

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

American Humane Association

*10. Behavior and  
Enrichment*

## 10. Behavior and Enrichment

### Observations:

SBCAS does not possess a comprehensive behavior and enrichment programs for dogs. The dogs are exercised, allowed some time in play yards outside, and have limited social interaction all predominately provided by the volunteers. However, a majority of their time is in runs with minimal enrichment. There is a prevalence of stereotypical behavior notably barking, cage jumping and spinning in some of the long term residents.

Behavior assessments are conducted by volunteers in all three shelters. It is not well-defined as to what qualifications the volunteers have to be considered an evaluator, or what training they have received to safely perform this task. This is not to imply that they are not qualified only that there are no standards set by SBCAS as to who can evaluate dogs and no required training or competency evaluation. An incidence was relayed whereby a volunteer insisted upon a dog to dog interaction between a shelter dog and a potential adopter's dog whereby the adopter's dog was fatally injured. General oversight, required training and standard operating procedures for behavior assessment are necessary to mitigate liability and ensure animal, employee, volunteer and adopter safety.

Each site has a version of a behavior evaluation form, but it is not consistent between sites. Behavior evaluations are not recorded in the organizations software system and thus not readily available for review.

Dog behavior evaluation is not performed on all dogs entering the shelter system. Assessments are only conducted if an animal is deemed to be "suspicious" during the intake procedure. Assessments are not routinely repeated during the animal's shelter stay, even those animals that have been in the system for years. Behavior notes were randomly made in animals records. Behavior observation forms do exist.

The cats, due to the low census numbers were afforded ample cage space, some grouped housed for companionship and their cages contained scratching pads and toys. The less socialized cats were provided with cardboard dens to hide. Volunteers routinely interacted with the cats providing socialization and enrichment. Feline behavior assessment is provided by ASAP in SB. They use their own forms and process and chose evaluators based on their own set of criteria. All shelters have a feral cat assessment form, though it is unclear how or who determines which cats to evaluate

The census indicated there are approximately 80 rabbits housed in Santa Barbara. BUNS maintains exercise pens for the rabbits to rotate through but seemingly they spend much time in cages. No rabbit behavior form was identified.

Animals exhibiting difficult behaviors are not provided with behavior modification plans. There are a number of animals in the SB shelter that are exhibiting behavior indicative of emotional distress and suffering. At-

tempts to humanely euthanize those animals have been blocked by a small group of vocal volunteers, yet behavior plans or modification attempts to mitigate their stress have not been undertaken. They remain sheltered, with no hope of reprieve.

Recommendations:

- Hire a Behavior and Enrichment Coordinator. Qualifications should include being a Certified Professional Dog Trainer or equivalent with experience with shelter animals. Responsibilities include:
  - Creating standardized canine behavior assessment procedures or adopt known assessment tool such as ASPCA SAFER.
  - Develop consistent staff and volunteer training program to ensure standard qualifications
  - Implement a full scale canine, feline and rabbit daily enrichment schedule
  - Draft and implement behavior modification plans for those animals needing rehabilitation
  - Teach basic obedience to enhance adaptability or large and unruly dogs.
  - Sit on the Care and Evaluation committee and provide subject matter expertise on animal dispositions including euthanasia recommendations
- Convene Care and Evaluation committee to start an active discussion regarding dogs exhibiting severe emotional distress. Create action plan which can include:
  - Assessing viability of foster care providing the animals are not considered dangerous.
  - Research sanctuary placement or transfer to external partner.
  - Implementation of proactive behavior plan under the guidance of a trainer or veterinarian.
  - Consider use of behavior drug therapy under the guidance and approval of a licensed veterinarian in combination with a behavior modification plan.
  - Recruit outside trainer to work with animal
  - Humane euthanasia
- Ensure appropriate behavior logs, evaluations and observations are recorded in Chameleon. Keep paper behavior logs in a convenient location for staff and volunteers to record observations.
- Standardize assessment and evaluation forms across all three sites and amongst all internal partners performing assessments. This can be a collaborative effort using best practices utilized by each group.
- Create Volunteer and Staff Behavior Evaluator criteria and provided standardized training. Work with internal partners to establish best practices for Evaluator Certification.
- Perform behavior assessments on each animal entering the shelter within 3 days of admission.
- Provide ongoing behavior assessments in animals sheltered longer than 90 days.
- Create volunteer enrichment team, think of a catchy name, provide t-shirts and establish enrichment schedule.
- Create standardized behavioral questionnaire for owner relinquishments. Gather as much information as possible during the surrender interview.

Discussion:

Animal shelters inherently are stressful environments. For these animals, they are in unfamiliar surroundings with strange people, noises and odors. Prolonged incarceration can create behavior issues in animals that previously were well-behaved. Stress is a precursor to disease outbreaks, especially in cats. Animals entering a shelter should not leave a shelter in worse mental health.

There are many things that can be done, easily and inexpensively, to provide sheltered animals with social interaction, mental stimulation and physical activity. Enrichment will enhance adaptability. Training shelter dogs can further increase adoptability and cage presentation by instilling behaviors that will make them more desirable.

It is important to standardized behavioral assessments to ensure that appropriate judgments are being made, but it is also necessary to understand the limitations of these structured tests and the variables that influence the outcome. Many decision are based on the animal's performance and liability issues concerning safely placing animals in a home need to be acknowledged when structuring a standard assessment program. Well-rounded behavior assessments not only include the results of the evaluation but also the intake questionnaire (assuming the animals were relinquished), behavior during the intake exam, and daily observations made by staff and volunteers. All of these must be clearly documented in the animal's electronic record.

While it is acceptable to have volunteers conducting the assessments, it is imperative that they and any staff assigned be trained, and evaluated for competency by a qualified individual. Cornell School of Veterinary Medicine Maddie's Fund Shelter Program recommends only staff perform these evaluations. However, staffing limitations in SBCAS prevent the reality of this. The key is to require training and standardization to limit liability.

Volunteers provide an essential role in shelter animal enrichment. Structuring enrichment protocols include varying the activity from day to day. Play groups, long walks, game playing, food puzzle and snack time preparation all can be assigned as volunteer duties.

Meal time should be in the form of enrichment. No dog should simply be fed in a metal tray or paper bowl. Food should be entertaining. Frozen Kongs, buster cubes, hidden snacks, dispensing toys should be routinely used.

The importance of a detailed behavioral intake questionnaire can not be over emphasized. Owners relinquishing their pets should encouraged to be open and honest about their pet's behavior in order to find a suitable adopter. Careful consultation by trained staff can ensure owners provide detailed information.

There is limitless information in the internet regarding creative enrichment program that will enhance the welfare of the shelter population and improve adoptability. And don't forget, bunnies, pocket pets, birds, horses, reptiles and farm animals need enrichment too!

<http://www.rabbitawarenessweek.co.uk/behaviour/tips-for-enrichment/>

Appendix 10.A - After the Adoption

Appendix 10.B - Canine Activity Log

Appendix 10.C - Food dispensing toys and recipes

Appendix 10.D - ARL Playgroup Manual

Appendix 10.E - Best Friends Enrichment for Shelter Dogs

Appendix 10.F - Shelter Enrichment PPT

Appendix 10.G - Sample Cat Surrender Questionnaire

Appendix 10.H - Sample Dog Surrender Questionnaire

CHECKLIST

High Priority	Date	Task	Assigned to:	Status
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		10.0 Hire Behavior and Enrichment Coordinator		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		10.0 Establish standardized behavior assessment procedure and ensure only qualified individuals perform evaluations		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		10.0 Implement comprehensive enrichment protocol		
<input type="checkbox"/>		10.0 Revise owner surrender forms to include detailed behavior questions		
<input type="checkbox"/>		10.0 Consistently document behavior evaluations and observations in Chameleon		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		10.0 Evaluate and make decisions regarding long term shelter residents with behavioral concerns and emotional distress		
<input type="checkbox"/>		10.0 Create standardized evaluation form for all 3 sites for all animals		
<input type="checkbox"/>		10.0 Set goal to perform behavior evaluations within 3 days of admission on all animals.		
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# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

American Humane Association

*11.1 Volunteer  
Management*



## 11.1 VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

### Observations:

Santa Barbara has an interesting and unique volunteer program. Presumably due to budgetary issues, limited resources and staffing shortage, outside volunteer organizations (501c3) and “friends of Animal Services” rallied to fill the gaps in animal care and financial shortfalls. A system was created to engage internal partners. These internal partners collectively providing thousands of volunteer hours per year are:

- BUNS - Bunnies Urgently Needing Shelter - This 501c(3) group provides volunteers to care for rabbits and costs associated with spay/neuter and other medical and husbandry expenses. Some capital improvements. Assistance with adoption and some community outreach and education. Located and serving Santa Barbara, Goleta shelter
- ASAP - Animal Shelter Assistance Program - This is a 501c(3) organization whose volunteers provides care to all cats and costs associated with medical/surgical care and husbandry. Capital improvements and equipment purchases, adoption, community outreach and education. Located and serving Santa Barbara, Goleta shelter and occasionally assists with Santa Maria cats. Recruits and trains fosters.
- CAPA - Companion Animal Placement Assistance - This is a 501c(3) organization whose volunteers provides care to animals in Lompoc. Funds some costs associated with medical/surgical care and husbandry. Capital improvements and equipment purchases, adoption, community outreach and education. Recruits and trains fosters.

Each internal partner volunteer organization operates independently from SBCAS with no oversight by a County employee. Their organizations seem to be well managed, extremely reliable and operate within (or above) acceptable standards. Animal care provided by these groups is impeccable and highly valued and a necessity for the humane care of the animals residing in Santa Barbara County.

Each of the internal partner volunteer organizations has their own standard operating procedures, recruitment standards, screening of applicants, training requirements, method of scheduling and opinions on the disposition, handling and needs of animals in the custody of SBCAS.

Santa Barbara Animal Services has its own volunteer program within the operation that has a basic infrastructure including a volunteer manual and a very small budget that essentially covers t-shirt purchases and small recognition items. SBCAS volunteers work in Goleta Shelter providing care to the resident dog population. In addition SBCAS volunteers work in the Santa Maria Shelter providing care to both dogs and cats. Managed by the Community Outreach position(s), the volunteer program allows interested individuals to complete an application followed by an orientation. There is no volunteer background screening. Volunteer opportunities range from doing laundry to greeting the public, to direct animal care; however, there seems to be limited volunteer job descriptions. Training consists of mentoring new volunteers by assigning them to a volunteer mentor. There is no ongoing volunteer training program for SBCAS volunteers.

There is no set schedule for the SBCAS volunteers who are able to sign up for their service hours so volunteer

engagement is on a week-to-week basis. There is no formal volunteer recognition program especially due to limited funding but staff attempts to show appreciation through an annual potluck party where efforts are recognized. Volunteer hours are currently tracked manually and statistics were hard to obtain. In the next few weeks however, the Community Outreach Coordinator will be implementing Volgistics, a volunteer resources management software program.

The relationship between the staff and all volunteers is challenging and confusing on several levels. In most animal shelters using volunteers, all volunteers are managed by an employee of the shelter. The standard operating procedures that the volunteers are trained on are the same ones that the shelter employees must abide by. The group ideally works cohesively and collaboratively under one organizations chart and by the same set of rules. This is not the case in SBCAS.

Because each campus has a different volunteer program structure and relationships with outside volunteer groups to complete the operational responsibilities including animal care, medical and behavior treatments, confusion often results from lack of a standard and consistent structure often guided by principals and expectations of the individual volunteer groups. Each internal partner has it's own mission statement and vision, all provide much valued services, however their objectives can often conflict with those set by the Santa Barbara County PHD. This can be a basis for friction and dissension. Despite this, relationships between volunteers (both SBCAS and provided by internal partners) and staff is generally good on most days.

The issue of liability cannot go unmentioned. SBCAS retains custody of all animals, yet in some instances volunteer groups who are internal partners and volunteers of SBCAS are making final decisions with regards to an animal's disposition. In addition, SBCAS volunteers use undue influence (through relationships with key community stakeholders) to direct or coerce care and disposition of animals at times blocking the humane euthanasia of some long term, emotionally distressed animals. Volunteers (SBCAS and internal partners) are issued keys, allowing them access to the buildings to obtain paperwork or use the restroom facilities during the weekend, when no county employee is on the property.

Various staff did express concerns about the political ramifications associated with the relationship between the Santa Barbara County CEO and management with various volunteer individuals and groups. These political concerns have resulted in a climate of anxiety and irresolution. This very concern has led to the resignation of a newly-hired staff member who cited explicit concerns in his resignation letter regarding the political climate, operational influences, and other issues preventing a consistent, professional volunteer program.

Both volunteers and staff also expressed concerns centering around bullying from a specific group of SBCAS volunteers who have been given too much authority or license in operational matters. A member of the American Humane Association evaluation team did witness a hostile comment directed toward an employee during an onsite visit to the Santa Barbara Campus. There have been accounts of an adopter's dog being killed by a shelter dog during an interaction whereby a trained volunteer facilitated the interaction.

It is important to preserve the relationships despite a few negative experiences. In summary, external stakeholders (volunteers and other nonprofit groups) are frustrated by the limited resources allocated to the animal care programming which they believe leads to a lack of training, tools, and overall ability to deliver an

effective animal care program for the community. This frustration has led to the creation of several nonprofit groups who have invested in the daily operations of the program with dedication, commitment, passion and enthusiasm. Without them adequate care for the animals would not be possible. However these relationships were not structured in a way that defined clear expectations, responsibilities and professional boundaries. Over time, this has resulted in a dysfunctional, yet symbiotic, relationship between the volunteers and the staff that must be rectified in order to gain stakeholder confidences.

**Recommendations:**

- Restructure the volunteer department so that there is one single point of coordination between all groups. The single point should be an employee of the County.
- Engage all internal partners that provide volunteer to form an executive committee collaborating to develop best practices for all volunteer management, then implement best practices across all volunteer groups providing services to SBCAS. This standard operating procedure should include:
  - Standard mechanism for screening all volunteers
  - Aggressive recruitment strategies
  - Structured, consistent orientation
  - Code of Conduct
  - Required training
  - Job descriptions and requirements
  - Mechanism to evaluate performance and remediate issues
  - Organizational chart
  - Uniforms
  - Recognition and appreciation
  - Monthly hour commitment
  - Scheduling
- A method of tracking all volunteers' numbers and hours will allow assessment in work load as well as community involvement. Establishing baselines will give a benchmark to measure growth. Information collected by internal partners should be shared with SBCAS on a monthly basis.
- There are consultants available for volunteer program evaluation that Santa Barbara County can engage to conduct a comprehensive volunteer program audit. One of these consultants is the JFFixler Group and more information can be found here: <http://www.jffixler.com/volunteer-and-member-engagement> (Disclosure: A member of the AHA staff has a spouse involved in the organization, though the recommendation was made without prior knowledge of this)
- The practice of the County Government allowing volunteers to exert undue influence over euthanasia decisions must stop. With strict guidelines soon to be in place, the process whereby that decision is thoughtfully and painstakingly made should not be undermined. If volunteers wish

to express concerns over the disposition of an animal, they need to come armed with solutions and through the appropriate forum. Letting an animal languish in a cage with no action taken is unacceptable and outside of the Association of Shelter Veterinarian Guidelines. The County has the responsibility to ensure no animal suffers needlessly. Emotional distress constitutes suffering by many standards. AHA is not advocating for the euthanization of any animal currently residing within the County shelter system, the recommendation is simply that a system be put into place where the correct people are allowed to make decisions after all other options have been exhausted and that those decision are supported.

Evaluate the risk management tips found in this article:

[http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/employee\\_or\\_volunteer.shtml](http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/employee_or_volunteer.shtml)

Articles regarding conflict between volunteers and staff:

<http://philanthropy.com/article/Volunteers-Can-Cause-Fricti/57754/>

[https://charityvillage.com/Content.aspx?topic=Human\\_Resources\\_Q\\_A\\_Reducing\\_conflict\\_between\\_staff\\_and\\_volunteers#.VOo7UpPF8bo](https://charityvillage.com/Content.aspx?topic=Human_Resources_Q_A_Reducing_conflict_between_staff_and_volunteers#.VOo7UpPF8bo)

### **Discussion:**

The team was impressed by the clear commitment of all of the volunteers and volunteer groups taking the initiative to forge a partnership all aimed at a common goal: to enhance the welfare of the animals in Santa Barbara County. The facilities maintained by ASAP and BUNS served the cats and rabbits of Goleta well. All operate with care and commitment and their policies and procedures are commendable. It is recognized that this collation was formed to solve a problem which entailed inefficient government funding for programs and services contracted to be provided by SBCAS. The solution's well-intentions are applauded and viewed as creative problem solving.

What was lacking when these relationships stated to form was clear, consistent operating procedures and boundaries, which falls to the County to implement. As a result, there is a bit of anarchy going on that has fueled strained relationships.

American Humane recognizes the value of services (both volunteer and financial) that all of these groups contribute and encourages that they way forward is with standards developed and abided by all. The staff of SBCAS also provides a valuable service to these animals and the tone and environment that everyone works in needs to be positive and productive, not divisive and toxic.

Everyone is united by a common goal. But the County does have an additional obligation to ensure that best practices are employed that mitigate risk and liability to staff, volunteers, the community and to the animals.

Resources for good volunteer program manuals:

<http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/all-topics/volunteer-management/resource-library.html>

Understanding how a volunteer program fits into an agency:



<https://www.energizeinc.com/hot-topics/2010/january>

<https://www.energizeinc.com/hot-topics/1999/may>

Understanding how to create an appreciative volunteer culture:

<http://learn.volunteermatch.org/>

<http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/workplaces-staff-volunteer.cfm>

[http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/may\\_jun\\_2004/developing\\_good\\_staff\\_volunteer\\_relationships.html?utm\\_source=Convio&utm\\_medium=Redirects&utm\\_campaign=301](http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/may_jun_2004/developing_good_staff_volunteer_relationships.html?utm_source=Convio&utm_medium=Redirects&utm_campaign=301)

**Appendix 11.A Volunteer Management & Animal Care**

**Appendix 11.B Please Curb your Volunteer**

**Appendix 11.C Tracks of my Volunteers**

**Appendix 11.D Training & Development Summary Report**



# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

American Humane Association

*12. Governance,  
Strategic Planning,  
Leadership*

## 12. Governance, Strategic Planning, Leadership

### 12.1 Governance

#### Observations:

The oversight of SBCAS is assigned to the Public Health Department, located in the Community Services Division. There are four divisions in Public Health: Fiscal, Administrative Support, Primary Care and Community Health. The Public Health Department Director, Dr. Takashi Wada, has general oversight of 24 public service programs within the Primary Care and Community Health Divisions. The Community Health Division is managed by the Deputy Director, Susan Klein-Rothschild. Ms. Klein-Rothschild is the direct supervisor of the SBCAS Director, Ms. Jan Glick who has served in this position since 1999.

The Public Health Department falls under the leadership of the Assistant County Executive Officer, Terry Maus-Nisich, who reports to the County Executive Officer, Mona Miyasato, who in turn, answers to the Board of Supervisors who are elected officials of the five County districts.

SBCAS provides contractual services for animal control and/or animal sheltering to 7 of the 8 County cities and incorporated communities.

SBCAS has informal agreements with several County non-profits to provide invaluable animal care assistance and financial support as well as a signed tenant-lease agreement with a 501 c(3) DAWG, that provides sheltering and public adoptions on the Goleta Campus. Governance of the internal partners is not well-defined as there is no accountability or clearly assigned oversight of the activities conducted on behalf of SBCAS.

The lack of structured agreements with these non-profits has contributed to the creation of an environment that cultivates confusion and conflict between staff, volunteers, partners and key stakeholders as it is unclear who is in charge of managing the work performed on behalf of the animals that are in legal custody of the county.

In well managed shelter, the Executive Director has ultimate responsibility for all the animals, staff and volunteers. This is not obviously the case in SBCAS as there seems to be decision making on every level, some by individuals who are not entrusted or entitled to do so. When decisions are made by management, they are susceptible to being undermined at any level up to the District Supervisors.

It is difficult to objectively evaluate current SBCAS leadership under these conditions. In this semi-anarchic environment it is impossible for anyone to lead successfully. Until such time as clear boundaries are set, a chain of command is implemented and adhered to and accountability is upheld the system cannot function productively or efficiently.

The management on all levels is predominately reactive not proactive and thus this is a failed system.

#### Recommendations:

- Establish and follow clear chain of command.
- Develop specific MOUs with internal partners that include and define accountability and



supervision.

- Engage internal and external partners in problem solving and restructuring relationships.

Discussion:

The collaboration between the County, SBCAS and the internal and external partners was a very creative way to solve a problem. The County is unable to fund the true total cost (as described in Section 15 (Finance & Budget) of animal services in a manner that ensures quality of care and the upholding of the Hayden Bill. These partnerships have been life-saving to the community animals. However, this intention was not well-executed as these informal agreements have over time eroded boundaries of authority. The animals of Santa Barbara County are the legal custody of the County, and better County oversight and funding would be appropriate.

Investigation into alternative governance models should be undertaken to ascertain if County management for Animal Services serves the community in the most efficient manner. Options include:

- Privatization of some or all County Animal services to a non-profit, either in whole or just the sheltering aspect
- Joint Powers of Authority

## 12.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Observations:

The team reviewed the FY 2014-15 Operational Plan provided by senior leadership. This document outlines the basic spend plan for all County services. In section D of the document, each Functional Group provides a brief summary of strategic values, purpose and goals. Animal Services resides in the Health & Human Services functional group. While a strategic purpose was listed: *Provision of animal shelters and animal control services*, there were no stated goals or objectives identified for Animal Services. A word search of this 504 page document found 21 matches for the word “animal”, eight of those instances referring to line items in the budget and four in reference to an anti-animal abuse task force proposed by the District Attorney. Animal Services was not well represented in the Operational Plan

While the SBCAS department policies call for an annual strategic plan in #1.4 of the Policy manual, there is no identified, current, strategic plan for Santa Barbara County Animal Services.

Recommendations:

- Engage SBCAS in a strategic planning process. This process should include those affected by the plan and those that have the ability to change it. Utilize the VMOSA process: Redefine the Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies and Action Plan. This should include short and long range planning.
- Establish measurable performance metrics to track success and provide you with the necessary data to drive decisions, make adjustments and to guide and track performance.
- Hold individuals accountable for the plan and the part they are delegated to accomplish.

Discussion:

The strategic plan is a living, operational document that is necessary to provide leadership, managers and employees with a road map to achieving desired outcomes. Without this document organizations can get lost, lose focus and initiative, decrease productivity, cultivate employee apathy, and create a public perception of disorganization and mismanagement. This document is a key component to aligning the time, energy and resources of all parties invested in the enhancement of the welfare of the community's animals.

Building the plan is only one piece of the puzzle, communicating that plan to all parties and holding everyone accountable for their part is the other.

A valuable resource: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>

Appendix 12.A - *Strategic Planning for Dummies*

### 12.3 ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND VISION

Observations:

Chapter 1.3 of the SBCAS PHD Policy & Procedure Manual contains the mission statement, goals and objectives for the department, outside of the context of a strategic plan. The document, drafted in 2010, indicates that the mission statement is “*to be revised*” and the date issued is “*pending*”. However, this document is posted on the SBCAS landing page on the PHD website.

**POLICY:**

**Animal Services mission is to establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment between humans and animals in Santa Barbara County. Further, to protect the human and domestic animal population from rabies. To protect the animal population from the dangers of the streets and the wild, and from other potential harm.**

**PROCEDURE:**

The objectives of the department are stated below:

- A. To assure that a minimum of 90% of Santa Barbara County's dog population has been vaccinated against rabies.
- B. To protect the public's safety by enforcing animal codes and ordinances and animal quarantines.
- C. To prevent and investigate the inhumane treatment of animals.
- D. To educate and inform the public in the areas of animal codes, animal ordinances, and responsible pet ownership.
- E. To implement and maintain an automated licensing program for dogs, and animal related businesses.

- F. To respond to emergency service requests from the public or law enforcement as quickly as possible but no later than one hour after receiving the call.
- G. To respond to routine service requests from the public within forty-eight hours.
- H. To impound (domestic and wild) stray animals.
- I. To provide services to the public to aid them in locating their lost animals.
- J. To implement, maintain, and encourage an adoption program for impounded animals.
- K. To provide, with veterinary supervision and/or assistance, medical attention for all impounded animals.
- L. To manage unclaimed animals through adoption, or humane euthanasia.

The mission statement seemed to be socialized amongst the staff, but it was not obvious that volunteers had been oriented to the document.

SBCAS objectives lack specificity in they are not quantitatively measurable or timed. In essence, they do not follow the SMART +C model.

S - Specific - How much is to be achieved by whom and when?

M - Measurable - Data and statistics recorded and collected

A - Achievable - Impacted by available resources

R - Relevant - Tied back to mission and goals

T - Timed - Defined timeline for completion

C - Challenging - Encourages forward improvement on issues important to community

These objectives seemingly just state the responsibilities of Animal Services rather than provide direction and guidance for the leaders as well as a mechanism for performance evaluation. Furthermore, there are no key performance indicators established or collected to benchmark progress and uphold accountability.

As previously noted, SBCAS has cultivated relationships with several community internal and external non-profit partners who provide valuable services that augment animal care and supplement financial shortfalls. These community partners are guided by their own mission statements, vision, beliefs and objectives that may or may not be in line with those of SBCAS.

#### Recommendations:

- As stated above, the SBCAS must undergo a strategic planning process.
- Re-define objectives using SMART+C methodology.
- Establish benchmarks and key performance indicators to evaluate all key areas of the organization.
- Ensure alignment, or at minimum visibility, of all internal and external partners objectives so the organization moves in unison toward mutual goals.

#### Discussion:



When all oars are not rowing in the same direction it is hard to move forward. Defining a mission and objectives is part of the strategic planning process. Ensuring that all stakeholders are on the same page and maintaining accountability allows the organization and its leaders to work progressively.

Prior to setting measurable objectives, baseline data, needs to be collected to assess where you are. How many adoptions did you do last year, how many euthanasias, field calls, volunteer hours? Once you know where you are, you can plan your goals and objectives on where you want to be. All of this is communicated down to the employees and volunteers so the message and direction is consistent. Miscommunicating or failure to clearly articulate objectives sets employees and volunteer up for failure.

## 12.4 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Observation:

SBCAS organizational chart is depicted in Appendix 12.B. & 12.C

The Director has a minimum of 8 (all contract veterinarians individually report to the Director) direct reports distributed over 3 campuses.

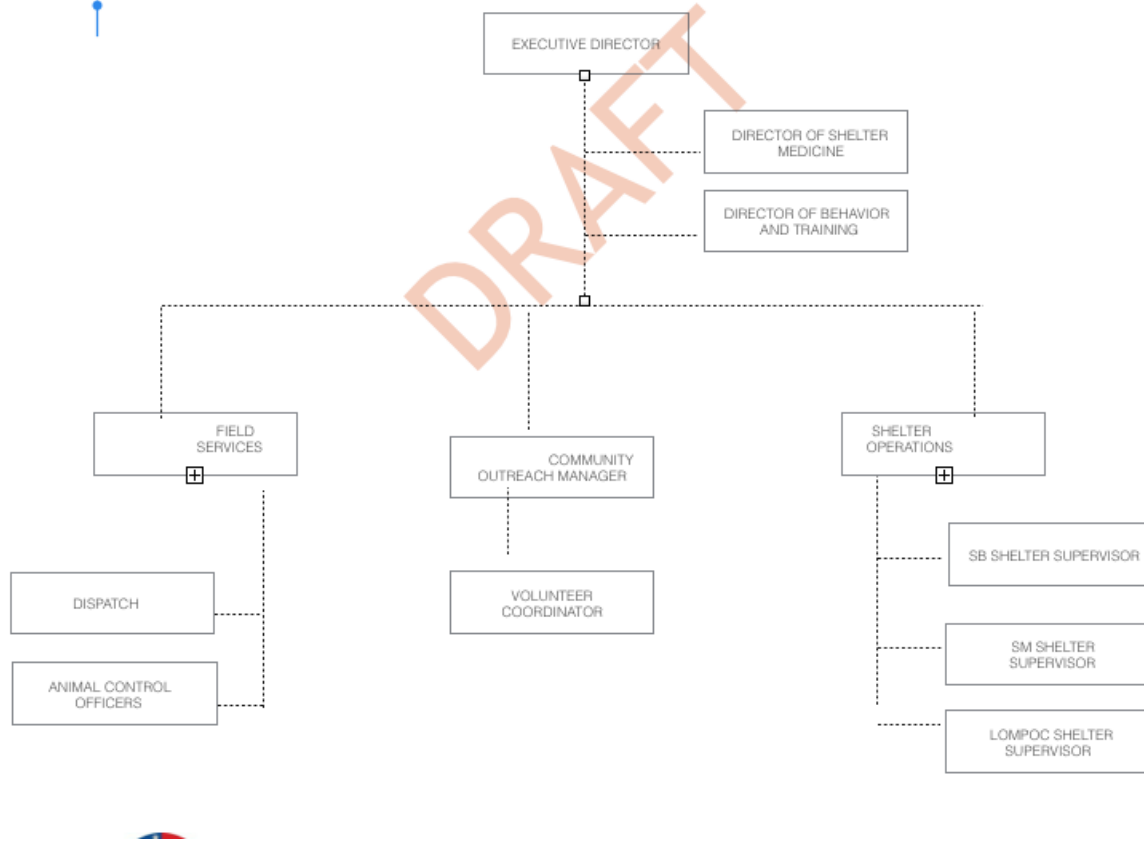
The organization chart is has both a functional and geographic delineation prohibiting the organization management by business lines. This puts a strain on the span of control and prohibits the Director from effectively and efficiently managing the team in addition to providing vision, leadership and acting as a liaison to the PHD and the community.

Due to insufficient depth in the staffing roster, or lack of employee efficiency, the Director has been seen working the front desk, supervisors are cleaning kennels, Animal Control Officers are transporting animals to other locations for surgery, and leadership has spent a lot of time engaging in debates over animal care with volunteers and members of the community. This is not efficient or productive use of time or adequate leveraging of resources. It also prevents forward motion when all day is spent putting out fires.

It is not clear that the Director has been truly empowered and positioned for success. There have been instances when decisions have been undermined through grievances communicated by community residents up to the Board of Supervisors. There are also observations made that the Director is inflexible in considering outside concerns and suggestions. The actual truth is not apparent, yet only supports the observation of the team of organizational dysfunction, misalignment of responsibilities, lack of clear boundaries and mistrust on all levels.

Recommendation:

- Consider re-organizing by business lines and developing appropriate tiers of management with the appropriate delegation of authority and accountability.



Discussion:

The appropriate span of control varies from organization to organization and is dependent on a number of factors:

- The experience and personality of the manager
- The nature of the business and work
- The skills and attitudes of the employees
- The organizational culture

Narrow or wide spans of control have advantages and disadvantages. Wide spans are typically adopted if budgetary factors control the number of managers allowed. Narrow spans may improve communication flow.

In this case, due to the geographic dispersal of employees and nature of work and work load capacity, delegation of responsibilities over a narrow range may improve the productivity of the Director and empower staff. The Director should be responsible for:

- Overseeing staff
- Cultivating and maintaining partnerships with community constituents
- Liaison to Public Health Department and County government
- Ensuring the policies and procedures are implemented and upheld
- Promote the efficient and productive utilization to staff

The Director should not be manning the front desk when employees take lunch breaks, cleaning kennels, and engaging in continuous debates over animal decisions.

## 12.5 EMPLOYEE MORALE AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST

### Observations:

Employees demonstrated a positive demeanor during the time of the onsite assessment; however, in an attempt to garner feedback from the employees directly, an employee satisfaction survey was provided to the employees. The survey results revealed that staff feel fulfilled and challenged working in the organization and they are held to somewhat realistic expectations, but are very often stressed. The stressors appear to stem from the lack of staff and the work load capacity, the handful of toxic volunteers, in addition to the nature of the work which lends itself to compassion fatigue. They feel that they mostly have the supplies needed to accomplish their jobs. However, a little more than half of the people feel that training is lacking.

Most employees are satisfied with their jobs, feel that they have good supervision, and that their opinions matter. Yet, interestingly 50% said they would be likely to look for another job. Some due to pay, others due to the lack of career growth and some due to the work environment.

Most everyone agrees that safety and appearance of the organization are extremely important, that the staff works well together as a team, but their opinions are a little more wide spread about supervisors following through on stated goals and actions. This has most people saying that they do not get to take on time or uninterrupted breaks. They seem fairly split about the staff being treated equally and fairly, but mostly are comfortable sharing concerns, and receive helpful feedback and guidance from supervisors. While most understand the philosophy and mission of the organization, they seem somewhat lacking in their ability to understand and follow policies which are different between the various organizations represented.

The majority of the staff feel that the presence of the internal partners is valuable and they could not do their job otherwise. Concern was expressed over a few individual volunteers that bully employees and generate

negativity. Overall, employee morale was judged as being good supporting evidence given the long tenures of many employees.

Recommendations:

- Hold quarterly “town hall” meetings to check the pulse of the employee morale, give them a forum to discuss concerns and challenges and communicate the status of the organizational goals and objectives.
- Mitigate employee stress
  - Host Compassion Fatigue seminars for both employee and volunteers
  - Ensure adequate breaks and down time
  - Assess staffing levels
  - Remove disruptive volunteers from service
- Increase communication between campuses. Shelter supervisors/managers should meet regularly
- Establish employee recognition program
- Consider implementing competency levels to give employees a chance to enhance their skills and responsibilities
- Establish employee training program, revitalize the Animal Services Training Academy

Discussion:

Employee morale affects productivity. Disengaged employees have a higher absentee rate, higher turnover and poor work performance. In this business, low morale can lead to bites, accidents, spread of disease, and mishandling of animals. This is an industry already fraught with emotions running high as the passion of the workers and volunteers can be consuming.

Maintaining employee morale starts with having the right people in the right jobs. Cultivating or fostering negativity should not be tolerated. A good leader motivates by example and sets the mood of the organization. Set clear expectations but give employees an opportunity to provide feedback if a new policy is being implemented that affects them. Make them feel valued and empowered.

An organization’s employees are the ambassadors to the public. Make morale and employee satisfaction a measurable objective in the strategic plan.

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

American Humane Association

*13. Human  
Resources*



## 13. Human Resources

### General Observations

Employees of SBCAS are Civil Servants and are hired through a County Human Resource department. Recruitment is primarily through the County website.

The animal services department is plagued by the normal challenges for most companies, absenteeism, covering PTO, employees on leave or in limited duty and budget shortfalls preventing adequate staffing levels. Extra help is assigned as needed, until earlier this year extra help was approved by the CEO, currently departments can put in requests to department administration for departmental approval. Wages are fair and benefits are generous.

With animal services the deficiencies in staffing have a unique challenge in that there are the same number of animals that need care regardless if someone calls out sick. This results in rearranging employees to cover gaps, and often times this is an Animal Control Officer that is assigned to animal care. This in turns leads to a domino effect has the ACO's now do not have enough time to cover their responsibilities. It appears that this game of musical chairs in an ongoing occurrence in SBCAS. There is not enough depth in the staffing roster to cover PTO and other unplanned absences. This exact finding was also documented in the 2006 Project Team Report and some of the recommendations below are consistent with those findings.

Another challenge noted was in the position descriptions. There are 11 official position descriptions and some limit the flexibility to work in other areas. For instance, the PD of an Administrative Office Professional pre-empts them from working in the kennel. This makes it challenging to benefit from staff cross training.

### 13.1 Staffing Levels

#### Observations:

Staffing assessments were difficult to determine due to several factors:

- Failure to track SBCAS specific volunteer hours
- Failure to collect volunteer hour data from internal partners
- The utilization of “extra help” which are included in the staffing model but not accounted for on the SBCAS official salary roster
- Utilization of contract veterinary labor
- Number of individuals out on leave or with limited service

The SBCAS budget allows for 33 FTE employees plus one approved, permanent “extra help” stationed at Santa Barbara, and 5 extra helps currently working in Santa Maria.

**Animal Shelter Attendants -**

Animal Shelter Attendants provides the following:

- Animal care, feeding, cleaning
- Basic enrichment
- Intake processing
- Euthanasia assistance
- Adoption assistance
- Medicating animals
- Basic wellness
- Daily and weekly cleaning as needed

Utilizing a modified/hybrid time-motion analysis (National Animal Control Association, UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine) an estimate of minutes per task was assessed and based on an average daily census, the following staffing recommendations are advised, with the following assumptions:

- This is based on the provision that the average daily census (ADC) not be exceeded
- This is also acknowledging that SBCAS operates over the humane capacity simply based on cage space.
- This does not account for seasonal influxes, as measures need to be taken to proactively manage the population. Staff cant expand and contract easily to accommodate surplus intake.
- This acknowledges that ASAP provides all cat care in SB and BUNS provides all Rabbit care in SB
- Rabbit care in SM is provided by all volunteers

Location	FTE on Roster	Recom- mended Staffing needs	Deficiency/ Suplus	Extra Help Assigned	Average Daily Census - Dogs	Cage Space Dogs	Average Daily Census - Cats	Cage Space Cats
Santa Barbara	2	4.4	2.6	1	70	48	ASAP	ASAP
Santa Maria	5	9.9	4.9	5	88	76	65	75
Lompoc	2	3.8	1.8	0	37	30	20	20

All three locations have wonderful, dedicated volunteers augmenting the staff.

A survey was initiated to estimate the number of FTE volunteer hours provided to SBCAS by three organizations, BUNS - Rabbit Care SB, ASAP - Cat Care in SB, and CAPA - Dog and Cat Care in Lompoc. These volunteers contribute an estimated minimum of 20 FTE per year.



SBCAS does not track volunteer hours at this point, though will in the near future.

It should be emphasized that volunteers are not a replacement for core staff. Their duties and responsibilities should be to augment and enhanced the animal care. However, in SBCAS, two volunteer organizations do provide exceptional sole and primary care for cats and rabbits in Santa Barbara. This unique partnership reduces the need for core staff, however, it needs to be recognized and better defined the exact number of FTE they support, as this impacts the reality of the staffing model. If those two groups ceased to continue collaboration SBCAS would be responsible for increasing the FTE staffing roster to accommodate the care of that animal population.

The above model represents the number of roster spaces in the SBCAS and the ideal recommendation, it does not however, reflect reality today. With 2 Animal Care Attendant vacancies in SB and one ACA in an acting ACO role in Lompoc, the ability of the staff to efficiently perform their duties is stretched to the maximum. Adding to the challenge is the absentee rate, the number of individuals out on leave or with restricted duties, and the ability to cover the work load when people are out on vacation. As a result, currently there is a constant re-arranging of staff to cover deficiencies which are causing a level of burn out and stress amongst the employees. This perpetual state of understaffing trickles up to management and the Director, as it has been witnessed the Director answering phones at the front desk and the managers and ACO's working in the kennels cleaning cages.

There is no Lead Animal Shelter Attendant providing oversight and guidance in the kennels or ability to cover for the Supervising ACO in their absence.

### **Administrative Office Professionals**

The Administrative Office Professionals provide for coverage of the reception area. This is a generic position description that restricts duties to front desk work only. They are not allowed to clean cages, or handle animals, therefore cannot be crossed trained. The position description is highly generic with no reference to animal issues or requirements unique to animal handling, sheltering or adoptions.

In an animal shelter the front desk duties/skills include:

- Clerical work
- Upholding customer service standard
- Answering complex questions
- Providing owner surrender counseling
- Providing adoption counseling
- Managing Intake appointments
- Proficiency in shelter policy and procedures and operations
- Data entry
- Licensing duties
- Cover kennel duties when needed

Current staffing roster for Administrative Office Professionals, based on the following assumptions:

- Shelter being open to the public 6 days per week.
- Staffing recommendation is based on a minimum of two people on during days open in SB and SM with higher volumes and 1.5 people in Lompoc. One person on the days closed.
- This is a customer service oriented position.
- ASAP does all cat adoptions in Santa Barbara

Location	FTE On Roster	Extra Help	Staffing Recommendation	Deficiency/Surplus
Santa Barbara	2*	1	2.6	0.6*
Santa Maria	2	0	2.6	0.6
Lompoc	1	0	2	1

\*\* Note: One AOP is actually performing the function of a Financial Office Professional and not providing front desk services, she is not included.

There is no appointed Lead Administrative Office Professional.

### Animal Control Officers

The Animal Control Officer Position Description includes a thorough account of field services in addition to provisions made to assist in the shelter duties when needed. As such, in times of staff shortages the ACO's are often assigned to kennel duties in the mornings prior to them being able to address their open activities. In addition, SBCAS Animal Control Officers pick up dead animals, transport animals to and from SB and Lompoc to SM for surgery, fill in at the front desk when there are shortages.

The typical duties of an Animal Control Officer include:

- Enforcing County animal ordinances
- Picking up injured/sick, stray animals
- Responding to calls regarding dangerous animals
- Responding to reports of animals at large, typically dogs or farm animals, and horses
- Animal cruelty investigation
- Enforcing Rabies laws and compliance
- Investigating animal nuisance reports
- Out reach and public education
- Report writing

With the additional duties in the SBCAS job description, this position is stretched too thin. The ACO's cover 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, on an on-call system.

Data was requested regarding the number of field calls received per day, and that was not readily available by the time this section of the report was drafted, so analysis of the work load of the ACO's is only based on the number of calls that were activated and response initiated.

Santa Barbara County covers a large geographic region, 2,735 square miles of land. There is a total of 8 Animal Control Officer staffing roster positions covering the County. Of these 8 positions, the officers are distributed to work out of each shelter as such:

- Santa Barbara - 2
- Santa Maria - 4
- Lompoc - 2

Of these 8, 1 is out on leave, 1 is on limited duty. Two Animal Shelter Attendants are working out of class to cover, and 1 extra help ACO is in training.

Looking at 2014 data, a total of 15,923 calls were initiated (this is not the number of calls received as that data was not readily available, and this is an important point because we don't know how many calls are not being attended to). The calls initiated to an activity are as follows:

- Santa Barbara - 3,939
- Santa Maria - 7,678
- Lompoc - 4,309

In a 1997 report issued by the National Animal Control Officer Association a recommendation was made that there should be 1 ACO for every 16,000-18,000 people. Estimating the needs for service is not straight forward as other factors such as coverage area, call volume and additional responsibilities over and above animal control need to be factored in. NACA also indicates that the average ACO position requires 1.6 employees to fill it due to paid time off, time spent in court, time spent to other assigned duties.

Using the simplified model of 1 ACO per 16-18,000 people would indicated that SBCAS should employ 25 Animal Control Officers. Obviously, this is not a reasonable recommendation. Call volume needs to be assessed before an actual figure can be derived.

A recent study of Yolo County (2010) by UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine program suggested that the average field service call takes 1.5 hours. If SBCAS responds to 15,923 calls per year, that would require 11.7 FTE working 2080 (260 days) hours per year. Factoring in the NACA recommendation that Field Officers typically only work 229 days and that 1.6 ACO's are needed to fill one FTE that suggests the number of ACO's needed in SBCAS is 18.7. Again, this is not a realistic recommendation.

### **Registered Veterinary Technicians**



SBCAS employs one Registered Veterinary Technician who has the responsibility for general oversight of the 6,868 animals that come through the shelter each year, distributed among 3 campuses. SBCAS provides surgical services to resident animals as well as spay and neuter services to the community. 3,868 spay/neuters were performed in 2014.

The staffing level of RVT's of SBCAS is unacceptable. There should be a minimum of 1 RVT (or highly trained veterinary assistant) on each campus to ensure the proper medical oversight of all the animals in the care of the County.

### Licensed Veterinarians

There are no licensed veterinarians on the staffing roster for SBCAS. Veterinary care is provided by the use of contract vets and the scheduling of their time and location is done by the RVT, excluding ASAP who schedules their own veterinarian, yet she is paid for by the county. Animals who need medical care may also be transported to local veterinarians when there is no veterinarian on duty at the shelter. Santa Maria is the only site that provides surgical services. Typical duties of a shelter veterinarian include:

- Maintaining premise licenses and DEA licenses
- Supervision of the RVT and medical staff
- Oversight of all animal health, diagnosis and treatment, intake medical exams, euthanasia
- Developing medical protocols
- Performing surgery
- Maintaining accurate record keeping
- Participation in daily rounds, committees and management meetings
- Staff training
- Zoonotic disease surveillance

Veterinary coverage is as follows:

- Santa Barbara - average 1 day per week
  - ASAP has veterinary coverage for cats in their care PT, 2 partial days a week.
- Santa Maria - an average of 4 days per week, predominately used in spay neuter, though shelter checks are done an average of 2 days per week
- Lompoc - 1 veterinarian provides coverage 2 afternoons per week

### Supervision and Outreach

There are 3 Supervising Animal Control Officers that manage the shelters with one (Lompoc) also supervising the ACO's. There is one additional Supervising Animal Control Officer that oversees the SB and SM ACO's.

Two Community Outreach Coordinator positions are rostered, but only one is filled. It is the duty of the COC to manage the volunteer program as well as the Public Information Assistant and Health Educator who



implement the Responsible Pet Ownership initiative. While this initiative may have resulted in the decrease in shelter intakes, it is unclear of the value of the PIA and HE as it is their primary responsibility to increase license sales which have been roughly flat over the past 5 years.

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
License Sales Total	21,088	22,931	24,720	26,870	25,112
RPO Project Pet Safe	397	2,029	3,722	1,558	957
Web License	350	2,932	2,351	4,888	5,614

There is an acting Financial Office Professional (classified as an AOP) that, once sufficiently trained will provide valuable assistance in assembling data and statistics to use in benchmark reporting.

**Recommendations:**

- 1 RVT assigned to each site
- Evaluate the effectiveness in RPO - PIA and HE position
- Perform call volume assessment to establish base line field services activity and in-depth modeling to establish ideal staffing levels for ACO’s
- ACO’s should only perform duties pertaining to animal control and field services. They should not be assigned duties in the kennel or front desk or transporting animals for surgery. This is an inefficient use of an employee who is paid at a higher classification.
- Fill Animal Shelter Attendant vacancies
- Use contract veterinarians only for Spay/neuter services
- Hire 2 PT veterinarians to cover a minimum of 2 days per week in SB and SM and one day on Lompoc
  - This recommendation may be altered if a veterinary clinic is added in Santa Barbara, so veterinary staffing suggestions are contingent upon decisions made elsewhere
- To uphold customer service standards and provide adequate front desk coverage 7 days per week 2 PT (SB, SM) and 1 FTE (Lompoc) Administrative Office Professionals should be added to staffing roster.
- Revise position description to allow for full cross training between Administrative Office Professionals and Animal Shelter Attendants
  - The Director has submitted a proposal for an Animal Welfare Specialist that would encompass responsibilities for both ASA and AOP’s. This position could be hire to cover the inadequacies of the AOP’s.
- A further assessment of the Animal Shelter Attendants is needed once all key vacancies are filled and a regular volunteer schedule is established and ACO’s are not scheduled to cover the shelter activities.

- Appoint Leads - ASA and AOP

### **Discussion:**

Finding the right balance between ideal staffing numbers and the reality of the budget can be challenging. There is still some question about procedural inefficiencies that exist due poor training, facility design, employee initiative, complex relationships between staff and volunteers and internal partners, leadership, and policies (like having ACO's responsible for driving shelter animals to Santa Maria for surgery!).

In addition, the one thing purposefully left out of this staffing discussion is animal census. Since this is an open admission shelter, planning for adequate staffing is challenging due to the fluctuation in animal population. Population management (addressed in another section of this report) is imperative to operate at a humane capacity the majority of the time.

The use of contract veterinarians has it's pros and cons. While it affords flexibility in scheduling and a decrease expense due to the need to provide benefits, hidden costs are incurred. Per Diem veterinarians typically do not have solid experience in shelter medicine, they do not have financial incentives to control expenses, they are not managed by one person, they have little communication with one another to discuss case management, they often differ in the opinion on how to treat medical conditions which can result in multiple therapies being initiated. All of this may lead to an increase in the length of stay of an animal which increases the cost per animal.

While it is imperative to provide medical oversight to all there shelters to what level may take some trial and error. The right fit will take into account the key positions that are missing in SBCAS discussed below.

The right staffing levels all around have an impact on:

- Employee morale and compassion fatigue
- Presence of disease
- Work related injuries and bites
- Absenteeism
- Customer Service

While there is a cost associated with increasing the staff roster, there are corresponding cost savings that can be realized when the model fits the work load.

## **13.2 Key Positions**

### **Observations/Recommendations:**

SBCAS could benefit from the addition of the following positions:

- Director of Shelter Medicine FTE
  - Drafting and implementing medical policies and procedures





- Provide subject matter expertise in animal welfare decisions
- Oversee medical professionals and ensure continuity of care
- Oversee medical budget
- Hold all required licensing
- Provide much needed credibility to leadership
- Uphold Association of Shelter Veterinarian guidelines to improve the quality of care and oversight provided to the animals
- Staff training
- Manager of Behavior and Training FTE
  - Drafting and implementing behavior and enrichment policies and procedures
  - Provide subject matter expertise in animal welfare decisions
  - Staff training
  - Provide much needed credibility to leadership
  - Enhance the adaptability of animals by integrating training programs
- Central Dispatch for Field Services
  - Organize and prioritize field calls to ensure efficiency and productivity of ACO time
  - Record keeping
  - Increase the safety of the officers out in the field by being aware of their location, activity and maintaining situational awareness
- Manager of Shelter Operations
  - Oversight of Supervising ACO's in the shelter and providing support and leadership
  - Assist the Director in completion of SBCAS objectives

The addition of these key positions will provide for enhanced productivity, employee and volunteer safety, expense management, and establish credibility within the community.

**Appendix 13.A Santa Barbara Staffing Calculator**

**Appendix 13.B Santa Maria Staffing Calculator**

**Appendix 13.C Lompoc Staffing Calculator**

**Appendix 13.D How much medical staff do you need?**

**Appendix 13.E Medical Staff Calculator**

### **13.3 HR Policies**

*Not evaluated due to all HR procedures being governed by County HR policies.*