

2024 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION PRESENTED TO:

Mayor Rex Richardson

AND

Long Beach City Council

Mary Zendejas.....	District 1
Cindy Allen.....	District 2
Kristina Duggan.....	District 3
Daryl Supernaw.....	District 4
Megan Kerr.....	District 5
Suely Saro.....	District 6
Roberto Uranga.....	District 7
Al Austin.....	District 8
Joni Ricks-Oddie.....	District 9

FOR:

**Requested Adjustments to Proposed 2024 Budget
Parks, Recreation and Marine
Long Beach Animal Care Services**

PRESENTED BY:

Laura Sellmer, ACS Volunteer, Medical Foster & Shelter Advocate
Lauren Campbell, President, Friends of Long Beach Animals, 30 years Veterinary Medical Industry
Nici Daniels, Co Founder K9 Kismet Dog Rescue, ACS Volunteer
Claudia Otis, Executive Director, Little Lion Foundation

Requested Adjustments to Proposed 2024 Budget

Parks, Recreation and Marine
Long Beach Animal Care Services

Summary

On August 21, 2023, our group met with the City's Budget Manager, Grace Yoon, PRM Director Brent Dennis, PRM Deputy Director, Steven Scott, ACS Interim Manager, Dr. Melanie Wagner and budget support staff, to discuss the Proposed '24 Budget for Animal Care Services. Our group was able to review the proposed ACS Budget in detail, discuss our concerns based on our deep involvement as volunteers, rescue partners and financial supporters of ACS for many years. We are respectfully requesting City Council to consider and approve recommendations for vital staff positions and make a minor accounting adjustment to track ACS costs of animal food.

- Enhanced Position, Animal Behavior, Assessment and Transport
- New Position, Dog Foster Coordinator Public Health Associate III (PHA III)
- New Position, Cat Foster Coordinator Public Health Associate III (PHA III)
- Create New Spay Neuter Team
 - Full time Veterinarian
 - Three (3) Animal Care Technicians
- Budget Line Item for Animal Food

Cross Section of the Community

Our group is comprised of animal rescues, ACS volunteers, non-profit stakeholders and community advocates. We came together in response to the unprecedented number of animals at Animal Care Services. ACS operating over capacity for nearly two years is unsustainable and we are seeking structural changes that address the needs of staffing and programming.

We are deeply committed to the success of ACS. We are part of a large community of volunteers and rescues, spending countless hours caring for animals both at ACS and on the streets in Long Beach. We have strong working relationships with the bureau and are very knowledgeable about past and current shelter operations, the findings in the two past audits, the key principles of *Compassion Saves* and the rollout of the ACS strategic plan.

Requested Adjustments to Proposed 2024 Budget

Parks, Recreation and Marine
Long Beach Animal Care Services

Enhanced Position Animal Behavior, Assessment and Transport Requires upgrade from Public Health Associate I (PHA I) to Public Health Associate III (PHA III)

This position is currently a minimum wage position yet requires highly specialized animal experience, skills, aptitudes and strong working relationships with the rescue community across the region. This is not an entry level position. At the current minimum wage salary, the Bureau cannot attract nor retain the talent required for the duties of the position. We urge City Council to adopt the 2024 Budget with an upgrade to the position from Public Health Associate I (PHA I) to Public Health Associate III (PHA III).

Requested Adjustments to Proposed 2024 Budget

Parks, Recreation and Marine
Long Beach Animal Care Services

New Position Dog Foster Coordinator Public Health Associate III (PHA III)

We are requesting a new position for a dog foster coordinator exclusively dedicated to the ACS dog population. There is currently only one all-animal foster coordinator at minimum wage, requiring an individual to handle hundreds of dogs, cats and neonatal kittens. It is untenable and unsafe to expect a single entry level position to responsibly place and oversee the behavior care and medical care for all species.

The proposed dog foster coordinator position requires specialized dog behavior knowledge, dog experience, strong organization skills, excellent judgment and interpersonal skills. The Bureau cannot attract nor retain the talent required for the duties of the position with an entry level salary. We urge City Council to adopt the 2024 Budget with a new position of Dog Foster Coordinator, Public Health Associate III (PHA III).

Reference:

Please see appendix: Dog Foster Pilot Program prepared by experienced volunteers and rescue partners which is currently in a pilot phase with an Apple One temporary employee.

Requested Adjustments to Proposed 2024 Budget

Parks, Recreation and Marine
Long Beach Animal Care Services

New Position Cat Foster Coordinator Public Health Associate III (PHA III)

We are requesting a new position for a cat foster coordinator exclusively dedicated to the ACS cat and the demanding neonatal kitten population. The current all-animal foster position is a minimum wage position, requiring an individual to handle hundreds of dogs, cats and neonatal kittens. It is untenable, and unsafe to expect a single entry level position to responsibly place and oversee the medical care and behavior care for all species. The proposed cat foster position requires specialized knowledge, experience, a high level of organization and excellent interpersonal skills. The Bureau cannot attract nor retain the talent required for the duties of fostering animals an entry level salary. We urge City Council to adopt the 2024 Budget with a new position of Cat Foster Coordinator, Public Health Associate III (PHA III).

Requested Adjustments to Proposed 2024 Budget

Parks, Recreation and Marine
Long Beach Animal Care Services

New Positions ACS Spay Neuter Team

Veterinarian – One (1) Full Time
Animal Health Technicians – Three (3) Full Time

We are requesting one (1) full time Veterinarian and three (3) Animal Health Technicians (Veterinary Assistants) to create a dedicated ACS Spay Neuter Team. This Vet to Technician ratio is the standard ratio of in veterinary clinics across the country. Our request will have a direct and major impact on the enormous backlog of unfixated animals that ACS is responsible for fixing; those in the shelter, those in foster care and those in private homes under an ACS “HomeFirst” practice. The practice of sending unfixated ACS animals into the community is being discontinued because deferring Spay Neuter has resulted in a spay neuter backlog with no clear path forward. The use of outside Veterinarian practices for spay neuter is already proving to be extremely costly to the taxpayer and is unsustainable. We believe it is the duty of the City to provide the legally mandated spay neuter care with fiscal responsibility.

Should the New ACS Spay Neuter Team get caught up with the backlog of spay neuter surgeries. We believe the value can be even greater when the team can pivot to supporting many other surgeries that ACS currently sends out, the pivoting to affordable community clinics for spay neuter.

Friends of Long Beach Animals (FOLBA) is willing to enter in discussions with the City of Long Beach to support the additional needs of operating a Spay Neuter Clinical practice. FOLBA has the history of supporting ACS and the professional expertise to play an important role in establishing an ACS Team. Once established, the team can also be positioned to support the ACS core veterinary team with in-house care in lieu of high cost outsourced care.

This request supports the mission of *Compassion Saves* ensuring the City is able to comply with the State of California mandates to spay and neuter. An ACS Spay Neuter Team also creates critical pivot points to eventually offer affordable spay neuter in underserved communities.

Requested Adjustments to Proposed 2024 Budget

Parks, Recreation and Marine
Long Beach Animal Care Services

Animal Food Expenses

We are requesting that the City create a separate and discrete accounting line item for animal food. Currently ACS accounting does not track the discrete cost of animal food, in spite of several requests from community dating back five years. We believe by tracking this cost, the shelter is better able to manage its costs and forecast basic care.

For example, the price of dog food has increased by 45.5% on average when compared with 2020 prices. We believe tracking ACS costs supports better management and is in compliance with **Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)** of establishing greater accountability and transparency.

Impacting the dogs who need it the most.

Long-Stay	Kennel Stress	Injury/Illness/Surgery
<p>Dogs who are languishing in the kennel need to be in a home to experience true decompression, learn a routine, develop basic obedience skills, and prove they can be a well-adjusted pet who are deserving of a home.</p>	<p>Dogs who suffer from kennel stress need to be in a home sooner than later to prevent self-harming and physical/mental deterioration.</p>	<p>Dogs suffering from short-term injury or illness need a home to recover in. Fosters become a house of healing so a dog can get back to being adoptable.</p>

Dogs and fosters are set-up for success.

Contacted

After a foster applies, the coordinator reaches out with a welcome email, complete with a detailed informational packet. If the applicant decides they're the right fit, a screening call is set-up.

Appendix Dog Foster Pilot Program

Screened & Matched

During the screening call, the coordinator discusses expectations and takes notes on the applicant's experience, schedule, & home environment. If suitable, they're matched with a short-list of dogs.

Supported

After meeting and taking home a foster dog, the foster begins the work, but they aren't alone: The coordinator is there every step of the way as the dog's medical, behavioral, & networking needs are met.

Meet the Foster Dogs

Approximately 97% of the dogs who've entered into the foster program were adopted (or likely will be) as a direct result of being part of it.

Abby • Adara • Alaska • Ariel • Avalon • Bandit •
Bennett • Blue • Bonbon • Brownie • Capri •
Clarissa • Delores • Dino • Dollie • Eeyore •
Favorite • Felicity • Fender • Fletcher • Francesca
• Jasmine • Kingsley • Kobe • Leia • Lhana •
Miracle • Marley • Marrybelle • Marshmallow •
Minnie • Mocha • Mojito • Mookie Petts •
Mr. Bojangles • Nala • Nike • Obi-Wan • Patterson
• Peppermint • Phoenix • Porkchop • Priscilla •
Ralphy • Riley • Ripley • Roxy • Sabre • Savannah
• Serendipity • Shadow • Shia LaFloof • Simbli
• Snow • Spicy • Squeak • Stardust & Puppies •
Steadman • Stella • Stubrik • Supra • Tanya •
Theresa • Tiny Tuna • Tootsie Pop • Travis Barker
• Washington • Whiskey • Zukes

Squeak

Stray Intake: 9/7/22

Foster Home: 3/24/23

Adopted: 4/4/23

Squeak had been languishing at the kennel after being passed up time and time again. After six months of languishing at the shelter went by, she was the dog that no longer got up and greeted people at the kennel door. Always so crestfallen, she seemed to be losing hope. As one of the longest stay dogs at the time, she was put on a potential foster's shortlist of candidates. After meeting Squeak, he decided to welcome her into his home. By the time they got to the car, she was a much lighter dog—all smiles and tail wags. It wasn't long before her foster's brother and niece would come to fall in love with the sweet and easy-going girl we all knew she would be. All she needed was someone to give her a chance.

Appendix Dog Foster Pilot Program



Porkchop

Stray Intake: 1/21/23

Foster Home: 4/19/23

Adopted: 5/21/23

Emiliano helped Porkchop, a very strong puller with a tendency to bark at every person passing by his kennel, to decompress in the home environment. He also gave him a routine and a human he could count on. He made considerable strides with him on his pulling and was his advocate for space so he wouldn't dare return to the shelter with a bad mark on his record. His foster was on a mission to get Porkchop adopted: He attended four adoption events in as many weeks. He sent in pictures for networking and supplied home notes through emails and the foster dog report card. It wasn't long before Porkchop had a bio that was reflective of who he truly is in a home environment.

Appendix Dog Foster Pilot Program



Mojito

Stray Intake: 6/26/23

Foster Home: 7/4/23

Adopted: 7/19/23

This senior pup, Mojito, was stressed in the kennel and sent home with a patient foster. She would later have a meet-and-greet in the park where she impressed a wonderful lady who would look past her heart murmur and periodontal disease and just see "her dog." Even on the morning that her adoption was supposed to take place, there was a medical emergency with one of her teeth that required us to rush Mojito to the ER, but that didn't deter her would-be adopter. By the end of the day, she had already set up Mojito with the necessary vet appointments so she could be the happiest and healthiest version of herself.

Appendix Dog Foster Pilot Program



Shadow

Stray Intake: 4/2/23

Foster Home: 7/9/23

Adopted: 7/22/23

Once a lead-only dog who struggled to find a sense of calm at the shelter, Shadow's fosters did amazing work to get this boy decompressed, centered, and ready to be someone's beloved pet. They shed some tears saying goodbye at the adoption event, but are already doing it all over again with a skittish dog named Sabre.

So many people avoid fostering because they want to avoid the pang of farewell. However, where would some of these dogs be without people willing to lend their homes and hearts to serve as beacons to those who risk being adrift forever?

Appendix Dog Foster Pilot Program



Fender

Stray Intake: 1/28/23

Foster Home: 7/1/23

Adopted: 7/22/23

Fender had two fosters across three weeks investing in him. Overlooked in the shelter for way too long, Fender was finally able to get the attention he deserves. His first temp-foster helped him decompress and get used to a routine, while his second foster gave him structure and boundaries, and worked with him on the basic obedience and leash skills he'd need to win over an adopter.

Appendix Dog Foster Pilot Program

