



ANIMAL SERVICES

## Joint Animal Services Commission Regular Meeting Agenda

Refer to the bottom of the agenda for meeting information.

---

Monday, April 20, 2026

5:30 PM

Lacey City Hall and Online

---

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda Items**

A. Approval of Agenda

B. February 9, 2026, Meeting Minutes

**4. Public Comment**

Refer to the bottom of the agenda for instructions on how to provide public comment.

**5. Business Items**

**A. Shelter Statistics and Field Data February-March 2026**

Sarah Hock, Executive Director

**B. Best Friends Animal Society Embed Agreement**

Sarah Hock, Executive Director

**6. Director Report**

A. Sarah Hock, Executive Director

**7. Adjourn**

---

### Attendance and Public Comment

#### Attend Remote or in Person

The public may attend the meeting in person, or you may view or listen to the meeting using one of the following platforms:

In-Person	Council Chambers at Lacey City Hall 420 College Street SE, Lacey, WA 98503
Zoom:	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_PC2NNavSTp62fU5K7v10tg">https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_PC2NNavSTp62fU5K7v10tg</a>
Website:	<a href="https://cityoflacey.org/government/public-meetings/">https://cityoflacey.org/government/public-meetings/</a>
Facebook:	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/cityoflacey">https://www.facebook.com/cityoflacey</a>
YouTube:	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGCT3r5OFt4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGCT3r5OFt4</a>
Cable:	Channel 77 with your local cable provider
Phone:	(888) 788-0099 or (877) 853-5247 (Webinar ID 861 7178 0980)

## **Verbal Public Comment**

Each speaker is limited to three minutes. Comments are welcome on matters connected to City business or specific agenda items.

Prior to starting your comments, please provide your:

- a. Name
- b. City of residence or connection to the Commission
- c. Topic or subject matter of your comments

Those wishing to provide verbal public comment may do so in person or by Zoom.

In-Person: Use the sign-up sheet located in the meeting room.

Zoom: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_PC2NNavSTp62fU5K7v10tg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_PC2NNavSTp62fU5K7v10tg)

## **Written Public Comment**

Public comments may also be submitted by email to [Public.Comment@jointanimalservices.org](mailto:Public.Comment@jointanimalservices.org). The commenting period will close two hours before the meeting time. Written comments will be provided to the Commission electronically prior to the meeting. Comments will not be addressed during the meeting; however, comments received will be added to the official record.



## Joint Animal Services Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 9, 2026

Lacey City Hall and Online

### 1. Call to Order

Commissioner Miller called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### 2. Roll Call

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Emily Clouse, Thurston County (remote); Kelly Green, City of Olympia; Malcolm Miller, City of Lacey; Brandon Weedon, City of Tumwater; Jo MacGugan, Feline Friends of Olympia; and Vicky Smith, DVM, Deschutes Animal Clinic

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: Barbara Benson, Thurston County Humane Society

STAFF PRESENT: Shannon Kelley-Fong, Lacey Assistant City Manager; Sarah Hock, Joint Animal Services Executive Director; and Brandy Legomina, Lacey Deputy City Clerk

### 3. Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda Items

- A. Approval of Agenda
- B. December 8, 2025, Meeting Minutes

**Commissioner Green moved to approve the agenda and consent agenda. Commissioner Clouse seconded. The motion carried.**

### 4. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

### 5. Business Items

- A. **Election of Officers**
  - 1. Chair

Commissioner Miller opened the nominations for Chair.

Commissioner Green nominated Commissioner Miller for Chair.

Commissioner Miller consented to the nomination.

**Commissioner Green moved to elect Commissioner Miller as Chair.  
Commissioner Smith seconded. The motion carried.**

2. Vice Chair

Chair Miller opened the nominations for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Weedon nominated Commissioner Green for Vice Chair.  
Commissioner Clouse nominated herself for Vice Chair, but later withdrew.

Commissioner Green consented to the nomination.

**The commission unanimously elected Commissioner Green as Vice Chair.**

B. **2025 in Review**

Sarah Hock, Executive Director

Hock delivered a presentation titled 2025 Year in Review. This presentation recognized staff members who were appointed to state and national boards, reviewed animal protection bills from the 2025 legislative session, and highlighted receiving \$1 million in state funding for a new facility. New programs were described and volunteer, veterinary, foster, positive outcomes, euthanasia, field call, and field operation statistics were shared. Hock summarized significant cases from 2025.

6. **Director Report**

A. Sarah Hock, Executive Director

Hock presented January 2026 Shelter Statistics and Field Calls. This presentation detailed monthly intake data by species and jurisdiction, positive outcomes (adoption, transfer, and return to owner), and field call data trends through January 2026.

The Director's Report highlighted January activities, building maintenance needs, and legislative updates.

7. **Adjourn**

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

**Animal Services Shelter Statistics 2026**

26-Feb 25-Feb

**Intake**

**Total Animals Received (live and doa)**

Dogs	89	134
Cats	123	66
Other	5	498
Wild	14	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>703</b>

**Custody-Misc Reasons**

Dogs	5	8
Cats	1	3
Other	0	65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>76</b>

**Strays Received**

Dogs	68	71
Cats	63	47
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>118</b>

**Owner Surrendered**

Dogs	16	51
Cats	21	16
Other	5	433
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>500</b>

**Owner Status Refused**

Dogs	0	0
Cats	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**WILDLIFE HANDLED**

**Incoming**

Live	3	2
Doa	11	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>

**Outgoing**

Doa	11	3
Euthanized (sick/inj)	3	2
Died	0	0
Bat-Rabies check	0	0
Released/Transferred	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>

**Outgoing Animals**

**Total Animals Out, incl all categories below**

Dogs	93	147
------	----	-----

Cats	130	81
Other	8	498
Wild	14	5
Died, esc, stolen	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>731</b>

#### Animals Adopted

Dogs	46	53
Cats	37	50
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>103</b>

#### Animals Transferred

Dogs	7	9
Cats	38	8
Other	0	107
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>124</b>

#### Animals Reclaimed

Dogs	29	37
Cats	1	1
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>38</b>

#### Animals DOA

Dogs	5	9
Cats	9	7
Other	14	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>

#### All Euthanasia, Died, Escaped, Stolen (from pg 2)

Dogs	6	19
Cats	6	12
Other	6	388
Died, esc, stolen	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>419</b>

#### EUTHANASIA, DIED, ESCAPED, STOLEN

##### Shelter Animals Euthanized Unhealthy/Untreatable

Dogs	4	16
Cats	5	11
Other	3	19

##### Treatable - Rehabilitatable

Dogs	2	1
Cats	0	1
Other	0	1



**Animal Services Shelter Statistics 2026**

26-Mar

25-Mar

**Intake**

**Total Animals Received (live and doa)**

Dogs	98	141
Cats	114	122
Other	3	14
Wild	8	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>289</b>

**Custody-Misc Reasons**

Dogs	5	9
Cats	2	34
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>

**Strays Received**

Dogs	68	104
Cats	55	55
Other	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>159</b>

**Owner Surrendered**

Dogs	24	25
Cats	17	26
Other	0	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>65</b>

**Owner Status Refused**

Dogs	0	0
Cats	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**WILDLIFE HANDLED**

**Incoming**

Live	2	4
Doa	6	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>

**Outgoing**

Doa	6	8
Euthanized (sick/inj)	2	4
Died	0	0
Bat-Rabies check	0	0
Released/Transferred	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>

## Outgoing Animals

### Total Animals Out, incl all categories below

Dogs	90	170
Cats	131	122
Other	2	14
Wild	8	12
Died, esc, stolen	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>319</b>

### Animals Adopted

Dogs	37	75
Cats	41	63
Other	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>139</b>

### Animals Transferred

Dogs	10	13
Cats	16	19
Other	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>32</b>

### Animals Reclaimed

Dogs	33	28
Cats	5	3
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>31</b>

### Animals DOA

Dogs	5	15
Cats	10	16
Other	6	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>49</b>

### All Euthanasia, Died, Escaped, Stolen

Dogs	5	15
Cats	17	16
Other	2	18
Died, esc, stolen	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>50</b>

EUTHANASIA, DIED, ESCAPED, STOLEN

**Shelter Animals Euthanized**

**Unhealthy/Untreatable**

Dogs	4	13
Cats	17	13
Other	2	7

**Treatable - Rehabilitatable**

Dogs	1	2
Cats	0	0
Other	0	0

**Treatable - Manageable**

Dogs	0	2
Cats	0	1
Other	0	0

**Healthy**

Dogs	0	0
Cats	0	0
Other	0	0

**Total Shelter Euthanasia            24            38**

**Owner Request Euthanasia**

Dogs	16	7
Cats	6	4
Other	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>

**Died At Shelter                            2            1**

**Escaped/Stolen                            0            0**

FIELD AND OTHER SERVICES

**Animals Currently**

**Court Involved**

Dogs	0	0
Cats	0	0
Other	0	0

**Field Response**

Olympia	63	55
Lacey	62	45
Tumwater	21	24
Thurston County	111	122
JBLM	2	2
Other	4	2
Yelm	6	11
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>261</b>

**PDD/DD Appeals                            0            1**





# 2026 Shelter Statistics & Field Calls

JASCOM | April 20, 2026

All data is current through March 31, 2026.

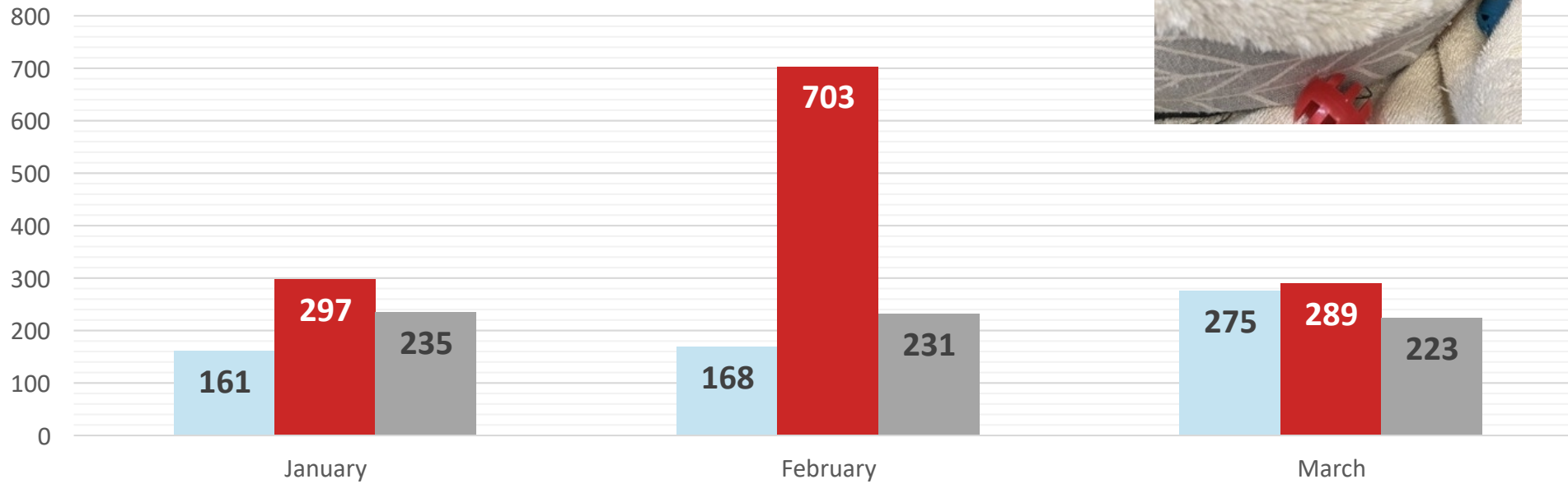


# Shelter Intake



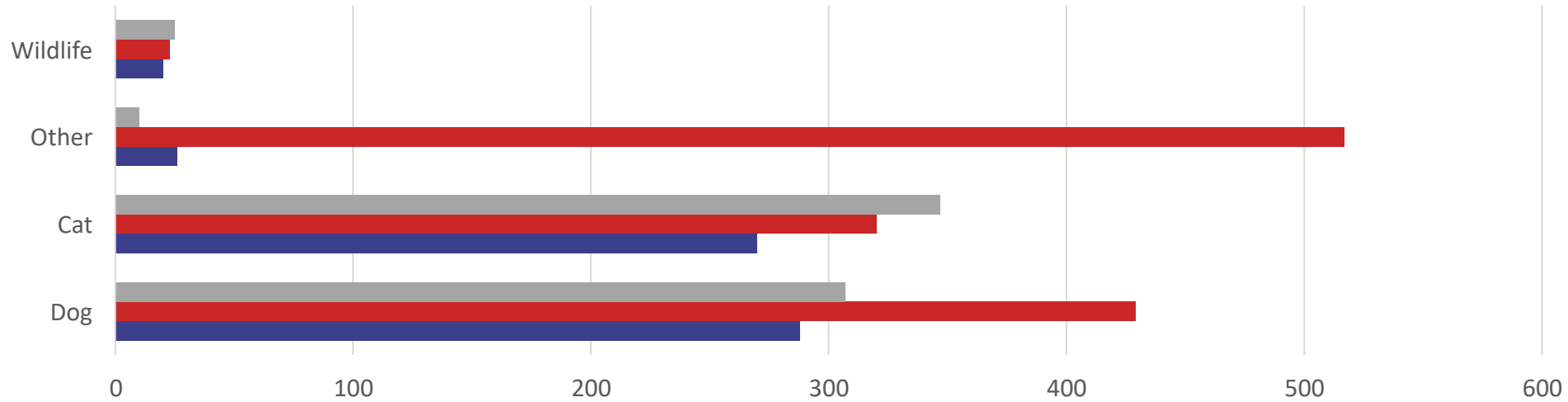
Intake by Month

2024 2025 2026



# Shelter Intake

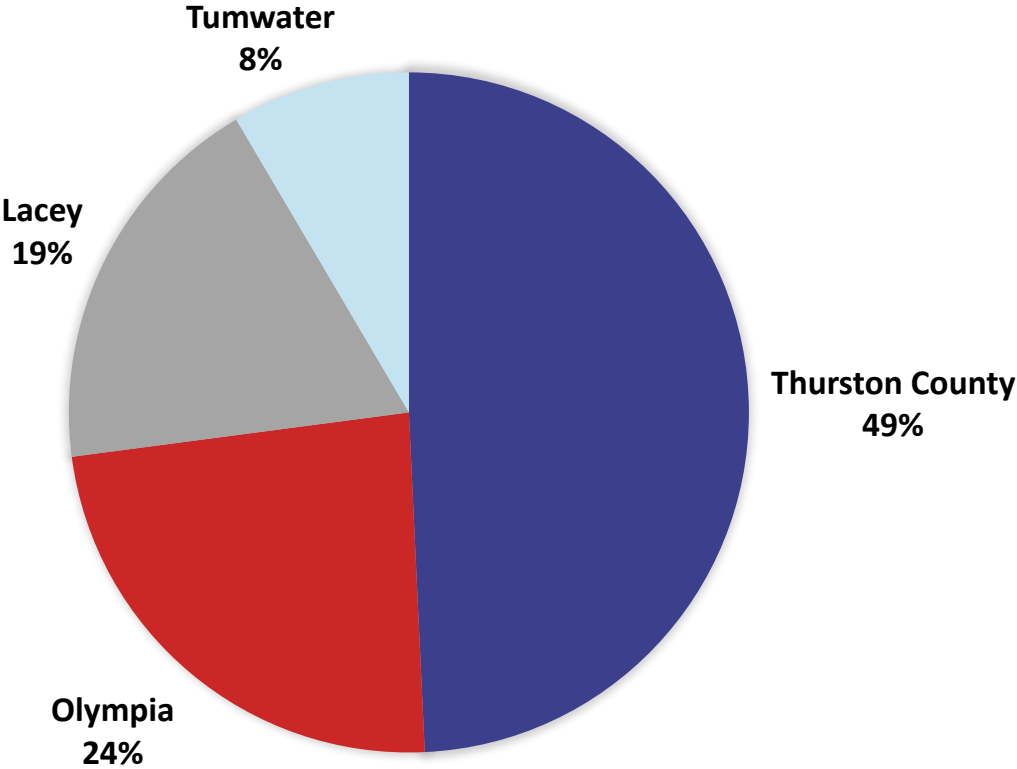
Intake by Animal



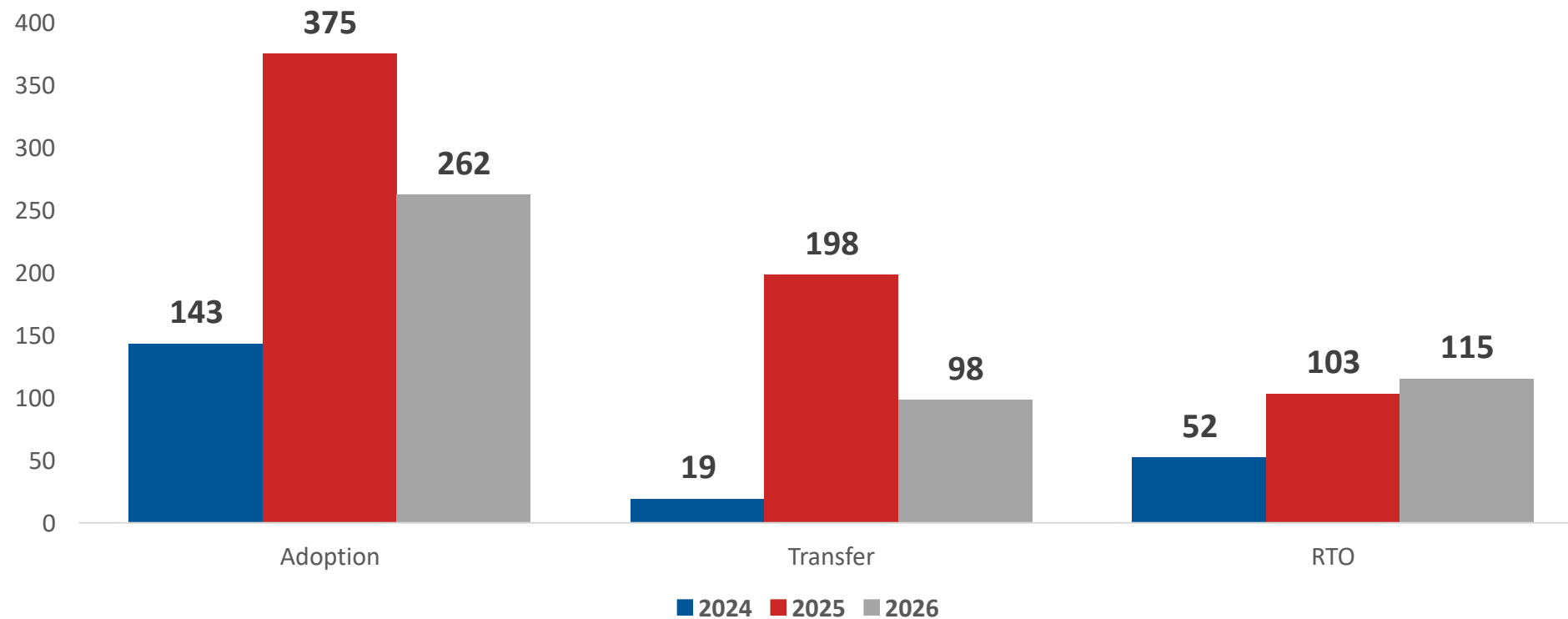
	Dog	Cat	Other	Wildlife
■ 2024	288	270	26	20
■ 2025	429	320	517	23
■ 2026	307	347	10	25



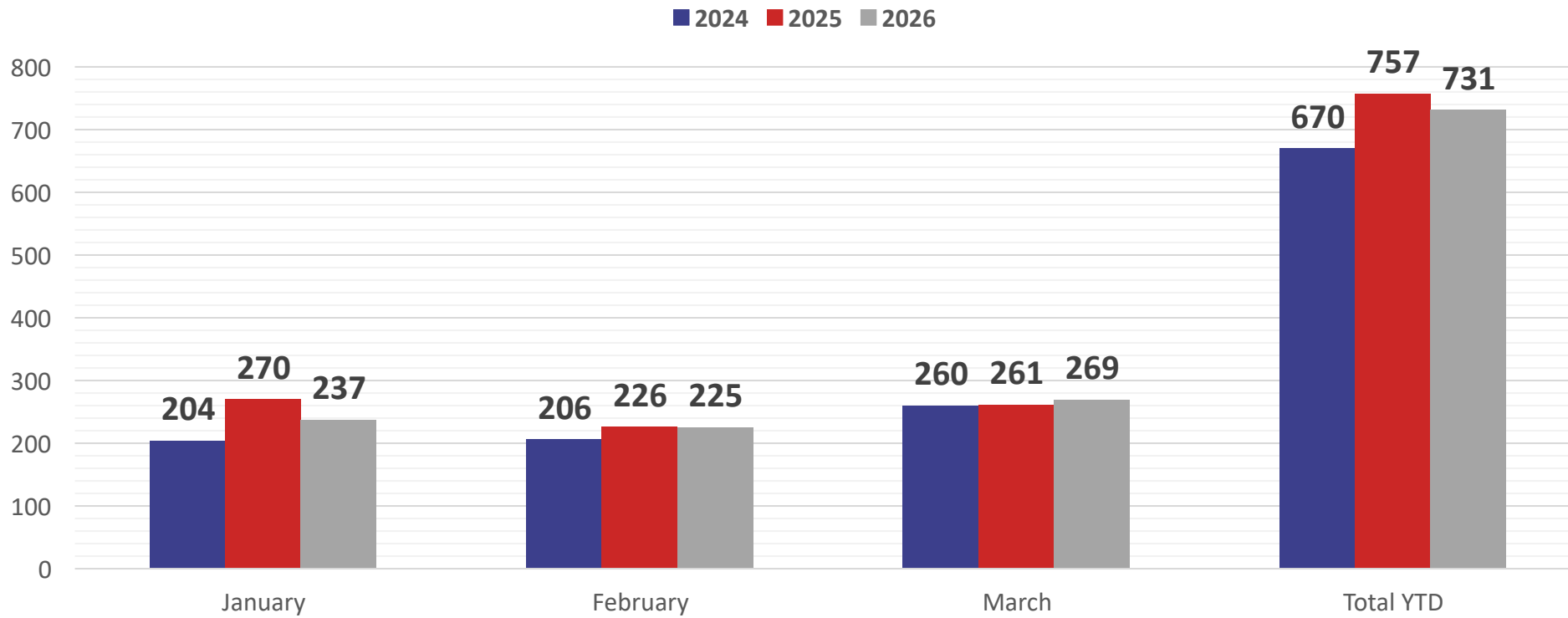
# Intake by Jurisdiction



# Positive Outcomes

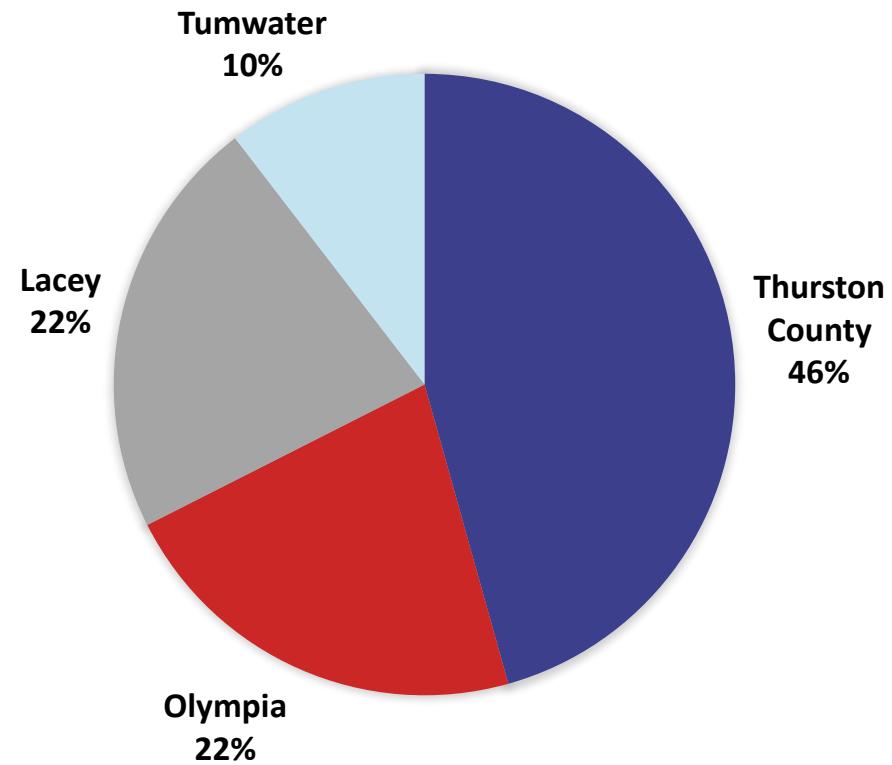


# Field Calls



# Field Calls by Jurisdiction

- Olympia – 4.43% decrease
- Lacey – 22% increase
- Tumwater – 7.46% increase
- Thurston County – 12.98% decrease





## STAFF REPORT

April 20th, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Best Friends Animal Society Embed Program Agreement

**RECOMMENDATION:** Motion to “authorize the City of Lacey to enter into the Best Friends National Shelter Embed Program Agreement on behalf of JAS”

**TO:** Joint Animal Services Commission

**STAFF CONTACT:** Sarah Hock, Animal Services Executive Director

**ORIGINATED BY:** Joint Animal Services

**ATTACHMENTS:** 1. Embed Agreement

**FISCAL NOTE:** There is no direct cost to JAS for the embedded staff position, as the position would be funded by Best Friends Animal Society.

Participation may require indirect investment through staff time, leadership engagement, data reporting, and operational adjustments necessary to support implementation and long-term sustainability.

**PRIOR REVIEW:** None

---

**BACKGROUND:** Best Friends Animal Society has invited Joint Animal Services (JAS) to participate in its National Shelter Embed Program, a short-term technical assistance initiative designed to help shelters implement proven lifesaving strategies and improve outcomes for dogs and cats. The program is supported in part by Maddie’s Fund® and is intended to accelerate progress that might otherwise take years to accomplish.

Under the proposed agreement, Best Friends would place a dedicated staff member onsite at JAS for an initial six-month term. The embedded staff member would work directly alongside JAS leadership and staff to help implement operational improvements, strengthen shelter programs, and support sustainable lifesaving outcomes.

The purpose of this partnership is to provide JAS with hands-on operational support and access to national expertise to help improve animal outcomes and modernize shelter operations. The draft agreement identifies the primary project goal as helping JAS work toward achieving and sustaining a 90% or higher save rate, while maintaining public safety and ensuring that all final decisions remain under JAS authority.

Participation in the National Shelter Embed Program would provide JAS with a unique opportunity to receive concentrated operational support that is difficult to replicate through standard staffing or consulting resources. Potential benefits include:

- Increased staff training and support;
- Improved consistency in lifesaving programming;
- Stronger operational systems and workflows;
- Increased access to external expertise and resources; and
- Greater long-term sustainability in shelter operations.

Staff believes this agreement represents a valuable opportunity for JAS to receive focused operational support from a nationally recognized animal welfare organization. At a time when shelters continue to face increasing intake, medical, staffing, and service pressures, this partnership could help JAS accelerate improvements in key program areas and strengthen systems that support both animal welfare and public service.

**Next Steps.** JASCOM could consider the following next steps:

**Option 1:** Authorize the City of Lacey to enter into the Best Friends National Shelter Embed Program Agreement on behalf of JAS.

**Option 2:** Decline participation in the National Shelter Embed Program and continue operational improvement efforts using existing internal resources only.

**Option 3:** Some other option not contemplated above.

## **Grant Agreement Between Best Friends Animal Society and City of Lacey**

This grant agreement (“Agreement”) is made and entered into between Best Friends Animal Society, a Utah nonprofit corporation (“Best Friends”) and The City of Lacey, a municipal corporation operating under the laws of the State of Washington (“Agency”). Each party shall be referred to herein individually as a “Party,” and collectively as the “Parties.” This Agreement shall be effective as of the date on which it is fully executed by both Parties.

### **BACKGROUND**

Best Friends is a leading national animal welfare organization dedicated to ending the killing of dogs and cats in America's shelters. Best Friends believes the no-kill philosophy is underpinned by one simple fact: every healthy or treatable animal should be saved. Generally, “no-kill” means that the shelter(s), private organizations, SPCAs and/or humane societies handling a community’s animal control intake and surrenders are collectively saving all healthy or treatable animals. The industry standard for a quantitative no-kill benchmark is saving ninety percent (90%) or more of the animals who come through the community system. In 2016, over 1 million cats and dogs were killed in America’s shelters because shelters did not have the community support, or the resources, they needed to save them. Best Friends is committed to change that and we know that no single organization can do it alone, so we are working with agencies to share our resources and expertise to help their community achieve no-kill. One way in which we facilitate this is through the national shelter embed program.

The national shelter embed program has roots dating back to 2011, when Best Friends piloted Community Cat Projects in partnership with PetSmart Charities®, which placed staff members in shelters to lead a game-changing program to dramatically increase cat save rates. Since that time, the national shelter embed program has expanded efforts to include all lifesaving programs in the shelter which are chosen for assistance. Staff members work side by side with agency leadership and staff to help them implement proven strategies to take their community to no-kill. Backed by a diverse array of subject-matter experts, embedded staff help partner organizations accomplish lifesaving goals that would normally take years in just a matter of months.

Best Friends has always believed that collaboration is the key to saving more lives. Best Friends has a vested interest in helping Agency continue to increase its save rate in a sustainable way and would like to work with Agency through the national shelter embed program to achieve this success.

### **AGREEMENT**

The activities covered by this Agreement are referred to as the “Project.”

#### **1. Proposal**

Agency is currently seeking leadership assistance to implement proven strategies to achieve and sustain a save rate of ninety percent (90%) or above. Best Friends would like to partner with Agency to support the shelter in achieving a minimum ninety percent (90%) save rate. The save rate calculation is determined using the following formula [(Live Intakes) – (Non-Live Outcomes)] divided by (Live Intakes). Best Friends proposes that Agency utilize a highly qualified Best Friends employee for the period of six (6) months from the mutually agreed upon Start Date (defined below) (the “Term”) subject to the termination provision herein. This employee will be deemed the Special Operations Strategist (“Position”) working with the Agency’s Operations

Manager. The Term can be extended on a monthly basis with the mutual written agreement of the Parties. The Term is subject to earlier termination by either Party as set forth below. The Position will be paid by Best Friends and would be covered by Best Friends insurance and benefits.

The Position would report to the Agency's Executive Director of Animal Services ("Designated Supervisor") as well as the Best Friends senior manager of national embed programming while in this role.

Additionally, Agency will need to provide this Position the ability to participate in program, procedural, and internal Agency policy/procedure decisions, as well as helping to direct employees on the implementation of lifesaving programs as approved by the Agency. In the event the Position experiences, is informed of or observes any harassment or other concerning behavior relating to Agency's employees or volunteers, the Position will utilize the appropriate Agency internal process to report such behavior.

The Position will have a proposed starting date of approximately four (4) weeks following the execution of this Agreement, or a date mutually agreed upon by the Agency and Best Friends ("Start Date"). The proposed Start Date allows for Best Friends to select the ideal candidate for this role and for the Best Friends employee to relocate.

The Position will help ensure the sustainability of the programs upon conclusion of their assignment at the shelter by Best Friends and will be available for ongoing support.

Agency has a strong and effective leadership which Best Friends believes will blend well with Best Friends progressive and effective executive leadership, lifesaving, animal services philosophy and programming. Best Friends has a variety of staff with modern sheltering and leadership skills. By filling the Position with a Best Friends staff person, the Agency can benefit from the outside operational knowledge, as well as the extended resources as the Position connects with other specialists within the Best Friends organization.

#### Benefits for Agency

- Ability to utilize talented and knowledgeable resource from outside the Agency to help facilitate transformational changes within the Agency.
- Ability to provide training and ongoing support for the Agency staff.
- Access to other Best Friends resources and expertise via the Best Friends staff person on-site.
- Operational improvements that will increase lifesaving within the Agency and improve reputation in the community, increasing community engagement and support.
- If the Parties do not fully execute this Agreement by April 24, 2026, Best Friends offer to work with Agency will expire and is automatically revoked. Best Friends will not be obligated to provide any support (financial or otherwise) to Agency if the offer expires and is automatically revoked.

## 2. Goals

The specific goal of the project is to achieve and sustain a ninety percent (90%) or higher save rate within the Term by implementing nationally proven programs, procedures and policies without compromise to public safety. Such programs, procedures and policies include, but are not limited to, a robust local adoption program, enhanced medical and sanitation protocols, collaborative relationships with other animal welfare agencies, increasing returns to owners, community cat programming, managed intake, community engagement, and robust foster and volunteer programs.

### **3. Commitment from Agency to Best Friends**

In order for Best Friends to devote this time and effort to Agency, Agency agrees to do the following in support of the implementation of lifesaving programs:

- A. Participate in a collaborative needs assessment on site by Best Friends prior to or at the start of the Term to determine agreed upon short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- B. Create and execute a communication strategy to all Agency staff to ensure embed staff, their purpose and the mutually agreed upon goals of this Agreement are properly socialized with the team.
- C. Grant the Position the authority to direct employees on the implementation of lifesaving programs from Attachment A as approved by the Agency's Executive Director.
- D. Provide appropriate statistics through the online reporting system designated by Best Friends. If Agency uses a shelter management software that can directly provide the information to the online reporting system, Agency will opt-in to allow the transfer of data directly to the designated online reporting system. If Agency is unable to use an online reporting system or the online reporting system is not yet available for Agency's use, Agency will report statistics directly to Best Friends program staff monthly, by the 5th of the following month (for example, January stats are due by February 5th), in the manner designated by Best Friends as well as any additional data requested to quantify success. Agency agrees to maintain data sharing for a minimum of twelve (12) months post conclusion of the Term.
- E. Agree to allow Position access to shelter software and provide Best Friends detailed data, beyond online reported statistics, to help with improvements of animal care and live outcome work as well as organizational sustainability.
- F. Use its best effort to increase the Agency's save rate calculation to ninety percent (90%) with the save rate calculation determined using the following formula  $[(\text{Live Intakes}) - (\text{Non-Live Outcomes})] \text{ divided by } (\text{Live Intakes})$ .
- G. Agree to attend scheduled meetings with the Senior Manager of National Shelter Embed Programming monthly and communicate between meetings as needed. Contact information to be provided by Best Friends.
- H. Allow for additional Best Friends staff to work at the Agency's facilities under the direction of the Position for additional support at no cost to the Agency, at the discretion of the Agency.
- I. Change any current programs, procedures, and policies under Agency's control, and, in compliance with any relevant registration or reporting requirements, proactively work with the relevant governmental officials to change any applicable ordinances that impede the ability of the shelter to achieve lifesavings goals including without limitation, the ability to institute and sustain lifesaving programs as agreed to in Attachment A.
- J. Subject to legal and/or budgetary constraints, change any current policies and procedures under Agency's control that are set forth as recommendations in the Operational Assessment Report derived from the onsite visit by Best Friends' Municipal Support Services team in August 2025, as attached to the Agreement as Attachment B.

### **4. Project Branding Terms and Promotion**

Agency shall cooperate with Best Friends regarding the promotion of the Project. Both Parties may issue reports or statements to its members, the media and the public about the Project. This includes, but is not limited to websites, newsletters, press releases, magazine articles, blogs, and

podcasts. Agency shall reasonably cooperate with Best Friends Network staff, volunteer team leaders, and news or magazine writers in the production of such news content. Agency agrees to cooperate with Best Friends and facilitate promotion of the Project through the Best Friends website, newsletters, electronic news distributions, press releases, and other media outlets. For the Term of this Agreement, Agency grants Best Friends a non-exclusive, royalty free license to use Agency's name and/or logo to promote Agency's lifesaving activities associated with the Project. Other than the forgoing, neither Party may use the other Party's logos, trademarks, or other intellectual property without express written permission of the other Party.

## **5. Agency's Representations and Warranties**

Agency represent and warrant that during the Term of this Agreement:

- A. Agency is a qualified 501(c)(3) entity or government organization;
- B. Agency is an activated member of the Best Friends Network;
- C. Agency acknowledges that their animal welfare activities may be governed by a variety of federal, state, and local laws. Agency hereby warrants that they shall use their best efforts to comply with all applicable laws and shall not knowingly violate same;
- D. Agency acknowledges and agrees that the Position will not be expected to perform any actions or tasks that conflict with the philosophical beliefs of Best Friends, and
- E. Agency acknowledges and agrees that, given the complex nature of the environment where the services are to be provided, Best Friends makes no guarantees as to whether any lifesaving goals set forth in this Agreement will be met. All decisions relating to policies, procedures, the care and disposition of animals remain the sole responsibility of Agency.

## **6. Termination**

- A. Termination by Agency
  1. Agency may terminate this Agreement upon providing fourteen (14) days written notice to Best Friends.
  2. Agency may terminate this Agreement upon providing five (5) business days written notice to Best Friends in the event of the following events of default:
    - i. By its actions or statements, Best Friends materially harms Agency in Agency's reasonable judgment; or
    - ii. Best Friends files for bankruptcy, or sells, assigns or transfers the majority of its assets to another entity, or ceases to operate as a nonprofit corporation.
    - iii. Agency may immediately terminate this agreement without penalty or further obligation upon written notice to Best Friends if Agency determines, in its sole and reasonable discretion, that the goals of the Agreement cannot be met.
- B. Termination by Best Friends
  1. Best Friends may terminate this Agreement upon providing fourteen (14) days written notice to Agency.
  2. Best Friends may terminate this Agreement upon providing five (5) business days written notice to Agency if by its actions or statements, Agency materially harms the reputation of Best Friends, as determined by Best Friends in Best Friends reasonable judgment.
  3. Best Friends may immediately terminate this agreement without penalty or further obligation upon written notice to Agency if Best Friend determines, in its sole and reasonable discretion, that the goals of the Agreement cannot be met. Such discretion may be based upon, but not limited to, factors including a determination by Best

Friends that adequate care of animals is not or cannot be met by Agency or the lack of care provided to animals rises to the level of cruelty, Agency's limitations in staffing, Agency's willingness to implement programming necessary to the goals of the Project, timeliness of Agency's action in implementing programming, policy and/or procedural changes or other items which may impact the success of the mutually agreed upon goals of the Project.

4. Best Friends may immediately terminate this Agreement without penalty or any further obligation upon written notice to Agency in the event that Best Friends determines that it lacks the financial ability to continue to support the Project. In such event Best Friends shall be solely responsible for implementation of any decision as it relates to Best Friends employees.

#### **7. Photo, Video, Digital and Audio Access and Release**

Agency grants to Best Friends (including its employees, contractors and agents), the nonexclusive, perpetual, royalty-free right, license, and permission to photograph, video, and audio record any of Agency's programs or events, associated with the Project for the duration of the Project and to use such materials in any manner including for identification purposes, to promote or report about Best Friends events, activities and mission; to raise donations, or for other purposes. Agency warrants to Best Friends that it has received any permissions needed to grant such rights and will indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Best Friends from any claim that its use of such materials as permitted in this Agreement infringes any third-party rights.

#### **8. Non-Disparagement**

During the Term of this Agreement and for three (3) years after this Agreement's termination, Agency agrees to take reasonable commercial measures to ensure that its representatives and official media outlets do not make public statements, including but not limited to social media posts, regarding the activities covered by this Agreement that are intended to or likely to bring Best Friends into disrepute.

#### **9. General Release**

Except for Best Friends gross negligence or intentional misconduct, Agency, their directors, officers, employees, representatives, agents, successors, and assigns, agree never to bring a claim or suit against Best Friends relating to the Project and its receipt of services. Except for Best Friends gross negligence or intentional misconduct, Agency agrees Best Friends and its directors, officers, employees, representatives, agents, successors and assigns are not responsible for any of the decisions, plans, guidelines, work, or activities related to or arising from the Project. Except for Best Friends gross negligence or intentional misconduct, Agency releases Best Friends and its directors, founders, employees, officers, agents, representatives, contractors, volunteers, successors and assigns from all liability arising from any work or activities related to the Project. Except for Best Friends gross negligence or intentional misconduct, Agency understand this Agreement discharges Best Friends and its directors, founders, employees, officers, agents, representatives, contractors, volunteers, successors and assigns from any liability to Agency with respect to bodily injury, personal injury, illness, death, property damage or other loss of any kind or nature whatsoever, direct or indirect, known or unknown, that may result as a result of Agency's work, participation and activities related to this Project.

## **10. Indemnity Agreement**

Agency and its directors, officers, agents, employees, representatives, successors and assigns, agree to indemnify and hold Best Friends harmless for all bodily injury, personal injury, illness, death, property damage or other losses of any kind or nature whatsoever, direct or indirect, known or unknown, including reasonable attorney's fees and costs of litigation that result to anyone else or any other entity because of actions or omissions related to the Project or Agency's breach of this Agreement. This includes lone acts or omissions by Agency as well as the combined acts of Agency with others.

Best Friends and its directors, officers, agents, employees, representatives, successors and assigns agree to indemnify and hold Agency harmless from all bodily injury, personal injury, illness, death, property damage or other losses of any kind or nature whatsoever, direct or indirect, known or unknown, including reasonable attorney fees and costs of litigation that result to anyone else or any other entity that is primarily the result of Best Friends' officers, employees or agents' physical presence on Agency's property for activities relating to this Agreement or at events directly connected with the Project.

## **11. Insurance**

Each Party agrees to maintain reasonable insurance coverage to cover their activities in connection with this Agreement. This includes but is not limited to workers compensation coverage required by the State of Washington.

## **12. Survival of Terms**

Intellectual property rights, including the rights to use photos, digital, audio and video materials, agreed to in this Agreement are perpetual. The releases and indemnity agreements are perpetual. The Non-Disparagement clause survives for three years following the conclusion of the Project.

## **13. Proprietary Information**

Agency acknowledges and agree that the following constitute "Proprietary Information": any secret or proprietary information relating directly to Best Friends business, including, but not limited to, the Best Friends Network and donation process, services, members, donor and volunteer lists, business policies, employment records and policies, operational methods, marketing plans and strategies, business development plans, new personnel acquisition plans, technical processes, designs and design projects, inventions and research programs, trade know-how, trade secrets, specific software, algorithms, computer processing systems, object and source codes, user manuals, systems documentation, and other business and financial affairs of Best Friends. It is not anticipated that Agency will have access to Best Friends proprietary information as a result of this Agreement. Nonetheless, Agency acknowledges and agrees that in the event Agency learns of or come into possession of any Best Friends proprietary information, Agency will notify Best Friends and return said information. Agency agrees that they will not use, supply or disclose any Proprietary Information it happens to learn of to any third party.

## **14. Personal Property**

During the Agreement, Best Friends may provide personal property for the use of the Position and employees or volunteers of Agency to assist in Agency's work. In the event that Agency utilizes any such personal property, Agency hereby accepts the personal property is provided in "AS-IS", WHERE IS" condition subject to and WITH ALL FAULTS. BEST FRIENDS MAKES NO

REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY OF ANY KIND OR NATURE WITH RESPECT TO THE GOODS, AND EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION ANY IMPLIED WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, WHETHER ARISING BY LAW, COURSE OF PERFORMANCE, COURSE OF DEALING, OR USAGE OF TRADE. For the avoidance of doubt, Agency's use of the personal property is covered by the indemnification obligation set forth in this Agreement and Agency releases Best Friends from any and all liability under any legal theory relating to the use of such personal property. At the termination of this Agreement, Best Friends, in its sole discretion, may leave all or some of this personal property for the continued use of Agency ("Donated Personal Property"). In such event, Best Friends will provide a list of substantial pieces of the Donated Personal Property or otherwise designate what is being left as Donated Personal Property to Agency. The title to any such Donated Personal Property will transfer on the date Best Friends indicates and such Donated Personal Property continues to be subject to the disclaimers and limitations of warranties, release, and indemnification coverage by Agency as set forth in this section.

#### **15. Monetary Grant Opportunities and Requirements**

Agency acknowledges and agrees that, unless specifically provided in this Agreement, Best Friends and its representatives have made no actual or implied promise of any grant funding. In the event that Agency is selected to receive a monetary grant from Best Friends during the Term of this Agreement, the Parties will mutually agree in writing upon any additional reporting or other obligations Agency will have associated with such grant. The grant funds will be provided to Agency upon receipt by Best Friends of Agency's IRS Form W-9. Agency will be informed if grant funds will be disbursed using a schedule and will be subject to Agency meeting specific reporting or other obligations. In addition to abiding by the requirement that any grant funds be used in furtherance of the purposes as agreed to by the Agency, Agency specifically agrees that no portion of any grant funds will be used for any of the following: (i) to lobby or otherwise attempt to influence legislation; (ii) to influence outcome of any specific public election or participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office or conduct, directly or indirectly; (iii) to support or oppose any elected official or candidate for public office or on any particular issue. The provisions of this Agreement will apply in connection with all uses of any grant funds provided by Best Friends during the Term of this Agreement, unless Agency and Best Friends have entered into a separate agreement specifically related to such grant.

#### **16. No Third-Party Beneficiaries**

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to give any person or entity other than the Parties to this Agreement any legal or equitable claim, right or remedy; rather, this Agreement is intended to be for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Parties hereto.

#### **17. Notices**

Any notice required or provided for under this Agreement shall be provided in writing, and shall be deemed given when either personally delivered, sent by e-mail with return/read receipt requested, sent by Certified U.S. Mail return receipt requested, delivered by courier and confirmed in writing, to the other Party at the address and/or contact set forth below or to such other address as may be provided in writing for the delivery of notices hereunder. E-mail notices sent as provided above shall be deemed sufficient notice for purposes of this Agreement:

If to Agency:                    Joint Animal Services  
    Attn: Sarah Hock  
    3120 Martin Way E  
    Olympia, WA 98506  
    Tel: 360-352-2510  
    Email: sarahjh@jointanimalservices.org

If to Best Friends:            Best Friends Animal Society  
    Attn: Scott Giacoppo  
    5001 Angel Canyon Rd.  
    Kanab, UT 84741  
    Tel: (435) 644-2001  
    Email: scottg@bestfriends.org  
    with a copy to legal@bestfriends.org

#### **18. Other**

These terms of this Agreement bind the successors and assigns of the Parties. Each term of this Agreement is material. Agency expressly agrees the releases and indemnity agreement are intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by law. The Parties agrees that in the event that any clause or provision of this Agreement shall be held to be invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity of such clause or provision shall not otherwise affect the remaining provisions of this Agreement. This is the entire agreement between the Parties and supersedes any other verbal or written statements, representations, or promises. No Party is responsible in any way for the debts of the other Party, or any breach of any law, rule, regulation, complaint, grievance, custom, or guideline of the other. No Party has authority to bind the other to any contractual or other agreements and in no event shall any Party represent or hold itself out as acting on behalf of the Party hereto. This Agreement shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington. Any disputes arising out of or related to this Agreement will be resolved in a State or Federal court of competent jurisdiction in Washington.

*The remainder of this page is left intentionally blank. The signature page follows.*

By signing below, each Party acknowledges that the individual executing the Agreement on behalf of the entity has the authority to execute this Agreement, has read and understand this Agreement, and indicates the intent to electronically sign and have the Party be bound by the terms and conditions therein. The Parties agree that any electronic signature is intended to authenticate this writing and to have the same force and effect as a manual signature for purposes of validity, enforceability, and admissibility.

**City of Lacey**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Best Friends Animal Society**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Attachment A:**

Recommendations, as mutually agreed to by way of this Attachment, shall consider all reasonable interpretations of local ordinances, state statutes, and other governing regulations in order to allow implementation of the agreed upon recommendations. Agreed recommendations to implement per section 3 of the Grant Agreement Between Best Friends Animal Society and the Agency:

1. **Field Services:** The Project will comply with local and state laws and regulations, as well as recommendations established by organizations such as the National Animal Control Association, including, but not limited to, Managed Intake for non-emergent situations or owner surrendered animals and Return to Owner in the Field practices. The Agency further acknowledges and agrees to advise and implement these practices in each department under its control which may have the authority to enforce local and state laws.
2. **Staffing Levels:** The Agency will maintain adequate staffing levels at the facility to ensure full shift coverage seven days a week, including holidays. Such staffing levels should be sufficient to fulfill daily routine care and enrichment responsibilities and to provide support for the additional recommendations outlined in the Agreement and this Attachment.
3. **Daily Care and Enrichment:** Expectations for the Project consider enrichment to be as important as food and water. The Agency shall ensure that enrichment is prioritized equally with comprehensive daily care. The Agency agrees to provide comprehensive daily care and enrichment for all dogs and cats within the shelter, recognizing its critical role in supporting the animals' mental well-being and mitigating shelter-induced behavioral challenges.
4. **Sanitation:** The Project will adhere to the standards set by organizations such as the Association of Shelter Veterinarians.
5. **Community Cat Programming (CCPs):** The Agency will allow for a CCP as determined by the Project. CCPs are a humane, fiscally responsible, and effective program that provides an immediate, lasting response for cats in and out of shelters. The Agency specifically acknowledges and agrees to take all reasonable efforts during the duration of the project to revise local ordinances hindering or impeding, whether real or perceived, in order to continue CCP subsequent to the project.
6. **Kitten Intake Diversion and Neonate Fostering:** The Agency shall implement and maintain procedures to provide alternatives to the general intake of healthy kittens. The Agency shall evaluate and determine the most appropriate options to address the specific needs of each kitten. Furthermore, the Agency agrees to ensure that all kittens entering the shelter receive a high standard of care.
7. **Volunteer and Foster Programming:** The Agency will work to expand the current volunteer program that includes recruitment, training, and engaging with existing volunteers.
8. **Adoption Programming:** The Agency will implement open adoption practices, including removing the barriers to adoption for people who want to provide a loving home for pets and ensuring the entire process is positive and accessible for everyone. This could also include extending open adoption hours, including but not limited to extending hours for adoption on weekends.
9. **Community Engagement:** The Agency and Project leadership will work to understand problems from the community's perspective and create solutions with shared buy-in, which can help increase the community's capacity to care for pets. The goal is to develop meaningful relationships with people to motivate them to get involved in filling a need or solving a community problem.

Attachment B:



---

# Joint Animal Services



## Operational Assessment Report

August 2025

---

*Prepared by the Best Friends National Shelter Support Team*

## About Best Friends Animal Society

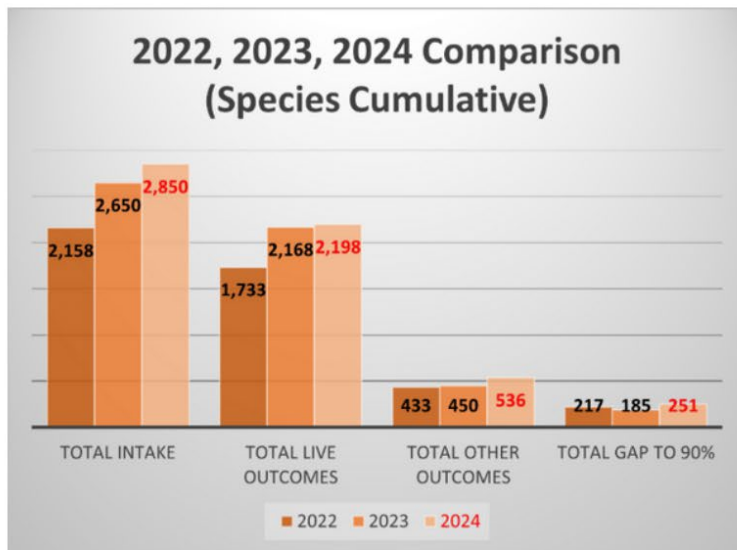
Best Friends Animal Society is a leading animal welfare organization dedicated to saving the lives of dogs and cats in America's shelters and making the entire country no-kill. Founded in 1984, Best Friends runs lifesaving facilities and programs nationwide in partnership with more than 5,000 shelters and rescue organizations.



From our headquarters in Kanab, Utah, we also operate the nation's largest no-kill animal sanctuary – a destination that brings our mission to life for thousands of visitors each year. We maintain the most comprehensive animal sheltering data in the country and make it accessible to the public – empowering communities with critical insights into the needs of their local shelters and how they can help. We believe every dog and cat deserves a home. And we believe that, by working together, we can Save Them All®.

## Defining the opportunity

Joint Animal Services has expressed a desire to reach and exceed a save rate of 90% (the benchmark for no-kill). Joint Animal Services has maintained a relatively stable save rate over the last few years, despite rising intake. We feel that there are opportunities to expedite and expand lifesaving through programmatic and philosophical changes.



## Introduction

Best Friends Animal Society's national shelter support team provides customized assessments and support for individual animal shelters and the communities they serve. Through the municipal and shelter support program, each community receives a shelter operations and field services assessment (if applicable) designed to identify specific areas of need and help implement best practices in animal welfare. Ongoing support is also provided to ensure that new programs and practices are sustainable and successful. Our team uses a collaborative approach to each shelter partnership and believes that every shelter should have the opportunity to determine its own organizational needs based on lifesaving impact in that community. As a rule, we avoid a one-size-fits-all approach because, just like every individual animal, each shelter and its community has its own individual personality and needs.

On August 5th-7th, 2025, members of the Best Friends national shelter support team conducted a shelter assessment for Joint Animal Services. This document provides the findings and recommendations for the Joint Animal Services team. Areas where improvement is needed will be highlighted and followed by recommendations based on nationally recognized proven strategies for success in shelter operations. Once the recommendations are accepted by shelter leadership, staff at Best Friends will work with shelter leadership to create an implementation plan and schedule periodic meetings to discuss progress and challenges.

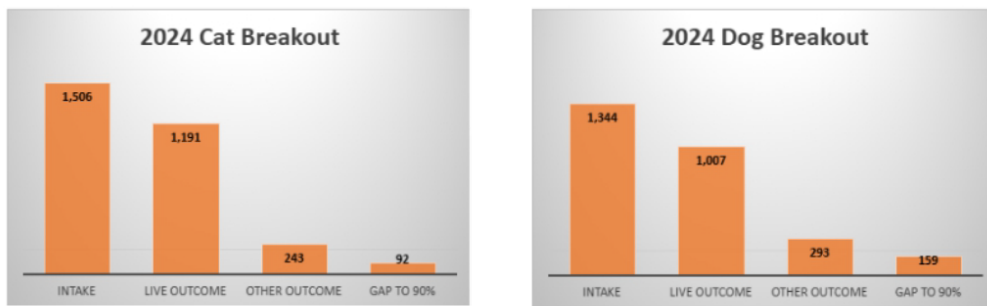


## Shelter data

Joint Animal Services (JAS) provides sheltering and field services to multiple cities and counties in Washington, with the majority of intake coming from the City of Lacey, the City of Olympia, and unincorporated Thurston County.

Using 2024 as a full-year baseline, the agency took in 2,850 animals. Of those, 1,344 were dogs and 1,506 were cats. The shelter does occasionally take in other species of animals (livestock, wildlife or other non-companion animals), but for the purposes of this assessment, Best Friends focused predominantly on cats and dogs. This number represents a 7% increase in cat and dog intake from 2023 and a 32% increase from 2022.

The overall 2024 save rate for dogs and cats for JAS was 81.2%. The benchmark for no-kill is a 90% save rate, so this data shows a lifesaving gap of 251 dogs and cats who need to be saved to achieve that status.



In 2024, JAS had an adoption rate of 50% which should be celebrated. Broken down by species, the adoption rate for dogs was 45% and cats was 55%. Return-to-owner rates for 2024 were 24% for dogs and 2.8% for cats. Transfer rates for 2024 were 14% of all cat intake and 6% of all dog intake. These outcomes reflect a strong foundation, especially considering JAS' limited facility space, and provide an encouraging starting point for further growth.

## Kudos

Before focusing on recommendations, it's important to highlight the many areas where JAS is excelling. The dedication and creativity of the team are evident in every aspect of their work:

- JAS staff are compassionate, dedicated, and work well as a team.
- The volunteer program, events, and foster leadership have made great strides in a short period of time.
- Leadership prioritizes staff health and mental well-being.
- JAS has fantastic trails and outdoor play yards for dogs.
- At-risk committee meetings show that euthanasia decisions are not taken lightly.
- JAS has a strong and upbeat social media presence.
- JAS makes sure to maximize their resources despite having a small facility.
- JAS is open, honest and transparent with their community.
- JAS recently implemented the “champion dog program”, a behavior program focused on rehabilitation of dogs with behavior issues supported by volunteers that have adequate handling experience (24 volunteers so far). This shows JAS’ initiative on targeting at-risk populations with focused programming.
- The lifesaving programs (foster, volunteer, events) at JAS have greatly improved and grown since bringing on two dedicated staff members to oversee the programs.
- Going deeper into JAS’ history, we want to recognize shelter leadership for changing the narrative of animal services in their community by shutting down the drop boxes and implementing forward-facing lifesaving programs.
- The ACR (animal cruelty response) program enables trained volunteers to be able to assist on-scene for large animal cruelty cases. This creative deployment of volunteers enables more efficient processes and allows the community to support these important efforts.

## Operational assessment and recommendations

---

Joint Animal Services is currently working on the development and improvement of several lifesaving programs that will create sustainable lifesaving well into the future. At the time of our assessment visit, many of these programs and changes were relatively new. With time, consistency, and expanded support, JAS will see improvements in lifesaving and community impact.

Joint Animal Services does a wonderful job serving their community, but are limited due to the small, outdated shelter they operate out of. Many of the areas of improvement that the assessment team identified are a result of the facility's limitations. JAS is currently exploring options for acquiring/building a new facility.

In the sections below are observations made on-site during our visit, common themes derived from the JAS staff members we interviewed as part of the assessment, and recommendations based on those observations and interviews. The recommendations are followed by a comprehensive list of resources to be used in conjunction with Best Friends' ongoing support to implement these recommendations.

**To increase the organization's lifesaving capacity, the recommendations are presented in order of priority:**

- 1 Cat lifesaving**
- 2 Dog lifesaving**
- 3 Lifesaving programs**
- 4 Intake and dispatch**

### Cat lifesaving

In 2024, JAS achieved an 83.9% cat save rate, rising slightly to 85.4% year-to-date in 2025. These numbers are encouraging, but with focused adjustments, JAS can push live outcomes for cats even higher.

#### Community cat program recommendations

- We recommend that JAS discontinue the intake of healthy ear-tipped cats, unless that cat is failing to thrive or involved in a bite case. We recommend providing training for staff to ensure that all staff members can fully explain the community cat program to community members and why ear-tipped cats should not be impounded.
  - We recommend that all staff and involved volunteers also receive complaint mitigation training to maximize successful mitigation of community complaints around outdoor cats. Best Friends is willing to provide this training virtually or can provide recorded training.
- The current community cat program (CCP) is limited by staff and volunteer bandwidth. We recommend that JAS work to recruit volunteers to support the community cat program and build out specific volunteer teams to support the different aspects of the CCP. We recommend using volunteer position descriptions and targeted recruiting for these volunteer roles. Sample CCP volunteer position descriptions can be found [here](#).
  - Currently, friendly stray cats are only returned to their original location through the community cat program when bandwidth allows. If transportation is not available, they are placed on the adoption floor regardless of ear-tip status. We recommend that JAS leverage available staff (including the field services team), volunteers, and finders to ensure all healthy stray cats have the opportunity to return to their outdoor homes and caregivers. This will also refocus staff bandwidth on those cats that truly need to be in the shelter's care.
  - We recommend that JAS discontinue the practice of leasing traps to the public, except for the purposes of trapping sick/injured animals, as the CCP is unable to manage the current intake of cats. Trap leases can be reinstated once there is bandwidth for surgery and return-to-field for incoming stray cats.

- JAS should employ more information gathering at intake for case-by-case situations of cat intake, especially kittens under four months of age. We recommend that intake staff, community cat program staff and volunteers, and dispatch receive training in kitten intake diversion. Kitten intake diversion resources can be found in the resources section below. This [resource](#) can also be used to guide the information collection process.

### **Cat housing recommendations**

- The current size of the stray cat housing is too small. We recommend that JAS review the [ASV \(Association of Shelter Veterinarians\) guidelines](#) and ensure that cat housing is in line with best practice. We recognize that JAS is limited by facility restrictions and recommend considering adding additional cat housing to allow for adequate cage size as a priority.
- All cats should have access to a hiding space in their kennel. We recommend adding mammal dens or [alternate hiding spaces](#) for all cats in the shelter's care to reduce stress and illness.

### **Medical and foster**

- We recommend that JAS work to expand specialized foster care for neonates, cats with health issues (e.g., ringworm), and other special needs.
  - Currently, cats with positive ringworm diagnoses are euthanized at the end of the day if there is no foster commitment. JAS does not have a current list of fosters in waiting to be contacted for these cases. We suggest working to create a list of available foster homes that can be called upon prior to euthanasia for this population. Additionally, it is recommended to utilize available transfer partners to take in cats with ringworm or other medical issues. The Best Friends' Pacific regional team can support building a transfer partnership to assist with this population of cats.
  - JAS should also implement ringworm cat treatment protocols to minimize spread and impact of ringworm on the shelter population. Supporting information and a sample protocol can be found in the resources section below.
  - JAS currently has nowhere to house isolation cats for ringworm as the isolation room is used as a holding area for the community cat program. We recommend considering a temporary solution to increase cat housing while JAS operates out of the current facility, such as the addition of a climate-controlled shed, trailer, catio or similar housing unit.

### Dog lifesaving

In 2024, JAS achieved a 78.2% dog save rate, rising slightly to 79.7% year-to-date in 2025. Building on current efforts can further reduce length of stay and improve outcomes.

#### Enrichment and behavior

- The assessment staff observed that during the at-risk meeting the behavioral notes that were shared were primarily in-kennel observations. This is due to limited bandwidth and the restricted volunteer program leading to limited out-of-kennel time for many dogs and therefore limited out-of-kennel behavioral notes. There is a need to increase behavioral information collection during the intake process and from kennel volunteers. More in-depth behavioral notes would allow more informed euthanasia decisions at the at-risk meetings.
- As previously mentioned, Best Friends applauds JAS' volunteer department for creating the "champion dog" program. This program will target the need for more out-of-kennel time and enrichment for dogs in the shelter's care. This increase in enrichment and exercise will be essential to minimizing kennel stress.
- Implementation of a running club or similar community group would ensure dogs are getting necessary physical exercise. The current dog day out program can be prioritized and further promoted to meet this need.

#### Adoptions

- The public is not allowed into the stray dog area due to housing for court hold and bite dogs sharing the same space. This is leading to increased length of stay and limited exposure for available dogs that are housed in the stray dog area. We recommend JAS explore options for sectioning off part of this housing area to allow a restricted area for these dogs to be housed, while allowing the public access to the available dogs housed in this area.
- We recommend that JAS begin allowing pre-adoption of animals while they are still on stray hold. This is common practice across the country and will help reduce the average length of stay and improve animal flow. While the public is unable to view these animals due to the above recommendation, these animals can be promoted via social media with scheduled meet-and-greets for potential adopters as a temporary solution.

- The assessment team identified several barriers on the adoption application, such as landlord checks, fence checks, and licensing requirements. Whether they are implemented in practice or not, we advise JAS to embrace a [“Adopters Welcome”](#) model and work to reduce barriers in the adoption process.

### **Foster program**

- We recommend that JAS focus on recruiting targeted fosters for at-risk dog populations (e.g., behavior cases). A [“unicorn foster program”](#) or similar approach can ensure resources and targeted pathway planning is applied to each at-risk animal’s case. The resources below and additional support from Best Friends will aid JAS in expanding the foster program.
-

### Lifesaving programs

#### Managed intake

The assessment team found that there are improvement opportunities to the managed intake program at JAS. Best Friends is willing and able to support JAS to strengthen current managed intake processes to be more robust and accessible.

There is minimal support given to owners looking to surrender their pets outside of a surrender appointment. Currently, JAS has a six to seven month wait list for owner surrenders, but minimal resources are provided to the owner for retention or rehoming.

- We recommend that JAS expand their managed intake program, which can be supported by volunteers, to ensure each owner seeking surrender is provided with counseling, support, and resources to either resolve issues to allow them to keep the pet at home or find a positive outcome outside of shelter impoundment through home-to-home placement. The resources below and support from Best Friends can be used to further build out this program.
- The agency's website has very few resources listed for owner surrenders and one JAS staff member mentioned that they often refer owners to the Tacoma Humane website to find these resources. We recommend updating the agency website to ensure community members have access to all available resources for keeping their pets or rehoming them outside of shelter impoundment. Alternatively, a separate website focused on support for owners seeking surrender may be easier to direct community members to.

#### Finder-to-foster

- We recommend that JAS implement a friendly finder or finder-to-foster program. This [playbook](#) can be used as a starting point and there are many successful programs across the country that JAS can review when building out this new program.

#### Volunteer

- A background check is currently required for volunteers, but not for fosters. We recommend working with city and county leadership to reduce barriers to the volunteer program to ensure the success of lifesaving programs at JAS.

## Medical

- Currently, the medical team operates out of a single-wide trailer, which is a creative and practical solution to navigating the facility limitations. While this is a great step forward, the size of the clinic still does not meet the surgical and medical needs of the shelter population. For example, on surgery days, the team's capacity to provide routine medical care is constrained, requiring much of that work to take place outside of the clinic. Additionally, the facility cannot support running two washing machines simultaneously, creating operational delays that impact the broader shelter workflow. As outlined earlier in this report, many of the shelter's challenges can be traced back to the facility itself, and it is likely these issues will persist until a new building becomes feasible.

## Staffing

- Currently, two staff members manage the foster program, rescue/transfer efforts, community cat programming, volunteer programming, and community events. Despite this stretch in bandwidth, the volunteer program has increased from 75 active volunteers to 90 in less than a year. They have also held 24 community events in the past year, condensed a lengthy onboarding process for volunteers and fosters, and had a 20% increase in dogs going to foster. While we commend the efforts made, we advise JAS to consider adding an additional staff member to increase the bandwidth for these pivotal programs and support further successes.
-

### Intake and dispatch

The assessment team found that JAS has an opportunity to reduce unnecessary intake and provide more community support at the point of intake and over the phone via dispatch.

- JAS intake and dispatch staff should receive training on community cat complaint mitigation and general concepts in community cat programming to enable them to have more successful conversations with the public and limit unnecessary intake (i.e. ear-tipped cats). Conversation guides can be helpful for newer staff or when implementing new policies and Best Friends can provide sample conversation guides.
  - Similarly, minimal support is offered to finders of stray dogs both through dispatch and on intake. Ideally, return-to-home efforts should start at the initial contact with the finder either at dispatch or at the intake desk. We recommend that both departments receive training on field return-to-home and lifesaving dispatch training. Resources for both can be found below.
  - A more detailed phone tree would help direct call traffic to appropriate departments and provide targeted resources before callers reach dispatch or intake.
-

## Conclusion

Joint Animal Services has already made impressive strides in improving outcomes and building community trust. With continued commitment and by implementing the recommendations outlined here and with the current efforts already underway, JAS has the potential to increase their presence as a leading lifesaving resource in the region. Best Friends Animal Society stands by Joint Animal Services ready to assist with strategy and implementation, provided that leadership and staff are all in full support.



*Disclaimer: Best Friends' reports are based upon observations and information available at the time of the assessment of your operations. We do not claim (1) that we have discovered any or all existing or potential hazards or (2) that your business locations or operations are in compliance with any law, rule or regulation. We assume no responsibility for the control or correction of hazards and do not warrant that the implementation of any of our recommendations will result in (1) the elimination of any unsafe conditions or (2) compliance with any standards, codes, ordinances, regulations, statutes or laws.*

## Resources

The following resources can assist Joint Animal Services with implementing the recommendations given above.

### Cat lifesaving

Community cat programming:

- [Best Friends comprehensive Community Cat Programs Handbook](#)
- [Best Friends webinar on mitigating nuisance cat complaints](#)
- [Best Friends Humane Animal Control manual chapter on Management of Stray and Feral Cats](#)
- [A Long-Term Lens: Cumulative Impacts of Free-Roaming Cat Management Strategy and Intensity on Preventable Cat Mortalities](#)
- [Guidelines for medical care for community cats](#)
- [The Dilemma of the Friendly Outdoor Cat](#)
- [HumanePro: Returning Healthy Feral Cats: Tips for veterinary care during trap-neuter-return](#)
- [ASPCA Pro: Special Considerations for Community Cats at Spay/Neuter Clinic](#)
- [Alley Cats Allies: Biology and Behavior of the Cat](#)
- [Sample shelter cat intake form](#)

Kitten lifesaving:

- [Best Friends Kitten Lifesaving Resources](#)
- [Dr. Kate Hurley's webinar on Kitten Intake Decisions](#)
- [What to do if you find kittens flyer](#)
- [Stray kitten intake guidelines](#)

Medical and housing:

- [Ringworm Management Playbook | Best Friends Animal Society - Save Them All](#)
- [Sample Ringworm protocol](#)
- [Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters](#)
- [Checklist version](#)
- [Feline Housing and Enrichment Training Playbook](#)
- [ASPCA resource: Hiding Places Mean Happier Cats](#)
- [Shelter housing for cats: Principles of design for health, welfare, and rehoming](#)
- [University of Wisconsin: Facility Design, Shelter Animal Housing and Shelter Population Management](#)
- [Best Friends Humane Animal Control manual chapter: Enrichment for Cats in Shelters](#)

### Dog lifesaving

Enrichment and behavior:

- [Enrichment for Dogs in Shelters](#)
- [Canine Care and Enrichment Playbook](#)
- [Dogs Playing For Life](#)
- [ASPCA Pro What's the Deal about Data](#)
- [Results from Monmouth University/Maddie's Fund Playgroup Study](#)

Adoptions:

- [Operational training playbook on Adoption](#)
- [Removing Barriers to Adoption webinar](#)
- [Making the leap to fee-waived adoptions: Reduced fee adoptions and why they work](#)
- [PetSmart Charities' Rescue Writer™ AI tool for creating bios](#)
- [Sample effective kennel cards](#)
- [Online learning course on Client Service and Barrier-Free Adoptions](#)

**Foster and alternative outcomes:**

- [Foundations of Volunteer Engagement](#)
- [Best Friends volunteer resources](#)
- [Best Friends orientation video for new volunteers in Los Angeles](#)
- [Foster Programs Training Playbook](#)
- [Best Friends Humane Animal Control manual chapter on Foster Programs](#)
- [Dog Foster Care Manual](#)
- [Secrets to Pet Foster Program Success](#)
- [HASS "Recruit More Fosters" Blog](#)
- [American Pets Alive Tips to Recruit More Foster Homes](#)
- [Friendly Finder Playbook | Best Friends Animal Society - Save Them All](#)

**Lifesaving programs**

**Managed intake**

- [Managed intake program playbook](#)
- [Setting the record straight on managed intake blog](#)
- [Best Friends podcast on managed intake](#)
- [Shelter intake and pathway planning resource](#)

**Community messaging:**

- [Best Friends podcast: Using transparency to empower your community](#)
- [Digital communication panel webinar](#)
- [Grassroots marketing webinar](#)
- [Capacity crisis marketing webinar](#)
- [Other marketing and communications resources](#)

**Finder-to-foster programming:**

- [Finder-to-foster program playbook](#)
- [Finder to foster legal considerations](#)

**Animal flow and length of stay:**

- [Operational playbook on Daily Rounds](#)
- [Daily Rounds SOP template](#)
- [UCD: Daily monitoring of animal health and behavior](#)
- [Best Friends Length of Stay Manual](#)
- [At-Risk Animals Training Playbook](#)
- [Alternative Outcomes Training Playbook](#)
- [Big Dogs Training Playbook](#)
- [Daily Checklists and Time Stamps](#)
- [Daily rounds Excel spreadsheet template](#)
- [Animal Flow Training Playbook](#)
- [Daily Rounds: Planning a Pathway Playbook](#)

**Intake and dispatch**

- [Lifesaving dispatch webinar](#)
- [Lifesaving dispatch playbook](#)
- [A call takers guide to field loose animal calls](#)
- [Intake diversion in the field: module and playbook](#)
- [Field Return-to-Home playbook](#)

# Embed Program

Best Friends Animal Society and Joint Animal Services



# An Established Partnership Built on Proven Investment

JAS and Best Friends Animal Society share a deep, results-driven relationship — one grounded in shared values and a long track record of mutual investment in lifesaving outcomes.

## Financial Support

- **\$18,000** — Launch of JAS's Community Cat Program
- **\$5,000** — Unicorn Foster training & program development
- **\$25,000** — Adoption fee waivers to increase live outcomes

## Staff Investment

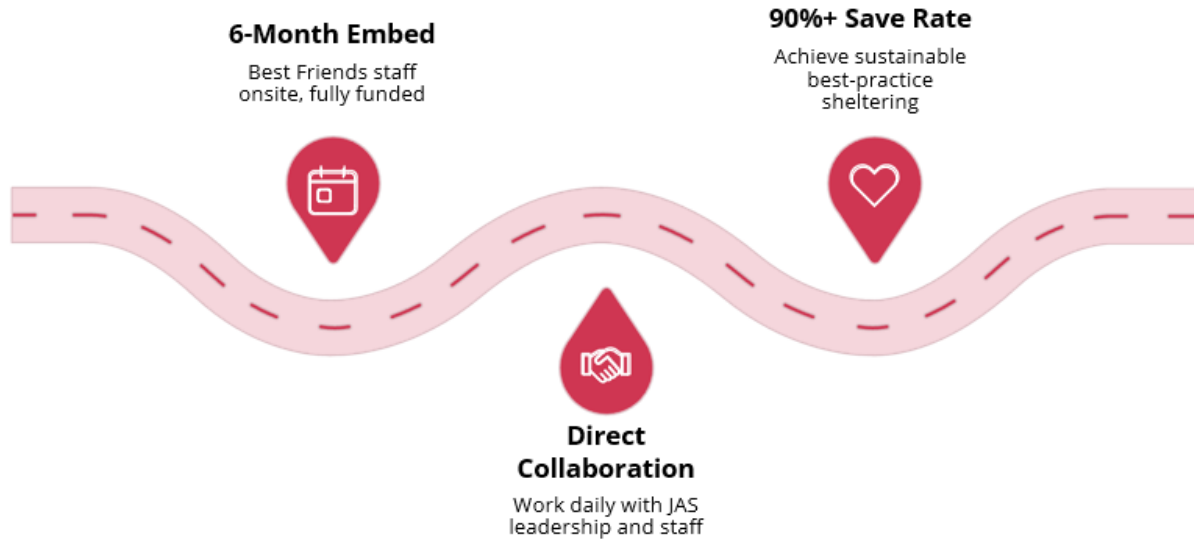
- **10+ conference scholarships** over 7 years (~\$2,000 each)
- Travel support when JAS staff are **selected as presenters**
- Continued commitment through the **National Shelter Embed Program**

- ✓ Best Friends is a proven partner — invested in JAS's innovation, sustainability, and lifesaving mission.



# National Shelter Embed Program

A short-term, high-impact technical assistance initiative designed to accelerate lifesaving outcomes and operational improvements at JAS.



The embedded staff member is employed and funded entirely by Best Friends — contracted through the City of Lacey at no direct cost to JAS.

## At a Glance

### Duration

6 months, onsite with JAS leadership and staff

### Funding

Fully funded and employed by Best Friends Animal Society

### Contract

Executed through the City of Lacey

### Primary Goal

Support JAS in reaching a **90%+ live save rate**



# What the Embed Delivers

## Focus Areas

- Field services & managed intake
- Return-to-owner strategies
- Kitten diversion & foster expansion
- Community cat programming
- Adoption & community engagement

## What Best Friends Provides

- Onsite operational support
- Access to national subject-matter experts
- Training & program development
- Data-driven strategy implementation

## Benefits to JAS

- Accelerated operational improvements
- Stronger, more consistent lifesaving programs
- Improved long-term sustainability
- Increased community trust & engagement



# Considerations & Path Forward

## Fiscal Impact

- Requires strong internal communication and alignment
- Operational changes must align with municipal and legal frameworks
- Contract subject to legal review — indemnification, insurance, liability

## Key Considerations

1

### Direct Cost

**\$0** — Position fully funded by Best Friends Animal Society

2

### Indirect Investment

Staff time, coordination, and implementation support from JAS

## Next Steps — If Approved

### Coordinate Onboarding

Define project scope and priorities with Best Friends

### Launch 6-Month Embed

Begin onsite collaboration with JAS leadership and staff

### Report Progress

Provide regular updates to JASCOM on outcomes and milestones



# The Case for Acting Today

JAS faces growing system pressure, rising community expectations, and a **time-limited opportunity** to accelerate change — with full funding already in place.

---

## Strategic Alignment

This program directly supports JAS's core priorities and positions the organization for long-term success:

**Progress that would typically take years can be achieved in months — with national expertise fully funded and ready to deploy.**

### Modernize Shelter Operations

Implement best practices at scale, faster than internal capacity alone allows

### Strengthen Sustainability

Build lasting programs and staff capability beyond the embed period

### Lead Regionally

Position JAS as a model for animal services across the region

# The Case for Acting Today

JAS faces growing system pressure, rising community expectations, and a **time-limited opportunity** to accelerate change — with full funding already in place.

## Strategic Alignment

This program directly supports JAS's core priorities and positions the organization for long-term success:

③ Progress that would typically take years can be achieved in months — with national expertise fully funded and ready to deploy.

### Modernize Shelter Operations

Implement best practices at scale, faster than internal capacity alone allows

### Strengthen Sustainability

Build lasting programs and staff capability beyond the embed period

### Lead Regionally

Position JAS as a model for animal services across the region





## Joint Animal Services Commission Director's report

### Staffing & Capacity Building

JAS hired two **Animal Care Technicians** in February who are currently in training. These additions will help strengthen daily shelter operations and support ongoing animal care needs. Following the retirement of a staff member, JAS also hired a **Customer Services Specialist** to support front-facing operations and maintain continuity in customer service functions.

Recruitment for the **Field Services Officer** position has also progressed, with interviews completed and a tentative offer extended, contingent upon successful completion of the background check and Personal History Statement. Filling this position remains an important priority as field demand remains high.

### Veterinary Care Team

During the first quarter of the year, the medical team completed **364 surgeries**, including 240 performed by Dr. Swearngin and 124 by relief veterinarians. Procedures included 126 dog spay/neuter surgeries, 207 cat spay/neuter surgeries, 8 dentals, and a variety of specialty procedures, including amputations, entropion repair, enucleations, and other surgical interventions.

The team also conducted **786 medical exams and checks**, with the majority completed by Dr. Swearngin (618), supported by veterinary assistants and licensed veterinary technicians (145), and relief veterinarians (23).

Recruitment for a Licensed Veterinary Technician (LVT) is ongoing. JAS currently has strong relief veterinary coverage secured through at least July. Beginning at the end of May, JAS will also partner with **Sound Veterinary Connection** to offer occasional Saturday surgery clinics, primarily focused on spay/neuter for foster kittens to support timely placement and population management.



## Joint Animal Services Commission Director's report

### Leadership, Training & Professional Development

On March 3, Executive Director Sarah Hock co-presented **“Leading Upward: Working with Councils and Boards”** alongside Deputy Mayor Miller at the Pacific Regional Summit, hosted by Best Friends Animal Society. The session focused on strategies for building effective relationships with elected officials and governing bodies, including how to communicate organizational needs, navigate governance dynamics, and foster alignment between staff leadership and policy decision-makers. The presentation reflected JAS's continued commitment to strengthening leadership capacity and advancing effective public-sector animal services governance.

On March 4, Sierra attended the **Olympia Police Department** leadership meeting and presented on JAS operations, services, and regional partnerships. Opportunities like this continue to strengthen interagency collaboration and raise awareness of JAS's role in public safety and animal welfare.

From March 16 through March 27, Taegan and Bekka attended the **Animal Control Officer Academy** and successfully earned their state certifications. Sierra also served as an instructor during the academy, teaching on animal cruelty investigations and supporting multiple course sessions. JAS once again participated at every level of the academy—from attendance to instruction—demonstrating our continued commitment to advancing professional standards in animal care and control across Washington.





## Joint Animal Services Commission Director's report

From April 10 through April 12, Sierra and Bekka attended the **National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA) Summit** as representatives of WACA. Their participation supported both professional development and statewide leadership engagement. Sarah also attended as a NACA board member.



From April 17 through April 19, Animal Care Technician Elissa attended an online animal behavior conference to expand her knowledge and strengthen JAS's internal capacity related to animal behavior, enrichment, and shelter care practices.

### Leadership & Development – Upcoming Events

Bekka and Sierra will attend and present at the **Texas Unites Conference** in Austin, Texas, where they will deliver their workshop, “**Sustainable Solutions for Animal Cruelty Cases.**” The presentation highlights JAS's specialized volunteer response and foster care program developed to support animal cruelty investigations, animal seizures, rehabilitation, and placement.

### Recurring Community Programs

JAS maintained a consistent presence at the Lacey Veterans Services Hub's outreach events on March 5, March 19, April 2, April 16, and April 30. These events continue to provide meaningful opportunities to connect with community members and share available JAS resources and services.

The Animal Allies Club also continued at both the Lacey and Yelm libraries. Sessions were held at the Lacey Library on March 4 and April 1, and at the Yelm Library on March 19 and



## **Joint Animal Services Commission Director's report**

### **ANIMAL SERVICES**

April 16. These youth-centered programs help build early community connections and foster compassion and education around animal welfare.

Volunteer dog playgroup trainings were also offered weekly on Thursdays from March 12 through April 30. These training sessions help expand volunteers' skill sets while directly supporting canine enrichment and quality of life in the shelter.

### **Outreach & Partnership Highlights**

On March 17, JAS participated in *Coffee with a Cop* in collaboration with the Lacey Police Department, helping strengthen relationships with both law enforcement partners and community members.

On March 21, JAS hosted a *Walk & Learn* session to continue volunteer training focused on safely and effectively walking shelter dogs.

On March 26, JAS hosted a shelter tour for New Horizon Tiny Homes to introduce a potential new volunteer group to the organization and explore future partnership opportunities.

On March 27, JAS participated in a collaborative photo shoot with Lacey Fire District 3 to support community outreach and visibility efforts.

On March 28, JAS participated in a speaking engagement with the Lions Club to share information about the organization's work, services, and community impact.

### **Strategic Planning**

JASCOM will participate in a 6-hour strategic planning session on June 8 to help establish organizational priorities for the next five or six years. This dedicated planning session will provide an opportunity for JASCOM and JAS leadership team to evaluate long-term goals, identify emerging needs and challenges, and help shape the future direction of Joint Animal Services. The session is intended to support thoughtful, proactive planning that aligns services, resources, and regional priorities for the years ahead.



**ANIMAL SERVICES**

## **Happy Tail – Lacey Rose**

# **Joint Animal Services Commission Director's report**

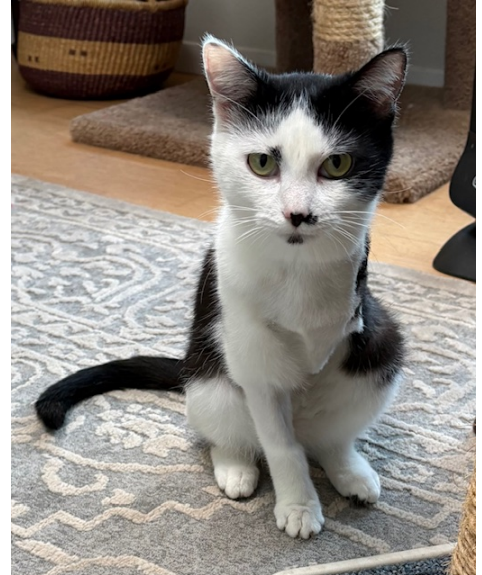
What started as a difficult case quickly became a story of resilience and compassion. This sweet cat arrived at Joint Animal Services as a stray, suffering from a severe injury to her front leg. After a thorough medical evaluation, it was determined that the injury was too extensive to repair, and the best path forward was a front limb amputation.

Thanks to the expertise of our veterinary team and the dedication of staff, her surgery was successful, and she began her recovery journey in a foster home. While initially shy and unsure, she quickly showed her true personality—growing more confident, social, and affectionate each day.

Her foster family played a critical role in her healing, providing a safe and supportive environment where she could rest, recover, and adapt. Like so many animals, she proved that resilience knows no bounds—learning to navigate the world comfortably on three legs and embracing her second chance.

The best part of this story? Her foster family fell in love and chose to adopt her, giving her the forever home she deserves.

This outcome reflects the very best of what JAS strives to do every day: combining compassionate care, skilled medical intervention, and community support to create lifesaving outcomes for animals in need.



# Director's Report

JASCOM|April 20, 2026



# Staffing

- **2 Animal Care Technicians hired (Feb)**
- **Customer Service Specialist hired (retirement backfill)**
- **LVT recruitment ongoing**
- **Field Services Officer recruitment:**
  - Interviews complete
  - Tentative offer extended (pending background/PHS)



# Veterinary Services – Q1 Impact

- **364** surgeries completed
  - **240** Dr. Swearngin | **124** relief vets
- **786** medical exams
- **Key procedures:**
  - **333** spay/neuter (dogs + cats)
  - Specialty surgeries (amputation, enucleation, etc.)
- Saturday surgery clinics launching (May)
  - Focus: foster kittens



# Leadership & Professional Development

- **Presented at Best Friends Summit**
  - “Leading Upward: Working with Councils & Boards”
- **Staff certified through WA ACO Academy**
  - JAS was represented at all levels
- **JAS represented at:**
  - NACA Summit (national leadership)
  - Virtual Behavior conference (capacity building)



# Community Programs & Engagement

- **Veteran's Hub** outreach (5 events)
- **Animal Allies Club** (Lacey & Yelm libraries)
- Weekly volunteer dog playgroup trainings



# Partnerships & Outreach

- Coffee with a Cop (Lacey PD)
- Shelter tours & volunteer expansion
- Collaboration with Lacey Fire District 3
- Community speaking (Lions Club)



# Strategic Planning – Looking Ahead

- **June 8:** 6-hour JASCOM Strategic Planning Session
- **Focus:**
  - 5-6 year priorities
  - Service alignment
- Regional needs & growth
- **Goal:** Proactive, sustainable future planning



# Happy Tail

## Lacey Rose

A stray cat with a severe front leg injury arrived at Joint Animal Services, where medical evaluation determined amputation was the best path forward. Following a successful surgery, she recovered in a foster home, gradually gaining confidence and revealing a social, affectionate personality. With the support of her foster family, she adapted remarkably well to life on three legs and ultimately found her forever home when they chose to adopt her. Her journey highlights JAS's commitment to combining compassionate care, medical expertise, and community support to create lifesaving outcomes.

