

Communication from Public

Name: Sandra Jacobson

Date Submitted: 05/13/2025 06:23 PM

Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: We need more sworn officers not fewer.

Communication from Public

Name: Linda Blauner

Date Submitted: 05/15/2025 12:18 PM

Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: Reside in CD-11- oppose budget cuts and agree with Traci Parks on budget recommendations.

Communication from Public

Name: Kenia Pino

Date Submitted: 05/15/2025 06:37 PM

Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: CITY COUNCIL - FUND THE DAY LABOR CENTERS

Communication from Public

Name: Karla

Date Submitted: 05/15/2025 09:00 PM

Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: Save Day Labor Centers!!!!!!! These are crucial to support workers in the city!!! Do not defund these!!!!!!! Support the working-class immigrant community in LA!

Communication from Public

Name: Hector Flores

Date Submitted: 05/15/2025 10:32 PM

Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: As a current resident of Los Angeles, and raised in Altadena, I know firsthand the critical role day laborer centers played in the emergency response efforts of the Altadena/Palisades fires. Additionally, these centers provide preventative services to workers who otherwise wouldn't be reached. Day laborers and the centers that serve them were on the front lines of natural disasters and COVID, but aren't recognized as an essential part of LA. Mayor Bass and the LA City Council must ensure that these centers ARE NOT DEFUNDED and that LA remains a real sanctuary city that supports ALL workers!

Communication from Public

Name: Lynne Chao

Date Submitted: 05/16/2025 04:24 AM

Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: Re: LA Animal Services. My testimony attached.

Dear Council Members,

- RE: LA Animal Services audit of independent counsel, here is Best Friends Animal Society's independent [16-page report](#)¹ reviewing LAAS Van Nuys and LAAS Chesterfield Square / South LA from 2023 to July 31, 2024. This LA Times article 11/22/24: "[Mayor Bass said she'd save L.A.'s shelter animals. More dogs are dying](#)"² references findings from this [16-page report](#).¹
- FY 2025-26 Animal Food \$200,000 budget is **INCORRECT**. This is based on cutting half the shelters (initial proposal) which cuts half the animals food. FY 2024-25 Estimated Expenditure is \$403,000. Given that all 6 shelters are remaining, please reassess. FY 2024-25 estimated expenditures pull an additional \$103,000 to cover animal food with FY 2024-25 \$300,000 budget.
- **Get to the Source of the Issue.** Review food brand and grade. Food causing diarrhea. Lowered food grade enacted in FY 2024-25 for cost cutting measures: actual expenditure FY 2023-24: \$1,006,601 decreased to FY 2024-25: \$403,000. My assessment: high rate of 28% of dogs with diarrhea at a shelter. **Switch to better quality "LIMITED INGREDIENT" dog food.** Review FY 2024-25 budget reduction animal food with lower quality changeout leading to rampant diarrhea, health issues, disease spreading. Diarrhea and feces in kennels are not timely cleaned and left in kennels for hours. Dogs are tracking into play areas, kennels, spreading diseases, creating more medical costs, more staffing hours for cleanup, and unhealthy environment with flies spreading diseases, landing on dog food. Better food = Less diarrhea. Healthier environment = Healthier dogs = More adoptions. **MANY DOGS ARE ALLERGIC TO CHICKEN, BEEF, AND DAIRY. SELECT DOG FOOD WITH LIMITED INGREDIENTS.** Rescues focus on salmon, fish, and turkey. Dog food brands recommended by shelters / pet stores to suit multiple dogs: Natural Balance for large dogs (limited ingredients, not expensive), Nutri Source Pure Vita for small dogs (limited ingredients).
- **Do not get rid of the marketing department. AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IS NECESSARY. THIS IS A REAL ISSUE FOR LAAS.** Marketing strategies need to be streamlined strategically to build awareness. **Dogs are not getting adopted faster because people do not know the shelters exist,**

do not know there are 6 shelters, or know to go to LAAS website to find adoptable pets. I reached to

¹ Best Friends Animals Society 16-page independent study of LAAS Van Nuys, LAAS Chesterfield
<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25212589-la-animal-services-factual-findings-observations/>

² LA Times 11/22/24: Mayor Bass said she'd save L.A.'s shelter animals. More dogs are dying. By Dakota Smith
<https://www.aol.com/news/mayor-bass-said-shed-save-110028015.html?guccounter=1>

700 people in surrounding cities of the shelters (Sherman Oaks, Hollywood, North Hollywood, Burbank, Studio City, Pasadena, Northridge, and Larchmont) and **only 4 out of 700 people knew LAAS shelters exist** even in a 2-mile radius. Only 2 people knew about LAAS website to find adoptable pets. None knew there were rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, turtles, and chickens up for adoptions.

- **Do not get rid of Dogs Playing for Life contract with outside vendor** for exercising dogs as Interim GM Annette Ramirez offered up for compensation on May 5, 2025, budget hearing.

These reasons are not obvious but so important to getting dogs adopted:

- **Play time is where dogs get happy mug shots on green astroturf which increases adoption.** Sad mug shots in cages behind bars, give dogs little chance. Photos make or break a dog's chance of getting adopted or getting euthanized. **Play time is where dogs get videoed. Videos of happy dogs playing get dogs adopted faster on social media vs. photo mug shots.** Adopters see dog's personality, adoptability with other dogs which can increase adopters with existing dogs in household.

Dogs are in kennels that are dirty which creates a sensory overload and stress. Dogs smell is 1,000 to 10,000 times higher than humans. There are feces and diarrhea left in kennels for hours with constant flies. High stress environment with 24-7 barking. **Want more adoptable less stressed dogs, clean the kennels better. Exercise to relieve stress and socialize. Basic 101.**

The obvious reasons of exercising dogs with Dogs Playing for Life:

- Increased Adaptability
- Mental Stimulation and Release
- Socialization
- Exercise
- Reducing territorial behavior
- Decrease reactivity
- Increase Focus

I tracked 60 dogs at the LAAS East Valley shelter, and 60 dogs at LAAS Chesterfield South LA.

East Valley is pushing 60% tracked dogs out of shelter (by adoptions, rescues or other means).

Chesterfield only 5% of dogs with much longer periods. **My assessment:** Van Nuys staffers are taking photos of happy dogs on green pretty astroturf while they are exercised with Dogs Playing for Life. East

Valley avoids photos of dogs behind bars which is key. Chesterfield's dog photos are sad dogs, not smiling and many photos of dogs behind bars.

- Do not resume breeder licenses that have been in moratorium, as agreed, until shelters reach 75% capacity for three months consecutive. Shelters are at critical level with over max capacity. LA Animal Services announced on May 1 Press Release: "Without immediate help, healthy adoptable pets are at risk of euthanasia simply due to lack of space."

Shelters are the frontline for pet emergencies ex: LA fires. The shelters need to be capable of handling emergencies and be at 75% capacity for influx. As the economy weakens, increase of animals will stress shelters. The shelters need to be functioning at levels with significantly reduced euthanasia rates before increasing dog population.

If the focus is adopting more dogs and decreasing euthanasia than an awareness campaign is needed, increase to better dog food which will alleviate costs in multiple areas.

To increase revenue, consider a Doggie Dash 5K twice yearly which is the Oregon Humane Society biggest fundraiser pulling in \$500,000 yearly. Fundraiser groups compete against each other to raise funds for prizes, sponsors like Subaru double down donations. This year OHS has two events: Portland's Doggie Dash raised \$500,000 in May and Salem's Doggie Dash is coming up so more funds.

Thank you.



CALIFORNIA

Mayor Bass said she'd save L.A.'s shelter animals. More dogs and cats are dying



Dogs available for adoption look out of their kennels at the Chesterfield Square/South Los Angeles animal shelter in August. (Christina House / Los Angeles Times)

By Dakota Smith and Lorena Iñiguez Elebee

Nov. 22, 2024 3 AM PT

Jake, a tawny 2-year-old mutt in L.A.'s West Valley shelter, wasn't doing well.

After six months at the shelter, he was running back and forth and jumping in his kennel.

So shelter workers put him on the euthanasia list in September.

“With the current staff we are unable to fulfill his enrichment needs and it is inhumane to continue housing in a shelter environment,” the workers’ notes said.

The number of dogs euthanized in animal shelters run by the city of L.A. has skyrocketed this year.

From January to September, 1,224 dogs were euthanized at the city’s six shelters — a 72% increase compared with the same period a year ago, according to a Times analysis.

The number of dogs entering the shelters has increased each year since 2022. But the number put to death this year has far outpaced the population gain. The euthanasia rate for dogs increased from 5.5% last year to more than 8% this year during the January-to-September period.

About 1,517 cats were euthanized through September— a 17% increase from a year ago.

In overcrowded shelters where dogs can go weeks without a walk and may live in feces-covered kennels, some animals start behaving poorly and suffer “mental and emotional breakdown,” according to a report by Best Friends Animal Society, a rescue group that has long worked with the city shelters.

That makes them less likely to be adopted — and more likely to be euthanized.

The city’s euthanasia list, available on its website, shows that Jake and some other dogs are being sentenced to death not because they are seriously ill or arrive with severe

behavioral issues but because the chronically understaffed and underfunded shelters cannot meet their basic needs.

Agnes Sibal, a spokesperson for LA Animal Services, the city department that runs the shelters, pointed to an “overcrowding crisis” with “nowhere to house incoming dogs.”

“This means that dogs with behavioral challenges are more likely to become at risk of euthanasia,” Sibal said.

After Mayor Karen Bass took office in December 2022, she vowed to save animals’ lives and make L.A. “a national model for animal welfare.”

She boosted the Animal Services budget by 18% — much lower than the 56% increase sought by the department — then trimmed the budget slightly the following fiscal year. She also hired a new general manager, Staycee Dains, who had run Long Beach’s shelters.



CALIFORNIA

‘It’s inhumane’: Dogs at L.A. animal shelters go weeks or months without being walked

July 14, 2022

In September, Best Friends announced it was withdrawing an offer of financial support to the city, stating that it would take several million dollars in funding to other shelters that “demonstrate a greater sense of urgency and commitment to save at-risk pets.”

“The current administration squandered the advantages it had inherited and did not invest in capacity building, foster programs, animal wellbeing, public and staff safety and customer service,” Best Friends said in a statement.

Gabby Maarse, a spokesperson for Bass, said in an email that “as a result of urgent work,” about 25,000 animals were adopted or rescued from the shelters — a 17% increase from the same period last year.

The city has made investments to “expand the roaming cat spay/neuter program, increase overall spay/neuter, hire critical staff members, make improvements and repairs at the six shelters, and deal with critical safety issues,” Maarse said.

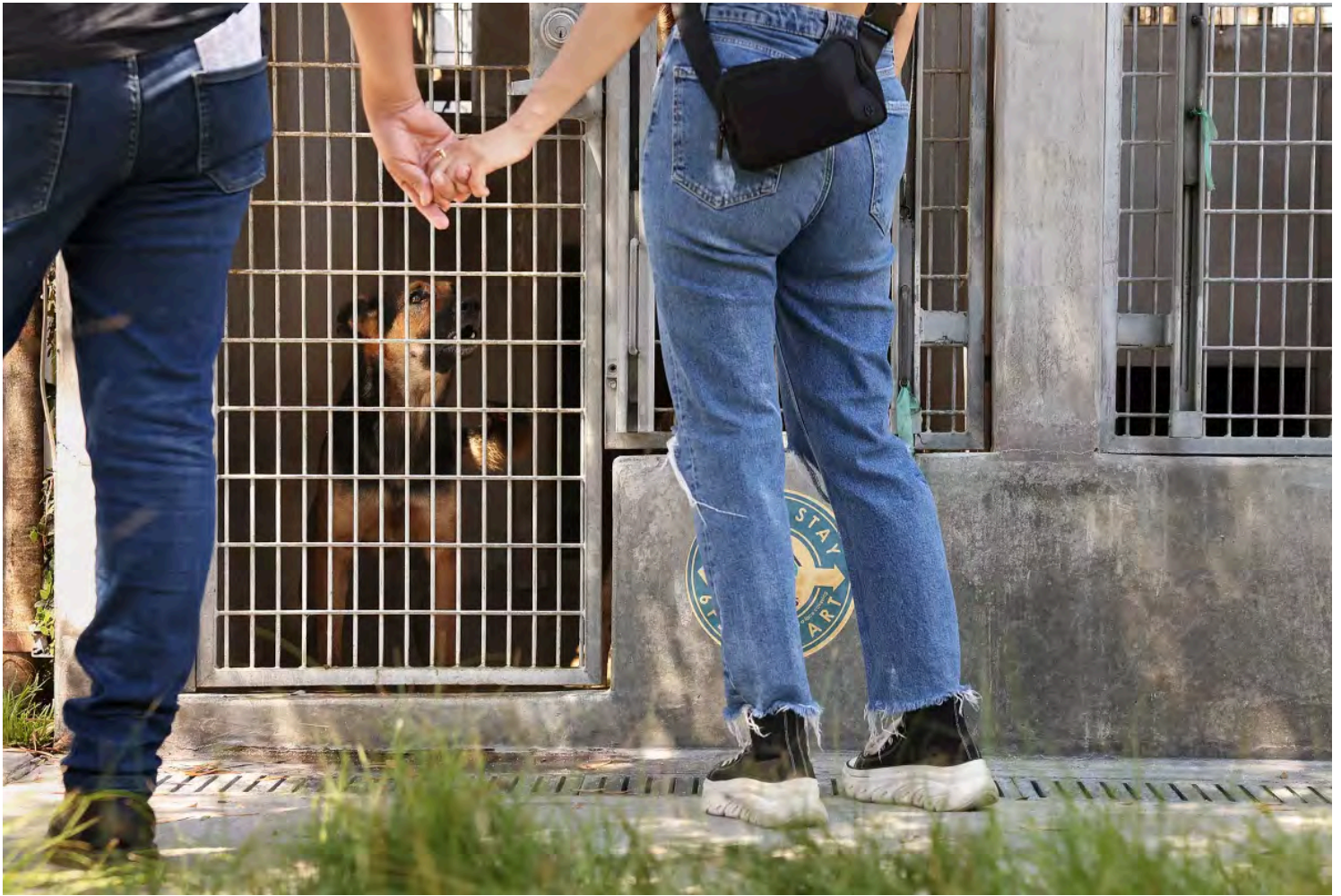
Despite the higher euthanasia rates, most animals still leave the city shelters alive, whether they are adopted, taken in by rescue groups or claimed by their original owners. The “save rate” was 91% for dogs and 81% for cats this year through September.

Shelters across the country are dealing with an influx of animals, as high rents and the rising cost of veterinary care lead people to give up their pets.

From January to September of this year, 33,028 dogs, cats and kittens entered L.A. city shelters — an 11% rise over the same period last year. Dogs made up nearly half that number.

Still, the L.A. shelters were even more crowded pre-pandemic. During the first nine months of 2019, more dogs and cats entered city shelters than in the same period in 2024, the Times analysis showed. Yet euthanasia rates were lower for both dogs and cats in 2019 than this year.

Sibal, the Animal Services spokesperson, said that more large dogs are coming into the shelters than in previous years and they are staying for longer periods. Larger dogs can take up to twice as long to get adopted, exacerbating overcrowding and leading to more euthanasias, she said.



Visitors walk past dog kennels at the Chesterfield Square animal shelter in August. (Christina House / Los Angeles Times)

Because of the lack of space, some dogs have been living in crates in hallways and staff rooms, Sibal said.

Earlier this year at the city's West L.A. shelter, two puppies were housed in the room where animals are put to death. Sibal called the situation unusual and said the intent was to protect the puppies from contracting diseases.

In June, shelter volunteers emailed Bass' office to question the city's euthanasia policies.

Dogs that had been labeled adoptable to the public were now being marked for euthanasia, the email said. And some dogs that had been described as friendly were re-categorized as available to rescue groups, but not the general public, because they were now deemed to have behavioral issues.

“The result is a conveyor belt pace of killing happy, healthy dogs falsely labeled as unadoptable,” the email said.

Asked if the city’s euthanasia policies had changed, Sibal wrote that the agency is seeking to ensure “public safety and humane animal care.”

“We must also do this while balancing overcrowding and fulfilling community needs,” Sibal said. “Our commitment to lifesaving has not wavered.”

Jill Dyché, executive director of the rescue group Outta the Cage, regularly visits the city’s shelters. Some dogs that have fought with other dogs are isolated and then listed for euthanasia, while others are not, she said.

“The euthanasia policies are still very fuzzy,” she said. “It seems to be a moving target.”

In a [16-page report](#) documenting conditions in the East Valley and Chesterfield Square shelters this summer, Best Friends criticized Dains, the Animal Services general manager, as the “biggest barrier” to improving conditions at the shelters.

The shelters lacked written protocols, and the staff reported that the euthanasia policy “changed five times in the last year” without communication about the changes.

The report also detailed ways to reduce the number of dogs in city shelters. The solutions ranged from helping owners keep their pets to better customer service for potential adopters to letting adopters take dogs home before returning for spay or neuter operations.

The report described lengthy stays for dogs at the Chesterfield Square shelter, with little human interaction and possibly “two weeks or more before they get any extended time outside of their kennels.”



From January to September of this year, 33,028 dogs, cats and kittens entered L.A. city shelters — an 11% rise over the same period last year. (Christina House / Los Angeles Times)

One dog named Olive Oil left her kennel only 14 times during a 240-day stay and was on the euthanasia list before being rescued, the report said.

The report also noted that “solid organic matter” is sometimes not removed from kennels and that some kennels were not cleaned beyond spraying them with water, with the dogs still inside.

At the East Valley facility, a worker “continuously” sprayed a brown female dog in the face while cleaning her kennel.

“Attempting to run to the back of the kennel, the dog fell repeatedly,” the report said.

City officials declined to comment on the Best Friends report, and Dains declined to talk to The Times. Dains, who earns about \$272,730 annually, went on paid leave earlier this year and hasn't returned.

City Controller Kenneth Mejia, who volunteers at the shelters, has used social media to highlight the higher euthanasia numbers and criticize city budget decisions.

A large portion of the city's \$5.9-billion operating budget goes to the Police Department, which received \$1.9 billion this fiscal year. Animal Services received about \$30 million.



CALIFORNIA

Bass' budget proposal for Animal Services is far less than what department requested

May 1, 2023

Mejia told The Times that “everyone at City Hall” knows about the understaffing and crowding issues at the animal shelters, yet Bass and most of the City Council backed budget cuts for the department this year.

“The city needs to do more to protect the animals, department staff and the public — not just let the animals suffer deteriorating health in our shelters and end up getting euthanized,” Mejia said.

Animal welfare consultant Kristen Hassen, whose firm was recently hired to assess the shelters, said at a commission hearing this week that L.A.'s Animal Services is among the lowest-funded large shelter systems in the country. She said she witnessed two staff members at the Chesterfield Square shelter being responsible for feeding dogs in 275 kennels as well as cleaning the kennels.

Without enough staff, there is “inconsistent cleaning and feeding” and “ongoing illness” at the facility, Hassen said.

Hassen told the Animal Services commissioners that it's not clear to her why more cats are being killed by the city. She described the higher euthanasia rates among dogs as an "over-correction" by the department to deal with behavioral problems and serious biting incidents.

Hassen, along with other animal welfare and academic groups, will partner with the city to improve shelter conditions, Bass' office announced last month.

Jake, the 2-year-old dog that was slated for euthanasia after shelter staffers acknowledged they could not meet his needs, is no longer listed on the Animal Services website.

Roger, a 6-year-old tan and white Kangal shepherd mix, was put on the euthanasia list this fall. He was showing signs of fear, anxiety and stress and "is cautious and fearful around new people," his staff notes stated.

The dog was taken out for "enrichment" — either walked or taken to the playground — 10 times in his five months at the South L.A. shelter.

"We are unable to supply Roger with the resources he needs and keeping him in the concrete kennel is inhumane for a 6-year-old senior dog," the notes said.

More to Read

L.A. mayor says animal shelters won't close. Rescue groups are still on edge

May 1, 2025



Voices

Editorial: Let's stop killing animals in shelters and get more of them adopted out

Dec. 18, 2024



State agency fines L.A. more than \$560,000 for dog attack at Harbor animal shelter

Dec. 17, 2024



Dakota Smith

Dakota Smith covers City Hall for the Los Angeles Times. She is part of the team that won the 2023 Pulitzer Prize in breaking news for reporting on a leaked audio recording that upended City Hall politics. She joined the newsroom in 2016 and previously covered City Hall for the Los Angeles Daily News. She is a graduate of Lewis & Clark College and lives in Los Angeles.



Lorena Iñiguez Elebee

Lorena Iñiguez Elebee is a senior data and graphics journalist at the Los Angeles Times.



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Los Angeles Animal Services Factual Findings

This document consolidates the observations and notes of interviews conducted at the East Valley and Chesterfield Square facilities by the assessment team of Best Friends Animal Society from July 22 to July 31, 2024.

Background

Best Friends Animal Society is a major stakeholder in LA Animal Services and has been involved in Los Angeles animal welfare since 1991. The organization has collaborated directly with LA Animal Services GMs, dating back to Dan Knapp, helping to build a robust community of support around the city's shelters. Best Friends has been part of the mayor's advisory committees in GM selection and has worked to help every general manager succeed by increasing volunteer participation and improving lifesaving outcomes. In 2005, we funded the vacant position of LA Animal Services volunteer coordinator to facilitate greater public participation in shelter and off-site animal adoptions. In 2012, Best Friends launched and funded the No-Kill Los Angeles (NKLA) Coalition of 154 Los Angeles-area rescue organizations exclusively focused on the successful rehoming of dogs and cats from LA Animal Services' six city shelters through financial incentives and grants. At the same time, we took on operation of the mothballed Northeast Valley Animal Shelter and operated it as an adoption center exclusively for city shelter pets and as a low-cost spay/neuter center for low-income city residents. We fulfilled three, 3-year contracts with the city, exceeding the terms of the service agreement by multiple factors through each contract, and effected the smooth transition to new contracts. In 2020, the work of the NKLA Coalition resulted in the City of Los Angeles becoming the nation's largest no-kill community, with a sustained city shelter save rate above 90% for dogs and cats for one full year.

To date, Best Friends has invested more than \$75 million in support of Los Angeles Animal Services.

While never directly involved in shelter operations, Best Friends and coalition members understood that the department would incorporate policies and procedures consistent with no-kill management protocols in order to sustain the operational benefits it enjoyed as a result of the work of the NKLA Coalition.

The following report reveals a failure to incorporate no-kill policies into operations and, in some instances, a failure to even meet minimal humane standards of care.

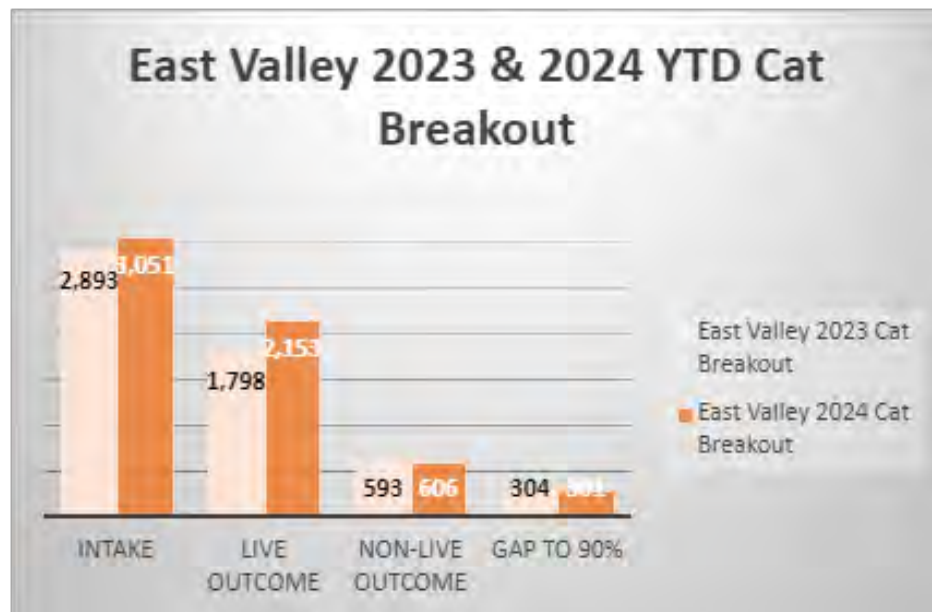
Overview

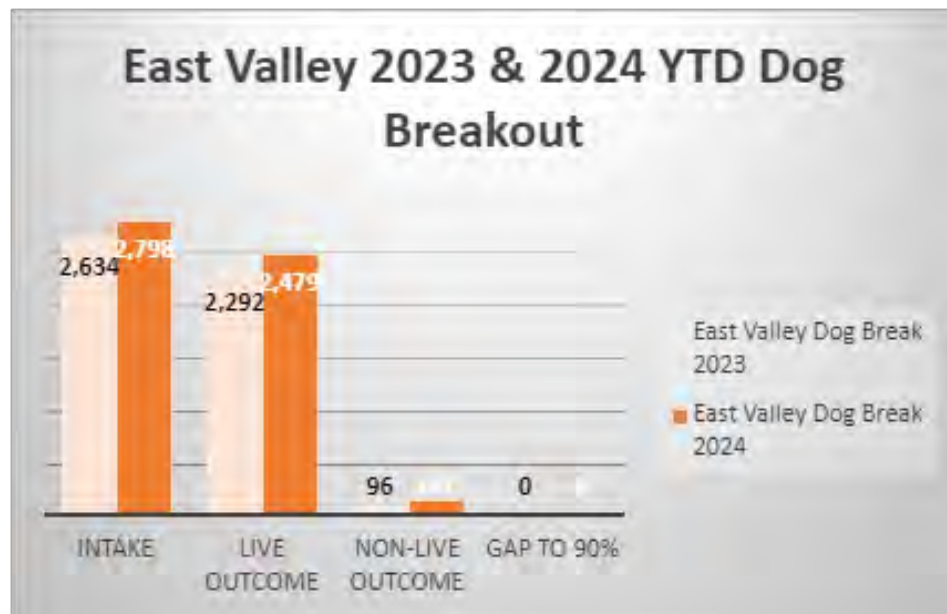
The team feels strongly that the biggest barrier to improving lifesaving at LA Animal Services (LAAS) is the leadership team, specifically the general manager (GM). Staff, including members of the LAAS leadership team, have expressed concerns about a serious lack of communication, accountability, and direction from the GM. We were informed by the GM that there were no written standard operating procedures, and most staff mentioned that they have never received any written protocols. However, one written policy of note is a euthanasia policy which, according to staff, has “changed five times in the last year” without notice or communication of the changes. An example: The GM informed our team that any animal with an upper respiratory infection is to be euthanized, yet members of the medical team stated they were never made aware of that (ill-advised) directive. LAAS staff confirmed this lack of accountability in discussions held during the assessment and **stated** that this negatively affects daily operations at both facilities. The reference mark for this assessment is based on the Los Angeles City Council policy that Los Angeles be a no-kill community with a 90% baseline save rate for all animals entering city shelters.

Shelter data

While on-site, the assessment team received data from shelter leadership for both East Valley and South L.A., which compares live intake, live outcome, and non-live outcomes from January to July 31, 2024. Using that data, we compiled the following graphs that compare their YTD data in 2024 to their 2023 data¹.

¹ Best Friends acknowledges that there are discrepancies between the data provided to us during the assessment and the data that is provided to the public on the LAAS web site





Though maintaining a save rate (on average) of no less than 87% within the given data set, this has been at the expense of the quality of life for those pets in the care of both facilities. The idea of pursuing a save rate of 90% by warehousing dogs and cats in the shelter at the pets' expense is misguided. It contradicts the principles of no-kill sheltering, but also the overall purpose of any

animal shelter, which is to provide a safe haven for displaced and mistreated pets.

Areas of improvement to bring the quality of life of each pet to an acceptable level, while maintaining a 90% or better save-rate, are outlined in this report's recommendations.

The assessment examined three primary aspects of shelter operations:

- Intake
 - Intake diversion
- Standards of care
 - Treatment of dogs and sanitation practices
 - Enrichment
 - Medical
- Outcomes
 - Adoptions
 - Foster
 - Community cat programming

What follows is an outline of those three aspects, presented in no particular order of importance but rather representing the flow of an animal's journey through the sheltering system.

Intake

Intake diversion

The assessment team witnessed nominal efforts to divert non-urgent animal intake at either facility. Overall, shelter intake sharply increased, due to what can only be described as a "conveyor-belt" intake procedure with little to no attempts at diversion. While "safety net" programs (such as return-to-owner, finder-to-foster programming, home-to-home placements, and pet retention support) are advertised on the LAAS website, they were not witnessed by Best Friends staff, despite staff having had opportunities to utilize those programs. It appeared that most staff members at both shelters were unaware that these programs even existed and that they had not received any training on program implementation.

Recommendations

- We recommend an evaluation of current intake practices and work to bring them in line with nationally proven strategies of non-emergency pet surrender. Implementing a managed intake program, which schedules non-emergency intake procedures in order to better sync shelter intake

numbers with available kennel/cage space and staff workload, benefits both animals, staff, and shelter operations. It is a widely accepted policy that supports the success of lifesaving programs.

- A consistent approach to client services, with appropriate counseling and offering of resources, is essential to achieving success in reducing unnecessary animal intake. We recommend that LAAS provide customer service training and managed intake training for all staff, as well as ensure that public-facing staff has a good understanding of resources available to the public.
- Create a thorough SOP on intake and intake diversion.
- More resources should be allocated for public programming that can help increase owner retention. These resources should include [Adopt a Pet](#) flyers that encourage owners to find new homes for pets without having them enter the shelter, materials to assist with behavior issues, and supplies such as food, vaccines, leashes, and collars made available via donation. Other resources (such as medical care) can be obtained by working with local veterinarians to offer services at a reduced price and/or offering some services (where appropriate) at the shelter. By offering public resources and managing intake, overall intake at the shelter will be reduced, and more animals will be reunited with their families.
- We recommend shoring up resources to educate the public on what to do upon finding a stray or lost pet. With the size of the service area, bringing stray animals to the shelter is often an impediment to them getting back to their homes. However, since our industry has trained the public to do this, we must take steps to change the narrative and encourage community members to help stray animals find their way home before bringing them to the shelter. This includes posting photos of animals on social media and asking neighbors if they recognize the animal, as well as having the pet scanned for a microchip at a local animal hospital.

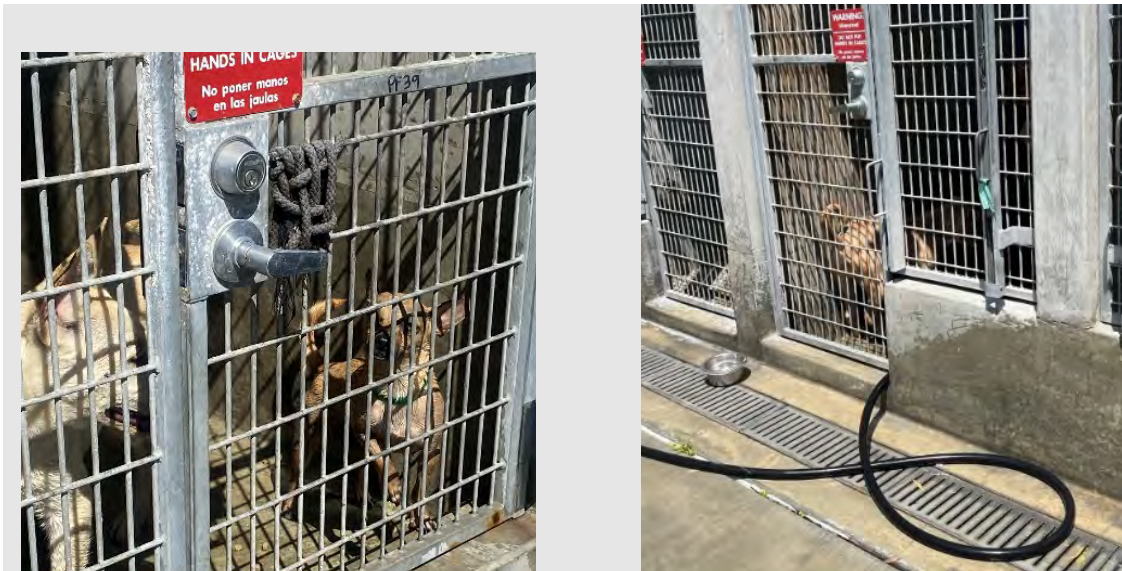
Comment:

The fundamental idea of all no-kill policies and programs is to do whatever is most likely to save the life of a pet — at every point of interaction with the shelter system. Offering alternatives to shelter intake helps to reduce crowding, reduces staff workload, and spares the animal from the stress and trauma of shelter life, which is at the root of many behavioral problems resulting in euthanasia decisions.

Standards of care

The Best Friends assessment team witnessed inhumane treatment of dogs during the cleaning procedures at both the East and South shelters. We observed LAAS staff members at both facilities cleaning dog kennels while they were still occupied, not removing solid waste, flooding the kennels with water, and spraying animals directly in the face. These cleaning procedures, which result in unnecessary stress to the animals, are in direct contradiction to the American Shelter Veterinarian's (ASV) guidelines for care of shelter animals: *"Splattering or soaking animals when spraying water, cleaning products, or disinfection products can cause significant distress. It is unacceptable to spray primary enclosures while animals are inside them. Animals must be removed from nearby housing compartments when overspray is likely."* [ASV Guidelines Standards of Care in relation to sanitation \(see chapter 5\).](#)

The following includes pictures and screen captures of videos, showing LAAS staff subjecting dogs to this treatment.





Sanitation and disease control

As previously mentioned, the assessment revealed major issues with cleaning procedures at both facilities: improper kennel cleaning, not removing solid organic matter, not using cleaning solutions, leaving dogs in kennels during cleaning, and dogs being sprayed directly with hoses. While all animal care technicians are receiving training prior to starting work at LAAS, none of the practices discussed with leadership and the individual tasked with developing onboarding are being followed. This is common knowledge among the GM and direct supervisors of both observed shelters. An expression heard from many in authority: “There’s a difference between what they are supposed to be doing and what they are actually doing.”

The way the cleaning process is supposed to be conducted, as explained to the assessment team, is as follows: Dogs are moved to the front of the kennel for morning feeding, with the rear of the kennel closed off for cleaning. (However, this is not done if multiple dogs are confined in one unit and labeled for separate feedings.) After feeding and cleaning the rear, dogs are supposed to be moved there so that the front can be properly cleaned. It is important to note that, during the assessment (unless it was first brought up by the assessment team), there was no discussion about using Rescue (the brand of kennel disinfectant on-site but not being utilized), any other disinfectant, or recommended contact times (the time period that a chemical must be on a surface to be effective).

At the South L.A. facility, the assessment team never saw the inside sections of the kennels being cleaned, and LAAS staff said these areas are never cleaned

beyond spraying the kennels with water (with dogs and their food still present in the kennel).

At the East L.A. facility, the assessment team observed the cleaning of a kennel housing a brown female dog. The LAAS staff member doing the cleaning continuously sprayed the dog in the face. Attempting to run to the back of the kennel, the dog fell repeatedly.

Recommendations

- We recommend creating a cleaning standard operating procedure using information outlined in the latest ASV guidelines. Staff should be fully trained in this and required to acknowledge that they have received the training.
- Attach proper Rescue labels with the date mixed on all spray bottles and mark the appropriate dilution and contact time.
- Observation periods should be established for animals with known disease exposure, and appropriate PPE should be utilized. Animals should be handled in a specific order (from healthy to exposed to sick) to minimize disease transmission. By implementing comprehensive biosecurity measures and adhering to recommended protocols, LAAS can effectively protect the health and well-being of its animal population.

Comment:

Failure to provide appropriate care described above needs no explication. They are deplorable and inexcusable by any reasonable standard. What may not be evident to all are the consequences of the conditions described. Dogs are effectively “trained” not to trust people by such treatment, and they suffer mental and emotional breakdown, making them less likely to be adopted and more likely to develop behavior issues. In effect, dogs wind up being killed because of their learned response to the mismanagement of their care. This is clearly a violation of public trust and taxpayer expectations.

Medical

At both shelters, the assessment team found no known documented standing orders for medical care, and treatment plans that were inconsistent. According to the chief veterinarian, medical decisions are primarily made by the GM with little to no input from the medical team. Though the medical staff has made efforts to combat a growing issue of upper respiratory infection (URI), the South L.A. facility does not isolate animals already identified as being ill but, rather,

consistently moves dogs around the facility, with no apparent attention to isolating sick animals. The assessment team observed a similar situation at the East L.A. facility, and although East L.A. makes use of isolation rooms, a breakdown in communications and tracking of dogs in care causes many to be exposed to those confirmed with URI.

Coupled with the rapid increase of URI at both facilities, LAAS has experienced a reduction in the number of spay/neuter surgeries performed. After speaking with LAAS medical staff and the chief veterinarian, the assessment team concludes that the current vet staff has little desire to perform in-house sterilizations — a clear barrier to outcomes due to the state prohibiting pets from leaving the shelter prior to being sterilized.

Recommendations

- Current medical staff should receive daily rounds training, provided by the Best Friends Animal Society national shelter medicine team free of charge.
- The chief veterinarian should be involved in all executive leadership-level discussions related to shelter operations and population management. The chief veterinarian's expertise is crucial for decision-making since operational decisions directly impact individual and population health. We recommend the implementation of medical SOPs, along with providing proper training to all appropriate staff on all medical policies and procedures. The Best Friends shelter medicine team can help with the creation of these SOPs.

Enrichment

Enrichment is as essential to animal health as proper nutrition and medical care. A lack of enrichment often manifests itself in behavioral deterioration and increases in illness and disease. The assessment team found that there is virtually no enrichment provided for animals in the shelters' care. Likewise, we didn't see any enrichment items (blankets, beds, toys) in the kennels. The only form of enrichment offered is through playgroups, which is facilitated and executed solely by embedded staff members and volunteers of Dogs Playing for Life, Inc. (DPFL). This is the standard at both the South L.A. and East Valley facilities. At the South L.A. facility, animals in the shelter's care seldom receive human interaction, and it may be two weeks or more before they get any extended time outside of their kennels. For example, a dog named Olive Oil who was in care at LAAS and stayed there 240 days, was only taken out of the kennel 14 times during that time and was placed on the euthanasia list before being

rescued at the last minute by a local partner. At the East L.A. facility, there is some volunteer involvement for enrichment and behavior modification; however, animals remain in their kennels for extended periods of time. Since there is little in place as far as pathway planning, animals stay in the shelter's care longer. The average length of stay for animals in care over 30 days is 102 days. Though cats are afforded more daily enrichment than dogs, based on our observations of both facilities, there are areas for improvement for cats, such as making sure they all have safe places to hide in their cages.

Recommendations

- We recommend integrating in-kennel enrichment into cleaning routines and establishing formalized schedules for playgroups and out-of-kennel time for all dogs. Shelters should ensure all animals receive adequate mental and physical stimulation. Volunteers play crucial roles in implementing enrichment programs that foster a sense of responsibility for each animal's well-being.
- Information should be gathered through playgroups and used during the decision-making for pathways of each dog in care.
- We recommend that DPFL staff train all LAAS staff on execution of daily playgroups, as well as create and implement an SOP for playgroups and note-taking.
- We recommend coupling playgroups with cleaning times to give all dogs in care a moment outside of their kennels. This makes it less likely that cleaning technicians are cleaning around multiple dogs inside a kennel.
- All cats should have access to soft resting areas and hiding spots such as [feral dens](#) or cardboard boxes. For comprehensive guidance on feline housing, please refer to this [comprehensive article](#) for detailed information and recommendations.

Outcomes

Adoptions

Many barriers in place at LAAS are limiting adoption opportunities. One of these is the requirement that potential community adopters provide landlord approval and address verification to be considered eligible. There is a general lack of customer service in the adoption process at both facilities, although this problem was more apparent at the South L.A. facility. Adopters do not receive any direction or assistance throughout the process, and they are often left to explore the animal housing areas on their own without guidance or follow-up from staff.

At both facilities, the assessment team observed multiple instances of interested adopters not getting any support from staff, and then leaving the shelter without adopting. When members of the assessment team stepped in to offer support to potential adopters, they also struggled to find staff members available to help, or they were met with resistance from staff. In addition, local laws require that animals be spayed or neutered before being allowed to leave a shelter. This results in adopted animals holding kennel space, which increases the risk of disease transmission and space-related euthanasia.

Recommendations

- Foster an “all-hands-on-deck” mentality and cross-train staff so that, when needed, they can support each other. A sense of urgency to increase adoptions and improve customer service should be instilled and encouraged with incentives in each staff member.
- Bios should be created for every available pet and used to highlight individual animals’ behaviors, temperaments, and compatibility with different lifestyles. These bios can also challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about certain breeds or types of animals. PetSmart Charities created an AI tool, called [Rescue Writer \(TM\)](#), to help volunteers, staff, and fosters to create instant profiles.
- Remove superficial barriers to adoptions such as landlord approval and address verification.
- To reduce length of stay, free up space and allow families to take their new pets home the same day, we recommend allowing pets to go home as a “foster to adopt.” This allows adopters to take their pets home after agreeing to return the pet for a later spay/neuter appointment, and reduces the time spent in the shelter. This is especially important for pets possibly in danger of euthanasia for space because they are held over a weekend. Many shelters across the country do this successfully, with appropriate measures and agreements in place to ensure pets are spayed and neutered.
- Another avenue for increasing adoptions is implementation of a system to [fast track](#) easier-to-adopt animals. This would involve getting any pet deemed highly adoptable (by means of a customized matrix) spayed or neutered the day after the stray hold is up, allowing the pet to leave the shelter immediately after adoption. This also means immediately placing these pets into prominent shelter adoption viewing areas. (Fast-tracked pets get adopted much faster.) The overall concept is to get pets (who we

know are likely to leave quickly) out of the shelter to make more room for those who will need more time.

Foster

The foster program at both shelters is operated entirely by volunteers. While volunteer involvement is a definite asset, the foster programs should be overseen by an LAAS staff member(s). Community members fostering animals are financially responsible for all medical care. And though this regulation was confirmed by the general manager, this is not the norm for shelters operating successful foster programs. The foster program currently does not serve shelter animals in most need of fostering (animals with medical or behavioral concerns). The assessment team witnessed one instance of two community members coming to the shelter to foster after hearing about the high level of sick dogs in the shelter's care. But LAAS staff members informed them that they could not foster any unsterilized animal or any animal with medical problems. There is no proactive sterilization occurring at the shelter. The existing foster contract, which is four pages long, is a barrier to recruiting new foster homes. Supervisory staff expressed a desire to update the foster program, but the assessment team found no evidence of any effort to update the program or remove the barriers that prevent it from being effective.

Recommendations:

- Research other successful programs and create guidelines and procedures that focus on animals most in need of support.
- Provide a foster coordinator to oversee the program. Recruit big dog fosters-in- waiting. Have them trained, ready, and waiting for medical cases, as well as animals who are seniors, shy and fearful, or jumpy/mouthy. This should mirror the current kitten fosters-in-waiting program.
- Work directly with the veterinary team to create and implement a medical protocol for pets with common illnesses in order to alleviate space limitations and ensure positive foster placement.
- Offer ongoing support and resources for foster caregivers to ensure they feel confident and supported in their roles. This could include access to behavior consultations with shelter behavior and enrichment specialists, veterinary care assistance from partnerships outside of the shelter, and round-the-clock support from other foster program "mentors."

Community cat programming

We commend LAAS for the extensive amount of sterilization surgeries done in the community since the inception of this program; however, the assessment team found that program is lacking in structure. There are persistent communication problems among various stakeholders, including LAAS staff. The front desk staff who were interviewed by Best Friends didn't know about the community cat program. The assessment team sat in on a meeting (that included management, shelter supervisors, and the South L.A. receiving staff). The meeting focused on the lack of information collected on where stray cats were found. The staff were not only unaware of the directive and the ability to put these stray cats into the program, but they were also unaware of the program's existence and were never properly trained on community cat programming. Obtaining information on where a cat is found is imperative to returning the cat to the proper caregiver. The philosophical beliefs of some staff (some feeling that TNVR is the equivalent of animal abandonment) and the lack of training of others could be the primary reason why LAAS's feline intake for the months of May and June of 2024 is higher than it has been in the past three years, at 2,601 and 2,636, respectively. The feline save rate year to date through June is 82.6%.

Recommendations

- Create, implement, and train all receiving and customer service staff on an SOP document that details the CCP program and includes all necessary information.
- Create an intake form (for all stray cats) that tracks all information needed for successful return-to-field. Best Friends can provide templates for this form.
- Include CCP sterilization within in-house spay/neuter planning to alleviate relying solely on external veterinary partnerships.
- Implement a community cat complaint mitigation team that not only defines nuisance behavior but trains staff on how to hold mitigation conversations with the public.
- We recommend that LAAS provide staff, volunteers, leadership, community members, and partners with comprehensive training on the benefits of and need for stray cat intake diversion as part of a full-scale community cat program. All staff should receive training on outdoor cat nuisance mitigation and kitten diversion programming so that they can have more successful public conversations. Best Friends has abundant resources to help with this.

Comment: The LA City Council approved a city-wide community cat program in December of 2020, and the Commission adopted the governing rules and regulations in

February of 2022. Such programs have a proven lifesaving track record and high public acceptance in communities across the country. No-kill policy would advance these options as a matter of management decisions and communication. Compliance should not be subject to personal opinion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is much to be done at LAAS; however, we believe it can be achieved, and that the city of Los Angeles can once again be considered a no-kill city. Embracing and fully implementing changes that have been proven successful in cities across the nation will take commitment and dedication from both city and agency leadership.

Resources

Intake

Intake diversion

- [Keeping Pets with their families](#)
- [People, Pets, and Policies: Towards Community Supported Animal Sheltering](#)

Standards of Care

Cleaning

- [Best Friends Cleaning & Disease Control Playbook](#)
- [Cleaning & Sanitation Training Video](#)

Enrichment

- [Canine Care & Enrichment Playbook](#)
- [Feline Care & Enrichment Playbook](#)

Medical

- [Best Friends Shelter Disease Outbreak Management Playbook](#)
- [Daily Rounds: Planning a Pathway Playbook](#)
- [Innovative Care for Canine URI & Kennel Cough](#)

Outcomes

Adoptions

- Operational training playbook on [Adoption](#)
- [Removing Barriers to Adoption](#) webinar



Atlanta, GA • Bentonville, AR • Houston, TX • Kanab, UT • Los Angeles, CA • New York City, NY • Salt Lake City, UT

- [Making the leap to fee-waived adoptions: Reduced fee adoptions and why they work](#)
- PetSmart Charities' [Rescue Writer](#) AI tool for creating bios.
- Sample effective [kennel cards](#)
- Online learning course on [Client Service and Barrier-Free Adoptions](#)

Foster

- [Foster Programs Training Playbook](#)
- Best Friends *Humane Animal Control* manual chapter on [Foster Programs](#)
- [Cat Foster Care Manual](#)
- [Kitten Foster Care Manual](#)
- [Dog Foster Care Manual](#)
- [Secrets to Pet Foster Program Success](#)
- [HASS "Recruit More Fosters" Blog](#)
- American Pets Alive [Tips to Recruit More Foster Homes](#)

Community cat programming

- Best Friends comprehensive [Community Cat Programs Handbook](#)
- [What to do if you find kittens](#) flyer
- Best Friends webinar on [mitigating nuisance cat complaints](#)
- Best Friends *Humane Animal Control* manual chapter on [Management of Stray and Feral Cats](#)
- [2022 AAFP/ISFM Cat Friendly Veterinary Interaction Guidelines: Approach and Handling Techniques](#)
- [A Long-Term Lens: Cumulative Impacts of Free-Roaming Cat Management Strategy and Intensity on Preventable Cat Mortalities](#)
- [Guidelines for medical care for community cats](#)
- [The Dilemma of the Friendly Outdoor Cat](#)
- HumanePro: [Returning Healthy Feral Cats: Tips for veterinary care during trap-neuter-return](#)

Communication from Public

Name: Nicolas Gardner
Date Submitted: 05/16/2025 07:58 AM
Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Chair and Members of the Budget and Finance Committee, On behalf of the 38,000 public school educators of Los Angeles, we write to you to express our concern with many of the cuts to staff and programs presented in the Proposed FY 25-26 City Budget. We are especially troubled by the proposed layoff of over 1,600 City workers , who provide indispensable services to all Angelenos. If approved, City staffing levels would be at their lowest point since FY 15. Thousands of families depend on public sector jobs with the City for economic security. Layoffs must always be an act of last resort. We stand in solidarity with our siblings impacted by these cuts and urge the City to continue working with its labor partners to identify every possible offset to minimize or even potentially eliminate the need for layoffs. In times of economic insecurity and political instability, it is more important than ever to invest in social services and the programs that keep our communities healthy, stable and secure. Austerity only leads to more inequality, poverty and privatization. As a union of educators, we not only champion public schools but the communities that sustain them. We urge the Committee and the larger Council to restore the following areas: • The Departments of Aging, Youth Development and Economic and Workforce Development. Many students and family members depend on the after-school programming, youth employment programs, elder nutrition programs, and job placement initiatives provided by these Departments. We are concerned at the ability of those programs to be executed successfully with the proposed cuts The Climate Emergency Mobilization Office, the Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Safety and Administration, the Brownfields Unit in Sanitation, and related climate offices in Planning and Transportation. LA Schools are at the heart of the fight for climate justice, many school communities are impacted by extreme heat, oil pollution, brownfield exposure, air pollution, and more. Educators depend on the climate programs provided by the City to further the vision for Healthy and Green Public Schools and to protect school communities. • The 20% budget cut and loss of 40% of positions within the Department of Disability. This agency protects the rights of students and parents with disabilities, and advocates for immigrants, LGBTQ+ communities and accessibility in public schools. Special Education students are

already under attack by the Trump Administration; we are concerned at the harm caused by a further disruption to services.

- The nearly 650 eliminated positions in Sanitation and Transportation within the Board of Public Works, severely limiting the ability of the City to provide the basic functions of infrastructure repair, maintenance, and cleaning needed to protect the safety of school communities.
- The City's Day Laborer Centers within the Department of Economic and Workforce Development, which serves many immigrant worker and communities across LA, many of whom are parents of LAUSD students.
- The City Crossing Guard programs, which keep thousands of students and families safe every single school day.

We are concerned not only about the loss of services and staff presented in this budget, but about the potential liability faced by the City if many of these positions are eliminated. From ADA compliance to street safety, failure to meet these obligations could cost the city millions more dollars down the road. Investment in community services is sound fiscal policy. Los Angeles is the largest City in the fourth largest economy in the world. We have the resources to ensure the financial stability of the City while ensuring core public functions and caring for vulnerable neighbors. In this time of crisis, the impact must be borne fairly and evenly across the City. The budget of the Los Angeles Police Department represents nearly a third of the General Fund, representing over \$2 billion in expenditures (in 24-25 actual spending). The uniform budget of the LAPD alone could fund the yearly expenses of a good number of City Departments. Even the nearly \$7 million increase allocated for the FY26 budget alone could offset many cuts in climate and social programs. We recognize the layoff of over 400 civilian workers within the LAPD. However, we urge the Committee and the Council to consider further programmatic reductions within the LAPD budget, especially in high impact areas such as helicopter fleet modernization, uniforms and more. We recommend for your consideration further reforms to reduce General Fund liability for LAPD settlements, such as completely funding payments from the LAPD budget itself. Additionally, we urge the Committee to reconsider the overfunding of the reserve fund in FY26. Beginning the new fiscal year with the reserve at 5% of the General Fund instead of 6% would create \$87.5 million in offsets to be used for staff and program restoration.



May 15, 2025

The Honorable Katy Yaroslavsky, Chair
and Honorable Members of the Budget and Finance Committee
200 N. Spring Street, Council District 5
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 CITY BUDGET

Dear Chair and Members of the Budget and Finance Committee,

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We are especially troubled by the proposed layoff of over 1,600 City workers , who provide indispensable services to all Angelenos. If approved, City staffing levels would be at their lowest point since FY 15. Thousands of families depend on public sector jobs with the City for economic security. Layoffs must always be an act of last resort. We stand in solidarity with our siblings impacted by these cuts and urge the City to continue working with its labor partners to identify every possible offset to minimize or even potentially eliminate the need for layoffs.

In times of economic insecurity and political instability, it is more important than ever to invest in social services and the programs that keep our communities healthy, stable and secure. Austerity only leads to more inequality, poverty and privatization. As a union of educators, we not only champion public schools but the communities that sustain them. We urge the Committee and the larger Council to restore the following areas:

- The Departments of Aging, Youth Development and Economic and Workforce Development. Many students and family members depend on the after-school programming, youth employment programs, elder nutrition programs, and job placement initiatives provided by these Departments. We are concerned at the ability of those programs to be executed successfully with the proposed cuts.



May 15, 2025

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- The Climate Emergency Mobilization Office, the Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Safety and Administration, the Brownfields Unit in Sanitation, and related climate offices in Planning and Transportation. LA Schools are at the heart of the fight for climate justice, many school communities are impacted by extreme heat, oil pollution, brownfield exposure, air pollution, and more. Educators depend on the climate programs provided by the City to further the vision for Healthy and Green Public Schools and to protect school communities.
- The 20% budget cut and loss of 40% of positions within the Department of Disability. This agency protects the rights of students and parents with disabilities, and advocates for immigrants, LGBTQ+ communities and accessibility in public schools. Special Education students are already under attack by the Trump Administration; we are concerned at the harm caused by a further disruption to services.
- The nearly 650 eliminated positions in Sanitation and Transportation within the Board of Public Works, severely limiting the ability of the City to provide the basic functions of infrastructure repair, maintenance, and cleaning needed to protect the safety of school communities.
- The City's Day Laborer Centers within the Department of Economic and Workforce Development, which serves many immigrants worker and communities across LA, many of whom are parents of LAUSD students.
- The City Crossing Guard programs, which keep thousands of students and families safe every single school day.

We are concerned not only about the loss of services and staff presented in this budget, but about the potential liability faced by the City if many of these positions are eliminated. From ADA compliance to street safety, failure to meet these obligations could cost the city millions more dollars down the road. Investment in community services is sound fiscal policy.

Los Angeles is the largest City in the fourth largest economy in the world. We have the resources to ensure the financial stability of the City while ensuring core public functions and caring for vulnerable neighbors. In this time of crisis, the impact must be borne fairly and evenly across the City.



May 15, 2025

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We recognize the layoff of over 400 civilian workers within the LAPD. However, we urge the Committee and the Council to consider further programmatic reductions within the LAPD budget, especially in high impact areas such as helicopter fleet modernization, uniforms and more. We recommend for your consideration further reforms to reduce General Fund liability for LAPD settlements, such as completely funding payments from the LAPD budget itself.

Additionally, we urge the Committee to reconsider the overfunding of the reserve fund in FY26. Beginning the new fiscal year with the reserve at 5% of the General Fund instead of 6% would create \$87.5 million in offsets to be used for staff and program restoration. Funding the reserves at 5% is in line with City policy and past best practices.

The City is in a difficult financial situation, and we respect the hard decisions that must be made by the Mayor and Council. We ask the Budget Committee and the larger Council to take every action necessary to prevent all proposed cuts to staff and programs. We hope to be partners in this work and look forward to collaborating with you in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

Cecily Myart Cruz
UTLA President

Communication from Public

Name: Atrianne

Date Submitted: 05/16/2025 08:01 AM

Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: Traffic crashes killed more people than homicides in Los Angeles last year. Cutting essential city services like transportation, street services, disability services while increasing the already bloated LAPD budget will continue to harm and endanger the lives of Angelenos. I'm asking the city to: Restore funding to the transportation, street services, and city planning departments so that my city councilmember can stop using his discretionary funds to do basic city services like fix the street lights on Sunset Blvd. Street lights directly improve the safety of Angelenos by ensuring that pedestrians are visible to drivers when crossing! Invest in unarmed crisis response teams which are proven to be effective and cost-saving (\$35 per call vs. LAPD's \$85 for the same amount of time) by expanding this life-saving program to three new divisions for \$4.46 million. Cut the LAPD's helicopter budget which costs us \$50m a year, heightens racist surveillance of Black and brown communities, generates harmful noise pollution for neighborhoods of color, and does not make Los Angeles a safer city. The LAPD's helicopter budget ALONE is more than the budget of 14 city departments – this program causes significant harm to Angelenos. Freeing up this funding would allow the city to fund essential services that actually improve our lives. Fund legal representation for undocumented Angelenos at a time when they're being cruelly targeted by the federal government. Please fund \$1m to RepresentLA so they can protect the lives of our undocumented neighbors! The LAPD is responsible for \$100 million in liability costs in fiscal year 2024, according to an LAist analysis of city controller data - don't make other city departments pay for their negligence.

Communication from Public

Name: Andrew Graebner

Date Submitted: 05/16/2025 08:26 AM

Council File No: 25-0600

Comments for Public Posting: This is my public comment for 5/16/2025. As the final vote on the budget bears, I am once again asking that you please oppose this budget that the Mayor is proposing and instead consider passing the budget proposed by the People's Budget LA Coalition instead. Their budget is created from the results of an extensive community outreach program and focuses on things that actually keep people safe, healthy, and happy. The police do not keep people safe, healthy, and happy. Defund and abolish the police. Let the People's Budget LA Coalition do a presentation before the Council. I'm sure they would be willing to do one