



NO KILL

101

**A Primer on No Kill
Animal Control Sheltering
for Public Officials**

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A PRIMER ON NO KILL ANIMAL CONTROL SHELTERING FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

A No Kill Nation Is on the Horizon

OVER THE LAST SEVERAL DECADES, shelters in hundreds of communities have implemented the No Kill Equation, a series of programs and services to reduce birthrates, increase placements, and keep animals with their responsible caretakers. As a result, they are achieving unprecedented results, placing upwards of 99.9% of all impounded animals in open admission animal control/municipal facilities. And it did not take them years to do it. Of the hundreds of cities and towns placing between 90% and 99% of animals, the vast majority achieved it in six months or less; many overnight. These communities share very little in common geographically, demographically, and economically: some are large and urban; others small and rural; some are economically well-off; others have relatively high rates of poverty; still others have very high per capita intake rates, as much as 10 times higher than New York City, the most congested urban area in the United States. What they do share is a can-do attitude, a commitment to saving lives, and the No Kill Equation.

Embracing the No Kill Equation is not only necessary, reasonable, and an effective means of saving lives, it is cost-effective, consistent with public safety, and brings a shelter's policies in line with the humane, progressive values of the American public.



Communities can quickly save the vast majority of animals once they commit to do so, even in the face of public irresponsibility or economic crisis.



The Key to Success

The No Kill EQUATION

The No Kill Equation is both cost-effective and economically beneficial.

Over the last several years, the No Kill Advocacy Center has analyzed shelter funding and placement rates in multiple states, the economic impact of increasing live release rates on shelter expenses and revenue, as well as the economic impact on community businesses and tax revenues. After analyzing that data, the answer became unassailable: saving lives is more cost-effective than killing.

Not only are most shelter costs fixed, but many of the programs identified as key components of saving lives rely on private philanthropy, as in the use of rescue groups, which shift costs of care from public taxpayers to private individuals and groups. Others, such as the use of volunteers, 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, with exponential savings in terms of reducing births. We're not the only ones to reach that conclusion.

A University of Denver study found that Austin, TX's embrace of this approach yielded \$157,452,503 in positive economic impact to the community — a return on investment of over 400%. The study found that, "The costs associated with implementing the [No Kill] Resolution appear to have been more than offset by a series of economic benefits to the community." And study authors further concluded that that's "the most conservative possible measure of the data." In other words, the true economic benefit is likely to be higher.

Many alternatives to killing are more cost effective & save money.

The No Kill Equation is consistent with public safety.

A study in the *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* found that "Nothing in the prevalence estimates we reviewed suggest that overall, dogs who come to spend time in a shelter... are dramatically more or less inclined toward problematic warning or biting behavior than are pet dogs in general." And since bite rates that involve enough force to cause an injury and require hospitalization occur with only 0.01% of all dogs (or roughly 1 in 10,000), the conclusion here appears inescapable also: the overwhelming majority of shelter dogs are not a threat. Indeed, one shelter director with experience at municipal agencies taking in as many as 30,000 animals a year says that "the percentage of truly aggressive dogs I have seen in small to very large shelters is well under one quarter of 1%."

No Kill is a humane, sustainable, cost-effective model that works hand-in-hand with public health & safety, while fulfilling a fiscal responsibility to taxpayers.

Austin's ability to promote and sustain the health and well-being of both its human and non-human animal residents." More specifically, it found no increase in moderate and severe dog bites — in fact, the number of moderate and severe dog bites declined during the study period — and noted specifically that the No Kill ordinance did not lead to an increase in dog bites.

Once again, the University of Denver study is instructive. In Austin, the killing of dogs deemed "aggressive" has declined significantly over the years: from 2009 (the year before the City mandated a minimum 90% placement rate at the shelter) to 2015 the rate dropped from 7% to 1%. (In 2018, it was 1/20th of 1%.) At the same time, the placement rate for dogs climbed from 69% to 98% while the percentage of dog bites deemed moderate or severe declined by 13% with the greatest decline in the number of bites classified as "severe," which declined by 89%. That trend holds over longer periods going back nearly 20 years in Austin.

Not surprisingly, the study found that No Kill was not only consistent with public safety, it improved it, noting positive impacts on "public health, social capital, and community engagement," all of which have "important implications for

Through the No Kill Equation, a 99.9% placement rate is achievable.

Today, hundreds of cities and towns across the U.S. have placement rates above 90% at their open admission municipal or contracted shelters (saving90.org). Many of those are over 95% and as high as 99.9%. That includes 26 communities in Colorado alone. In Michigan, sixty out of 83 counties have a placement rate of 90% or better. Not surprisingly, the University of Denver study specifically concluded that "a high LRR [Live Release Rate] is achievable at a municipal level." The conclusion was not surprising: something can't be impossible if it has already been achieved.

The No Kill Equation is cost-effective. It is consistent with public safety. Its mandates are achievable. And they should be. The end result will be good for animals, good for the people of the community, good for taxpayers, and good for the local economy, a classic "win-win." When it comes to dogs, cats, rabbits, and other animal companions, Americans are kind, generous, and humane. They deserve shelters that reflect their values. The No Kill Equation ensures that they do.

The data shows that every year there are 10 times more people looking to acquire an animal than there are animals being killed in shelters.



THE PROGRAMS & SERVICES OF THE NO KILL EQUATION

TWO DECADES AGO, a No Kill community was little more than a dream. Today, it is a reality in many cities and counties nationwide and the numbers continue to grow. And the first step is a decision by a shelter's leadership: a commitment to reject kill-oriented ways of doing business, to replace a regressive, anachronistic 19th century model of failure with 21st century innovations by implementing the No Kill Equation. No Kill starts as an act of will.

Animals enter shelters for a variety of reasons and with a variety of needs, but for over 100 years, the "solution" has been the same: adopt a few and kill the rest. The No Kill Equation provides a humane, life-affirming means of responding to every type of animal entering a shelter, and every type of need those animals might have. Some animals entering shelters are community cats. At traditional shelters, they are killed, but at a No Kill shelter, they are sterilized and released back to their habitats. Some animals entering shelters are motherless puppies and kittens. At traditional shelters, these animals are killed as well. At a No Kill shelter, they are sent into a foster home to provide around-the-clock care until they are eating on their own and old enough to be adopted. Some animals have medical or behavior issues. At a traditional shelter, they are killed. At a No Kill shelter, they are provided with rehabilitative care and then adopted. Whatever the situation, the No Kill Equation provides a lifesaving alternative that replaces killing. The mandatory programs and services are:

Animals enter shelters for a variety of reasons, and humane programs and services exist to address each of them.

Community Cat/Dog Sterilization

Community sterilization programs humanely reduce impounds and killing.

High-Volume, Low-Cost Sterilization

No- and low-cost, high-volume sterilization reduces the number of animals entering the shelter system, allowing more resources to be allocated toward saving lives.

Rescue Groups

An adoption or transfer/transport to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, and killing, and improves a community's rate of life-

saving. Because millions of dogs and cats are killed in shelters annually, rare is the circumstance in which a qualified rescue group should be denied an animal.

Foster Care

Foster care is a low-cost, and often no-cost, way of increasing a shelter's capacity, caring for sick and injured or behaviorally challenged animals, and thus saving more lives.

Comprehensive Adoption Programs

Adoptions are vital to an agency's lifesaving mission. The quantity and quality of shelter adoptions is in shelter management's hands, making lifesaving a direct function of shelter policies and

practices. If shelters better promoted their animals and had adoption programs responsive to community needs, including public access hours for working people, offsite adoptions, adoption incentives, and effective marketing, they could increase the number of homes available and replace killing with adoptions. Contrary to conventional wisdom, shelters *can* adopt their way out of killing.

Pet Retention

While some surrenders of animals to shelters are unavoidable, others can be prevented — but only if shelters work with people to help them solve their problems. Saving animals requires shelters to develop innovative strategies for keeping people and their companion animals together. And the more a community sees its shelters as a place to turn for advice and assistance, the easier this job will be.

Medical & Behavior Programs

To meet its commitment to a lifesaving guarantee for all animals who are not irremediably suffering, shelters need to keep animals happy and healthy and moving efficiently through the sys-

tem. To do this, shelters must put in place comprehensive vaccination, handling, cleaning, socialization, and care policies before animals get sick and rehabilitative efforts for those who come in sick, injured, unweaned, or traumatized.

Public Relations/Community Involvement

Increasing adoptions, maximizing donations, recruiting volunteers, and partnering with community agencies comes down to increasing the shelter's public exposure. And that means consistent marketing and public relations. Public relations and marketing are the foundation of a shelter's activities and success.

Volunteers


Volunteers are a dedicated “army of compassion” and the backbone of a successful No Kill effort. There is never enough staff, never enough dollars to hire more staff, and always more needs than paid human resources. That is where volunteers make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.

Proactive Redemptions

One of the most overlooked opportunities for re-



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ducing killing in animal control shelters is increasing the number of lost animals returned to their families. This includes matching reports of lost animals with animals in the shelter, rehoming animals in the field, and use of technology such as posting lost animals on the internet.

A Compassionate Director

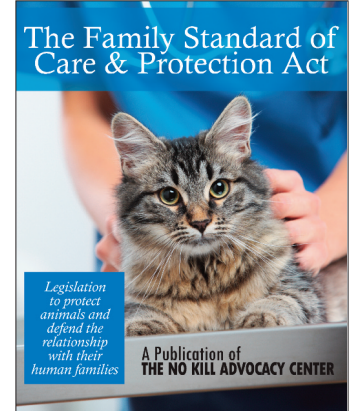
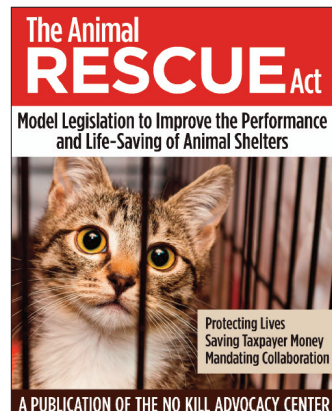
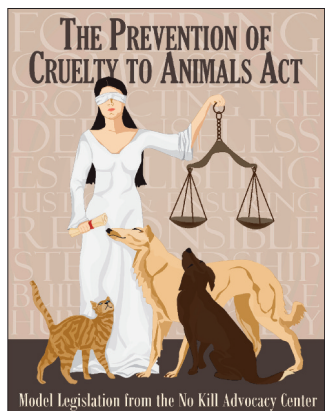
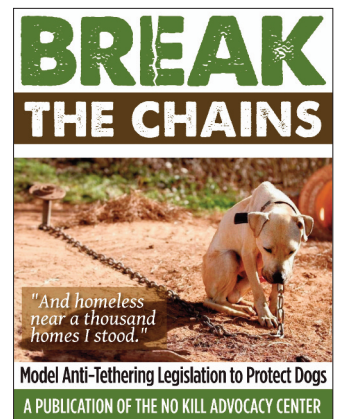
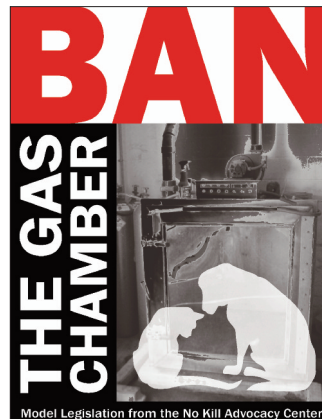
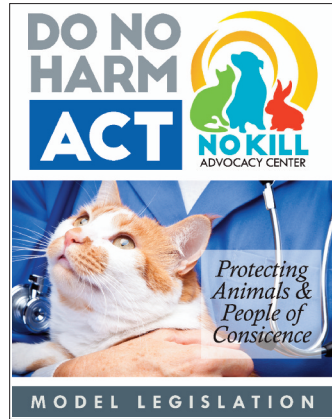
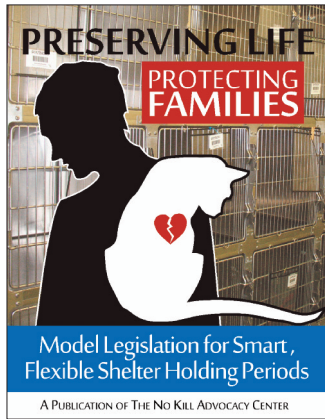
The final element of the No Kill Equation is the most important of all, without which all other elements are thwarted — a hard working, compassionate animal control or shelter director not content to continue killing, while regurgitating tired clichés about “public irresponsibility” or hiding behind the myth of “too many animals, not enough homes.”

While shelter leadership drives the No Kill initiative, it is the community that extends the safety net of care. Unlike traditional shelters — which view members of the public as adversaries and refuse to partner with them as rescuers or volunteers — a No Kill shelter embraces the people in its community. They are the key to success: they volunteer, foster, socialize animals, staff offsite adoption venues, and open their hearts, homes and wallets to the animals in need. The public is at the center of every successful No Kill shelter in the nation. By working with people, implementing lifesaving programs, and treating each life as precious, a shelter can transform itself.

A better, brighter future awaits America’s neediest companion animals. By demanding excellence and accountability from the shelters that serve their communities, public officials can lead the way.

To download the Companion Animal Protection Act & other model laws visit:

nokilladvocacycenter.org



A No Kill nation is within our reach

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