

Introduction:

The Program for Pet Health Equity in partnership with The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement is conducting a survey to better understand the challenges that animal welfare and animal care & control organizations face and their effects on the animals in their care.

The following survey is comprised of questions related to personnel, budgets, and medical programming that might best be answered by a variety of staff members including your human resources leader, veterinary medical leader and operations leader. The survey tool will allow you to save your data so that you can complete the questions as a team over time.

Background Info

1. What is the name of your organization? If you are associated with more than one organization, please report for the one with the highest annual animal intake. _____
2. What is the zip code of your location? _____
3. What is the primary role you serve at your organization? If you serve more than one, what is the highest level role you occupy?
 1. Director, CEO, Executive Director, or similar
 2. Non-medical Upper-level management – e.g. Director of Operations, Director of Finance, etc.
 3. Medical Director or Shelter veterinarian
 4. Mid-level manager – e.g. Foster Coordinator, Adoptions Manager, Lead Veterinary Technician
 5. Line level employee – e.g. Animal Care Technician, Adoptions Counselor, veterinary assistant, etc.
 6. Animal Control Officer

We would like to begin by asking a few basic questions about your organization. For each question, please provide your best estimate if you don't have access to the exact numbers.

4. First, which best describes your organization?
 1. Brick-and-mortar government animal shelter
 2. Brick-and-mortar nonprofit animal shelter WITHOUT a government contract for animal control or housing services
 3. Brick-and-mortar nonprofit animal shelter WITH a government contract for animal control or housing services
 4. Foster-based animal rescue organization WITHOUT a government contract for animal control and/or sheltering services
 5. Foster-based animal rescue organization WITH a government contract for animal control and/or sheltering services
 6. Spay/neuter clinic
 7. Other - please specify: _____

5. What is your organization’s current total annual operating budget?

1. < \$100,000
2. \$100,000-\$499,999
3. \$500,000-\$999,999
4. \$1,000,000 - \$4,999,999
5. \$5,000,000 - \$9,999,999
6. \$10,000,000 - \$24,999,999
7. >\$25,000,000
8. Not sure

6. What was the approximate number of animals your organization took in for each category below during the 2022 calendar year?

	Number of Intakes	Total number of live outcomes
a. Cats		
b. Dogs		
c. Other		

7. What was the average length of stay in days for animals in each category below during the 2022 calendar year? If you are not sure of the answer, please enter “0”

	Average Length of Stay (# of days)
a. Cats	
b. Dogs	
c. Other	

Vet Staffing

8. Do you have at least one veterinarian - full time or part time - currently on staff?

1. No
2. Yes

9. [IF YES to Q8] How many **total combined hours** do your veterinarians work in a typical week in each of the following areas. For example, if you have 2 veterinarians, and one works 30 hours per week, and one works 15 hours per week, your total would be 45.

Areas	Total hours
a. Shelter medicine	
b. Public clinic	
c. Public/shelter spay-neuter clinic	

10. [If YES to Q8] What is the average annual salary (or equivalent if veterinary positions are part time) for veterinarians working on staff for your organization? _____

11. [If NO to Q8]: Why do you not have a veterinarian currently on staff? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Budgetary constraints
2. Inability to recruit a veterinarian (i.e. we have the budget but cannot attract a candidate)
3. We use a local clinic for veterinary services
4. We use independent veterinary contractors
5. We do not need a veterinarian on staff
6. Other - please specify: _____

12. Is your organization currently recruiting for an on-staff veterinarian?

1. No
2. Yes

13. [If YES to Q12] Approximately how many veterinary care hours per week are you looking to fill with your current veterinary recruitment efforts? _____

14. [If YES to Q12] What is the annual salary (or equivalent if position is part time) that your organization is offering for your open veterinary position(s) \$_____

15. [If YES to Q8 OR Q12] What benefits do you currently offer veterinarians? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Annual Cost of Living raise
2. Assigned mentor
3. Conference attendance registration and travel expenses
4. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
5. Flexible work schedule
6. Health insurance
7. Housing stipend
8. Merit based raise
9. Paying for annual Continuing Education credits
10. Paying professional association dues
11. PTO (Paid Time Off)
12. Relocation assistance (i.e. financial, housing, or otherwise)
13. Retirement or 401K account payments
14. Scheduled rotations at different shelters/vet clinics/specialty hospitals
15. Signing bonus
16. Student loan repayment
17. Other - please specify: _____

16. How much do you agree or disagree that each of the following factors make it difficult to recruit veterinarians to work in your organization.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
a. Stressful nature of the work.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
b. Long work hours	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
c. Challenging or difficult working relationships with organization leadership and/or board members.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
d. Private practice offers a higher salary	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
e. Lack of training in shelter medicine	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
f. Geographic area not desirable for residence	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
g. Flexible work schedule isn't offered or supported	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
h. Lack of support staff (ratio of veterinary assistants to veterinarians)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
i. Lack of mentorship from more senior veterinarian	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
j. Frustration of reporting to a non-veterinarian	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
k. Mandate to practice medicine within certain budget or policy constraints (e.g. not using the gold standard of care)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
l. On-call coverage after hours	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
m. Stress of carrying the professional license for the organization to use Schedule II narcotics	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
n. Burn-out, compassion fatigue, and chronic exposure to animal abuse/neglect cases, etc.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
o. Being the only veterinarian on staff	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

17. What other reasons make it difficult to find or recruit veterinarians to work in your organization?

18. How many Registered/Licensed Veterinary Technicians or unlicensed veterinary technicians does your organization employ? _____

19. How many unlicensed Veterinary Assistants does your organization employ? _____

Vet Care Provided

20. Which of the following types of veterinary care does your organization provide? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Spay-neuter for our organization’s animals by our own veterinary staff or through contract services from a local veterinarian
2. Spay-neuter for publicly owned animals
3. Owner requested euthanasia for publicly owned animals
4. Veterinary care for our organization’s animals
5. Non-spay/neuter veterinary care for publicly owned animals (e.g. vaccines, wellness care, and/or illness care)
6. Community vaccination clinics
7. Health certificates for transport
8. Necropsies and/or forensic work for internal and/or external law enforcement
9. Specimen collection, testing/storage/shipping for Rabies

21. When it is needed, how consistently is your organization able to provide the following services FOR ANIMALS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION’S CARE?

Essential care	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Consistently
a. Basic intake care (e.g. core vaccines / antiparasitics)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
b. Care for routine illnesses that can be treated based on protocols (e.g. upper respiratory disease, feline URI, kennel cough, mild diarrhea)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
c. Euthanasia for organization animals when health or behavior necessitates	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

22. [ASK IF “NEVER”, “RARELY” OR “SOMETIMES” IS CHOSEN FOR ANY ESSENTIAL CARE ITEM]

What were the reasons your organization was not able to provide this care? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Lack of access to a veterinarian
2. Lack of administrative support (leadership didn't support)
3. Veterinarian available but unable to provide the specific care needed
4. Lack of support staff for direct care (e.g. veterinary technicians)
5. Lack of support staff to provide indirect/logistical support (e.g. scheduling)
6. Cost
7. Lack of transport
8. Inadequate space or equipment
9. Public policy prevents us from providing this
10. We choose not to provide this
11. Other – please specify: _____

23. When it is needed, how consistently is your organization able to provide spay/neuter surgery to the animals that are in your care?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Consistently

24. [ASK IF “CONSISTENTLY” IS NOT CHOSEN FOR SPAY/NEUTER SURGERY] What were the reasons your organization was not able to consistently provide spay/neuter surgery? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Lack of access to a veterinarian
2. Lack of administrative support (leadership didn't support)
3. Veterinarian available but unable to provide the specific care needed
4. Lack of support staff for direct care (e.g. veterinary technicians)
5. Lack of support staff to provide indirect/logistical support (e.g. scheduling)
6. Cost
7. Lack of transport
8. Inadequate space or equipment
9. Public policy prevents us from providing this
10. We choose not to provide this
11. Other – please specify: _____

25. When it is needed, how consistently is your organization able to provide the following services FOR ANIMALS IN YOUR ORGANIZATIONS CARE?

Intermediate and Complete care	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Consistently
a. Treatment for nonroutine illness or injury that requires veterinary assessment, (e.g., parvo, panleukopenia)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
b. Medical diagnostics beyond heartworm and FeLV/FIV testing (e.g. radiographs, bloodwork)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
c. Non-spay/neuter surgery (e.g. amputation, enucleation)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
d. Dental procedures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
e. Neonatal care	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

26. [ASK IF “NEVER”, “RARELY” OR “SOMETIMES” IS CHOSEN FOR ANY INTERMEDIATE OR COMPLETE CARE ITEM]

What were the reasons your organization was not able to provide this care? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Lack of access to a veterinarian
2. Lack of administrative support (leadership didn’t support)
3. Veterinarian available but unable to provide the specific care needed
4. Lack of support staff for direct care (e.g. veterinary technicians)
5. Lack of support staff to provide indirect/logistical support (e.g. scheduling)
6. Cost
7. Lack of transport
8. Inadequate space or equipment
9. Public policy prevents us from providing this
10. We choose not to provide this
11. Other – please specify: _____

27. When it is needed, how consistently is your organization able to provide Intake Prevention/”Safety Net” Veterinary Services/Community Veterinary Services?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Consistently

28. [ASK IF “NEVER“, “RARELY” OR “SOMETIMES IS CHOSEN FOR Q27] What were the reasons your organization was not able to always provide Intake Prevention/“Safety Net” Veterinary Services/Community Veterinary Services? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Lack of access to a veterinarian
2. Lack of administrative support (leadership didn’t support)
3. Veterinarian available but unable to provide the specific care needed
4. Lack of support staff for direct care (e.g. veterinary technicians)
5. Lack of support staff to provide indirect/logistical support (e.g. scheduling)
6. Cost
7. Lack of transport
8. Inadequate space or equipment
9. Public policy prevents us from providing this
10. We choose not to provide this
11. Other – please specify: _____

29. When it is needed, how consistently is your organization able to provide Community cat spay/neuter programs?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Consistently

30. [ASK IF “NEVER“, “RARELY” OR “SOMETIMES IS CHOSEN FOR Q29] What were the reasons your organization was not able to always provide Community cat spay/neuter programs? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Lack of access to a veterinarian
2. Lack of administrative support (leadership didn’t support)
3. Veterinarian available but unable to provide the specific care needed
4. Lack of support staff for direct care (e.g. veterinary technicians)
5. Lack of support staff to provide indirect/logistical support (e.g. scheduling)
6. Cost
7. Lack of transport
8. Inadequate space or equipment
9. Public policy prevents us from providing this
10. We choose not to provide this
11. Other – please specify: _____

31. When it is needed, how consistently is your organization able to provide the following services?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Consistently
a. Cruelty/forensics investigations	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
b. Health certificate for transport	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
c. Telemedicine consultations	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
d. Expert testimony in court cases (this is different than doing the exam and treatment plan for cruelty investigations)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

32. In the last 12 months how often has your organization had to

In the last 12 months how often has your organization had to....	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Consistently	Not applicable
a. Euthanize animals for space/time due to a lack of veterinary care	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
b. Euthanize animals for minor medical conditions (e.g. upper respiratory infection) due to inadequate access to veterinary care	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
c. Euthanize animals for moderate medical conditions (e.g. parvovirus, fractured limbs) due to inadequate access to veterinary care	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
d. House animals for longer periods of time as veterinary care was not available as quickly as we needed it	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
e. Delay spay-neuter surgery due to inadequate access to veterinary care	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
f. Send animals to their new homes without having been spayed/neutered due to inadequate access to veterinary care	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
g. Discontinue or downsize foster program due to lack of veterinarian accessibility	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.

In the last 12 months how often has your organization had to....	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Consistently	Not applicable
h. Stop intake of animals from public due to shelter being full	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
i. Stop transfer/transport program due to lack of access to veterinary care	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
j. Exceed animal housing capacity for care best practices	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
k. Co-house or double-up animals in kennels, cages, habitats, etc. not meant for multiple animals	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
l. Stop citations for mandatory spay/neuter ordinance enforcement due to lack of accessible spay/neuter in community	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
m. Stop pursuing animal cruelty and/or neglect cases due to not having a veterinarian	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.

33. How often does inadequate access to veterinary care for the following types of care result in an **increased Length of Stay FOR ANIMALS AT YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Consistently	We do not provide this care
a. Intake vaccinations (Dogs = DAPP and Bordetella; Cats = FVRCP)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
b. Rabies vaccination	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
c. Spay-neuter surgery	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
d. Non-spay/neuter surgery (e.g. amputations, enucleations)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
e. Treatment for routine illnesses (e.g. upper respiratory infections or vomiting in an otherwise healthy animal)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
f. Treatment for non-routine illnesses (e.g. ringworm, parvovirus, diseases without clear diagnosis)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
g. Dental care	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
h. Issuing health certificates	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
i. Humane euthanasia for sick or injured animals	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
j. Triage and management of in-shelter population illness (e.g. Parvo, Ringworm or Panleukopenia outbreak)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
k. Foster animal appointments for routine vaccinations, treatment for URI, etc.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.

34. Compared to pre-pandemic, how has your organization's ability to access veterinary care changed?

1. It is more difficult to access veterinary care now than it was for us before the pandemic
2. Our ability to access veterinary care has not changed as compared to prior to the pandemic
3. Veterinary care is easier for us to obtain now than prior to the pandemic.
4. Not sure

35. Several concepts have evolved that help address veterinary workforce shortages. Which of these do you believe will significantly impact this issue? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Increased utilization of veterinary technicians
2. Creation of midlevel practitioner similar to a physician's assistant in human medicine
3. Increased scope of practice for existing veterinary technicians without specialist certification
4. Increased scope of practice for existing veterinary technicians without specialist certification
5. Other – please specify: _____

36. Does your organization take in cats who are living outside or stray?

1. No
2. Yes

37. [IF YES TO Q36] Does your organization sterilize cats who are living outside or stray and return them to where they were found?

1. No
2. Yes

38. [IF YES TO Q37] Which of the following requirements must be met in order for an outdoor/stray cat to be sterilized and returned to its outdoor home? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Cat must be of a certain age
2. Cat must be generally healthy and in good body condition
3. Cats must be “feral”/unsocialized
4. Cats must be members of a known “colony”
5. Cats must have a known caretaker

39. [IF YES TO Q37] Approximately what percentage of your stray/outdoor cat intake—regardless of their degree of socialization to humans— are sterilized and returned to where they were found by your organization (if you are unsure please make your best estimate)?

1. 1% - 25%
2. 26% - 50%
3. 51% - 75%
4. 76% - 100%
5. Not sure

40. [IF YES TO Q37] Which of the following would be the “top 3 things” that would enable you to do more sterilizations and return to field for unowned cats in your community? SELECT THREE

1. Access to more vets who are willing to work with outdoor cats.
2. More “in house” vets (either full time or part time)
3. More available appointments at local vet clinics
4. More funding to provide this service
5. More available cat trapping
6. Public policy/laws that are more conducive to this type of work

41. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Ideally, our organization would like to be able to sterilize a greater proportion of stray/community cats and return them to where they were found.”

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree

42. What recommendation would you make for improving access to veterinary care for your organization? _____

43. We are interested in conducting further research to explore how organizations are addressing the challenges in animal welfare. Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up study?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Maybe