

Community Pet Adoption Partnerships Survey Results



June 2016



Maddie's
Fund

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About the Survey

What can animal shelters do to eliminate or reduce the time pets spend in the shelter?

During the summer of 2014, Maddie's Institute conducted a survey to identify practices that were successful in shortening length of stay, or prevented the pets from entering the shelter entirely. It covered three scenarios, the third of which is discussed in this report.

We sought out respondents who were administrators, staff members and volunteers of U.S. animal shelters, rescue organizations or municipal animal services. Invitations to participate in this survey were distributed via email through the Maddie's Fund mailing list. We requested that the survey be completed by only one respondent from each organization – the individual most familiar with the organization's policies regarding adoption and/or community services.

These results were not analyzed for statistical significance. Although our sample may not be statistically representative of the larger population of animal care organizations in the United States, we have collected data from a diverse group of respondents from organizations that varied both structurally and geographically.

About the Scenario

Survey respondents were asked to reply to a series of questions directly related to the scenario outlined below.

The "Pet Owner Rehoming" Scenario:

Asked of organizations that take in both dogs and cats; and, organizations that only take in dogs:

A pet owner can no longer care for his 8-year-old dog, Daisy, and contacts your shelter or rescue organization. The owner has determined definitively that Daisy needs a new home.

Asked of organizations that only take in cats:

A pet owner can no longer care for his 8-year-old cat, Muffin, and contacts your shelter or rescue organization. The owner has determined definitively that Muffin needs a new home.

Please note: Organizations that serve both dogs and cats and organizations that serve dogs only were asked to answer questions regarding the dog rehoming process only. Organizations that serve cats only were asked to answer questions regarding the cat rehoming process only.



Executive Summary

At Maddie's Fund, we strongly support strong "safety net," or "pet retention," programs that provide assistance to keep pets in their homes. Although a growing number of shelters and rescue organizations are implementing such efforts, there are times when remaining in their home is not an option. To what extent can the pet guardians themselves be part of the "rehoming" process? What kind of support from shelters or rescue organizations makes it more likely they'll take on at least some of the responsibility to find a new home? Can this happen without having the pet step foot into the shelter?

Among the organizations we queried in this survey, pet relinquishment was a very common occurrence. Excluding those that never saw similar relinquishment scenarios, less than half, 49%, of organizations serving both dogs and cats, as well as those serving dogs only, reportedly empowered pet owners to find a home for their pet themselves to a "great extent;" the number increases to 64% of cat-only groups. Fewer than half reported doing an effective job of supporting owner rehoming efforts.

The only major category of assistance provided by the groups we surveyed was advice given over the phone, with practical help such as website listings, space for flyers, or written tips or templates being offered only in relatively few cases. For example, of groups handling both dogs and cats, only 38% offered a free rehoming listing on their organization's website; the number was higher for dog-only and cat-only groups, but still only a little over half did so. In municipal shelters, the number fell to 16%.

Why are these numbers so low? Respondents who reported that their organization didn't empower pet owners to find a home for the pet themselves or empower pet owners "to a small extent" were asked to comment as to why not. Topping the list was fear – fear of animal cruelty or placement in inappropriate homes, of abandonment or "dumping," or of liability and public safety issues. Organizations also saw conflicts with their perceived mission, felt their policies didn't allow it, or even had no idea why they weren't doing it. And a large segment, 21%, believed pet owners had "already made up their minds" and weren't open to alternatives, while 18% believed pet owners "wouldn't do the work" or weren't willing to accept assistance. Interestingly overall, in contrast, 79% of dog-and-cat-serving organizations agreed the shelter should be "an option of last resort" for rehoming pets. Ironically, 91% of municipal shelters surveyed believed the shelter should be the last resort even while offering the least support for owner rehoming.

While the purpose of this survey was to identify the prevalence rather than the effectiveness of pet rehoming assistance programs, the results clearly indicate that the development of evidence-based guidelines for such programs would be extremely valuable. In the absence of such findings, shelters and rescue groups may want to consider the following steps:

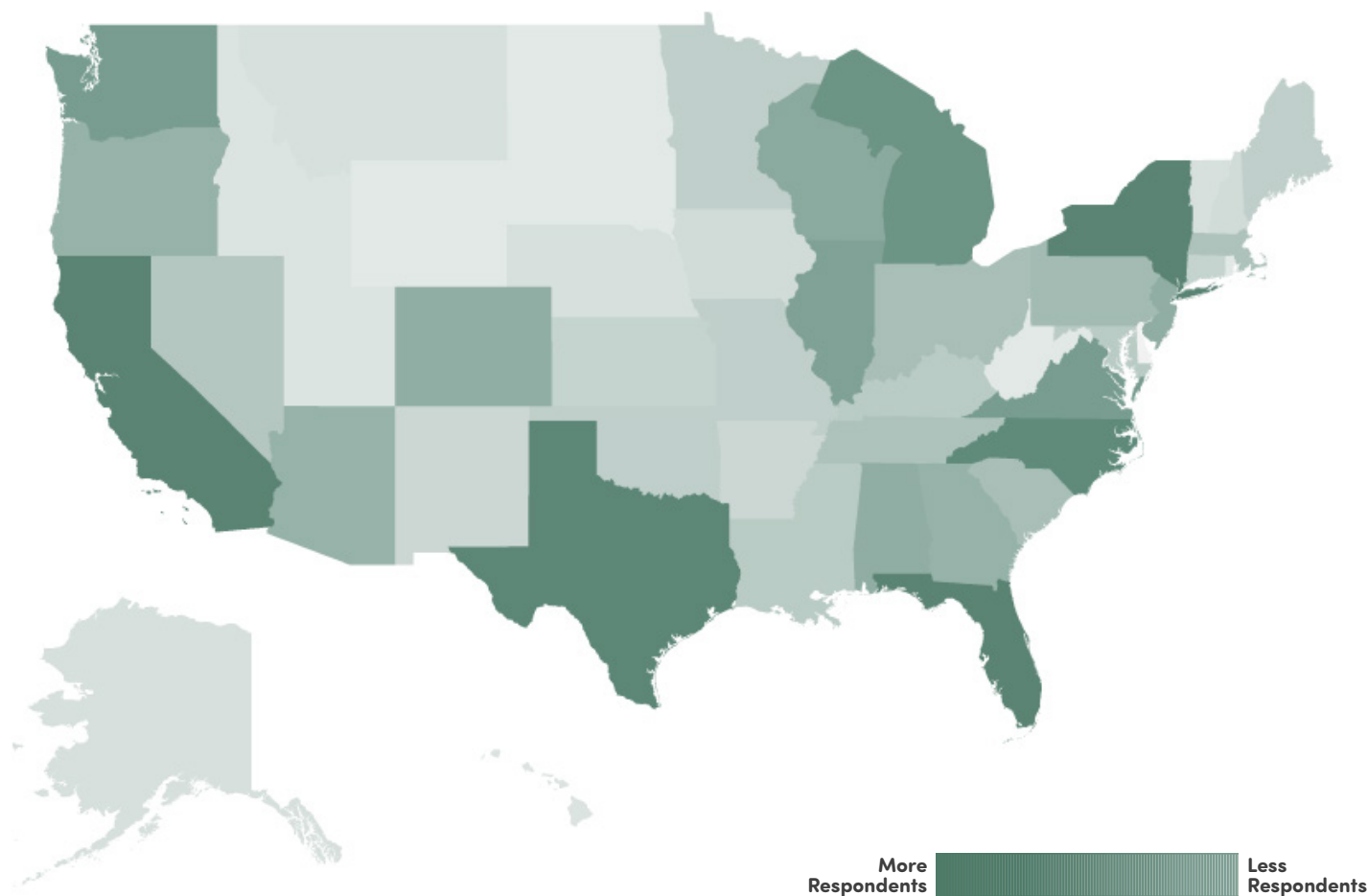
- Network with organizations that are successfully implementing direct rehoming assistance for guardians who cannot keep their pets.
- Implement pilot programs to determine the effectiveness of different forms of assistance in stemming the flow of owner surrenders to the organization.
- Engage with programs such as Pets for Life to better understand whether an organization's perception of the willingness of individual pet owners, or the community at large, to help rehome animals directly is accurate, or has been colored by negative past experiences.



Demographics

Aggregate Respondent Data

National Representation: Our data depicts representation from all 50 states, the District of Colombia (see map below) and Puerto Rico, totaling 750 individual survey respondents. The darker the color scale, the more participation from a given state.



Pay Status:

- 49% of respondents were paid staff
- 51% were unpaid volunteers

Position:

- 52% of all respondents (whether paid or unpaid) were in an executive or leadership position (to include veterinarian)
- 24% were in a managerial or supervisory position

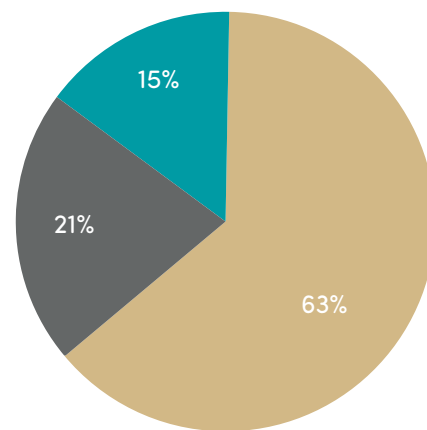


Demographics

Aggregate Respondent Data

A Organizational Type:

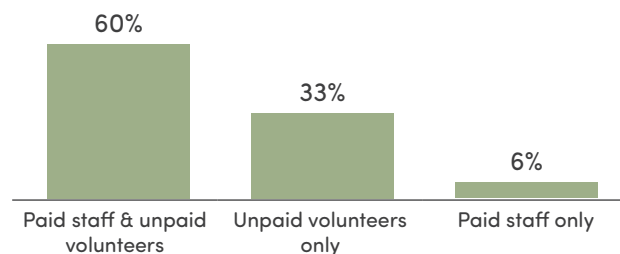
- 63% of organizations were categorized as an animal shelter/rescue without a municipal contract
- 21% as an animal shelter/rescue with a municipal contract (i.e., animal control or housing services)
- 15% as a municipal animal services



A Organizational Type

B Workforce composition:

- 60% composed of paid staff and unpaid volunteers
- 33% composed of unpaid volunteers only
- 6% composed of paid staff only



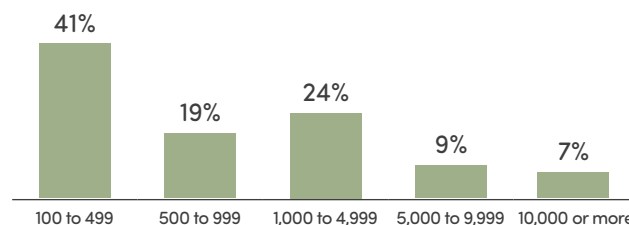
B Workforce Composition

Animal Intake Type:

- 76% take in both dogs and cats
- 9% take in dogs only
- 15% take in cats only

C Annual Intake of Dogs and/or Cats:

- 41% take in 100 - 499
- 19% take in 500 - 999
- 24% take in 1,000 - 4,999
- 9% take in 5,000 - 9,999
- 7% take in 10,000+



C Annual Intake of Dogs and/or Cats

Housing:

- 64% of organizations represented primarily house animals in a physical facility or shelter
- 23% primarily house animals in foster homes
- 11% house animals equally between a physical facility or shelter and foster homes

Intake Policy:

- For the animal population the organization serves, 62% of organizations represented in this survey have a policy of accepting all or almost all of animals presented to them.



Data Profiles by Organizational Type

	Municipal Animal Services (n=115)	Animal Shelter/Rescue with a Municipal Contract (n=115)	Animal Shelter/Rescue w/o a Municipal Contract (n=476)
Workforce composition:	81% composed of paid staff and unpaid volunteers 19% composed of paid staff only	87% composed of a mix of paid staff and unpaid volunteers 8% composed of paid staff only 5% composed of unpaid volunteers only	50% composed of a mix of paid staff and unpaid volunteers 47% composed of paid staff only 3% composed of unpaid volunteers only
Animal Intake Type:	98% of organizations represented in this report take in both dogs and cats 2% took in dogs only 0% took in cats only	97% of organizations represented in this report take in both dogs and cats 2% took in dogs only 1% took in cats only	64% of organizations represented in this report take in both dogs and cats 13% took in dogs only 22% took in cats only
Annual Intake of Dogs and/or Cats:	7% took in 100–499 10% took in 500–999 37% took in 1,000–4,999 18% took in 5,000–9,999 28% took in 10,000+	10% took in 100–499 17% took in 500–999 43% took in 1,000–4,999 20% took in 5,000–9,999 10% took in 10,000+	59% took in 100–499 22% took in 500–999 15% took in 1,000–4,999 3% took in 5,000–9,999 1% took in 10,000+
Housing:	97% primarily housed animals in a facility/shelter 3% housed animals equally between a facility/shelter and foster homes	93% of organizations represented primarily house animals in a facility/shelter 2% primarily housed animals in foster homes 5% housed animals equally between a facility/shelter and foster homes	46% of organizations represented primarily housed animals in a facility/shelter 35% primarily housed animals in foster homes 16% housed animals equally between a facility/shelter and foster homes
Intake Policy:	96% have a policy of taking in all or almost all animals presented	92% have a policy of taking in all or almost all animals at intake	43% have a policy of taking in all or almost all animals at intake



Data Profiles by Animal Intake Type

	Organizations Serving Both Dogs and Cats (n=572)	Organizations Serving Dogs Only (n=67)	Organizations Serving Cats Only (n=111)
Organizational Type:	54% of organizations were categorized as an animal shelter/rescue without a municipal contract 26% as an animal shelter/rescue with a municipal contract (i.e., animal control or housing services) 20% as a municipal animal services	93% of organizations were categorized as an animal shelter/rescue without a municipal contract 4% as an animal shelter/rescue with a municipal contract (i.e., animal control or housing services) 3% as a municipal animal services	96% of organizations were categorized as an animal shelter/rescue without a municipal contract 2% as an animal shelter/rescue with a municipal contract (i.e., animal control or housing services)
Workforce Composition:	70% composed of paid staff and unpaid volunteers 22% composed of unpaid volunteers only 8% composed of paid staff only	69% composed of paid staff and unpaid volunteers 28% composed of unpaid volunteers only 3% composed of paid staff only	70% composed of unpaid volunteers only 30% composed of a mix of paid staff and unpaid volunteers
Annual Intake of Dogs and/or Cats:	30% took in 100–499 20% took in 500–999 29% took in 1,000–4,999 11% took in 5,000–9,999 9% took in 10,000+	78% took in 100–499 15% took in 500–999 6% took in 1,000–4,999 1% took in 5,000–9,999 0% took in 10,000+	73% took in 100–499 18% took in 500–999 8% took in 1,000–4,999 0% took in 5,000–9,999 1% took in 10,000+
Housing:	73% primarily housed animals in a facility/shelter 15% primarily housed animals in foster homes 10% housed animals equally between a facility/shelter and foster homes	31% primarily housed animals in a facility/shelter 58% primarily housed animals in foster homes 9% housed animals equally between a facility/shelter and foster homes	33% primarily housed animals in a facility/shelter 41% primarily housed animals in foster homes 17% housed animals equally between a facility/shelter and foster homes 8% other
Intake Policy:	68% have a policy of taking in all or almost all animals presented	42% have a policy of taking in all or almost all animals presented	44% have a policy of taking in all or almost all animals presented



Results

These results were not analyzed for statistical significance.

Survey respondents were asked to reply to a series of questions directly related to the scenario outlined below.

The “Pet Owner Rehoming” Scenario:

Asked of organizations that take in both dogs and cats; and, organizations that only take in dogs:

A pet owner can no longer care for his 8-year-old dog, Daisy, and contacts your shelter or rescue organization. The owner has determined definitively that Daisy needs a new home.

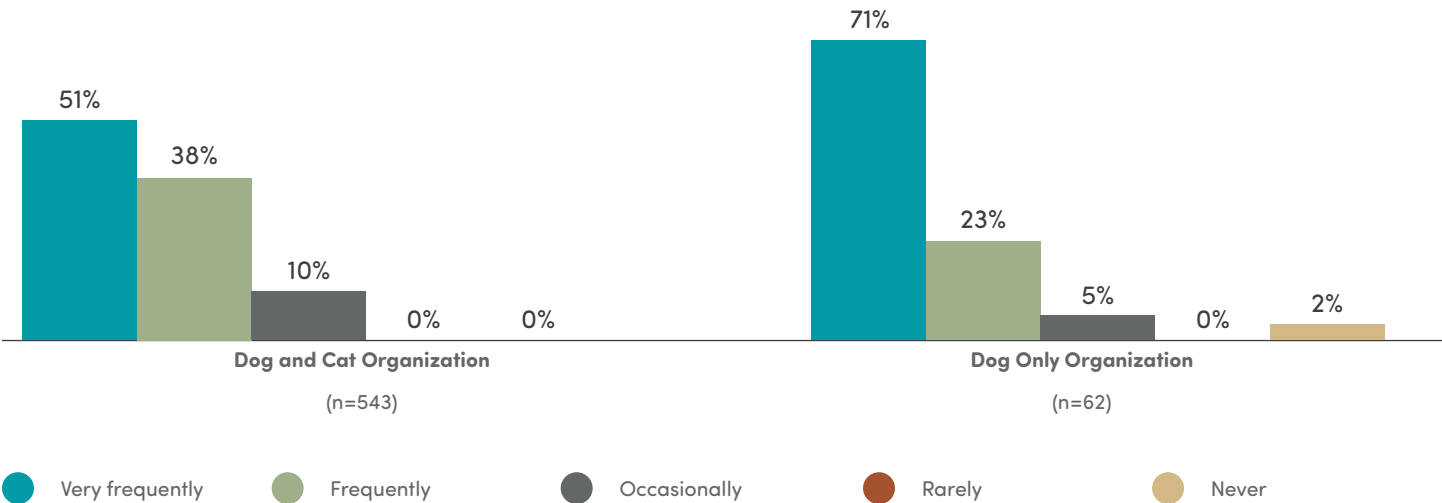
Asked of organizations that only take in cats:

A pet owner can no longer care for his 8-year-old cat, Muffin, and contacts your shelter or rescue organization. The owner has determined definitively that Muffin needs a new home.

Please note: Organizations that serve both dogs and cats and organizations that serve dogs only were asked to answer questions regarding the dog rehoming process only. Organizations that serve cats only were asked to answer questions regarding the cat rehoming process only.

Q1. How often does your organization see a situation similar to the scenario above?

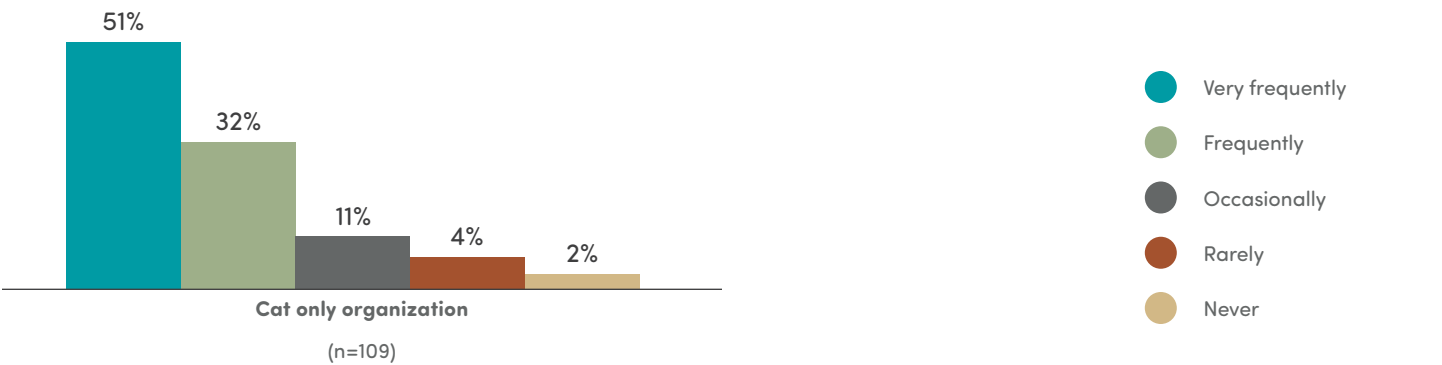
- Of organizations that serve both dogs and cats, 89% reported frequently facing situations where a guardian has definitely determined they can no longer care for their dog (51% reported “very frequently” and 38% reported “frequently;” see chart below).
- Of organizations that only serve dogs, 94% reported frequently facing similar dog relinquishment scenarios as above (71% reported “very frequently” and 23% reported “frequently;” see chart below).



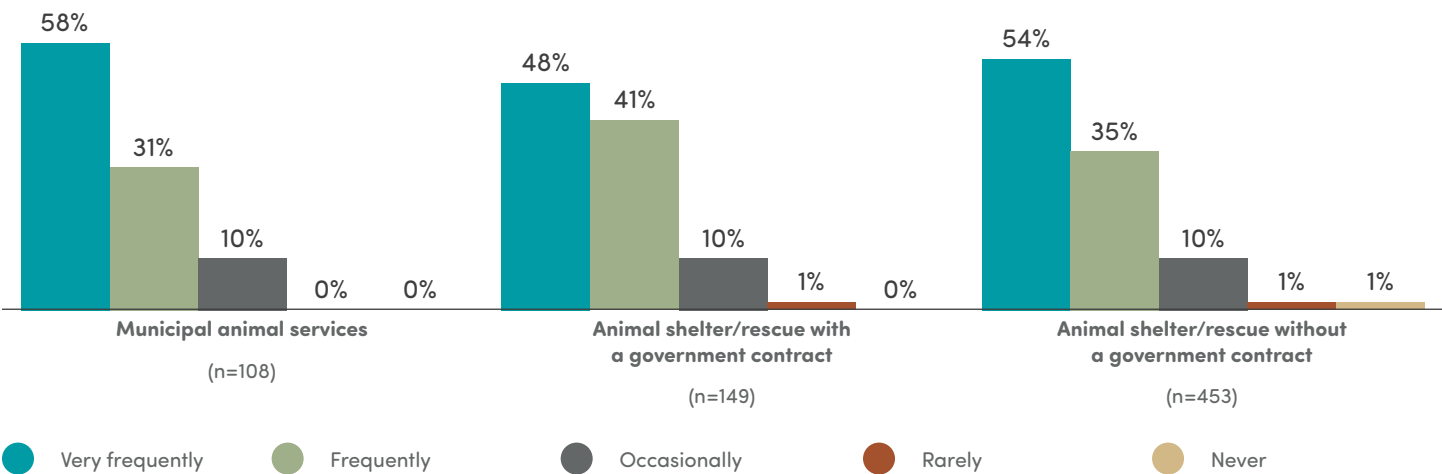
Results

Q2. Continued.

- Of organizations that only serve cats, 83% reported frequently facing situations where a guardian has definitely determined they can no longer care for their cat (51% reported “very frequently” and 32% reported “frequently;” see chart below). Municipal animal services (81%) may be less likely to have a foster care program than animal shelters or rescues with or without a municipal contract (93%, 94%, respectively; see chart below).

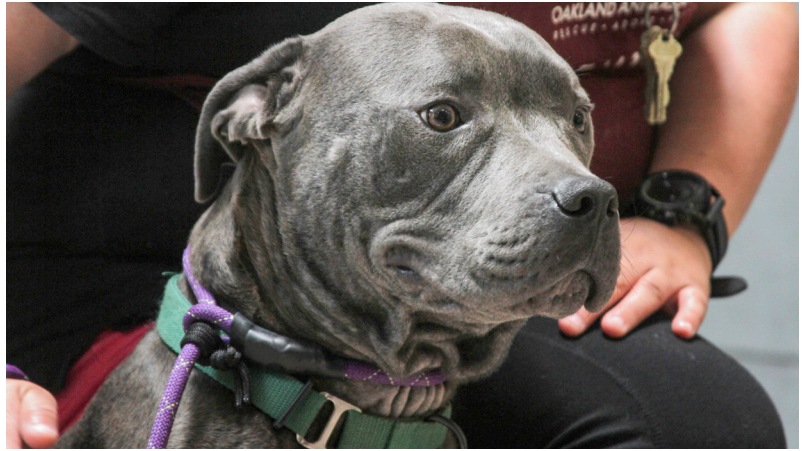


- Organizations that classified themselves as municipal animal services were most likely to report seeing scenarios similar to the above “very frequently” (58%, see chart below).



"Especially during the hard economic time, we have seen many dogs and cats being surrendered due to eviction, foreclosure or just lack of funds."

–Anonymous Respondent



"Way too many times, very sad."

– Anonymous Respondent

Pet Retention Resources:

Safety Net Programs, ASPCA Pro:

<http://aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-programs-behavior-enrichment-return-owner-safety-net/safety-net>

Pets for Life, HSUS:

<http://www.animalsheltering.org/programs/pets-for-life>



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Pg 10

Results

The “Pet Owner Rehoming” Scenario:

Asked of organizations that take in both dogs and cats; and, organizations that only take in dogs:

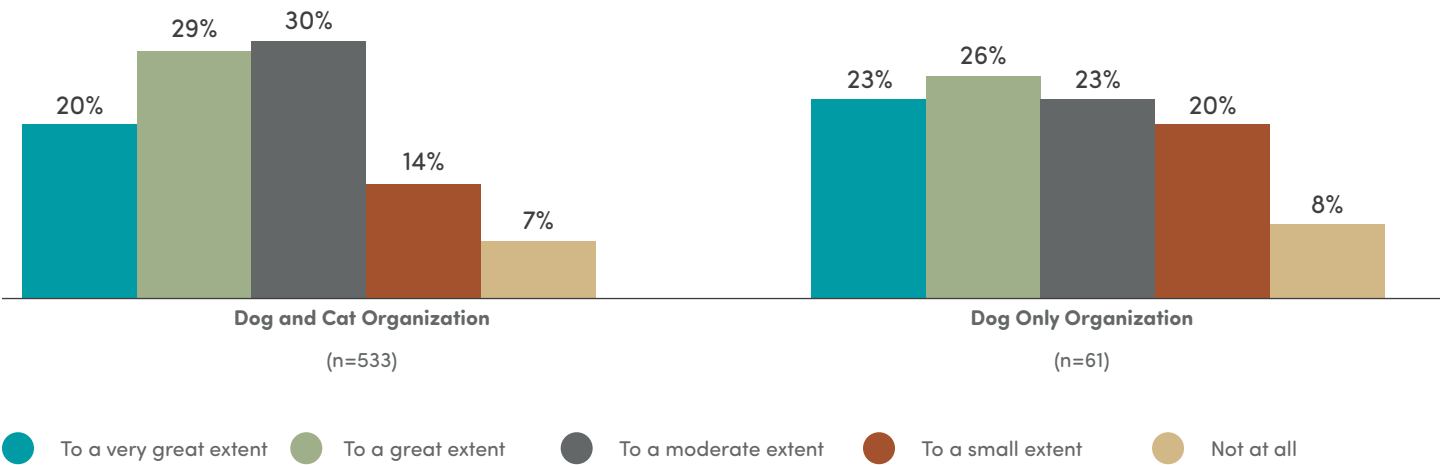
A pet owner can no longer care for his 8-year-old dog, Daisy, and contacts your shelter or rescue organization. The owner has determined definitively that Daisy needs a new home.

Asked of organizations that only take in cats:

A pet owner can no longer care for his 8-year-old cat, Muffin, and contacts your shelter or rescue organization. The owner has determined definitively that Muffin needs a new home.

Q2. To what extent does your organization empower the owner to find a home for their pet themselves, as an alternative to surrender to a shelter or rescue?

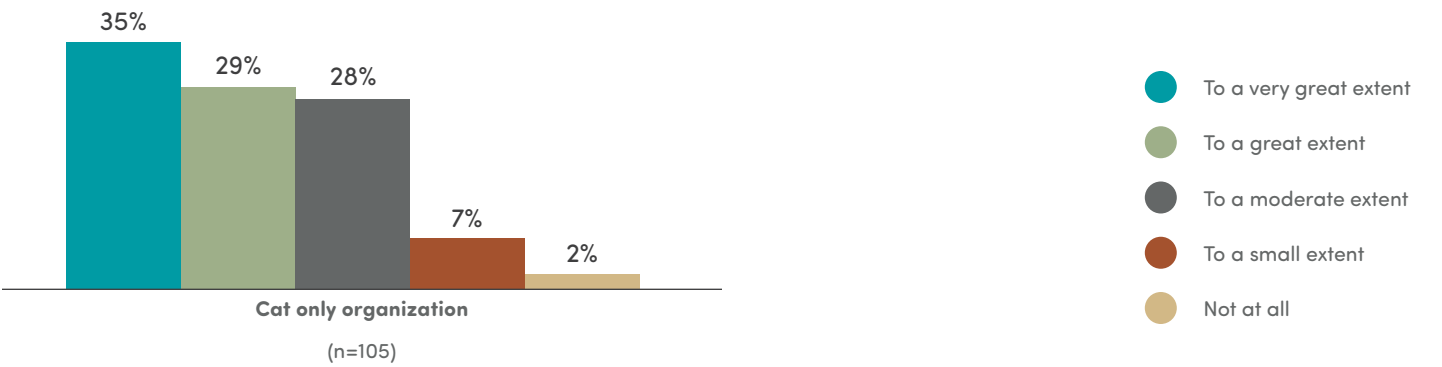
- Data for Question #2 does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” sees situations similar to the respective scenario stated above.
- 49% of organizations, which serve both dogs and cats, reported that they “empower the pet owner to find a home for their pet themselves” to a “great extent” (20% reported “to a very great extent” and 29% reported “to a great extent;” see chart below).
- Similarly, 49% of organizations that serve dogs only, reported that they “empower the pet owner to find a home for their pet themselves” to a “great extent” (23% reported “to a very great extent” and 26% reported “to a great extent;” see chart below).



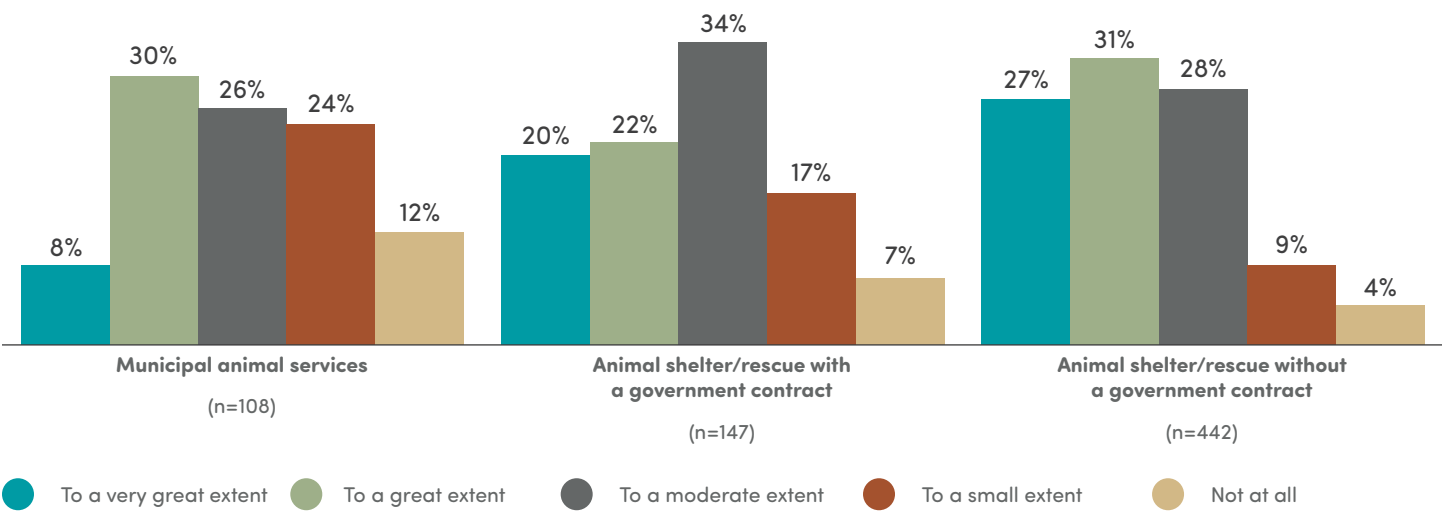
Results

Q2. Continued.

- Interestingly, 64% of organizations that serve cats only, reported that they “empower the pet owner to find a home for their pet themselves” to a “great extent” (35% reported “to a very great extent” and 29% reported “to a great extent;” see chart below).

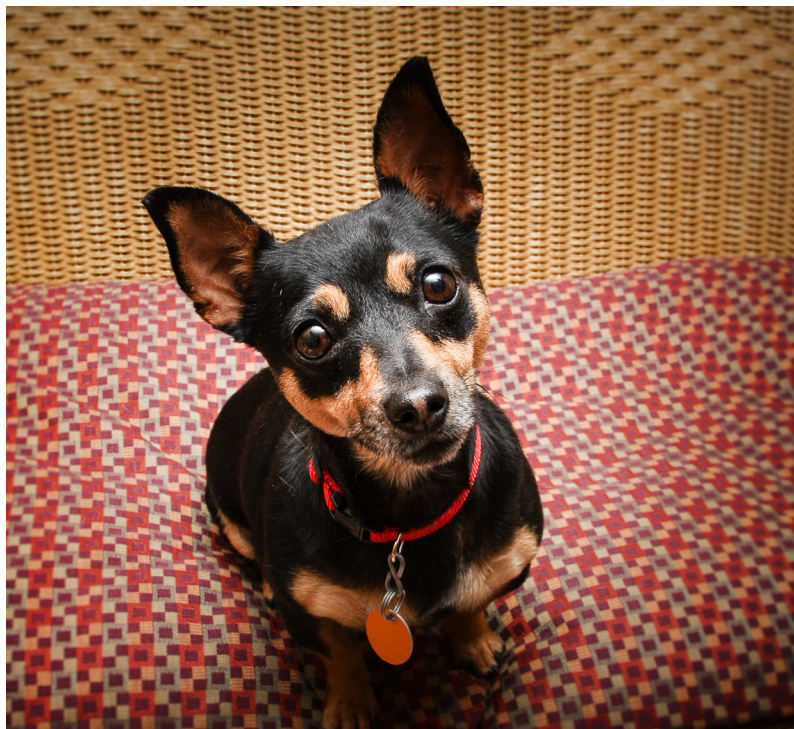


- Animal shelters or rescue organizations that do not have government contracts were more likely to report empowering pet owners to find a home for their pet themselves than municipal animal services or organizations with a government contract (see chart below). This may be in part due to admission policies, but more research would be required.



**"We will support the owner 100%,
and offer counseling on alternatives, but
if the owner is not open to it, we take
the dog/cat, no problem."**

– Anonymous Respondent



General Rehoming Tips:

For Guardians:

<http://rehomeyourpets.com/rehoming-tips/>

For Organizations:

<http://aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-safety-net/rehoming-services>

<http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/finding-new-home-for-your-pet.html>



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Pg 13

Results

Q3. Why not?

- Respondents who reported that their organization “do not” empower pet owners to find a home for the pet themselves or empower pet owners “to a small extent” were asked to comment as to why not.
- Data for Question #3 also does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” saw situations similar to the respective scenario stated above.
- The majority of comments fit into common categories (see chart below):

Fear of not being placed in a good home/ cruelty	32%
Lack of knowledge and training/capacity and resources at organization	21%
People have made up their minds/ exhausted options	21%
Assistance not accepted/won't do the work	18%
Fear of abandonment/dumping	14%
Open admission/organization policy or mission conflict	12%
We're working on it	8%
Not sure why we aren't doing this now	4%
Lack of research	1%
Liability/public safety	1%



Results

Q3. Continued.

Select comments:

- **We're working on it:**
 - "No formal policy in place but this is starting to become more common if **family willing to foster** animal as we try to rehome."
 - "We are working on creating an intake committee to help remedy this problem."
 - "This is a program we are currently in the process of implementing. We are soon to close our **night drop cages** and go to a **managed intake** for owner surrender animals."
 - "Once the decision to find a new home has been made, they frequently want the animal gone immediately. However, a **new re-homing assistance program** we have launched seems to be gaining some ground in this area."
- **Not sure why we aren't doing this now:**
 - "I can't think of a reason why this is a bad idea. We would need the staff to work on such a program. It's a **great idea**."
 - "I am not sure. It may be because our feelings are hurt on behalf of the dog or we **don't trust** what the rejecting owner might do."
- **Lack of knowledge and training/capacity and resources at organization:**
 - Knowledge and Training:
 - "Lack of **knowledge** by people that answer the phones."
 - "Lack of **education**; little knowledge of alternative solutions."
 - "Our staff are **not proactive** in that approach to surrender."
 - Capacity and Resources:
 - "Don't have the **manpower** to counsel customers coming into the lobby to surrender animals."
 - "Limited staff & **community** resources."
 - "Lack of **front-end resources** at this time for counseling due to high volume activities, more proactive opportunities occur during the slower times of the year."
 - "We are lacking the **structure and volunteer empowerment** to provide basic support in this area - leaders are more focused on saving the dogs from [euthanasia] at the shelter than a dog in a home."
- **Fear of not being placed in a good home/cruelty:**
 - "We would rather see animals go to a **definitely safe environment** from our care than have the owner give the animal away to someone who may very well end up bringing the animal here anyway."
 - "We would rather the pet be provided with **shelter, vet care, nutritious food**, etc. and have adopters **screened** rather than have a pet owner put their pet on Craigslist or in the newspaper as the outcome is often not good for the pet. We do have a **dog fighting** problem in this county as it is an impoverished and largely rural county."
 - "They don't know to find the **appropriate home** and **screen** potential adopters correctly like a rescue does."
 - "The general public rehoming an animal on their own is **dangerous**. They don't know the questions to ask or the **red flags** to watch for."
 - "Most times they make **bad choices** for the animal and end up in the system anyway. We encourage them to send others our way who might be a potential match."



Results

Q3. Continued.

Select comments:

- **Fear of not being placed in a good home/cruelty:**
 - "Too often pet owners resort to "free to good home" ads on **craigslist** or giving their animal away to the first person who comes along. We don't want to see a dog end up in a bad place, so we assist with screening potential adopters. Also we will be responsible for spay/neuter and vaccinations rather than see a dog be rehomed and used for **breeding**."
 - "The owner could **sell the dog as bait**, and not be aware. It could give the dog to an **inappropriate** home. We have application and thoroughly screen our potential homes."
- **People have made up their minds/exhausted options:**
 - "When they are at the door, they have **made up their mind** to leave [the pet]."
 - "Usually the person has already **made the decision** and will come up with excuses not to keep the [pet]."
 - "If they have reached out, it is **assumed that they have tried** to find a good and suitable home."
 - "Once owners have made the decision to surrender their cat and have contacted the shelter, they generally are **ready to give the animal up immediately**. Also, we find that in many cases, owners have already **exhausted other possible avenues** for re-homing and are reaching out to us as a last resort."
 - "When a person has reached the point of surrendering their companion animal they have probably **exhausted all of their resources** and potential homes. We are experienced in and very careful about making good matches for the animal, not just placing out of desperation."
 - "Most owners contact us as a **last resort**. It is hard to tell them to keep trying."
 - "The owner has not taken care of the pet previously and wants to '**get rid of it**' as quickly as possible. Or doesn't have time to re-home on their own by the time they contact us."
- **Assistance is not accepted/people won't do the work:**
 - "Suggestions and assistance are **rarely accepted** by the surrendering owner."
 - "The owner surrenders we most commonly see, are owners who are **not interested in investing any effort** in finding a new suitable home for their dog. They just want to leave at the shelter and forget about it."
 - "**Apathy** by owner."
 - "Most people don't want to **waste their time** looking for a home for their unwanted pet."
 - "Either don't care (common) or don't see as their **responsibility**."
 - "They **don't care** or don't have time to do it. There's very little focus on education."
 - "People want their "problem" **solved for them**."
- **Fear of abandonment/dumping:**
 - "**Too afraid** that the dog will be **dumped** if the shelter doesn't take the dog in."
 - "We are in a poor, uneducated community. We don't know what they might do with the dog/cat if we don't take [them]."
 - "They maintain they are a public shelter and should not discourage folks from turning in animals lest they **dump** them on street feeling "judged."
 - "Most of our surrenders are victims of '**benign neglect**' so we take them in to get the veterinary care they need."



Results

Q3. Continued.

Select comments:

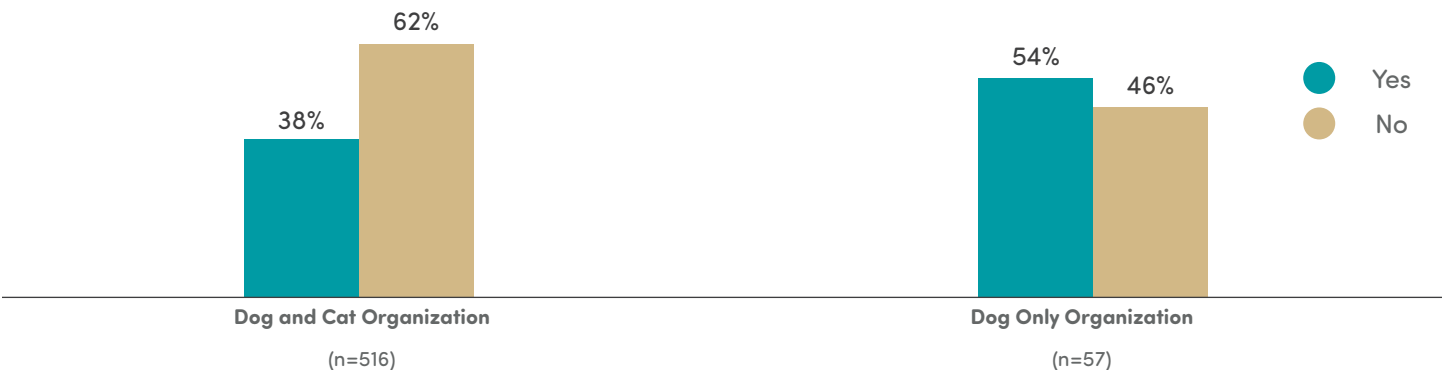
- **Open admission/organizational policy or mission conflict:**
 - “We are an **open admissions** facility. We do not want to make the patron feel like we are not there to help them.”
 - “Because our government leaders require us to **not turn away pets.**”
 - “We take all animals **no questions asked.**”
 - “No definitive **policy** approved by government agency.”
 - “Not considered consistent with our mission.”
- **Liability/public safety:**
 - “We take a large number of owner surrenders. There is great **liability** in dogs that do not ‘pass’ evaluation (aggression related most likely) and we disclose their liability and discuss concern for dog and people safety.”
- **Lack of research:**
 - “Alternative placements under managed admissions have **not been proven** by rigorous study to have succeeded in actual permanent placements. Too many in our field are taking it on faith that statements of alternative placements are true.”



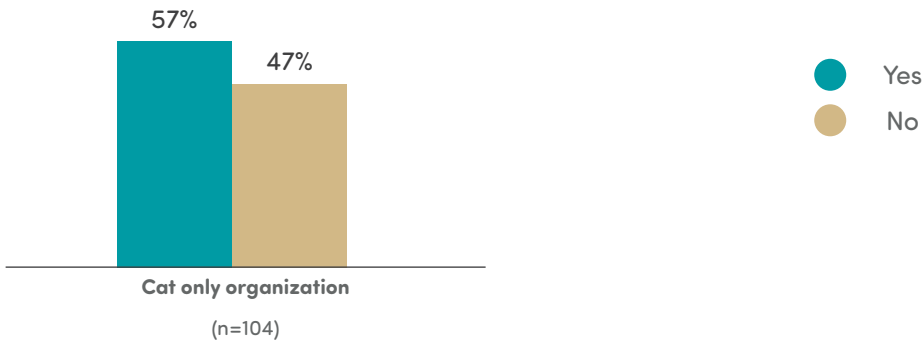
Results

Q4. Does your organization offer free pet listings on your organization’s website (i.e., a rehoming webpage)?

- Data for Question 4 does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” receives requests similar to the respective scenario on page 8, nor does it include responses from organizations that do not have a website.
- 38% of organizations that serve both dogs and cats surveyed offer to post a dog for rehoming on their website without charging a fee (62% do not offer to post these pets).
- The majority (54%) of organizations that serve dogs only, reported to offer community members a free listing on their websites.
- Of organizations that serve cats exclusively, 84% reported that foster caregivers may work with their organization in a joint adoption process, but the organization makes all final decisions (see chart below).



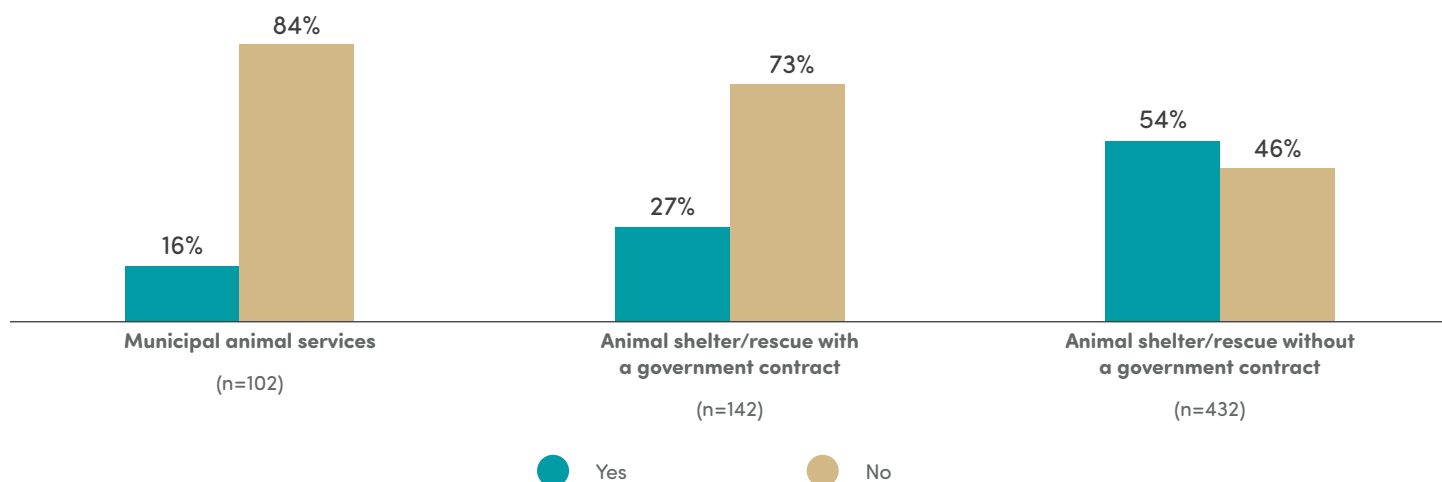
- Similarly, 57% of organizations that serve cats only, offered a free listing for cats being rehomed (see charts below).



Results

Q4. Continued.

- Animal shelters or rescue organizations that do not have government contracts were more likely to report offering free listing for pets needing to be rehomed than municipal animal services or organizations with a government contract (see chart below). This may be in part due to government privacy policies, website restrictions or admission policies, but again more research would be required.



"We offer courtesy posts after interviewing the pet owner or finder to make sure they meet our standards to rehome a pet (up to date on medical prior to adoption, screening, and communication). We also allow limited attendance at our adoption events for [pets] and support the person in screening if needed."

- Anonymous Respondent

Example Rehoming Webpages:

<http://www.richmondspca.org/page.aspx?pid=259>

Example Rehoming Post Forms:

<http://www.mdspca.org/programs/giving-up-your-pet/re-homing/post/>



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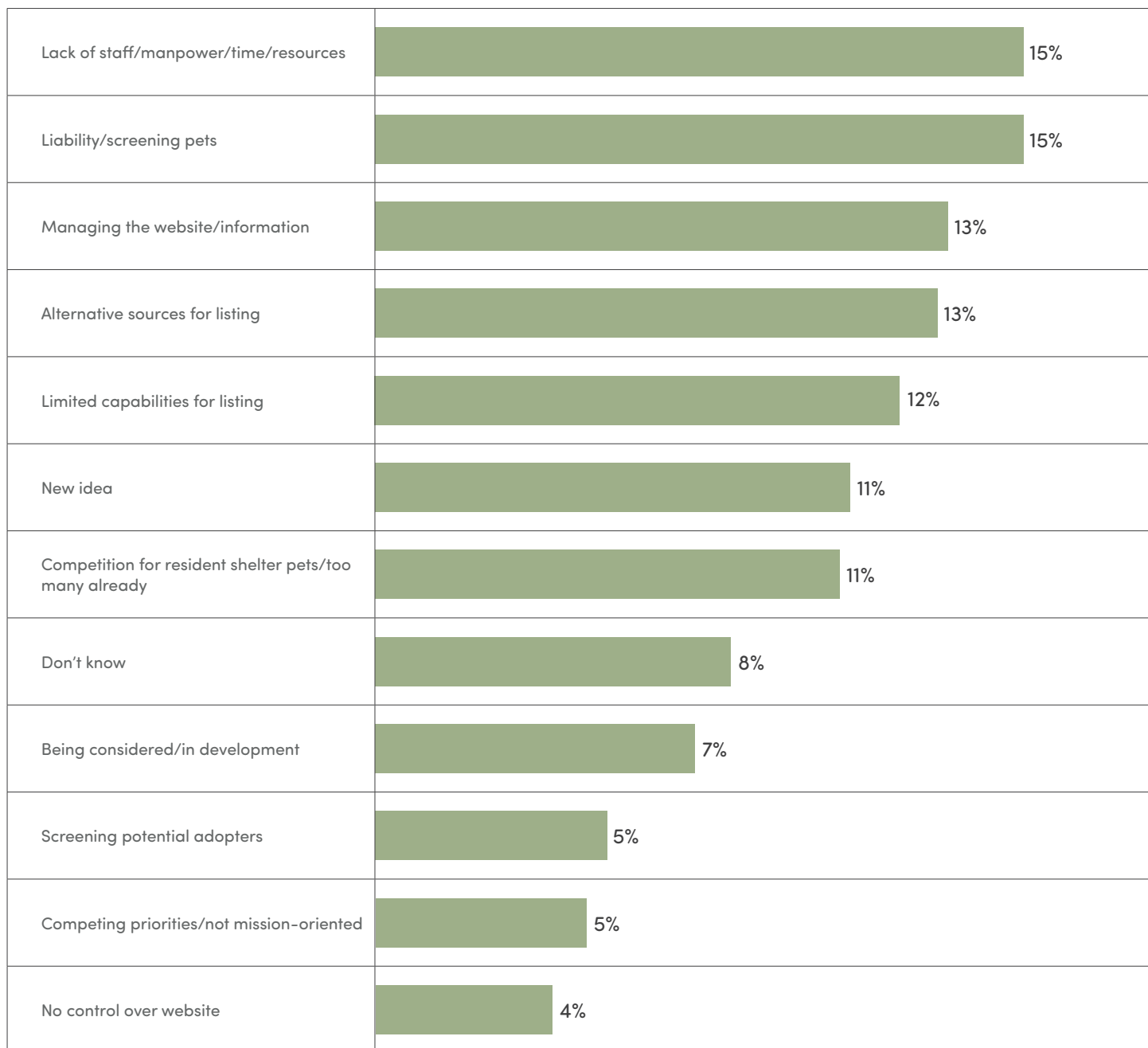
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Pg 19

Results

Q5. Why not?

- Respondents who reported that their organization “did not” offer free pet listings on your organization’s website (i.e., a rehoming webpage) were asked to comment as to why not.
- Data for Question #5 also does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” sees situations similar to the respective scenario stated above.
- The majority of comments fit into common categories (see chart below):



Results

Q5. Continued.

Select comments:

- **New idea:**
 - "Never heard of a shelter doing this and don't know anything about results shelters have had."
 - "We do post courtesy listing on our Facebook page, but never thought about creating a separate tab on our website for this. Would like to learn more about agencies that do utilize this- policies & procedures, website examples."
- **Being considered/in development:**
 - "We have discussed and just haven't made a decision on how to implement this option."
- **Lack of staff/manpower/time/resources:**
 - "We've never had a chance to have it organized - understaffed for everything in general, but we are doing better and better regardless!"
 - "We do not have the time or knowledge to make this happen."
- **Liability/screening pets:**
 - "I think the only hesitation would be the assumption that we are "endorsing/or approving" of this animal with no knowledge of its medical status or behavioral status."
 - "Often these pets are not altered. We don't provide the community with a vehicle to traffic in unaltered pets under our shelter's mantle. We refer those with unaltered pets to the local low cost spay/neuter clinic prior to rehoming the pets."
 - "We do offer free listings of some pets, but not an open listing. Our feeling is that bad placements of pets with aggression or other severe behavioral issues linked to our website (even if only a courtesy listing) will hurt both our credibility and adoption rate."
 - "We don't want to be associated with the exchange in case something goes wrong."
 - "The confusion over where the [pet] is located and whom to contact regarding the [pet]. Also the misperception that all cats that we post are 'ours'."
- **Managing the website/information:**
 - "The maintenance and ability to monitor the list on an ongoing basis is difficult."
 - "Do not have the staffing to maintain such listings since we get relinquishment requests on a daily basis."
 - "Concern over maintaining accurate & up to date information."
 - "Logistics; access to and management of site; trouble maintaining accurate listing of animals currently in shelter - too confusing to have outside animals listed also."
- **Alternative sources for listing:**
 - "We have a separate Facebook page where owners can post."
 - "We mostly use Petfinder to advertise our pets, and Petfinder, in the past, has had a policy of no courtesy postings on our website. But, we do encourage people to use Craigslist and Petfinder site specifically designed for owners wishing to rehome."
 - "Duplication of resources already available."
 - "Local newspaper, local websites and veterinarians offer free listings."



Results

Q5. Continued.

Select comments:

- **Limited capabilities of website:**
 - "Our website is based on our database of animals in the shelters and can't be set up to include owned animals."
 - "Have to intake animal in PetPoint to list on our current site; don't have a separate page on our website yet."
 - "Plan to in the future but need to invest time and money to update website."
 - "Software limitations at this time but the issue is being addressed. We do provide a book of animals needing a new home at our adoption counter."
- **Competition for resident shelter pets/too many already:**
 - "We have too many of our own animals."
 - "Have 350 of our own pets to find home for every day. Owners have a number of resources that we don't."
 - "The Board of Directors decided that these listings took attention away from our pets for adoption."
 - "Fear it would decrease adoptions of the adoptable [pets] we house."
 - "Probably the concern is that it would compete with the thousands of animals that we are trying to find homes for -- but if it prevents animals coming to the shelter, obviously that is great! We'll have to talk about this."
 - "If we did that, no one would see the animals that we take pictures of in our kill shelter weekly."
- **Screening potential adopters:**
 - "We like to match animals with owners to ensure a good fit for both the family and the pet. With a rehoming site, this would be difficult to oversee."
 - "We prefer to take the [pet] into our rescue and screen the applicants thoroughly. We cannot do this if we just post the [pet] for the owner."
 - "We cannot in good conscience encourage free giveaways of animals. There are people that will take them and use them for BAIT dogs in fighting rings."
 - "Most people who want to give up a cat will jump on the first offer of a home just to get the animal out. They have no idea of the vetting process that needs to be done to be sure they find a good home as opposed to any home."
- **Competing priorities/not mission-oriented:**
 - "Competing priorities in a large organization with multiple business units."
 - "We rescue homeless animals, we don't re-home owned pets."
 - "Rehoming isn't in our charter."
 - "We may do this in the future but currently our priority is featuring the animals we pulled from shelters where they were at risk of euthanasia. The animals being rehomed by their guardians are not at risk of euthanasia and there are other sites readily available for them to be featured."



Results

Q5. Continued.

Select comments:

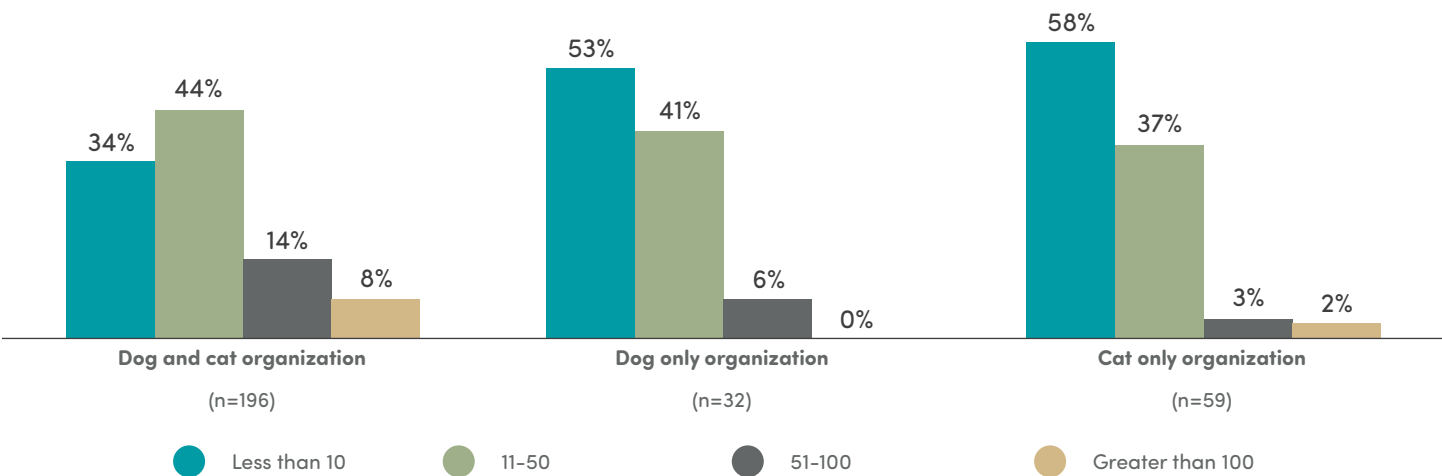
- **No control over website:**
 - "We are run by the county government and Police Department and our website is updated and maintained by them."
 - "Municipal IT security concerns."
 - "We are a government agency so we cannot permit the public to add things to our web site."
- **Other:**
 - "We ask that these pets be current on vaccinations and charge a \$25 fee, however we have decreased or waived that fee on occasion."
 - "Once we accept custody/responsibility for an animal we remove the surrendering person from the equation."
 - "We only allow those owners who sign up to foster their pet through our program to post their animals because we do not have the staff to take, edit and post pictures and profiles to our Petfinder."
 - "Not something we have had owners express an interest in by the time they bring the pet to us."
 - "Many times they adopt or give the animal away and never notify us. A fee is an attempt to get them to stay in communication."



Results

Q6. Approximately how many cats and/or dogs are posted on your organization’s rehoming webpage monthly?

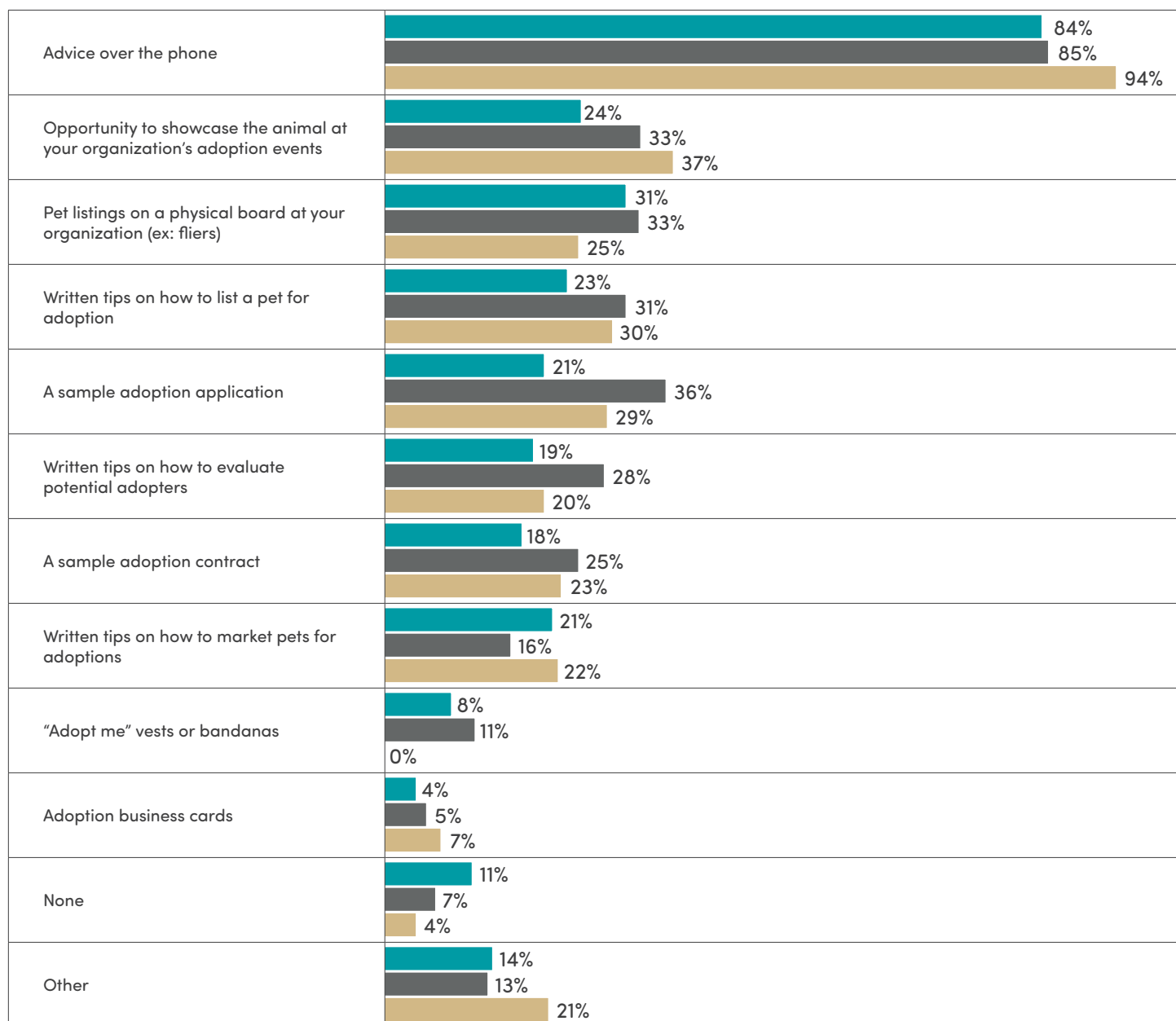
- Data for Question #4 does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” receives requests similar to the respective scenario on page 8, nor does it include responses from respondents who reported that their organization does not offer free pet listings on their organization’s website.
- Of organizations that serve both dogs and cats and offer free rehoming listings on their websites, 44% report to post between “11–50” pets monthly (see chart below).
- 53% of organizations that serve dogs only reported to post approximately “less than 10” dogs monthly for rehoming. Similarly, 58% of organizations that serve cats only post “less than 10” cats monthly (see charts below).



Results

Q7. What free services and/or materials are available to facilitate the owner in the rehoming process? Check all that apply.

- Data for Question #7 does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” receives requests for owner surrender.
- Excluding rehoming webpage(s), the most frequently available rehoming services and/or materials from organizations that serve both dogs and cats are reportedly: 1) advice over the phone, 2) pet listings on a physical board at the organization (for flyers, etc.) and 3) the opportunity to showcase the pet at the organization’s adoption events (see chart below).



 Dog and cat organization (n=535)

 Dog only organization (n=61)

 Cat only organization (n=105)



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Pg 25

Results

Q7. Continued.

- Of organizations that only serve dogs, the most frequently available rehoming resources, from those listed above, are: 1) advice over the phone, 2) a sample adoption application and 3) pet listings on a physical board at the organization (for flyers, etc.) and 4) the opportunity to showcase the pet at the organization's adoption events (excluding rehoming webpages; see chart above).
- Of organizations that only serve cats, the most frequently available rehoming resources, from those listed above, are: 1) advice over the phone, 2) the opportunity to showcase the pet at the organization's adoption events and 3) written tips on how to list a pet for adoption (excluding rehoming webpages; see chart above).
- Given the list of services or materials in Q7, the least available resources for rehoming included:
 - Written tips on how to market pets for adoption (i.e., community events, signage, visibility, etc.)
 - "Adopt me" vests or bandanas
 - Adoption business cards
- Respondents were able to note "other" free resources available during rehoming scenarios, including:
 - Breed rescue information
 - Reliable web resources for rehoming guidance
 - Networking on social media by volunteers
 - An email blast, if the pet is spayed or neutered
 - Accompaniment with owner on a home visit, and to check out references
 - Meet and greets at the shelter
 - Free spay or neuter and vaccinations
 - A "Background Information" page that gets filled out by the surrenderer. It offers information on past health and behavior as well as things a new adopter "might need to know."
- Approximately 7% of all respondents, regardless of associated animal intake type, reported that "none" of the above free services and/or materials are available for rehoming purposes.

Ideas We Love

Foster to Rehome



"We have an 'open adoption' program where we sign owners up to be foster parents for their own dog while it is available for adoption. This way we can market the dog, provide any medical services, and assist with the adoption process."

– Anonymous Respondent

"In most cases, if the owner is 'fostering' their own pet, we treat them as the foster and assist with the adoption process as we normally would for unowned pets."

– Anonymous Respondent

Check out this resource to learn more:

<http://www.richmondspca.org/document.doc?id=118>



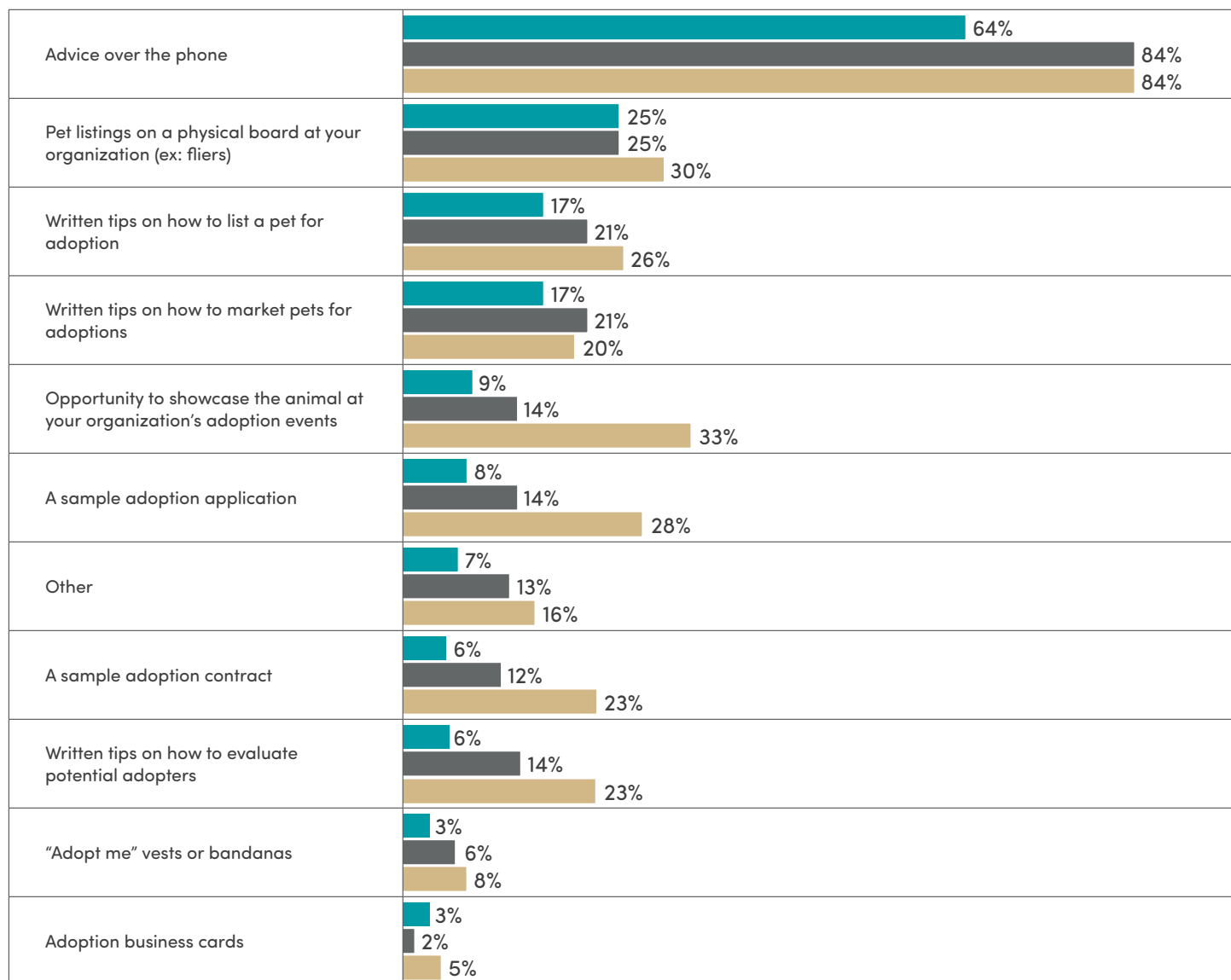
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Pg 26

Results

Q7. Continued.



Municipal animal services
(n=115)



**Animal shelter/rescue with
a government contract**
(n=155)



**Animal shelter/rescue without
a government contract**
(n=476)

- Overall, animal shelter or rescue organizations that do not have government contracts appear to offer a wider array of free services and/or materials for rehoming purposes than organizations with government contracts or municipal animal services (see chart above).



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Pg 27

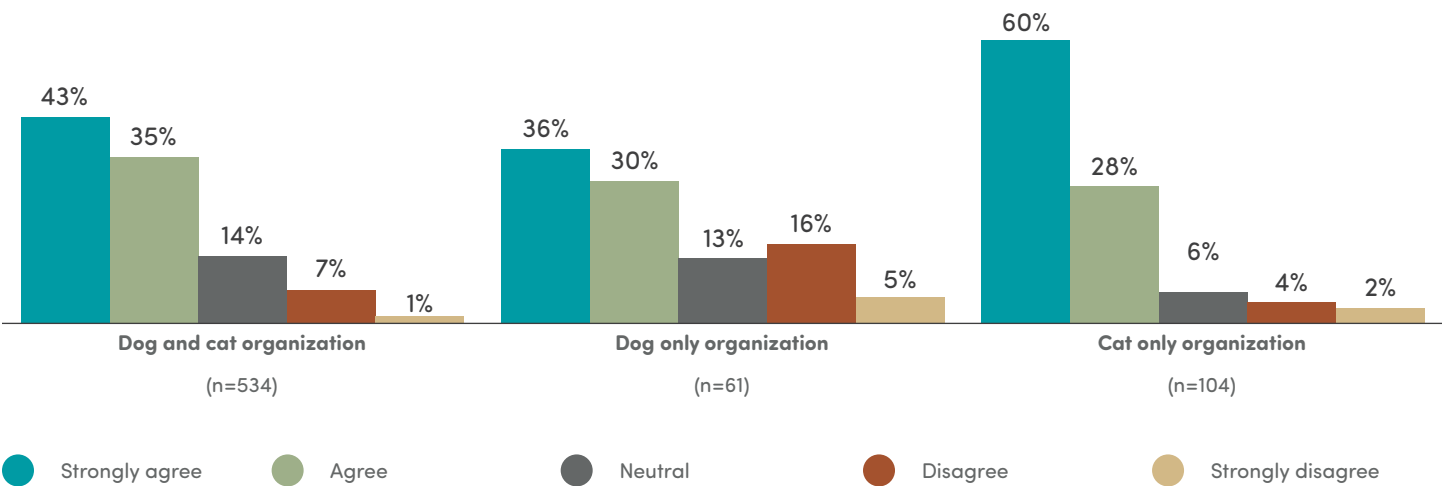
Results

Q8. Please rate the following statements.

- Data for Question #8 does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” receives requests for owner surrender.

A. Rescue or shelter intake should be an option of last resort for owners seeking to surrender their pets.

- Of organizations that serve both dogs and cats, 43% “strongly agree” and 35% “agree” that rescue or shelter intake should be an option of ‘last resort’ for owners seeking to surrender their pets.
- Of organizations that serve dogs only, fewer, 36% “strongly agree” and 30% “agree.”
- Interestingly, of organizations that serve cats only, far more respondents, 60% “strongly agree” and 28% “agree” that rescue or shelter intake should be an option of ‘last resort’ for owners seeking to surrender their pets (see chart below). We hypothesize this higher percentage may be due to research suggesting that the ‘traditional’ shelter environment may be more stressful for cats than dogs, cats may be at risk for euthanasia in a ‘traditional shelter’ and/or the success of community cat programs. Again, this would require more research.

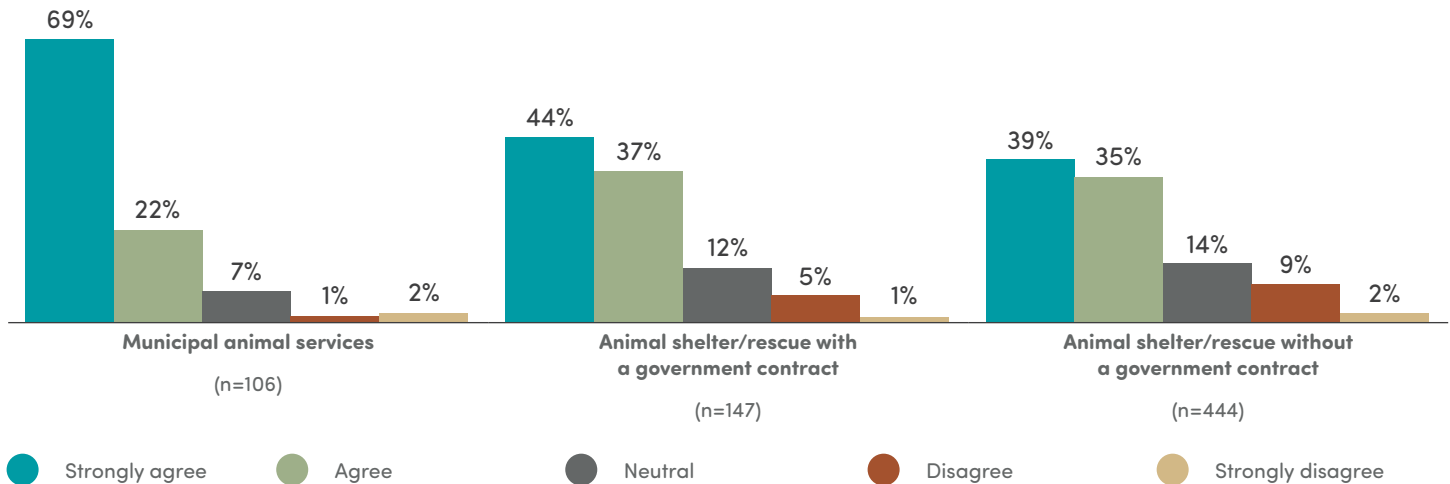


Results

Q8. Continued.

A. Statement Continued.

- Municipal animal services were much more likely to “strongly agree” that rescue or shelter intake should be an option of ‘last resort’ for owners seeking to surrender their pets (see chart below).



“Although we are very liberal about expressing a shelter as ‘a last resort,’ I have also seen many animals lives improved greatly because they were surrendered to the shelter. So my answer to the first question may vary case by case.”

– Anonymous Respondent



“We don’t want people to run to rescue first, but we have also seen what happens to animals bounced around on Craigslist... it’s a fine line and done case by case.”

– Anonymous Respondent



“I don’t think surrendering an animal should be easy and I don’t think that municipal shelters should do it without a wait list either, unless they fear for the animal’s wellbeing. Pet owners in our area tend to find homes on their own when pushed to do so. This statement is very true for dog owners, but definitely a larger struggle for cats.”

– Anonymous Respondent



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Pg 29

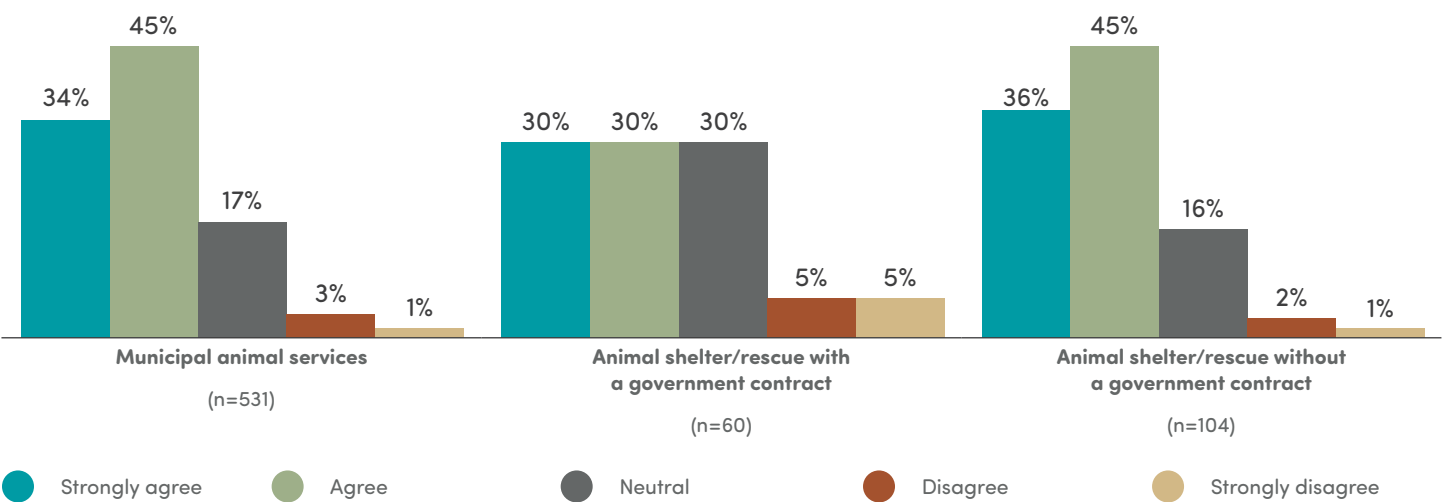
Results

Q8. Please rate the following statements.

- Data for Question #8 does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” receives requests for owner surrender.

B. I think programs that empower pet owners to find homes for their pets as an alternative to surrender are effective in increasing capacity and/or organizational resources.

- Of organizations that serve both dogs and cats, 34% “strongly agree” and 45% “agree” that programs which empower pet owners to find homes their pets as alternative to surrender are effective in increasing capacity and/or organizational resources.
- Of organizations that serve dogs only, fewer, 30% “strongly agree” and 30% “agree.”
- Of organizations that serve cats only, 36% “strongly agree” and 46% “agree” (see chart below).
- Organizational classification – whether municipal animal services or a shelter/rescue organization with or without a government contract – did not appear to be a strong factor in response to Statement B.



Results

Q8. Continued.

B. Statement selected comments:

"I think that programs which empower pets owners to find homes for their pets on their own as an alternative surrender may be effective in increasing capacity or organizational resources, but not be effective in the pet finding an appropriate home. We see assisting the community and pets in these situations as one of the main purposes of our organization."

– Anonymous Respondent

"These programs are essential and effective to pet owners who want to find homes for their pets; however, often the pet owners find it more convenient to drop off and abandoned their pets, if no kill organizations can't take them or if they have to pay a fee for a government run shelter to take the pet. This area is inundated with abandoned beautiful dogs and cats."

– Anonymous Respondent

"I agree that keeping animals out of shelters increases the shelter's capacity, yes. However, our area has a large amount of unaltered animals and no access to low cost or affordable spay and neuter services. The shelters here are continuing to gain ground in their adoption numbers, and I feel it is often better for the animal to go to the shelter, get neutered, and then go up for adoption, knowing the likelihood of adoption is very high."

– Anonymous Respondent



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Pg 31

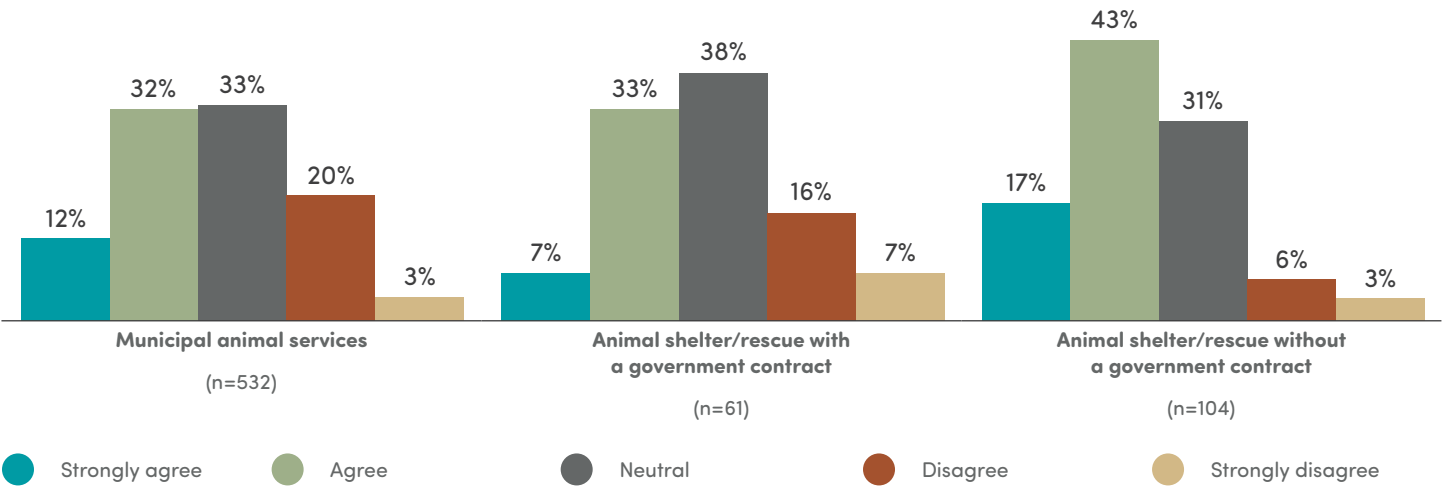
Results

Q8. Please rate the following statements.

- Data for Question #8 does not include responses from respondents who reported that their organization “never” receives requests for owner surrender.

C. My organization is effective in encouraging pet owners to find homes for their pets as an alternative to surrender.

- Of organizations that serve both dogs and cats, 12% “strongly agree” and 32% “agree” that their organization is effective in encouraging pet owners to find homes for their pets as an alternative to surrender.
- Of organizations that serve dogs only, 7% “strongly agree” and 33% “agree.”
- Of organizations that serve cats only, 17% “strongly agree” and 43% “agree,” suggesting that this group feels the most effective when compared to organizations that only serve dogs and organizations that serve cats and dogs (see chart below).



“We strongly encourage owners to rehome animals themselves but our only slightly effective at it. It is a new concept in our shelter (within the last year) and has taken a significant amount of staff training and encouragement to get started. We definitely have room for improvement.”

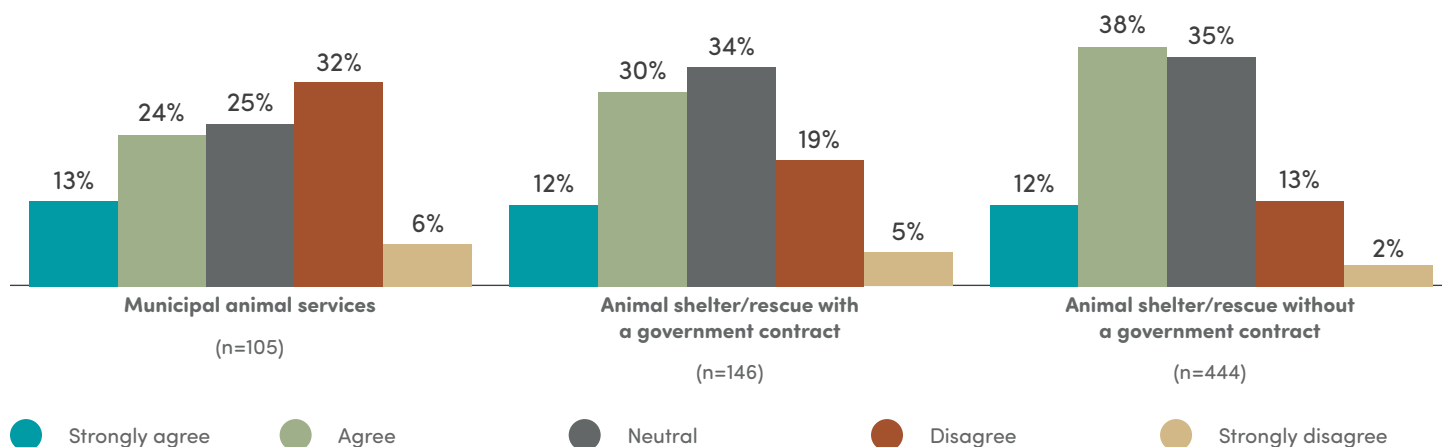
– Anonymous Respondent

Results

Q8. Continued.

C. Statement Continued.

- Municipal animal services were most likely to report that their organization is not effective in encouraging pet owners to find homes for their pets as an alternative to surrender.



“Our call center has been keeping tabs through follow up surveys on surrender calls and the results are encouraging. Either through resources on how to help the pet (addressing behavior/training) or how to rehome they have been able to divert many from entering a shelter.”

– Anonymous Respondent

“This type of program is a good idea but we do not currently have the staff or financial resources to educate dog owners on how to find a home, evaluate the home and potential new owners, and help them through the ownership transfer process for licensing.”

– Anonymous Respondent

“While we always look for ways to support owners to keep their pets, or privately rehome, most owners have arrived at their decision to surrender to a shelter before walking through the door and are not easily redirected.”

– Anonymous Respondent

“We just aren’t as successful as I would like to see us yet in this endeavor, although we keep trying and trying new ways.”

– Anonymous Respondent



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Pg 33