

The Needs of San Francisco's Homeless Cats

SFACC Live Release Data

- This table shows SFACC annual intake and live release rates from 1994 to 2021. This information is published on ACC's website for 2006 and later. We obtained earlier years through a public records request. Presented here are only the numbers for cats.
- As you can see, in the mid-late '90's ACC was euthanizing almost half of the cats and kittens impounded.
- Two factors that improved these numbers:
 - SPCA began a free TNR (trap, neuter, release) program for feral cats in 1993, which dramatically reduced the outdoor cat population over time, and thus reduced ACC shelter intake. Similar results occurred in studies of other communities that have implemented TNR programs.
 - Toni Sestak, while volunteering at both SPCA and ACC, realized that ACC had no kitten foster program and as a result, many underage kittens were being euthanized. Toni started the kitten foster program at ACC in June 1999. As explained on the Toni's Kitty Rescue website:
 - Underage kittens need a safe place to grow until they are big enough and healthy enough to go up for adoption. They need to be socialized to people. They need vaccination shots, and sometimes medicines. And the tiniest ones (bottle-feeders) need to be fed with a little baby bottle 4 to 6 times a day.
 - In her first year at SFACC it was mainly Toni and a handful of volunteers, doing as much as they could. But each year Toni enlisted more volunteers. In 2003 she organized her group into Toni's Kitty Rescue and received her nonprofit status. Since then Toni's has fostered over 8,000 kittens! Now at 85 volunteers and still growing, TKR cares for 800-1,000 orphaned kittens annually.
- Today, ACC does not euthanize for space and intake numbers for cats have dropped to around 1/3 of the levels seen in the '90's. Their live release rate for cats has consistently remained in the 90% percentile for the last 9 years.

Comparison of Municipal Animal Shelters – Per Capita Budgets/Intake & Live Release Rates

- These tables show a comparison of SFACC's budget and intake figures (per capita) to other municipal shelters around the country. Budgets and shelter statistics were obtained from information available online, and we have provided data for both pre-pandemic and post-pandemic.
- In comparing SFACC to other communities, we can see that:
 - San Francisco's budget per capita of \$11-\$12 is among the highest, yet compared to communities with similar and even much lower budgets per capita, San Francisco takes in far fewer animals.
 - San Antonio, TX for example, also has a budget of \$11 per capita and achieved a live release rate greater than 90% but took in 24,635 cats and dogs in fiscal year 2020-2021, as compared to SFACC's total of 3,561 cats and dogs for the same period.
 - SFACC is well funded and operating out of a brand-new state of the art shelter, so why are they turning away animals and cutting programs?