

2023-1388 No Kill Animal Shelter Resolution Notes

No Kill Animal Shelter Resolution Notes

This problem is not new and is an issue shared by jurisdictions, cities, and states across the nation. In 2017 the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners passed a no-kill resolution affirming the support of the no-kill policy for the DeKalb animal shelter, becoming the 2nd county in Georgia to do so. To assist with this, the previous Animal Shelter was moved and expanded.

In the last several decades, hundreds of communities across the country have ended the killing of healthy and treatable animals in their municipal shelters. As a result, they are achieving unprecedented results, placing 95%- 99% of animals in open-admission animal control facilities. There is no reason DeKalb County cannot do the same — and every reason to believe it can.

This is achieved through the No Kill Equation, a series of programs and services that include foster care, marketing and promotion, offsite adoptions, and robust adoption campaigns, including being open when people are off work and families are together, such as on weekends and evenings.

These programs are humane, readily available, affordable, and, when comprehensively implemented to the point that they replace killing entirely, effective. Communities across the country that embrace the No Kill Equation achieve success without turning animals away, putting public safety at risk, or warehousing animals. Collectively, the No Kill Equation has resulted in a nationwide shelter death rate decline of 95%, fewer people buying animals, more people adopting, and 30% fewer puppy mills.

Costs and Economic Benefits of No Kill Animal Control

Although they vary by shelter, the cost to impound, hold, kill an animal, and dispose of the body is approximately \$135.00 (\$84 for impoundment and \$51 for killing and disposal). The process is revenue-negative.

By contrast, as most shelter costs are fixed, keeping animals alive for adoption does not dramatically increase costs. And since it takes roughly the same time to clean a kennel as it does to kill an animal, staff increases often prove unnecessary, with the added financial benefit that cleaning requires less-skilled, less-expensive labor and can be augmented by volunteer support.

Moreover, the programs and services of the No Kill Equation are cost-effective. Some rely on private philanthropy, such as partnering with rescue groups that shift care costs from public taxpayers to private individuals and groups. Other programs, such as adoption, bring in revenue. And still others, such as sterilizing rather than killing community cats, are less expensive and, over the long term, result in exponential savings by reducing births.

For example, a six-year study examined the economic impact of a city passing a No Kill ordinance. The ordinance included three main programmatic components:

- An “immediate moratorium on the [convenience killing] of animals if there were available kennels at the municipal facility”;
- Implementation of the No Kill Equation; and,
- A mandated minimum live release rate of 90% (since increased to 95%).

Dog adoptions increased by 67%, and cat adoptions by 49%. Conversely, dog killing declined by 94%, and cat killing by 91%. The city placed 95% cats and 98% dogs during the study period.

Study authors found that the total dollar value of spending at local veterinarians, grooming facilities, daycare centers, pet stores, and other local businesses was \$157,452,503, with an investment of just over \$30,000,000 — a return on investment of over 400%. These economic benefits included \$49,307,682 in additional spending by individuals on local veterinary and pet care services and \$25,333,237 in additional spending on other pet-related expenses.

Study authors note that’s “the most conservative possible measure of the data.” In other words, the actual economic benefit was likely much higher.

2023-1388 No Kill Animal Shelter Resolution Notes

In addition to spurring spending, creating jobs, and increasing sales tax revenues, it also attracted new businesses: Google's decision to build a new office tower is directly attributable to the city's No Kill plan. Google executives noted that "it is attractive to a young, vibrant, pet-loving workforce."

Consistent with Public Safety

The programs of the No Kill Equation do not change long-standing state laws regarding dangerous dogs and dogs with serious bite histories. A 10-year California study found that "there is no evidence that the problems predicted by some... such as hoarding or exposing the public to dangerous dogs, has ever materialized." A subsequent study in a local municipality found that while the placement of dogs climbed from 69% to 98% after it passed an ordinance mandating a 90% placement rate at its shelter (subsequently increased to 95%), the percentage of dog bites deemed moderate or severe declined by 13%, with the most significant decline in the number of bites classified as "severe," which fell by 89%. The study concluded that No Kill Equation legislation was not only consistent with public safety, it also improved it, noting positive impacts on "public health, social capital, and community engagement," all of which have "important implications for [the city's] ability to promote and sustain the health and well-being of both its human and non-human animal residents." In short, by embracing the No Kill Equation and hiring leaders with a "can do" attitude and a commitment to getting results, communities that provide funding within national norms can safely place upwards of 99% of all intakes.

Responsive Government

A recent study found that 96% of Americans believe we have a moral duty to care for animals and should have strong laws to do so. Not surprisingly, No Kill initiatives receive strong bipartisan support and are popular with voters. A No Kill ordinance is not just good ethics and good business, it's good government.

Addressing concerns that the majority breed of dogs at the shelter are categorized as "pit bull mixes"

Are Pit Bulls good family dogs?

Absolutely, Pit Bulls can be wonderful additions to the family. They're overflowing with love and loyalty, and, with proper care, training, and socialization, these pups can be the ultimate playmates, not only for kids but also for other furry pals in your household. Their warm hearts and affectionate spirits make them ideal companions.

Are Pit Bulls dangerous?

No, Pit Bulls are not dangerous by nature. While they were originally bred for purposes like dog fighting and bull baiting, it's essential to remember that they don't come hardwired with aggression. Their temperament largely depends on factors like socialization, training, and the care they receive, which is the case for all dogs regardless of breed.

When it comes to temperament, Pit Bulls have proved their mettle. In fact, they performed remarkably well in one of the most extensive and comprehensive temperament tests conducted on dogs, coming second only to the sporting group. It's also worth noting that the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) emphasizes that a dog's behavior primarily depends on responsible pet parenting rather than the breed itself. So, in a nutshell, it's not about the breed, but how they are nurtured and cared for that truly matters.

What can do in the meantime?

Formation of an animal welfare task force made up of relevant departments, animal advisory board members, the judicial system, the Board of Commissioners, the Law Department and community stakeholders to review, advise and act on the full implementation of the "no-kill equation" program and policy framework.

What best practices can be identified, and solutions can be piloted:

- Cause for the pet abandonment
- Identify "hot spots" for dumping
- Address back yard breeding through ordinances and legislation
- License those who breed to sell
- Fund or incentivize additional spay and neuter services, resources for those who are struggling with care, microchipping all lets
- Permit individuals who sell or give animals away
- Microchip mandates, working with local vets