



Maddie's
Fund

Community-Centric Animal Services

SURVEY RESULTS 2021

Executive Summary

Community-Centric Animal Services Practices (CCASP) are programs and policies that sheltering organizations use to support people and pets through engagement with their community. CCASP include programs such as returning lost animals in the field, using foster care instead of housing animals in a shelter facility, helping people to keep their pets instead of surrendering them and more.

The Community-Centric Animal Services Practices (CCASP) survey was launched in March 2021 and distributed by Maddie's Fund® and national partners including: Adopt a Pet, American Pets Alive!, the ASPCA, Best Friends Animal Society, the Humane Society of the United States, Michelson Found Animals Foundation, National Animal Care & Control Association, Petco Love and The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement.



The objective was to establish baseline data on the utilization of various CCASPs in this first survey. The survey audience was comprised of representatives from government organizations with a physical shelter and private organizations with a physical shelter and a government contract. A total of 356 eligible and complete submissions were included in this report. There was an incentive of ten \$500 grants; grantees were randomly selected from those respondents who completed the survey.

Survey results revealed that there's wide variation in the utilization of CCASPs across the United States and that all organizations have room to grow as they work to support their communities. Notably, there are major opportunities to increase or improve: pathway planning for pets that enter the shelter system, return to home in the field, case management to keep pets in homes, self-rehoming support, partnerships with human social services, as well as housing and fencing support.

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly played a large role in all areas, but most obviously in a shelter's ability to provide physical access to their location. Sixty-nine percent decreased their access hours on weekends, and fewer than half were open to the public on Sundays.

As animal support service organizations work to connect with their entire community for the well-being of people and animals, this inaugural survey defines where animal sheltering is currently. We'll be conducting this survey again in the future so we can track progression of community-centric animal services.

About the Survey

This survey was developed by Maddie’s Fund and launched in March 2021. The objective was to establish baseline data on the utilization of various Community-Centric Animal Services Practices. The survey audience was comprised of representatives from government organizations with a physical shelter and private organizations with a physical shelter and a government contract.

The survey asked respondents about the following general categories:

- Services (including field services), policies and practices
- Public support (keeping pets in homes and self-rehoming support)
- Shelter operations, including volunteers, foster care and adoption practices
- Partnerships (e.g., with other shelters, human social services)

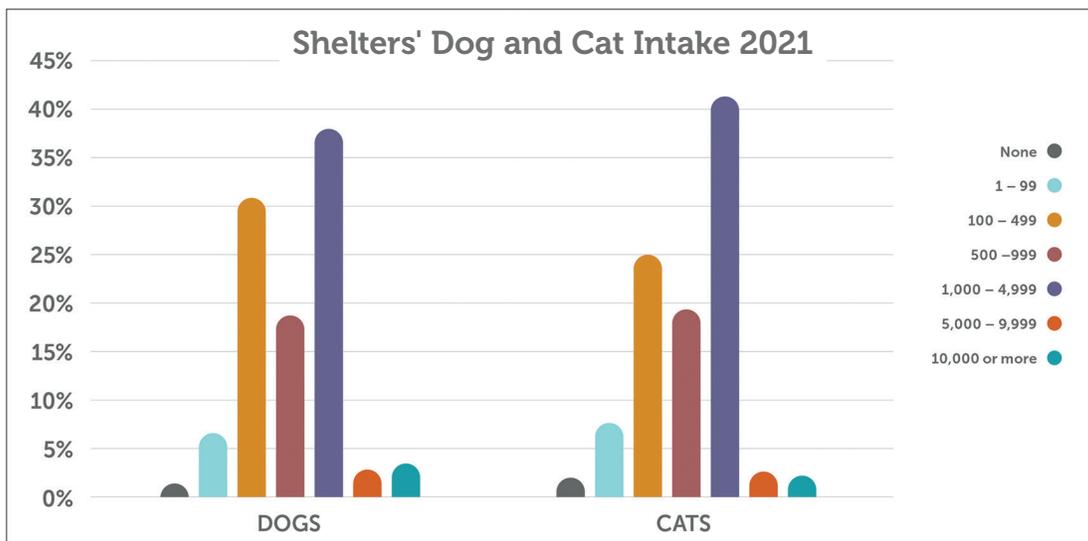
A variety of questions were employed in this survey. Some used a five-point scale while others asked the responded to select from a list of options.

About the Respondents

A total of 358 qualified respondents completed the survey. All respondents work or volunteer at an animal welfare organization located in the United States or the District of Columbia (not including U.S. Territories). Responses were received from 48 states and the District of Columbia. The majority of responding organizations took in between 100 and 4,999 cats and/or dogs in 2020.

Government shelters represented 51% of respondents; with 49% from private shelter organizations with a government contract. Respondents indicated titles or roles as 68% Executive, Shelter or Operations Director/management equivalent; 32% noted their title as “other.” Community/service areas were described by organizations as all or part Rural 62%, Suburban 54% or 34% Urban.

The survey asked respondents to ‘check all that apply’ related to involvement with Human Animal Support Services (HASS). Respondents indicated that 92% were interested in learning more about community-centric practices, 78% were investing time and/or resources in becoming a more community-centric organization, 15% were actively participating in a HASS working group, and 8% of organizations were HASS pilot shelters.



Key Findings

These key findings highlight areas where a majority of respondents report offering a program/area of support or indicate a good or excellent rating at implementing a program or area of support. Areas were also identified where the majority of organizations either don't offer or are just beginning to implement a program/area of support.

More than 75% of respondents reported that their organization offered:

- Shelter housing: 98% (352)
- Adoption services: 97% (348)
- Phone support to the community: 97% (348)
- Email support to the community: 96% (344)
- Animal intake: 95% (341)
- Guidance to people who found a pet: 95% (341)
- Guidance to people looking for lost pet: 95% (340)
- In-person support to the community: 93% (334)
- Bite quarantine: 88% (315)
- Community support: 87% (312)
- Online resources on organization website: 84% (300)
- Pet food support (e.g., pet food pantry): 83% (298)
- Legal custody holds: 80% (288)
- Spay/neuter support to the community: 77% (277)

Over 50% of respondents stated that they did a good or excellent job of administering the following programs or services:

- Foster care for cats/kittens: 66% (230)
- Foster care for dogs/puppies: 57%, (199)
- Partnerships with other shelters and rescue organizations: 72% (255)
- Social media promotions (e.g., foster, adoption, lost/found, community support): 75% (263)
- Daily rounds: 68% (222)
- Frequent review of reports (e.g., length of stay, pets overdue for services): 62% (216)
- Lost and found resources that are actively marketed to the community: 59% (208)
- Fee-waived or reduced-fee return to home: 55% (190)
- A community-wide pet identification program (e.g., tags or microchips): 53% (185)

Less than 25% of respondents reported that their organizations had good or excellent:

- Partnerships with human social services to support animals (24% (83))
- Shelter, neuter, return for dogs (SNR, 6% (18))
- Trap, neuter return (TNR, 3% (8)) for neighborhood (free roaming) dogs.

Key Findings

More than 25% of organizations either didn't have or were in the planning/beginning phase of:

- TNR for neighborhood dogs: 94% (281)
- SNR for neighborhood dogs: 88% (272)
- Partnerships with human social services to support animals: 54% (189)
- SNR for community cats: 46% (155)
- Short-term foster care: 41% (142)
- Adult dog behavior foster care: 39% (137)
- TNR for community cats: 39% (134)
- Partnerships with local/regional businesses: 33% (115)
- Resources for people rehoming pets on their own: 32% (110)
- Return to home in field: 28% (90)
- Pathway planning: 27% (94)

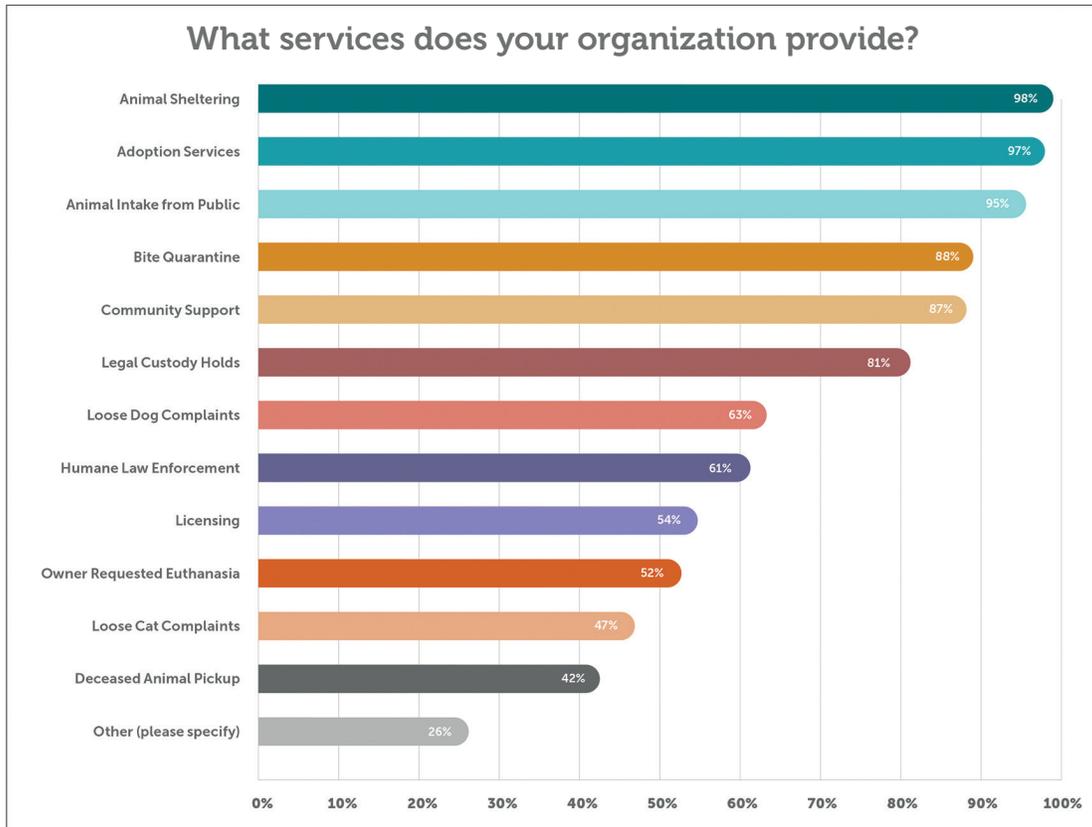
Less than 25% of respondents reported that their organization offered:

- Housing support (e.g., pet fees, pet friendly rentals): 20% (70)
- Public support via text messaging: 20% (72)
- Case management: 19% (69)
- Public support via online chat: 17% (60)
- Fencing support (e.g., build or repair fences): 13% (47)
- Self-rehoming services
 - Owned pet listings on organization website: 22% (80)
 - Resources to help people take pictures/write bios: 22% (79)
 - Resources to help people interview potential adopters: 15% (52)
 - A sample adoption agreement: 11% (38)

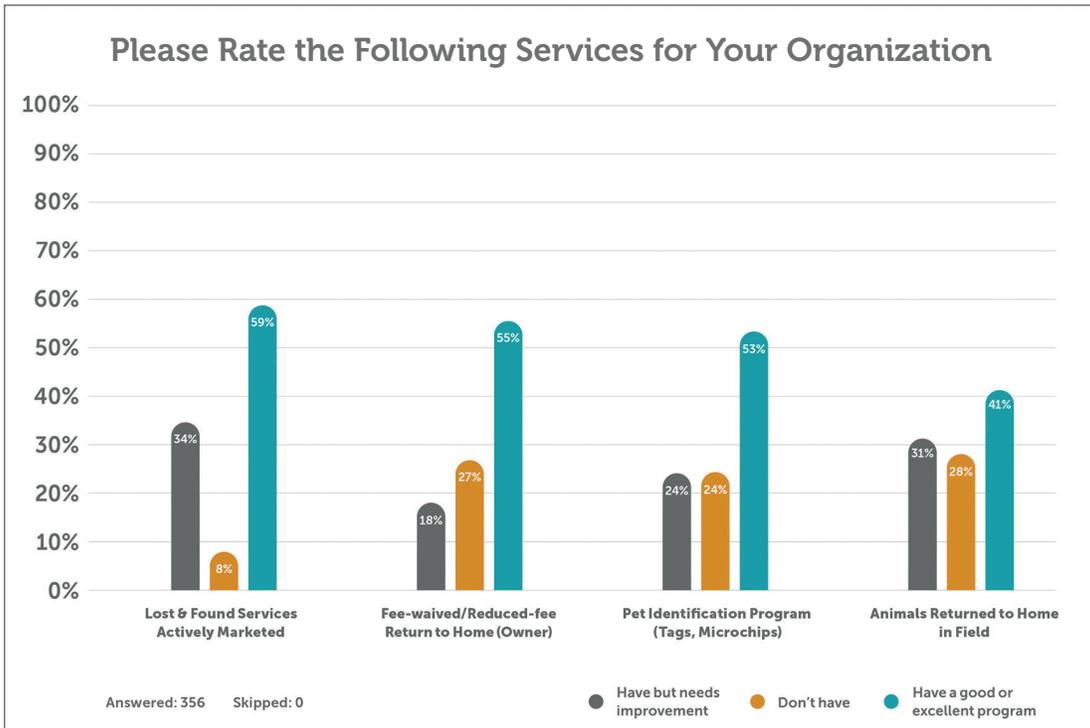
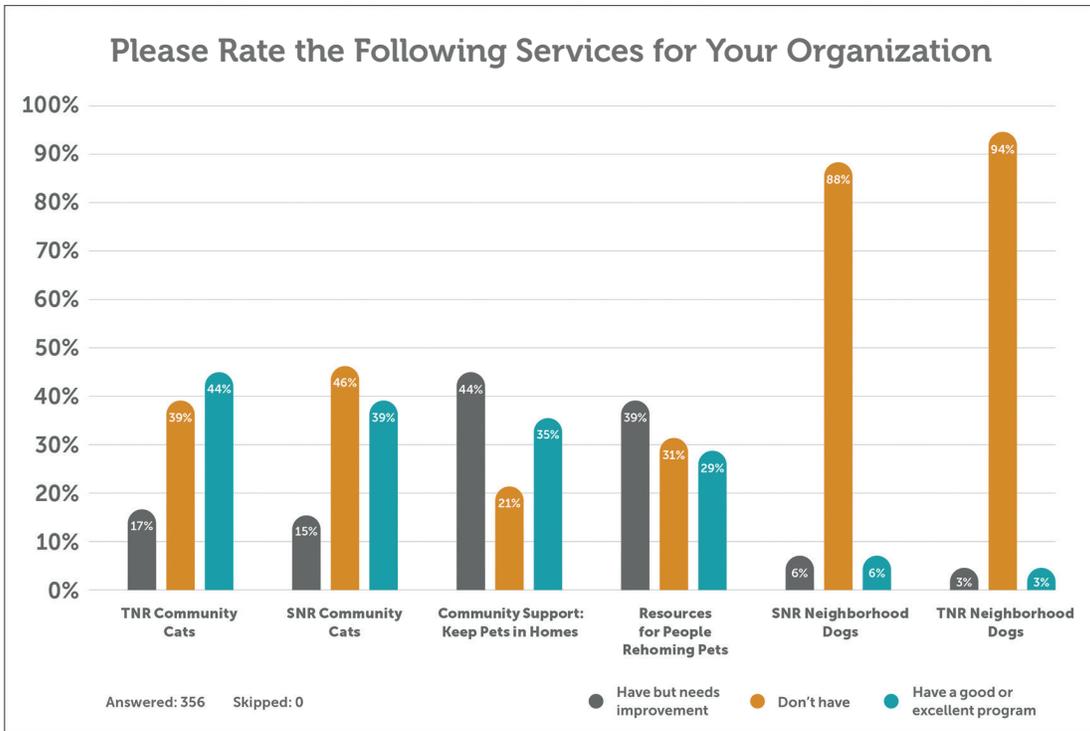


Services, Policies and Practices

The most common services offered by respondents were sheltering (housing), adoption, intake from the public, bite quarantine and community support. The least common services were humane law enforcement & public safety, licensing, owner requested euthanasia, loose cat complaints and deceased animal pickup. Detailed responses about services, policies and practices are included in the charts below.

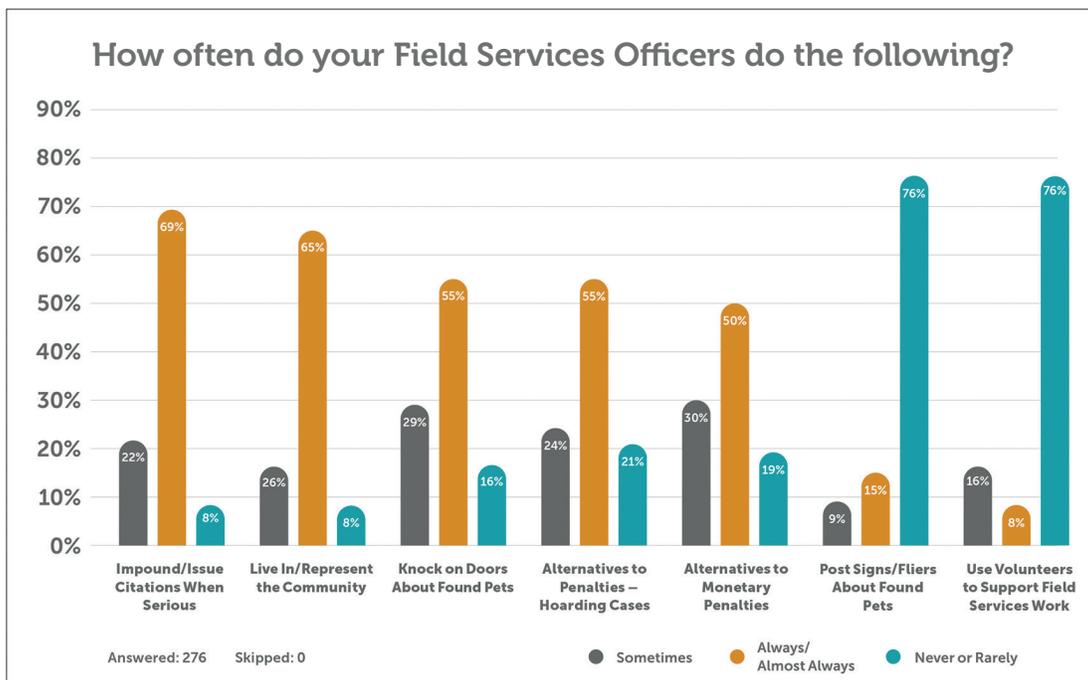
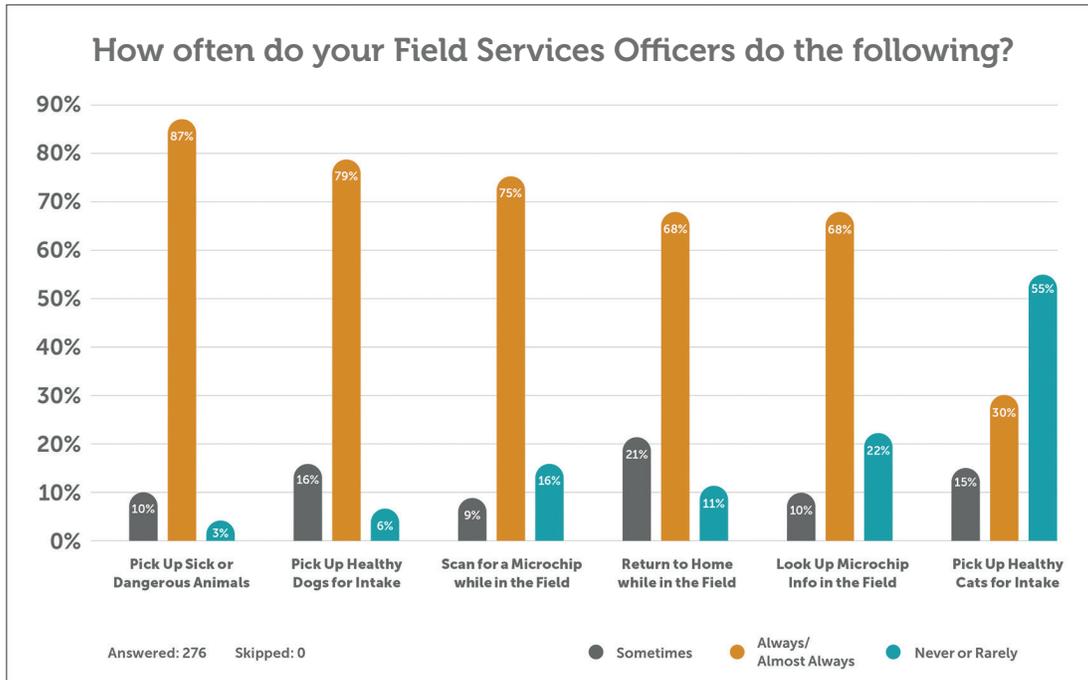


Services, Policies and Practices



Field Services

Overall, 77% of responding organizations have field service (animal control) officers. Fifty-eight percent of private organizations with a government contract have field service officers. The most common activities of field service officers were picking up sick or dangerous animals, picking up healthy dogs for intake and scanning for a microchip while in the field. The least common activities were picking up healthy cats for intake, posting signs or flyers about lost pets and using volunteers to support field services. Detailed responses about field service activities are included in the charts below.



Policies and Practices

Organizations were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the policies and practices listed in the table below. The strongest agreement was with their organization's ability to use volunteers to help further their mission, have open and inclusive adoption practices and have public policies and ordinances that support the community's pets and reduce shelter stays. The strongest disagreement was with the organization encouraging people who find free roaming animals to foster them instead of surrendering them to the center, providing support to people for whom English is a second language and allocating budget and staffing toward a focus on programs that keep pets and people together.

Please Rate the Following Statements. My Organization:

Answered: 356 Skipped: 0

	NEUTRAL	AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE	DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Uses volunteers to help further our mission	12% 44	79% 280	9% 31	355	2.21
Has public policies and ordinances that support our community's pets and reduce shelter stays	31% 111	56% 199	13% 46	356	2.44
Makes it easy for community members to get support how, when and where they need it	33% 118	47% 167	20% 70	355	2.53
Uses shelter and community demographic/census data to focus programs	28% 101	45% 159	27% 95	355	2.55
Has allocated budgeting and staffing with a focus on programs that keep pets and people together	27% 95	43% 154	30% 106	355	2.57

Please Rate the Following Statements. My Organization:

Answered: 356 Skipped: 0

	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE	AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Has open and inclusive adoption practices and policies	13% 45	5% 17	83% 294	356	2.95
Encourages people who find stray pets to foster them before surrendering them to the shelter	32% 115	29% 104	38% 136	355	2.71
Has the ability to provide support to those for whom English is a second language	22% 77	44% 156	34% 122	355	2.56
Has the ability to provide transportation to those who need it	19% 69	63% 223	18% 64	356	2.37

[Comments \(11\)](#)

Community Access to Support

Most organizations provided some type of support to their community to help keep pets in homes. Organizations were most likely to offer guidance to people who lost or found a pet, free pet food and spay/neuter support. Organizations were least likely to provide housing support and fencing support (e.g., building a fence).

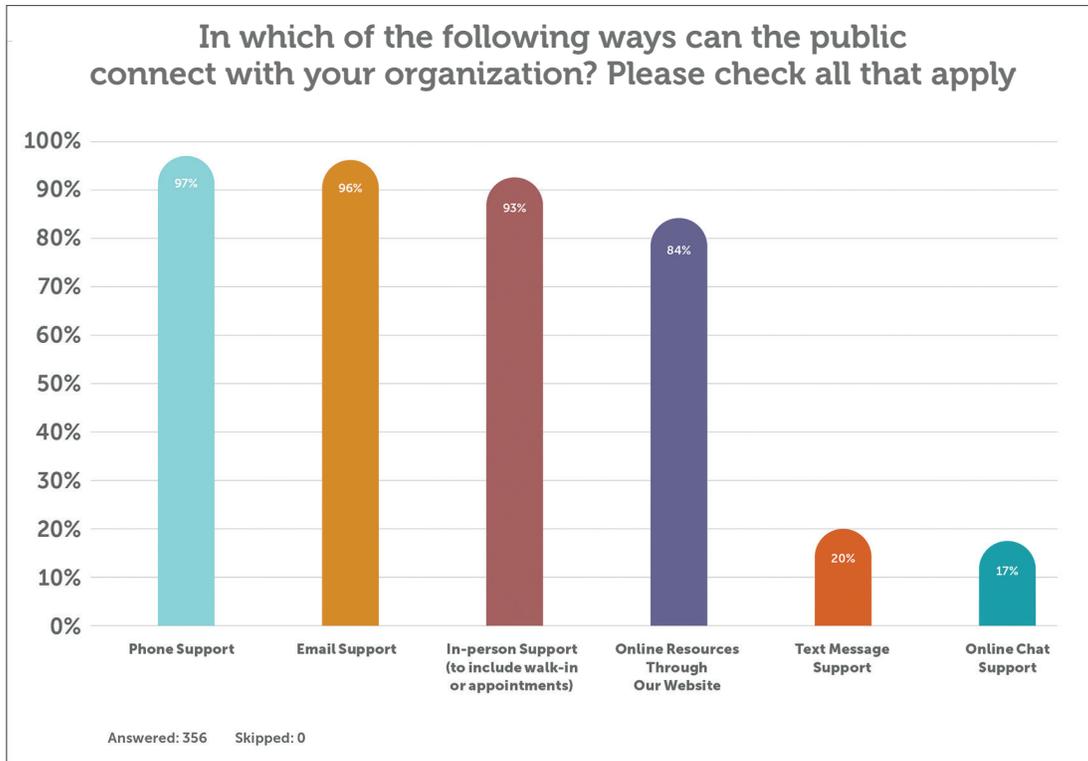
The majority of organizations (77%) reported providing immediate (live) support five to six days per week; 17% provided immediate support 24 hours per day, seven days per week; 6% provided immediate support 3 – 4 days per week or less. Organizations were accessible to the community via phone (97%) email (96%), in-person (93%) or via online resources (84%). Organizations were open to the public for an average of 43.6 hours per week and 6.2 hours per day. Forty-one percent of organizations were closed to the public on Sunday; 17% were closed on Monday and 9% were closed on Saturday. Sixty-four percent reported decreased weekend hours compared to weekday hours.

Which of the following does your organization offer (or refer/partner with another organization to offer) the public for owned animals? Please check all that apply

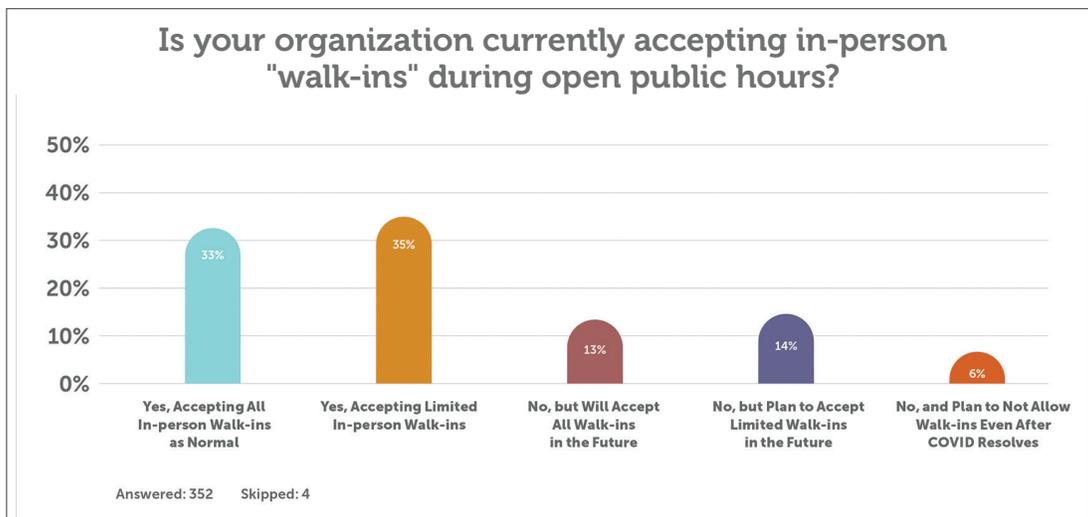
Answered: 356 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Provide guidance to people who found a pet	95%	339
Provide guidance to people looking for their lost pet	95%	338
Pet food support	83%	297
Spay/neuter support	77%	275
Supply support (e.g., leashes, collars, bowls)	60%	213
Preventative care support (e.g., vaccinations, flea/tick medication)	53%	187
Animal behavior and training support	40%	143
Temporary foster home support	34%	121
Temporary boarding or boarding assistance	34%	120
Veterinary (sick or ongoing) care support	31%	110
Housing support (e.g., pet fees, assist with finding pet friendly rentals)	19%	69
Fencing (building or repair) support	13%	46
None of the above	1%	5
Total Respondents: 356		

Community Access to Support



Some organizations changed whether they accepted walk-in/unscheduled animal surrender during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time this survey was administered, the majority of organizations (68%) were accepting walk-ins to some degree. Thirty-two percent weren't accepting walk-ins with varying plans to begin accepting them in the future.



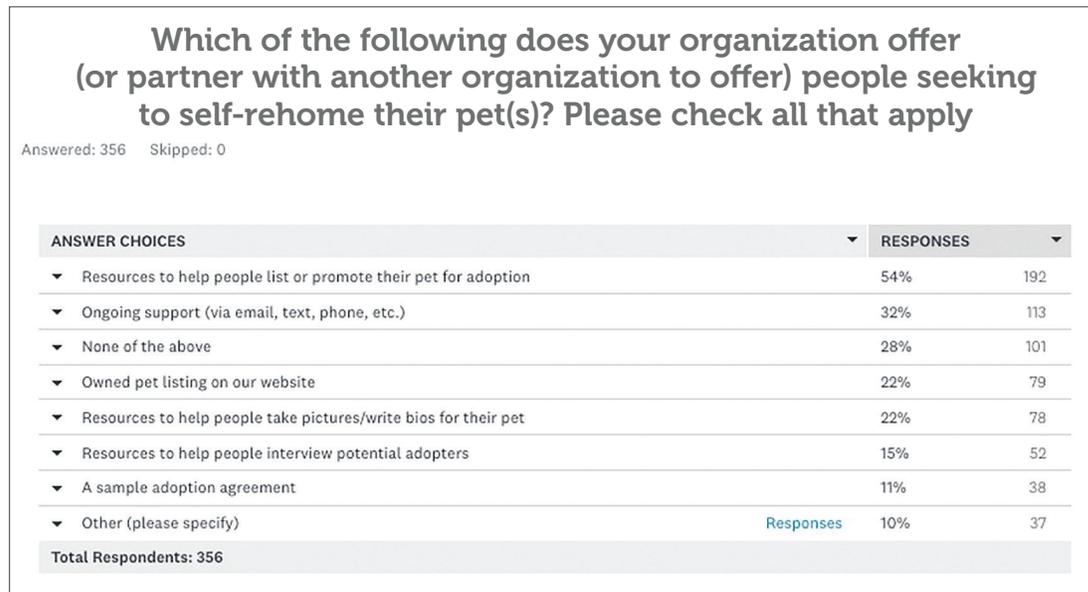
Case Management

Some animal service organizations have case management programs similar to those seen in the human social services industry. Trained case managers help struggling pet owners keep their pets by coordinating and providing comprehensive support to help people find the best possible solutions. Nineteen percent of organizations reported that they have a case management program. Twelve percent of organizations (9% 'yes' and the majority of the 4% 'other' responses) reported having used a trained social worker in the past two years, either on staff, as a consultant or for a training/workshop.



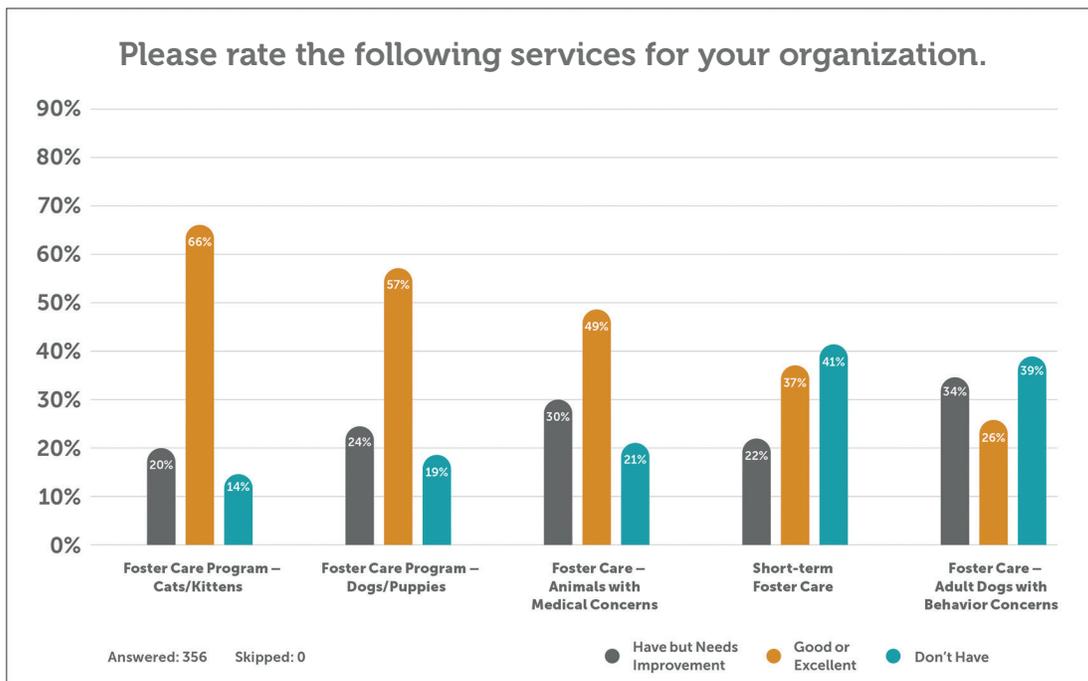
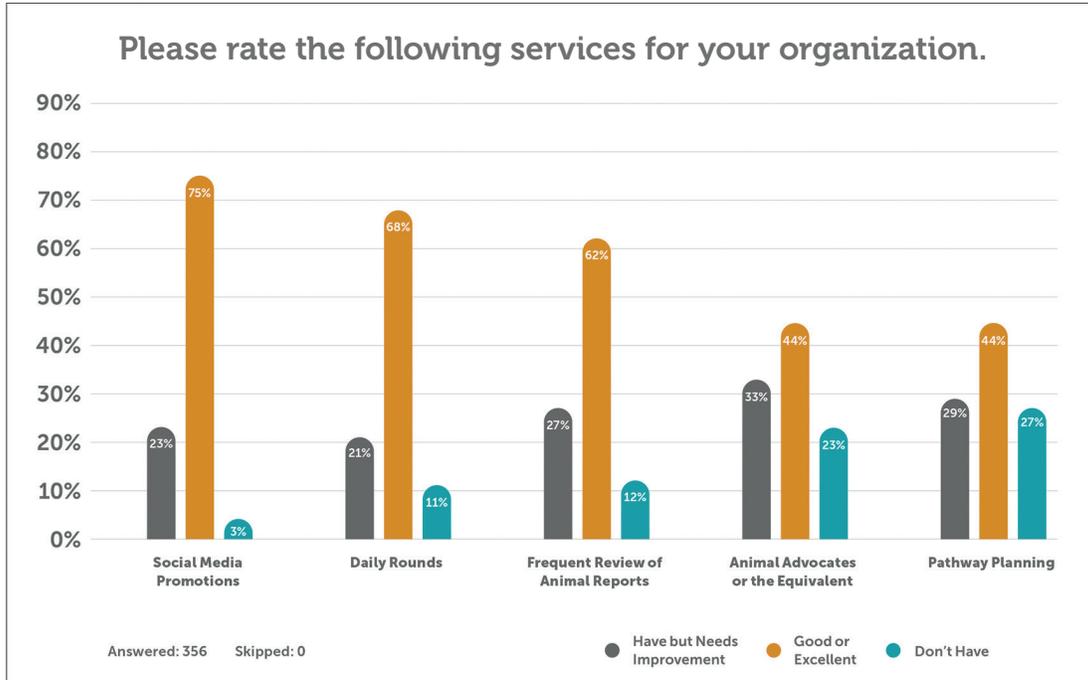
Self-Rehoming

Self-rehoming describes the process of aiding pet owners to find another home for their pet(s), person to person, without that pet having to go into the shelter. Twenty-eight percent of organizations don't offer any services to support self-rehoming. Detailed responses about self-rehoming are included in the chart below.



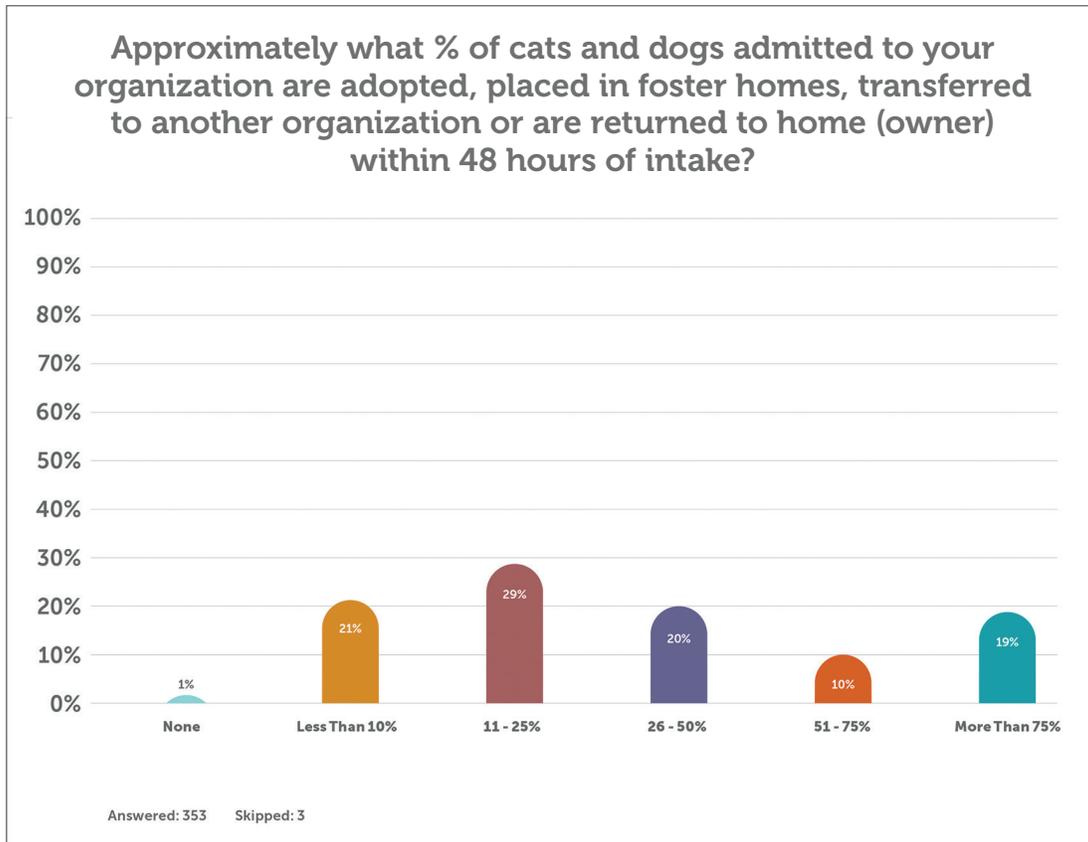
Shelter Operations

The survey asked about several different areas of shelter operations including management, foster care and adoptions. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported that their organizations did a good job at social media promotions. Organizations were least likely to have or offer Pathway planning, short-term foster, and adult dog behavior foster programs.



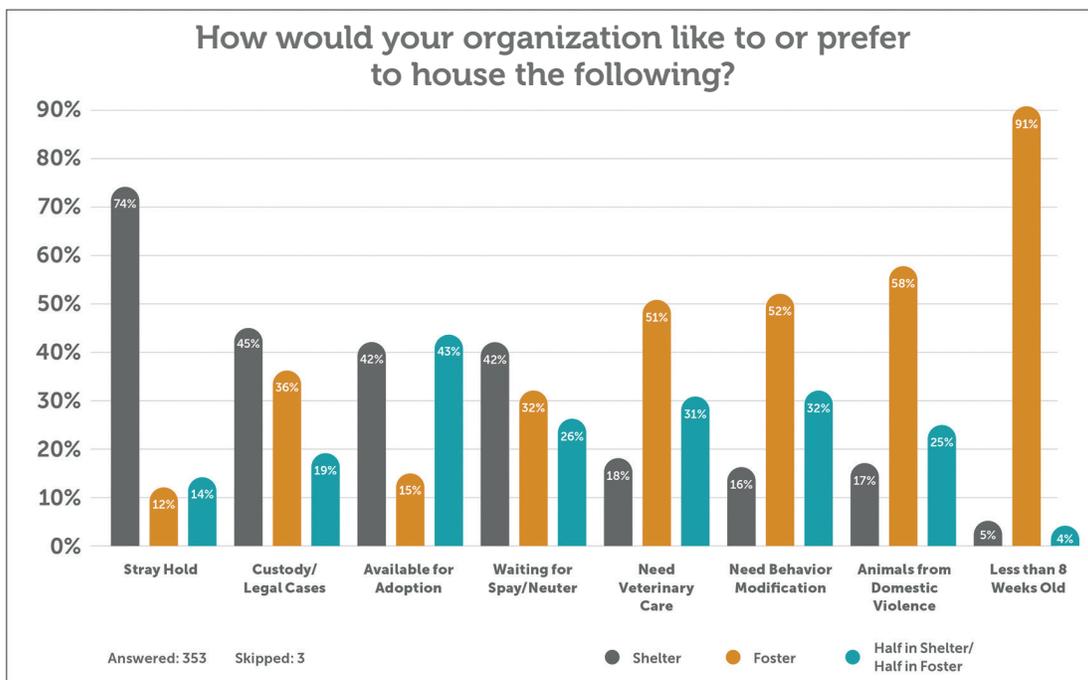
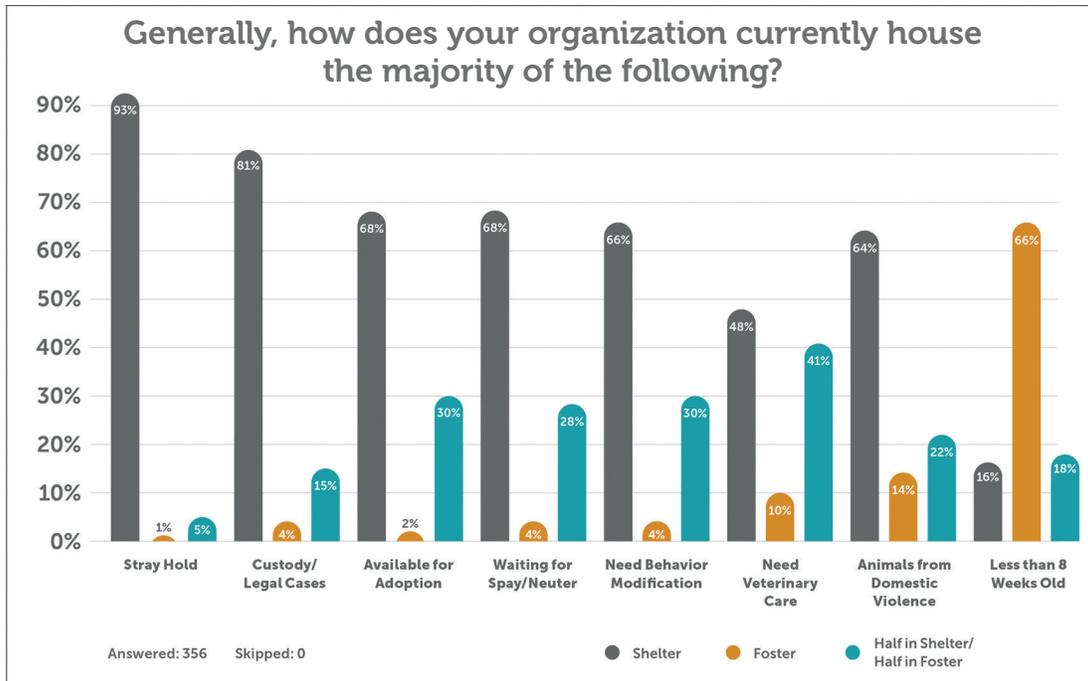
Shelter Operations

The survey asked what percentage of animals are adopted, go to foster, transferred or returned to home within 48 hours of intake. The majority of organizations placed 11-25% of their cats and dogs within 48 hours of intake.



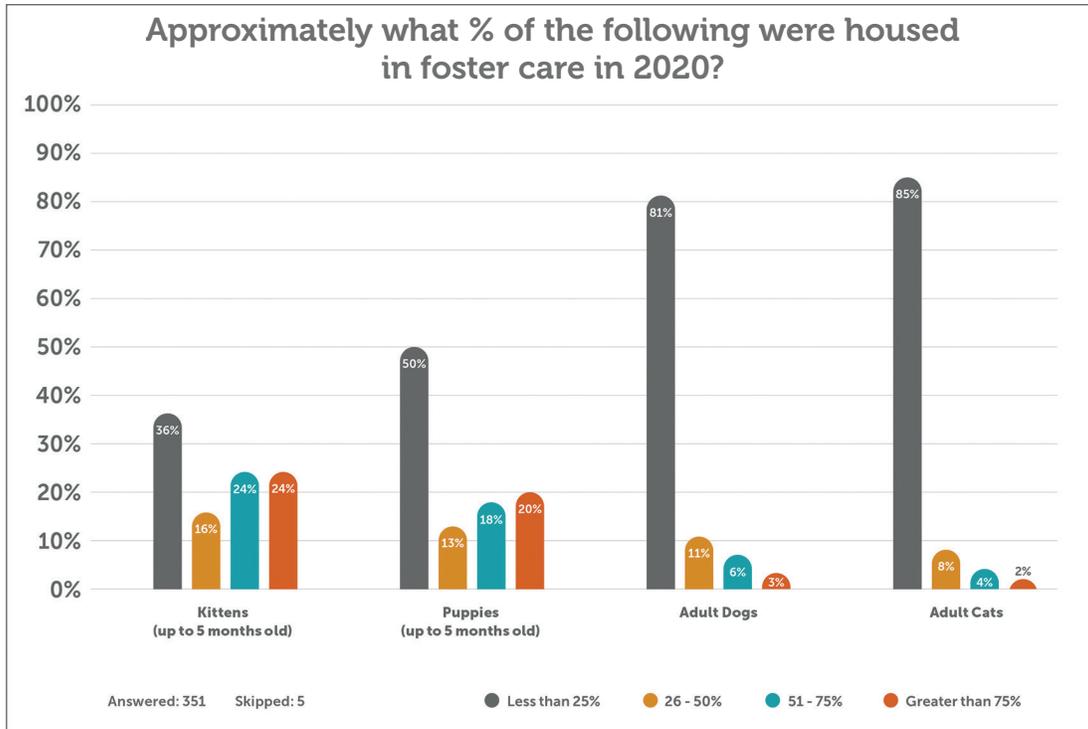
Shelter Operations

Except for animals less than eight weeks old, organizations house the majority of animal in care, in the shelter environment. Foster care is utilized 1-22% of the time for all categories below, except for animals less than eight weeks old. Alternatively, when asked where they would like or prefer to house animals, shelters strongly preferred to house animals on stray hold in-shelter and animals less than eight weeks old in foster. The majority of respondents ideally preferred to house custody cases and animals waiting for spay/neuter in shelter. Alternatively, the majority ideally preferred to house animals who need veterinary care, animals who need behavior modification and animals from domestic violence situations in foster care. Organizations preferred to house animals in shelter OR in foster (half in each location) when they were awaiting adoption.



Shelter Operations

Respondents were asked what percentage (number in foster/total number of animals admitted) of their population was housed for 1 or more days in foster care during 2020. Adult animals were less likely to be housed in foster care than were puppies and kittens up to five months of age.



Shelter Operations

Over 20% of organizations report that they require landlord checks, name of veterinarian, vaccination records for all the pets in the household and the entire household, including animals, must meet the potential new pet. Additional details are included in the chart below.

Which of the following are required for a person to adopt an animal?

Answered: 356 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Application	79%	281
In-person interview/conversation	69%	244
Landlord check	37%	132
Name of veterinarian	33%	119
Vaccination records for existing household pets	23%	82
Entire household (including any resident pets) must meet the animal	23%	82
References	15%	52
Other (please specify)	14%	51
Background check	10%	37
None of the above	6%	23
Home visit	6%	21
Training class(es)	1%	4
Total Respondents: 356		

Volunteers

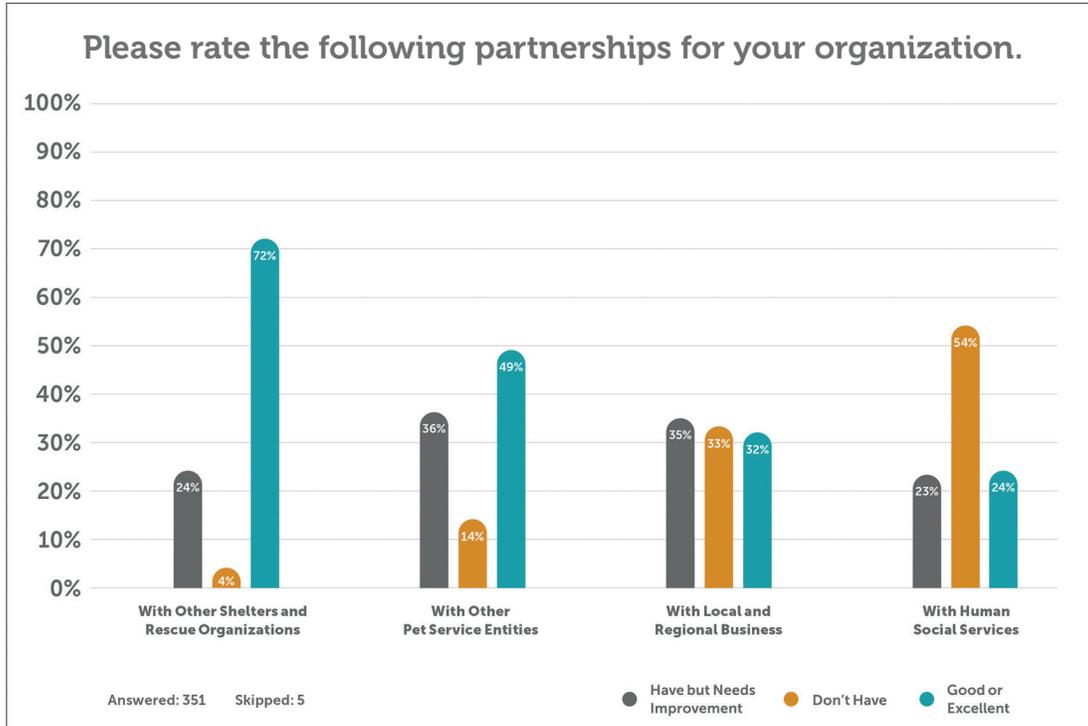
Organizations were unlikely to use volunteers for lost and found support and disaster response. They were most likely to use volunteers for events, foster care, cleaning, animal care, and fundraising.

Please rate the following. To what extent does your organization use volunteers to support?

	FREQUENTLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER OR RARELY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
▼ Events	69% 245	20% 72	11% 38	355	1.42
▼ Foster care program	61% 216	22% 78	17% 61	355	1.56
▼ Cleaning	47% 167	32% 111	21% 74	352	1.74
▼ Animal care	47% 167	30% 105	23% 83	355	1.76
▼ Fundraising	45% 158	32% 114	23% 80	352	1.78
▼ Transfers/Rescue Partnerships	32% 114	41% 145	27% 96	355	1.95
▼ Adoptions program	31% 108	37% 130	33% 116	354	2.02
▼ Behavior and training	24% 85	46% 162	30% 107	354	2.06
▼ Administrative work	19% 68	35% 122	46% 163	353	2.27
▼ Disaster response	16% 57	25% 90	59% 208	355	2.43
▼ Marketing and Communications	15% 54	37% 133	47% 168	355	2.32
▼ Lost and Found	15% 54	33% 116	52% 181	351	2.36
▼ Veterinary care	13% 47	25% 87	62% 217	351	2.48
▼ Intake prevention	6% 21	20% 69	74% 262	352	2.68
▼ Shelter intake	5% 18	17% 61	78% 273	352	2.72
▼ Field Services	5% 18	10% 35	85% 297	350	2.80

Partnerships

The majority of organizations reported that they have good or excellent partnerships with other shelter and rescue organizations and other pet service entities (e.g., veterinary hospitals). The majority of organizations don't have or are just getting started with partnerships with human social service providers.



Conclusion

These survey results revealed that there's wide variation in the utilization of CCASPs across the United States and that all organizations have room to grow as they work to support their communities. Notably, there are major opportunities to increase or improve pathway planning for pets that enter the shelter system, return to home in the field, case management to keep pets in homes, self-rehoming support, partnerships with human social services, as well as housing and fencing support.

As animal support service organizations work to connect with their entire community for the well-being of people and animals, this inaugural survey defines where animal sheltering is currently. We'll be conducting this survey again in the future to track progression of community-centric animal services.





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