

Pets For Life Community Outreach Toolkit



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**



INTRODUCTION 1

WHY ACCESS TO PET RESOURCES IS A SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE 5

FIRST STEPS 9

COMMUNITY OUTREACH 27

DATA AND MAPPING 39

STRATEGIC PROGRAM GROWTH 49

SUSTAINABILITY AND MESSAGING 53

POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT REFORM 57

IN CLOSING 63

APPENDIX 65



Introduction

A core program of the Humane Society of the United States, Pets for Life is guided by the philosophy that a deep connection with pets transcends socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity and geography, and that no one should be denied the opportunity to experience the benefits, joy and comfort that come from the human-animal bond.

Systemic inequity and institutional barriers create obstacles to accessing affordable veterinary care, pet resources and wellness information for millions of people every day.

PFL takes a comprehensive, long-term approach to addressing the inequity in and lack of access to pet resources that people in underserved communities experience.

Through door-to-door community outreach and pet owner support services, PFL provides veterinary care, supplies, services and information at no cost to pet owners. The program builds trust, positive relationships and community partnerships.

To address the systemic challenges faced by people and pets living in poverty or in underserved communities, PFL focuses on three distinct but intersecting areas:

DIRECT CARE

Our PFL teams provide pet services and information at no cost to pet owners in Los Angeles and Philadelphia. These established core markets are also where PFL refines best practices; they serve as training grounds for local organizations to learn how to implement the PFL approach in their own communities.

TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP

PFL delivers in-depth guidance and support to local organizations throughout the U.S. and Canada and to the veterinary community, ensuring the necessary tools and knowledge to implement and sustain community outreach programming.

PFL emphasizes understanding the impact of systemic poverty on pet keeping, effective outreach strategies and long-term program sustainability.

POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT REFORM

PFL encourages agencies tasked with enforcement of animal welfare ordinances and statutes to take a less punitive and more support-based approach, and for animal welfare organizations to enact policies that are equitable for all pet owners.

PFL theory of change



THE PETS FOR LIFE APPROACH

There is a need in every community to start or grow community-based animal welfare programming and increase equity in access to pet resources. Regardless of your community's size or the type of organization you represent, if you have a genuine willingness to be of service to people and pets, the PFL program applies and can be successful anywhere.

Offering services is an important part of the solution and certainly an immediate need. As you will see from this toolkit, PFL employs an intensely organized, methodical approach to the work. But bringing about transformational change also requires tackling the larger systems that keep inequity alive.

There are several core considerations when building an impactful community outreach effort.

ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL INEQUITY

Overtaking exclusionary systems and working toward equity in access to care requires a collaborative and sustained effort between animal welfare organizations, the veterinary community, policymakers, foundations and individual supporters—all informed and driven by the diverse experiences and perspectives that make up every community. PFL embraces the human in “humane” and extends compassion and respect to all audiences of pet owners. Within the animal welfare movement, PFL works to create greater recognition of how systemic inequality impacts pet keeping.

GETTING CLOSE AND STRATEGIC

A philosophical shift must happen within animal welfare. Service providers and policymakers must get up close and personal and build community partnerships. Big problems cannot be tackled from a distance. While it may feel uncomfortable and requires sustained investment, being present is essential to developing an approach that truly mirrors the voice of the community.



BEING A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY RESOURCE

An effective community outreach program provides services based on the actual wants and needs voiced by the community. Veterinary care, spay/neuter, pet supplies and other support services such as pet deposits and return-to-owner fees should all be considered when possible. When it's comprehensive, the PFL program is more meaningful and has greater impact on the immediate challenges people and their pets are experiencing.

ACHIEVING SUCCESS, REGARDLESS OF GEOGRAPHY

From Alaska to the U.S. East Coast and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, PFL programs have operated successfully in all environments—urban, rural and Indigenous communities. Regardless of your geography or your community's size, the PFL approach can work. Logistics may vary, but the constant is a commitment to building trust and nurturing relationships by being nonjudgmental, culturally competent and active listeners. If an organization approaches the work with the genuine intent of being a supportive resource, service providers can expect doors to open and programmatic success.

EMBRACING A PROACTIVE, SCALABLE AND COST-EFFECTIVE MODEL

The PFL methodology is focused on program efficiency and delivering services in the most effective yet economical way possible. On average, the cost-per-pet for traditional care in animal shelters, rescues and municipal agencies is much higher than the services provided through the proactive work of PFL. Investment in proactive programming is not only less stressful for pets, keeping them in the homes they already have, but also more cost-effective than reactive measures.

As long as poverty and inequity exist, there will be a need for subsidized services, and PFL has shown that shifting a greater portion of resources to owner support versus rehoming or punishment is the appropriate and reasonable path forward for companion animal welfare.

GATHERING AND ANALYZING COMMUNITY-BASED METRICS

There is a growing need for animal welfare to evolve and add to mission-level metrics beyond the traditional shelter-centric measurements, which fall short of telling the complete story of the animal welfare field and how it intersects with the entire pet-owning population. Most metrics used in the field are shelter-based (intake, live release rates, length of stay, etc.) and, while important, this data fails to adequately show programmatic impact within the community, outside the shelter walls. In fact, some animal welfare organizations are beginning to serve a larger percentage of owned pets through their community-based programming while serving fewer pets through more conventional intake and sheltering efforts, illustrating a growing trend and foreshadowing what is to come for the future of the animal welfare field.

PFL takes into account different measurements and perspectives that more appropriately define programmatic success in the context of community engagement and long-term impact. PFL data shows that the vast majority of people and pets reached through door-to-door efforts and relationship building in underserved areas have never reached out the local shelter and that three quarters of pets have never seen a veterinarian. Because of this, far too many people and pets are left out of traditional metrics.



The data PFL recommends collecting not only shows the direct impact the program has on the lives of people and pets, it also helps reveal how disconnected pet service providers have been from underserved communities. Being able to speak to how many pets have never seen a veterinarian, how many pet owners have never connected with local animal service agencies and how many people are isolated from spay/neuter services strengthens the case for positive, resource-based engagement within the community. Such data also informs strategic program improvements to ensure a permanent increase in access to pet services.

In the chapters to come, you will have the opportunity for in-depth exploration of the barriers to pet resources that exist for millions of people and concrete tips and tools for starting your own community outreach program to address those inequities. This step-by-step guide will provide a detailed operational plan based on an approach that has been tested over the last decade and proven to be successful in any geographic environment as well as within various types and sizes of organizations. From defining a focus area in which resources will be offered to establishing equitable policies; and from measuring outcomes to financially sustaining your community outreach efforts, this toolkit offers a holistic roadmap to an effective community based model for companion animal welfare.



Why access to pet resources is a social justice issue

SYSTEMIC INEQUITY FOR PEOPLE AND PETS

The field of animal welfare has in many ways been successful in bringing attention to the need to extend care and compassion to animals. However, the environment and human community around the animal has not always been as effectively understood or considered.

Animal welfare benefits greatly from a broadened understanding of how systemic poverty and institutional bias impact people and their pets. While the issues are complex and nuanced, this chapter will provide foundational information. Hopefully, you will be inspired to learn more about how people in your community may be affected and about opportunities to address issues of access and equity through your work.

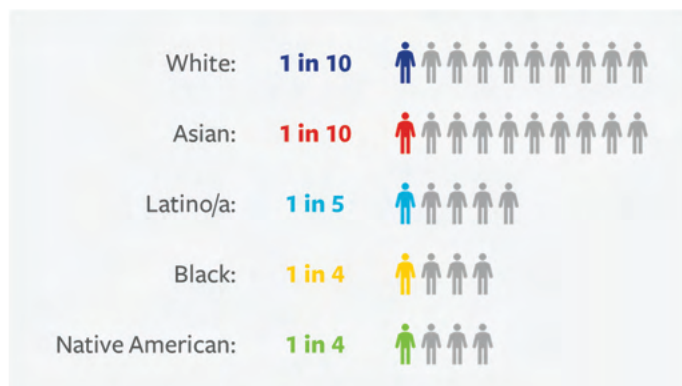
WHY ACCESS TO PET RESOURCES IS A SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE

In the United States today, 43.5% of the population (an estimated 140 million people) is defined as being working poor or low-income. This means tens of millions of pets are living with people and families who are struggling financially. The federal poverty line is currently set at \$12,760 for one person and \$26,200 for a family of four (for other family/household size thresholds and for updates to these amounts, visit this resource from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines).

While socioeconomic disparities are immense, race matters in conjunction with and in addition to poverty. Poverty cannot be discussed without also discussing race. Race and issues of inequity are not isolated. More than other demographic categories, race is the strongest indicator of outcomes in all areas—whether health, education, housing, income or criminal justice—so race must be purposefully centered in conversations. There is a [major racial disparity](#) among those living in poverty: 24.2% of Black, 21% of Latino, 25.8% of Native American, 11.6% of Asian and 11.6% of white people live below the poverty level.

United States residents living in poverty

By race/ethnicity

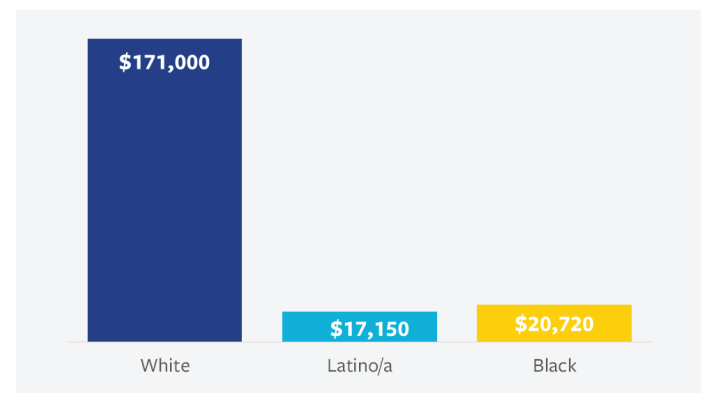


Income inequality has been on the rise for decades in the United States and is currently the highest in a century. Over the [past century](#), the amount of wealth [consolidated](#) among a [tiny percentage](#) of the most affluent citizens has [grown enormously](#). When factoring in inflation, this means that rising prices in all areas, from housing to food, disproportionately impact low-income families more heavily than wealthy ones.

The racial wealth divide deepens the issue further. The [median net worth](#) (net worth is total wealth, more than just income, including assets and liabilities) of Black and Latino families stands at just \$17,150 and \$20,720, respectively, a fraction of the \$171,000 wealth held by the median white family. Over the past 30 years, the average wealth of white families has grown by 84%—1.2 times the rate of growth for the Latino population and three times the rate of growth for the Black population. If the past 30 years were to repeat, the next three decades would see the average wealth of white households increase by over \$18,000 per year, while Latino and Black households would see respective wealth increase by about \$2,250 and \$750 per year.

2016 Median net worth

By race/ethnicity



Because wealth or net worth is passed down from generation to generation, it dictates the starting point for the trajectory of an individual's economic security throughout their lifetime. In most cases, net worth is not the finish line, but the starting point for the next generation. Economists estimate that 80% of lifetime wealth accumulation depends on where a person starts and upon intergenerational transfer of wealth.



There are many reasons why there are such extreme differences in income and wealth today—from white Americans profiting an estimated \$1 trillion from 200 years of unpaid slave labor to the Homestead Act of 1862, a massive land transfer from Native tribes to white homesteaders—far too much to completely explore in this toolkit ([please see the Resource List to learn more](#)). One more recent factor to note is the New Deal of the 1930s, a series of social programs, public works projects, financial reforms and regulations aimed at combating the Depression—still the largest governmental social aid program ever to exist in the United States. One of the cornerstones of the New Deal was government-backed mortgages administered through the Federal Housing Administration. FHA lent over \$120 billion in home mortgages, with recipients being 98% white households. Today, after inflation, that is the equivalent of \$2.2 trillion. Systemically, Black, Indigenous and people of color were denied access to government support while white people received support and prospered.

The New Deal also created a national appraisal system, carried out in most every city and town across the country. The system labeled some areas and neighborhoods desirable and eligible to have home mortgages approved. Other areas were deemed hazardous, meaning mortgages would not be given. Those deemed hazardous were marked in red, a practice commonly referred to as “redlining.” This important moment shows how the [past relates to the present](#). Today, 74% of neighborhoods that were redlined in the 1930s through the New Deal are still low to moderate income today and 64% are predominately inhabited by Black and Brown families. Conversely, a vast majority of neighborhoods that were marked to receive government-backed home mortgages are [middle- to upper-class today](#) and predominantly inhabited by white residents.

In addition to income and wealth, many more layers of systemic inequity—in issues from housing insecurity to mass incarceration—create immense challenges to accessing resources for millions of people and pets every day.

THE ROLE OF ANIMAL WELFARE IN ECONOMIC AND RACIAL EQUITY

While official statistics on diversity, equity and inclusion in the animal welfare industry are not widely available, observational and experiential evidence shows that staff, volunteers and advocates who make up and are connected to the field are predominately white, middle-class individuals. There is information indicating the [veterinary profession](#) is the [least racially and ethnically diverse profession](#) in the country, and a survey of Pets for Life mentorship partners in the U.S. shows staff at the local animal shelters and service agencies in these communities are 88% white, 6% Latino, 3% Black and 3% Native American. Our society is made up of diverse experiences and perspectives, so if animal welfare wants to appropriately represent and effectively serve all audiences of people and pets, various racial and socioeconomic experiences must be recognized.

The current homogeneity within the field has implications for the way animal programming and policy take form. It is important to acknowledge that organizational policies and ordinances at various levels are frequently created without varied perspectives and cultural humility—the practice of looking inward and examining implicit bias.

EQUALITY VS. EQUITY

The distinction between equality and equity is essential to understand. Equality has to do with treating everyone the same, giving the exact same resources regardless of need; equity, on the other hand, involves treating people differently and distributing resources based on need. This difference is critically important because, in the United States, opponents of racial justice initiatives often use the notion of “fairness” as an underlying rationale; they assert that social safety net programs are unfair because some people are given advantages and resources over others. This sentiment is grounded in the idea that equality—rather than equity—should be society’s goal. However, this ignores the vast differences in resources and treatment across racial groups. For everyone to have a real opportunity to succeed, there must be an acknowledgment that not everyone starts at the same place. The different starting positions are not solely individual but related to systems of privilege and oppression based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ability and other identities. Only with this recognition can the systems responsible for creating and maintaining these differences be disrupted and equity be achieved. For more discussion on language and definitions, [please see the Sustainability Guide](#).

(Source: Hudson, D. J. (2017). On “diversity” as anti-racism in library and information studies: a critique. *Journal of Critical Librarianship and Information Studies*, 1-36)

With research and data showing every segment of society impacted by racial and economic inequity, animal welfare is not exempt. Animal welfare is not a unique area where race and socioeconomics don’t matter. The field must pay attention to and factor in structures of societal and systemic injustice when planning outreach and programs. Understanding how race and income impact people and pets can hugely enhance the ability of service providers to compassionately engage all audiences of pet owners.

There is an immense need within the animal welfare field to not only be informed on the history and current state of inequity but to also become active participants in dismantling structural discrimination, starting within our own industry. This is crucial to create solutions that repair the divide and cultivate equal access for all pet owners, regardless of race, ethnicity, income level or geography.

Rectifying exclusionary systems and leading the way toward equity for all pet owners requires a collaborative and sustained effort. Offering services is an important part of the solution and certainly an immediate need, but as you go through this toolkit, keep in mind that bringing about transformational change requires changes in the larger systems that keep discrimination in the present. Animal welfare has a unique and special opportunity to create positive change because animals provide a strong connection point to build empathic relationships. Pets can bring us all together; they are a constant reminder of how people are much more alike than different.

For more information on access to care in the animal welfare field and other tools to support your programming and communication for community-based, pet owner support work, please visit humanepro.org/petsforlife.



First steps

Thorough planning will create a strong foundation for your community-based work and ensure readiness to provide services to people and pets. The first steps in starting a community outreach program are discussed in this chapter: Identify a focus area, define what resources will be made available and create strategy and structure.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

A community assessment serves multiple purposes:

- It deepens your understanding of your community. Even if you have an anecdotal recognition of which areas are most

underserved or have the highest poverty rates, collecting data is informative and strengthens your ability to communicate the need for community-based programming.

- It illustrates to policymakers and supporters the importance of connecting human demographics to companion animal welfare work, not just shelter-centric metrics. If you only look at shelter intake and disposition statistics only, you can miss valuable information that can inform your strategy and success in community engagement.

- It provides a more comprehensive examination of your community with an overview of the economic and spatial inequity that exists there (spatial inequity means unequal distribution of resources and services across different areas or locations). Statistics that showcase the challenges people face in accessing resources for their pets are important to share within your organization and with the general public.
- It pinpoints a focus area so that you can develop a disciplined outreach strategy that is rooted in relationship building. Having finite resources requires you to focus geographically, allowing saturation and then migration.

Many free tools are available to help collect, organize and map the community assessment information. The assessment will take many focused hours to complete, but it is well worth the effort. You will find the process valuable and inevitably will learn something new about your community.



START WITH A SPREADSHEET

To ensure organized information, a comprehensive worksheet for tracking the data gathered in a community assessment must be developed. This tool can be maintained most efficiently in electronic form; it also needs to be shareable and portable. The worksheet includes information such as community demographics, indicators leading to your area of focus, pet care and wellness resources, and current or potential partners. While not the only choice, Excel is an easy, available and useful option. [See here the general template used by Pets for Life.](#)

Community Demographics and Indicators

Information is readily available at a zip code or census tract level. There are benefits to each, and determining at what level you will collect information is usually based on what online system you are most comfortable with and how large of a focus area you can serve. The first column in your worksheet will be the geographic label, and the other columns will be the demographic data to collect, including but not limited to:

- Total population
- Total number of households
- Estimated dog-owning households
- Estimated cat-owning households
- Total number of dogs/total number of cats
- Race/Ethnicity breakdown
- Average or median household income
- Percent of residents below poverty level
- Educational attainment
- Percent of renter-occupied residences
- Policing interaction – both human and animal control if possible
- Shelter intake – from your organization if applicable and any other intake facilities in your community if possible

These are all indicators that reveal the most underserved areas. The purpose of community outreach efforts is to reach an audience traditionally overlooked or not positively engaged, and the data collected will usually be very clear in showing those areas. Use zip code and census tract-level details to guide an even deeper dive, obtain neighborhood-level statistics if available, and physically get out into the community to become more familiar. Your program will be most successful when it has a defined concentration.

Keep in mind that sources may have slightly different data depending on the origin and date of the data. In general, however, the information will provide clear direction and highlight areas where an outreach program is most needed.

Online options for obtaining data are:

- Census Bureau (detailed demographic data): data.census.gov
- Census QuickFacts (demographic data): census.gov/quickfacts
- Opportunity Atlas (social mobility data): opportunityatlas.org
- Eviction Lab (eviction data and tracking): evictionlab.org
- Mapping Poverty in America (location and concentration of poverty): nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2014/01/05/poverty-map/index.html
- CDC Social Vulnerability Index (external stresses on human health data): svi.cdc.gov
- Rich Blocks, Poor Blocks (mapping by income level): richblockspoorblocks.com
- City Data (demographic data by city and zip code): city-data.com

Data can often be obtained through local sources such as your city, county or state websites. These and other resources can be found by doing internet searches. Be sure to document your sources so the data can be verified and tracked for any updates and changes.



DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS

You should be able to find the number of households from the Census Bureau website, but if the number of households isn't readily available, the average household size can usually be found. You can then estimate the number of households in a community by taking the population for the zip code or census tract and dividing it by the average household size.

ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF DOGS AND CATS

When your area of focus has been identified and population information gathered, there are two sources currently available to estimate the number of households in your community who have pets: American Veterinary Medical Association or the American Pet Products Association. Note that this information is based on the national average and the formulas are based on number of households, not overall population.

To use these two sources, first calculate how many households have dogs and how many have cats. Then calculate the number of each species per owning household.



The 2019-2020 APPA Survey says:

Percent of households with a dog – 50%

Percent of households with a cat – 34%

Average number of dogs per owning household – 1.3

Average number of cats per owning household – 1.5

The 2017-2018 AVMA Sourcebook says:

Percent of households with a dog – 38%

Percent of households with a cat – 25%

Average number of dogs per owning household – 1.6

Average number of cats per owning household – 1.8

Here is a sample calculation:

100,000 households in Anytown x 0.38

100,000 households in Anytown x 0.38

(percentage of households with dogs)

= 38,000 dog-owning households in Anytown

38,000 dog-owning households in Anytown x 1.6

(number of dogs owned per household nationally)

= 60,800 dogs in Anytown

100,000 households in Anytown x 0.25

(percentage of cat owners nationally)

= 25,000 cat-owning households in Anytown

25,000 cat-owning households in Anytown x 1.8

(number of cats owned per household nationally)

= 45,000 cats in Anytown

In general, there is a lack of information and research on the number of pets living in communities with high poverty rates and little to no access to veterinary and pet service providers. The number of households with pets varies at regional, state and local levels, and your area may be higher or lower than the national average. To address this gap in information regarding the number of households that keep pets in underserved communities, the Institute for Human-Animal Connection recently conducted a detailed pet inventory study in four Pets for Life program communities – two rural and two urban. This study found:

- The community-level pet ownership rates in the four communities (Granger, WA; Madison, WI; Seattle, WA; and Wilder, ID) were significantly different ($p < 0.0001$) than the rates predicted if the 2017-18 AVMA formula is used.
 - The two rural communities (Granger, WA and Wilder, ID) had an average 11.5% higher rate of overall pet keeping than the two urban communities (Madison, WI and Seattle, WA).
 - The two rural communities (Granger, WA and Wilder, ID) had a 19% higher dog ownership rate than the urban communities.
 - The cat ownership rate was similar in all four sites at an average of 19.4%.
- However, the combined pet-keeping rate of all four communities was 56.8% (exactly the same as that calculated by the AVMA).

You can find a copy of the study at

socialwork.du.edu/research/project/pets-life-one-health.

Community Resources

Research and details should be collected pertaining to the resources currently available within your community. This information will showcase where there are gaps in pet services and where pet resource deserts exist, which is helpful in both setting goals and supporting the need for a community-based program. The easiest way to find information online and organize this sheet is by zip code.

Gather basic details like addresses, phone numbers and websites for resources in your community including but not limited to:

- Shelters
- Animal control agencies
- Spay/neuter or community medicine clinics
- Veterinary offices
- Animal welfare organizations/rescue groups
- Big box retailers (for pet supplies and pet food)
- Discount stores (for pet supplies and pet food)
- Pet retailers
- Pet care providers (groomers, boarding facilities, etc.)
- Social welfare organizations
- Public assistance offices
- Faith based organizations/places of worship
- Schools

In developing your resource inventory spreadsheet, include the category, name, address and phone number of each resource. To allow mapping pet-specific resources separate from overall community resources, we suggest grouping the pet-related resources together first, then following with non-animal-related resources. Creating a thorough list of social service agencies is also helpful as you will encounter situations beyond your scope and mission, and it is helpful to have information for referral agencies. [Here is an example.](#)



Collaboration and Miscellaneous Contacts

Once you begin implementing a community-based approach, you'll find that having a variety of strong community partners adds value to your work. Use a collaboration details spreadsheet to keep track of groups and media outlets you know or want to connect with over time. Include information such as:

- Website address
- Contact names
- Email address
- Physical address
- Phone numbers
- Specifics (services, prices, capacity, specialty)
- Summary of mission
- Notes
- Status of contact (first contact, established partnership, not interested)

MAPPING

Collecting the data in a spreadsheet will help you manage and organize the information as well create maps that will provide a useful dimension to your community assessment. Maps can display demographic information, community resources and overall geography in a way that clearly highlights potential focus areas and identifies barriers to accessing services. A map displays your spreadsheet data in a way that's easy to comprehend and makes communication in reports and marketing material more direct. The initial goal of a community assessment map is to direct your team's planning efforts. Later, it will also assist in your efforts to relate the story of inequity to others.

An electronic map can be created using software on your computer or online services like Google Maps; printing a laminated map you can draw on is also an option. Electronic maps can be updated regularly, shared more easily and allow you to layer multiple types of data at the same time while toggling on and off as needed. There are many computer programs, resources and approaches to building maps, so use whichever option works best for your team according to your needs and abilities. If you are new to map-making, Google Maps is recommended as a starting point, and you can upgrade to more robust options later if possible. If you do not already have a Google Gmail account, you can sign up for free online by going to gmail.com. This account will allow you to create, edit and save your own personal maps and data. You can also invite others to view or edit the map with you. If you find yourself growing out of Google Maps and need more functionality and flexibility, another excellent map-making system is Esri's ArcGIS Online program and Pro software. It is not free, but nonprofits can get it for a significantly reduced price. If you are a municipal/government agency, you may also be able to get an ArcGIS account at no cost through your municipal GIS office.

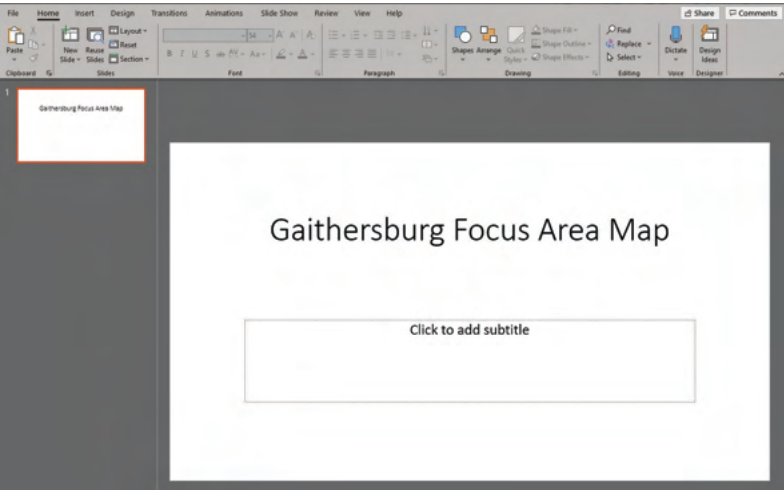


Using the demographic and pet resource data collected in your spreadsheet, you should be able to identify the most underserved area. Again, this could be based on zip codes, census tracts, towns, neighborhoods or a combination of multiple geographic boundaries. Keep an eye on actual community and neighborhood borders on the ground; frequently there is overlap in income levels within zip codes and census tracts. One advantage to building a community resource map in Google is that by simply browsing the Google map itself, you can identify many community features and resources like neighborhood names, public transportation, pet stores, animal hospitals, community organizations and municipal buildings. Features like this are usually clearly marked, so you can scan the neighborhood and drop markers or pins on items you want to keep track of. Another option is loading your community assessment spreadsheet directly into your Google map.

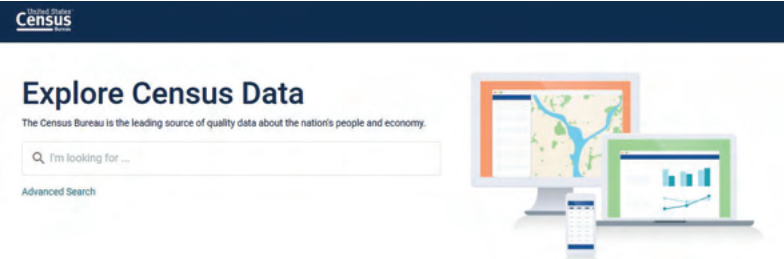
Focus Area Map

Here is an example of an easy way to create a sharable map of your focus area and showcase why the area was chosen.

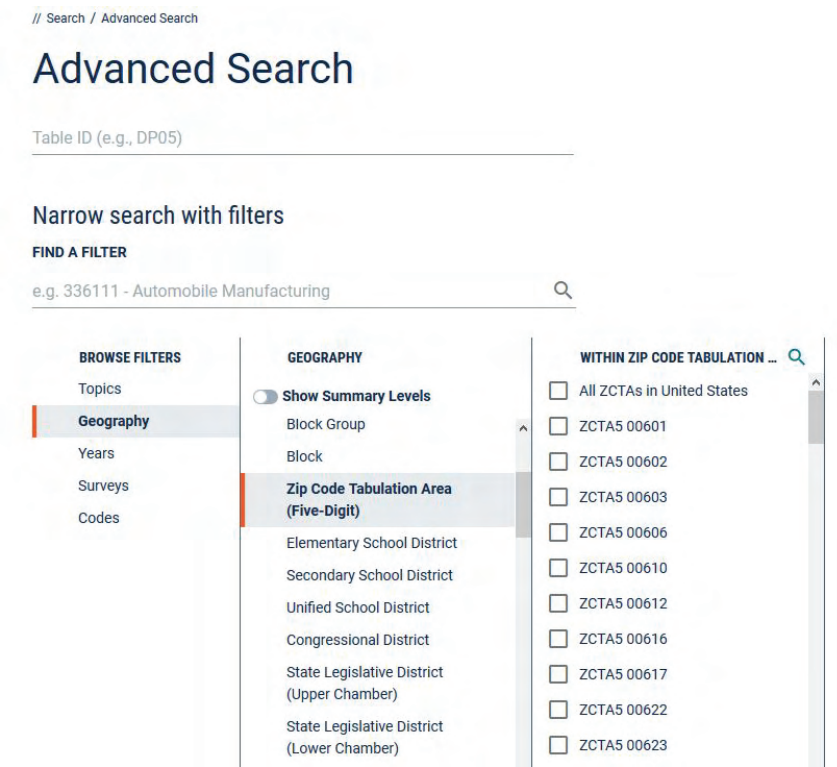
1. Open PowerPoint and create a new file. Name the title of the first slide something like “Your City Focus Area.”



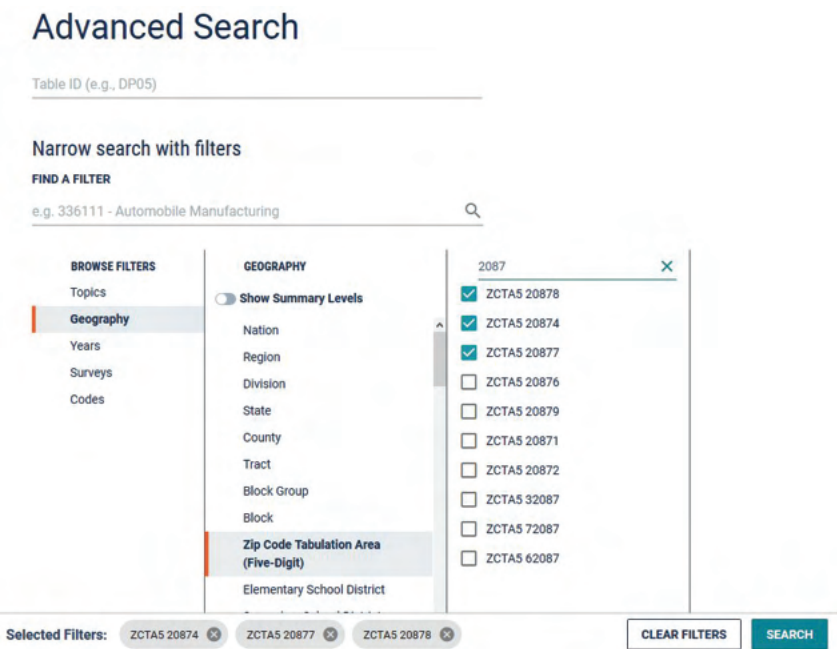
2. Open your web browser and go to data.census.gov. Then click “Advanced Search.”



3. On the Advanced Search page, click the geography filter and then the zip code filter (you can also choose other geographic areas if it makes sense for your focus area).



4. To narrow down the list, click the magnifying glass and type the first three or four numbers of the zip codes you are looking for. Check the box for each zip code in your focus area and then click “Search.”



5. You will arrive at a page with a variety of data related to your chosen zip codes. To reach the map you need, either click the “Maps” link at the top of the page or scroll down and click the small thumbnail map.

ALL TABLES MAPS PAGES

About 2,678 results | Filter

Tables

AGE AND SEX

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 Table: S0101

POPULATION 60 YEARS AND OVER IN THE UNITED STATES

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 Table: S0102

POPULATION 65 YEARS AND OVER IN THE UNITED STATES

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016 Table: S0103

VIEW ALL TABLES (1339)

Maps

AGE AND SEX

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 Table: S0101

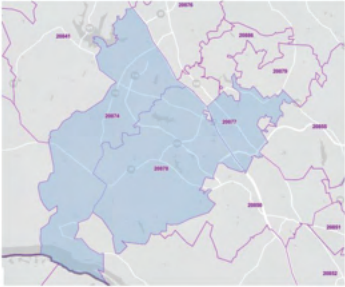


6. You should arrive at a page with a large map with your previously selected zip codes highlighted. Use the screen capture or screenshot feature on your computer to select and save an image of this map.

7. Take a screenshot of the highlighted areas. To take a screenshot on a Windows computer, search your Start menu for “Snipping Tool” or “Snip and Sketch,” open it, use it to highlight the area you want and save it as an image. On a Mac computer: Click shift + command + 4, use the cursor to highlight the desired area and then click “Done.”

Add the saved screenshot image to your PowerPoint slide. Adjust the title, image and text boxes as necessary for fit. On one side, add demographic information about your zip codes, such as median household income, percent of people below the poverty line, overall population total or race/ethnicity information.

Gaithersburg Focus Area Map



Gaithersburg

Population: 12345
Median Household Income: \$56,789
Percent Below Poverty Level: 9%

20874

Population: 3456
Median Household Income: \$12345
Percent Below Poverty Level: 30%

20877

Population: 2345
Median Household Income: \$12345
Percent Below Poverty Level: 25%

20878

Population: 45468
Median Household Income: \$12345
Percent Below Poverty Level: 35%

United States Census Bureau

ALL TABLES MAPS PAGES

1339 Results Filter | Download

SELECTION MAP

AGE AND SEX

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 Table: S0101

POPULATION 60 YEARS AND OVER IN THE UNITED STATES

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 Table: S0102

POPULATION 65 YEARS AND OVER IN THE UNITED STATES

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016 Table: S0103

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIVE AND FOREIGN-BORN POPULATIONS

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 Table: S0501

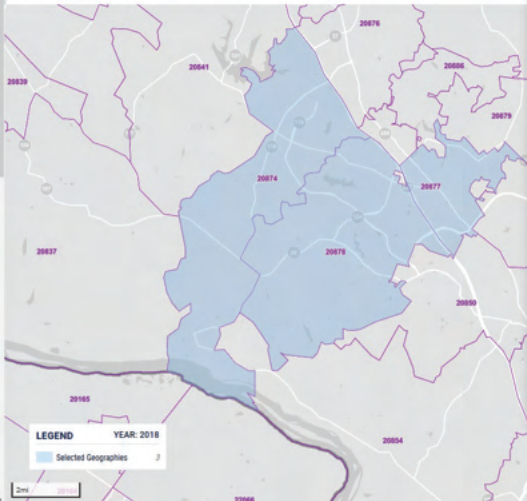
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY PERIOD OF ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES

Survey/Program: American Community Survey
Years: 2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 Table: S0502

ZIP Code Tabulation Area Selection Map

Geographies: ZIP Code Tabulation Area Year: 2018

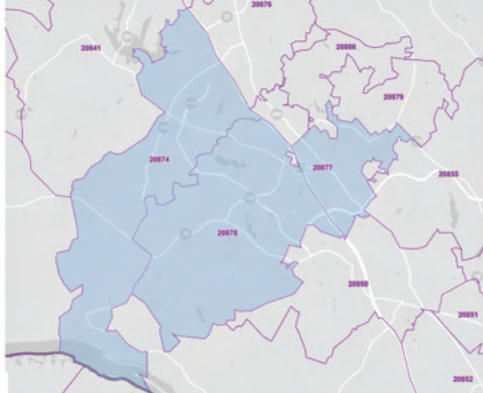
Select Clear Geos Identify Filters Download Print Share Table Chart Data Notes



LEGEND YEAR: 2018
Selected Geographies 3

Snipping Tool

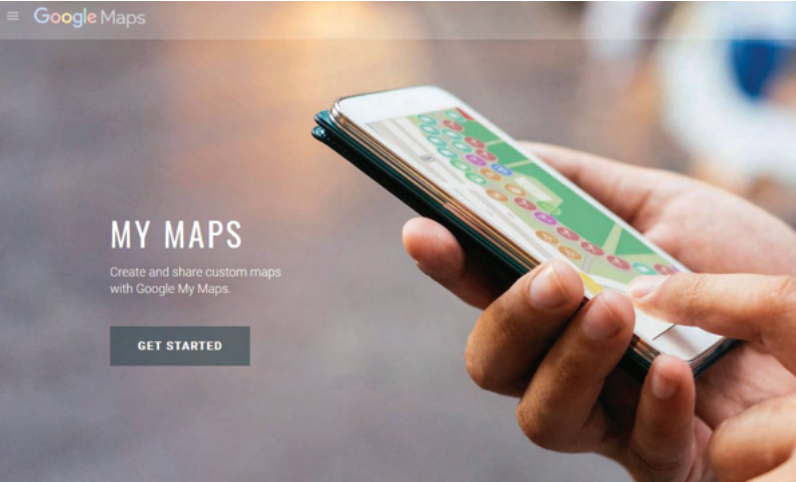
File Edit Tools Help



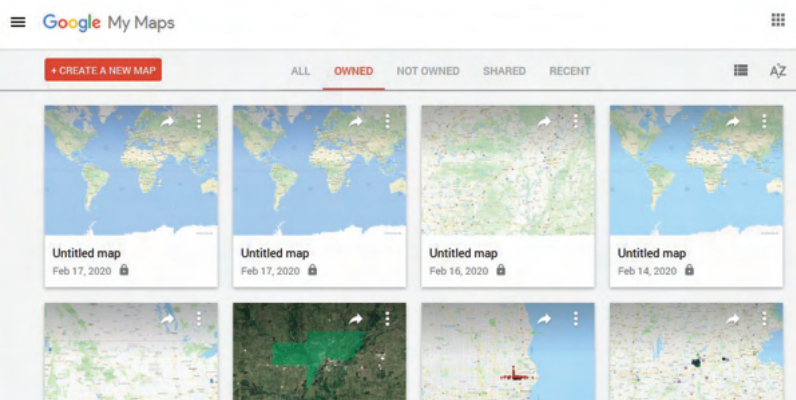
Resource Map

Here is a simple way to create a sharable map that shows the limited resources within your focus area and the resources outside your focus area as a comparison.

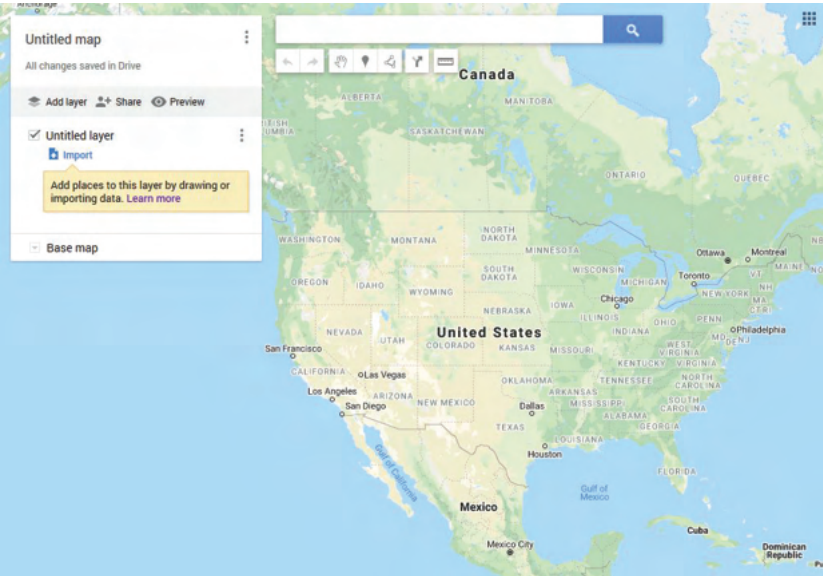
1. For this process, a Google product called My Maps will be used. It is similar to Google Maps, but My Maps has more flexibility and options and allows layers of custom data to be added. Go to google.com/maps/about/mymaps and click “Get Started.”



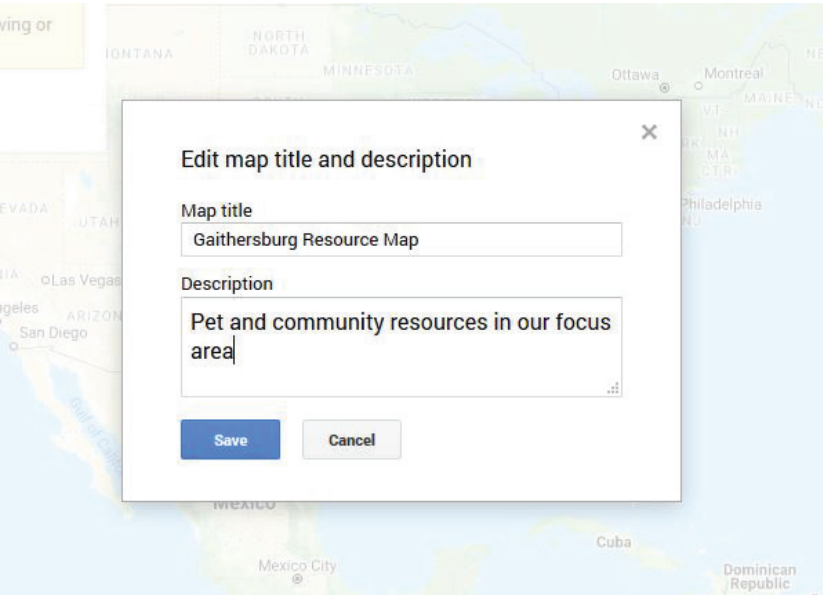
2. You will arrive at the My Maps landing page, where any map you create will be listed. You may want to save this as a browser bookmark so it is easy to find later.



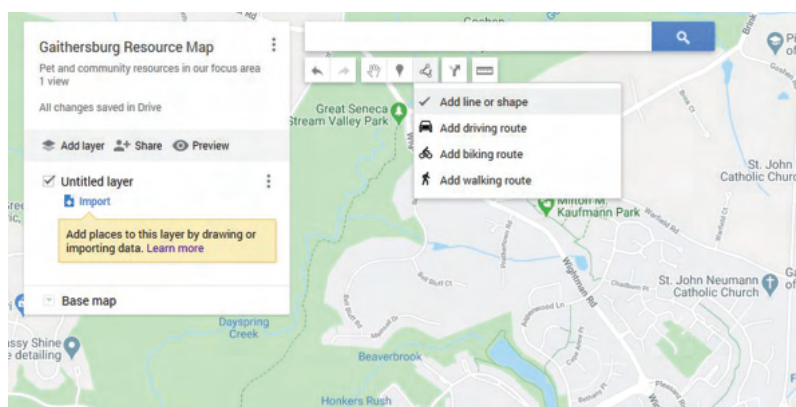
3. Click the “Create a New Map” button, and your new map will open. You do not need to save it. My Maps automatically saves the new map and most of the changes you will make.



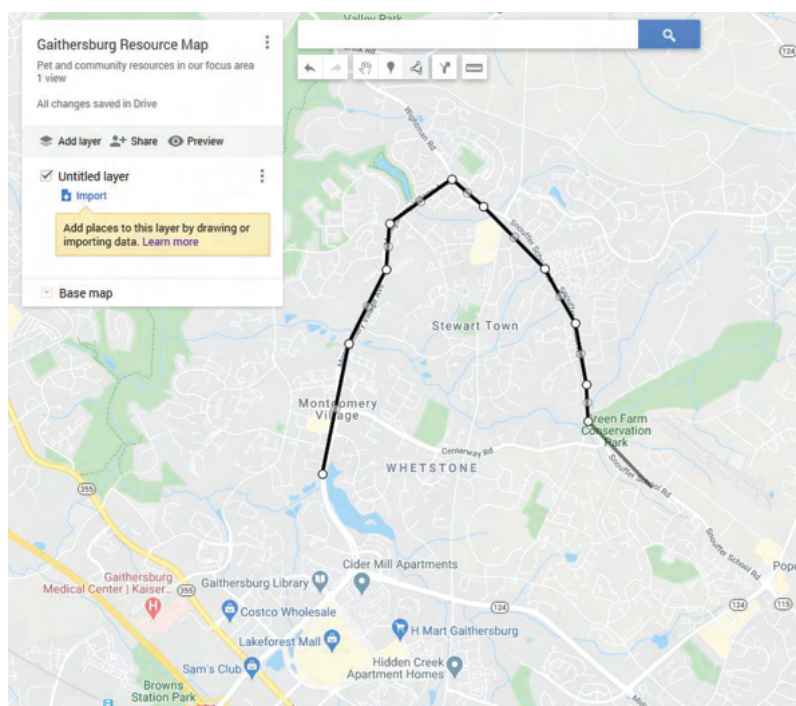
4. Click at the top where it says “Untitled Map” to add a title and description. Then click “Untitled Layer” and rename it to “Focus Area.”



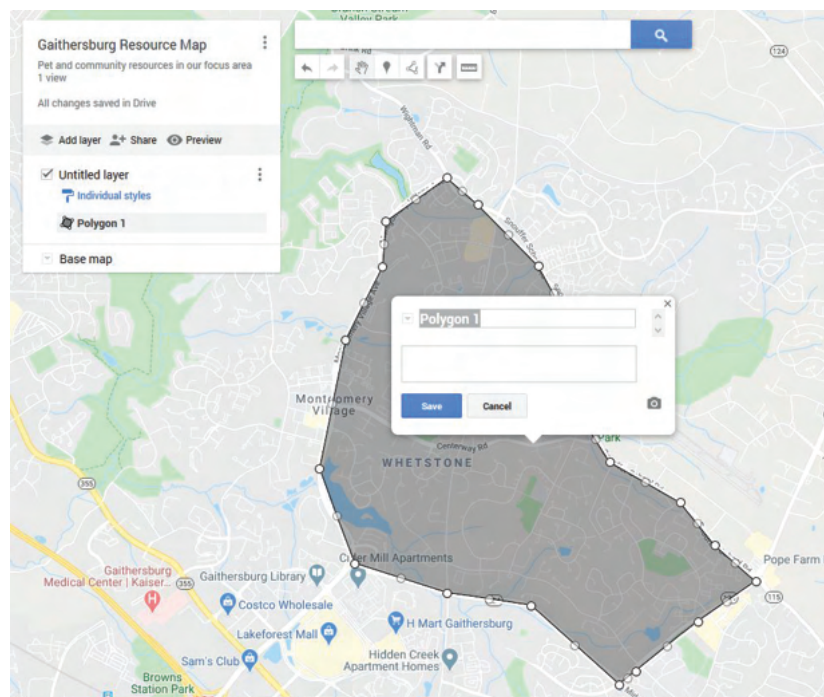
5. The easiest way to add your focus area is by drawing it directly on the map. First, using the search box at the top, enter your town, neighborhood name or zip code, whichever will zoom the map to the desired area. After you have located your focus area, look for the drawing tool under the search box. It looks like three dots with lines connecting them. Click it and note the available options. Use the default “Add Line or Shape.” Your cursor will change to a “plus” sign, which means it is ready to draw. You will not be able to move the map after you begin drawing. If you need to adjust the map before beginning, click the “hand” tool, adjust the map view and then click the drawing tool again.



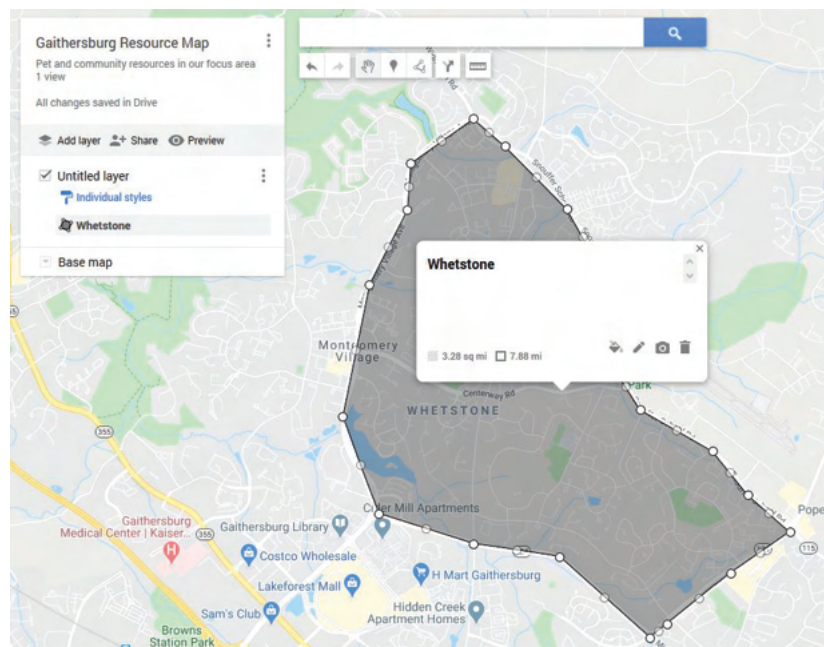
6. When ready, click the map once on one of the borders of your focus area. Click again a little farther away along the border, and continue clicking and adding dots around the entire focus area. You will need fewer dots along straight lines and more dots to capture a curvy area.



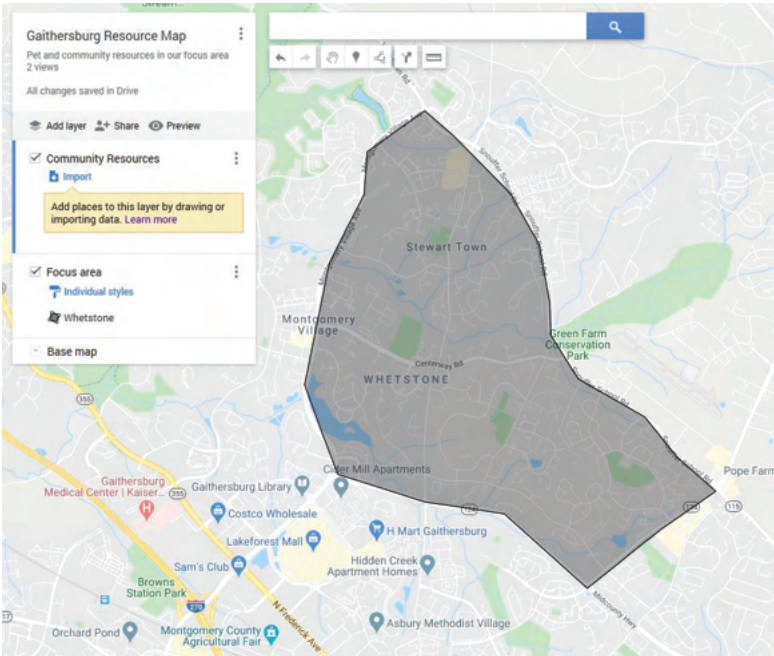
7. Continue all around the entire border until you reach your first dot again. The map should automatically complete your polygon and prompt you to choose a name. You can put the neighborhood name, zip code or any other label that identifies the area. After that, you can add more polygons if your focus area consists of multiple or disconnected areas.



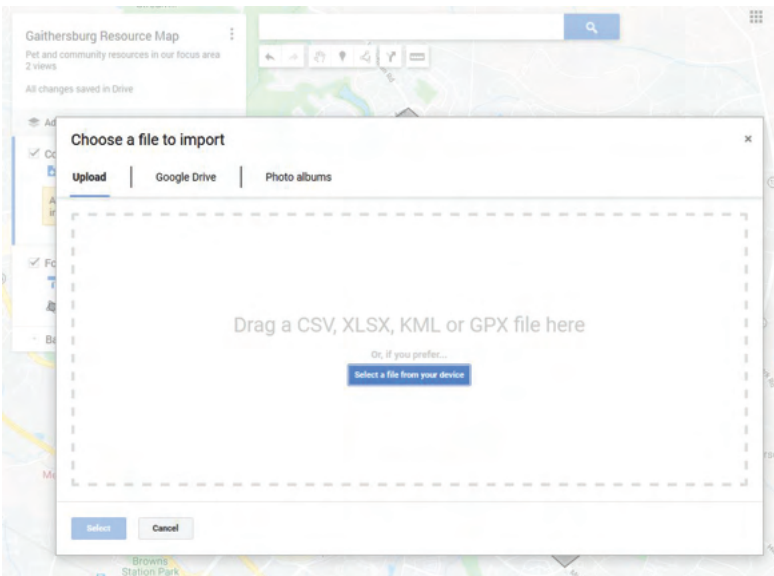
8. If you made any mistakes or want to start over, click your polygon name in the legend and then click the garbage can icon in the popup to delete.



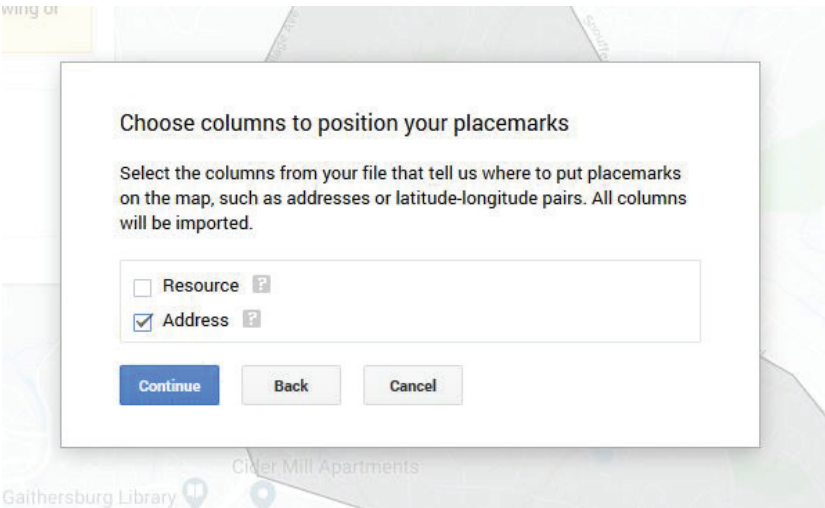
9. The next step is adding community and pet resources to your map. There are two ways to do this. You can import a spreadsheet with addresses and Google will add it to the map for you, or you can add individual markers directly to the map. Either way, the next step is to click “Add Layer.” A new untitled layer will appear. Drag it up above the focus area layer so your resources will not be hidden behind the focus area polygon. Rename it something descriptive, like “Community Resources.”



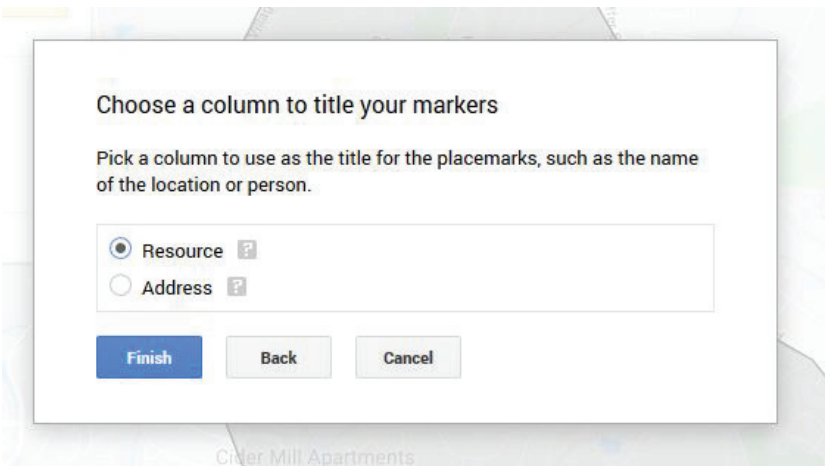
10. To add resources by importing a spreadsheet, click the blue “Import” link. Then either drag your spreadsheet into the popup window or click the blue “Select a File” button to navigate to the spreadsheet on your computer.



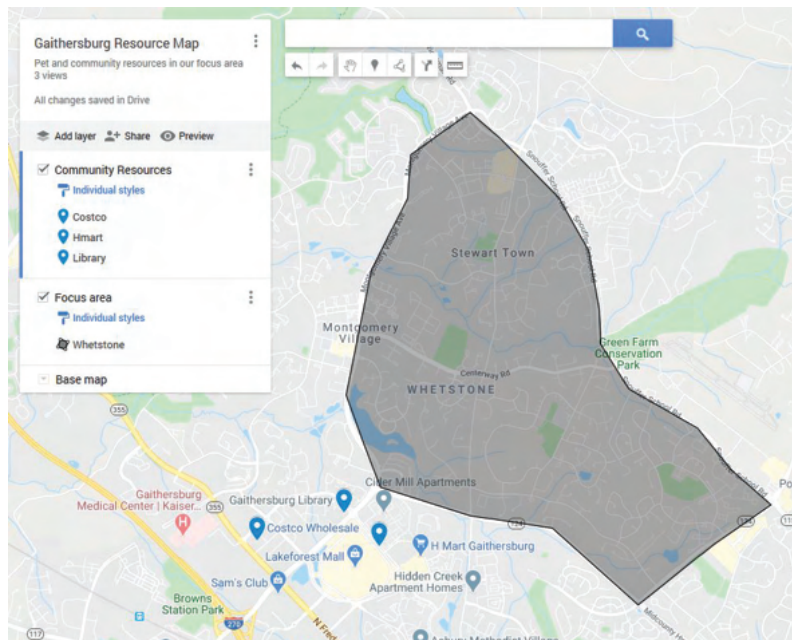
11. After your spreadsheet is imported, Google will ask you which columns contain your address information. Check the box for that column or columns (if your addresses are split into multiple columns). Then click “Continue.”



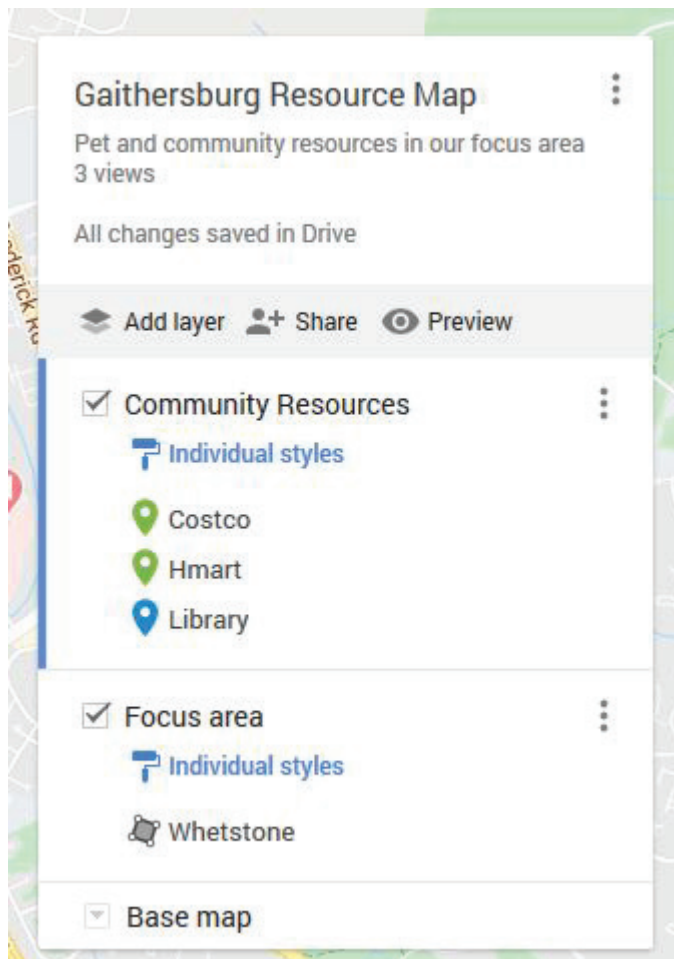
12. On the next screen, select the column that contains the title for each spreadsheet entry. Usually this will be the column with the name of the resource—for example, “Walmart” or “Sally’s Pet Food Depot.”



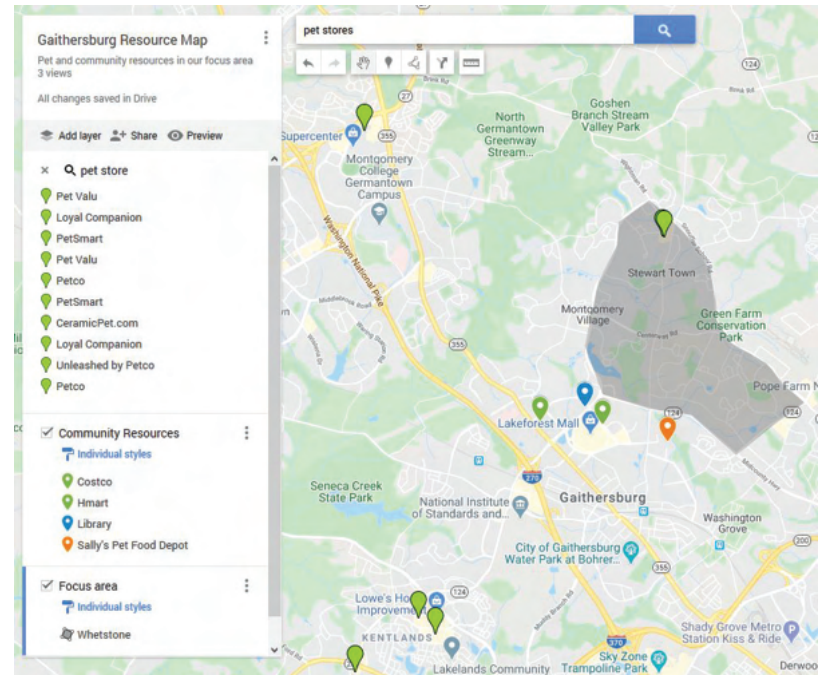
13. Click “Finish,” and Google Maps will import your spreadsheet, add markers to your map and add a list of your resources in the map legend with the titles you chose.



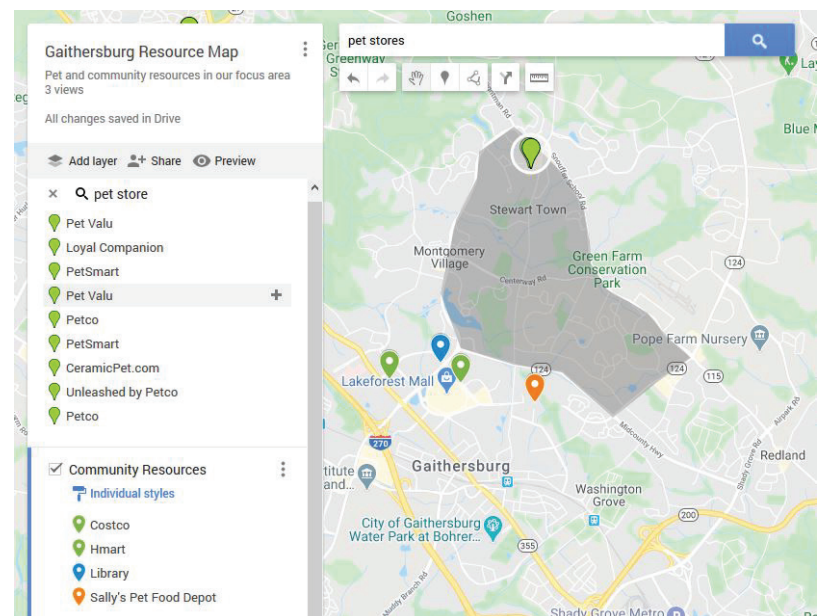
14. The other way to add resources is by adding to the map one by one. Before adding markers, make sure your resource layer is highlighted blue in the legend so they are added to the correct layer.



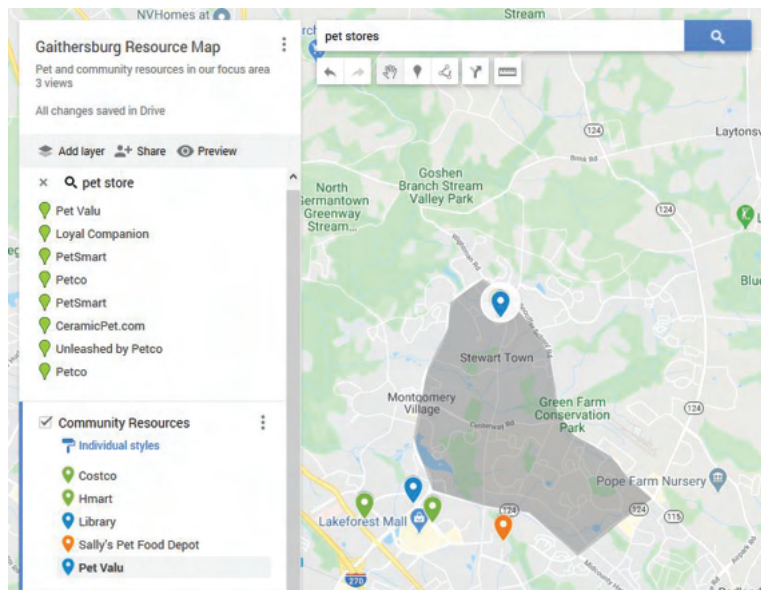
15. If you need to find resources, you can search for them in the search box at the top of the map. You can either search for specific businesses that you know are in the area, like “Sally’s Pet Food Depot,” or you can search for categories. For example, searching for “pet store” displays the results with new green markers on the map and adds a list in the map legend.



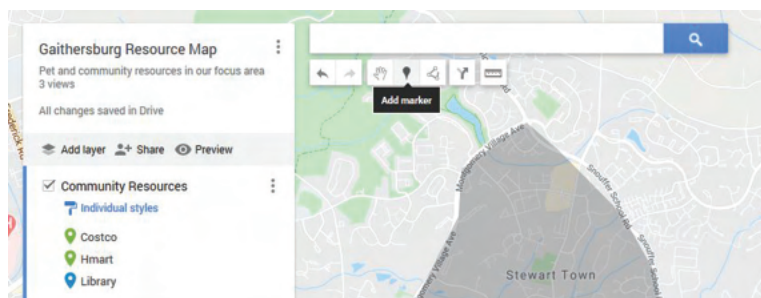
16. Review the list and decide which ones you want to add to your resource layer. Hover your mouse over each item to highlight its location on the map.



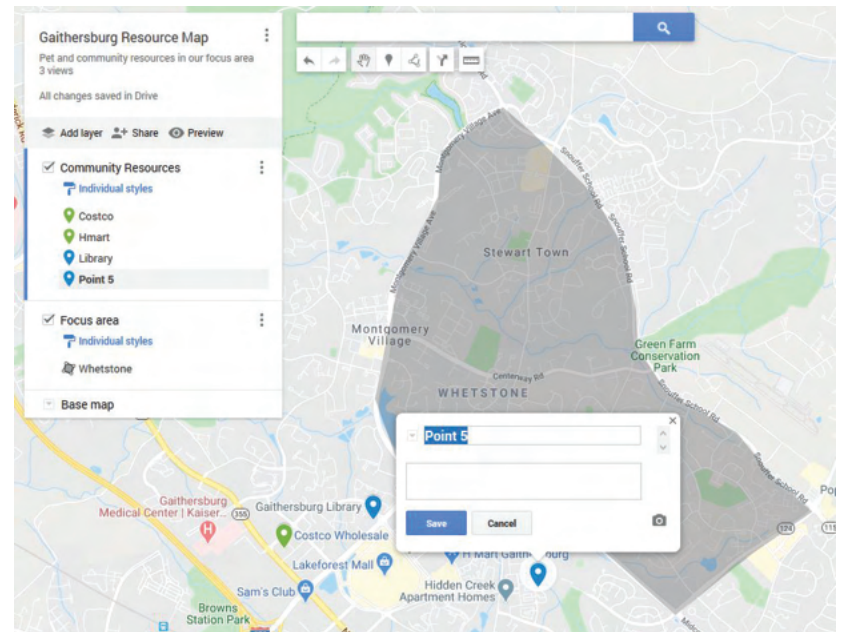
17. If you want to keep an item, click the gray plus button, and it will be added to your resource layer.



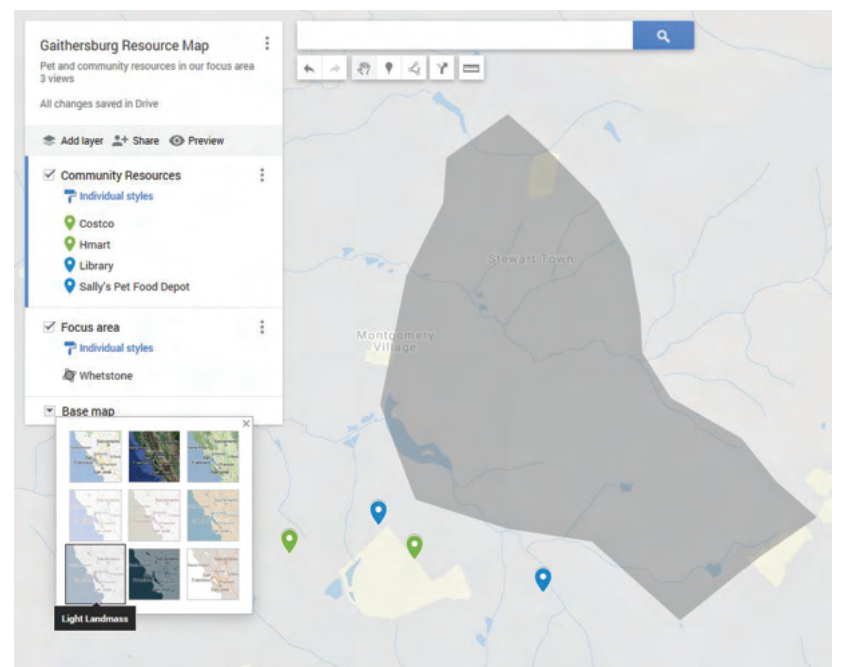
18. If you already know where there are resources or see ones already labeled on the map, make sure your resource layer is highlighted blue, then click the “Add Marker” tool button at the top of the map.



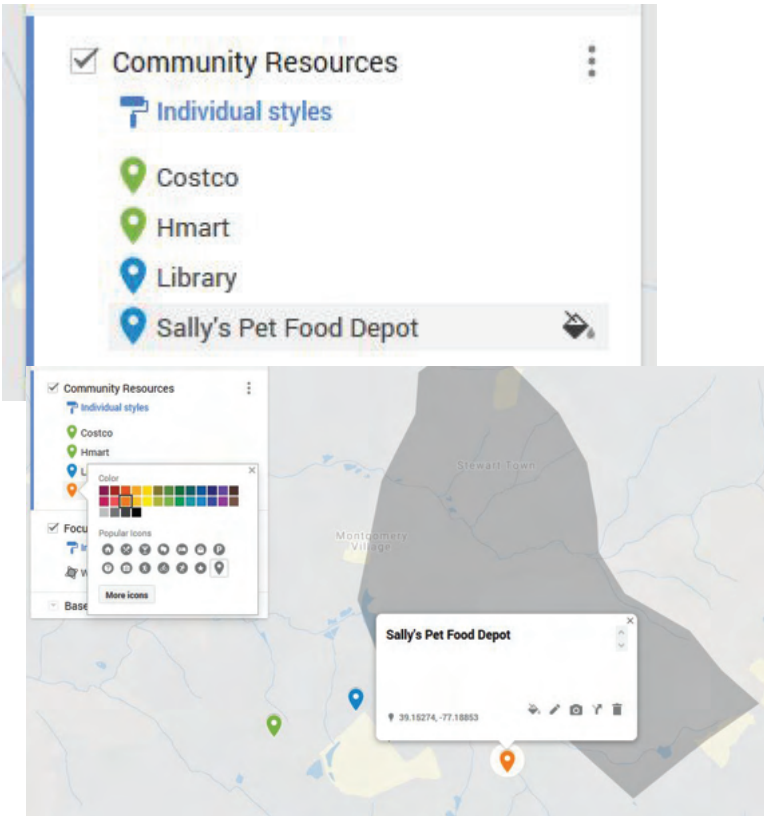
19. Click the map where you want to add the new marker. After you click the map, your new point will be added to the resource layer, and a popup will appear where you can give the marker a name, add a description or add a photo.



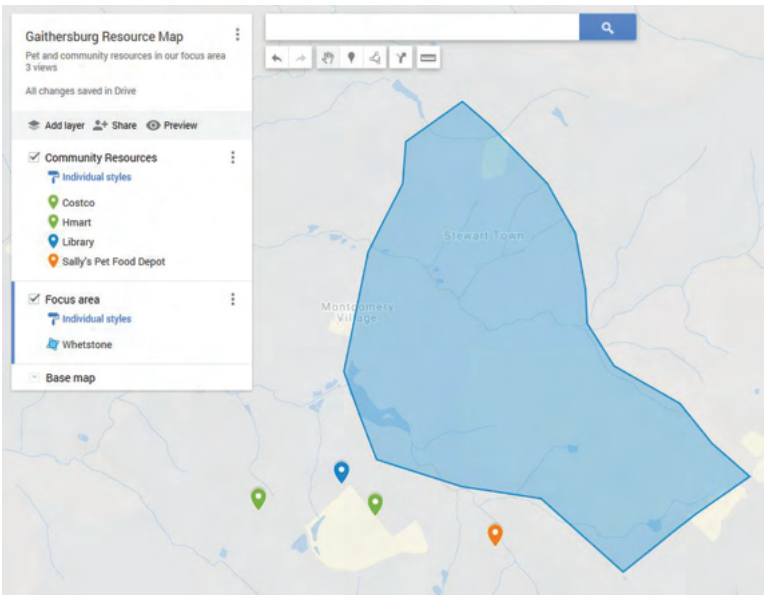
20. You may have noticed that the markers are difficult to see. One option for making them pop out is clicking “Base Map” and choosing a different style of map.



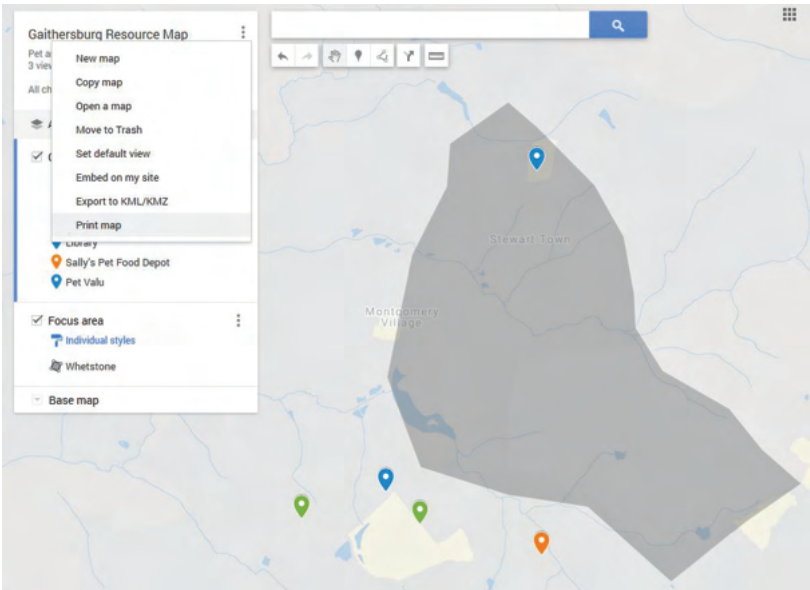
21. Another option is changing the marker color. You can also color each marker differently based on the type of resource. For example, green for grocery stores, blue for pet stores, orange for animal shelters, etc. Hover your mouse over the marker whose color you want to change, and click the little paint can icon.



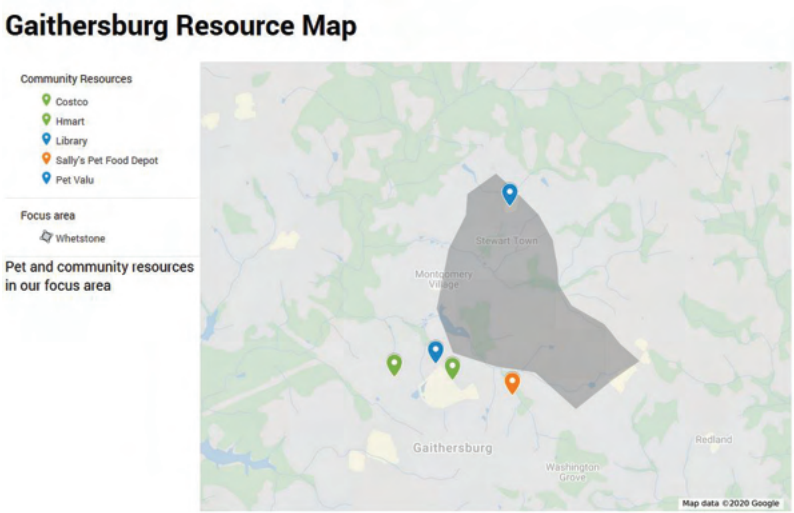
22. There are many built-in options for styling the map, so be sure to check out all of them. You can change the colors, change the icons, restyle the appearance of your focus area polygon and add additional layers.



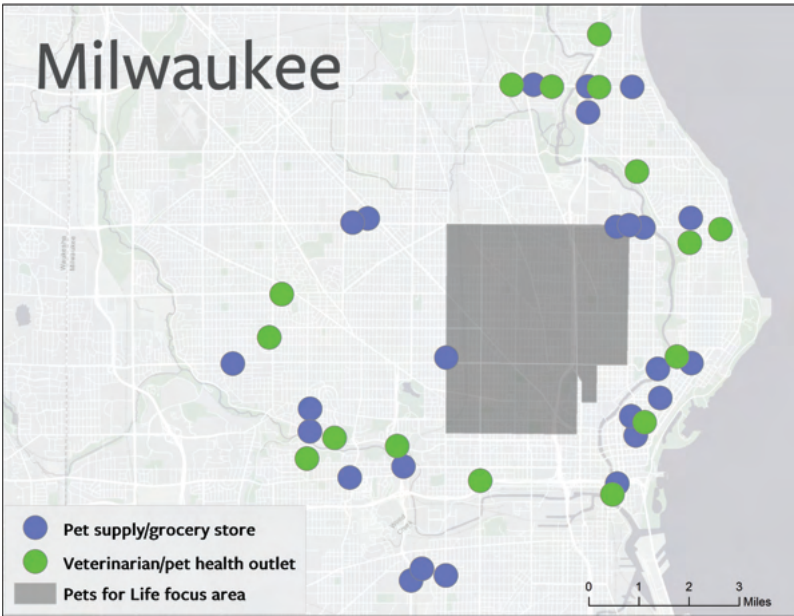
23. When you are ready to share your map or include it in other documents, there are several choices. Click the three dots to the right of your map title for a drop-down menu that includes the option to embed your map in another website or to print it. Below the map title is the “Share” button. Click it to access your custom map link that you can give to others. Another option is to use your computer’s screenshot or screen capture feature to select and save a screenshot of your map as an image.



If you use the print option, Google will format your completed map and automatically include a title and legend. You can either print it or take a screenshot of the formatted map to use in emails or presentations. Here is what a final result can look like:



Here is an example of a map created using ArcGIS software:



PROGRAM BUDGET

Creating a budget is another key piece to beginning your community outreach program. There is no one-size-fits-all budget; you can work with whatever funds are available. The important thing is to be aware of your limitations in order to set clear expectations for those carrying out the work and serving the community. Overpromising services and support and then being unable to deliver is easy to do and can derail your outreach work by destroying trust within the community.

Revenue

Revenue can come from grants, individual donations, fundraising events, in-kind products/services or other miscellaneous streams. Revenue can also include reallocated funds from another organizational area or repurposing a position.

Spay/Neuter Package

Spay/Neuter costs should include surgery, injection or take-home pain medication, rabies vaccination, and DHPP/FVRCP. This cost can include nail trims, microchips or other add-on services based on what is available to you. If spay/neuter surgeries will be performed by or within your organization, pricing should be fairly easy to obtain. If an outside partner will be used, an estimate is sufficient, or collect a range of pricing and use the average.

Staffing

While a full-time outreach position is recommended, if budget limitations don't allow that, start with a part-time person or even utilize a reliable and trained volunteer.

Veterinary care and pet supplies/services

Be as comprehensive as possible in your support while understanding limitations. In the sample budget provided, there are line items for the most common issues—flea/tick medication, dewormer, medical for illness and injuries, and supplies such as leashes/collars and litter boxes.

Note: You can grow your services over time, so be realistic in your initial budget and remain flexible in listening to the community's perspectives and allowing the outreach to guide the services provided.

Transportation

Some level of transportation support is needed in every community. Do your best to estimate what percentage of people and pets will need assistance in getting to and from veterinary appointments and how that will be provided—through an existing organizational vehicle, utilizing volunteers, etc.

Administrative

There are basic administrative costs that are important to program operation. Think through various items such as a dedicated phone, print material and data collection.

[Here is a sample budget template for reference.](#)

LOGISTICS PLANNING

There are a variety of logistics to think through and start to plan for before beginning your outreach. Most of these should be at least partially established before the program work begins, so you are prepared to offer services when you begin meeting people and pets. Some areas will come together more organically as the work is carried out over time.

Service providers

If you have the ability to provide veterinary services within your organization, some of the logistics planning will look different. You will still need to determine capacity and scheduling, and ensure staff are on board with the philosophy of nonjudgement and support. If veterinary services will be provided by a third party, work to build as robust a network as possible, including:

- Private practice veterinarians
- High-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinics
- Mobile veterinarians for spay/neuter and wellness care

For third party partnerships, meeting to discuss the program philosophy and goals is imperative. Also consider executing a memorandum of understanding. [Here is a sample MOU.](#)

Note: It is also helpful to have other services—such as behaviorists, trainers and groomers—available, either within your organization or as an outside partner.



Capacity

Determine how many spay/neuter and veterinary appointments are available at each provider on a weekly or monthly basis. As discussed in the next chapter, this will help guide your outreach schedule, transport days and budget. Considerations for capacity:

- Designate specific days for a set number of appointments
- Designate specific days for owner transport and assisted transport
- Sex, weight and age limits/requirements for spay/neuter surgeries
- Overscheduling to account for no-shows
- Drop-off and pickup times

Partnerships

There are a variety of other types of partnerships that will add value to your program and service to the community.

- Veterinary schools – A veterinary school in your area can provide exams and basic services to people; create opportunities for students to do ride-alongs or in-home visits; and allow students to engage with an audience of pet owners not often available in other school rotations.
- Animal-related businesses – Local pet supply stores, groomers, trainers and other businesses may be willing to provide products and services.
- Trap-neuter-return organizations/volunteers – You will inevitably need to support people taking care of community cats. Working with groups or volunteers focused on TNR can help ease the demands on your time.
- General volunteers – Look for volunteers who have skills in photography, building media relations, data entry, etc.
- Non-animal welfare groups – Elected officials, social service agencies, faith-based entities, tribal councils, public housing authorities and more can be very useful partners.



Transportation

You likely will not know what level of transportation support is needed for spay/neuter and veterinary appointments until you start community outreach, but at this point begin to think through the options for providing transportation:

- Transport vehicle already on hand
- Partner with a transport vehicle
- Personal vehicle for staff
- Volunteer transporters in personal vehicles
- Rideshare companies

For any transportation not provided by the pet owner, having a waiver of liability is highly encouraged. [Here is a sample template in English and Spanish.](#)

For staff or volunteer transporters, we recommend creating expectations, best practices and standard operating procedures for transportation. [See sample document here.](#)

Supplies

To help carry out your program, you will need to address a variety of administrative needs and gather pet supplies. From branded clothing and printed material to doghouses and litter boxes, think through what items should be on hand before outreach begins and order or solicit donations as needed. The next chapter provides more detailed information on PFL recommendations for supplies.

Hiring staff for outreach

Finding the right person to conduct community outreach and be a community liaison is extremely important. Below are some considerations in choosing the best fit:

- Someone who genuinely enjoys meeting new people and is comfortable in a variety of social settings.
- Someone who can work independently and is self-motivated.
- Someone with great time-management skills.
- Someone who is comfortable around animals.
- Someone who is multilingual as needed to connect with the community being served.

Hiring for an outreach position should not be a significant departure from your routine hiring practices. However, do think about where the job is posted to increase diversity in candidates and to attract people interested not only in animal welfare but in social justice and community service.

[Here are sample job descriptions for different versions of program positions.](#)

As you are putting in place the pieces of a community outreach program, take time to have conversations in all areas of your organization—from the board of directors and development team to front-line staff and volunteers. Building understanding and support for the philosophy of nonjudgement is essential throughout all departments. Success of any program hinges not only on the effectiveness and commitment of a single individual, but rather the collective efforts of everyone.

Reflect on internal processes and external messaging. Look at your mission statement, how it guides the work of your organization, and how community outreach aligns with that mission. Review organizational communication on social media, in newsletters, in client communication and in donor engagement. How issues surrounding inequity are articulated within an organization and with the general public are key components to operating a successful community-based effort.

Consider adopting a workplace culture agreement that sets a clear expectation of values and norms with all employees and volunteers. [Here is an example.](#)





Community outreach

WHAT IS COMMUNITY OUTREACH?

Community outreach as defined and discussed in this toolkit is door-to-door engagement, creating a consistent community presence and building relationships with people face-to-face in the area of focus identified through the process in Chapter 3. Community outreach is not posting on social media, messaging on billboards, utilizing mail inserts or leaving flyers on doors—such tactics may be helpful at points, but they are not the heart of this work.

The goal is to create community partnerships and reach people and pets in underserved areas, so community events, periodic vaccination clinics and other types of traditional engagement are not a substitute for consistently showing up and conducting door-to-door outreach.

Note: Community outreach events like vaccination clinics are effective for providing a high volume of services in a short period of time. But strong, long-term relationships and trust come from showing up day after day and week after week.

NOT OUTREACH

- Tabling at events
- Facebook/social media
- Hosting one-time events
- Leaving flyers on doors and at businesses

OUTREACH

- Meeting people where they are in the community
- Face-to-face conversations
- Consistent, long-term presence
- Conversations on the block, on porches, and in people’s homes

Community outreach is designed to reach people where they are. The goal is to build relationships and partnerships and listen to what community members want and need for their pets. Be patient as you start: Trust does not happen instantly; it takes time to form. Keep in mind what you have learned about the history of inequity and discrimination.

Simple conversational tools should be employed. Introduce yourself, ask if the time to chat is convenient, ask permission to interact with pets, pay attention to body language (both your own and that of those you’re talking to) and listen actively. Be transparent, practice humility and allow space for natural ebbs and flows in the interaction. Be prepared for and open to any response. If you are new to doing community outreach, have a couple of icebreakers ready when someone opens their door and has a pet. For example, say how cute the pet is, ask the pet’s name or inquire how old the pet is. Always be yourself. The more comfortable you are, the more comfortable others will be around you.

The best outreach team is small, one or two people. This may seem counterproductive, but large outreach teams can be imposing and have difficulty maintaining consistent messaging. When the community sees the same one or two people reliably, comfort and familiarity are more easily achieved.

With a focus on relationship building, the community outreach approach discussed in this chapter applies in every type of community.

Each community has logistical considerations. Some communities may require more careful planning regarding distance to service providers, transportation or what door-to-door outreach looks like, but the process of positive and respectful engagement is the same. Do not underestimate the significance of acknowledging people as experts on their communities and pets, forming partnerships and being an ally. For example, in Indigenous communities, listen to, value and honor the voice of tribal leaders.

SUPPLIES AND PLANNING

Before knocking on the first door, be prepared with a comprehensive plan and supplies.

Designated phone number

A phone number specific to your community outreach work is imperative. A separate phone for the outreach person, Google Voice or a toll-free number forwarded to another line are all good options, as long as there is consistency and people can contact the outreach person directly. Avoid using a personal number or one that is also used by a shelter or veterinary clinic that requires callers to navigate a series of choices to reach the person doing outreach or to leave a message. Ideally, the number given out to people will also be the number used for outgoing calls and has the capability to text, take pictures and receive photos.

Computer and Wi-Fi

A computer or tablet is needed to enter and store data. Plan ahead to determine whether data entry and data searches will be carried out in the field, at a desk or both, as well as whether internet is required to access the data storage system.

Handcards

A handcard that provides your organization’s name, brief program details and phone number is useful. Handcards are not flyers to leave at unanswered doors or in stacks at a business. They are intended to be left with the people you meet to share your program and contact information.

[Here is a sample handcard in English and Spanish.](#)



Spay/Neuter ‘Vouchers’

To encourage spay/neuter appointments, consider using vouchers, which are essentially coupons for the service that can create excitement, generate conversation and be left with people who want more time to make a decision. Unlike the way in which vouchers are sometimes used in spay/neuter programs, the voucher we suggest does not have a value and is not necessary to schedule or complete a spay/neuter appointment; it is more like an appointment reminder card.

[Here is a sample spay/neuter voucher in English and Spanish – to be printed on card stock or similar substantive material.](#)

Business Cards

Business cards should include your name, organization and contact information. Business cards are not flyers to leave at unanswered doors, but something to provide people after having conversations.

Branded Program Attire and Gear

Wearing T-shirts, sweatshirts or jackets with the program name makes you easy to identify and helps build familiarity. When possible, choose bright colors in a style that is nonthreatening and casual.

Vehicle Magnets/Wraps

If you are driving a personal vehicle, you can build recognition by identifying it with simple, inexpensive car magnets. If a program vehicle is available and the budget allows, a branded wrap is useful.

Waivers

Every person receiving spay/neuter surgery or transportation services must sign a liability waiver beforehand. Additional waivers may cover veterinary consent, euthanasia and other practices.

[Here is a sample waiver for spay/neuter and transport in English and Spanish.](#)

Data Collection Forms

Be familiar with what information should be collected as part of the outreach program. It is helpful to have a form with that information to reference during outreach, especially in the beginning as you learn and get comfortable with the data questions. Practice not asking questions as if you are conducting a survey; instead, work your questions into conversations. Sometimes multiple conversations and visits are needed to gather all data points. That is OK and should alleviate pressure on the introductory conversation. Do not have forms that people are asked to complete.

[Here is a sample data collection form.](#)

Create a list of items that should be available during outreach. Keep these items in a backpack or small tote for accessibility. This includes handcards, waivers, vouchers, notebook, pens, slip leads, leashes, collars, treats, toys, etc. Larger items can be stored in a bin in the vehicle.

OUTREACH SCHEDULE AND GOALS

Setting program goals and adhering to a schedule are major keys to program success. Both will depend on a variety of factors, including program budget, service providers and focus area size. For example, your budget may dictate whether there is full-time or part-time outreach staff, or if having an outside spay/neuter provider may limit the number of surgeries that can be booked each month. Whatever those details, positive results will come from vigilantly adhering to the schedule created and focusing on the goals.

Schedule

A schedule includes these categories:

- **Proactive outreach:** This includes knocking on new doors in the area of focus (as identified in Chapter 3) to meet new people and pets. The schedule will be heavy with proactive outreach in the beginning. Even years into a program, proactive outreach should occupy a significant part of the schedule. Proactive outreach should be carried out strategically and systematically. Stay in one area or on one street until a majority of people have been engaged, as shown here.

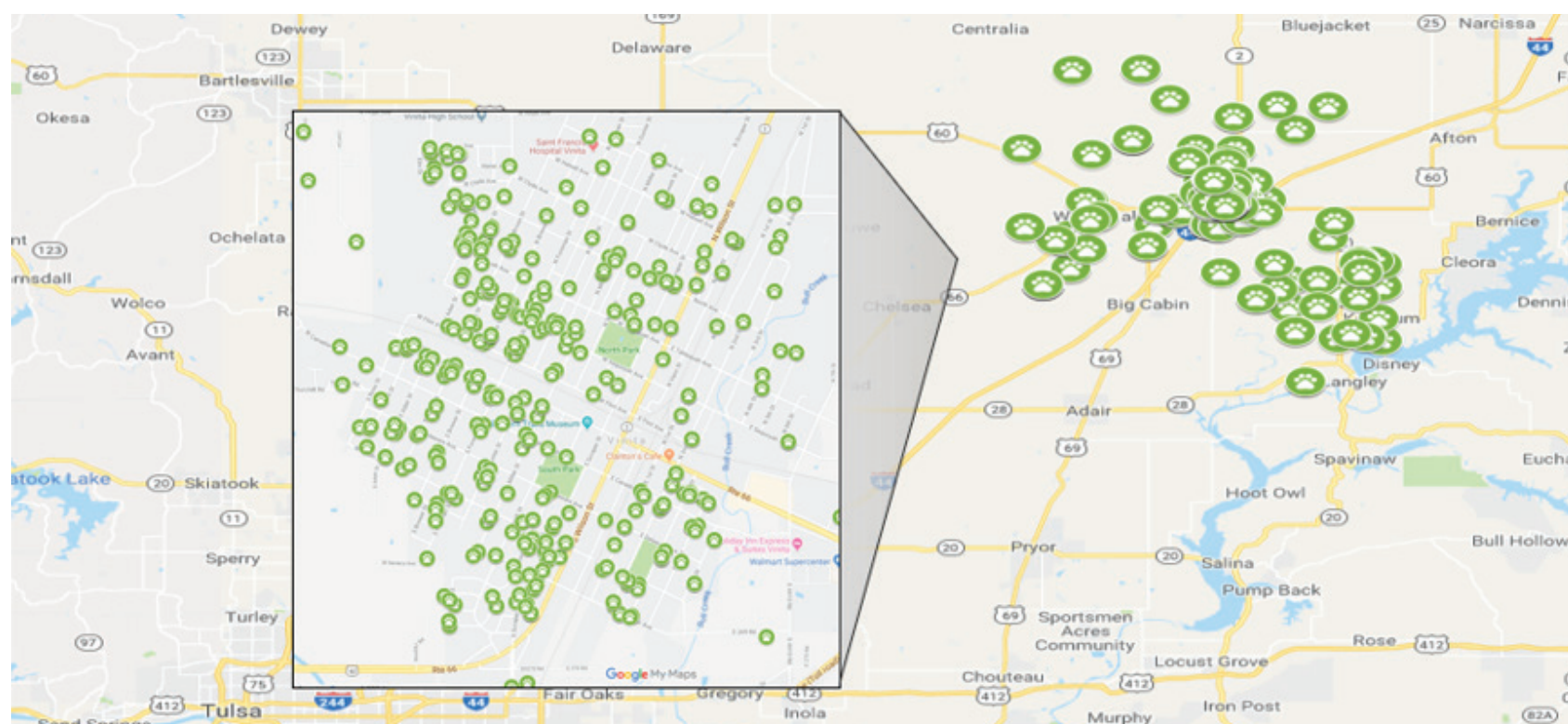
- **Reactive outreach:** This includes addressing new referrals to the program or following up with someone already a part of the program. Word-of-mouth spreads organically. As you regularly meet new people, the list of people in the program will grow, so reactive outreach should increase over time. In addition to referrals, reactive outreach can be necessary when someone gets a new pet, has a medical issue or moves to a new place, etc.

- **Follow-up phone calls and reminders:** Schedule time weekly to make a variety of calls, whether you are setting up a veterinary appointment, checking on how a spay/neuter surgery went or returning messages.

- **Data entry:** Data should be entered into the program database system on a daily basis, so build time into the schedule at the end of each outreach day or following veterinary appointments.

- **Administrative duties:** Allow time for tasks such as preparing items for outreach, ordering and restocking supplies, uploading photos, writing stories for sharing and any other miscellaneous administrative duties.

[Here is sample schedule.](#)



Goals

Goals are flexible and depend on your budget, level of staffing and size of the focus area. But setting goals will help you create a schedule and stay motivated while providing a marker for your work.

- People/pets met: A day of outreach can be knocking on 10 doors per hour and getting information for two new pet owners per hour.
- Follow-up calls: A good goal is to complete 10 calls per hour while simultaneously recording data on those calls.
- Supplies/services provided: Most likely every person and pet you meet will receive some service or supply, but the same service or supply will not be provided to every person.
- Conversion and completion rates: Conversion rate is the percentage of unaltered pets met who are subsequently altered through the program. Completion rate is the number of pets scheduled for spay/neuter appointments who complete the surgery. A good goal is 75% for conversion rate and 90% for completion rate. These goals indicate if relationship building is occurring and if barriers to services are being removed. The goals do not involve pressuring or shaming people.



SERVICES AND PROTOCOLS

There are certain fundamental components to every community outreach program. While it is difficult to account for every variable in a platform like this toolkit, the following are key areas of consideration. A philosophy of nonjudgment, fairness and inclusivity should always guide the work, but there are items that must be specifically tailored to your organization.

ADDRESSING BIAS

Research has shown that in a matter of seconds, the human brain unconsciously categorizes other people. This is often referred to as a first impression and is automatic. Think about how much time it usually takes for you to form a first impression when meeting someone. Can you recall a time when your first impression was incorrect and you may have judged a person too quickly? What was the reason—the clothes the person was wearing, their accent, their age or physical appearance? This quick judgment in favor or against someone is a bias.

Many forms of bias exist in the world, but there are two to reflect on in relation to your community outreach work: implicit and explicit. Implicit and explicit biases can significantly impact interactions with people.

- Explicit biases are conscious, meaning you are aware of them. This type of bias may be outwardly shown and lead to stereotypes. Explicit and conscious biases are easier to recognize because they are usually more obvious.
- Implicit biases are trickier and require deeper introspection. The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity defines implicit bias as “the result of mental associations that have formed by the direct and indirect messaging we receive, often about different groups of people. When we are constantly exposed to certain identity groups being paired with certain characteristics, we can begin to automatically and unconsciously associate the identity with the characteristics, whether or not the association aligns with reality.” Since implicit biases are unconscious, prejudices can exist in your mind and within your behavior without you being aware of them. Implicit biases impact the attitudes or stereotypes that affect your understanding, actions and decision making.

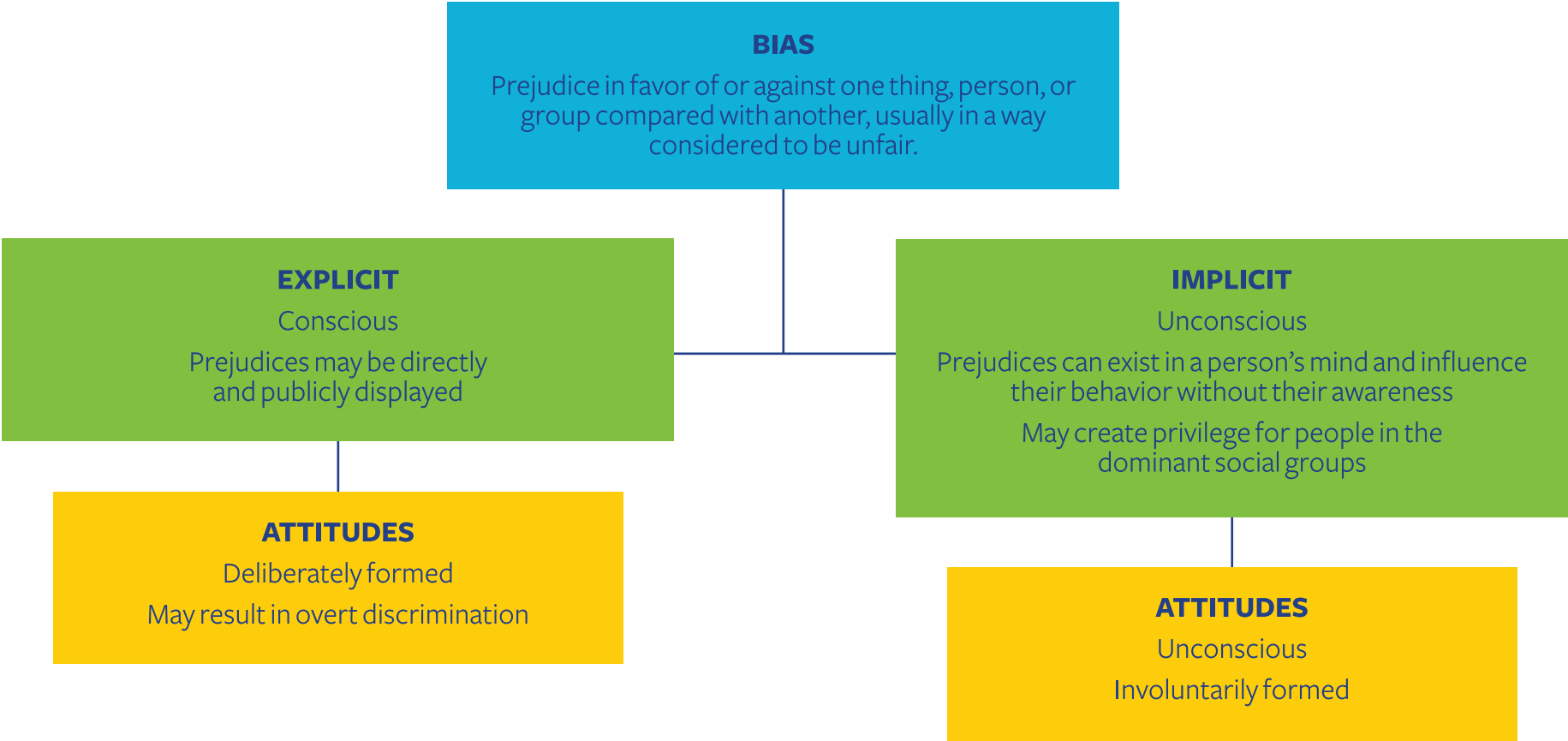


Image adapted from North Carolina State University

Implicit biases do not simply influence your individual behavior or organizational culture; the biases often turn into racial and socioeconomic discrimination at an institutional and systemic level.

An example of an implicit bias that is frequently reinforced in the United States is that communities of color are less safe than predominantly white communities. This bias is reinforced by persistent mainstream messaging and the generalization of an entire community, which leads to institutional racism. Since the implicit bias is that communities of color are less safe, an institutional response may be to provide more law enforcement under the pretext of improving public safety. With a higher volume of law enforcement deployed, a disproportionate number of people of color are then pulled into the criminal legal system. This is a component of systemic racism.

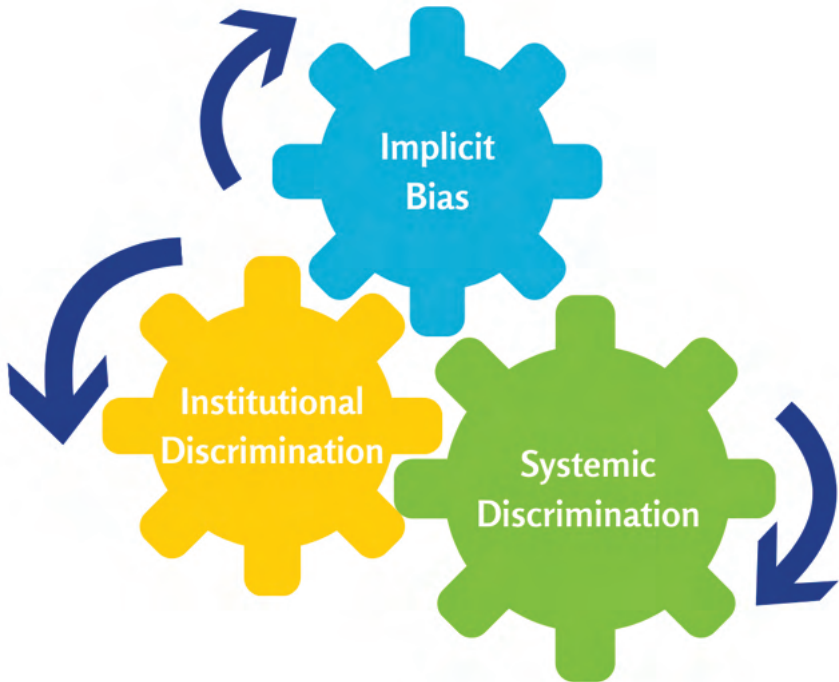


Image adapted from ACLU of West Virginia



SPAY/NEUTER PROCESS

Before beginning outreach, you should have a spay/neuter plan in place. This includes where spay/neuter surgeries will take place, when appointments are available, drop-off and pickup times, what is included in the spay/neuter package (vaccinations, microchips, etc.), a plan for transporting pets to and from appointments, and printed vouchers and waivers.

While conducting outreach and offering spay/neuter services, remember the decision made by a pet owner should always be heard and respected. If someone is uninterested in spay/neuter for their pet, your goal is not to pressure people through coercion or shaming but to share information, stay positive and maintain open communication.

When booking spay/neuter appointments, collect all necessary information that the veterinary or clinic partner needs: pet name, sex, weight, age, medical history, etc., as well as the owner's information for reminders and follow-up. Here is a suggested process for spay/neuter appointments to ensure high rates of completed appointments:

- Leave a spay/neuter voucher if the conversation occurs in person.
- Make a courtesy call to the pet owner within 24 hours of signing up the pet.
 - During this call, either provide or confirm the appointment date and time.
- Make a reminder call 24 to 48 hours before the appointment date.
- If the appointment is made more than one week out, call once a week to check in.
 - Make all appointments within two weeks when possible. Booking appointments more than two weeks out results in lower completion rates.
- Make a follow-up call within 24 hours of the appointment being completed to ensure the owner is pleased with the experience and to answer questions and concerns.

Animal welfare is not exempt from the impacts of implicit bias and the unconscious and automatic association of a person's identity with certain characteristics formed by societal stereotypes. For example, there is a common assumption within the animal welfare field that Latino men are less likely to spay/neuter their pets due to cultural machismo. This may lead to a belief that more aggressive dogs live in predominantly Latino communities or that Latino pet owners are opposed to spay/neuter. The implicit bias of cultural machismo is reinforced by persistent mainstream messaging. Again, this bias and generalization of an entire demographic may lead to institutional racism expressed as mandatory spay/neuter laws or breed-specific policies under the pretext of improving public safety. Systemic racism sets in when Latino communities experience a higher volume of animal control calls, fines and fees, or a higher incidence of being forced to surrender pets. Therefore, the implicit bias of cultural machismo upholds a false narrative, and the outcome of systemic racism unfairly legitimizes the original implicit bias.

Note: The study [“Race and ethnicity are not primary determinants in utilizing veterinary services in underserved communities in the United States”](#) concludes that Latino pet owners spay and neuter at the same rate as white and Black pet owners when people are engaged positively and veterinary care is accessible and affordable.

During the courtesy and reminder calls, confirm whether the owner will be able to transport to the appointment or if transport should be provided. In every conversation, provide space for the pet owner to ask questions and share concerns.

The spay/neuter process is in-depth, and people may change their minds, reschedule or miss an appointment. This is to be expected, so remain positive and keep lines of communication open. If someone scheduled to transport their pet misses the appointment, offer to provide transportation for the next appointment. There should be no limit to how many times someone can reschedule or how long after meeting a pet an appointment can be scheduled. It is important to manage expectations with and provide complete transparency to veterinary partners of the program approach.



VETERINARY CARE

In order to be most effective in providing veterinary care:

- If services are not provided in house, establish a partnership with at least one full-service veterinarian available to provide medical care. Define expectations with both the pet owner and the veterinary partner. A reasonable estimate of cost per incident is in the \$50 to \$250 range. Consider anything above \$250 on a case-by-case basis and have a conversation about alternative options. It is not recommended to provide costly treatments like chemotherapy, long-term care for chronically ill pets or major surgeries. Work with veterinary partners on minimizing diagnostic costs and applying incremental care that is not cost prohibitive.

- Be a liaison between the pet owner and veterinarian. Schedule the appointment and communicate details between the veterinarian and the pet owner. If a pet owner is anxious about a pet's condition or you are unsure about diagnosis and treatment, be present at the appointment. This will result in a smoother process for all involved and minimize miscommunication on approved treatment and costs.

- Clarify up front that the veterinary partner is not to make decisions without the pet owner's knowledge and permission. If a pet requires veterinary care outside the scope of your protocol or capability, the pet owner should not be pressured to pay for additional treatment or to surrender their pet. Part of your job is to advocate for the pet owner and find solutions that are appropriate and fair. The discussion can include pain management, quality of life treatment or end-of-life decisions.

The most common medical issues to consider and plan for are:

- Worms/intestinal parasites: Most over-the-counter dewormer is ineffective. Some options, like Strongid, can be useful, but many cases should be treated with a prescription dewormer.

- Lacerations/wounds: Depending on severity, a veterinarian may need to prescribe antibiotics and pain medication.

- **Fleas/ticks:** An over-the-counter flea medication like Frontline Plus is generally safe and effective, but consult local veterinary partners on which brands they recommend.
- **Mange:** To diagnose demodectic or sarcoptic mange, a veterinary visit is usually necessary. For the most convenient treatment with the quickest results, talk with your veterinarian about Bravecto for demodectic mange and Revolution for sarcoptic mange.
- **Infections (eyes/ears/skin):** Consult your veterinarian for the best treatment options.
- **Intestinal blockages:** These are often expensive to treat. Talk to your veterinarian about whether diagnostics are necessary and if there is a way to attempt to unblock first without surgery. Humane euthanasia may be the outcome in this situation.
- **Parvovirus:** Work with your veterinary partner on a reasonably priced parvo package that includes anti-nausea medication, antibiotics and subcutaneous fluids. Humane euthanasia may be an outcome in this situation.
- **Vaginal or anal prolapse:** These are identified by a noticeable bulge of tissue from the vagina or anus. Schedule a veterinary appointment immediately.
- **Pyometria:** This is most easily recognized by vaginal discharge or a painful, enlarged abdomen. Early stages can be treated with a priority spay appointment.
- **Heartworms:** Heartworm tests, prevention and treatment are typically out of reach for the program and not sustainable financially. Provide people information on recognizing heart failure and offer humane euthanasia when the disease is advanced and impacting quality of life.
- **Emergency injuries:** Be aware that using emergency and after-hours veterinary services can be very expensive.
- **Severe matting:** Provide grooming by a trained staff member/volunteer or partner.
- **Humane euthanasia:** This is one of the most important services the program should offer, so people are given a dignified and compassionate option for aging, ill or severely injured pets.

TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN (TNR)

The need for TNR services arises very quickly in most community outreach programs. However, TNR is a time-consuming process. If you are a TNR-specific program, the methods described in this toolkit will be extremely useful in making your work more effective and efficient. If you are not a TNR-specific organization, we recommend recruiting volunteers specifically to help with TNR or partnering with a TNR group. If partnering with a TNR group, be sure the partner aligns with your philosophy of treating people respectfully and not removing cats from the community.

In working to identify caretakers, ask people you meet during outreach about community cats or feeding outdoor cats. Often times if this question is not asked specifically, people will not think community cats are eligible for the services or may have fear in sharing this information.

Do not be discouraged if caretakers are not identified right away or some people are apprehensive. Fully explain what TNR entails, what ear tipping is, and the benefits to the cats and the community. Once a caregiver is identified, collect information and be prepared that more than one person may care for some cats or a colony of cats. In these cases, be sure to notify, work with and get permission from all caregivers.

Consistency is paramount for a smooth TNR process for you and the community. Have set, recurring surgery days. Caregivers should go through the same spay/neuter process shared earlier in this chapter. Remind the caregiver(s) 24 to 48 hours before trapping to withhold food (except in special cases). This will likely be the most difficult part of the process because many people feel uneasy at first about not feeding the cats, or you might not be able to reach every caregiver. Talk to as many people in the area as possible, even those not identified as caregivers, and distribute “Do Not Feed” signs to as many people as possible in the immediate area where trapping is taking place. [Here is a sample sign.](#)

There are many useful resources for TNR best practices and standard operating procedures from various organizations. A great place to start is at humanepro.org/topics/cats.

[Here is a one pager PFL uses as a guide for program staff in incorporating TNR into community outreach.](#)

One of the most important pieces of TNR work is providing transportation to and from the surgery. Be prepared to transport a large percentage of TNR cats.

TRANSPORTATION

When you completed the community assessment in Chapter 3, you likely realized just how little access people in your chosen focus area have to veterinary services. This reality, combined with the fact that many people work hourly jobs and often do not have reliable personal transportation, makes it challenging and sometimes impossible for people to get their pets to veterinary appointments. Providing transportation to and from spay/neuter and veterinary appointments is an essential service with many benefits:

- Spay/neuter appointments are more consistently filled and completed.
- With fewer “no shows” for spay/neuter appointments, time for rescheduling is reduced.
- Stress around time, money and family/work responsibilities for pet owners is eliminated.
- Relationships and trust are built when people see the extent of support being offered.

There are many transportation plans to consider:

- If your organization has a vehicle, assign a couple of days a month in the outreach staff’s schedule to provide transportation.
- If your organization does not have a vehicle, talk to other local animal shelters, animal service agencies and spay/neuter clinics to see if they have a vehicle that can be utilized on certain days.

- Create a volunteer program of transporters. These volunteers should be well trained in animal handling, be well versed in your program philosophy and have the right skill set for the role—mainly a friendly demeanor and the ability to interact well with people.

- There is not one best way to make a volunteer transport program work—be creative and solution-oriented.

- Work with a pet taxi or ride-share services. This can add to the average cost of each spay/ neuter surgery but is worth it if no other option is possible.

For all the choices above, door-to-door pickup is ideal. If that is not possible to do efficiently, coordinate a convenient and centrally located spot for people to meet for drop-off and pickup. When possible, have paperwork completed and signed by the owner ahead of time. If that is not possible, ensure the owner will be present at pickup to sign. [See more here on providing transportation support.](#)



MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS

There is no way to prepare for every type of situation you will encounter when operating a community outreach program. However, here are a few common situations to plan for and consider.

Landlord intervention

When possible, build pet fees and deposits into your budget. Issues of housing insecurity and housing discrimination are common. In some cases, funds are not needed, but you might need to advocate for pet owners in the form of conversations or recommendation letters. For some landlords, simply knowing a service provider is available to assist with spay/neuter, indoor crates, litter boxes, vaccinations, flea/tick medication, etc. is enough to keep a family together.

Adoptions

People wanting to add new pets to their family may want to adopt from a local shelter or rescue organization but need support and information to have a positive experience. As much as possible, prepare the person for the adoption agency's requirements and advocate for the person with the adoption agency.

Return-to-owner (RTO)

This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, but find solutions to reunite people with their pets. Become informed on whether your local shelter's reclaim fees and requirements are codified legally or more so guided by organizational policy. Look for ways to make the process as fair and equitable as possible.

Pet Food

Pet food is an incredibly valuable resource to provide but can become overwhelming and cost prohibitive. Create a strong plan for what is reasonable for your program and share those expectations and limitations up front and with full transparency. Work with pet and human food banks when possible.



Euthanasia

Euthanasia is never easy, but many pet owners are faced with limited options: either a prolonged and difficult natural death or surrendering the pet in a traumatic and high-stress way for euthanasia to be provided. Offering a dignified, peaceful and compassionate ending—with the option of the owner being present—is one of the most impactful and important services you can offer for both people and their pets.

Pet licensure

Pet licenses do not exist everywhere and where they do, the municipal requirements can vary drastically. It is necessary to fully understand the license laws in your community. If licenses are mandated, you must decide if your program will provide them.

Pet limits

Pet limits do not exist in every community but when legal limits are put in place by a municipal code or ordinances, understand the details in order to share with people what they need to know for compliance.

Community pets

Some communities have a higher rate of community-owned, free-roaming pets. Please do not assume every loose dog or cat is unowned, lost or in danger. Ask questions and collect information from the community about these pets. Through listening, determine what if any services can be offered and if there are considerations with local laws. Not all pets must be contained in the same way for a happy, healthy life, and there are a variety of humane approaches to pet keeping.

Rehoming/pet surrender

While rehoming is a last resort, some circumstances (housing limitations, death of a caretaker, medical challenges, etc.) may present an unavoidable reality. In these situations, when all other options have been exhausted, provide pet owners with as much information as possible about networking with family and friends to rehome. Local shelters and rescue groups are another option for rehoming. Let owners know what support your program can provide, such as supplies and services to assist with the transition to a new home. If someone must surrender to a local shelter, sometimes they need transportation to the shelter, and just having a friendly face along for moral support is greatly appreciated.

Post-surgery emergency needs

Have a plan in place with the veterinary provider in case there are complications from a spay/neuter surgery.

Inclement weather

Community outreach is year-round, and that means dealing with inclement weather at times. Before beginning the work, have a clear plan in place for when outreach/transport should be cancelled and what other duties can be performed on those days. That time can be used for administrative or data entry catch-up or making calls to people who have not been engaged recently. It is also important to set the expectation with the community that you will likely not be available if school/government offices are closed. Change your outgoing voicemail as needed to give people pertinent information for their pets.

Community ambassadors

You are certain to meet community members who become invaluable allies, a part of your program and an extension of your team. People can spread the message about the program to friends, neighbors and family members, help in setting and checking TNR traps or take the outreach team around to make introductions. Have a plan for how to adequately recognize and thank community ambassadors and how not to take advantage of people's generosity. Never require that any pet owner volunteer time in order to receive services.





Data and mapping

WHY IS DATA IMPORTANT ?

Data collection is essential to any community outreach and support services program. A long-term commitment to collecting, analyzing and sharing data about the communities, people and pets served should be part of your plan and operations.

It's commonly thought that a community's animal welfare data can be measured mostly in shelter statistics and outcomes. Shelter data is important, but data for pets outside the shelter in the community at large is just as important and much less available, especially in underserved areas. The data we are discussing in this chapter is from people and pets outside the shelter system and, more specifically, people and pets not traditionally in contact with or served by the animal welfare field.

Data at its most basic level is simply a group of facts and/or numbers. For our purposes, data is information about people and pets that helps us develop and operate community-based programs more effectively; understand audiences of pet owners largely unreached; and tell the story of the need for support-based initiatives. Consistent and comprehensive data collection allows you to:

- Track, direct and analyze your work.
- Demonstrate your organization’s effectiveness.
- Monitor changes and look for patterns over time and by geographic location.
- Create attractive and informational charts, maps, graphics and marketing materials.
- Share your work with supporters and community members.
- Provide detailed and comprehensive reports for donors so they know exactly where their money is going.
- Show board members, donors and foundations that community-based animal welfare work is unique and necessary.

Good data can make your organization’s work more effective and efficient because you use the information and patterns found in your data to create or adjust your procedures, programs and policymaking. Good data builds confidence among staff and volunteers and these days is also more likely to be required by foundations and donors. Data is essential to successful and sustainable community-based pet owner support work.

HOW TO COLLECT AND STORE DATA

There is certain data that Pets for Life has found useful to collect in order to both guide and report out on program work. [Here is a sample form with information to consider collecting.](#)

Whatever data you end up choosing to collect, here are a few key strategies for gathering that data while doing community outreach work:

- Make observations.
- Ask people questions.
- Be conversational.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Focus on relationship-building.

Practice and experience will improve your ability to gather data through various methods. For example, while you introduce yourself on someone’s front porch, you can observe their address and age range without having to ask. Or when someone introduces you to their pet, you can determine the pet’s species, gender and size. A few well-placed, open-ended questions will allow someone to tell their story, which will include many pieces of information about both the person and their pet. As you get to know people and gain trust, you’ll learn lots of information simply through regular conversations.

Outreach staff are encouraged to record information by whatever method is most comfortable—that could be jotting down notes, filling out an intake form or typing notes on a phone or tablet. Be sure to gauge people’s response and ask permission to take notes when needed or adjust collection methods to make people most comfortable.

The best way to ensure complete and accurate data is to enter information into your organization’s chosen program or database system immediately after outreach. It is a good idea to enter data the same day as it is collected or the same day a service or supply is provided. The longer the time between collection and entry, the more likely details and nuance will be lost.



As you collect and record data, be aware there are times when data collected does not need to be permanently recorded into your data storage system. For example, to manage your outreach, you may keep notes about individual houses—which ones are vacant, ones where no one answers the door, where you heard dogs barking indoors, where residents said to come back later, etc. But once you've contacted someone and gathered more detailed data, those initial notes are no longer needed. Only the key information selected by your organization needs to be recorded in your data storage system.

We encourage the use of a centralized electronic system to make data analysis and reporting much easier and to allow for accessible and comprehensive searches. Your organization's needs, abilities and resources will dictate the best fit. There are many options available, but here are a few examples of programs that can be used to enter and store data:

- Excel spreadsheets
- Google Sheets
- Microsoft Access
- FileMaker Pro
- SmartSheet
- A custom-built or custom-modified system

All data should be entered into one system by all staff and volunteers. Everyone should also be using the same terminology, understand what each piece of data means and why the data is being collected. Consistency in training staff and volunteers will make collecting and entering complete and accurate data easier.

When first starting out, one of the simpler options, like a shared Google Sheet or Excel spreadsheet, can work fine. But as the amount of collected data grows, spreadsheets can quickly become too large and difficult to navigate. Regardless of what system is chosen, having good data to work with depends on data collection and entry being a core and valued part of the work.



DATA MAPPING

In addition to collecting and storing data, mapping data is also useful. Maps can be visually impactful, bring data to life and can be used as a tool in guiding, analyzing and sharing information about community outreach work. Maps can display statistics in a way that is easier to understand than numbers alone, and mapping data makes it possible to look for geographic patterns and trends over time.

In order to map geographic data for a person and pet, a record must contain a valid street address, and the address must be geocoded. If you are not familiar with it, geocoding may sound intimidating, but it simply refers to taking an address and finding its location on Earth; more specifically, it means finding the home's exact latitude and longitude. Geocoding can be a one-time task or a built-in part of a data management system. For example, you can upload a spreadsheet of data with addresses into Google Maps and Google automatically geocodes the addresses and places them on the map. But you must do this each time your original data changes. A long-term solution is configuring your database program to find the latitude and longitude of each address and store it permanently in the client or pet record.

To geocode for free or on an as-needed basis, the easiest option is to upload a spreadsheet with addresses and other data to Google Maps. The downside of Google Maps is that map editing options are limited and downloading the resulting geocoded data is not possible. If the plan is to use geocoded data in another mapping program, online services like BatchGeo or Texas A&M Geoservices are good options to explore. These will geocode addresses and make them available for download and use in any map program or software. Another option is ESRI's ArcGIS mapping software, but this program requires the purchase of a license.

The best long-term option is to set up the chosen database system to automatically find and add the latitude and longitude information to records in the database at the time information is entered. Geocoded addresses can then be exported and used with any mapping program or tools. There are many options for this, including Google's free geocoding service for developers, which can automatically geocode within a database.

***Note:** Google Maps is a good one-stop shop for building a simple map. Geocoding and map-building tasks are all in one place. See Chapter 3 for setting up a Google account.*

Once geocoding is figured out, there are many programs you can use to create and design maps, including the previously mentioned Google Maps and ESRI ArcGIS software. Google Maps is free but has limited design and export options and requires an internet connection. QGIS is another free desktop software option that is a robust, open-source mapping program. A midrange option is MapBox, which has both free and upgraded paid versions. The most advanced, widely used and well-supported mapping system is ESRI's ArcGIS online and desktop programs. They charge a reduced, small annual license fee for nonprofits. This option also offers the ability to create online mapping applications. Choosing which program is the best fit will depend on your organization's budget, needs and skills.

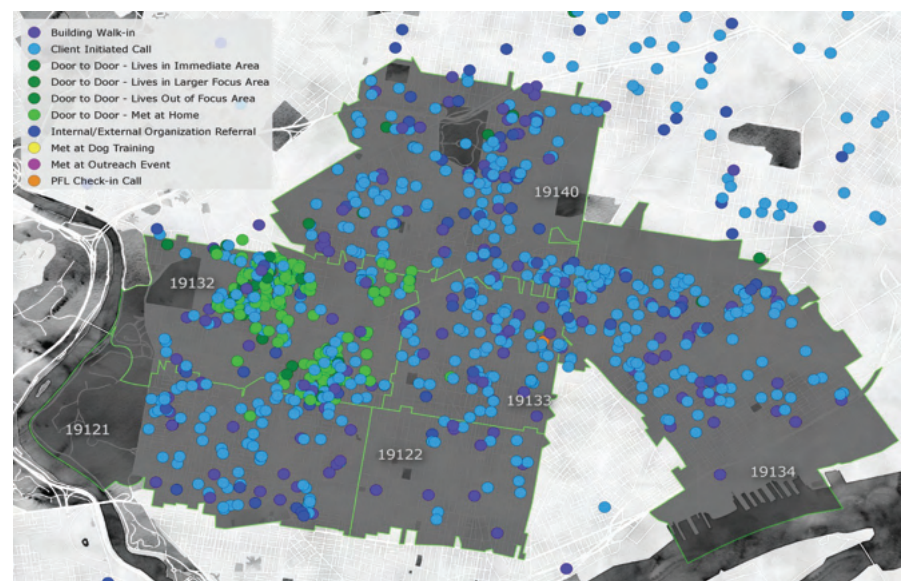
HOW TO USE DATA AND MAPPING

There are almost unlimited ways to use data in tracking, guiding, analyzing and sharing your work.

Utilize in proactive and reactive outreach

Day-to-day outreach is more effective when using data to inform schedules, locations and relationship building. For example, if a street shows only one person met, that street should receive more proactive outreach. However, if 80% of the households have been engaged, another street can be added. When planning reactive outreach time, look for all people already met in a given area to be visited at the same time to increase efficiency. (Types of outreach are discussed in Chapter 4)

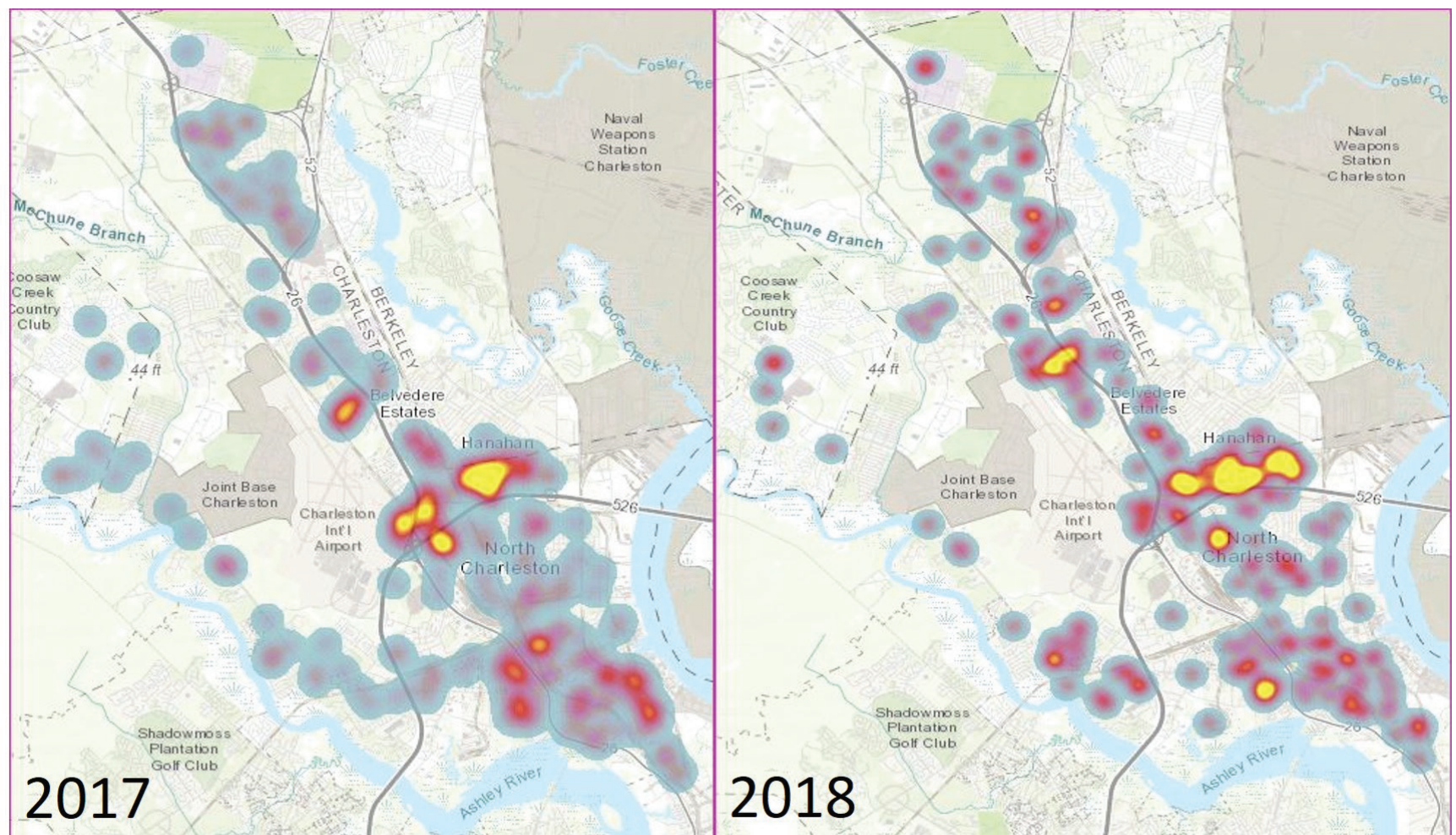
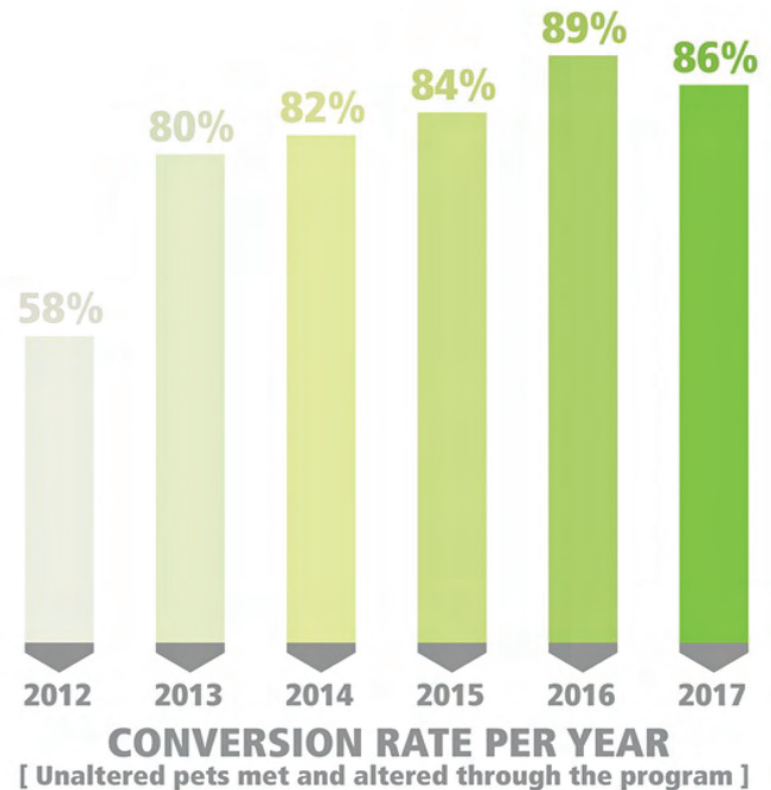
This map shows a Pets for Life focus area, with green dots indicating people met through proactive door-to-door outreach and blue/purple dots indicating people who called or were referred by someone else. The map makes it easy to see that proactive outreach was concentrated in a small, distinct area, and people met in other ways covered a wider geographic area.



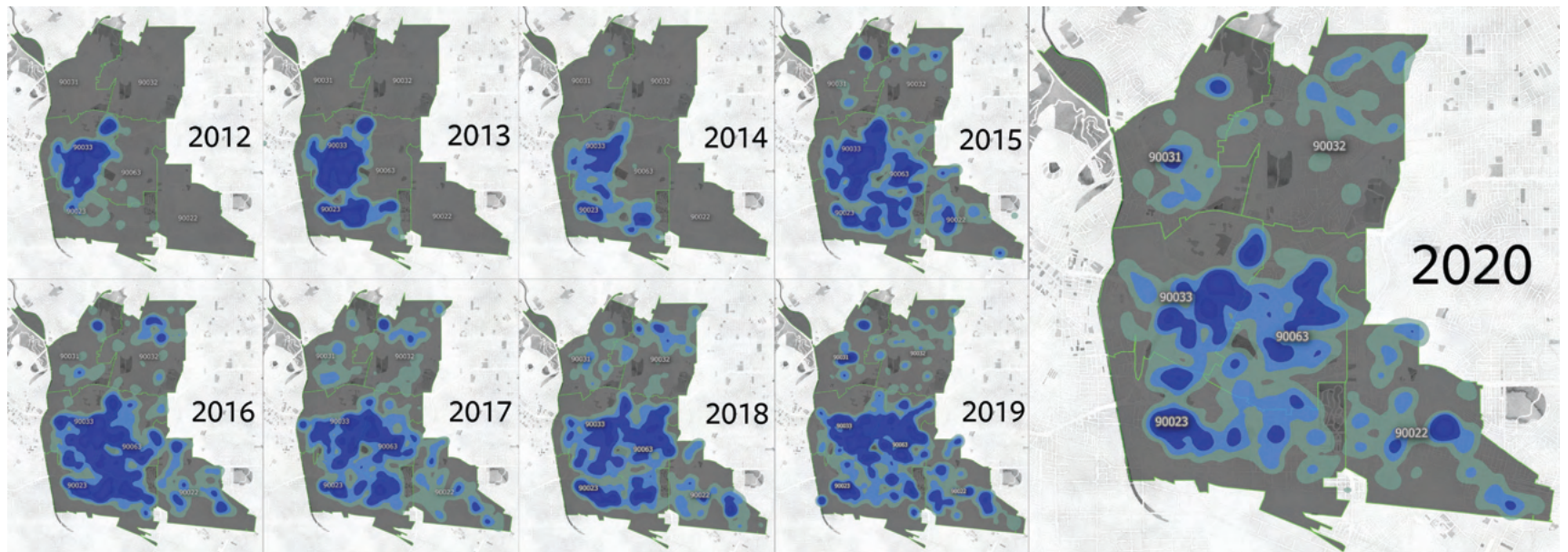
Monitor changes and patterns over time

Consistent and continuous data collection allows for the tracking of various metrics to see if there are changes and what the changes are, as shown in the example to the right of the increase in spay/neuter rates. ►

Heat or density maps like the ones below can show the location of new people and pets met each year, as seen here where the yellow and red spots indicate higher-density areas. ▼



This example of a density map not only shows where concentrations of people and pets were met, but also shows how the focus area coverage grows year to year.

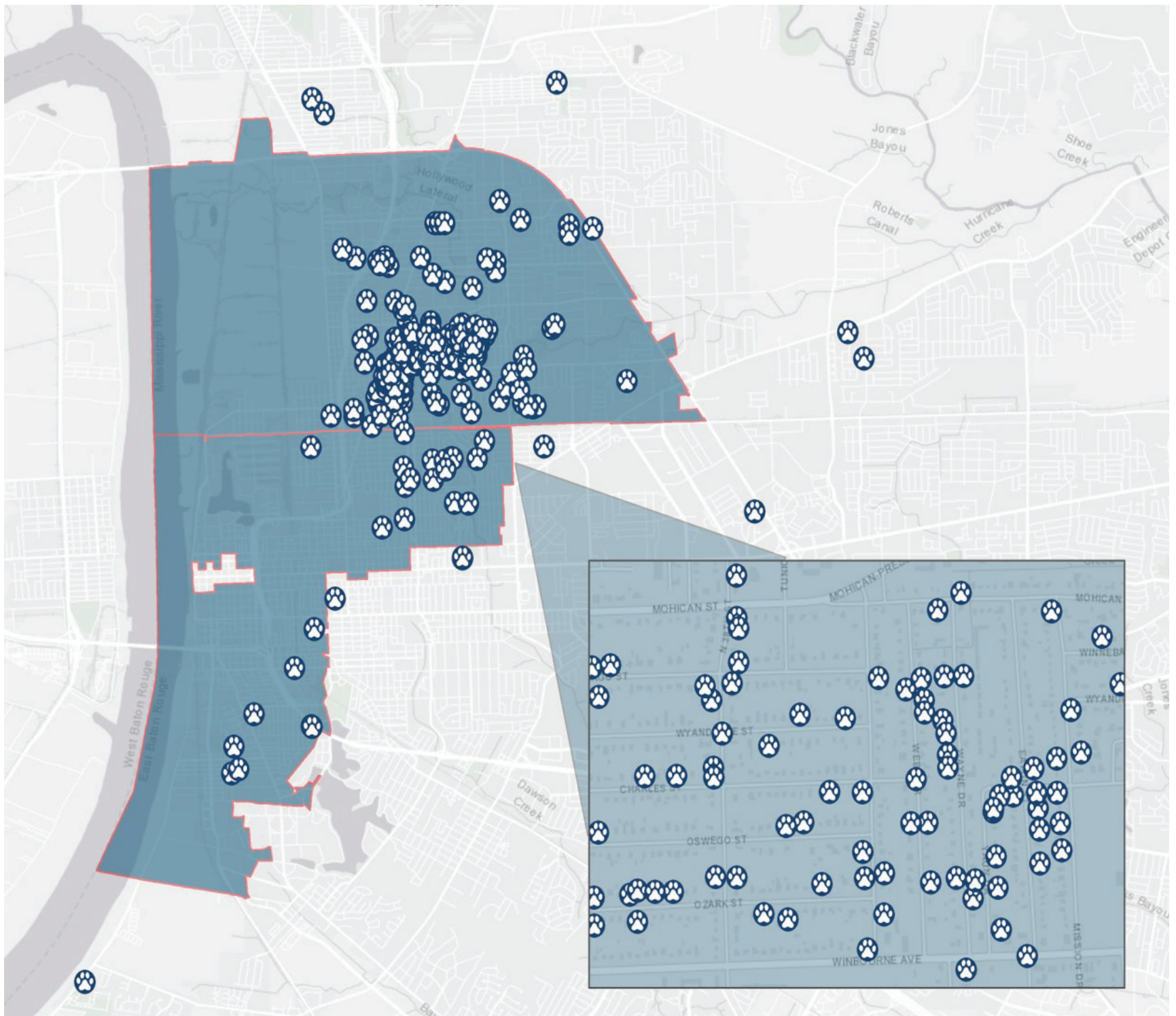


Create charts, maps, graphics and marketing materials to demonstrate program and organization effectiveness

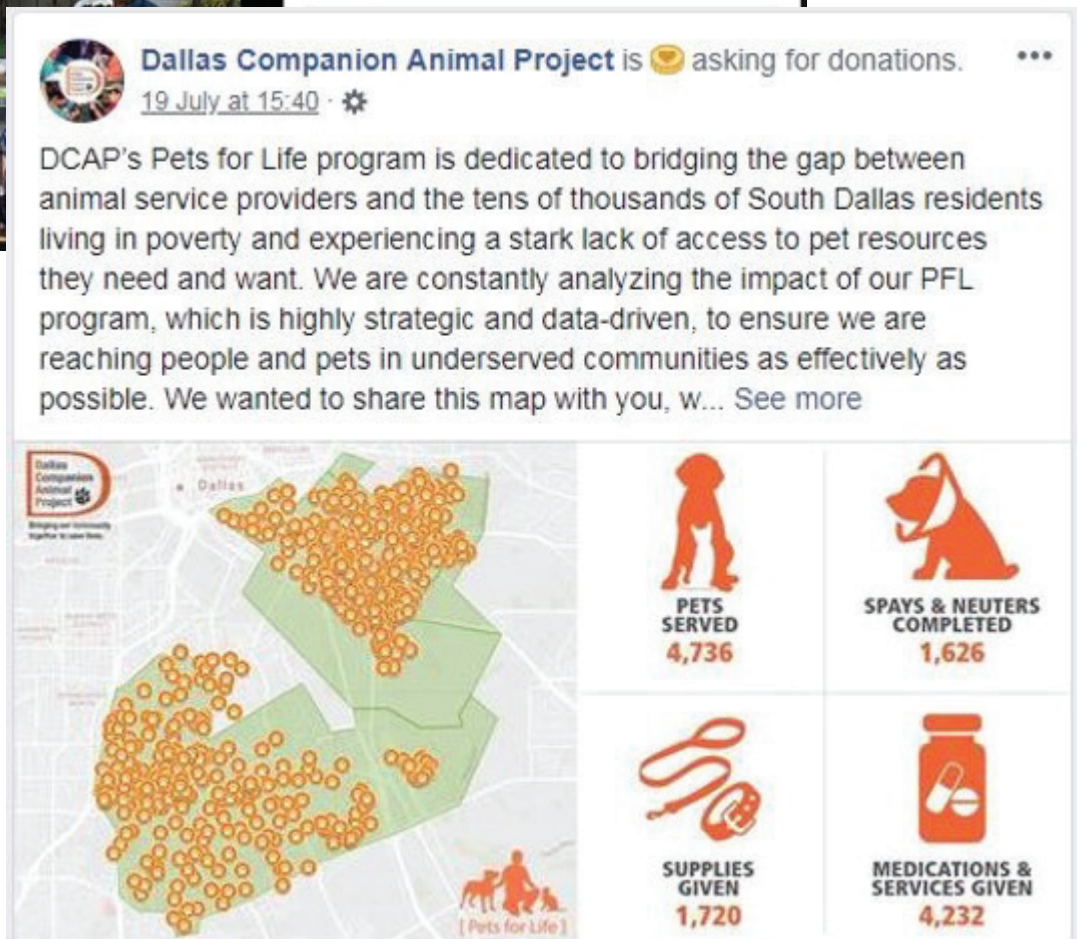
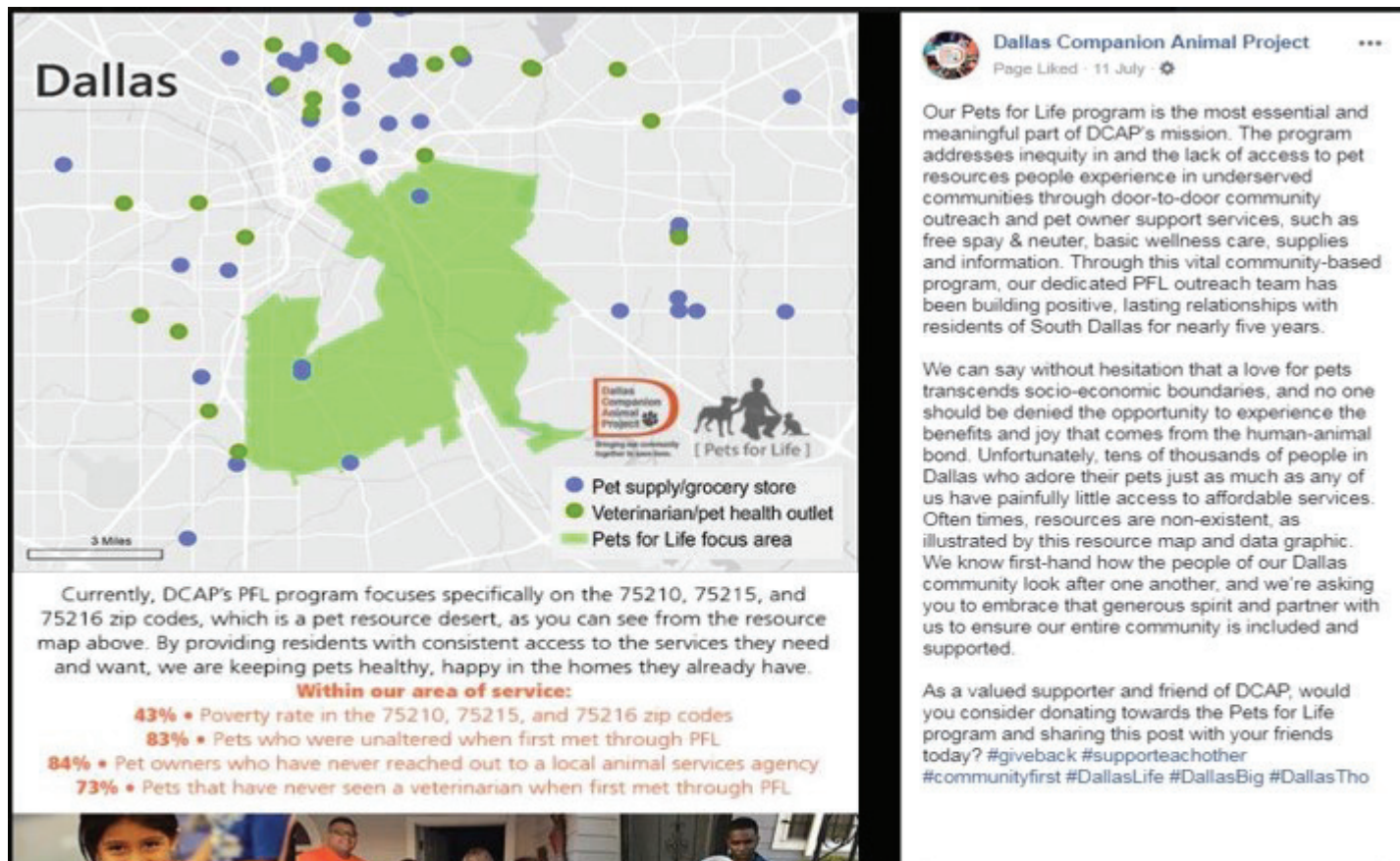
Incorporate data in marketing graphics to highlight successes and share multiple categories of data at once.



Here each paw print icon indicates a person and pet served and shows the concentration of outreach.



These fundraising posts on social media share information on pet resource deserts and the importance of community outreach with digestible graphics and visual support.



Provide reports for staff and donors

Weekly and monthly data reports can be utilized by the outreach team to share internally with staff what the outreach program is achieving or with donors who want to know what their funds have accomplished.

Vinita	Weekly Report	
	Week Ending April 08	Year to Date
New Clients (proactive)	8	17
New Clients (reactive)	4	42
New Pets	18	103
S/N Appointments Scheduled	0	78
S/N Surgeries Completed	0	78
Touches	12	59
Supplies	32	87
Medications/Services	6	115
Completion Rate		88%
Conversion Rate		88%

Tahlequah	Monthly Report	
	February	Year to Date
New Clients (proactive)	5	8
New Clients (reactive)	32	59
New Pets	74	149
S/N Appointments Scheduled	54	104
S/N Surgeries Completed	49	98
Touches	37	67
Supplies	12	15
Medications/Services	121	242
Completion Rate		83%
Conversion Rate		77%

Show why community-based animal welfare work is necessary

These graphics share key pieces of data collected while conducting outreach and meeting people and pets. Instead of simply using a plain number or list of numbers, eye-catching and colorful designs are created for greater impact.

PET ACQUISITION

NEIGHBOR / FAMILY / FRIEND: 54%

FOUND / ROAMING: 24%

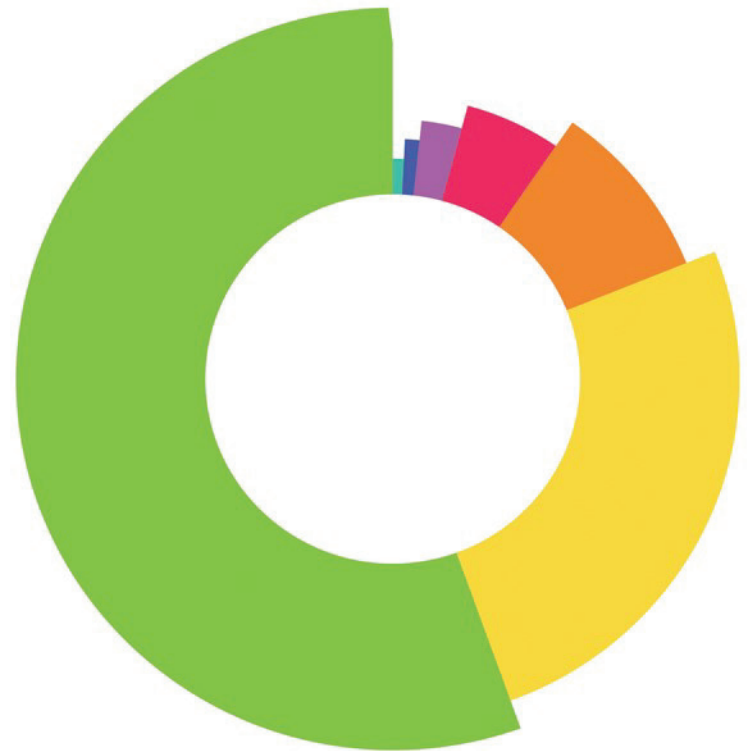
PET'S LITTER: 11%

BREEDER: 6%

SHELTER / RESCUE: 3%

ONLINE / NEWSPAPER: 2%

PET STORE: 1%



**PETS HAVE NOT
SEEN VETERINARIAN**



**NEVER CONTACTED
ANIMAL SERVICES**

Data collection is an integral component to operating an effective and successful community outreach and support services program. The discussion and examples in this chapter are just a start to all the potential benefits that come from an organization prioritizing and investing in data.



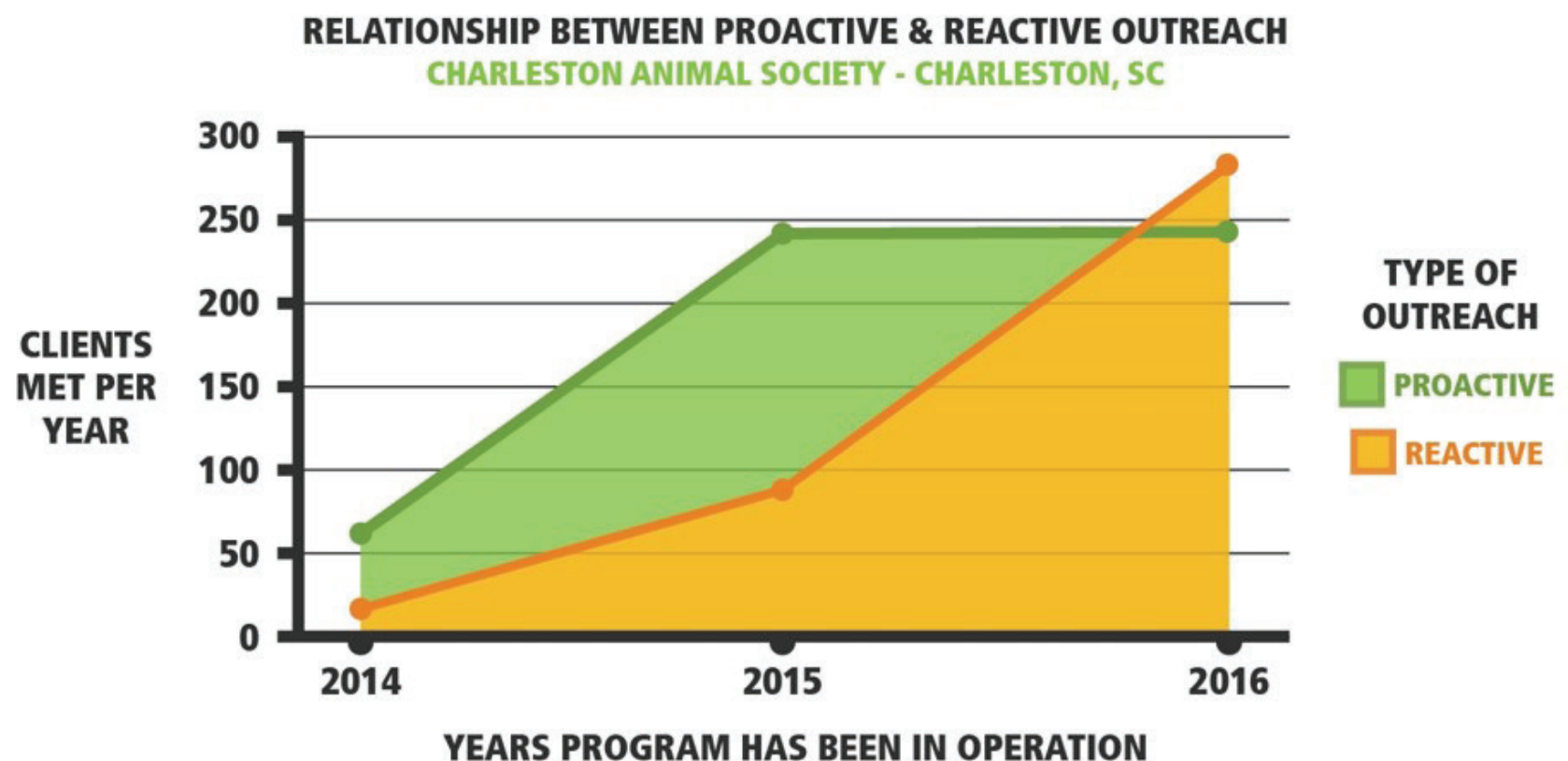
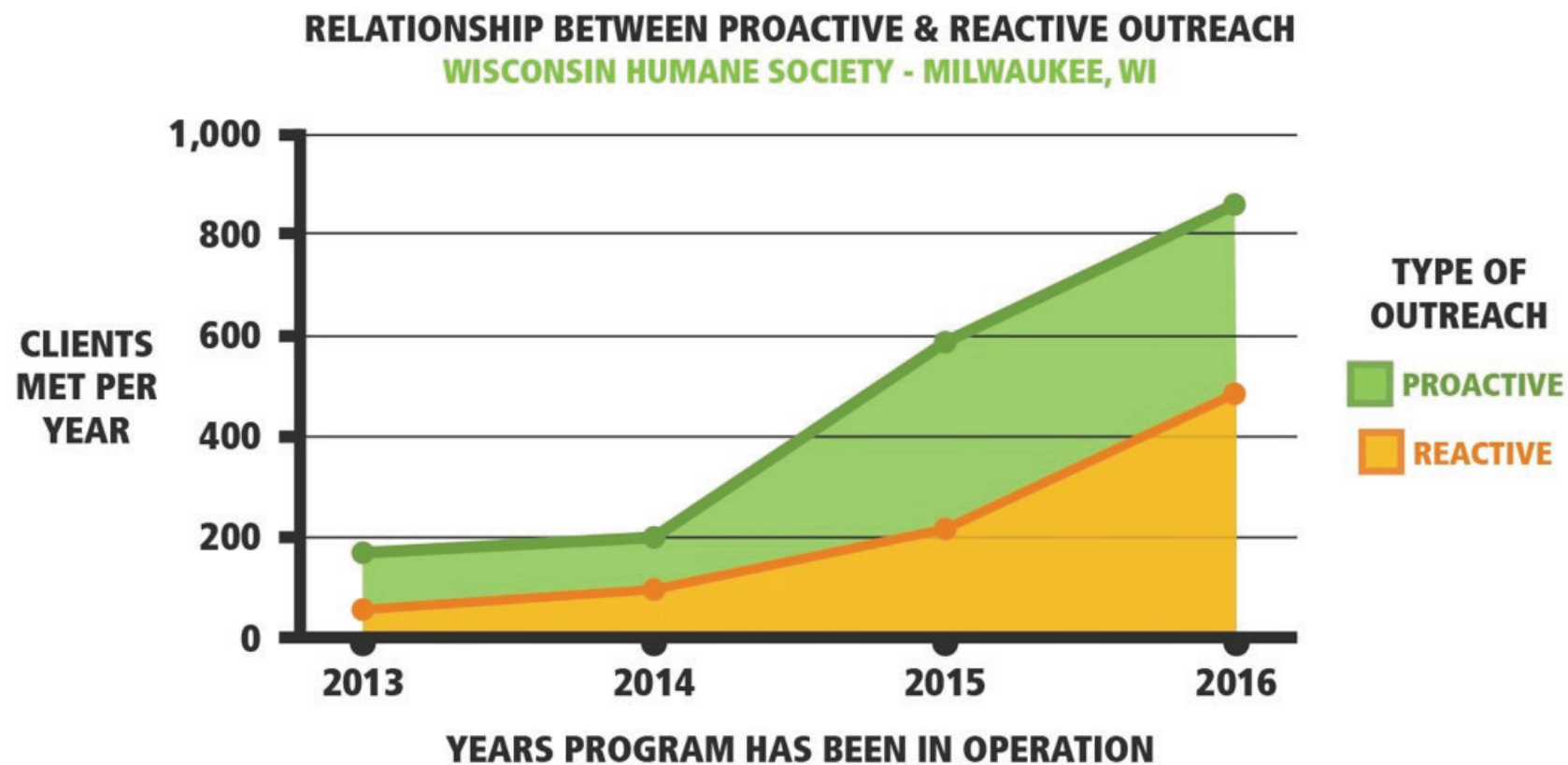
Strategic program growth

In order to achieve equity in access to pet resources, community-based programming must be viewed as a long-term commitment. As long as poverty exists, community outreach and subsidized services will be necessary and should become a priority initiative in animal welfare.

SATURATION AND MIGRATION

With a goal of building a consistent community presence and sustained strategic outreach, support services programming requires focus and patience. Staying the course over time will result in saturation, meaning the development of a strong community partnership and increase in pet services throughout your focus area. This is achieved through thoughtful and deliberate door-to-door outreach.

As high levels of saturation start to be realized within a focus area, do not stray from the outreach strategies. Whether the focus area is several zip codes, one neighborhood or a census tract, maintaining a presence is necessary. An increase in reactive outreach (as defined in Chapter 4) will happen over time as word-of-mouth spreads, but proactive outreach (as defined in Chapter 4) should never stop. As saturation occurs, new streets, blocks and community pockets can be added for proactive outreach, while you continue to serve the original area reactively. We refer to this process of growing coverage throughout the focus area as migration. See examples here that show how reactive outreach grows over time while proactive outreach continues to grow and be maintained as well.



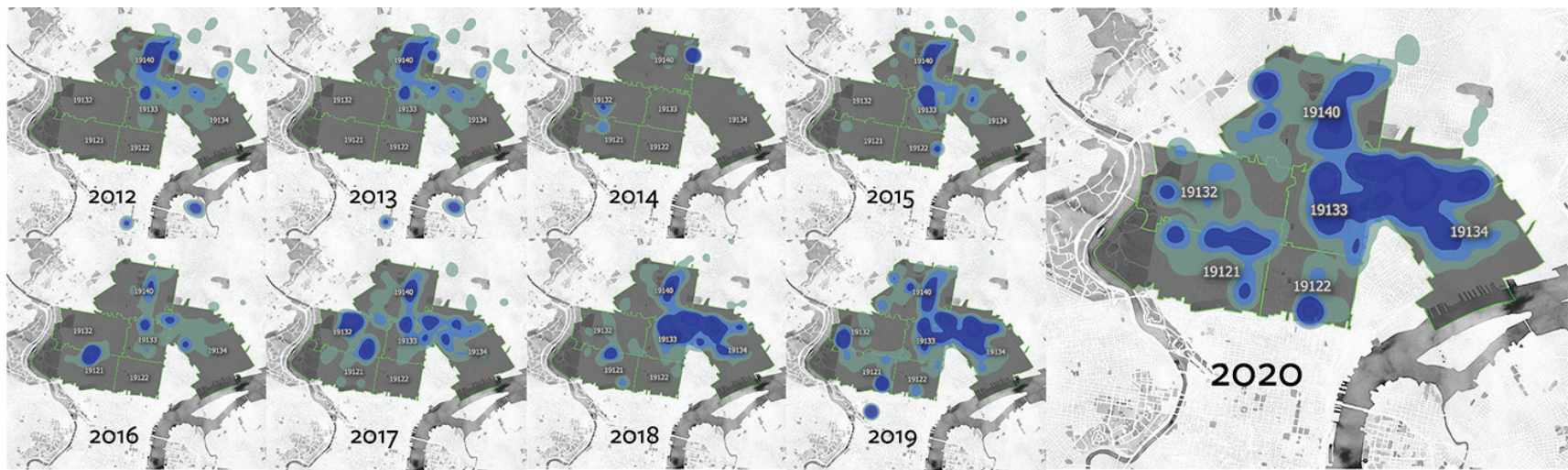


Migration is not a perfect science and must be informed by data and guided by the community. You may even begin to migrate and then have unforeseen circumstances dictate a change in the plan. One example is if gentrification occurs. Gentrification is when more affluent people move into traditionally low-income areas (often communities of color), which can lead to an increase in available businesses and services but also to increased

property taxes and rental rates. This can result in residents being displaced and require you to revisit a previous area or add a new focus area.

Note: Housing insecurity—which includes several dimensions of housing problems people may experience, including affordability, availability, safety, quality and loss of housing—is an increasingly common and devastating issue in communities across the country. Learn more at the National Low Income Housing Coalition (nlihc.org) or the Eviction Lab (evictionlab.org). Housing insecurity can be compounded for people with pets; for more details, see the Eviction Response Toolkit at humanepro.org/eviction-toolkit.

As migration in program outreach takes place, new areas require an emphasis on proactive outreach. At this point there must be a balance in creating a presence in the added area while still responding to the original area as medical issues come up, new people move in and people acquire new pets. Adhering to a strict schedule as discussed in Chapter 4 is more important than ever. Also critical is data collection and mapping out saturation and migration—see Chapter 5 for more instruction on how to create and utilize maps. As you can see in this example, the geographic reach of the program grew year to year while never leaving the area where the program started.



INCREASE PROGRAM REACH

Geographic growth is not the only way to evolve and strengthen impact over time with a community outreach program. You can increase capacity for services like spay/neuter and wellness care beyond initial program availability and offer new resources like pet deposits and pet supplies that may not have been possible when first starting the work.

Capacity growth can take shape in various ways:

- Additional staff to create more bandwidth for outreach hours or higher rates of transportation support
- More veterinary partners to boost the number of spay/neuter and medical appointments or the days available for people to choose from
- Larger budget for expansion of medical care options

Resource growth may be possible instead of or in addition to an increase in capacity. Most programs are unable to offer every type of support service the community wants and needs at the outset, so evaluate what you have learned from the community and what would add the most value to the program. Considerations for resource growth are:

- Housing support: Talk to landlords proactively about how to be more welcoming to pets; get involved with city or county programs and policymaking and cover pet deposits.
- Return-to-owner: Provide support to ensure the reunification process is readily available. Remove financial, transportation and information barriers that may prevent people and pets from being reunited.
- Intake diversion: Identify reasons why people are faced with the difficult decision to surrender their pet at the shelter or in the field, and offer alternatives to keep families together.

- Adoption: Make adoption available to an audience of people who have largely not seen formal rescue as a way to acquire a pet. According to PFL data, only between 3%-5% of people in underserved communities currently get their pet from a shelter or rescue.

- Supplies: Outdoor shelters, indoor crates, litter boxes, toys and other items are often out of reach for many people and can make a huge difference in the health and happiness of the person and the pet.

With any increase in the volume of people and pets met or services provided, do not forget that demand increases for all areas of the program, including additional data entry, follow-up calls, administrative needs and team management.

Every organization starts in a different place with community outreach program goals and capabilities, so how the program grows and evolves will vary as well.

ORGANIZATION PHILOSOPHY

The influence of community outreach programming can be far reaching in ways that are not tied specifically to direct care expansion. Another way to grow is implementing a community-minded philosophy throughout an organization—reflected in all departments, messaging and fundraising and board of directors.

- Review your organization's mission statement and modify it if needed to reflect a commitment to inclusion, fairness and social justice.
- Make sure everyone in your organization, from leadership to front desk staff, is committed to integrating and upholding an approach that creates equity in access to pet resources.
- Inventory organizational policies and processes to identify gaps in resources; unintended or disproportionate implementation of punitive measures; or barriers to services that may exist for some pet owners in your community.



Sustainability and messaging

For an in-depth discussion on fundraising and sustainability, please see the Pets for Life Sustainability Guide at humanepro.org/pets-for-life/sustainability-guide. The guide provides a comprehensive and holistic look at fundraising for a community outreach and support services program. A summary of the guide is shared in this chapter. A fundraising and sustainability plan should include the following three key elements:

Social Justice Lens: Pursue an understanding of how people and pets are impacted by larger systemic barriers—like poverty, racial and economic segregation,

mass incarceration and housing insecurity—and embrace animal welfare’s responsibility and unique opportunity to advocate and lead toward equity, inclusion and justice.

Organizational Support: Ensure that people at all levels of the organization are committed to community-based work and integrating and upholding an approach that creates equity in access to pet resources.

Ongoing Development: Create and stick to a development plan that engages supporters around the philosophy and strategy of equity. Invest in fundraising and communication activities that build long-term program success.

MEASURING AND DEFINING SUCCESS

Community-based animal welfare work requires a new and different way of thinking about how to measure success—evolving and adding to traditional mission-level metrics in our field. Most metrics historically are shelter-based (intake, euthanasia, adoptions, length of stay, live-release rates, etc.). While important, this data does not encompass community-wide conditions or show programmatic impact throughout the community. Measurements that define success in the context of community engagement and an organization’s ability to bridge the gap in reaching an audience of people and pets in underserved areas include:

- People/pets served through community outreach
- Medications/services/supplies provided
- Spay/neuter surgeries completed
- Percentage of pets unaltered when met
- Conversion rate (percentage of unaltered pets met and altered through the program)
- Percentage of pets who had not seen a veterinarian before the program
- Percentage of people who had never contacted an animal service agency before the program
- Compilation of ways in which people acquire their pets
- Percentage of people needing transportation support to and from veterinary appointments

Use elements from the community assessment and resource map created in Chapter 3 as a foundation to showcase current gaps in or complete lack of access to pet services in your community and to illustrate the unique effort your organization is making to bridge those divides.

Share that your organization has done due diligence in deciding where to invest time and funds and is carrying out the work with careful deliberation. Creating maps and other visuals as discussed in Chapter 5 is extremely helpful in making donors aware of the barriers and isolation from services that many people and pets face and why a door-to-door approach is important.

Program effectiveness is also measured through long-term focus, which results in consistent community engagement, saturation and migration over time, as discussed in Chapter 6. Sharing this information through maps that chart locations of pets served and services provided is useful. You can even individualize data based on a specific area of interest for a donor or foundation, like one with a concentration on cats or focus on serving senior adults.



FUNDRAISING IDEAS

The ability to craft a compelling story and identify untapped opportunities is as critical as managing a robust donor database or organizing an annual fundraising appeal. These efforts all require clarity, intention and some imagination in order to be successful. Your organization's type may dictate the sources of funding available to you (e.g., municipal agencies receive the majority if not all of their funding from government), but there are some general strategies for raising money from individuals and foundations:

- Tell succinct yet impactful stories of individual people and pets. [See Storytelling Tips here.](#)
- Use strong imagery that honors the human-animal bond. [See Photography Tips here.](#)
- Create a call to action around systemic issues of inequity.
- Connect asks to tangible services and supplies provided through the program, like a \$25 donation for kitty litter/litter box, \$50 for one veterinary appointment, \$100 for one spay/neuter surgery, etc.
- Engage on a personal and human level, connecting people to the work and giving them an opportunity to walk in someone else's shoes and gain a different perspective.
- Incentivize giving with matching gift campaigns and platforms where donors can monitor progress toward a fundraising goal.
- Show cost comparisons. The cost per pet for traditional intake and re homing in animal shelters, rescues and municipal agencies is often much higher than the per-pet cost of providing proactive support services.
- Look outside of traditional animal welfare funders for support. Public health agencies, faith-based organizations and community improvement and quality-of-life initiatives are a few examples.

- Get and stay organized with a grant calendar for application deadlines, a schedule for social media posts and a plan for tying fundraising opportunities to holidays and other special events.

- Say thank you. During and following any fundraising campaign, event or donor engagement, acknowledge gifts and recognize supporters publicly when appropriate and always personally in a timely manner.

Funding will flow more easily when there is a clear vision and commitment throughout your organization to building equity in access to pet resources. Consistent messaging minimizes confusion on the organizational mission and builds a strong brand.



REALLOCATION

Funding for your program does not need to come from new revenue only. Finding ways to reallocate or apply existing resources is incredibly valuable. This can come in many forms, so think creatively:

- Have a current staffer, between their existing responsibilities, devote hours to supporting community outreach through data entry or follow-up phone calls.
- Shift a staff position from traditional shelter work to community outreach.
- Designate a portion of money assigned to medical care for shelter animals to instead cover veterinary care for owned animals.
- Transfer traditional marketing expenses like online ads or billboards to support outreach hours.

Small, incremental reallocations can have a major impact and steadily grow over time.

MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATIONS

There are respectful and effective ways to tell the story of your community outreach program that avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes about underserved communities while inviting your supporters to support equity in access to pet resources. You can tell a compelling story that brings supporters along with your organization's work and increases the program's sustainability.

An effective communications plan nurtures an in-depth understanding of systemic poverty, institutional discrimination and the barriers to services that people in underserved areas experience. Some key factors to take into account when developing this plan:

- Positivity: Create and maintain a theme in storytelling that highlights the love people have for their pets.

- Consistency: Integrate community-based work into all communication methods and platforms—web, social media, video, email, public relations, event graphics, brochures and other printed materials.
- Internal connection: Outreach staff should be in regular contact with marketing and development staff in order to supply storytelling content and ensure that messages are crafted authentically and with respect to community relationships and partnerships.
- Measurable goals: Monitor the effectiveness of marketing efforts by analyzing website traffic, social media engagement and email click-through rates, or even solicit feedback from your supporters through an online survey. The more information you have, the more you can fine-tune your approach.
- Language: Understand the power of words and acknowledge how some words may perpetuate division and cause harm. [See more on the importance of language here.](#)
- Accountability: Provide opportunities for community storytelling and perspectives to be shared and practice cultural humility—the practice of looking inward and examining implicit bias.





Policy and enforcement reform

There are many ways companion animal welfare can evolve to be more inclusive and fair, and a focus on support services can yield results that are beneficial to animals and people. Two areas critical to evaluate are internal organizational policies and enforcement of animal welfare ordinances and statutes.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES

Every animal welfare organization has practices and policies to examine through an equity lens. Initial review steps include:

- Audit current written policies.
- Identify unwritten policies and assumptions that guide decision-making.
- Highlight areas where policies are missing.
- Identify staff responsible for implementation of policies.
- Analyze how policies are communicated and applied to the public.

Policies vary by organization, and there are likely many to review and consider in your organization. As you work toward serving all people and pets in your community fairly and without discrimination, here are a few more issues to consider.

RETURN-TO-OWNER POLICIES

The best return-to-owner strategy is one that focuses on preventing pets from coming into your shelter by providing proactive community support through microchips, identification tags, guidance on lost pets and in-field return strategies. Michelson Found Animals has great information available at foundanimals.org/covid-19-rto-in-field-services.

In terms of actual policy, when pets do enter the shelter system, it is crucial for organizations to consider the difficulties some pet owners have in reclaiming their lost or displaced pets and the barriers put in place by many RTO policies. Too often, RTO policies disproportionately impact people with lower socioeconomic status. Fees, for example, are one of the largest barriers to reclaiming a pet.

In recent years, more has been done to reunite pets in the system with their families, but inflexible policies and expensive fees still result in too many animals labeled as “homeless” even when they have a home. Countless people face the choice of paying exorbitant fees or leaving their pet in the shelter, which for many is no choice at all. Some people are afraid to reclaim a pet because of fear they will be threatened with citations or criminal charges or treated with suspicion and judgment when entering the shelter. Other people simply don’t know where to look for their pet. Computer and internet access are not readily available in every community, so making online postings of picked up animals does not reach everyone. Additionally, viewing hours still too often exclude evenings and weekends, the only times when many people who work hourly wage jobs are able to go.

There is a long-held misconception that redemption fees act as a deterrent to ensure a pet does not end up in the shelter, that they are necessary to offset costs of temporarily housing an animal or that those who cannot pay them should not have a pet. None of these are true. A fine is not a deterrent if a person cannot afford to pay it. The idea that a person can prevent an accident from happening or repair a situation that results in a loose pet based on a potential fine is not realistic. Accidents can happen to anyone, and no person should lose his or her pet because of one. The best way for shelters to ensure a pet is safely controlled is to provide information and support, not put a solution further out of reach.

Returning a pet home as quickly as possible, or incorporating field returns where a pet never enters the shelter to begin with, can save money. The cost of continuing to house and find new homes for animals will almost always surpass what would be charged in redemption fees, especially when you consider how many pets could go home if money was not a barrier. Eliminating RTO charges also goes a long way in building trust and rapport with the community, which in the end is better for the shelter, the people and the pets.



Some RTO fees are codified by law, while others are set by organizational staff or decided on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the structure, there is a range of possibilities for reuniting more people and pets and making RTOs more equitable.

- Allocate staff to actively seek out owners.
- Use technology, social media and online forums to share information on lost pets.
- Proactively and regularly communicate your organization's desire to reunite people with their pets.
- Advocate for equitable ordinance or statute changes with city, county or state officials.
- Waive fees when allowed, and when that is not possible, offer a payment plan.
- Seek grants for pet retention and pet reunification.
- Ask for funding from donors, foundations and supporters specifically for vaccines, boarding, microchips and spay/neuter for lost/reclaimed pets.
- Create a budget line item to offer free or subsidized redemption resources.

OWNER-PRESENT AND OWNER-REQUESTED EUTHANASIA

Unfortunately, humane euthanasia for a pet has not historically been accessible to everyone. Even when owner-requested euthanasia is available, owner-present often is not. Far too many people are left with the options of a pet passing at home, which can be prolonged and painful, or surrendering their pet to a local animal shelter or animal service agency for the pet to be euthanized.

End-of-life decisions are difficult, and not being able to give your pet a peaceful and dignified ending can be traumatic for the family and the pet. While offering euthanasia services to the public can be complex and difficult, finding equitable solutions in this area is important and necessary.

If your organization can provide this essential service, here are some best practices:

- Develop and share information with people on the process and services available.
- Give owners time to make the decision and to say goodbye.
- Create a private room or area that is quiet, visually comforting and has enough space for the euthanasia technician/veterinarian, the pet and the pet owner.
- Choose staff based on experience, training and empathy.
- Certify multiple people in order to have a rotation of euthanasia technicians to alleviate emotional burnout. For more information on compassion fatigue, go to humanepro.org/topics/compassion-fatigue.
- Identify partnerships with private practice and mobile veterinarians to utilize when shelter staff are not available.



ADOPTIONS

Everyone can benefit from the joy and unconditional love of a pet, and pet adoption should be available for all who seek it. Yet, Pets for Life data shows that less than 5% of people in underserved communities acquire their pets through a formal rescue or adoption process. For an in-depth guide to making your adoption practices and policies welcoming and inclusive, please visit humanepro.org/page/adopters-welcome-manual.

Here is a summary of our key suggestions:

- Rely on conversations that get to know the potential adopter instead of applications.
- Focus on relationship building and strong customer service.
- Remove requirements that create barriers and prop up racial and economic inequity.
- Provide subsidized or fee-waived adoptions.
- Offer additional resource programs and support after the adoption.

For all policy changes within your organization, getting your staff and volunteers on board is important. The keys to getting buy-in and compliance include: clear and transparent communication on the reason for the change; guidelines on how to implement new policies; open forums for discussion; and follow-up on successes. It can take time for everyone to adjust to the changes, but you must be consistent in applying and expecting adherence to the new or modified policies.

All people within an organization—not just the staff responsible for direct community engagement—should receive training on interacting with the public. This training should focus on critical skills that build empathy and emotional intelligence, such as creating a welcoming environment, active listening and de-escalation. The training must be integrated and reinforced within all facets of an organization. Supervisors from all departments should engage in the training to ensure all staff are committed to becoming a welcoming resource to the community.

In addition to training, it is equally important to make sure staff feels cared for and engaged. It is essential to celebrate successes, especially at the beginning of the cultural shifts and policy changes. Create visible, regular opportunities to highlight situations where support was provided to a person and their pet instead of a more traditional response. Regular check-ins with staff and volunteers on an individual level are also recommended.



ENFORCEMENT

A national conversation is happening on the economic and racial disparities in the criminal legal system and on shifting from punitive-only approaches to more support-based community engagement models. Because their work sometimes entails an enforcement component, animal welfare organizations are not exempt from these discussions or concerns.

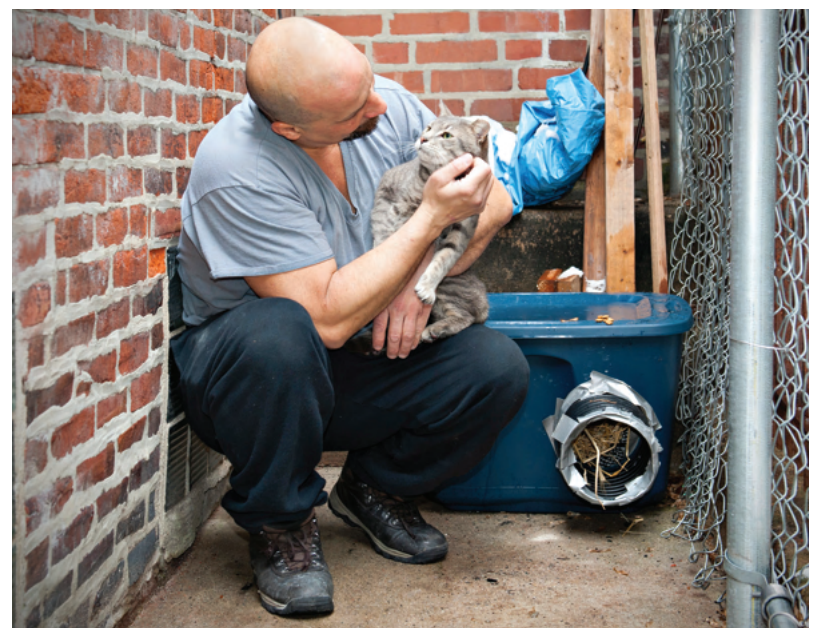
The animal welfare field has been discussing and treating the issue of animal cruelty and neglect the same way for decades. It is time to take a serious look at this perspective and the effectiveness of the approach. While institutional and large-scale cruelty situations do exist, what has traditionally been labeled as “animal cruelty” in individual pet owner situations is frequently an issue of owners lacking access to services or needing financial assistance. The distinction is important in order to move animal welfare away from criminalizing poverty and demonizing pet owners who face socioeconomic and access challenges toward a model where we offer understanding and support.

Too often, underserved neighborhoods are stigmatized as places where cruelty is prevalent, which perpetuates harmful stereotypes and myths. This can exacerbate the existing gap in services and create distrust between service providers and the community. There is a significant need to repair distrust and treat people with dignity, respect and understanding. By focusing on support instead of punishment, animal control and humane law enforcement agencies can build trust and become a community resource.

Shifting to support-based enforcement is not an easy task; it requires an open mind, patience and a desire to achieve more just results. Many officers may think their choice is binary: Either leave a situation unaddressed or issue a citation and seize an animal. But as officers obtain more training, guidance and resources, the options for resolving situations increase. Trust and relationship building benefits the collective health and well-being of pets more than division and conflict.

Some helpful tips and tools to utilize in the process are:

- Instead of focusing on citations, budget to provide pet owners with resources like outdoor shelters, veterinary care, runners/trolleys, fence repairs, indoor crates, grooming, etc. See the Pets for Life Sustainability Guide for ideas on fundraising, messaging and reallocating for support services: humanepro.org/pets-for-life/sustainability-guide.
- Partner with groups offering such pet resources.
- Create a resource guide with human support services for officers.
- Authorize and train officers to provide rabies vaccinations in the field at no or low cost.
- Encourage officers to share suggestions when appropriate for resolving pet-related disputes between neighbors.



- Ensure fair and consistent handling of complaint calls. How calls are communicated with and assigned to officers by compliance category and by location of complaint can influence the tone of the response.
- Prepare officers to approach calls without ego and exercising cultural humility.
- Facilitate meetings for officers to connect with colleagues in other departments, organizations and community leaders in order to find resolutions for issues in the field.
- Train officers on active listening techniques, where information is gathered and shared without assumption of malice or guilt.
- Re-evaluate training requirements and topics to support duties related to support-based approaches.
- Host trainings on implicit bias; diversity, equity and inclusion; de-escalation tactics; communication across differences; and compassion fatigue. For more information on compassion fatigue, see humanepro.org/topics/compassion-fatigue.
- Set clear expectations for officers on community engagement, nonjudgment and treating everyone with respect.
- Create incentives and issue positive performance reviews for officers who comply with supportive practices.
- Remove quotas, if they exist, on issuing citations.
- Have regular check-ins with officers to discuss concerns and challenges with managing support-based services.
- Update the language in job descriptions to attract applicants interested in community support. In the hiring process, be transparent about what is expected of officers.
- Repurpose positions from traditional enforcement officers to community liaisons. [See this sample position and job description.](#)

- Update job titles to reflect your support-based approach—for example, change “cruelty investigator” to “community resource specialist.”

- Utilize data to review caseloads and outcomes. Track the number of cases resolved through support measures, the impact on intake, and map where gaps in services exist and can be addressed.

In addition to evaluating enforcement practices, your organization should carefully consider the impact of enacting new policies or lobbying for new laws. Legal mandates do not change the access a community has to resources or the financial capacity of low-income pet owners. Subsequently, penalties and punitive measures may be unequally applied and have unintended consequences. Even well-intentioned policies and laws can have negative and disproportionate outcomes for pets, people and communities.

The responsibility and power of enforcement should not be taken lightly. Acknowledge the seriousness of citations, fines and charges. Punitive measures can be life-altering and result in substantial consequences for people; the possible negative consequences include criminal records, family destabilization, jail time, loss of job or income, exclusion from government programs, emotional trauma and much more.

Often the suggestion of shifting focus from punishment to support is misconstrued as turning a blind eye to enforcement calls and complaints. Actually, the opposite is true. We advocate for increased community engagement but with an eye toward support and mitigating harmful outcomes for people and their pets. When removing discriminatory policies and creating equitable practices, we can do what’s best for animals by treating people with compassion, respect and fairness.

For more reflection and discussion, read [Punishment to Support: The Need to Align Animal Control Enforcement with the Human Social Justice Movement](#) and [Serving Pets in Poverty: A New Frontier for the Animal Welfare Movement](#).



In closing

The *Pets for Life Community Outreach Toolkit* is a comprehensive resource based on years of experience, data gathering, analysis and learning. We hope the toolkit serves as a blueprint for creating and nurturing community-based efforts that build connections with people and increase equity in access to pet resources. Pets for Life believes in the compassion and capability of the animal welfare movement and in everyone who is willing and ready to invest time in this process.

Dismantling exclusionary systems requires a collaborative and sustained effort between animal welfare organizations, the veterinary community, policymakers and funders—all informed and driven by the experiences and input of people within directly impacted communities. The animal welfare field has a special opportunity to contribute to institutional change. Companion animals present a strong point of connection and have the potential to bring people together. If the animal welfare field embraces the opportunity, we can contribute to a more just and fairer world for people and pets.



Appendix

TOOLKIT LINKS BY TOPIC

Demographics and Data

[Poverty Guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

[Poverty USA](#): Educational resource with maps and demographic data related to Poverty in the United States.

[Rich Blocks, Poor Blocks: Mapping by income level](#)

[City Data](#): Demographic data by city and zip code

[Fiscal Facts: Median Value of Family Net Worth](#), Tax Policy Center, Urban Institute and Brookings Institution

[Detailed U.S. demographic data](#), United States Census Bureau

[U.S. Demographic Quick Facts](#), United States Census Bureau

[The Opportunity Atlas: Which neighborhoods in America offer children the best chance to rise out of poverty?](#)

[Mapping Poverty in America: Location and concentration of poverty](#), The New York Times

[CDC Social Vulnerability Index: External stresses on human health data](#), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Labor force characteristics by race and ethnicity, 2019](#) (PDF), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

[The lack of racial diversity in veterinary medicine](#), Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association

[Detailed assessment of pet ownership rates in four underserved urban and rural communities in the United States](#), Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science

[Eviction Lab](#)

Income Inequality

[U.S. income inequality, on rise for decades, is now highest since 1928](#), Pew Research Center

[The Nation's Income Inequality Challenge Explained in Charts](#), Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy

[Income inequality: Evidence and policies from the Urban Institute](#)

[Income inequality is rising so fast that economic data can't keep up](#), Chicago Tribune

[HOLC “Redlining” Maps: The persistent structure of segregation and economic inequality](#) (PDF), National Community Reinvestment Coalition

[Interactive Redlining Map Zooms In On America’s History of Discrimination](#), National Public Radio

[On “Diversity” as Anti-Racism in Library and Information Studies: A Critique](#), Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies

[Unpacking America’s Eviction Crisis](#), Eviction Lab

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources from the HSUS

[Pets for Life Sustainability Guide](#)

[Pets for Life](#)

[Compassion Fatigue](#)

[Adopters Welcome Manual](#)

Suggested reading/viewing list

[PFL Resource List](#)

Recommended trainings/workshops

[Animal Care Expo](#)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources](#), The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement

Our Promise



We fight the big fights to end suffering for all animals.

Together with millions of supporters, we take on puppy mills, factory farms, trophy hunts, animal testing and other cruel industries. With our affiliates, we rescue and care for thousands of animals every year through our animal rescue team’s work and other hands-on animal care services.

We fight all forms of animal cruelty to achieve the vision behind our name: a humane society.
And we can’t do it without you.



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