



DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES

CALENDAR YEAR 2025 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Leadership Sponsor: Reasa Currier, Director

Equity Lead(s): Lauren Krzywicki, Manager, Pet Resource Center

Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:

The Department of Animal Services is committed to applying an equity lens to our policies and procedures to ensure that Fairfax County residents can keep their families intact through the prevention of pet relinquishment. The human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors essential to the health and well-being of both. DAS recognizes the impact of systemic poverty and structural inequity on pet ownership and is committed to providing equitable pet assistance to preserve the human-animal bond formed among Fairfax County residents and companion animals.

Context:

The top reasons that Fairfax County residents either relinquish their pets to the FCAS or seek out temporary housing includes access to a wide array of basic care needs and/or because they are experiencing homelessness or other hardships.

- Lack of access to affordable preventative and urgent veterinary care.
- Lack of low-cost spay/neuter options for Fairfax County residents outside of services through DAS.
- Lack of pet-inclusive housing is one of the top reasons that pets become unnecessarily relinquished to the FCAS.
 - Over two thirds of Fairfax County households have pets.
 - Lack of access to pet-inclusive housing without size or breed restrictions.
 - Lack of pet-inclusive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Lack of access to affordable pet retention supplies such as food, medication, preventatives, grooming, and training.
- Lack of access to accurate and quality information about the above items.

While Fairfax County Animal Services prioritizes provisions of high-quality care to animals in FCAS, we recognize that we have an obligation to our community to identify, acknowledge, and address service and resource gaps to prevent animals from entering the shelter system altogether, keeping Fairfax County families together. The health of families and their pets are inextricably linked. Disparities that place individuals on the low end of the health gradient are reflected in the pet population through increased relinquishment to the shelter. Research has shown that companion animal owners are willing to risk or forego shelter, treatment, healthcare, housing, and certain employment opportunities to prevent being separated from their pet. Through the establishment of community partnerships and collaboration with other county agencies, DAS seeks to provide consolidated social

services to Fairfax County families so that families have the capacity to focus on making optimal choices for themselves that enhance the mental and physical well-being of the family as a whole. A large contributor to this goal is through the formation of the Department of Animal Services' Field Services division. As Field Services is developed, policies and procedures will focus on prioritizing community engagement, relationship building, and accessibility to resources.

System-Level Infrastructure:

- Development of internal Field Services division; structuring policies, practices, and efforts focused on community engagement, relationship building, and promotion of One Welfare, highlighting the interconnections between animal welfare, human wellbeing, and the environment.
- Policies and practices of the Health Department, Family Services, and Neighborhood and Community Services related to DAS's efforts in the community and ongoing communication between agencies regarding these items.
- Policies, practices, and outreach efforts of other social service agencies specifically related to pets owned by residents utilizing services and ongoing communication between agencies regarding these items.

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DEPARTMENT GOALS

Goal 1:
Continue and expand community outreach programs to improve quality of life for pets and people in underserved communities.

One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:
18. Other

Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):
Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability

Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):
 ESRFV 1. Develop targeted marketing and outreach strategies, in coordination with community-based partners, to proactively engage residents facing vulnerability.
 ESRFV 3. Identify the root causes of vulnerabilities affecting residents and use those insights to inform policy and practice and target interventions to prevent vulnerability.
 ESRFV 4. Use all available sources of data to identify and understand emerging and existing vulnerabilities, in order to proactively engage impacted residents, identify service gaps, and efficiently allocate resources.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/Supports	Responsible	Timeline	Performance Measures
1a. Increase the capacity of accessible veterinary services and other pet resource programs to serve target number of individuals/families.	PRC Manager DAS Leadership	Staff, money, time, volunteers	PRC Manager PRC Coordinator	Jan. '24 - Dec. '26	Number and types of services provided, number of events hosted, number of families served, number of agency collaborations, number of nonprofit/mission-based organizational partnerships
1c. Survey residents in vulnerable communities on needs and demographic information to tailor services to the fluid needs of the community	PRC Manager Field Services	Staff, time	PRC Manager	Jan. '25 - Dec. '25	Number of total respondents, number of respondents located in target communities (by zip code analysis).

Goal 2:
Increase accessibility of DAS information and content.

One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:
15. Digital access and literacy for all residents.

Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):

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Efficient and Effective Government					
Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):					
EEG3. Enhance communication and outreach to the community by using all available communication methods and tailoring messaging to individual needs.					
Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/Supports	Responsible	Timeline	Performance Measures
2a. Expand multilingual social media presence.	Communications Manager	Staff, time	Communications Manager PRC Coordinator	Jan. '25 - Dec. '25	Number of existing content/material improved for accessibility (multi-media, multiple languages, alt. text, etc), increased webpage traffic
2b. Create multilingual informational materials and other materials to increase accessibility for all DAS services.	DAS Leadership	Staff, time	DAS Leadership PRC Coordinator	Jan. '24 - Dec. '25	

Goal 3:
Increase diversity of staff, volunteers, fosters, and applicants to match the county's diverse population.

One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:
 16. Intentional, focused recruitment efforts that bolster a diverse applicant pool; hiring and evaluation practices, and processes for employee feedback, to achieve and preserve a culture of equity and fairness for all employees.

Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):
 Cultural and Recreational Opportunities, Efficient and Effective Government

Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):
 CRO 7. Build awareness of volunteer opportunities and recruit a diverse volunteer base to support cultural and recreational opportunities.
 EEG 8. Improve the county's competitiveness as an employer to recruit, hire and retain a diverse, highly qualified workforce utilizing data to determine barriers and target strategies for marginalized groups.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/Supports	Responsible	Timeline	Performance Measures
3a. Advertise job postings in locations and methods that are accessible to diverse audiences.	Human Resources DAS Leadership	Time, staff	Business Manager HR Manager PRC Coordinator Volunteers	Jan. '25 - Dec. '25	Number of overall applications to posted positions, percent of applicants to speak a second language, number of organizations disseminating job postings
3b. Identify job seeking locations, job boards, and other physical locations to post jobs/volunteer opportunities.	Human Resources DAS Leadership	Time, staff	Business Manager HR Manager PRC Coordinator	Jan. '25 - Dec. '25	

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Goal 4: Increase access to veterinary care for Fairfax County residents.					
One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus: 10. A health and human services system where opportunities exist for all individuals and families to be safe, be healthy and realize their potential through the provision of accessible, high quality, affordable, and culturally appropriate services.					
Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s): Healthy Communities					
Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s): HC 3. Identify barriers to accessing health services for residents in need and align county and community resources to address the underlying factors contributing to underutilization and eliminate gaps in services.					
Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/Supports	Responsible	Timeline	Performance Measures
4a. Create accessibility to low-cost urgent care to provide vulnerable populations with accessible veterinary care when their pet becomes sick.	Pender Veterinary Centre DAS Leadership PRC Manager	Partnership with private veterinary practices, time, staffing, funding	PRC Manager PRC Coordinator Pender Veterinary Centre	Jan. '25 - Dec. '27	Establishment of public urgent care appointments, number of patients seen
4b. Focus Field Services policies and procedures on prioritizing community engagement, relationship building, and connection to resources.	DAS Leadership		Deputy Director, Field Services	June '25 - Dec. '27	Number of community events attended by Animal Service Officers (ASO), number of referred cases to PRC programs from ASOs

Goal 5: Expand access to affordable, pet-inclusive housing for Fairfax County Residents. Lack of pet-inclusive housing is one of the top reasons pets become unnecessarily homeless.					
One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus: 2. Housing policies that encourage all who want to live in Fairfax to be able to do so, and the provision of a full spectrum of housing opportunities across the country, most notably those in mixed use areas that are accessible to multiple modes of transport.					
Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s): Housing and Neighborhood Livability					
Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s): HNL 2. Identify and create opportunities for additional affordable rental and homeownership units, including modifying housing policies, guidance and communication strategies for people facing barriers in order to make a variety of housing program options accessible for all residents.					

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Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/Supports	Responsible	Timeline	Performance Measures
5a. Work with HCD and other stakeholders to develop a pet-inclusive housing policy for Fairfax County supported affordable housing units.	HCD DAS Leadership	Collaboration and engagement from HCD and stakeholders	PRC Manager DAS Director HCD Leadership	Jan. '24 - Dec. '27	Number of units with pet-inclusive policies.
5b. Develop resources and support for families with pets in crisis due to housing.	HCD DAS Leadership	Collaboration and engagement from HCD and stakeholders	PRC Manager DAS Director HCD Leadership	Jan. '24 - Dec. '26	Percent of animals returned to families from the animal FCAS through crisis program.

Department Director's Signature:

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