

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

*Introduction &  
Executive  
Summary*

American Humane Association

## Introduction

American Humane Association was asked to perform a comprehensive assessment of the Santa Barbara County Animal Services agency (SBCAS). The objective of the assessment was to increase understanding of current operations, and make recommendations on how best to focus resources to be most impactful.

After evaluation of requested organizational documents, a site visit was conducted on January 12-15, 2015. The assessment team was comprised of one American Humane Association (AHA) staff member and four expert independent consultants in the field of animal care and control.

Justin Scally – National Director, Humane Intervention, Red Star - American Humane Association  
Team Leader through March 2015

Beau Archer - Consultant, American Humane Association  
Topics: General Shelter Operations, Facility, Maintenance, OSHA

Catherine Mullin, MS, VMD - Pacific Shelter Veterinary Service, Consultant, American Humane Association  
Topics: Shelter Medicine & Veterinary Services

Mark Kumpf - Certified Animal Welfare Administrator, Consultant, American Humane Association  
Topics: Field Services

Katherine McGowan Shenar - Consultant, American Humane Association  
Topics: Leadership, Administration, Community Relations, Marketing

Amy Haines - Professional Photographer

A subsequent visit was scheduled due to a change in leadership at American Humane. This visit took place April 21 -28, 2015. The purpose of this trip was to acquaint the new Team Leader with the organization, conduct gap assessment and analysis, meet with Public Health Department Leadership to ensure the report continued to follow the correct direction, and perform a direct assessment of areas not covered during the initial site visit. The new Team Leader subsequently assumed all responsibilities for the construction of the document and delivery to the Board of Supervisors.

Robin Brennen, DVM-Interim Director-Humane Intervention - American Humane Association  
Topics: Behavior & Training, Finance & Budgeting, Human Resources & Staffing, Population Management, Governance

The American Humane Association team would like to thank the entire staff and management of SBCAS, the internal and external partners and community stakeholders for their extraordinary cooperation and hospitality prior to, during, and after the site visit. The communication prior to the site visit was excellent,



and the team was provided with the requested materials. During the site visit, SBCAS staff truly went above and beyond to accommodate the American Humane Association team in every possible way.

## About American Humane Association

**Mission:** The mission of American Humane Association is to ensure the welfare, wellness and well-being of children and animals, and to unleash the full potential of the bond between humans and animals to the mutual benefit of both.

### History

Since 1877 the historic American Humane Association has been at the forefront of every major advancement in protecting children, pets and farm animals from abuse and neglect. Today we're also leading the way in understanding human-animal interaction and its role in society.

As the nation's voice for the protection of children and animals, American Humane Association reaches millions of people every day through groundbreaking research, education, training and services that span a wide network of organizations, agencies and businesses.

### Shelter Support

American Humane Association offers many resources and services to animal shelters throughout the country. We invite shelter professionals to contact us or visit our website for more information on the following programs:

- Training and Seminars
- Grant opportunities, including Second Chance® Fund grants and Meacham Foundation Memorial Grants
- Red Star® Animal Emergency Services (disaster/emergency preparedness and response)
- American Humane Association's legacy initiatives: Adopt-A-Cat Month®, Adopt-A-Dog Month® and Be Kind to Animals Week®

### Methodology and Goals

American Humane Association selected the team members for this evaluation based on their individual experience and expertise in specific areas of shelter operations, shelter medicine, animal control/field operation, community relations, etc. Prior to the site visit, the team reviewed background materials provided by SBCAS, and each team member was given an extensive list of assigned responsibilities developed by the team leader. During the two site visits, the American Humane Association team observed all aspects of agency's operations and conducted interviews with both internal and external parties to include employees, volunteers, community stakeholders, county and department leadership, agency leadership, etc. An online community stakeholder survey was conducted and an employee survey was left for employees to complete and submit at the completion of the site visit.



The first site visit concluded on the afternoon of January 15, 2015, when the American Humane Association team presented a limited verbal debriefing of its most significant findings to the Deputy Director of Community Health for the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, the Director of SBCAS and members of the SBCAS management team.

A phone conference was conducted on March 19, 2015 with Director of Public Health, Dr. Takashi Wada, Deputy Director, Susan Klein-Rothschild, Dr. Brennen, American Humane Association and the 4 expert consultants to discuss preliminary key findings and provide additional information to the Public Health Department for fiscal planning purposes as the department was entering their budgetary cycle.

A second site visit concluded on the morning of April 27, 2015. Dr. Brennen engaged in a wrap up meeting with the Deputy CEO, Terri Maus-Nisich, Director of Public Health, Dr. Takashi Wada, and Deputy Director, Susan Klein-Rothschild to discuss the addition findings and to provide expert counseling and offer solutions for key challenges identified during the visit.

American Humane Association’s goal was not only to provide an accurate snapshot of SBCAS’s current operations in relation to best practices, but also to develop practical recommendations that will serve as a guide for the organization as they move forward.

### **How to Use this Report**

This report is intended to provide an overview of the on-site evaluation of SBCAS by American Humane Association. It cites the organization’s strengths and weaknesses, and provides recommendations for the implementation of best practices where indicated. To be effective, it is crucial that this report and the reasons behind its request be shared with the management and staff of SBCAS, as well as key Santa Barbara County officials. Adequate time should be taken to review this report and discuss strategies for implementing the recommendations. American Humane Association is available to support Santa Barbara County in their strategy discussions, to offer suggestions and to answer questions.

The body of the report follows a simple format: Observations, Recommendations, Discussion which are supported by industry documents located in the Appendix for each section. Finally, a check list was created to assist in the initiation of key recommendations. American Humane Association’s objective was to provide a working document that can be used to take initial first steps. A document of this size and magnitude can be intimidating. In implementing these recommendations, many organizations have found it helpful to create an internal task force or committee to develop a plan of action, define benchmarks and establish timelines for project implementation/completion. Breaking down projects into smaller, more manageable tasks is also highly recommended.

The **Executive Summary** gives a brief summary of the most significant findings and key recommendations in the report.

A **Statement of Confidentiality** is also included with this report. American Humane Association considers this report to be confidential and provides copies only to Santa Barbara County’s Public Health Department and SBCAS to distribute and make available at its discretion. Santa Barbara County has sole proprietary ownership

of this report and findings. Santa Barbara County is urged to clearly establish the acceptable use and distribution of this report for management and staff.

### Data Preparation and Research

In preparation for this assessment, American Humane Association requested the following background materials from SBCAS prior to the site visit:

- Copies of recent publications/PR information
- Copies of current agency mission statement, vision documents and/or strategic focus documents (i.e. goals and objectives) including a copy of the current strategic plan and any current SWOT analysis
- Copy of any by-laws, state statutes and local ordinances that pertain to the operation and authority
- Copy of budgets and financial information for the current fiscal year, the last two fiscal years, and any available proposed and/or approved budgets for next fiscal year
- Copy of the most recent operational and financial audits
- Copy of any contracts between jurisdictions (i.e. counties, cities, towns or other municipalities)
- List of current community partnerships and/or relationships
- Copy of employee handbook/manual
- Copy of current safety/OSHA manual
- Copy of current disaster preparedness plan
- Copy of any and all operational policies and procedures
- Listing of board members and/or advisory members along with a copy of any mission, goals and objections established for any applicable advisory boards
- Copy of statistical annual reports as well as data of services and programs for the year-to-date and for the last two calendar years, including:
  - o Animal intake by species
  - o Animal disposition by species (adopted, returned-to-owner, euthanasia, other placements, etc.)
  - o Animal length of stay data
  - o Spay/Neuter data
  - o Field Services data (calls for service numbers by type, citations, court cases, response times, etc.)
- Detailed staffing information, including:
  - o Organizational chart for the agency
  - o Organizational chart for where the agency fits into the jurisdiction (if applicable)
  - o Employee names, job titles, hire dates and current salaries
  - o Benefits Package Information
  - o Copy of all job descriptions
  - o Outline of staff training program
- Copy of building floor plans to include shelter size and housing capabilities



- List of all services currently provided to the community (i.e. stray pick-up/intake, owner-surrender, adoption, spay/neuter, owner-requested euthanasia, feral cat or community cat programs, cruelty investigations, nuisance wildlife, rabies quarantine, fostering, pet placement partners, etc.)
- Copies of all forms used, including but not limited to:
  - o Intake forms
  - o Medical forms
  - o Sheltering/care forms
  - o Adoption and/or placement applications
  - o Volunteer applications
  - o Behavioral assessment forms
  - o Spay/Neuter requirements and forms
  - o Field Service/Animal Control Forms
- List of computer programs used (shelter, fundraising and accounting software)
- Copy of volunteer program information, including:
  - o Forms
  - o Manuals including training documents and policy/procedures
  - o Total number of volunteers
  - o Total volunteer hours logged year-to-date and for the last two calendar years
- Other information/reports as available

### Service Area and Demographics

Santa Barbara County comprises a land area of 2,735.09 square miles. Incorporated in 1850, the county’s largest city by population is Santa Maria. Located in southwestern California, several cities/towns are located within the county to include Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Guadalupe and Solvang. The county seat is Santa Barbara.

SBCAS provides field and shelter operations for the entire county with the exception of the City of Carpinteria (which completely provides their own services) and the City of Santa Barbara (which provides their own field services.)

Business QuickFacts	Santa Barbara County	California
Private nonfarm establishments, 2012	11,229	864,913 <sup>1</sup>
Private nonfarm employment, 2012	134,241	12,952,818 <sup>1</sup>
Private nonfarm employment, percent change, 2011-2012	0.3%	2.0% <sup>1</sup>
Nonemployer establishments, 2012	31,764	2,926,065



Total number of firms, 2007	39,834	3,425,510
Black-owned firms, percent, 2007	S	4.0%
American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned firms, percent, 2007	1.1%	1.3%
Asian-owned firms, percent, 2007	5.9%	14.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-owned firms, percent, 2007	F	0.3%
Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007	13.9%	16.5%
Women-owned firms, percent, 2007	28.3%	30.3%
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Manufacturers shipments, 2007 (\$1000)	3,174,119	491,372,092
Merchant wholesaler sales, 2007 (\$1000)	4,023,586	598,456,486
Retail sales, 2007 (\$1000)	4,983,368	455,032,270
Retail sales per capita, 2007	\$12,443	\$12,561
Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 (\$1000)	1,361,476	80,852,787
Building permits, 2012	461	58,549
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Geography QuickFacts	Santa Barbara County	California
Land area in square miles, 2010	2,735.09	155,779.22
Persons per square mile, 2010	155.0	239.1
FIPS Code	083	06
Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Area	Santa Maria-Santa Barbara, CA Metro Area	

**Demographics**<sup>1</sup>: Includes data not distributed by county.

Includes persons reporting only one race.

(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

D: Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information

F: Fewer than 25 firms

FN: Footnote on this item for this area in place of data

NA: Not available

S: Suppressed; does not meet publication standards

X: Not applicable

Z: Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Non-employer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits

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## Executive Summary

Overall, the community works hard to ensure the welfare of the animals is preserved. The efforts of the County, Internal Partners, External Partners, Volunteers and SBCAS Employees were evident, admirable and undertaken with care and compassion. People were enthusiastic and receptive that steps are being taken to move the organization forward. It's a community that is passionate about animals and you could sense a level of frustration felt by all parties that now want change.

This tension has escalated, and, in fact, it's become unproductive and has impacted the organizations ability to be progressive. There is lots of second guessing and he said, she said going on, none to the benefit of any animal in the shelter. Everyone's hair is on fire, a reactionary culture, not a proactive one and it is causing inertia. This community needs to be re-united toward one goal, a collaborative environment needs to be built where internal and external partners, volunteers, key stakeholders, County leadership, shelter management and employees reset the clock and start from the beginning.

### **The American Humane Association team's key findings and recommendations are summarized as follows:**

- 1. Key Finding** - The present model of governance may not be the best business model to operate animal services.

**Recommendation:** Investigate financial implications of Privatization and Joint Powers of Authority versus County oversight of animal services.
- 2. Key Finding** - Fractured culture. Key stakeholders overall dissatisfaction with the management of animal services from oversight of the Public Health Department to the leadership of the Animal Services Director, as well as their ability to provide the services needed for quality animal care. And, Animal Services Leadership and employees feeling that decision making and policy is being driven by outside influencers and some volunteers that undermine their ability to do their job.

**Recommendation** - With the assistance of a third party facilitator, adopt a community-wide strategic plan that rebuilds relationships and re-unites all invested parties toward a common goal. Re-commit to working together, create objectives and assign accountability.
- 3. Key Finding** - No organization-wide standard operating procedures creating confusion between employees and volunteers. Internal partners and SBCAS need to be operating under the same guiding principles for animal care, volunteer management and hours of operation.

**Recommendation** - Form a committee to establish best practices for animal care and volunteer management and adopt them organizational wide, including internal partners.
- 4. Key Finding** - No strategic plan for organization and no data collection and benchmark analysis.

**Recommendation** - A Strategic Plan must be drafted and adopted that includes key performance metrics the organization agrees upon to measure success.



5. *Key Finding* - External community members exerting undue influence on Supervisors and County Government, which often undermine the ability of the Animal Services Director to do her job.  
*Recommendations* - Establish clear chain of command. Implement it, hold people accountable.
  
6. *Key Finding* - Housing of animals in the Pillsbury building is inappropriate.  
*Recommendations* - Demolition of the Pillsbury building is recommended to provide room for other more needed structures
  
7. *Key Finding* - Passive population management. Animals are not being actively moved in the system toward an outcome. There are several dogs in Santa Barbara that have been sheltered for 2-3 years and are exhibiting signs of severe emotional distress. Feral cats should not be sheltered.  
*Recommendation* - Establish fast-track and slow track population management system and operate within the humane capacity for care. Create Animal Welfare Panel to assess all long term dogs and actively find solutions. Implement community cat program to reduce feral cat intake.
  
8. *Key Finding* - Lack of sufficient medical oversight.  
*Recommendation* - Hire Veterinary Medical Director and Registered Veterinary Technician and build small veterinary clinic space in Santa Barbara.
  
9. *Key Finding* - Lack of behavioral enrichment and training program aimed at enhancing the mental health and well-being of the animals.  
*Recommendation* - Hire Behavior and Training Coordinator, implement enrichment plans.
  
10. *Key Finding* - Lack of Central Dispatch to ensure officer safety in the field.  
*Recommendation* - Hire Central Dispatcher
  
11. *Key Finding* - Span of control of Director is too large to be effective.  
*Recommendation* - Re-organization by business lines and consider hiring a Manager of Shelter Operations.
  
12. *Key Finding* - Insufficient depth of staffing roster, or inefficient systems in place which effects employee productivity. It is probably a combination of both.  
*Recommendation* - Staffing roster does not sufficiently cover 7 day a week animal care or animal control. Review roster, scheduling, use of volunteers to ensure adequate coverage of all departments.
  
13. *Key Finding* - Lack of standardized on-going training program for staff (and volunteers)  
*Recommendation* - Implement robust training program, quarterly training seminars in house, invest in improving employee job knowledge.

14. *Key Finding* - OSHA compliance is not consistent.

*Recommendation* - Hire OSHA compliance consultant, establish on-site safety committee.

15. *Key Finding* - Limited use of Chameleon software prohibits employee efficiency

*Recommendation* - Chameleon should be utilized for everything, from medical record keeping to task list generation.

