

**Quality and Productivity Commission
31st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Celebrating Quality Service"**

2017 APPLICATION

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

NAME OF PROJECT: USING PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR EFFECTIVE ANIMAL LAWS

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: JANUARY 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:

1 The Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) and the Office of County Counsel
2 (OCC) completed an exhaustive 2 ½ year overhaul of Los Angeles County Code
3 Title 10 - Animals. Title 10, which sets forth the laws regarding the keeping of animals
4 in Los Angeles County, is the main enforcement tool for DACC. Large portions of the
5 ordinance were outdated, were very difficult to understand, and unnecessary. The
6 ordinance also lacked key provisions to address certain animal related complaints and
7 other issues concerning animals and the people who care for them. Each section has
8 been reviewed for relevancy, redundancy, and compliance with State and federal laws.
9 Legal precedents relating to animal control ordinances in other jurisdictions were
10 reviewed to ensure that additions to Title 10 would withstand legal challenge. Most
11 importantly, DACC and OCC applied the Quality and Productivity Commission's Plain
12 Language initiative in the rewording of the ordinance. The use of plain language
13 reduced the length of Title 10 by 38 percent and created a remarkably clearer and more
14 comprehensive model ordinance that will greatly enhance service to residents of
15 Los Angeles County and serve as a model to other County departments.

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
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Animal Care and Control 5898 Cherry Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90805		TELEPHONE NUMBER 562-728-4610
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Marcia Mayeda 		TELEPHONE NUMBER 562-728-4610 EMAIL: MMAYEDA@ANIMALCARE.LACOUNTY.GOV
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Dorothy Phillips 		DATE 6/21/17 TELEPHONE NUMBER 562-256-1379 EMAIL: DPHILLIPS@ANIMALCARE.LACOUNTY.GOV
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Marcia Mayeda 		DATE 6/21/17 TELEPHONE NUMBER 562-728-4610

Quality and Productivity Commission
31st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
“Celebrating Quality Service”

2017 APPLICATION

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

NAME OF PROJECT: USING PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR EFFECTIVE ANIMAL LAWS

1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY:

The Challenge

Los Angeles County Code Title 10 - Animals is the key enforcement tool for protecting public health and safety regarding animals and regulating the keeping of animals for their safety and protection. Although a number of innovative sections have been added to Title 10 during the past decade, vast portions of the ordinance had not been revised for more than 50 years.

Many of the ordinance provisions were outdated, repetitive or unnecessary, did not adequately address current animal control issues, and were written with excessive legal terminology. As a result, the ordinance was very difficult for the public to understand, burdensome for officers to enforce, and obsolete, making it more difficult to resolve some animal complaints.

For example, Title 10 lacked a suitable enforcement protocol for resolving complaints of excessive animal noise. Barking dog complaints were handled as public nuisances, requiring several neighbors to keep logs of the offensive barking and sign a petition for the district attorney's office. The district attorney held office hearings to attempt to resolve the complaints. This process was burdensome and difficult to enforce, since many neighbors were unwilling to join in a group complaint. Further, there was no mechanism to address complaints regarding excessive noise from other sources, such as properties housing large numbers of roosters, or any other type of animal. Many complaints to DACC and Board offices regarding roosters could not be effectively resolved.

Title 10 was insufficient in stating requirements for a person's duties when they find and take up a lost animal, leaving it more difficult to reunite lost pets with their owners.

Most problematic was Title 10's reliance on legal verbiage. The ordinance was difficult for residents to understand and for officers to enforce. It contained overly complicated animal control language that could be stated much more clearly and succinctly.

The Solution

It was the vision of the Office of County Counsel and the Department of Animal Care and Control to address the many problems in Title 10 and create a completely revised, modern, effective, and easily understood ordinance. A team composed of representatives from both departments devoted hundreds of hours over 2 ½ years to review every section of the ordinance. Sections that were unnecessary, repetitive,

Quality and Productivity Commission
31st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
“Celebrating Quality Service”

2017 APPLICATION

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

NAME OF PROJECT: USING PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR EFFECTIVE ANIMAL LAWS

Fact Sheet: cont'd

and inapplicable were removed. Extensive research was conducted to ensure proposed changes are consistent with State and federal laws and will withstand legal challenge.

The team also recognized that much of the language in Title 10 was written in legal jargon. This language is difficult for the average resident to understand, creating potential due process concerns as to whether the County had clearly communicated the requirements of the law.

A new animal noise section is included in the ordinance. This section replaced the former log and petition requirement and hearing process with an administrative citation process that does not rely on many households to establish a complaint. Based on one complaint submitted under penalty of perjury, the Department of Animal Care and Control will notify the owner of the offending animal(s) that a complaint has been made, and provide a reasonable time period to correct the problem. Failure of the owner to correct the problem will result in administrative citations, with increasing fines. It will be much easier for complainants to peacefully enjoy their property without excessive animal noise.

The team applied the Quality and Productivity Commission's Plain Language Initiative in the rewording of the ordinance. Painstaking care was taken with the crafting of every sentence to make it more understandable without sacrificing necessary wording for enforcement purposes. The team also identified and included many new improvements to the ordinance.

The Benefits

The revised Title 10 ordinance includes many improvements to the process of enforcing laws regarding animals. A discounted pet license fee for veterans with disabilities was added to recognize the sacrifices these veterans made in serving our country. Where appropriate, response and appeal times for administrative hearings and procedures were extended to ensure that parties have adequate time for the resolution of their cases. An administrative review and owner agreement process was included to increase the efficiency of potentially dangerous dog case resolutions.

The use of the Plain Language Initiative has created an ordinance that is much easier to understand. Replacing unnecessary legal jargon with plain language, and removing the redundant and unnecessary language has reduced the ordinance length from 28,280 words to 17,613, a reduction of 38 percent. The ordinance is now better organized and easier to follow. Residents will be better able to understand and

Quality and Productivity Commission
31st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
“Celebrating Quality Service”

2017 APPLICATION

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

NAME OF PROJECT: USING PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR EFFECTIVE ANIMAL LAWS

Fact Sheet: cont'd

comply with the laws regarding animals. Officers will have an updated and easy to use ordinance to rely upon as they protect the people and animals of Los Angeles County. Animal noise complaints will be more readily resolved.

This is the first time the Plain Language Initiative has been applied to a County ordinance. The positive results seen from this endeavor can serve as a model for other County departments to use Plain Language to revise their own departments' ordinances. This ordinance overhaul can also be used as an example to encourage animal care and control agencies across the nation to update their own local ordinances. These agencies can benefit from the work done by the Department of Animal Care and Control and the Office of County Counsel as they look for innovative ways to serve the residents of their own communities.

Linkage to the County Strategic Plan

This ordinance overhaul supports Los Angeles County Strategic Plan Goal 3 – Realize Tomorrow's Government Today, by pursuing operational effectiveness and focusing on public service and advancing the common good.

The ordinance overhaul creates a much more streamlined and user-friendly ordinance that uses Plain Language to clearly state the laws regarding animals, reducing the length of the ordinance by 38 percent. It adds many clarifications and enhancements to resolve previously unaddressed animal control matters. It is a much more effective document for animal control officers to use as they protect the people and animals of Los Angeles County. Other changes have brought Title 10 to be current with the Americans With Disabilities Act regarding the use of service animals.

It creates a more effective animal noise resolution process, which will enhance residents' ability to live without unreasonably disturbing and offensive noise. Ordinance changes increase the efficiency of potentially dangerous dog cases by removing the need for an administrative hearing if the owner agrees to all conditions imposed by the Department. Dog owners and victims of dog attacks will have quicker resolution to their cases. This ordinance also recognizes the sacrifices provided to our country by military veterans by providing a reduced pet license fee for veterans with service related disabilities.

Quality and Productivity Commission
31st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Celebrating Quality Service"

2017 APPLICATION

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

NAME OF PROJECT: USING PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR EFFECTIVE ANIMAL LAWS

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.

(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
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

Quality and Productivity Commission
31st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
“Celebrating Quality Service”

2017 APPLICATION

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

NAME OF PROJECT: USING PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR EFFECTIVE ANIMAL LAWS

FOR COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS ONLY

(For single department submissions, do not include this page)

DEPARTMENT NO. 2 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
OFFICE OF COUNTY COUNSEL – 500 W. TEMPLE ST., ROOM 648, LOS ANGELES, CA 90012	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original Signature on File	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE Original Signature on File
JESUS CASTILLO EMAIL: JCASTILLO@COUNSEL.LACOUNTY.GOV	MARY C. WICKHAM EMAIL: MWICKHAM@COUNSEL.LACOUNTY.GOV
DEPARTMENT NO. 3 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 4 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 5 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 6 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____
DEPARTMENT NO. 7 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
EMAIL: _____	EMAIL: _____