

**Quality and Productivity Commission  
31<sup>st</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program  
"Celebrating Quality Service"**

**2017 APPLICATION NEW**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT:** Fur Ever Families: Pets, People and Partnerships

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION:** JUNE 2014  
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before July 1, 2016)

**PROJECT STATUS:**  Ongoing  One-time only

**HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT?**  Yes  No

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

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In June of 2014, DACC initiated an innovative partnership with the ASPCA and launched the groundbreaking Safety Net Program. The program was founded on the belief that pets belong with their families and should not have to be relinquished due to financial hardship or the lack of access to resources and solutions. Prior to the program, pet owners who could not afford services were often faced with the heartbreaking decision of surrendering their pets. The ASPCA assisted DACC by providing funding and dedicated staff members with backgrounds in social services, education, and community organizing at the Baldwin Park and Downey Animal Care Centers. These dedicated staff members intercepted pet owners as they arrived to surrender their pets and provided them with the resources necessary for them to keep their beloved companions. Services such as subsidized veterinary care, spay/neuter, temporary boarding, fencing repair, food vouchers, and behavioral assistance were provided. The results were immediate, profound, and staggering and to date more than 23,000 animals and their owners have been assisted through this innovative partnership.

**BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY**

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$3,386,269	\$	\$	\$	<input type="checkbox"/>

**ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY**

<b>SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b> Animal Care and Control 5898 Cherry Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90805		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 562-728-4610
<b>PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME</b> Allison Cardona		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 562-728-4572  <b>EMAIL:</b> ACARDONA@ANIMALCARE.LACOUNTY.GOV
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0326 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Dorothy Phillips	<b>DATE</b> 4/20/17	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 562-256-1379  <b>EMAIL:</b> DPHILLIPS@ANIMALCARE.LACOUNTY.GOV
<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> Marcia Mayeda	<b>DATE</b> 6/28/17	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 562-728-4610

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**1<sup>st</sup> FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY:** Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success.

The Challenge

The Department of Animal Care and Control operates seven animal care centers across the County of Los Angeles, each acting as their community resource for all stray and owner surrendered animals. In many cases, pet owners turn to the Department for assistance with veterinary care, temporary boarding, animal behavior problems, and other issues that they are unable to resolve on their own. Due to limited funding, the Department does not have sufficient resources to offer such widespread services to the residents who so desperately need them. As a result, if a pet owner could not afford veterinary care, spay/neuter, or other services they were often faced with the decision to surrender their pet to the care center. Not only did this result in increased animal intake into our care centers, it also took pets out of their homes and away from the owners who loved and cared for them. Countless pet owners left the care centers in tears, devastated at having to leave their beloved pets behind. We realized that this needed to change and committed to finding innovative ways to help our residents and their pets stay together.

The Solution

We approached the ASPCA to discuss a solution. The ASPCA proposed providing staff members to be stationed at the Baldwin Park and Downey Animal Care Centers as these two care centers would benefit most based on intake and adoption data. The ASPCA staff members would serve as the first point of contact with the public, greeting them and discussing their needs. The ASPCA would then offer connections to subsidized services at partner veterinary clinics, boarding kennels, and other service providers within the community. In addition, DACC staff would be trained on how to offer services and connect pet owners to the ASPCA program. With enthusiastic support between the two organizations, the Safety Net program was launched in June 2014.

The Benefit

The results of the program were immediate and pet owners expressed deep gratitude for the support and assistance they received. In addition to the emotional impact, the partnership proved highly successful in terms of sustainability. Data collected during the first year of the program revealed that 85 percent of the interventions were successful and that the pets and their owners were still together 30 days after the intervention took place.

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The need for services soon outpaced the ASPCA’s staff capacity and due to the tremendous success of the program, the team grew from a staff of two people to eight full-time staff members. DACC and the ASPCA have developed a strong partnership committed to helping pets stay in their homes, and as a result of this alliance 23,291 pets have been assisted since June of 2014. Bernice Orsoto, ASPCA Safety Net Manager at the Downey Animal Care Center is excited to be a part of this effort that transforms lives and invests in the community: “People do love their pets, but sometimes it’s just very difficult for them to provide for them. That’s why we’re here, we are here to be their safety net.”

In addition to changing the lives of pets and their owners, the partnership has had a deeply profound effect on DACC employees and their degree of engagement in their work. Prior to the partnership, employees had limited options to offer pet owners who were in desperate need. This resulted in a sense of helplessness and frustration of not being able to help people and pets in need. Now, staff have options and have the opportunity to see and experience many more happy endings. Staff feel a renewed connection to the Department mission as a result of this partnership. Sgt. Sara Berrelleza of the Downey Animal Care Center has witnessed the success of this partnership first-hand. “The Safety Net Program has played a huge role in our ability to better serve our communities and keep pets and their owners together. We are so grateful that we have more resources and creative ways to serve our residents and their beloved pets.”

Lisa Harrison, a resident of Baldwin Park, was assisted through the program and had the following to say regarding the veterinary assistance she received for her cat “Big Eyes.” “We were so afraid. We’ve been doing everything we possibly can to survive, we couldn’t believe it; it saved her life. We are just so thankful for everything.”

In addition to helping pets stay in their homes, there have been other unexpected benefits of the partnership. From the first day, pet owners approached DACC and the ASPCA about assistance with retrieving impounded pets from the shelter. Many were unable to afford the fees associated with impoundment and were at a loss on how to bring their pet back home. DACC and the ASPCA decided to expand the program to include assistance to pet owners who needed help paying redemption fees. Many of these pets had escaped or were accidentally let out of their yards and ended up at the care center as a stray.. As a result of this adjustment to the program, 1,820 pets have been able to return to their homes where they are wanted and loved.

Another unanticipated benefit came as a result of interaction with these pet owners. We learned that many dogs had escaped from yards due to broken fencing, a lack of fencing, or inadequate housing. Many pet owners expressed the inability to pay for or

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repair fencing or to provide necessary housing. This led to a natural evolution of the program to extend to our field services division. Officers were empowered with the ability to offer ASPCA services to pet owners who were in need of assistance as an alternative to a citation or notice to comply. The Department now has a tool box of resources to assist them with when responding to requests from the community and 226 dogs have been assisted through this additional housing and fencing component alone.

Marcia Mayeda, Director of the Department of Animal Care and Control, is happy to see the evolution of this partnership knowing that it will continue to help pets and their owners stay together. “The Safety Net program has been a life-saving paradigm shift for the people and animals served by the County of Los Angeles. This public-private partnership shows how great things can be accomplished through collaboration and a shared mission. We are grateful to the ASPCA for their support and alliance as we work together to improve the lives of people and animals in Los Angeles County.”

**Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only.** Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how.

Our partnership with the ASPCA and the use of the Safety Net program supports Los Angeles County Goal 1: ***Make Investments that Transform Lives.*** We provide prevention initiatives allowing citizens to keep their beloved pets by providing comprehensive interventions to suit their specific needs.

It also supports Goal 2. ***Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities.*** This private-public partnership supports the health and wellness of our communities through strong partnerships that invest in the emotional wellness of our citizens and the health of the pets who rely on us.

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**COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY):** If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

**Cost Avoidance:** Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

**Cost Savings:** A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

**Revenue:** Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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This annual calculation was determined by dividing the total number of animals serviced since the program inception (23,291) divided by three (7,764).

The average stay per animal is 11 days, and the average rate is \$39.65.

Fiscal Year	# of animals per year	# of days	Rate	Cost
2014-15	7764	11	28.86	\$ 2,464,759
2015-16	7764	11	34.15	\$ 2,916,547
<b>2016-17</b>	<b>7764</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39.65</b>	<b>\$ 3,386,269</b>