

12.0 HUMAN RESOURCES

12.1 PERSONNEL/ POLICIES

12.11 STAFFING LEVELS

Observations:

The HSUS team was advised that MDPASU did not have enough staff throughout the site visit. According to the organizational chart provided to the HSUS team MDPASU had 54 full-time staff, 35 part-time staff, and seven sworn staff. Thirteen of the positions were vacant. Seven of these vacancies were for kennel staff, which amounts to one third of the necessary staff in animal care. The HSUS team was advised that these positions were frozen.

It was explained that part-time staff is not allowed to work more than 39 hours per week. The HSUS team was unable to ascertain why this many employees fall under part-time status; however, we believe it is because part-time staff do not receive the benefits that full-time staff do.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Explore making the majority of part-time employees full-time.
- ✓ Immediately fill vacant positions; especially kennel staff, since a large number of complaints are being received about animal care issues.
- ✓ Until such time as an experienced animal control director is hired, and the police leave MDPASU, no major changes in staffing should be undertaken. Any changes in staffing should be the decision of the new animal control director.

Recommendations:

It is very hard to determine what the correct staffing level is for animal care and control agencies, because no two provide identical levels of service. It is like comparing apples to oranges.

There are virtually no national guidelines for staffing except the National Animal Control Association (NACA) recommendation which states one ACO for every 16,000-18,000 of human population. Using that estimate, MDPASU would need 100+ ACOs, which is probably not realistic or affordable.

If all part-time animal care positions were made full-time and all positions were filled, The HSUS team believes this would be an adequate number to provide humane and effective animal care. In addition, making these positions full-time provides more incentive for employees to stay with the organization.

12.2 STAFF TURNOVER

Observations:

Based on interviews with MDPASU staff, turnover is very low, which is very uncommon in animal care and control.

Recommendations:

✓ None

Discussion:

There could be a number of factors for low turnover including employees recognizing the benefit of working for MDPASU and enjoying their work. Salary and fringe benefits may make the staff feel stable in an otherwise lower salaried community for similar service in the private sector. In any case this should be considered positive. Making the part-time staff full-time giving them full benefits may decrease turnover even more.

According to the Society of Animal Welfare Administrator's (SAWA) last salary and resource study, of the agencies who responded to their survey they report an average of 48% annual turnover in kennel staff, and an overall 34% turnover rate for all positions agency wide from the responding agencies.

13.0 FINANCIAL ISSUES

13.1 GENERAL FINANCIAL ISSUES

Observations:

The SOPs state that MDPASU is a self-proprietary unit which operates from fees and fines collected countywide. This revenue is partly raised by charging relinquishment and other fees, impoundments, rabies vaccinations, citations, adoption fees, and licensing fees.

The biggest issue for MDPASU related to budget is the unrealistic expectation that it should be self sufficient. It is agreed that animal care and control units should try and generate revenue from people who create the need for the services to the extent possible. However, during the last budget cycle MDPASU received approximately \$900,000.00 general fund support for the program with a 5.575 million dollar budget, plus an additional 1.5 million in unbudgeted police personnel costs. As in most animal control programs between two thirds and seventy five percent of the budget is related to salary and fringe benefit costs for employees. Miami-Dade County is close enough to these ranges that this is not an issue worth addressing.

With an estimated service population of 2,312,478 citizens, the county expenditure per capita for animal care and control is \$2.47 per person. These numbers were provided by the Miami-Dade County Office of Strategic Business Management Performance Improvement Division, which also completed a review of MDPASU.

The Animal Control Trust Fund was one million plus dollars in 2001 and is now less than \$70,000. These funds, primarily donated by citizens after Hurricane Andrew, should have been restricted and not used to subsidize operational costs. The Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General is conducting an internal audit, which should address this issue more in-depth.

Recommendations:

- ✓ When and if the police leave, part of the 1.5 million dollars they provide in unbudgeted support will have to be supplemented by general fund dollars.
- ✓ The International City County Management Association (ICMA), in a special report on animal control programs for local government, recommends that local government budget four to seven dollars annually per human inhabitant for the operation of an effective animal control program.¹¹⁴ Using this formula Miami-Dade County is running a minimally funded operation and should strive to meet the minimum of \$4.00 per person, which equals a budget of \$9,249,912.00. The difference between current revenue generated and this figure should be achieved with general fund dollars. It should not be expected that the cost of animal control will be fully recovered by mandatory registration fees, impoundment fees, and other user fees.
- ✓ The budget for adequate service delivery for MDPASU should be prepared by an

114 International City/County Management Association (ICMA), "Animal Control Management, A Guide for Local Governments," page 3*

experienced animal care and control director, projecting realistic anticipated revenues that can be generated and the necessary funding difference provided from general fund dollars.

- ✓ Any additional funds donated to MDPASU need to be earmarked for projects above and beyond what the normal budgeted operating costs are. They need to go into a trust fund specifically restricted for this purpose.

Discussion:

The expectation that MDPASU should be self sufficient is unrealistic and currently not achieved by any governmental animal control agency in the U.S. to the knowledge of The HSUS. Animal care and control is a public health and safety service. The HSUS, while not having revenue estimates for other Miami-Dade County public health and safety departments, is confident MDPASU raises more of its cost of operation than any other county department.

Citizens will not donate to municipal animal care and control agencies unless they know their donations will not go into the general fund or be used to pay salaries of existing employees.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the nation's largest animal-protection organization, with more than seven million constituents. The HSUS was founded in 1954 to promote the humane treatment of animals and to foster respect, understanding, and compassion for all creatures. Today our message of care and protection embraces not only the animal kingdom but also the Earth and its environment. To achieve our goals, The HSUS works through legal, educational, legislative, and investigative means. The HSUS's efforts in the United States are facilitated by our regional offices; we are not, however, affiliated with any local animal shelters or humane organizations. Our programs include those in humane education, wildlife and habitat protection, farm animals and bioethics, companion animals, and animal research issues. The HSUS's worldwide outreach is supported by our global family of affiliated organizations.