

APPROVED
MAR 13 2013

Alina T. Hudak
Deputy Mayor



Animal Services Department Business Plan

Fiscal Years: 2013 and 2014
(10/1/012 through 9/30/14)

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Alex Muñoz, Department Director

Approved by:

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Alina Hudak, Deputy Mayor

Plan Date: December 14, 2012

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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Department Mission

Miami Dade County Animal Services Department is responsible for implementation of Chapter 5 of the County Code. The Department's mission focuses on saving lives of abandoned animals, the protection of people and pets from health related issues, and public safety. The mission is primarily accomplished through the following programs and services: rabies prevention, dog licensing, low-cost sterilization, commercial pet regulations and permanent placement of lost/stray animals in new homes, rescue organizations and transfers – thus reducing the euthanasia rate and increasing our save rate. The Department's ability to increase its life saving capacity has greatly benefited from its selection by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), in partnership with the Humane Society of Greater Miami (HSGM) and The Cat Network to increase the amount of animal lives saved. Overall, 31,224 homeless pets were handled by the shelter by the end of the fiscal year. The shelter can house approximately 400 cats and dogs at any given time and admits an average of 80-100 pets daily. Since 2005, adoptions have increased by 140% from 3,000 to 7,252. The dog save rate is 76.21% and represents an all time high for the amount of dogs saved. Similarly, the rate of several cat program has yielded the highest cat save rate ever of 35.83%. A comparison between species for FY 10/11 and FY 11/12 is provided below:

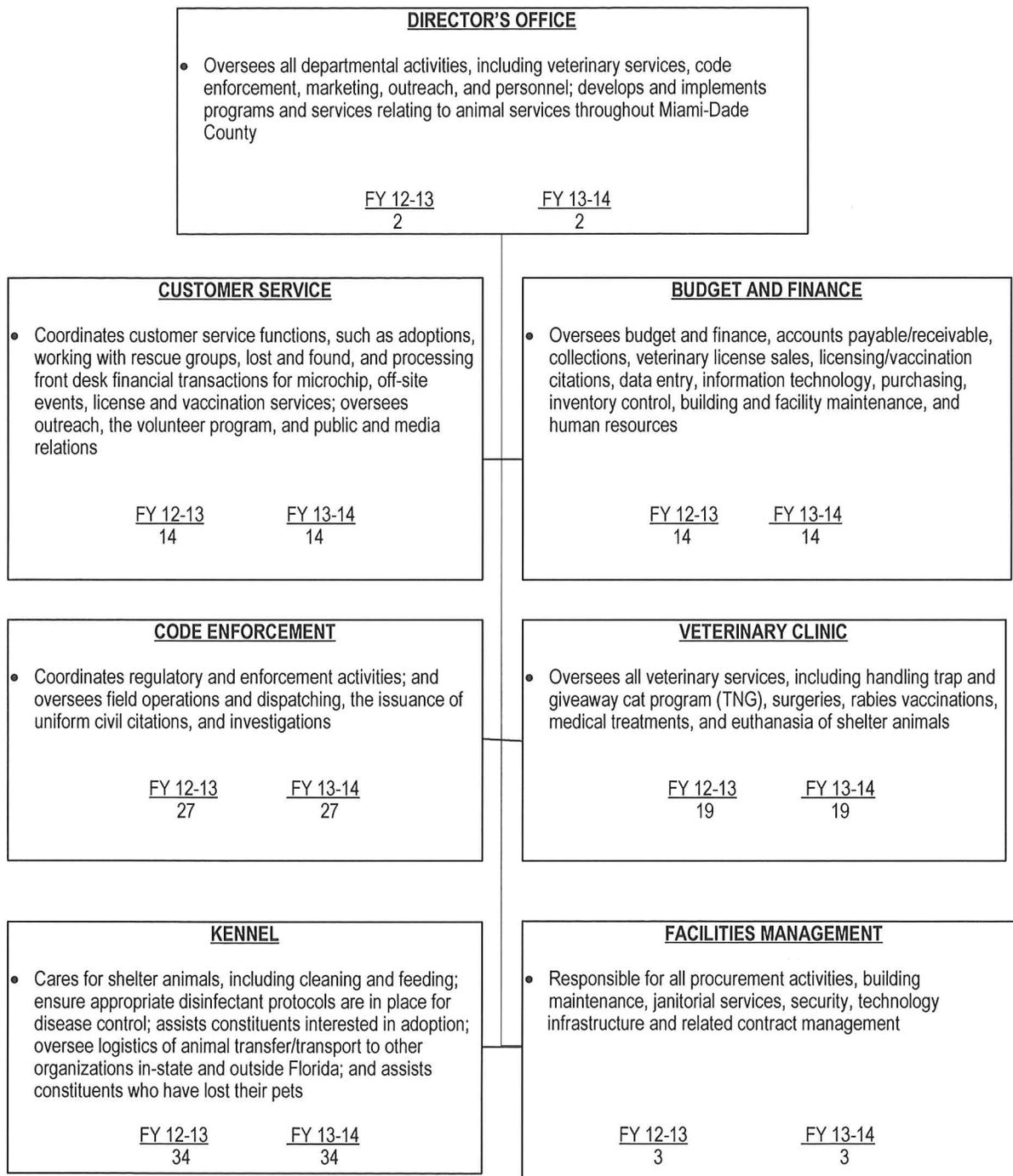
Save Rate Breakdown			
Fiscal Year	Cats	Kittens	Species Overall Avg
FY 11/12	31.14%	39.43%	35.83%
FY 10/11	19.13%	34.02%	26.15%
Fiscal Year	Dogs	Puppies	Species Overall Avg
FY 11/12	72.43%	87.90%	76.21%
FY 10/11	68.92%	81.21%	71.91%

The Department has proactively developed partnerships with over seventy (70) rescue organizations in pursuit of accomplishing its main mission to save lives. Through these relationships, the Department has successfully transferred 7,840 pets to other facilities for adoption opportunities and treatment. ASD together with the ASPCA and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), has joined the Southeast Florida Spay/Neuter Coalition, a tri-county initiative, providing targeted spay/neuter services and vaccine clinics to areas within Miami-Dade County producing the highest owner surrender intake (dogs) in calendar year 2011. A total of 78 dogs were surrendered from owners within the one square mile area, 47 of which were juveniles. The goal is to reduce owner surrender intake from the target area by 90%.

As part of the Neighborhood and Infrastructure strategic area, the department's key responsibilities include licensing, enforcing vaccination requirements for both dogs and cats, protecting the public from stray and dangerous dogs, promoting animal adoption and public education, and investigating animal cruelty cases. The Animal Services shelter opens to the public seven days a week for adoptions, lost and found, licensing and micro-chipping, spay/neuter services, pet vaccinations, intake of stray and owner surrender pets, and euthanasia requests for citizens with sick and injured pets.

The department's services are available to all Miami-Dade County residents.

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Strategic Alignment Summary

The department's efforts align with Miami-Dade County Strategic Plan Goal of providing "Safe, healthy and attractive neighborhoods and communities".

- Objective: GG1-1: Provide easy access to information and services
- GG1-4: Improve relations between communities and governments
- GG4-2: Effectively allocate and utilize resources to meet current and future operating and capital needs
- NI4-2: Promote livable and beautiful neighborhoods

Our Customer

The department has a broad customer base – comprised of pet owners, shelter visitors (over 60,000 people visited Animal Services last year), 70 partner rescue organizations and approximately 200 veterinary clinics and pet dealers, as well as the community-at-large. The department also received over 25,000 enforcement related service requests every year.

Visitors to our facility include those wishing to adopt, redeem their lost pet, or secure one of the low-cost services available to them (i.e. microchipping, spay/neuter surgery, vaccination). Others visit to ensure compliance with Chapter 5, such as licensing and vaccination requirements or to resolve a violation issue. To direct the heavy traffic flow within the facility and improve customer service, when possible, staff and volunteers are utilized to respond to customer inquiries on the adoption floor. Additionally, bilingual flyers, titled "Are you here to Adopt" are located at both adoption entry points – the lobby area and adoption floor (kennel) providing step-by-step instructions on the adoption process, shelter services and related fees.

During FY11/12 and FY12/13, the department launched a new online service and developed a second application to provide greater accessibility to constituents. Online tag research enables constituents to view their account to determine if content information is accurate and the expiration date of their pet's license and/or vaccination. The second application - online tag renewal provides easy and convenient access to purchase dog licenses. This application is expected to launch in FY 12/13.

These efforts are expected to improve the rate of compliance. In an effort to decrease the number of non-compliant pet owners which can result in citations being issued on the enforcement side, recorded messages through the county's call center are made 45-days in advance along with the required renewal notices. The department is monitoring any increase in its performance measures already recorded on Active Strategy (i.e. adoption rate, number of vaccines, etc...) to determine if these improvements are having an impact.

To facilitate communication with the veterinary and pet dealer community, the department has developed a section on the website dedicated to this segment of the community. The site includes forms, instructions and legislative information which impact their business operations. At the end of each fiscal year, the department provides an overview of any upcoming changes, as well as addresses various issues that arise during the year. Posters and guidebooks have been developed and distributed to ensure that information is readily accessible by all. Onsite bi-annual orientations

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were also scheduled to discuss legislations and develop open line of communications with our biggest community partner – the veterinary community. Currently, the department is researching the feasibility of developing an application that may provide clinics with the ability to update rabies and licensing information online for their clients, thus eliminating the delay associated with submitting records on a monthly basis and updating accounts.

Communication and input from the community is essential to the ultimate success of any mission. As stated, our Community is comprised of many stakeholders. The department is reaching out to gain input on processes from pet owners, animal welfare advocates, rescue groups, pet dealers and the veterinary community. We must strive to communicate our successes and challenges with our stakeholders if we are to accomplish our mission of saving more lives. Advocacy and community involvement are an integral element of most shelters. The department is researching methods and developing a media plan that can be used to further our mission.

To that end, staff is meeting with any and all groups or individuals interested in advocating for certain programs, policies and recommendations related to how we operate the public shelter. The reality remains that the department is not resourced to support all programs. As resources are identified and become available, initiatives will be prioritized with primary consideration given to programs that are large enough to make a difference. To monitor customer satisfaction, a survey is also being developed and placed on the department's website to seek feedback from constituents. The same survey will be provided to shelter visitors.

Whether or not you own a pet, the constituency of Miami-Dade County is also one of our customers. Anytime someone calls to report an injured animal, a cruelty case, a dog bite to a person, dead animal pickup, a stray – our Enforcement Team is there for them. Last fiscal year, 25,219 service requests were received by the department with 8,373 closed as overdue. Every year, the response time has been hindered as a result of staff reductions. Regardless of the challenges ahead, management will assess all resources and processes to determine their optimal use.

KEY ISSUES

- 1) Providing optimal housing and animal care with limited resources and inadequate facility.
- 2) Transitioning to New Shelter
- 3) Strengthening relationship with community and partners (i.e. pet owners, community, veterinary stations, pet stores, community advocates, rescue organizations and other shelter organizations)
- 4) Utilizing limited resources to meet business and operational demands – in all areas
- 5) Promoting legislation that supports the mission of the department to “Increase the Live Release Rate”
- 6) Protecting community pets through outreach efforts and providing access to low cost treatment
- 7) Developing and implementing programs associated with the straw ballot recently approved by Miami-Dade County voters to dedicate a portion of the county millage to increase the amount of animals saved, reduce euthanasia and provide greater sterilization services
- 8) Implementation of No Kill Initiative

The purchase of the new facility could not have occurred at a more opportune time given the systemic structural problems at the existing shelter. The archaic plumbing, sewage and electrical system have shut down areas on occasion. Additionally, there is no temperature control for the majority of the animal holding areas, which presents a problem during cold spells and high temperatures during the summer. The physical plant of the current facility presents many challenges that may not be worth fixing as our intention is to move into a new facility within 18 to 24 months. This fact presents serious challenges that will not disappear during the next two years as the current facility is not acceptable for



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many of the sheltering demands and responsibilities that we must address daily. The building is unwelcoming, worn, limiting and does not provide an environment conducive to adoptions. Transitioning to a new facility will create other challenges, such as an increase in housing capacity and square footage. As we expand to a larger shelter, the department's ability to maintain current service levels in the area of maintenance and care of animals will be impacted. Additional resources may be required to care for more animals given that the increase housing capacity will allow for longer stay periods. Other operational expenditures, such as electricity, pet food, cleaning supplies and janitorial services are expected to be impacted. Fortunately, the new design includes a separate HVAC system to limit the spread of airborne diseases, design features which enhance the quality of life and care for the animals housed at the facility, as well as the general maintenance of the shelter.

The well-being of our homeless pet population is a primary mission of our Veterinary Services functions. The housing of high quantities of animals with unknown medical conditions in close quarters is always a challenge – a problem common to all public, open admission shelters. The medical treatment of animals and maintenance of their housing is a key factor in preventing the spread of disease. Kennel staff is responsible for cleaning protocols that directly impact the health of the animals and are also separate from the Veterinary practice.

The kennel section is responsible for the intake of pets and the disinfecting of the kennels. They are also tasked with assisting the public with lost and found pets, provide logistical support for all special events and outreach efforts, and the feeding and care and of all pets housed at the shelter that during peak time can reach up to 600 animals. Additionally we serve as adoption counselors and promote adoptions through face to face customer service. Our responsibility extends to all areas of the department which include assisting the clinic section in procedures such as euthanasia and general maintenance of the facility grounds.

During FY11/12, the department set aside funding to market and promote adoptions. services. Our goal is to be seen as an adoption center to promote the dogs and cats and thus – saving more lives. To further our reach, joint events with other animal welfare agencies have been held to maximize our exposure. Also, association with non-animal related organizations such as the Marlins and ESPN have been established to create events outside the typical animal arena and attract different demographics. These partnerships will continue to grow in the subsequent years. The most recent events include the 24-Hour Mega Match-a-Thon with the ASPCA, the Humane Society of Greater Miami and The Cat Network held at Tropical Park in March. Additionally, in October 2012, the first Annual Summer Fun Festival, was held in cooperation with the School Board. Other efforts, such as weekly adoption events at the Stephen P. Clark building, in collaboration with the Community Action and Humane Services Department, successfully matched abandoned dogs and cats pets with senior citizens. The first quarter of this fiscal year the department joined forces with the Marlins to hosts 2 Adopt-o-Mania events which included free spay/neuter and vaccination services. This adoption outreach effort also included, Skateboard Rodeo and COPA ESPN, a 2-day soccer festival in Kendall, yielding successful adoption results and generating a new relationship with ESPN Radio.

Our partnership with over 70 Rescue Organizations is part of the formula to increase the "Live Release Rate". These groups help rescue animals that otherwise might not be adopted because of medical conditions, pet age, aggressiveness, demeanor around children, etc. An organization must be registered as a 501(c), attend an in-house volunteer orientation, and sign a Partnership Agreement with ASD. We continue to enlist partners and work closely with these organizations. Thanks to our partnership with The Cat Network we had the opportunity to transfer cats outside the state. Due to the success of these transfers, we have continued with this program directly with the rescue partner in Maryland. In order to grow this program and select, prepare and transfer a larger number of animals, a person dedicated to this program would help increase the outcome, as well as establish relationships with other rescue groups nationwide.

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In a continued effort to increase adoptions, ASD has increased its off-site adoption, and implemented various programs and marketing campaigns. However, a Coordinator capable of supporting off site events and special needs pets is required – a position that is currently not funded. One new initiative in support of saving more animals is the Foster Care Program. This program would place in temporary homes pets that are unable to be care for at the shelter due to young age, medical requirements or simply space. To that end, a Foster Program Coordinator is essential – but it is not currently part of the organizational structure.

Another unfunded, but needed program is the department's Volunteer Program and Adoption Counseling service. Both programs respective positions initially received ASPCA grant monies to fund the program on a short-term basis, The Volunteer Coordinator is assigned the responsibility of recruiting, training and retaining volunteers. Volunteers are an essential component of operations to effectively attend to customer needs, care for in-house animals, serve as department ambassadors and assist at the multitude of events. Through the use of volunteers and re-trained staff, the Department is developing programs to provide personalized service to assist potential adopters find a suitable pet.

The objective of the Adoption Counseling service is to increase adoptions at the shelter by providing better communication with potential adopters and recruit, train and retain volunteers to act as Adoption Counselors. Improving the customer service and quality of information provided will allow adopters to make a more educated decision about the pet they are selecting, and therefore, increase adoptions and pet retention. Further, we are working with veterinarians and rescue groups to establish a pet surrender prevention program to reduce the number of pets left at shelter.

In the Clinic area, the Chief Veterinary position oversees the clinic, veterinary and per diem staff. The incumbent is charged to work within the same organizational structure as the Kennel Staff in the development of unified medical, cleaning and animal handling protocols, and review and assessment of medical resources - all within unified supervision of the Operations Division.

We continue to strive to meet the challenge of finding homes for unwanted animals and ensuring their well-being. To that end, the department has hosted special pricing campaigns on adoptions throughout the year to encourage more adoptions. Additionally, various events are being held throughout the community to provide free booster vaccinations with the goals of preventing and/or controlling the spread of disease. Not only will this campaign improve the health of our pets in the community, but bring awareness of shelter services and adoption opportunities.

The enforcement of Chapter 5 and State Statute 828 continues to present a challenge to the department. The response time to services provided to the community-at-large, such as picking up strays, injured animals, animal bites to people, etc... have been negatively impacted. Over a three year period the demand for these services has decreased by 4%, however, there has been a 20% increase in workload due to staffing reductions. Given the number of calls, the demand in field calls appears to be on the rise. For example, during FY11/12, Enforcement Officers responded to 495 more injured animal calls than last fiscal year. After three years of staff reductions, Enforcement staff will see its rank increase by an additional Animal Control Officer. The Enforcement Unit is comprised of fourteen (14) Animal Control Officers (ACOs) and six (6) Investigators. Annually, they receive an average of 25,000 field service requests. The reduction to the number of ACOs from 21 in FY 09-10, has negatively impacted the department's ability to timely respond to requests for service. For example, during FY11/12 - 8,300 service requests were handled in overdue status, dog bite response time increased from 3.6 days to 6.5 days, pitbull response time increased from 14.9 days to 51 days, and cruelty response time increased from 5.3 days to 8.3 days. The timely response to animal bites and the quarantine of biter animals is critical as it relates to rabies control and public health.

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Unfortunately, the untimely response to service requests have resulted in an increase in customer complaints and poor public perception of the shelter/enforcement operations.

Field service is not the only enforcement-related service that has been impacted. The Citation Office Enforcement Clerks which provided on-site assistance to the public, were eliminated during the FY 11/12 budget cycle. This unit was responsible for preparing payment plans, processing citation payments, updating records, scheduling appeals for hearings, handling citation-related faxes and letters – while tending to the public's onsite inquiries.

During this period, one Citation Specialist and the Enforcement Supervisory staff assisted with these services. However, the elimination of personnel not only created a backlog over 15,000 faxes and letters, but generated complaints regarding the lack of follow-up and response. To remedy the situation, temporary employees were hired mid-year to handle the volume of work. This strategy afforded the department the opportunity to restructure the area, setup tracking mechanisms and improved processes to determine the actual staffing needs for this unit. Last fiscal year, this unit responded to 25,344 faxes, letters, and emails, processed 5,177 collection accounts, and handled 10,542 walk-in cases. The Citation Office provides proactive service to lessen the number of appeals by offering constituents the opportunity to resolve cases prior to the appeal process – in addition to its clerical responsibilities. With the additional temporary personnel to handle walk-ins, response time for updates is within 24-hours and less than 5 weeks for faxes and mail. As a means to timely respond to emails, the department has initiated auto-replies to its email system advising constituents of possible options and timelines. In November 2012, the department launched the mailing of biweekly Violation Cancellation Notices to notify constituents when violations are closed or void in response to their inquiries and submittals. Upon the Clerk of the Courts database reflecting a violation closure, the account will be flagged for notification issuance. Prior to its implementation, there was no mechanism in place to advise the constituent of a violation closure.

The timely mailing of citations is contingent upon the processing of faxes and letters, as well as updating of rabies/licensing certificates submitted by Veterinarians. This function is performed by the Licensing Unit. Last fiscal year, this unit processed 183,375 rabies certificates/licenses, a 13% increase from the previous fiscal year (162K certificates). By the end of October 2012, the Licensing Unit had recorded 17% more certificates compared to last fiscal year. If current trends continue, FY12/13 will also result in a higher number of rabies certificates and license renewals.

Another area that was tackled during this fiscal year was the reconciliation of veterinary clinic accounts. A full-time temporary accountant was hired to solely tackle this issue. Reconciliation of FY11/12 is projected to be completed by January 2013. Collection effort for those accounts completed is underway. Prior to the hiring of the temporary full-time Accountant, reconciliation of veterinary clinic accounts was behind by almost two (2) fiscal years.

Given that the veterinary clinics represent 50% of proprietary revenues generated, the department has embarked in an outreach effort to improve lines of communication. Launched in August 2012, the campaign includes bi-annual orientations and printed information products, such as posters and handbook. The sessions included information on state and county legislation, department policies, fees and other issues pertinent to the continued dialogue and partnership with the veterinary community.

Although processes and staffing levels are always reviewed to determine the most effective and efficient way to maintain service levels, technology is also playing a critical role in the improvement of service. One such initiative is E-ticketing which was implemented during the first quarter of FY12/13. This technology will help further reduce the error rate in citations issued by Officers, as well as provide real-time submission of violations to the Clerk of the Court's (COC's) database (SEFA). Currently it takes approximately ten to twelve days from the time a manual citation is issued to the time it is



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entered in the database. All manually issued citations are recorded on a transmittal form and submitted along with hard copies to the COC for processing. Not only is this a labor intensive process for Animal Services and the COC, but it is also susceptible to human error and loss of paperwork. Another application being researched is the feasibility of veterinary clinics updating rabies and license information online. This is but one of a few projects that the department will be pursuing in the upcoming year.

As we move forward – all aspects of the organization will continued to be reviewed to determine how to maximize the adoptability of our homeless pet population.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

OUTREACH: The department's mission to increase the live release rate is a consorted effort utilizing marketing, sponsorships, grant opportunities, volunteers and public outreach to maximize our message and save pets. The following initiatives will be employed to achieve this mission:

- Develop adoption marketing campaign
- Seek grant opportunity/identify existing revenue streams to market shelter services
- Continue seeking grant opportunities to fund low cost spay/neuter program
- Develop more partnerships to try to increase the animals transferred to locations where they will be well cared for while in the process of finding a home
- Pursue grant and/or donor opportunities to fund higher level of care for adoptable pets
- Seek sponsorship and/or grant funding to conduct outreach efforts targeting low income, high pet overpopulation areas of our community to provide low cost or free spay/neuter and vaccination services to reduce the incidence of contagious diseases and unwanted litters in these areas.
- Promote our microchip and ID Tag program to increase our "return to owner" rate as part of our reunification effort when lost animals are found
- Expand volunteer program to include specific roles and schedules to maximize contribution.
- Continue to promote the pet foster program to increase the Live Release Rate

NEW FACILITY: The department has hosted tours of the new facility not only inviting all employees, but partners within the community seeking their input in its design. This grassroots effort to develop design ideas generated many customer and animal friendly recommendations that were forwarded to the architect for consideration. Additionally, a \$10k grant was secured from the ASCPA to secure the consulting services of a Veterinary expert in the design of animal shelters. Funding opportunities are also being sought to ensure that the new facility has all the resources necessary upon transition.

TECHNOLOGY: As a means to improve our customer service, technology continues to be an effective tool in developing cost effective and efficient processes and services. The following projects will be developed and/or implemented within this fiscal year:

- Develop online licensing and rabies access to veterinary community
- Secure an improved shelter application that meets operational needs

TECHNOLOGY: As a means to improve our tracking of supply inventory, technology is needed to account for all our supplies.

- A computer program designed to input/remove supply quantities that can keep track of inventory and alert when inventory is reaching low levels. Such program can be used as a tool to better project our expenses and identify deficiencies in supply stocked. This will also be beneficial when preparing for natural disasters such as hurricanes.

ANIMAL WELFARE:

- 1) Providing optimal housing and animal care with limited resources and inadequate facility.

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- 2) Transitioning to New Shelter securing new/transitioning to new one.
- 3) Hours of operation extended beyond regular industry standards in some areas.

Providing optimal care to the pets housed in the shelter is still a challenge. Measures have been taken to provide all pets with items of comfort when extreme weather arises. Items such as beds, blankets and toys are often used to provide these services to the animals. The disinfectant selected to be carried over to the new shelter failed to properly work on our current facility. Research to acquire the right disinfectant for the facility is currently under way. The addition of more animal care specialists and development of an employee incentive program, has minimized the frequency of call outs giving us daily adequate staffing to properly performed our duties.

As we expand to a larger shelter, the department's ability to maintain current service levels in the area of maintenance and care of animals will be impacted. Additional resources will be required to care for more animals given that the increase housing capacity will allow for longer stay periods. This will include the addition of more staff to provide adequate care in meeting the industry standard. This process should take place while in transition and not when the "Grand Opening" occurs. This will allow us to hit the ground running upon completion of the new facility.

Our receiving hours of operation currently send the wrong message to the community that it is acceptable to use Animal Services as a first resort when they can no longer have their pet. We currently allow public to drop off dogs and cats 11 hrs./day on weekdays and 10 hrs. on weekends. These hours restrain us from properly flowing the pets through the shelter as intake does not cease until the end of the day. This further hinders us from lowering our intake levels which have not been below 30,000 per year in the last 5 years. Reducing intake hours daily and closing for intake once a week will benefit both the animals and the staff shelter wide. This will allow the kennel section to perform detailed cleaning of kennels and perform better general maintenance of the facility. The clinic section can benefit by using the extra technician for services such as double surgery or to verify all pets have been properly checked and vaccinated.

LEGISLATION: For the fifth year, the department is working with the Dade Delegation through the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Mayor's office for passage of state legislation to allow the use of the \$5 surcharge on civil violation notices for other operational needs. Currently, these funds can only be applied to Animal Control Officer training. Animal Services provides services that include low cost rabies vaccinations, micro chipping, license renewals, cat trap rentals, and pet adoptions. Additional responsibilities include reuniting lost pets, outreach, code enforcement, protecting the public from stray and dangerous dogs, and investigating animal cruelty cases. Over 200 veterinary clinics and pet stores also represent the department through the sale of licenses and reporting of rabies vaccinations. These sales represent approximately 50% of our proprietary revenues which last fiscal year generated over \$4M.

Overall, the department will continue to seek support for legislation that will support the mission of the department as follows;

- Support state legislation that allows the use of the \$5 violation surcharge for other operational needs and services, such as low-cost spay/neuter programs.
- Support legislation that promotes increasing the live release rate.
- Support legislation that promotes compliance with state and local ordinances.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Most significantly, in the next two years the department will be moving into the newly acquired facility located in Doral at 3651 NW 79th Avenue. The current facility lends itself to the spread of contagious



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diseases and serious maintenance and structural issues which have resulted in electrical fires, drainage problems and rodent infestations. Internal Services has secured a site that is centrally located, with an abundance of parking and warehouse space to accommodate the needs of the shelter. The new facility will house 25% more cages/runs, include an HVAC system thus improving air quality and effectively reducing and controlling the spread of disease.

Of great concern are the unknown and unexpected operational overhead expenditures that have yet to be determined once shelter operations have transferred to the new facility. More importantly, staffing, or the lack thereof, will continue to be an issue. With more kennel space, the likelihood of more kennel personnel will be needed to maintain the housing area clean and properly disinfected. The Clinic will also be impacted as a result of more animals being housed at the new facility.

The No Kill Resolution which was recently adopted by the BCC requires additional programs and services to be implemented which are not currently offered. The save rate associated with No Kill requires 90% or more of the animals entering the shelter be saved. To meet the 90% save rate goal associated with No Kill, additional funding sources must be established. The resources called for under the No Kill resolution include comprehensive adoption programs, Trap/Neuter Return (TNR) for community cats, pet retention programs and medical and behavioral programs.

The upcoming budget season will not be easier and the same concerns and challenges will be faced as we strive to meet these challenges.

ATTACHMENT 1

