



Capacity for Care

Mendocino County Animal
Care Services

UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, 3/2017

CONTENTS

Executive summary.....	2
Introduction to Capacity for Care	2
Summary of recommendations	3
Report	5
Detailed Recommendations	5
Intake	5
Population Management and welfare	9
Housing	11
Outcomes.....	19
Veterinary services	21
Sanitation.....	21
Cat Enrichment	21
Dog Enrichment	22
Appendix: Length of stay methods and general considerations	23
Appendix: General recommendations for housing	25
Cats	25
Hold/Isolation/Special care and for Open selection operational models.....	25
Cat Adoption – provide a variety of housing such as caging, individual rooms and group room(S)	27
Other feline housing	29
Dogs	32
Hold/Isolation/Quarantine/Adoption – Double compartment Kennels.....	32
Dog Adoption – provide a variety of housing	33
Appendix: Length of stay relationship to flow capacity.....	35
Additional resources for length of stay and capacity for care.....	36
Glossary of Terms	37

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION TO CAPACITY FOR CARE

Capacity for care (C4C), considered holistically, means meeting the needs of each animal admitted to a shelter, whether feral or friendly, stray or owner surrendered, young or old. The [Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare](#) provide a framework to define what it means to meet the needs of any animal in confinement. Assuring capacity for care also supports success in meeting a Sixth Freedom, the freedom from euthanasia for animals that are neither terminally ill nor dangerous. Providing high quality housing and optimizing length of stay through pro-active management are two key factors in assuring capacity for care for every animal in the shelter.

The [Association of Shelter Veterinarian's Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters](#) advises:

Every sheltering organization has a maximum capacity for care, and the population in their care must not exceed that level.

On the surface, this seems like a simple and logical statement. Operating within an organization's ability to provide care is the foundation on which all other guidelines for care rest. If the facility is insufficient to provide appropriate housing; if staff members do not have time to keep animals clean and well fed; if the environment is barren of enrichment due to limited resources; inevitably some elements of animals' mental or physical well-being will be compromised. This also creates an environment where staff is not able to do their best work and inevitably feel less fulfilled in the work they are doing every day.

FLOW CAPACITY VERSUS PHYSICAL CAPACITY

No amount of physical holding capacity will be sufficient to resolve issues with homeless and abandoned animals in a community. Even the largest facility will eventually fill if more animals are admitted than are either released alive or euthanized over time. Rather, the holding capacity of the facility must be sufficient to support the required *flow of animals over time*. The required holding capacity to support a given level of flow (intake) depends on LOS.

The goal is to have sufficient humane housing and care to support an optimal LOS for the anticipated intake. Physical capacity that exceeds this number will increase daily care costs and time investment with no further gain in live release by consuming time and resources that could otherwise be spent on programs to support enrichment, adoptions, reclaims and rescue, thus excessive capacity can ultimately impair animal welfare and compromise live release.

Physical capacity below the required level, or of inadequate quality, will likewise result in constant overcrowding, compromised welfare, increased disease levels, greater costs and higher euthanasia. The relationship between LOS and required housing capacity is illustrated in the Appendix on [LOS to flow capacity](#).

OPTIMAL LENGTH OF STAY (LOS)

The optimal length of stay (LOS) is defined as the shortest possible time to reach the best possible result for each animal, given the capacity of the organization and community for adoption, transfer, and other live outcomes. Optimal LOS is an average, *not a time limit*, and includes sufficient time to evaluate the behavioral and medical requirements of each animal, perform any needed services prior to adoption (e.g. spay/neuter surgery), and make the animal available for adoption or rescue for a reasonable time period (including ensuring viewing or rescue/transport opportunities on weekends if needed). This requires a pro-active approach to moving animals through the shelter system with adequate staffing at each step of the way.

Just as simply holding animals longer is not in itself a means to save their lives, rushing to euthanasia is not a means to optimize LOS. In fact, reduced LOS is linked to [increased life-saving success](#). Additional information on management considerations for Capacity for Care and Length of Stay are provided in [Additional Resources for Capacity for Care and LOS](#).

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Monitor and function within the shelter's optimum population (monthly C4C) to maximize live release while ensuring the Five Freedoms for each animal
 - Utilize the monthly C4C/Magic Number calculator to determine the in-shelter population and to plan intake, housing needs, surgery and outcomes accordingly
 - This calculator was reviewed with Sam at the time of the consultation
 - Identify (or hire) and empower an animal flow specialist (AFS) to coordinate admission with owner surrenders, foster returns, surgery scheduling, adoption and rescue
 - An example job description for this position was been provided in the resources folder on Box
 - AFS to manage [daily population rounds](#) to ensure efficient and effective flow of animals and to identify animal needs/risks as soon as possible
 - Cats: The calculated C4C for April 2017 is 15 cats/12 kittens in holding and 9 cats/3 kittens in adoption at any one time; (see the CAT C4C/Magic Number calculator for April 2017 in the Resources folder in Box); this is a total of 40 felines in the shelter housed in 29 housing units (1 adult cat/2-3 kittens per housing unit on average).
 - This is with a 30 day LOS for adults and 21 days for kittens which is longer than the recommended two week shelter stay
 - The average LOS to all outcomes at Mendocino County Animal Care Services in 2016 for adult cats was 46 days and for kittens was 51 days.
 - Dogs: The calculated C4C for April 2017 is 20 dogs/3 puppies in holding and 13 dogs/2 puppies in adoption at any one time; (see the DOG C4C/Magic Number calculator for April 2017 in the Resources folder in

Box); this is a total of 37 canines in the shelter housed in 35 housing units (1 adult dog/2 puppies per housing unit on average).

- This is with a 21 day LOS for adults and 14 days for puppies which is longer than the recommended two week shelter stay
 - The average LOS to all outcomes at Mendocino County Animal Care Services in 2016 was 23 days for both adult dogs and puppies.
- Utilize managed intake and adoption specials to get to this optimum population
- Consider placing all non-emergency admissions to the shelter on a waiting list for 1-2 weeks in the near term to quickly jump start the program
- ✓ Maintain optimal Capacity for Care (C4C) numbers without negatively impacting live release or public service through policy adjustments, including those listed in the following report, particularly:
 - Utilize a waiting list and schedule admission for healthy owner surrendered animals and stray cats in balance with the shelter's C4C to assure appropriate housing, care and outcomes at all times of the year
 - Create coordinated communication among all employees at the shelter and throughout Mendocino County staff, including animal control officers, so that the public receives a consistent message regarding underage kittens, healthy stray cats and feral/community cats and where to look for their lost pets
 - Further develop public messaging and web based resources providing positive alternatives to bringing healthy lost and unwanted animals to the shelter
- ✓ Provide double-compartment cage and kennel housing in all housing areas of the facility in order to protect animal health, minimize length of stay (LOS), and maximize staffing efficiency and safety
 - Use the portalized stainless steel cages for primary flow cats and kittens in all wards including adoption/holding, feral room and isolation
 - Purchase laminate cat condos to use in adoption
 - Manage the dog population such that all dogs are housed in double compartment kennels for their entire shelter stay
- ✓ Embrace and train all staff on the [Adopters Welcome](#) philosophy to encourage community members to think of Mendocino County Animal Care Services as the most welcoming and helpful place to adopt a new pet

REPORT

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

INTAKE

DEVELOP PUBLIC MESSAGING AND WEB BASED RESOURCES PROVIDING THE MESSAGE TO “CALL FIRST” AND OFFER POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES TO BRINGING ANIMALS TO THE SHELTER

- **Neonates:**
 - Information and material support (food, supplies) for finders and owners of neonatal kittens
 - Listen and watch for 4-6 hours to see if mom returns
 - If the kittens remain quiet, mom is around caring for them and they should remain where they are
 - If they feel the kittens need to come in, mom *must* accompany them
 - If mom is not around, provide resources (milk replacer, kitten food, litter box, warming pads, etc.) and support so that the finders can raise the kittens until they are of weight suitable for S/N surgery
 - Consider discontinuing acceptance of underage owner surrendered litters except in emergencies
- **Owned pets:**
 - Guidance for rehoming pets and assistance with developing marketing materials (such as signage and web profiles) for found animals and pets that the owner can no longer keep
 - Information to assist owners in resolving housing, behavioral, or other issues leading them to consider surrendering their pet
 - Referral to a helpline for assistance with access to food, grooming and necessary medical care to the extent possible
- **Healthy stray cats:**
 - Lost cats are more than 10 times more likely to find their way home if left in their neighborhood as compared to being brought into the local shelter
 - Confirm that the cat really needs help/rescue (e.g. http://www.chicoanimalshelter.org/uploads/1/1/3/2/11329691/cat_flowchart.pdf)
 - Provide information on successful ways to reunite cats with their owners include importance of searching in the neighborhood of origin versus bringing cat to a shelter
 - Offer suggestions to help finder help the cat including:
 - Put paper collar on cat with note to see if there is an owner
 - Post photo and info on shelter found pets page
 - Provide links to local lost and found pages (Facebook groups, Craigslist, others)
 - Provide a link to create a found cat flyer (e.g. <http://www.petbond.com/flyerentry.php>)

- o Provide a list of veterinary clinics where a found cat can be taken to be scanned for a microchip
- **Feral cats:**
 - o Information to help with decreasing the nuisance behavior and co-existence with cats
 - o Consider discontinuing acceptance of healthy cats in traps except in when an exigent welfare risk or severe nuisance situation is demonstrated
 - o Loan out [cat deterrents](#) instead of traps for nuisance cats
 - o Refer to community TNR as available
- Samples for informational resources for above categories have been provided to both organizations in a google folder

DEVELOP A MULTIFACETED COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN ABOUT NEW POLICIES AND PRACTICES (E.G. “CALL FIRST” POLICY, NEW HOURS FOR INTAKE AND WAITING LIST/APPOINTMENTS)

- All phone messages
- Shelter websites
 - o Ensure the Mendocino County Animal Care Services is the first site to come up when community members google such things as ‘found a stray cat’, ‘found a litter of kittens’, ‘lost my dog’, etc.
- 311/county dispatcher communication with the public
- Communicate policy changes with calm, conviction and consistency
- Emphasize service orientation appropriate to the situation and in line with other services offered at the shelter such as spay/neuter and adoption that also follow set hours and have associated fees
- Notice which staff do best at communicating the change successfully to the public and enlist these staff members to develop scripts and role-plays for dealing with people who come in during non-intake hours or without an appointment
 - o The biggest surprise to shelters who have switched to this policy is the lack of criticism from the community
 - o Contacts at shelters that have made the switch to various models of managed admission are available upon request
- Provide scripts to intake staff on how to communicate this information about cats
 - o Examples can be provided upon request
- Examples from other shelters:
 - o <http://www.aspcapro.org/blog/2015/09/21/they-did-it-offsite-neonatal-care-kittens>
 - o <https://www.sfspca.org/get-involved/volunteer/foster/kittens>
 - o <http://www.chicoanimalshelter.org/strayferal-cats.html>
- Resources on scheduled/managed intake:
 - o UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine – [Shelter intake and pathway planning](#)
 - o Million Cat Challenge Website – [Alternative to Intake](#) and [Managed Admissions](#)
 - o ASPCApro – [Managed intake case report](#)
 - o Maddie’s Fund – [Managed admissions learning track](#)

- o Animal Humane New Mexico – [Moving to managed intake](#)
- o Animal Humane Society in Minneapolis, MN – [Surrendering your pet](#)

COORDINATE ADMISSION TIMING WITH FOSTER RETURNS, SURGERY SCHEDULING, HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND RESCUE

- It does not always need to be a question of *if* an animal comes in but rather *when* the animal enters the shelter
 - o Admission for healthy animals must be at a time that an outcome can be within a week on average
 - Thus a surgery spot (if needed) and a housing unit on the appropriate pathway must be available
- Identify (or hire) and empower an animal flow specialist (AFS) either temporarily until within C4C or permanently
 - o The Animal Flow Specialist should focus on identifying, resolving, and communicating animal flow opportunities and challenges with the goal of keeping adoption floors full, eliminating roadblocks and increasing efficiency
 - o This person will work closely with leadership as well as admissions (stray, owner surrenders, foster returns, etc.) to proactively plan for intakes, act on spacing needs and play an active role in the rounds process
- Implement a waiting list for healthy stray cats and all owner surrendered animals
 - o Refer the patron to the behavior helpline (Sage or Amy) in the meantime
 - o Address litter box or other behavior issues while waiting if this is the reason for wanting to surrender
- Decide on circumstances for exceptions to scheduled intake (e.g. person is in genuinely urgent circumstances such as sudden health or housing issues; making genuinely concerning threats to harm animal or shelter staff) and otherwise consistently enforce the policy
- Have staff available at all owner surrender appointments to do medical and behavioral evaluations on intake to immediately determine adoptability (e.g. rehoming potential) and pathway
 - o Animals deemed unadoptable through the current adoption program, should be surrendered for euthanasia by the owner or provided with other options
- Fast track healthy, friendly stray and owner surrendered animals and foster returns straight into housing that is open to the public ('open selection')
 - o Utilize signage as needed if the animal is not available for adoption right away or still needs surgery
 - o Determine a process to take holds or do pre-adoptions on animals still in hold/not yet available

ADJUST HOURS AND FEES TO SUPPORT ADOPTIONS AND ANIMAL FLOW

- Example: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 12-6 pm, Wednesday 12-7pm, Saturday 11-5 pm
- Discontinue accepting healthy stray cats and owner surrendered animals on Saturday
 - Only allow on an emergency case by case basis when accepting the animal is in the animal's best interest
 - This will allow the shelter staff and volunteers to focus on adoptions and reclaims on Saturdays
- Allow owners to reclaim their pets on Mondays during limited hours such as 2-5 pm
- Ask for a fee proportional to the owner surrender fee for healthy stray cats – this will discourage misrepresentation of a cat's status and allow the relatively small fraction of citizens taking advantage of this service to bear a fair share of the cost
 - Evaluate the current surrender fee and determine if really necessary
 - Consider simply asking for a donation for both owner surrendered and stray animals

STREAMLINE AND SUPPORT THE ACTUAL INTAKE PROCESS

- Hire additional staff to perform animal intake; both the public contact side and the animal care side
 - Provide customer service training to front new and current front office staff
 - We are willing to help with this if it can be coordinated with a follow-up visit to address housing
- Utilize the intake room for all animal intake
- Give pyrantel orally to all animals (1 ml/10 pounds for dogs and 1 mL/5 pounds for cats) at intake
- Apply topical flea and tick treatment to all animals at intake
 - If fleas are noted on an animal, give oral Drontal® (praziquantal) to treat for tape worms
- Assign one staff member to answer questions and do all follow up on dog licensing
 - This appears to be a major time commitment that pulls the front staff employees away from other duties
- Print out and utilize a cage card from Chameleon for all animals that enter the shelter
 - Chameleon has a template to use
 - Information that must be included is intake date, intake type, address where picked up if a stray, gender, weight and a clear photo
 - This is critical to track and identify animals and allows for daily population and medical rounds to be efficient
 - If the current adoption cage card is going to continue to be used once an animal is available, remove the information about if the animal is spayed or neutered
 - This information is likely confusing to adopters since all animals will be altered prior to adoption and also, these cage cards are not changed after the animal has had surgery so they may not be up to date

- Consider utilizing temporary collars to help identify animals while in the shelter
 - Utilize pink or red for females and blue for males
 - Write their Chameleon number and name (if known) on collar

POPULATION MANAGEMENT AND WELFARE

DETERMINE AND FUNCTION WITHIN YOUR CAPACITY FOR CARE (C4C)

- Use historical data and C4C calculators for active population management; the following have already been calculated and the spread sheets can be found in the Resources folder on Box:
 - Cats:
 - April 2017 – 15 cats/12 kittens in holding and 9 cats/3 kittens in adoption at any one time; this is a total of 40 felines in the shelters housed in 29 housing units (1 adult cat/2-3 kittens per housing unit on average).
 - June 2017 (historical peak month for felines) – 43 cats/18 kittens in holding and 39 cats/13 kittens in adoption at any one time; this is a total of 114 felines in the shelters housed in 96 housing units (1 adult cat/2 kittens per housing unit on average)
 - Both of these monthly calculations are with a 30 day LOS for adults and 21 days for kittens which is longer than the recommended two week shelter stay
 - As programs are implemented and the shelter population is smaller, a shorter target LOS of 14 days should be the goal
 - The average LOS to all outcomes at Mendocino County Animal Care Services in 2016 for adult cats was 46 days and for kittens was 51 days
 - Dogs:
 - April 2017 – 20 dogs/3 puppies in holding and 13 dogs/2 puppies in adoption at any one time; this is a total of 37 canines in the shelter housed in 35 housing units (1 adult dog/2 puppies per housing unit on average)
 - January (peak month in both 2015 and 2016) – 29 dogs/5 puppies in holding and 19 dogs/2 puppies in adoption at any one time; this is a total of 54 canines in the shelter housed in 51 housing units (1 adult dog/2 puppies per housing unit on average)
 - Both of these monthly calculations are with a 21 day LOS for adults and 14 days for puppies which is longer than the recommended two week shelter stay
 - As programs are implemented and the shelter population is smaller, a shorter target LOS of 14 days or less should be the goal
 - The average LOS to all outcomes at Mendocino County Animal Care Services in 2016 was 23 days for both adult dogs and puppies

- With the presumed opening of the shelter in Fort Bragg for intake of both cats and dogs from that area, the projected intake at the Ukiah location is expected to decrease and thus help with achieving the calculated C4C numbers
- Post C4C targets and monitor against actual daily population – alert management team when daily population or LOS targets are exceeded
 - It is much easier to make small adjustments using waiting lists and adoption specials before things get too out of hand
- The main focus for the shelter will be on efficient decision making, pro-active pathway planning, and strategic use of foster care and the current facility to decrease LOS, improve welfare and function within C4C
 - There is less seasonal fluctuation with dogs, so over time as you get used to canine C4C, you may not need to recalculate each month but should still monitor and note when your ideal number is exceeded

PROVIDE TRAINING FOR STAFF ON CAPACITY FOR CARE AND THE FIVE FREEDOMS PLUS ONE

- Presentation from the 2015 G2Z Summit – [Understanding Capacity for Care](#)
- Article in Animal Shelter May/June 2015 – [What's the perfect number?](#)
- Million Cat Challenge Website – [Capacity for Care](#)

PERFORM DAILY POPULATION WELFARE ROUNDS

- Create a cat team and a dog team to complete daily population rounds each day
- Each day, have key staff with knowledge of the animals and decision making capabilities look at every animal in the shelter and ask the following questions:
 - Who are you? (Are you who we think you are? Is it accurate in Shelter Buddy?)
 - How are you?
 - Are you where you are supposed to be? (both physically and along your pathway)
 - Why are you still here?
 - What do you need to move you along on your pathway out of here?
- Use these questions to develop action lists for each department, to keep every animal moving along the path, every day
 - No one gets lost and no one stays one moment longer than they need to
- Perform biweekly population rounds with full team
 - For every animal – identify risk and needs as soon as available
- Evaluate animals based on adoption floor needs/fast track not intake date
 - Although it may seem unfair, allowing fast track animals (e.g. juveniles, super friendly, purebred and striking looking adult cats) to “skip to the head of the line” ultimately serves both fast and slow track animals better
 - This allows fast trackers to move quickly through and out of the shelter, leaving more time and space for the slow trackers to get the care they need

- Place, price and promote an animal based their characteristics and shelter needs not LOS in shelter/foster
 - Pro-actively identify animals at risk for a long length of stay based on physical and behavioral characteristics and lower prices/implement special promotions immediately upon that animal becoming available for adoption
 - Send these dogs out on sleep overs and other out of the shelter activities to let them be seen in the community
 - Lower adoption revenues will likely be more than offset by decreased care and medical costs for these animals
- Resources on daily population rounds
 - UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program – [Daily shelter rounds](#)
 - ASPCApro – [Daily rounds to decrease LOS](#)

WORK TO REDUCE LENGTH OF STAY (LOS) FOR ALL ANIMALS IN THE SHELTER

- The average length of stay (LOS) to adoption for adult cats is 61 days and adult dogs is 39 days
 - Having to wait for surgery contributes to this LOS as well as housing a population on site that is above the C4C for a shorter target LOS
 - Thus the in shelter population is driving LOS
- Ideally the average LOS for animals (other than required holds for protection cases) would be 14 days or less
 - This is not a time limit – rather it is achieved through pro-active management including:
 - Match the surgical availability to time of intake
 - Institute proactive population management to include managing intake through scheduling the intake of healthy, stray cats and owner surrendered animals, daily population rounds and matching the on-site population size and diversity with the current adoption rate
- Some improvement in LOS can be expected as a result of a more welcoming and accessible adoption process

HOUSING

- Provide double-compartment housing for all dogs and cats individually housed and provide at least 18 sq. ft. per cat in group housing areas in order to protect animal health, minimize length of stay (LOS), and maximize staffing efficiency and safety
- Calculate and post monthly C4C magic numbers and maintain number housed within this number for primary flow animals
- Use cage cards on the front of each cage to help with easy identification of who is in the cage (see intake section for details)

CAT HOLD AND ADOPTION HOUSING

This is considered “primary flow” housing (animals actively moving through the shelter system to their appropriate outcome) and includes housing for animals in their stray holding period who are on a pathway to adoption and those already available for adoption. Special care, animal protection and isolation housing are outside of this primary flow and are considered separately.

- Reducing the number of housing units per room will meet the shelter’s C4C and will provide enough housing once such practices as a waiting list, scheduled intake, daily rounds and sufficient surgical capacity are implemented
- Minimum cat cage housing recommended is double compartment units at least 4’ long by ~28” deep by ~2’ high
- Recommended cat ward usage is as follows:
 - Adoption room
 - Utilize as a colony cat room to house up to six adult cats
 - Ideally house three to four cats in this room at a time
 - Consider managing the room as all in/all out and adopting out all cats before putting a new group of cats in there. Alternatively you could adopt down to one or two cats and then take the remaining two and move them out to foster, or rescue to ensure they do not have a long length of stay in the shelter and then start with a new group.
 - Keep the seven portalized 2x2 cages (the bottom row of cages during our visit) and move them to the stray room
 - Remove all 18” tall caging from the shelter
 - Cat colony room
 - Purchase two 5 feet and one 4 feet laminate quads for the north wall
 - <http://www.shor-line.com/index.php/products/detail/483.html>
 - Up to 12 kittens or six adult cats or some combination thereof (housing kittens two-three/unit) can be housed in this room
 - Room will function best for adoption if housing is just on the one wall, however if you need more housing then go ahead and put caging on the south wall as well
 - *If you feel you need more adoption housing then order two additional 5 feet laminate quads for the south wall*
 - *8 kittens or 4 adults or some combination thereof (kittens two/unit)*
 - Stray cat room
 - Portalize all 2x2 cages (bottom row of cages during our visit) to house healthy, friendly cats on stray hold
 - Remove all 18” tall caging from the shelter
 - Utilize the seven 2x2 cages from the adoption room in this room
 - Need to find three additional cages to complete the cage housing needed in that room (e.g. stainless steel cages that were behind the shelter)

- This will create two rows of double compartment 2x2 cages with five units per row for a total of 10 housing units
- Recommend utilizing 'open selection' for this room by opening to the public to enter and view and select cats for adoption
 - Cats in hold period need to be identified with a sign clearing showing when they are available to go home
 - Cats can either be put on hold by utilizing a deposit or simply let interested adopters know when the cat will be available and let folks come back on that day to adopt
- Feral cat room
 - Flex space
 - May need to continue to use as feral cat housing until a return to field program is in place but ideally these cats will not spend any time in this facility or will be housed out doors
 - Remove all housing units from this room as they do not meet the recommended height requirements
 - Could possibly use these cages for *kittens only* at times when kitten intake is high (e.g. put in the lobby during an adoption event or in the nursery if housing a litter without a mom)
 - The housing recommendation for this room is to have 3 units of double stacked 2x2 double compartment units double stacked (e.g. two rows high) for a total of six housing units
 - Purchase or acquire these additional cages if the shelter does not have enough 2x2 cages
 - The lower unit needs to be elevated 18" off of the floor
- Nursery
 - Flex space
 - Likely continue to function as overflow during kitten season for moms and litters waiting for foster
 - Can use for surgery recovery during other time periods
 - Ensure that all housing used in this room is double compartment when used for housing and not recovery
- Reserve spots for fast track cats, stray litters of kittens and healthy, friendly strays and owner surrenders in rooms that are open to the public
 - Strive to always be at 60-80% full
- Always reserve space in back of house (e.g. feral cat room) for animal protection cases so these cases do not lead to crowding
- Utilize visual barriers/hiding places for cats in cages to help reduce stress in cats
 - When cats are noticed to hide frequently, move the cat into the colony room or consider adoption from a foster home if possible

OTHER CAT HOUSING

- Cat isolation room
 - Install a movable barrier so during times of less upper respiratory infection (URI) you can use the other housing in this room for flexible back of shelter cat housing
 - URI in cats is not an airborne disease
 - Good management as far as order of care will maintain low risk of disease transmission even for cats housed in the same room
 - It is good practice to observe all of the animals prior to the start of the daily routine to ensure there are no animals in need of immediate care
 - When daily routine starts, maintain strict order of care by always starting with the healthy kittens, then adult cats before caring for any sick cats
 - Portalize all cages to create all double compartment housing
 - Add two additional cages to create a total of 12 double compartment housing units
- Consider housing feral cats in housing outside in small groups of four to six cats
 - Provide double entry access to housing
 - Must be protected from the elements
 - Could be a temporary set-up
 - Provide lots of hiding places and vertical space
 - This will have the benefits of being less stressful on the cats and easier for staff to clean and feed daily
 - Saves staff time
 - Decreases risk for bites and scratches
 - See [other feline housing](#) in the appendix for descriptions of this type of housing

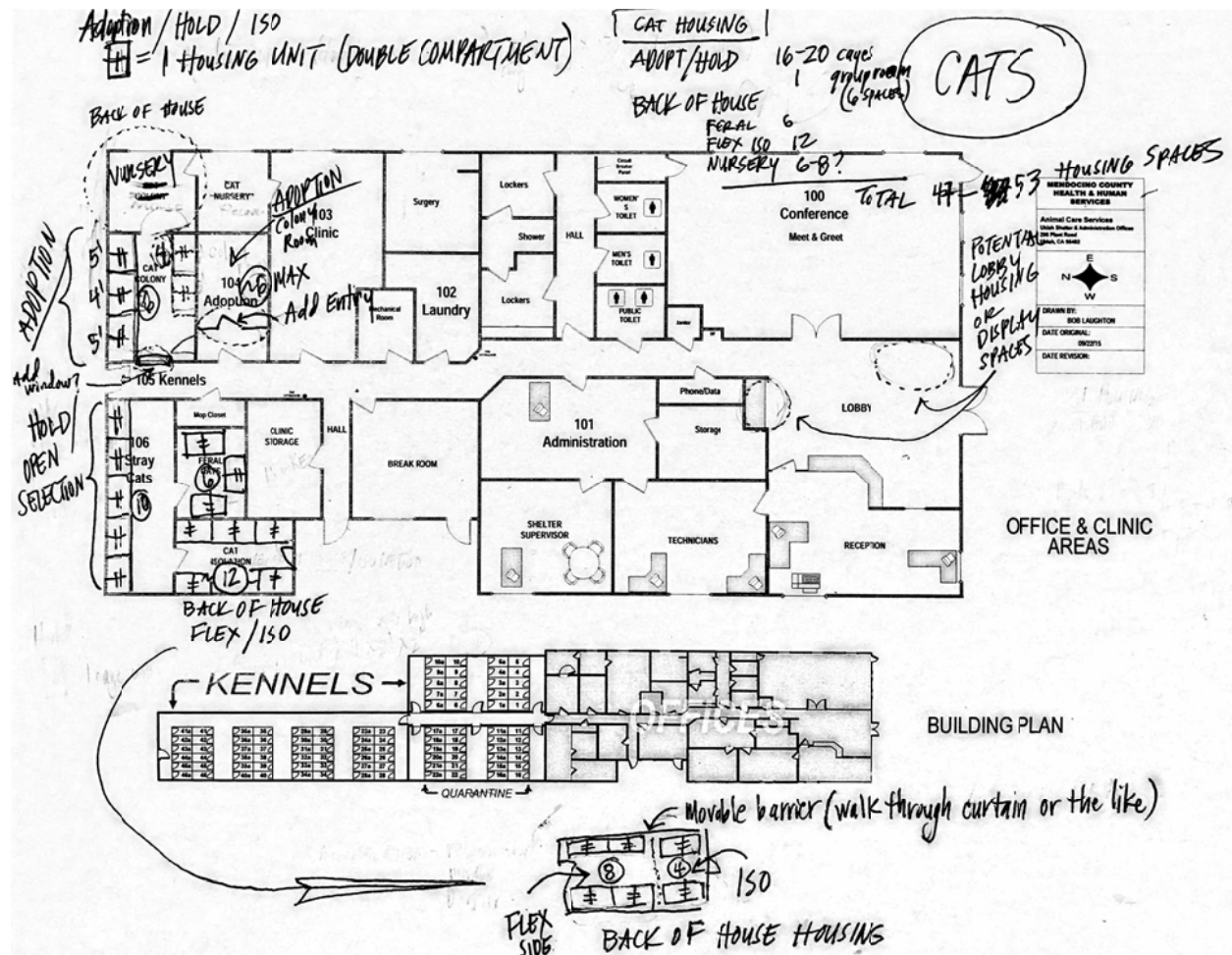
CAT HOUSING USE

The numbers in this table represent the number of housing units given the recommendations we have provided for the cat housing area. All cage housing will be double compartment. Housing recommendations are based on the assumption that kittens will be housed on average at two per housing unit (younger groups housed as litters, and older kittens housed between one to three kittens per unit). During non-kitten season, the number of cats housed should be lower than the number of actual housing units to avoid prolonged LOS and inefficient use of staff time, which will mean housing units will need to stay empty during low intake times of the year (winter and early spring).

Cat housing units			
Annual intake: ~900		% Capacity: Peak intake 100%, average intake 80% or less	Average Length of Stay Goal: 10 – 14 days
Housing type	Housing spaces	Portalized cages	Colony Rooms
Holding/Adoption (primary flow)	17-26	16-20	1 (up to 6 adults max)
Back of House Nursery/flex space	14	14	-
Feral Cat Room	6	6	Outdoor pens?

Isolation	6	6	-
Total housing units	43-52	Comments: These housing recommendations will require a considerable decrease in the current average LOS. Capacity needs could decrease if healthy strays and some owner surrenders are helped by means other than shelter intake.	

Suggested Cat Housing Area Use:



DOG HOLD AND ADOPTION HOUSING

This is considered “primary flow” housing (animals actively moving through the shelter system to their appropriate outcome) and includes housing for animals in their stray holding period who are on a pathway to adoption and those already available for adoption. Special care, animal protection and isolation housing are outside of this primary flow and are considered separately.

- There are two options for dog housing use with the existing kennels (see diagrams below for more detail)
 - Option #1

- House all dogs up for adoption or stray dogs on a pathway to adoption in the inside kennels
- Recommend utilizing 'open selection' for these room by opening to the public to enter and view and select dogs for adoption
 - Dogs still in their hold period need to be identified with a sign clearing showing when they are available to go home
 - Dogs can either be put on hold by utilizing a deposit or simply let interested adopters know when the cat will be available and let folks come back on that day to adopt
- Allow public to only have access in the middle aisle
 - Keep the back side of the kennels for staff only access
 - Put bedding and food/water on the side of the kennel that the public has access to
- House overflow stray hold, confiscated dogs, bite quarantine dogs and potentially isolated dogs in the back kennels
 - See diagram below for gate placement in this area
 - This will allow for flexibility of use and control of depth of public access into this area
- Option #2
 - House all dogs up for adoption or stray dogs on a pathway to adoption in the back kennels and utilize with 'open selection'
 - See diagram below for gate placement in this area
 - This will allow for flexibility of use and control of depth of public access into this area
 - House overflow stray hold, confiscated dogs, bite quarantine dogs and potentially isolated dogs in the inside kennels
 - Open the current adoption room to the public as needed based on housing use (e.g. stray dogs)

OTHER DOG HOUSING

- Dog Isolation
 - Potential to install two double compartment kennels with a side transfer door in the current storage room behind the back kennels

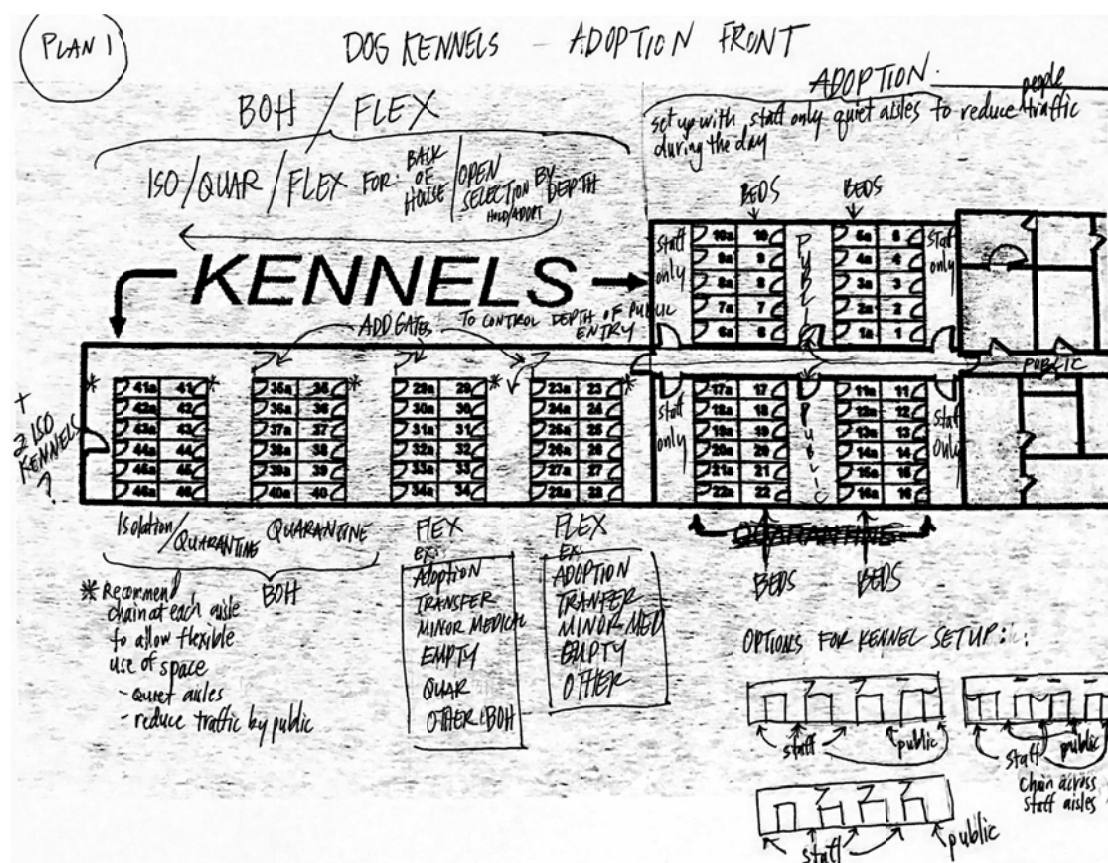
DOG HOUSING USE

The numbers in this table represent the number of housing units at the current facility and not the number of dogs and puppies housed in the shelter. Housing recommendations are based on the assumption that adults dogs will be housed one per double compartment kennel and puppies two per double compartment kennel.

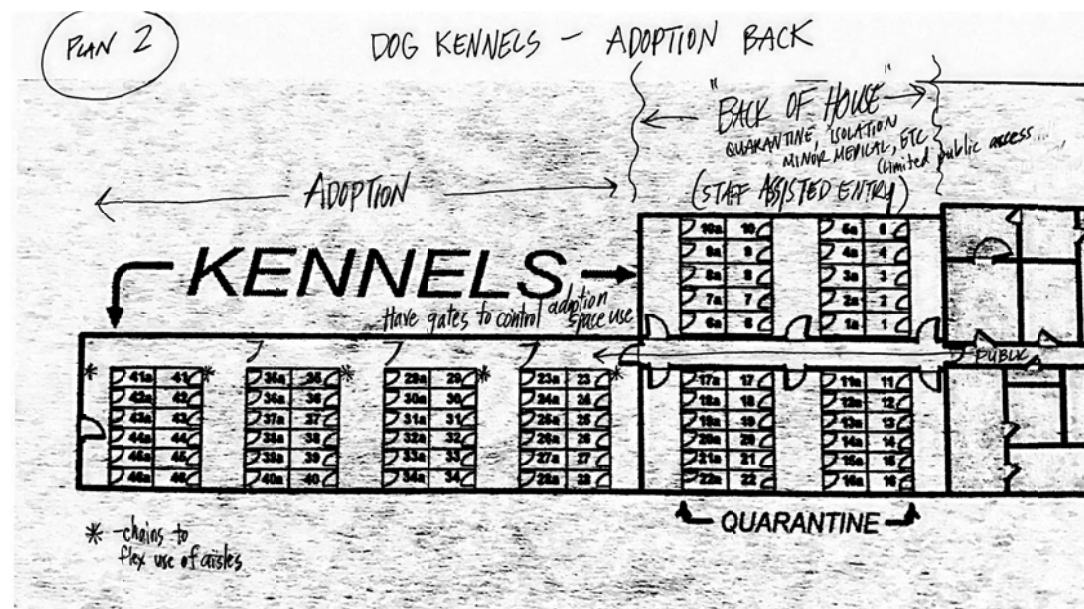
Dog Housing Units		
Annual intake: ~1300		% Capacity: 80% Average Length of Stay Goal: 10-14 days
Housing type	Housing spaces	Double sided kennels
Holding/Adoption (primary flow)	28	28
Special care	-	-
Quarantine/Confiscate	12	12
Isolation	6 (+2)	6 (+2 in the storage room)
Total housing units	46 +2	Comments: The use of your kennels as one dog per double sided kennel will require a considerable decrease in the current average LOS. We expect that capacity needs may decrease if strays from the Fort Bragg area are diverted to a shelter structure in that area. Further capacity needs may decrease by increased assistance/services to potential owner surrender clients.

Suggested existing kennel use options:

Plan Option #1:



Plan Option #2:



RABBIT, OTHER SMALL MAMMAL AND EXOTIC HOUSING

- Ensure that appropriate housing is available for the animal prior to admitting these types of animals

OUTCOMES

ADOPTION

- Remove requirements such as all family members needing to meet a pet, rental agreement reviews and dog meet and greets (unless the adopter would like to have one done at the shelter)
 - Revise language on the adoption process webpage to be more welcoming
- Avoid stating adoption restrictions on the website (NO KIDS, NO OTHER PETS) and keep an open mind about the necessity of restrictions (play groups will tell you more about dog-dog sociability, and homes with other pets and kids should be considered on a case by case basis)
- Ensure all marketing for adoption pets is short, positive and highlights a special quality about the pet
- Keep a good variety of pets in the adoptable animal areas (i.e. not too many overweight or shy cats up for adoption at one time)
- By reducing LOS and number of animals in care, there will be more time for adoption discussions
 - Recruit volunteers to show adopters around and help them make a good match with their family
- Create a tiered adoption fee schedule to match price with adoption desirability
- Allow volunteers to take animals to pet friendly places in the community (e.g. hiking trails, breweries, restaurants, etc.) to give them more exposure to potential adopters since some community members may not know about the shelter or are able to bring themselves to visit (either emotionally or physically)
 - Have the dogs wear 'Adopt Me!' vests
 - Make up business cards with information about the shelter to hand out to folks who are interested in adopting
- Make a monthly plan for group and individual adoption promotions to get approved by the county in advance so that each event does not require its own approval
 - Use holidays and theme adoption events to promote groups of animals (black dogs or cats, fat cats, orange cats, shy cats, etc.)
 - Promote individual animals identified as high risk for a long stay ("slow track", e.g. older animals, shy animals, animals with special medical needs, etc.) and promote these animals prior to a long wait – so identify them upon entry and start promoting RIGHT AWAY
 - Use price, placement in the shelter, placement off site (e.g. from foster) and special media promotions to get slow track animals out the door
 - See [ASPCA's ideas for cat marketing](#) for fun ideas
- Utilize adoption conversations that are driven by what the adopter wants to know about so that they are more engaged and feel more confident about caring for their new pet
- Focus resources on post adoption support as opposed to pre-adoption screening of both the animals and the potential adopters

- Generate emails that go out automatically to adopters three days, three weeks and three months' post adoption to ask how the adopter is doing (and thus how is the adoption going since a happy adopter is the sign of a successful adoption).
- Volunteers can also be utilized, if given a script, to facilitate phone calls to the new adopters
 - Any tricky issues can then be handed on to the relevant department or shelter staff member
- Provide a phone number that people can call if they have any questions and/or concerns
 - These calls should be answered or returned promptly
- A behavior team member should be available during all adoption hours to provide adoption counseling and post-adoption support
- Provide a free collar and engraved ID tag with the adopters contact information to all adopted, reclaimed and mobile clinic pets
 - Purchase two pet ID tag engravers
 - One for the shelter and one for the mobile spay/neuter mobile
 - Physically put this on each pet at the time they are leaving the shelter or have surgery
 - If it is a puppy or a kitten, talk to owners about increasing the collar size as the animal grows (give them two collars if available – one for the juvenile and one for when it is an adult)

RETURN TO FIELD/SHELTER NEUTER RETURN PROGRAM

- Identify strategy for handling each phase of RTF, from intake to surgery to release and follow-up/nuisance mitigation
 - This program needs to be fully developed to include clear communication with the public on when cats are to be dropped off
 - Allow cats to be dropped off early in the morning to allow for surgery the same day
- Exceptions should be made for cats at extraordinary risk at the site of impound; sick and injured cats; substantial nuisance situations (e.g. hoarding); ecologically sensitive locations and those with extraordinary public health implications
 - Reserve barn/working cat homes for these cats
- Additional resources are available to help with model legislation for a Return to Field program
- Create plan for communication with municipal contractees regarding RTF
- Resources
 - [HSUS/ICMA Managing Community Cats – Guide for Municipal Leaders](#)
 - [SF SPCA Community Cat Resources](#)

VETERINARY SERVICES

- Ensure that all intake is coordinated with available surgery time
- Drop age that kittens can go to surgery to a robust 1.5 pounds/6 weeks
 - This practice has been successfully implemented in shelters across the country
 - Safe anesthetic protocols have been developed
 - Behaviorally, the kittens do well adopted out into their new home at this age
- Discontinue the use of Lysine in all animals
- Utilize a revised [URI protocol](#)
 - If a cat is just sneezing, monitor in place and have staff clean these cats last
 - Only move to isolation if/when treatment is started
 - Move cats out of isolation as soon as the cat is sneeze free (clear of all clinical signs) rather than waiting for any set time periods

SANITATION

- Spot clean both dogs and [cats](#)
 - No chemicals needed for daily cleaning of cats
 - Leave bedding whenever not soiled or wet
 - A new dog kennel cleaning protocol has been provided
- Deep clean and disinfect cages and kennels when an animal vacates the housing unit prior to housing a new animal in that unit
- Care for healthy adult animals can occur without hand washing or glove changes between animals. Try to minimize animal handling during the daily cleaning and care process
 - Minimizes animal stress and greatly reduces disease transmission risks
- Hand sanitize (or hand wash) before and after handling animals for all volunteers and visitors
 - Provide easy to locate alcohol hand sanitizer stations in all animal housing areas
- Assign gown/top for higher disease risk populations/individual housing units (cat isolation area and dog isolation areas and for housing spaces where puppies or kittens may be housed) for cleaning; remove gown/change top after cleaning
 - Gown top can stay (hang up at entry/exit point) in the area and be reused – wash as needed

CAT ENRICHMENT

- Provide all cats in caged housing with a scratching surface such as a [Stretch and Scratch](#)
 - Send these home with the cat when it is adopted or throw away (don't reuse for other cats)
- Provide all cats with the ability to hide
 - Elevated bed or shelf with a towel/fleece blanket draped over
 - Make your own [elevated cat beds](#)
 - Put [cat Kuranda beds](#) on your Amazon wish list
 - Cover a portion of the front of the cage with a "[curtailment](#)"
 - Provide visual choice vs all or nothing

- o [Neighborhood cat dens](#) that can also be used to transport cats

DOG ENRICHMENT

- Institute a daily quiet hour for dogs
 - o Close the kennels to all people (staff, volunteers and visitors) for one hour every day; work to make this hour at a consistent time every day (e.g. 1-2 pm) since the dogs will come to anticipate it
 - o Turn off the lights
 - o Hang signage so that folks understand the importance of closing the kennels for a period of time every day
 - o If someone comes in to reclaim their dog during this hour, have them look through the photos at the front desk to help verify that their pet is in the shelter
 - Complete all paperwork
 - Wait until quiet hour is over to retrieve their dog from the kennels
- Encourage volunteers to do quiet activities with dogs in addition to their walks and playgroups
 - o Sitting and reading with the dogs in their kennels
 - o Sitting in the sun and relaxing (when it's not too hot!)
- Install sealed concrete in the puppy yard to allow this area to be disinfected between litters of puppies
- Create an Amazon Wish List to let the public know what you would like donated and have a direct link from your website

APPENDIX: LENGTH OF STAY METHODS AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this capacity report, overall weighted average length of stay (LOS) for cats and dogs were calculated based on the intake category (intake type, breed for dogs, age for cats), outcome type (e.g. reclaim, rescue, service out, adoption, euthanasia) and the optimal projected LOS to each outcome for each intake type. A shorter LOS to most outcomes is used in capacity calculations compared to the LOS currently achieved at an existing facility. LOS at a facility with an optimal number of high quality housing units (single housing for most adult dogs, double compartment housing for all animals) will tend to decrease for a number of reasons including:

- Reduced disease transmission and injuries, leading to fewer animals requiring treatment and less time in treatment
- Improved behavioral presentation in the kennel, lower stress, and greater ease of monitoring in single, double-compartment housing allowing animals to be accurately placed on the appropriate pathway early in their stay (e.g. friendly, healthy animals to adoption, fearful animals to rescue if needed, dangerous/untreatable animals to euthanasia if not reclaimed)
- Reduced staff time for cleaning and daily care, allowing refocusing of efforts on customer service, rescue networking, animal marketing and other activities that enhance live release and speed animals to the appropriate outcome
- Increased foot traffic associated with a more welcoming and attractive facility
 - Doubling foot traffic means each animal will be seen by an equal number of potential adopters in half the time
- Self-sustaining decreased LOS due to fewer animals in the system at any one time at optimal capacity
 - Simply lowering the number of animals in the facility at any one time, *provided there is sufficient time for each animal to receive all needed services and be viewed for an adequate time period*, will decrease the LOS for each one independent of all other factors

Management practices also strongly influence LOS. Some management best practices are facilitated by improved housing (for instance, by promoting accurate behavioral and medical evaluation to help place animals on the appropriate pathway early in their stay). However, some management practices can optimize LOS independent of facility. These should be initiated or expanded to the extent possible as soon as possible to allow for a smooth transition into a new or remodeled facility. Management practices to optimize LOS include (but are not limited to):

- Scheduled admission for non-emergency owner surrendered dogs and cats, healthy stray cats, service out and foster returns to coincide with optimal flow (e.g. in order to have surgery and be prepared for adoption on weekends)
- Pro-active pathway planning and daily population management rounds, ensuring that each animal is evaluated initially and reevaluated daily during their stay to identify the most

appropriate outcome, and that all steps are taken to move the animal to that outcome as soon as legally and logistically possible

- Adequate number and skill level of staff to perform all needed services, including initial intake evaluation, any required behavioral evaluation, and spay/neuter surgery with minimal delay
- “Fast track/slow track” management that prioritizes rapid movement through the system for animals with high potential for adoption, and pro-active promotion of “slow track” animals through differential pricing, marketing or other methods
- Open adoption policies that promote adopter driven conversation and is conducted by trained staff and volunteers (more resources on [strategic](#) and [open adoptions](#) can be found on our website)

Pro-active planning is emphasized to manage LOS and will be critical to maintaining the facility most of the time at the recommended level (commonly ~ 80% of maximum capacity), which allows for adequate housing to be assured even during times of peak intake. If the population is only managed in response to the shelter being full, this will not be possible. Additional information on length of stay management can be found in the appendix on [Capacity for Care and Length of Stay resources](#).

APPENDIX: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING

A cornerstone of successful shelter design is the size and type of the animal housing. To meet animal needs, reduce animal stress and allow staff to safely and efficiently care for animals, housing should be double compartment. These recommendations intend for all animals to be housed individually (exceptions – mothers and offspring, bonded pairs, juveniles, purpose designed group housing). The housing recommended will meet most animals' needs for up to about a two-week shelter stay. If animals are expected to be housed in the shelter for periods beyond two weeks, then accommodation for additional needs for more housing space, out-of- housing time and provisions for behavioral needs according to the individual animal must be met; the housing recommendations provided here are not intended for extended stays.

In general, all individual (dog and cat) shelter housing should:

- Provide double compartments of adequate space
- Provide the animal a place for retreat in the housing unit (hiding box, high sided bed, box, curtain/towel attached to housing unit door, etc.)
- Allow human/animal interaction to occur at the front of the housing unit
- Maximize the floor space by utilizing raised beds and elevated food/water dishes
- Provide fresh clean food and water daily
- Provide as much choice within the housing unit for the animal (soft and hard surfaces, cool and warm surfaces, floor and elevated height spaces, hiding/retreat space, indoor and outdoor space, viewing choices – window, etc.)
- Be located in a quiet environment
- Provide natural lighting
- Provide adequate ventilation – open barred housing unit doors generally allow room ventilation into housing spaces and are preferred over completely enclosed housing units
 - Enclosed housing units must be individually ventilated
- Easy to clean and disinfectable surfaces
- Provide visual choice – window views, outdoor views, view into the center of the room, views of other animals of the same species (given that both animals have the choice to not be seen if desired and if overstimulation occurs due to something seen move the animal to other housing such that the visual cause is lessened or find alternative housing – foster etc.), (generally avoid views into a blank wall)

CATS

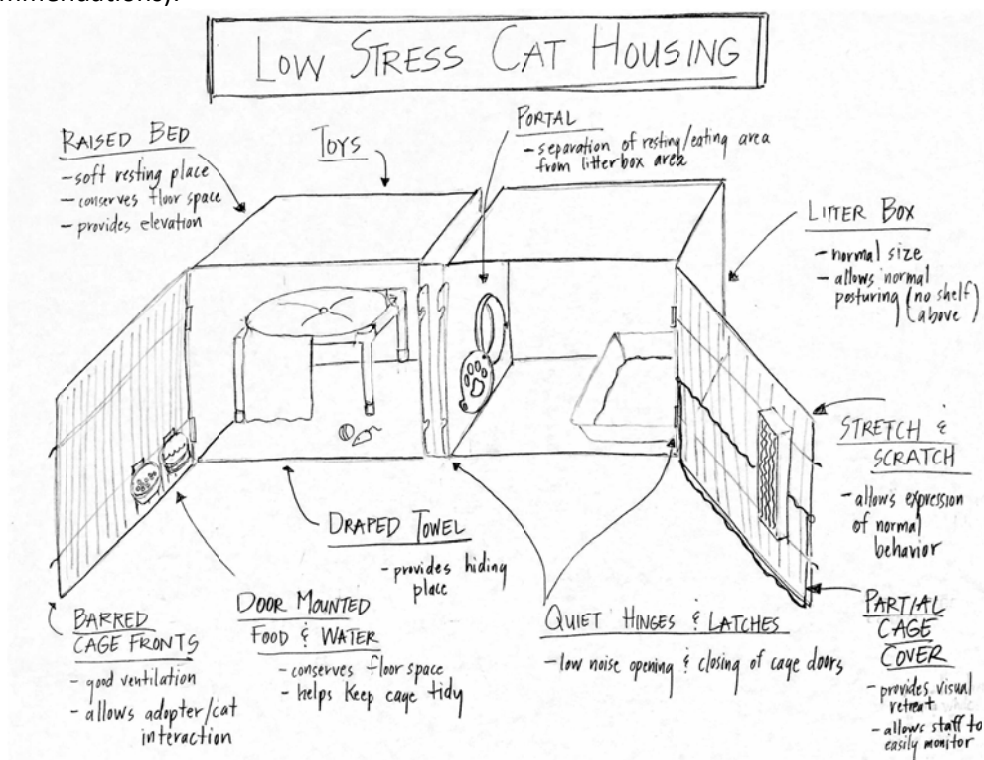
HOLD/ISOLATION/SPECIAL CARE AND FOR OPEN SELECTION OPERATIONAL MODELS

- Double compartment caging/condos - Our favorite are two 30" long by 28" deep by 28-30" high cages with a side to side pass-through between them with the units double stacked (we do not recommend triple stacking). These cage sizes can be found in laminate, stainless steel or fiberglass units. Not all will have a pass through available if purchased new. Most older units that are still in good shape will be single cages, but both new and older cage units can be retrofitted to double compartment with a [portal](#). Request quiet latches and hinges from the manufacturer.

- Example: These are new 30" stainless steel cages that have been retrofitted with portals to make them double compartment



- Cage set up when double compartment is side to side (see link above for daily spot cleaning recommendations):



- The minimum size for double compartment cat housing is a 4' unit
 - Example 1) two 2x2 cages – notice the portal in between these two cages making a double compartment housing unit. Staff needed a reminder to house only one cat per double unit- hence the sign “1 cat”.



- o Example 2) a 4' cage divided to provide a main living area and a litter box side.

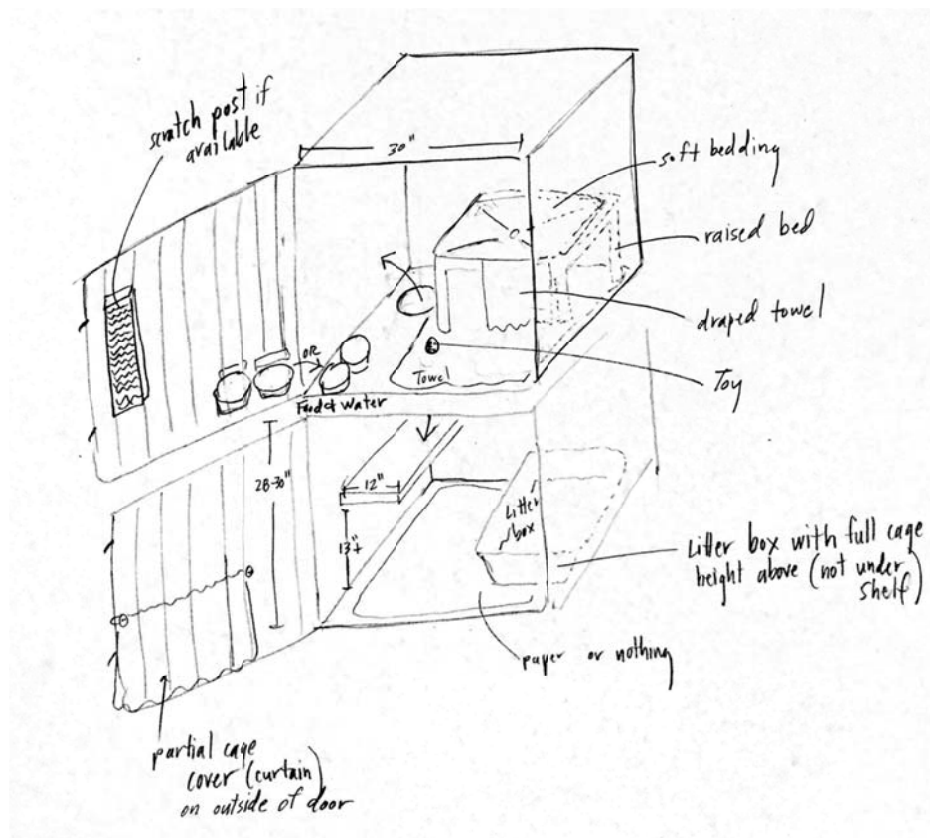


CAT ADOPTION – PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING SUCH AS CAGING, INDIVIDUAL ROOMS AND GROUP ROOM(S)

- **Caging - Adoption Quad** – Four - 30" long by 28" deep by 28-30" high cages with pass through side to side and up to down. These are basically the same as the holding units but have an additional pass through up to down, which provides more housing flexibility and work well to present cats at the eye level of the adopter when the double compartment is up to down.
 - Many manufactures make similar models to this one – (Shorline® 5' laminate unit). The open bar cage fronts allow room ventilation to easily enter the housing unit and are great for observation and adopter/cat interactions.

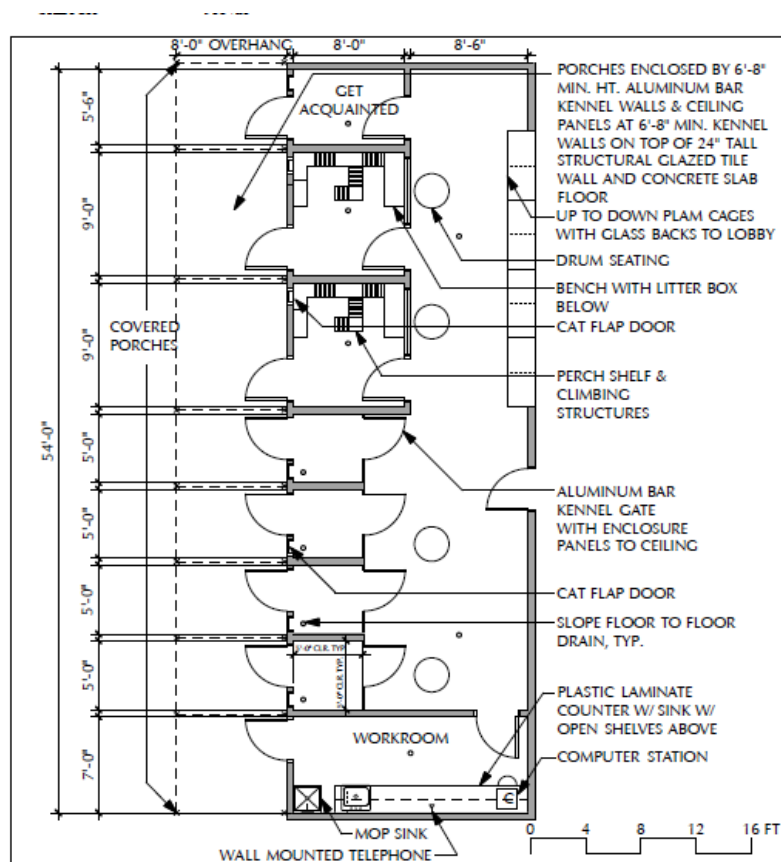


- Cage set up when double compartment is up to down (see link above for daily spot cleaning recommendation)



- **Group rooms** – minimum of 18 ft²/cat. Rooms can be larger but maximum number of cats planned for a room should be no more than ~4-6 with some flexibility to mitigate stress and infectious disease concerns.
- **Individual cat room** – minimum of 18 ft²/cat. Minimum size needed for a person to enter comfortably and sit in a chair and interact with a cat (~6' x 6'). For one to two cats (bonded).

Cat Adoption Housing Example: this schematic depicts a variety of housing with several double compartment cages (up to down configuration in adoption) along the right wall, as well as several larger group rooms and some smaller individual cat rooms each with access to outside porches. Work spaces and get acquainted areas are also shown.

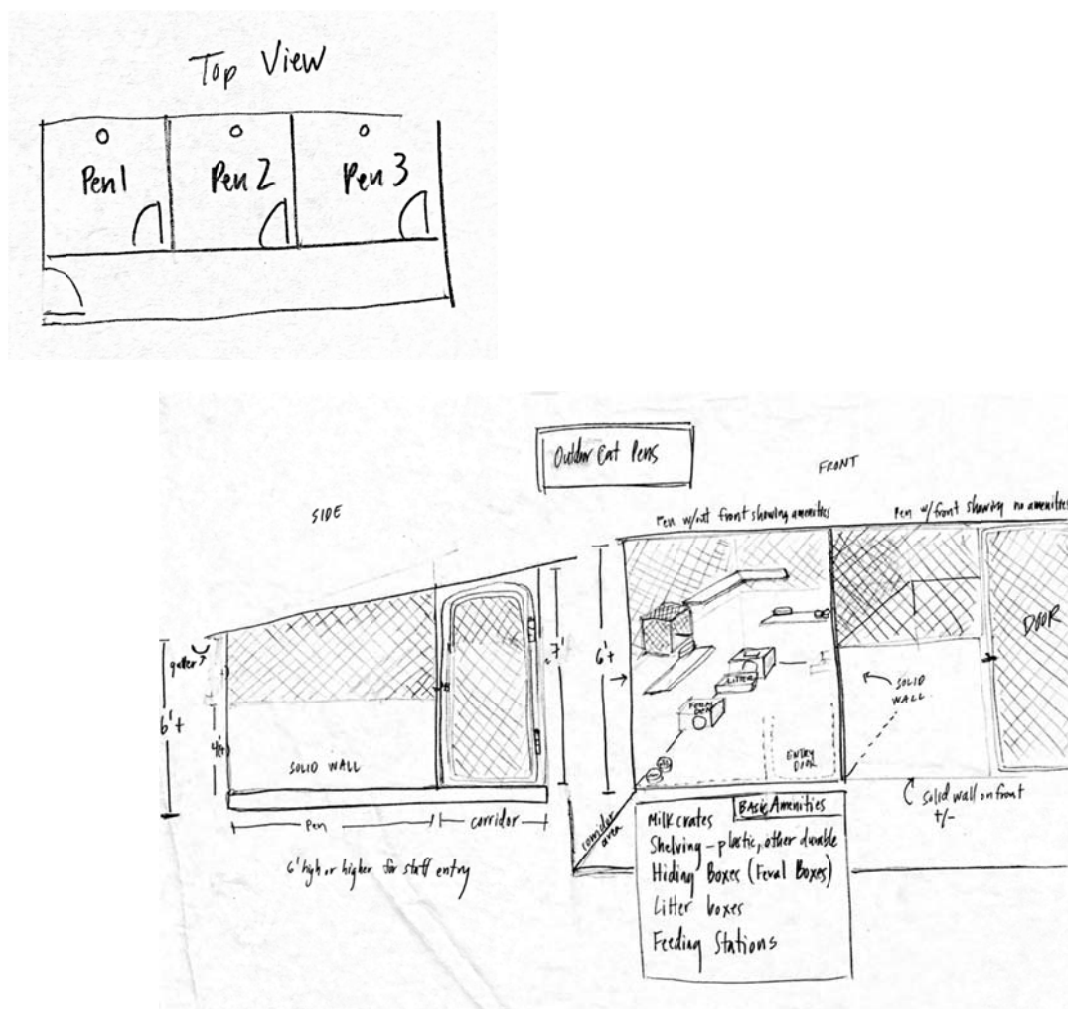


OTHER FELINE HOUSING

- **Outdoor pens** – outdoor pens can group-house cats that live in outdoor environments (community cats, feral cats). These can be provided as part of a barn enclosure or separate outdoor pen unit. These need to be covered and protected from wind and weather. The pens need a solid wall surface that extends up about ~3-4'. A solid back wall and between pen walls may be preferred. The remainder can be cat proof fencing. The interior of the pens need shelving, hiding boxes, litter boxes, feeding stations and any other amenities needed to maintain health and well-being depending on the time of year (warming boxes, etc.). These

should be located in quiet, low traffic areas and have an enclosed front aisle that allows access to the pens (i.e. providing a double door entry).

Here are some sketches of what an outdoor pen may look like:



- **Indoor pens** – these are similar to the outdoor pens except they are located inside the shelter and are generally simple indoor pens with the same amenities as the outdoor pens. They can be used to house community or feral cats. Additionally they could be used for confiscate or hoarding cases where multiple cats from the same household would benefit from group housing. Ensure that plenty of hiding places and elevated space is provided.

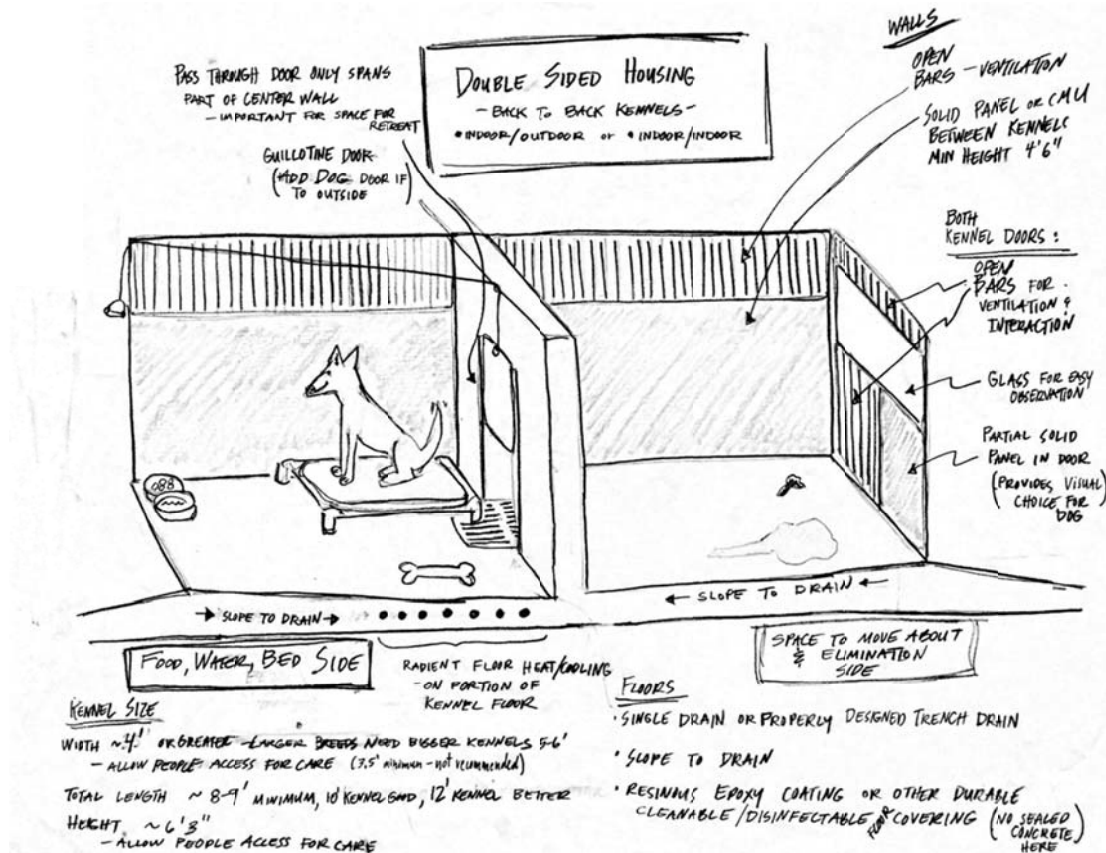


- **Temporary pens** – these can be used to house cats when there is an acute need for group-housing, such as hoarding cases. Dog kennel type pens with tops can work well. Ideally, these could be set up when needed in a room designed for multi-use needs. These should be thought of as temporary housing, and cases should be processed as quickly as possible. When setting these up, keep the needs of the animals to be housed within them in mind. This may be indoor or outdoor (with proper protection from the elements and predators). Include needed amenities, such as food and water stations, warming boxes (when needed), adequate shelving, hiding places and vertical space.

DOGS

HOLD/ISOLATION/QUARANTINE/ADOPTION – DOUBLE COMPARTMENT KENNELS

- These can be indoor/outdoor or indoor/indoor kennels with a pass through front to back or double stacked cages with a pass through side to side (Preference for indoor/outdoor kennels when possible, however there may be a preference for small dog kennels to be indoor/indoor)



- In addition to the guillotine door, indoor/outdoor kennels should have a dog door to maintain a consistent indoor conditioned environment
 - Example (and our favorite): saloon style door by [Biteguard Kennelplex](#)



- General kennel size
 - 4' wide by 10-12' + long divided by a guillotine door pass through

- Fits most dogs
 - Always include a few kennels for giant breed dogs or co-housed dogs, mom and pups, etc.
 - 6' wide x 10-12' + long divided by a guillotine door pass through
 - Ensure the guillotine door is big enough for giant breed dogs
 - If it is expected that people will spend time with dogs within their kennels, increase the kennel width to accommodate this need (~5-6' wide or greater)
- **Small dog kennel** – Hold/Special Care/Isolation/Adoption (Ex: Chihuahua, some terriers and puppies)
 - 3' wide by 6' long divided by a guillotine door pass through
 - Limited space for personnel to enter kennel
- **Small dog double stacked kennels** – Hold/Special Care/Isolation/Adoption (small dogs/puppies) – recommend stainless steel
 - 6' wide by 28" deep by 30" tall divided by a side to side pass through.
 - Example:



DOG ADOPTION – PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING

- **Any of the above canine housing can work for adoption areas**
- **May be combined with canine hold housing for “open selection” type facility and greater flexibility**
- Real Life Room
 - Indoor/outdoor or Indoor/Indoor
 - Generally enclosed with some amount of glass for viewing
 - Room is individually ventilated
 - Accommodate for adopter/dog interaction
 - Sniff holes – allow treats to be administered and for dogs to sniff what’s outside their room space
 - Dutch doors

- Allows for some interaction to occur without having to take the dog out of its housing space
- May increase noise in the dog adoption area when upper door is open if housing a barking dog
- Ideally set up with amenities that might be found in a home such as cleanable furniture (cement, plastic, etc.), dog bed, etc.
- Example: This large real life room co-houses two dogs and has access to a second compartment that is outdoors for urination and defecation needs:



- Example: Another real life room with access to another indoor compartment:



APPENDIX: LENGTH OF STAY RELATIONSHIP TO FLOW CAPACITY

Ideally shelter programs, community programs and community involvement would help keep intakes from dramatically increasing however some flexibility in capacity is always needed. One tool for meeting potential increased capacity needs of the future is by management of length of stay (LOS). Length of stay has a powerful impact on the total number of animals that can be served in a community and can serve to increase the annual capacity of a shelter without increasing daily inventory or physical housing requirements should more animals need sheltering care/services in the future.

Management of LOS can also help accommodate seasonal fluctuations in intake, such as those that typically accompany kitten season at many shelters. Shortening the LOS for kittens by pro-active surgery scheduling and foster care arrangements (e.g. a [“Foster on Deck”](#) system) can facilitate processing a high number of cats through the shelter safely during peak season without exceeding housing capacity.

The table below shows a theoretical capacity for annual throughput of animals with a shelter with a total housing capacity of 50 housing units. This assumes one animal housed per unit. (Use at 100%). Notice the over four fold increase in number of animals served in the same 50 housing units when comparing the longest length of stay to the shortest length of stay. Lowering average LOS can provide more housing capacity without having to “build” more housing units.

Table 1: Number of animals served per year given differing average lengths of stay	
AVE. LOS	Animals served per year
7	2607
10	1825
14	1304
21	869
25	730
30	608

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR LENGTH OF STAY AND CAPACITY FOR CARE

- Recent article in Animal Sheltering Magazine on Capacity for Care: [Finding your Magic Number](#)
- Length of stay – [Information sheet](#)
- Fast track/slow track flow through planning – [Information sheet](#)
- Dr. Hurley's Conference Capacity for Care Lectures from the Florida Shelter Medicine Course May 2014 – Video Recordings:

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

- Developing intake and adoption decision making criteria (includes scoring system information) – [Information sheet](#)
- Adoption driven capacity: your shelter's key to saving lives and providing great care – [Information sheet](#)
- New paradigms for shelters and community cats – [Information sheet](#)
- The [ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters](#)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Adoption – pet receives a new home
- Capacity, flow through – number of animals that can be served in a given facility annually
- Capacity, physical or holding – number of housing units or spaces within group housing
- Capacity for care (C4C) – A shelter's capacity for care is based on its ability to provide animals the five freedoms of animal welfare and is based on housing quality and number; staffing and volunteer levels for daily care; and the rate of positive outcomes achieved at a given facility
- Community Cat – unowned or semi-owned cat living in community, regardless of socialization status
- Euthanasia – Euthanasia is derived from the Greek terms eu meaning good and thanatos meaning death. The term is usually used to describe ending the life of an individual animal in a way that minimizes or eliminates pain and distress. A good death is tantamount to the humane termination of an animal's life. (From the AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2013 Edition).
- Fast tracking – pathway planning that prioritizes animals that are likely to appeal to a high percentage of adopters (e.g. by reason of age, breed, appearance, or behavior) for rapid movement through the shelter; this can free up space and resources for animals that appeal to a more select group of adopters
- Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare
 - Freedom from hunger and thirst
 - Freedom from discomfort
 - Freedom from pain, injury or disease
 - Freedom to express normal behavior
 - Freedom from fear and distress
- Humane animal shelter housing
 - Individual animal housing – two compartments that are of adequate size (two kennels or cages) separated by some type of pass-through (guillotine/transfer door for dog kennels, portal for cat housing units). Double compartment housing is intended to house one shelter animal (exceptions: juvenile, nursing moms, bonded pairs). The expectation for length of time this housing will meet animals' needs in a shelter is approximately 10-14 days or less.
 - Can be used for hold and adoption housing needs
 - Various housing sizes can be used depending on animal needs and location in facility
 - Group housing for cats – provide 18ft² of floor-space/cat. Recommend small groups of up to about 4-5 cats.
 - Group housing for dogs is not generally recommended for short term shelter care. Can be beneficial in longer term shelters or sanctuaries.
 - Co- housing of bonded pairs of cats or dogs can be beneficial with adequate space and monitoring to ensure both animals have access to food and resources (resource

guarding may emerge in confinement housing even when it has not previously been a problem)

- Juvenile – usually a dog or cat that is less than 5 or 6 months of age
- Live Intake – animals that are entering the shelter that will be in need of housing space
 - Does not include animals that are deceased on arrival
 - Does not include animals that are owner requested euthanasia unless these animals are housed in the shelter and potentially made available for adoption or rescue
- Length of stay (LOS) – the number of days that an animal spends in a shelter from intake to outcome
 - Often reported as an average number when referring to groups of animals (dogs, cats, specific breeds, juveniles, etc.)
 - LOS is not used to decide how long an individual animal stays in the shelter (e.g. it is not a time limit)
- Neonate – a puppy or kitten too young to be placed for adoption (less than 6-8 weeks of age for kittens and less than 8 weeks of age for puppies, depending on shelter policy)
- Outcome – the method by which an animal leaves the shelter (e.g. reclaim, rescue, return to field, adoption, euthanasia)
 - Over time the number of outcomes must equal the number of intake
- OS – owner surrender
- Rescue – animal moves out of the shelter facility to a rescuer or rescue group
- Right sizing – capacity (housing of appropriate number and type) and flexibility in space use to meet animal intake needs of the community now and into the future
 - Right sizing is the combination of facility capacity (housing and supporting care spaces) and shelter and/or community programs that address animal population control and the communities at risk or homeless animal care needs
- RTF – Return to Field: sterilization, vaccination, and ear tipping followed by return to the location found
- RTO – return to owner
- Stray – animal found roaming at large, with or without evidence of ownership
- TNR – trap, neuter, return (cats)
- Transfer – In general used to describe an animal that is moved from one shelter facility to another. Some shelters may use it to describe animals that are rescued or moved off campus with a live outcome.