

The No Kill Equation

“No Kill” isn’t about warehousing animals, hoarding, or becoming a sanctuary for “unadoptable” animals. It is about implementing the FULL COMPLEMENT of programs to achieve a 90%-plus live release rate! It might as well be called “Save 90”!

1. Feral Cat TNR Program

Trap Neuter Release (TNR) programs are the only proven effective methods of reducing a feral cat population, and No Kill communities across the country have embraced these tactics as a method of drastically reducing shelter intake and saving lives.

2. High Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter

Low or no-cost, high volume spay/neuter programs are a key component to reducing shelter intake, and become especially effective over time. Reducing intake allows for additional resources to be allocated to other shelter necessities.

3. Rescue Groups

Rescue groups are an invaluable element of the NKE. Any transfer of an animal to a rescue group reduces taxpayer cost for vet care and boarding (or euthanasia), in addition to freeing up a kennel for another animal. A transfer to a legitimate rescue should never be refused by a shelter.

4. Foster Care

Foster care is an irreplaceable way to drastically expand shelter capacity. Volunteer foster parents provide boarding, food and care for animals, and serve as key advocates for the shelter’s mission. These programs also save the lives of neonatal kittens and other animals who cannot survive in a shelter environment.

5. Comprehensive Pet Adoptions

You CAN adopt your way out of killing, but it takes hard work and innovation. There are 17 million families looking for pets each year, and three to four million killed in shelters. There are more than enough homes for our nation’s homeless pets, but shelters must compete with outside sources of animals – they must offer promotions, adoption specials and implement effective marketing programs to get pets out the door.

6. Pet Retention

Many of the reasons people surrender their animals are preventable, but shelters must work with the public to help them retain their animals. Through offering advice and assistance to those in need, shelters can reduce intake and keep families together.

7. Medical and Behavior Rehabilitation

A key part of any shelter’s responsibility is to insure the health & well being of its inhabitants. Animals must be treated for medical conditions and rehabilitated for behavioral issues. This step includes the implementation of proper cleaning, vaccination, evaluation and other protocols.

8. Public Relations/Community Involvement

Community support is key to No Kill success. By increasing public exposure for the shelter, the community will get involved, which means more donations, more volunteers, more adoptions and more lifesaving success.

9. Volunteers

No Kill efforts cannot succeed without volunteers. They expand the shelter’s operational efforts without necessitating additional expense. They are invaluable, and the backbone of any successful shelter.

10. Proactive Redemptions

In Washoe County, Nevada, almost 65% of intakes are returned to their owners, demonstrating the high percentage of animals that need only be redeemed. Actively working towards RTO efforts can drastically reduce shelter intake and kill rates.

11. A Compassionate Director

The number one most important factor in reaching a No Kill community is effective leadership. Unless a shelter’s leader is progressive, compassionate and hard-working, other efforts are likely to fail. The leader dictates the policies & procedures of the organization, and if a leader makes a decision to stop the killing – it will stop.