

DOLLARS & SENSE

A GUIDE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

The Economic Benefits of No Kill Animal Control



**Reduce
Costs**



**Increase
Revenues**



**Support
Community
Businesses**



A PUBLICATION OF THE NO KILL ADVOCACY CENTER

THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF NO KILL ANIMAL CONTROL

Dollars&Sense



MYTH:

No Kill is too expensive. Our community can't afford it.

FACT:

No Kill is cost-effective, fiscally responsible, and a great economic boon to local communities. Municipalities which want to enact good policy and improve the local economy should invest in lifesaving at their local shelter. Given the cost savings and additional revenues of doing so (reduced costs associated with killing, enhanced community support, an increase in adoption revenues and other user fees, and additional tax revenues), as well as the positive economic impact of adoptions, a community cannot afford *not* to embrace No Kill.

TODAY, THERE ARE HUNDREDS of communities across the United State with live release rates above 90% and many are as high as 99%. These communities share little in common demographically. What they do share is leadership with a “can do” attitude and a passion for saving lives, as well as the model used to achieve it: the programs and services of the No Kill Equation (See *No Kill 101: A Primer on No Kill Animal Control Sheltering for Public Officials*, at nokilladvocacycenter.org). These communities not only prove that No Kill can be achieved at “open admission” municipal shelters in both urban and rural, Northern and Southern, large and small, and both politically liberal and conservative communities, but also that No Kill is consistent with a municipal shelter’s public safety mandate. They also disprove the idea that communities with high intake rates can’t be No Kill. This is good news because not only do the animals deserve it and alternatives to killing exist, but the public is increasingly demanding it. In a national survey, 96% of Americans—almost every single person across the social and political

NO KILL EQUATION PROGRAMS

- Volunteers
- Rescue Access
- Foster Care
- Comprehensive Adoption Programs
- Pet Retention
- Community Cat & Dog Sterilization
- Medical and Behavior Prevention & Rehabilitation
- Public Relations/Community Involvement
- High-Volume, Low-Cost Sterilization
- Proactive Redemptions
- Leadership

spectrum—said we have a moral obligation to protect animals and that we should have strong laws to do so. Saving lives is not only good public policy; it is also good bipartisan politics. But at a time when economic challenges are being faced in communities across the country, legislators and policy makers are asking if they can afford to embrace a more humane alternative.

Thankfully, many communities have already proven that No Kill animal control is cost-effective, saves municipalities expenses associated with killing, and brings badly needed revenues into public coffers and community businesses. In addition, while some of the communities which have embraced No Kill have also increased funding for animal services, not all of them have. Achieving No Kill does not necessarily require increased expenditures on animal control.

Although costs vary somewhat, impounding, caring for, and ultimately killing an animal and disposing of his/her body costs approximately \$106.00 (\$66 for impoundment and \$40 for killing and disposal). The

process is entirely revenue negative to the municipality in contrast to the No Kill approach which transfers costs to private philanthropy, brings in adoption revenue and other user fees, and supports local businesses. In just one community, a No Kill initiative yielded \$250,000 in increased shelter revenues at a time the shelter also significantly reduced expenditures. In addition, the positive economic impact to businesses due to subsequent spending by adopters on those animals totaled over \$12,000,000 in sales annually. Over the course of the lifetime of those animals and subsequent adoptions, it is estimated that these animals will generate \$300 million, bringing in over \$20,000,000 in sales tax revenues.

Does it make more economic sense to adopt out animals, transfer animals to private non-profit rescue organizations, and increase the number of stray animals reclaimed by their families, all revenue positive activities that save the costs of killing and bring in fees and other revenues? Of course it does. At a time when dozens of communities across the country have achieved No Kill, including those with *per capita* intake rates up to 10 times higher than New York City, shelters which continue to kill in the face of lifesaving alternatives are not only engaging in morally bankrupt conduct (killing animals who have a place to go), they are bankrupting community coffers. No Kill animal control not only makes good sense.

It makes *dollars and cents*.

ECONOMIC COSTS OF NO KILL

Many of the programs identified as key components of saving lives are more cost-effective than impounding, warehousing, and then killing animals. Some rely on private philanthropy, as in the use of rescue groups, which shifts costs of care from public taxpayers to private individuals and groups. Others, such as the use of volun-

CASE STUDY

AUSTIN, TX

A 2017 University of Denver study found that the total dollar value of additional spending and other economic impact realized by the City of Austin, TX, between 2010 - 2016 as a result of passing a No Kill ordinance was \$157,452,503, with an investment of just over \$30,000,000 — a return on investment of over 400%. These economic benefits included:- \$49,307,682 in additional spending by individuals within Austin on veterinary and pet care services;

- \$25,333,237 in additional spending on other pet-related expenses;

It also attracted new businesses: Google's decision to build a new office tower in Austin is directly attributable to the City's No Kill plan. Google executives noted that "it is attractive to a young, vibrant, pet-loving workforce."

"An additional benefit appears to be the positive contribution of Austin's progressive animal welfare policies to its brand equity. This impact is important as municipalities compete with each other to attract employee demographics that in turn draw new business and new economic growth to their area. Although not included in the final economic impact calculation, the potential impacts of progressive animal welfare policies on larger social and environmental outcomes, including public health, social capital, and community engagement, have important implications for Austin's ability to promote and sustain the health and well-being of both its human and animal residents." During the study period, Travis County's

population grew by 17.1%, resulting in an additional \$4.9 billion spent on the local economy, of which \$72.3 million is "attributable to no-kill." And, the study authors note, that's "the most conservative possible measure of the data." In other words, the true economic benefit is likely to be much higher.

The No Kill plan included three main programmatic components:

- An "immediate moratorium on the [convenience killing] of animals if there were available kennels at the municipal facility";

- Implementation of the No Kill Equation (offsite adoptions, medical care, behavior and training, pet retention, foster care, community cat sterilization, rescue partnerships, and community engagement); and,

- A mandated minimum live release rate of 90%.

Adoptions between the baseline year and the last year for which data was available showed dog adoptions were up 67% and cat adoptions were up 49%. Conversely, dog killing was down 94% and cat killing was down 91%. The live release rate went from 54% to 95% for cats and from 70% to 98% for dogs.



teers, augment paid human resources. Still others, such as adoptions, bring in revenue. And, finally, some, such as sterilizing rather than killing community cats, are simply less expensive both immediately and in the long-term, with exponential savings in terms of reducing births.

In addition, a national study found no correlation between per capita funding for animal control and live release rates. One community saved 90 percent of the animals, while another saved only 40 percent despite four times the *per capita* rate of spending on animal control. One community has seen killing rates increase over 30 percent despite one of the best-funded shelter systems in the nation. Another has caused death rates to drop by 50 percent despite cutting spending.

Nationally, *per capita* funding ranged from \$1.50 to about \$6.30. Corresponding

live release rates ranged from 35% (\$2.00 *per capita*) to 95% (\$1.50 *per capita*), but their lifesaving rates did not follow any predictable pattern. There were shelters with an 87% rate of lifesaving spending only \$2.80 *per capita*, and shelters with a 42% rate (less than half of the former) spending more than double that (at \$5.80 *per capita*).



CASE STUDY

MARQUETTE, MI

In 2006, the Upper Peninsula Animal Welfare Shelter (UPAWS), the open admission shelter which serves Marquette, MI, was killing 64% of animals and on the verge of bankruptcy when it chose to embrace the No Kill philosophy.

Since that time, the number of animals saved rather than killed has increased dramatically. Immediately after announcing its No Kill mission, UPAWS saved 93%. It has been steadily increasing. In 2015, UPAWS saved 97% of dogs, 96% of cats, and 97% of rabbits, hamsters, ferrets, and other animals. Since then, the live release rate has climbed to 99%.

What did it cost? When UPAWS was killing 64% of the animals, they spent \$190.85 per animal. Now saving over 95%, they spend \$207.58. At the same time, however, they lost \$178,636 in adoption revenue when they were killing the animals and it would only have cost them \$15,660 more to actually save them. But that's not at all: while the cost per animal went up slightly (8%), so did revenue: an overall increase of 61%, more than offsetting costs.

In other words, there was no correlation between success/failure and per capita spending on animal control. The difference between those shelters that succeeded and those that failed was not the size of the budget, but the programmatic effort of its leadership: the commitment of shelter managers to comprehensively implement a key series of programs and services. While communities should provide adequate funding, simply throwing money at the problem of shelter killing will do very little without leadership committed both to lifesaving and to accountability. Between 2007-2009, King County, Washington commissioners spent millions of additional dollars on the animal services program after three independent evaluations revealed rampant illness, deplorable conditions, and high rates of killing. In fact, during this period, the County Commission never denied a funding request for the agency. But no improvement in animal care resulted despite the allocation of millions of additional dollars.

In Portland, OR, likewise, an analysis of shelter expenses to lifesaving found that:

Over the course of the past few years (fiscal years 2003 through 2008), a period during which the total number of animals brought into the shelter increased by only 5 percent and the agency's budget increased by 50 percent (to a current \$4.6 million), nearly every measure of the agency's performance documents failure. Adoptions are down by 40 percent (dogs) and 18 percent (cats). Nearly half of the dogs not returned to owners are killed; so too are nearly two-thirds of cats. The "kill rate" is now well above rates in neighboring counties facing far more severe budget limitations. Thousands of dollars are squandered on adversarial enforcement efforts that have achieved no meaningful improvement in the public's safety. The number of animals saved by cooperating with life-saving organizations and individuals, a number widely recognized as a key measure of community support, has dropped by 40 percent.

That doesn't mean that governments should continue underfunding their shelters. Shelters with low per capita spending claimed difficulty sustaining programs. As a result, the study should not

CASE STUDY

POLK COUNTY, FL

A 2016 Florida Southern College study of the impact of the SPCA of Florida on the regional economy found that for every \$1 in revenue generated by the SPCA, \$1.67 was created in the regional economy. On top of that, the SPCA's adoption center generates over \$5.7 million yearly in economic impact (as adopters spend money on veterinary care, pet supplies, shop while in the area, and more), has provided approximately one additional employee to each of Polk County's 179 for-profit veterinarians, and helps reduce intakes and costs at the local municipal shelter. Overall, from 2010-2015, the SPCA had an overall regional economic impact of \$71 million.

be used as an excuse to reduce shelter budgets. It does mean, however, that to really make an impact, communities do not generally need to allocate millions of dollars more to animal control. By investing in progressive leaders willing to embrace the cost-effective and revenue-producing programs and services which make No Kill possible and to embrace public-private partnerships which save lives and save money, communities that provide funding within national norms can end the killing of savable animals (roughly 99% of all intakes) without raiding public coffers.

Moreover, as most shelter costs are fixed, keeping additional animals alive does not dramatically increase costs. Since it takes roughly the same amount of time to clean a kennel as it does to kill an animal, staff increases often prove unnecessary, with the added financial benefit that cleaning requires less-skilled, less-expensive labor and can be augmented through unpaid volunteer support.

Not only do the cost-effective programs that make No Kill possible benefit a municipality's bottom line, they can be enhanced with the free support of non-profit organizations and volunteers. In San Francisco, for example, volunteers spend over 110,000 hours at the shelter each year. Assuming the prevailing hourly wage, it would cost the agency over \$1,000,000 dollars to provide those services. All too often, however, volunteers and rescuers are prevented from assisting by regressive policies in shelters across the country. Even in those communities that allow volunteers, traditional shelters find it difficult to recruit and retain volunteers who do not want to work in an environment of killing. By adopting the No Kill philosophy, shelter volunteer rates increase dramatically, allowing more lives to be cared for and saved. In Reno, Nevada, the local shelter increased the number of volunteers from 30 to over 7,000 after launch-

ing its No Kill initiative. In addition, the number of foster homes increased from a handful to almost 2,500, all of whom help save lives at little cost to the shelter. The services volunteers provide reduce expenses, while increasing capacity, and the animals they save are then adopted out, bringing in adoption revenue to the shelter and further revenue to local businesses.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Municipalities which invest in prevention programs also realize short and long-term economic benefits, such as programs to proactively reclaim more animals, pet retention initiatives to keep animals from entering the shelter, as well as subsidized spay/neuter.

Preventing Surrenders: In Reno, a full-time staff member and volunteers manage an "Animal Help" desk where people calling to surrender their animals are offered no-cost advice and guidance on solving the challenges relating to their animals. A survey found that of those who agreed to participate in the program, 59% did not surrender their animal after one year, saving the shelter from having to take in and care for those animals and more than offsetting the cost of the program.

Increasing Reclaims: A proactive effort to ensure that lost animals are reclaimed has led to stray redemption rates in Reno that are seven times greater than the national average for cats and over three times the average for dogs, reducing the costs of care, killing, and disposal. Over 60% of stray dogs are being reclaimed by their families—compared to the national average of roughly 20% and less than 10% for poorly-performing communities—because the agency has invested in proactive efforts to get more animals home.

This includes officers going door-to-door to locate the "owner" when animals are picked up in the field thereby avoiding the

costs of impound, holding, and potential killing; waiving fees or billing citizens rather than holding their animal on threat of execution if they cannot afford the fees or fines; uploading photographs and full descriptions of found animals onto the agency's website so that people can identify their animals online from any computer 24 hours a day/seven days a week; and more. By returning thousands of animals every year to their homes in the field and helping thousands more get home after they have been impounded, the shelter does not spend additional money caring for and potentially killing those animals. Moreover, those animals no longer compete for kennel space or homes with other animals, allowing more resources to be allocated to those remaining animals.

Reducing Births: Research shows that investment in sterilization programs not only provides immediate public health and public relations benefits but also long-term financial savings to a jurisdiction as well. Reductions in animal intakes, fewer animals killed, and fewer field calls associated with free-roaming, unaltered animals have been reported. Moreover, community dog and cat sterilization has an immediate measurable lifesaving impact, in addition to immediate cost savings.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF NO KILL

Beyond the increased revenues and associated savings of No Kill animal control, there are even wider economic benefits to the community. Americans spend \$70 billion annually on the care of their companion animals, an amount which is growing every year even as other economic sectors decline. Spending on animal companions is now the seventh largest sector of the retail economy. And giving to

animal related charities remains one of the fastest growing segments in American philanthropy. This embrace of animals cuts across all political, economic, and social demographics. And communities which adopt a No Kill orientation for animal control are reaping the economic benefits.

Before Reno's No Kill initiative, the shelter adopted out less than 5,000 dogs and cats every year. The remainder was put to

We Are a Nation of ANIMAL LOVERS

Spending on companion animals is one of the mainstays of the American economy. On average, Americans spend approximately \$4,662 per dog and \$3,774 per cat annually as follows:

DOGS

Food:	\$600
Treats/Toys	\$240
Veterinary Care:	\$2,402
Boarding/Pet Sitting:	\$700
Miscellaneous:	\$720

TOTAL: \$4,662

CATS

Food:	\$519
Treats/Toys	\$216
Veterinary Care:	\$1,822
Boarding/Pet Sitting:	\$653
Miscellaneous:	\$564

TOTAL: \$3,774

* According to figures based on averages calculated from the American Veterinary Medical Association, American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, Rover, and Bloomberg Report.

*Municipalities that charge high adoption and reclaim fees in order to increase revenues as much as possible are working at cross purposes with their goals of greater lifesaving—the higher the fees, the lower the number of adoptions and reclaims that occur. Municipalities can balance their animal care with their animal control goals by lowering fees, but increasing volume.

death at great cost to taxpayers and donors. In 2010, as death rates declined, the number of animals adopted doubled to just under 10,000 adoptions. In addition to a cost savings of roughly \$200,000 associated with killing, adoption fees brought in almost \$250,000 in additional adoption revenues. Moreover, the positive economic impact of economic spending by adopters on those animals to community businesses totaled over \$12,000,000 in annual sales. With an average lifespan of roughly 11 years per animal, the total revenues to community businesses over the life of those pets could potentially top \$120,000,000. The number is substantially higher given that those impacts are exponen-

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS SAVE LIVES, SAVE MONEY & IMPROVE PUBLIC SATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT

A WIN-WIN-WIN

In 1998, California passed a law making it illegal for public (and private) shelters to kill animals when qualified rescue groups were willing to save them. It passed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority—96 to 12, as close as possible to unanimity in a state as large as California. In 2010, a similar law passed both houses of the Delaware legislature unanimously. In both of these states, it made no sense to legislators of either party that taxpayers were paying to kill animals when qualified non-profit rescue groups were willing to spend their own money (private, philanthropic dollars) to save them. In just one California County, the number of animals saved, rather than killed, went from zero (before the law was enacted and enforced) to 4,000 per year. At roughly \$40.00 per animal killed, the municipality saved \$160,000 in expenses associated with killing. A similar study in the City and County of San Francisco found the City realized an annualized cost savings of \$486,480 by working with rescue groups and No Kill shelters, rather than killing the animals these groups wanted to save.

In fact, the number of animals saved, rather than killed, by forcing shelters to work cooperatively with rescue groups increased in California from 12,526 before the law went into effect to 58,939 in 2010—a lifesaving increase of over 370%, and a potential cost savings of \$1,856,520 statewide for killing and disposal (these savings do not include additional savings relative to cost of care). In addition, because the law specifically allows shelters to charge these organizations up to the standard adoption fee, partnering with rescue groups potentially brings in millions of dollars in additional revenues.

In New York and Florida, by contrast, statewide surveys found that 71% and 63% of non-profit rescue organizations respectively have been turned away from shelters, which then killed the very animals they offered to save. This is not only unethical—killing animals when those animals have an immediate place to go—it is economically irresponsible. Not only can these shelters save on the cost of killing and disposal, they can bring in badly needed revenues to lower public expenditures on animal control or use the additional revenue to enhance services—also realizing the intangible benefit of improving public satisfaction with the job government is doing. In short, adoption programs resulting in increased lifesaving also increase revenues; while continued killing costs money.

CASE STUDY

DUBUQUE, IA

The Dubuque Regional Humane Society reduced cat killing by 80%. Doing so allowed it to save over \$170,000 in expenses. How? The agency reduced adoption fees for adult cats from \$75 to \$25 and for kittens from \$110 to \$50. As a result, more cats were adopted and they were adopted more quickly. The increased lifesaving "reduced cat care expenses by nearly \$130,000 and saved more than \$70,000 of cat [killing] costs. This \$200,000 of cost savings more than offset the loss of \$26,000 of adoption revenues."

tial (in Year Two, businesses would benefit from two years worth of adoptions; in Year Three, they would benefit from three years of adoptions; etc.). In addition, not only do those businesses then employ people who turn around and spend even more, all these activities also bring in badly needed tax revenues. At an average 6% rate, adoptions over a ten-year period could potentially bring in over \$20,000,000 in sales tax alone.

While many of these economic benefits will be realized regardless of where people get their animals, cost savings and other revenues will not be realized. For one, many commercially-sourced animals come from puppy mills, which contribute to animal cruelty. In addition, the animals will not be sterilized before adoption, requiring the shelter to absorb the costs of taking in the offspring of some of those animals. Moreover, the municipality will not benefit from the decreased costs and increased revenue associated with adopting the animals to those homes. Finally, a successful adoption marketing program not only results in citizens who are more likely to adopt from a shelter, but it can increase the number of available

homes as well by empowering and inspiring local citizens to feel like valued allies in the shelter's lifesaving mission, thereby encouraging them to open their homes to additional animals.

DOING WELL BY DOING GOOD

In order to avoid accountability despite growing No Kill success across the country, shelters and municipalities offer various excuses as to why their community shelter continues killing. These excuses include "pet overpopulation," "public irresponsibility," and the claims that "open-admission" shelters cannot be No Kill and No Kill is in-



Animals who are adopted into a community become a valuable source of revenue for local businesses. Groomers, boarding facilities, pet sitters, veterinarians and businesses which sell products for pets such as treats and toys all benefit from the consumer needs of those who adopt shelter pets.

consistent with a municipal shelter's public safety mandate. All of them have been proven false. No Kill has been and will continue to be embraced, achieved, and sustained in municipal shelters serving every possible geographic location and public demographic.

No Kill is also good policy that reduces costs associated with killing, enhances community support, increases user fees such as adoption revenues, and brings in additional tax revenues. It has a long-term beneficial community economic impact, as well. In short, No Kill is a humane, sustainable, cost-effective and economically beneficial model that works hand in hand with public safety. The successes and benefits of this approach across the country prove it.

In communities across the country, animal lovers are clamoring for change. There are legions of potential volunteers ready, willing, and able to assist at no cost to municipalities. There are non-profit rescue organizations willing to take on not just the care of the animals, but the costs of care, shifting the burden from taxpayer to private philanthropy. But they are prevented from doing so by antiquated policies that favor killing. The cost in both animal lives and wasted taxpayer expenditures is staggering. These larger costs include unspayed animals cruelly-sourced from puppy mills supplanting adoptions, and reduced markets, resulting in lost revenue to local businesses.

All the tools, resources, caring, and compassion that make it possible for any shelter to achieve No Kill already exist in every community. If a community harnesses that compassion by embracing the No Kill philosophy and the programs and services which make it possible, it can save more lives and improve the bottom line—a classic "win-win": for the animals, for animal lovers, for community businesses, and for taxpayers.

THE KEY TO GREATER LIFESAVING




HARNESSING COMMUNITY COMPASSION

All the tools, resources, caring, and compassion that make it possible for any shelter to achieve No Kill already exist in every community. If a shelter harnesses that compassion by embracing the No Kill philosophy and the programs and services which make it possible, it can save more lives and every community stakeholder comes away a winner: the animals, animal lovers, community businesses, and taxpayers.

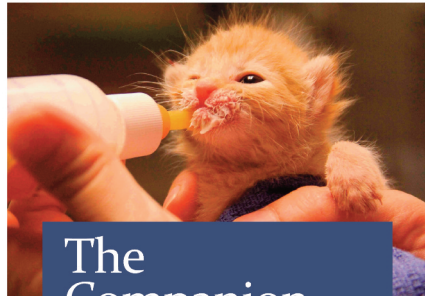
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No Kill 101



A Primer on No Kill Animal Control Sheltering for Public Officials


Model Legislation to Improve the Performance & Life-Saving of Animal Shelters



The Companion Animal Protection Act

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BREAK THE CHAINS



"And homeless near a thousand homes I stood."

Model Anti-Tethering Legislation to Protect Dogs


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ALSO AVAILABLE



The Animal RESCUE Act


Model Legislation to Improve the Performance and Life-Saving of Animal Shelters



Protecting Lives
Saving Taxpayer Money
Mandating Collaboration


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WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Why HSUS, the ASPCA, PETA & State "Humane" Organizations Lobby AGAINST Shelter Reform

A Guide for Legislators & Policy Makers



A PUBLICATION OF THE NO KILL ADVOCACY CENTER

A NO KILL NATION IS WITHIN OUR REACH

If every animal shelter in the United States embraced the No Kill philosophy and the programs and services that make it possible, we would save roughly two million animals who are scheduled to die in shelters this year, and the year after that. It is not an impossible dream.

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