



Animal Services

To serve the community by promoting public safety and the compassionate treatment of all animals through humane education, community outreach, sheltering, and law enforcement.

Department Programs

Animal Shelter

Provides care and treatment for surrendered, stray, neglected, abused, abandoned, and impounded companion animals and livestock and facilitates placement through a variety of programs.

Activities

- Animal Intake, Care, and Placement
- Humane Education and Outreach Services

Humane Law Enforcement (HLE)

Provides for the health, safety, and welfare of the residents and animals in Loudoun County through the enforcement of both state and local laws pertaining to domesticated animals; protects public health and safety through management of sick, stray, injured, potentially rabid, or dangerous animals; and investigates and resolves reports of crimes against animals, including cruelty, neglect, and abandonment.

- Humane Law Enforcement (HLE)
- Dog Licensing

Financial Information

FY 2024 Adopted Information¹

	Expenditures	Revenue	LTF	FTE
Animal Shelter (including Outreach)	\$2,917,876	\$113,250	\$2,804,626	26.00
Humane Law Enforcement (HLE)	2,310,011	483,950	1,826,061	16.00
Total	\$5,227,887	\$597,200	\$4,630,687	42.00

¹ Sums may not equal due to rounding.



Animal Services: Animal Shelter

Animal Intake, Care, and Placement

What We Do: The Animal Intake, Care, and Placement Team provides daily care and husbandry for animals housed with the Loudoun County Animal Services (LCAS) Department. The new animal shelter facility, located in Leesburg, was completed and opened in FY 2022, and is approximately 22,000 square feet, with specialized design to support optimal animal health and welfare and resident services. At the animal shelter, animal care activities include feeding, cleaning, administering vaccines and medications, microchip implantation, medical and surgical procedures, and the mandated documentation of all animal information. Animal care staff performs behavioral and medical evaluations; provides exercise, socialization, and mental enrichment programs; and develops medical and behavioral intervention plans. Animal care staff also supports the foster care initiative (which utilizes volunteer homes to provide supplemental care for animals not ready for adoption) and transfer efforts (by partnering with other agencies to offer optimal adoption opportunities in the local community). This hands-on team also provides adoption, surrender, and euthanasia counseling, as well as performs euthanasia for animals who are dangerous, suffering, or otherwise unplaceable. Administrative staff oversees purchasing, payroll, facilities management, human resources, budgeting, financial accounting, and specialized software applications.

Mandate Information: Sheltering services for stray dogs, either provided by local government or contracted, are mandated in the Code of Virginia § 3.2-6546 B. Records for all animals must be maintained in accordance with the Code of Virginia § 3.2-6546 and various administrative codes enforced by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Sterilization of adopted cats and dogs must be provided or coordinated through LCAS, as mandated in the Code of Virginia § 3.2-6574.

Who Does It: County staff provides these services, with a very small percentage of specialized services (e.g., specialty veterinary procedures) being provided by external entities.

Why We Do It: LCAS operates the only open-access facility in the County, accepting stray and surrendered domestic animals regardless of age, temperament, or health. LCAS staff provides medical care for sick and injured animals, vaccination protocols to reduce disease in the shelter, and enrichment for all companion animals to reduce stress and maximize adoptability. The care staff provides adoption counseling to individuals interested in selecting a pet and offers surrender counseling designed to gather vital behavioral and medical information from the pet owner to find the pet the best possible outcome post-surrender. Additionally, LCAS staff connects residents with animals to resources to assist in preserving the human-animal bond, staffs the animal shelter's front counter, assists customers with questions and concerns and with completing the adoption application process, provides support and guidance post-adoption, maintains LCAS's lost and found pet database, reduces euthanasia by providing alternatives to surrender, and accepts stray and surrendered pets from Loudoun residents. Retention counseling is offered to each person looking to surrender a pet, with the goal of keeping animals with their families whenever possible, thus reducing the number of animals unnecessarily brought into the shelter system. LCAS staff is trained in crisis situations such as large-scale animal seizures, dangerous and fractious animal handling, livestock husbandry, and pet-friendly sheltering in the event of a disaster. Without these services, the Loudoun community would not be equipped to handle animal-related safety and welfare concerns that arise; and pets and people in crisis would have limited options, if any. LCAS also provides temporary pet sheltering services for clients of local nonprofit organizations and human/social services agencies, with the goal of ensuring a holistic service delivery to those most in need. LCAS has also developed plans in collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to ensure that Loudoun County's disaster response plans include addressing the needs of residents with pets, to remain eligible for federal funding in the event of a major disaster or emergency.

How We Do It Now – Current Service Level: Current service level maintains a live release rate of 94 percent or higher for approximately 2,400 companion animals annually. Through this function, LCAS receives stray, surrendered, seized, and abandoned animals, over 70 percent of which have complex medical or behavioral challenges that require elevated resources to effectively manage. Current service level represents processing nearly 1,800 adoptions and returning 300 animals to their owners. Additionally, current service level provides for revenue-neutral transfer services for approximately 600 animals.



Animal Services: Animal Shelter

Service level indicators are based on the current ratio of complex animal intakes, which is likely to grow, consistent with national trends as pet overpopulation levels drop. If more complicated intakes are necessary, service levels may be impacted. Service level indicators are also based on the current human population, assuming a static per capita pet ownership rate and stable economic climate. However, if human population dramatically rises, economic conditions negatively impact pet ownership, or per capita pet ownership increases, service levels may be impacted. In FY 2023, LCAS saw a dramatic spike in local intakes, with the stray and owner surrender categories, bringing the dog kennels to full capacity for the first time in over ten years. It remains to be seen whether this is a long-term issue, or one tied to the current challenges with veterinary access and pet-inclusive housing.

A full-time shelter veterinarian and two veterinary technicians provide all in-house medical care and oversight for tasks such as wound repair, vaccination, sterilization, minor and major surgeries, animal cruelty assessments, dental procedures, amputations, euthanasia, specialized feeding plans, medically addressing behavioral deterioration resulting from kenneling, and all aspects of physical and mental health care for approximately 2,300 sheltered animals per year, in addition to performing necropsies and evidence collection and testifying in court on animal cruelty cases.

How We Plan to Do It in the Future – Recommended Service Level: In the future, it is anticipated that intakes to LCAS will grow at a faster rate than in years past due to the greater accessibility of the facility, which is now located in Leesburg, compared with the less-central location of the previous facility. If intakes continue to increase at the rates seen from FY 2022 and FY 2023, LCAS will have to modify and expand operations to maintain the current service level. LCAS expects that the metrics with asterisks (*) below will indicate that the program may need to adjust its services or service levels. This would necessitate the addition of staff, an increased volunteer base, a more comprehensive focus on pet retention programs, and improvement of support initiatives, such as dog training, pet supply and food pantries, low-cost veterinary care, and pet ownership classes. The quality of service provided will be impacted by the types and special needs required by the animals received, and the rate at which those animals need shelter as compared to animals who require less skilled care. Animals with complex medical and behavioral histories – and residents in need of advanced interventions – require a higher level of service that is not presently available to meet the demand seen in FY 2023 on a prolonged basis. LCAS has released a five-year strategic plan to create a framework to support future success in service delivery.

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Achieve an 85 percent or higher rate of live animal outcomes.					
Total live release rate	94%	95%	94%	94%	93%
Total intake of dogs*	602	765	967	1,200	1,400
Total intake of cats*	827	1,117	1,078	1,300	1,500
Total intake of other species*	614	359	383	475	500
Number of animals with complex medical or behavioral challenges	65	49	61	70	70
Number of animals adopted	1,485	1,864	1,825	1,800	1,900
Number of animals returned to owner	239	250	358	300	300
Increase feline return-to-owner (RTO) rate, maintaining a minimum of double the national average (2 percent).					
Feline RTO rate	20%	20%	24%	25%	25%



Animal Services: Animal Shelter

Humane Education and Outreach Services

What We Do: This activity expands the reach of LCAS beyond the confines of the physical structure through marketing, educational initiatives, and participation in community events, forging meaningful community partnerships and developing humane communities. In addition, the team develops community relationships that facilitate foster and transfer programs, with the goal of securing the best placement option for each animal. This activity works closely with animal-oriented businesses and nonprofit organizations to serve Loudoun residents. For instance, staff collaborates with community partners to help operate the Loudoun Pet Pantry, which provides emergency food supplies for family pets in need, reducing the need to surrender these pets to the animal shelter due to financial hardship.

Mandate Information: This activity provides support to the animal sheltering services mandated in the Code of Virginia § 3.2-6546 B – “the governing body of each County shall maintain (or cause to be maintained) a public animal shelter...” Additionally, the Code of Virginia § 3.2-6546 requires maintenance of lost and found directories and written records of each companion animal within the care of LCAS, and prohibits adoption of animals under the age of eight weeks, necessitating placement in foster care.

Who Does It: County staff provides this service with the support of over 200 volunteers and countless public-private partnerships.

Why We Do It: The Humane Education and Outreach Services staff provides vital, cost-saving support to LCAS by recruiting and training volunteers. This activity also plays a key role in reducing euthanasia and the daily cost of animal care, and it supports the foster care and animal placement programs.

LCAS provides a low-cost vaccination and microchip program for owned pets in Loudoun County. Program goals include mitigating rabies risk, creating a healthier animal population, increasing RTO rates for lost pets, increasing dog license compliance, and connecting with the pet-owning community. LCAS is expanding its reach to targeted locations around the County to continue assisting residents of varying backgrounds and needs with accessing these critical services.

LCAS education programs provide vital information to the Loudoun community to reduce animal bites; reduce euthanasia of healthy, safe, and treatable pets; interrupt the cycle of animal cruelty; promote adoptions; and develop a community of educated and empowered pet owners.

How We Do It Now – Current Service Level: Current service level supports over 100 annual outreach activities and up to 200 active volunteers. At current service level, volunteers contribute over 15,000 hours of service at a value of over \$450,000. Currently, volunteers are waitlisted to ensure that all interested volunteers can receive proper animal handling and safety training. At current service level, LCAS coordinates life-saving foster support services to approximately 400 animals over the course of the year, giving young puppies and kittens and adult animals in need of in-home care the opportunity to receive such care outside of the shelter and become eligible for adoption. Using state and national formulas, the animal foster parent program saves LCAS over \$350,000 in labor each year.

How We Plan to Do It in the Future – Recommended Service Level: The current demand for volunteer opportunities far outweighs the ability for one person to handle. If LCAS wants to increase volunteer opportunities and allow for further growth, it will require expansion of staffing. Youth and adult educational programs also routinely book completely within minutes of offering, and as LCAS seeks new ways to increase community trust and engagement, this area will likely require additional staff support as well.



Animal Services: Animal Shelter

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Increase presence in the community through social media, online, and outreach activities.					
Number of outreach activities to promote animal service	44	81	86	75	75
Number of humane education activities	49	156	152	130	130
Number of participants attending humane education and outreach activities	3,188	14,884	29,186	25,000	25,000
Number of social media followers	23,770	27,296	30,748	32,000	32,000
Number of owned animals provided with low-cost vaccination or microchip services	820	635	1,111	600	600
Increase the level of volunteer support through appropriate training.					
Number of adult volunteers	144	171	210	200	200
Number of volunteers under the age of 18	49	77	104	100	100
Number of volunteer hours	5,227	12,893	15,799	16,000	16,000
Total value of volunteer hours	\$148,788	\$367,833	\$483,991	\$479,200	\$479,200
Number of foster families	172	98	168	150	150
Number of foster care hours	11,385	12,940	11,246	11,000	11,000
Number of animals sent to foster care	677	621	946	600	600
Total hours of volunteer training provided	40	174	173	150	150



Animal Services: Humane Law Enforcement (HLE)

Humane Law Enforcement (HLE)

What We Do: The Humane Law Enforcement (HLE) activity provides for the health, safety, and welfare of the public and animals in Loudoun County through the enforcement of both state and local animal laws. Services are provided 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for critical or emergency animal-related issues that impact the public.

Humane Law Enforcement Officers (HLEOs) protect the public's health and safety from sick, stray, injured, rabid, or dangerous animals, and advocate for the welfare of animals by promoting and providing for their safe, humane, and lawful treatment. HLE works in partnership with public safety agencies; investigates and resolves reports of animal cruelty, neglect, and abandonment; performs skilled rescues of domestic animals and livestock; and participates in educational programs. LCAS dispatchers and HLEOs provide education to the community on domesticated-animal- and wildlife-related issues. This team also handles technical large animal rescues in partnership with Loudoun County Fire and Rescue.

Mandate Information: Pursuant to the Code of Virginia § 3.2-6555, it is mandated that “the governing body of each County or city shall, or each town may, employ an officer to be known as the animal control officer who shall have the power to enforce this chapter, all ordinances enacted pursuant to this chapter and all laws for the protection of domestic animals. The governing body may also employ one or more deputy animal control officers to assist the chief animal control officer in the performance of his duties.”

Who Does It: County staff provides this service.

Why We Do It: Understanding animal behavior and needs across species lines as well the laws that pertain to companion animals, agricultural animals, and wildlife requires knowledge, skills, and expertise unique to HLEOs. This team of officers is strategically deployed throughout the County to provide timely response to public requests for services. Officers successfully resolve a majority of the animal-related complaints outside of court through a tiered enforcement process that starts with education. Furthermore, because HLEOs have unique training and ability to handle a variety of animals and emergency response scenarios, other public safety agencies can perform their duties in a safer, more efficient manner, allowing them to focus their efforts on the human emergency while HLEOs focus on the animal emergency. HLEOs provide residents of all ages with education on proper animal care and handling designed to create a stronger human-animal bond, thereby reducing incidents requiring enforcement or officer intervention. Specialty outreach programs are also managed by the HLEO team, including the Companion Animal Resource Effort (CARE) and Operation Protect Livestock (OPL). CARE provides one-time financial assistance to low-income pet owners, which allows pets to stay in their home and reduces the number of animals surrendered to the animal shelter or euthanized for financial reasons. OPL serves to reunite stray livestock with their owner to greatly reduce the likelihood of property damage occurring, or the animal becoming injured or killed when off of their property.

How We Do It Now – Current Service Level: At current service level, up to 90 percent of calls are resolved outside of court through diversion, education, and enforcement efforts. Current service level involves fielding over 22,000 phone calls annually, with HLEOs physically responding to up to 5,300 calls for service, while dispatchers aim to resolve over 70 percent of public inquiries by telephone. If more complicated trends are present (such as increased rates of serious animal-related crimes, or more calls regarding wildlife conflicts), service levels may be negatively impacted. Service level indicators are also based on the current human population, assuming a static per capita pet ownership rate. If the human population dramatically rises or pet ownership increases, service levels may be negatively impacted.

How We Plan to Do It in the Future – Recommended Service Level: While many investigations are routine, LCAS does handle a number of disturbing and violent cases each year. Calls handled by HLEOs are unique when compared to traditional law enforcement in that the vast majority of calls involve live evidence; and when call volume increases, the work cannot be delegated to any other staff or department. As other law enforcement agencies in the United States see an increase in violent crimes involving animals – and animal crimes involving technology – the number of hours to resolve complex cases will inevitably increase, necessitating additional staffing. As Loudoun development continues, it is also reasonable to expect



Animal Services: Humane Law Enforcement (HLE)

greater road traffic; and with 52 percent of all shift hours covered by two HLEOs or less, additional officers will be needed to ensure appropriate response times and coverage.

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Improve effectiveness of call-taking services through diversion, education, and enforcement.					
Number of wildlife telephone calls	3,948	4,090	3,439	4,000	4,000
Percentage of wildlife calls resolved through education	60%	62%	61%	60%	65%
Total number of telephone calls received	15,838	18,380	18,483	22,000	20,000
Number of on-call telephone calls	477	382	403	500	500
Number of animal shelter telephone calls	6,860	8,649	9,297	10,000	10,000
Percentage of telephone calls resolved through education (includes livestock and companion animals)	55%	46%	49%	55%	60%
Number of animal control telephone calls	5,230	5,165	5,097	6,000	6,000
Sustain 90 percent resolution of calls outside of court.¹					
Total number of calls for service	4,866	5,185	4,958	5,000	5,750
Number of calls for service for dog bites	544	625	655	700	700
Percentage of dog bites resolved outside of court	93%	96%	95%	95%	95%
Number of calls for service for investigations	1,339	1,406	1,267	1,600	1,650
Percentage of investigations resolved outside of court	95%	97%	97%	90%	90%
Number of calls for service for routine calls	2,697	2,133	2,203	2,800	3,000
Percentage of routine calls resolved outside of court	95%	96%	95%	95%	95%
Total number of cases resolved outside of court	3,585	5,048	4,807	5,000	5,000
Number of calls for service for wildlife calls	1,470	1,442	1,335	1,500	1,600
Total number of responses needed to complete all calls for service	10,214	9,915	9,887	12,000	12,000
Achieve a success rate of 80 percent or higher through court.					
Number of cases taken to court	164	137	151	185	185
Success rate for court cases (plea or conviction)	82%	68%	76%	70%	75%
Maintain an efficient response time for calls for service by HLEOs.²					
Average response time for calls between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. (in minutes)					
Target Response Time = 45 minutes	31	29	28	20	20

¹ Calls are considered routine if no person or animal is in danger. For example, a dog running at-large with no indication of it being aggressive or a traffic hazard would be considered a routine stray roam.

² Target response times are developed internally based on call volume and staffing levels.

**Animal Services: Humane Law Enforcement (HLE)**

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Average response time for calls between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. (in minutes) Target Response Time = 180 minutes	113	76	60	100	100
Average response time for emergency calls with persons in danger (in minutes) Target Response Time = 30 minutes	20	22	19	20	20
Average response time for animals in danger and other urgent calls (in minutes) Target Response Time = 30 minutes	24	25	27	25	25
Average response time for routine calls (in minutes) Target Response Time = 390 minutes	145	479	95	250	250
Total number of priority calls, person or animal in danger calls, or other urgent calls	1,939	2,009	1,893	2,000	2,200
Total number of routine calls for service	2,927	3,169	3,065	3,500	3,500



Animal Services: Humane Law Enforcement (HLE)

Dog Licensing

What We Do: The Dog Licensing activity provides dog license registration, issuance, and fee collection for Loudoun County residents. This activity processes all dog license revenue collected via mail and website transactions and answers relevant inquiries via email and telephone. The state enacted legislation in 2008 requiring local veterinarians to submit rabies certificates to the Treasurer’s Office. LCAS has a memorandum of understanding with the Treasurer’s Office that allows for LCAS to process all rabies certificates into the departmental software system. This activity processes all rabies certificates submitted to LCAS from veterinary offices and follows up with new and delinquent dog owners.

Mandate Information: This service is mandated by the Code of Virginia § 3.2-6524, which stipulates that unlicensed dogs are prohibited: “It shall be unlawful for any person, other than a releasing agency that has registered as such annually with local animal control, to own a dog four months old or older in the Commonwealth unless such dog is licensed, as required by the provision of this article.”

Who Does It: One County staff member is dedicated to this activity.

Why We Do It: The Dog Licensing activity ensures that dogs residing in the County have current rabies vaccinations and enables progressive RTO programs for licensed pets. When a friendly stray pet is found by a resident, that resident may call into LCAS; and dispatchers will search license records geographically to connect the finder and pet owner, either directly or through a HLEO. This process eliminates the need to transport and house the animal at the shelter. The license record matching program helps ensure that stray dogs are returned to their owners. The online dog licensing platform that enables residents to purchase a dog license from their computer or smartphone increases dog licensure revenue. The online platform also provides HLEOs with the most current information, reducing the number of public complaints.

How We Do It Now – Current Service Level: At current service level, this activity provides licenses to approximately 45 percent of dogs in Loudoun County. Current service level is based on the current human population, assuming a static per capita pet ownership rate. If the human population dramatically rises, or pet ownership increases, service levels may be negatively impacted.

How We Plan to Do It in the Future – Recommended Service Level: The Dog Licensing activity is mandated through Loudoun County Codified Ordinances, Chapter 612.03; and is expected to grow proportionally with the population. Limitations in pet-inclusive housing may reduce overall dog ownership, but new formulas to determine the accurate rate of dog ownership are under evaluation, allowing for greater accuracy in projections.

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Achieve 50 percent or higher of dogs licensed in Loudoun County.					
Number of dog license notices issued	46,002	48,268	46,909	47,000	47,000
Number of new and renewed dog licenses sold	25,045	24,039	23,447	23,000	23,000
Percentage of dogs licensed in Loudoun County	45%	45%	47%	46%	45%

