



Demystifying  
Managed Intake

**Best Friends<sup>®</sup>**  
SAVE THEM ALL



# NACA Position Statement

The National Animal Care & Control Association is committed to setting the standard of professionalism in animal welfare and public safety through training, networking, and advocacy.

**NATIONAL ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION**

## NACA Guideline on Appointment-based Pet Intake into Shelters

The outdated practice of unscheduled intake leads to a number of negative impacts (See Appendix A). Some of the consequences of on-demand, immediate intake include animals being unnecessarily impounded; families and pets being needlessly and often permanently separated; increased stress, disease, and death in shelter animals; poor customer experience; compromised staffing efficiency; and decreased organizational effectiveness.

**Given the numerous harms and risks associated with unscheduled intake, we recommend all animal shelters replace this practice with an appointment-based system that includes individual assessment and a case management approach for all non-emergency requests.**

**How has shelter pet intake evolved over the past 25 years?** Historically, animal services agencies have provided on-demand shelter impoundment of owned and loose or lost pets. Over the past several decades, as animal services agencies move away from treating pets as simply a public nuisance and increasingly recognize a full 98% of pet owners value their pets as much as human family members, there has been a shift in how agencies manage intake processes. Closing of overnight 'drop boxes,' a shift to providing pre-intake counseling, and appointment-based intake management are all reflections of the evolving role of animal services and the high value our communities place on the human-animal bond.

**What is an appointment-based approach to shelter intake?** This approach involves appointment-based intake of animals in non-emergency situations into the animal services facility. It is appropriate for routine intake of pets being surrendered by their owners as well as lost friendly, healthy animals. Cats, dogs, puppies, and kittens, along with other companion animals may be scheduled for intake following an initial assessment (by phone or web/e-mail) to determine if shelter intake is the only viable option or the best option for that pet and caregiver.

**What is the benefit to my community and organization?** The purpose of a scheduled or appointment policy is to ensure that pets who can be safely cared for in their communities do not have to unnecessarily enter the animal shelter. When effectively implemented, this practice will reduce the population of pets housed in the shelter, help more pets get home faster, improve community health and safety, and reduce shelter-borne illnesses and behavioral decline associated with crowded animal shelter conditions. Importantly, managed intake frees up shelter resources to ensure emergencies and critical situations are handled promptly and effectively. Scheduled intake is better for pets, better for people, and leads to healthier, safer communities.

**What does the appointment-based intake process look like?** When a person has a pet, they want to surrender or have found a lost pet, they contact the animal shelter via phone, email, or web-based form. Owners or finders may be asked to fill out an information form. A shelter staff member or volunteer then follows up with a conversation to determine if the organization can help the owner or finder identify a solution that does NOT involve the pet coming to the shelter. If no alternative solution can be found, and impoundment into the facility is determined to be the best option, an appointment is scheduled for the finder or owner to bring the pet into the shelter. Depending on the urgency of the situation and the capacity of the shelter, that appointment may be scheduled on the spot or several weeks out.

No. Effective intake management practices do not mean organizations refuse



The Association of Shelter Veterinarian's Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters admonish : “Every sheltering organization has a maximum capacity for care, and the population in their care must not exceed that level.”



# Capacity for Care

Daily Intake \* Length of Stay = Capacity for Care

Ideally, we should keep 10% of the kennels open so we have the ability to take in emergency cases when we are “full”

5 daily intake \* 10 days = 50 kennels

Solve for X

$X * 10 = 60$  kennels

$5 * X = 50$  kennels







# What is Managed Intake?



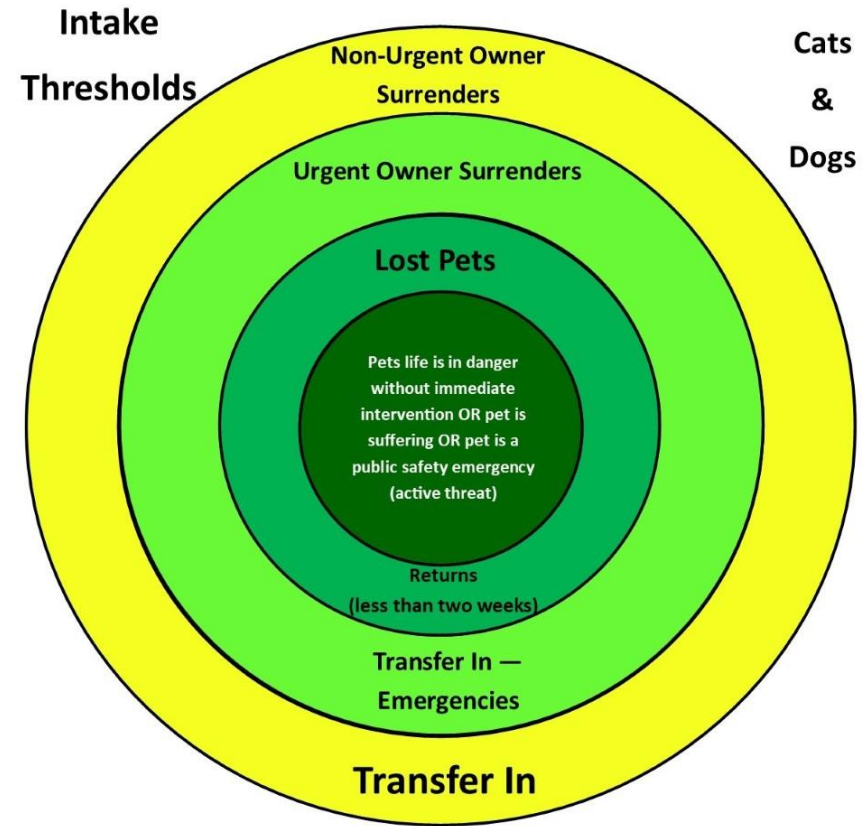
# 2 Popular Options

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- Scheduled Intake
- Owner Surrender Hours



# Intake Thresholds based on Kennel Capacity



Level 1	Always & Immediately
Level 2	Kennels at 90% Capacity or Less
Level 3	Kennels at 75% Capacity or Less
Level 4	Kennels at 50% Capacity or Less



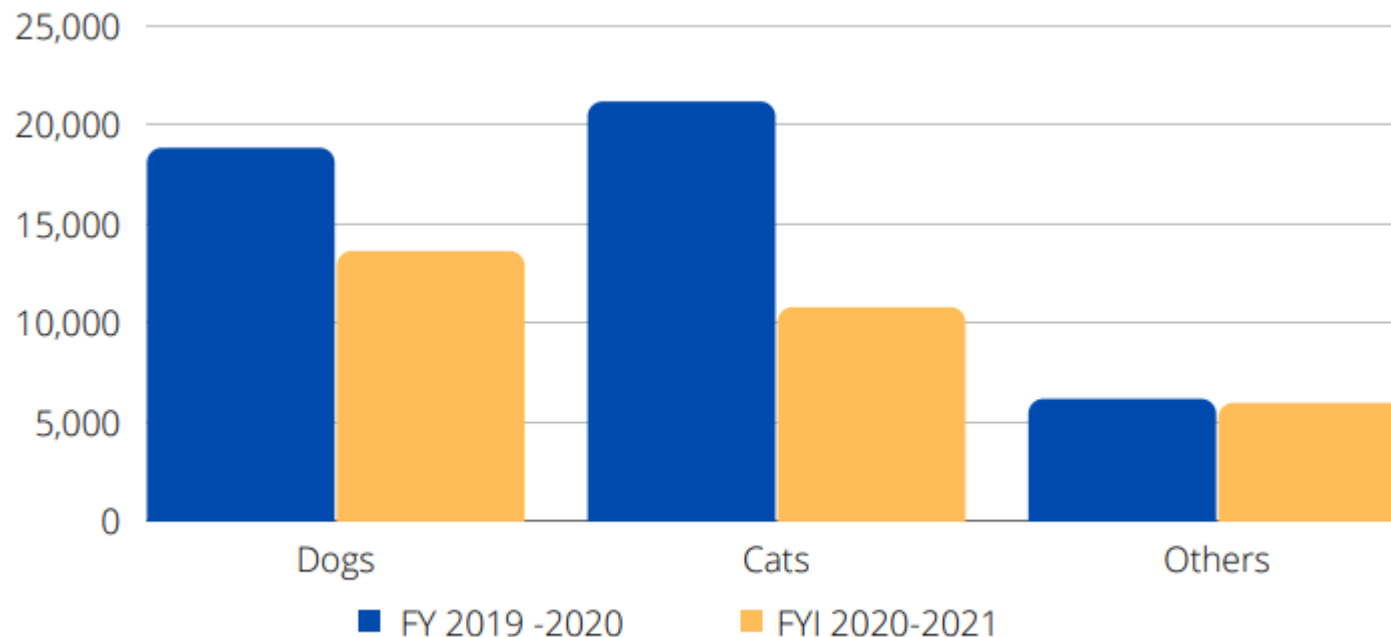


# DACC in LA County





In fiscal year 2019-2020, 46,135 animals came into the care centers. In fiscal year 2020-2021, only 24,856 animals were impounded





“Aside from allowing continuity of essential services, these changes have also greatly improved customer service and the ability to provide enhanced care to animals at the ACCs. DACC continues to provide appointment-based and curbside services because these changes have eliminated the long in-person customer waiting lines of the past.”

**DACC recognizes that some animals must be immediately brought to an animal care center for their own safety or the safety of the public. Animals that pose a safety threat are immediately and safely admitted. Animals that are sick or injured are accepted immediately so medical assistance can be provided. Additional situations may include an owner’s sudden and complete inability to provide care, animal cruelty and neglect cases, and other special circumstances. DACC established same day appointments to address these especial circumstances.**



# Success

- “After a few months of appointment-based services, it was noted that the animals were calmer, less stressed, and able to relax during the day. Dogs barked less and were able to nap during the day, and cats hid less frequently.”

"We noticed that respiratory illnesses in cats and dogs decreased by over 50%. This is attributed not only to fewer animals in the care center, but also fewer people and a more controlled environment, contributing to a calmer and healthier experience for animals."

DR. FUMIE YAMAMOTO  
SENIOR VETERINARIAN





# Managed Intake Myth

Scheduling non-urgent intakes will reduce services to the community and pets will be abandoned elsewhere



## SUCCESS SAYS OTHERWISE

Agencies all over the country, in varying regional and demographic locations, have successfully implemented managed intake and disproven these misconceptions.

## SAY "NOT RIGHT NOW"

Managed admission or managed intake can be thought of as the "how" and "when" of intake, and refers to any form of regulating or scheduling non-urgent intake.



# Intake Diversion

- Human & Pet Food Banks
  - Meals On Wheels
  - Door Dash's Project Dash will deliver Pet Pantry items
- Low-Cost Veterinary Services
- Fence supplies
- Dog houses/tethers
- Temporary housing for homelessness/domestic violence
- Adopt a Pet Rehome
- Posting to Next Door or Local Facebook lost pages.



We put our heads together, looked at programs of other shelters that utilized admission by appointment and soon instituted our own program.

The staff and I were fully prepared to deal with:

- Daily arguments from people;
- Cats dumped at admissions while people ran away quickly;
- Bad press concerning us turning our backs on cats;
- Cats in boxes outside of our doors;
- Many more reports of cats abandoned.

But to my great surprise, *none* of this happened! - [Barbara Carr, SPCA of Erie County https://www.maddiesfund.org/cats-by-appointment-only.htm](https://www.maddiesfund.org/cats-by-appointment-only.htm)



## Public Criticism



**Keep information  
from all  
communication  
sources the same**

## Intake Services

Intake staff need to counsel those wishing to surrender their pets to understand the reason and offer resources to try to help them keep the pet and/or find alternative placement for the pet, such as a rescue organization or another home, to avoid having the pet enter the shelter.





What is the benefit  
to my community  
and organization?



**Best Friends  
Animal Society**