2020)	Budget*	Budget Per Capita	Year	Intake Total (Cats & Dogs)	Intake Per Capita (per 1,000 residents)	Live Release Rate (Cats & Dogs)	Year
Reno (Washoe County)	NV	464,182	\$ 6,827,475	\$ 15	2021	9,677	21	96%	2021
Austin (Travis County)	TX	1,251,000	\$ 16,046,546	\$ 13	FY 2020-2021	11,329	9	96%	2021
Oakland	CA	422,575	\$ 5,413,317	\$ 13	FY 2021-2022	4,741	11	92%	2021
Dallas	TX	1,339,000	\$ 15,314,969	\$ 11	FY 2020-2021	16,433	12	86%	FY 2020-2021
Ventura (Ventura County)	CA	845,599	\$ 9,611,986	\$ 11	FY 2020-2021	4,589	5	89%	2021
San Francisco	CA	874,784	\$ 9,528,984	\$ 11	FY 2021-2022	3,561	4	94%	FY 2020-2021
San Antonio	TX	1,529,000	\$ 16,135,041	\$ 11	FY 2020-2021	24,635	16	91%	FY 2020-2021
San Jose	CA	1,029,000	\$ 8,878,649	\$ 9	FY 2021-2022	14,445	14	90%	2021
Miami (Miami-Dade County)	FL	2,706,000	\$ 21,610,000	\$ 8	FY 2021-2022	31,281	12	86%	2021
Los Angeles	CA	3,973,000	\$ 25,733,887	\$ 6	FY 2021-2022	28,683	7	89%	2021
Houston	TX	2,313,000	\$ 14,168,907	\$ 6	FY 2021-2022	16,190	7	90%	FY 2021-2022
Phoenix (Maricopa County)	AZ	4,413,000	\$ 18,426,620	\$ 4	FY 2021-2022	18,026	4	93%	2021
Chicago	IL	2,699,000	\$ 7,022,025	\$ 3	2021	10,524	4	79%	2021
New York	NY	8,380,000	\$ 15,921,423	\$ 2	FY 2020-2021	13,547	2	81%	2021
PRE-PANDEMIC									
City	State	Population (2020)	Budget*	Budget Per Capita	Year	Intake Total (Cats & Dogs)	Intake Per Capita (per 1,000 residents)	Live Release Rate (Cats & Dogs)	Year
Reno (Washoe County)	NV	464,182	\$ 5,666,147	\$ 12	FY 2017-2018	10,795	23	95%	2018
San Francisco	CA	874,784	\$ 10,533,698	\$ 12	FY 2018-2019	5,035	6	93%	FY 2018-2019
Austin (Travis County)	TX	1,251,000	\$ 13,911,617	\$ 11	FY 2018-2019	16,147	13	97%	FY 2018-2019
Dallas	TX	1,339,000	\$ 14,878,667	\$ 11	FY 2018-2019	39,132	29	86%	FY 2018-2019
San Antonio	TX	1,529,000	\$ 16,021,241	\$ 10	FY 2019-2020	27,194	18	92%	FY 2019-2020
Oakland	CA	422,575	\$ 4,383,337	\$ 10	FY 2018-2019	4,919	12	85%	2018
Ventura (Ventura County)	CA	845,599	\$ 8,584,863	\$ 10	FY 2018-2019	9,280	11	87%	2019
San Jose	CA	1,029,000	\$ 8,009,684	\$ 8	FY 2018-2019	15,781	15	89%	2019
Los Angeles	CA	3,973,000	\$ 24,910,654	\$ 6	FY 2018-2019	46,825	12	88%	2019
Houston	TX	2,313,000	\$ 14,301,908	\$ 6	FY 2018-2019	23,884	10	85%	FY 2018-2019
Miami (Miami-Dade County)	FL	2,706,000	\$ 16,160,000	\$ 6	FY 2018-2019	32,757	12	85%	2019
Phoenix (Maricopa County)	AZ	4,413,000	\$ 17,871,149	\$ 4	FY 2018-2019	27,451	6	92%	2019
Chicago	IL	2,699,000	\$ 6,843,307	\$ 3	2019	15,322	6	82%	2019
New York	NY	8,380,000	\$ 17,767,129	\$ 2	FY 2018-2019	22,410	3	86%	2019

*Budget figures do not include other shelter revenue such as adoption fees, donations, etc.

Summary of Cats Transferred to Rescue Partners at SFACC

SFACC has reliable pathways to send cats to rescues. This allows a higher capacity for them to take in cats.

	Totals	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Adopted Cats	1140	9	22	30	120	175	170	50	109	118	92	35	26	20	41	24	99
Transferred Cats	1080	42	51	95	77	89	95	57	69	62	25	48	46	22	54	107	141



SFACC agreement with SPCA which reduces euthanasia of animals
<https://www.sfanimalcare.org/about-us/agreement-sfspca-acc/>

SFACC's Basis for New Intake Policies:

- In ACC's email responses to concerned members of the cat community, they refer to "guidance" from the Universities of Wisconsin, Florida, and Davis.
- These articles focus on shelters that are incredibly underfunded, overcrowded, and high kill.
- "New Paradigms for Shelters and Community Cats." UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, 7 June 2015:
 - "Each year, millions of cats lose their lives in animal shelters. We now know that euthanasia of healthy cats in shelters can be replaced with programs that are dramatically more humane and effective for cats and communities alike."
 - "Even friendly community cats are sometimes euthanized. This often takes place after efforts to find a home have failed or the cat has become sick or overly stressed under crowded shelter conditions."
 - "In some cases, simply leaving friendly stray cats where they are, or performing TNR and replacing them in the community, may increase their chances of finding a new home rather than being euthanized in an overcrowded shelter."
 - "While adult cats can thrive in the community, kittens are less likely to survive. In one study, 75% of feral kittens died or disappeared before 6 months of age, a survival rate similar to other small carnivores. TNR programs will alleviate this risk by reducing reproduction. Kittens should also be prioritized for rehoming through sheltering programs whenever possible."

SFACC's Basis for New Intake Policies:

- “Rethinking the Animal Shelter's Role in Free-Roaming Cat Management.” Hurley, Kate F, and Julie K Levy. 8 Mar. 2022:
 - “Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, this consisted primarily of ad hoc admission of cats captured by members of the public, **with euthanasia being the most common outcome.**”
 - “In North America alone, **hundreds of millions of cats have been impounded and euthanized** and billions of dollars invested in such programs.”
 - *“Offering low-cost spay/neuter for additional cats in the neighborhood can open the door to education on responsible feeding practices, management of cat waste and other mitigation strategies.”*
 - *“The practical value of engaging with caregivers and concerned community members should not be underestimated.”*
 - “In this **individualized case management approach**...a situational assessment is performed to determine the most appropriate course of action. Similar to **calling an “advice nurse”**... **this provides an opportunity to gather information, identify whether shelter admission is the best solution, and provide alternatives** where indicated..”
- SFACC does not fall into the category of overcrowded, under-funded, high kill shelter
- SFACC as far as we know have not rolled out additional programs to support community-centered sheltering.

Why go backwards now?

Successful Programs Eliminated at SFACC

Orange Volunteer Program

- Volunteers worked exclusively with behavior cats and shy/feral kittens, which allowed these cats/kittens time to acclimate to the shelter.
- Volunteers could focus on the cats/kittens that needed the most support and consistent socializing. They could go in regularly and focus on the cats/kittens that need socialization.
- In a 2017 meeting, a shelter representative told volunteers that as a result of the successful program, they had only euthanized one behavior cat.
- Historically, the kittens were socialized and adopted or transferred to rescues.

The Orange Volunteer program was replaced by the PURR Program.

PURR Program

- There are limited hours volunteers can go in.
- Volunteers can't consistently work with a cat that needs support.
- The pathway is shorter, with less time for a cat/kitten to adjust to the shelter before returning to the field or offering to a rescue.
- The Kitten behavior is rated; if kittens are rated a 4 or 5, they are automatically TNR'd. and volunteers are not allowed to touch them



Other Successful Programs Eliminated

- **CIP (Call Interested Party):**

- Finders surrendering the animal could opt in.
- They would get a call in the event of the animal was scheduled to be euthanized.
- This allowed finders to have vested interest in the animal and even gave them a chance to save the animal's life.

- **Open Hours:**

- Replaced by the appointment system due to COVID restrictions.
- This limits the public's ability to bring in animals at convenient times.

- **Foster Limitations:**

- SFACC now only allows kittens under 2.5 months to go into foster, severely limiting their intake capacity.
- Shy or under-socialized kittens are rarely allowed to go into foster, where one-on-one interaction would most benefit them and put them on the pathway to adoption.



Community Takes on the Burden

- Members of the rescue community take on the responsibilities of SFACC by vetting friendly cats and kittens that SFACC refuses to take.
- Alena Ja brought in *61 cats to SFACC. Another 20 cats she rescued went to Give Me Shelter*, some of which were rejected by ACC.
- The out-of-pocket costs to rescue *falls on individual rescuers*.
- Give Me Shelter (a predominately adult cat rescue) adopts out about 200-250 cats annually.
- Andrea's Dream (a predominately kitten rescue) adopted out 300 cats and kittens in 2021.
- Give Me Shelter and Andrea's Dream Rescue receive regular calls and emails about found cats and kittens in San Francisco.

Nine Lives S/N Costs

Privately-Owned Cats

Low-Cost Spay
(female cats)
\$175.00

Includes spay surgery, general anesthesia, pain medications & SQ fluids if cat is pregnant.

Other charges may apply.

Low-Cost Neuter
(male cats)
\$140.00

Includes neuter surgery, general anesthesia & pain medications.

Other charges may apply.

Rescue Cats

There is a \$20 copay for spay/neuter rescue cat vouchers, per cat.

Low-Cost Spay
(female cats)
\$85.00

Includes spay surgery, general anesthesia, pain medications & SQ fluids if cat is pregnant.

FVRCP & Defensor Rabies \$10/each.

Other charges may apply.

Low-Cost Neuter
(male cats)
\$70.00

Private Vet S/N Cost

Ocean Avenue Hospital \$1000

Colma Animal Hospital \$900

Meanwhile ACC has \$9.5M budget, and is a tax-payer funded open admission shelter

We are Not Alone, Communities are Speaking Out

San Francisco's petition has 2100 signatures and growing
<https://www.change.org/ReformSFACC>

The community is speaking out in these cities, counties and more:

- Rochester
- Front Street, Sacramento
- Contra Costa County
- Tracy
- Solano County
- Santa Clara
- San Diego
- Austin
 - Austin was a model shelter but is now under criticism. They asked for feedback but, despite the community's concerns, they still refuse to take in stray animals.

Communities with petitions and more

Rochester, over 80,000 signatures: <https://www.change.org/p/city-of-rochester-demand-that-rochester-ny-animal-servicers-re-open-its-shelter-to-take-in-homeless-cats>

Front Street Open (Sacramento): <https://www.change.org/p/darrell-steinberg-reopen-front-street-animal-shelter>

Fix Front Street: <https://www.change.org/p/fix-front-street-we-call-for-new-management-and-a-complete-audit-of-shelter-operations-policies-and-procedures>

San Diego Humane Society gets sued:

<https://www.10news.com/news/local-news/lawsuit-against-san-diego-humane-society-over-policy-of-releasing-friendly-cats-to-streets-moves-forward>

Petition details

Comments

Updates



Make Animal Care & Control an "Open-Door" Shelter Again

2,100 have signed. Let's get to 2,500!



SFACC Is over Capacity for Dogs and Turns Away Dogs in Need



Animal Care & Control San Francisco

3d · 🌐

SFACC is full of dogs again! We're currently at capacity and ask you to delay surrendering dogs if possible. Please wait to surrender your dog until after Labor Day if at all possible.

The overpopulation problem is primarily with our 'Custody' dogs. SFACC takes in owned dogs for a variety of reasons: a guardian was jailed; a guardian is hospitalized or died; a dog has been seized by our officers as part of a cruelty investigation; a dog has been seized for biting or attacking; a dog is here as part of a program called 'Safe Pets' that protects victims of domestic violence. Many, many reasons. These dogs are here indefinitely until their situations are resolved. We also continue to take in stray dogs that are in our care for a holding period to see if an owner claims them. We also need time for our Behavior & Training team to assess stray and owner surrendered dogs for our adoption program here at SFACC, or for transfer to an adoption partner. Our staff is constantly juggling dogs! We do have adoptable dogs too – but definitely not even close to the same amount as our custody dogs and incoming stray/lost and owner-surrendered dogs.



Next Door post from Sept. 6, 2022

can't believe acc is refusing to take a stray dog that was running the streets
In this heat the poor dog must be about 14 and is coughing obvious distress and My girlfriend wanted to just drive the dog down there and-the guy at ACC told my friend to put the dog in the car crack the windows and give it some water and leave it there overnight and bring it in in the morning this is an old stray dog coughing in distress and that's what they told her to do I can't believe that that must be somebody not very well trained answering the phone because usually I never have a problem with them they always are so good with strays
I've taken injured dogs to them and they've taken better care of them right away than I would've had to wait hours in an emergency room But that seems counter to what ACC stands for I wouldn't of believed it if i was w her

😞😭❤️ 7

🤍 Like 6 ↗

Outcome

it was chipped and is being returned to owner it spent the night in the garage acc took her in during business hours this was a sick dog and the people picked her up because it was roaming on lincoln blv im sorry the city investing millions in a shelter was not well thought out plan nor we don't have enough money for overnight care for somebody to take a sick dog so we invest in a building we can't staff then maybe we need to reassess Who's in charge the shelter is at capacity because it's poorly staffed They just don't have enough people to take for the dogs and people instead of property spend the money on the animals instead of spending so much board that decide what to do with them

What would have happened to this dog if the finder could not have housed him overnight?

Educate and Support the Community

- Rescues and members of the public are **invested in the care and wellbeing** of the animal.
 - **Why not work together to save as many animals as possible?**
- Educating the public means giving them tools and knowledge, which:
 - Allows them to act **with purpose and efficiency** when finding cats in need
 - Gives them the authority to **educate others**
 - Helps give the public a purpose, while **reducing the burden for SFACC Officers and staff**
- **Why not make the finder a foster?**
 - They **are invested in the animal** and may have the capacity/room to care for them.
 - With simple training and resources, they can responsibly and capably take care of friendly healthy cats.
 - **They may become a valuable foster for life.**
- SFACC could be creating **community and empowerment**, continuing the legacy of the **grassroots cat rescue efforts of San Francisco.**

Why aren't these instructions given when people call SFACC?

Step 1. Determine if the cat is sick or injured.

If you answered YES to any of these questions, please contact SFACC Dispatch (415.554.9400) for further assistance:

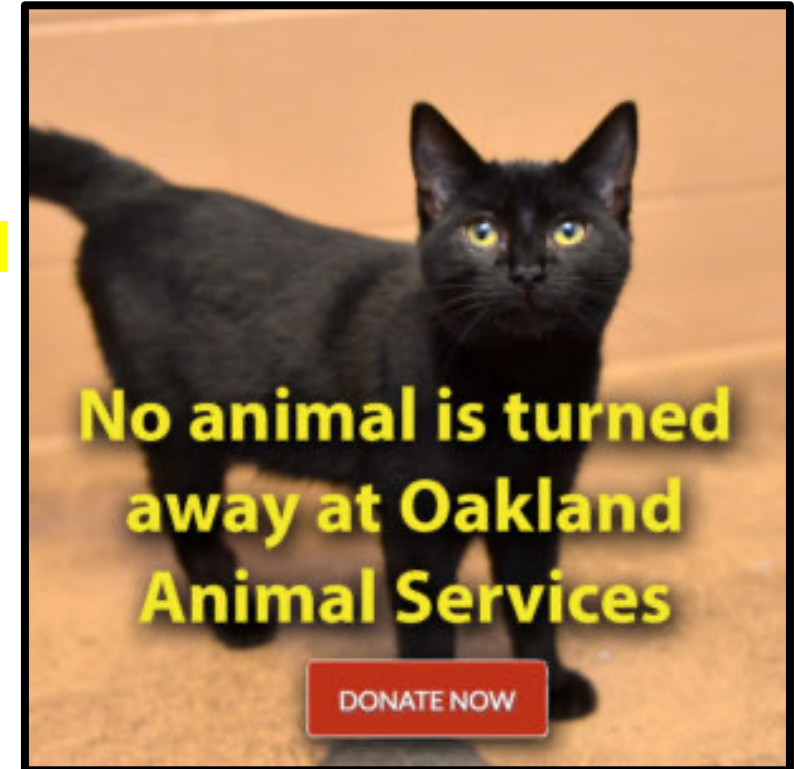
- Does the coat appear dirty, unkempt or missing patches of fur?
- Are there visible wounds or bleeding?
- Is the cat mobile, reluctant to move or limping?
- Does the cat have discharge from the eyes or nose or difficulty breathing?
- Is the cat vocalizing or displaying unusual behavior?

<https://www.sfanimalcare.org/lost-found-pets/report-a-found-pet/>

Support for Cats and Community: Oakland Animal Services

Found a pet?

- If you found kittens, please click [here](#).
- If you think you found an adult feral cat, please click [here](#).
- **Thank you for helping a lost animal.** If you found a stray pet, please bring the animal to the shelter during our [open hours](#).
- It is important that you bring the pet into the shelter so that we can get **information about them** and **post to our found animals page** on our website, **which is where most pet owners look for their lost pets.**
- The law requires that you report any stray dog or cat that you find in the City of Oakland to Oakland Animal Services. While **we encourage you to try and find the pet's owner by calling the phone number on their tag, asking your neighbors, putting up flyers, posting on social media, scanning for a microchip (which can be done at any veterinary clinic or animal shelter), etc.,** you **MUST** also report the lost pet to Oakland Animal Services.
- **Are you able to hold onto the animal just a little longer?**
- **Be kind.**



Our Goal: Bring Healthy Cats & Kittens into SFACC

- San Francisco has so many cats in need, and members of the public and the rescue community can't rescue by themselves. We need SFACC to provide services to these cats in need.
- We'd like to know why this change is happening now after **30 years**, after successfully programs have helped cats find homes and controlled overpopulation.
- Why have the proven programs been abandoned?
- What needs to be done in order to support SFACC to be able to continue to take in healthy cats and kittens in need?
- Potential Future presentations: SFSPCA Community Cats Program, and Give Me Shelter Cat Rescue

