

No Kill Equation

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The mandatory programs and services of the No Kill Equation include:

I. Feral Cat TNR Program

Many communities throughout the United States are embracing Trap, Neuter, Release programs (TNR) to improve animal welfare, reduce death rates, and meet obligations to public welfare.

II. High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter

Low cost, high volume spay/neuter will quickly lead to fewer animals entering the shelter system, allowing more resources to be allocated toward saving lives.

III. Rescue Groups

An adoption or transfer to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, killing, and improves a community's rate of lifesaving. In an environment of millions of dogs and cats killed in shelters annually, rare is the circumstance in which a rescue group should be denied an animal.

IV. Foster Care

Volunteer foster care is crucial to No Kill. Without it, saving lives is compromised. It is a low cost, and often no cost, way of increasing a shelter's capacity, improving public relations, increasing a shelter's public image, rehabilitating sick and injured or behaviorally challenged animals, and saving lives.

V. Comprehensive Adoption Programs

Adoptions are vital to an agency's lifesaving mission. The quantity and quality of shelter adoptions is in shelter management's hands, making lifesaving a direct function of shelter policies and practice. In fact, studies show people get their animals from shelters only 20 percent of the time. If shelters better promoted their animals and had adoption programs responsive to the needs of the community, including public access hours for working people, offsite adoptions, adoption incentives, and effective marketing, they could increase the number of homes available and replace killing with adoptions. Contrary to conventional wisdom, shelters can adopt their way out of killing.

VI. Pet Retention

While some of the reasons animals are surrendered to shelters are unavoidable, others can be prevented—but only if shelters are willing to work with people to help them solve their problems. Saving animals requires communities to develop innovative strategies for keeping people and their companion animals together. And the more a community sees its shelters as a place to turn for advice and assistance, the easier this job will be.

VII. Medical and Behavior Programs

In order to meet its commitment to a lifesaving guarantee for all savable animals, shelters need to keep animals happy and healthy and keep animals moving through the system. To do this, shelters must put in place comprehensive vaccination, handling, cleaning, socialization, and care policies

before animals get sick and rehabilitative efforts for those who come in sick, injured, unweaned, or traumatized.

VIII. Public Relations/Community Involvement

Increasing adoptions, maximizing donations, recruiting volunteers and partnering with community agencies comes down to one thing: increasing the shelter's exposure. And that means consistent marketing and public relations. Public relations and marketing are the foundation of all a shelter's activities and their success. To do all these things well, the shelter must be in the public eye.

IX. Volunteers

Volunteers are a dedicated "army of compassion" and the backbone of a successful No Kill effort. There is never enough staff, never enough dollars to hire more staff, and always more needs than paid human resources. That is where volunteers come in and make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.

X. Proactive Redemptions

One of the most overlooked areas for reducing killing in animal control shelters are lost animal reclaims. Sadly, besides having pet owners fill out a lost pet report, very little effort is made in this area of shelter operations. This is unfortunate because doing so—primarily shifting from passive to a more proactive approach—has proven to have a significant impact on lifesaving and allow shelters to return a large percentage of lost animals to their families.

XI. A Compassionate Director

The final element of the No Kill equation is the most important of all, without which all other elements are thwarted—a hard working, compassionate animal control or shelter director not content to regurgitate tired clichés or hide behind the myth of "too many animals, not enough homes." Unfortunately, this one is also oftentimes the hardest one to demand and find.

But it is clear that No Kill is simply not achievable without rigorous implementation of each and every one of these programs and services. These programs provide the *only* model which has ever created No Kill communities. It is up to us in the humane movement to demand them of our local shelters, and no longer to settle for illusory excuses and smokescreens shelters often put up in order to avoid implementing them.

Comprehensive Implementation

To succeed fully, however, shelters should not implement the programs piecemeal or in a limited manner. If they are sincere in their desire to stop the killing, animal shelters will implement and expand programs to the point that they replace killing entirely. Combining rigorous, comprehensive implementation of the No Kill Equation with best practices and accountability of staff in cleaning, handling, and care of animals, must be the standard.

From Nathan J. Winograd (2009) Can We Save All the Lives at Risk in Shelters? National Summit to End Companion Animal Overpopulation Proceedings 2009, Gold Coast, Australia www.ndn.org.au