



BASIC DATA MATRIX

(VRS 1.2021)

INTRODUCTION

This basic matrix was designed to serve as a tool for basic data collection. It is a simple matrix containing what many (including Asilomar, ASPCA, National Federation of Humane Societies, American Humane, UC Davis, Maddie's Fund, PetSmart Charities, HSUS and Shelter Animals Count) have agreed are the minimum data points (along with definitions) an organization should gather. Whether organizations already gather a great deal of data or have only gathered the basics, this matrix should facilitate the roll up or merging of data at the local, regional, or national level by providing a common framework. This matrix does not reflect any preference in data analysis or the calculation of rates but is rather simply a tool for data collection.

By agreeing to this basic matrix - we hope organizations will gather AT LEAST this data, or if an organization already gathers a great deal of data, that they will consider rolling up their data into this format to help facilitate data collection at a local, regional or national level, which would allow participating agencies to benchmark their work against similar agencies around their region or the nation. This matrix does not reflect any preference for the variety of live release rates used in animal sheltering and welfare. Most rates, other than full Asilomar which requires a conditions matrix, should be able to be calculated from the data points included.

What Animals are Counted?

The 2021 update to the basic data matrix expands beyond canines and felines to include other companion animal categories: rabbits, equines, small mammals, farm animals, birds, and reptiles + amphibians. Many organizations also provide extraordinary services for other animals such as wildlife, not captured here.

Live Admissions Only

For the purposes of this matrix, we are tracking LIVE admissions only, i.e. animals who are alive when they come into an agency's possession. Animals who are dead when taken into an agency's possession may be a data point to track, but that information is not tracked by this matrix.

Tracking by Species and Age

The risks associated with being an adult dog, puppy, adult cat, or kitten (or neonate of any kind) in a shelter environment vary a great deal. To help shelters assess and understand the differing risks for these populations of animals, this basic data matrix includes a

break out by species and age for intake and outcome categories. The age tracked within intake categories is the age at intake, and the age tracked within outcome categories is the age at outcome. Age is not necessary to track for beginning and ending counts. If tracking statistics broken out by species and age is beyond the capacity of an agency, simply tracking statistics by species would be a place to begin. This document defines puppy and kitten as under 5 months of age (see below: Determining Age).

Determining Age

This basic matrix utilizes 5 months as the break point between puppy/kitten and adult. At or near 5 months of age there are changes in the teeth which can help guide trained staff regarding proper categorization of the animal. For cats, at 4-5 months of age permanent canines, premolars and molars are coming in (all in by 6 months of age). For dogs, at 5-7 months of age permanent canines, premolars and molars are coming in (all in by 7 months of age). Source: *Animal Sheltering*.

Beginning and Ending Shelter Counts

These numbers help frame the population of the animals sheltered and cared for by the organization. We recommend a shelter walk through – physically counting the animals sheltered within the organization, and not forgetting to count those animals who have been admitted but who are not currently within the shelter (foster care, in the care of a veterinary hospital, etc.). Beginning and ending counts aren't broken down by age, since the age of animals will change while at the shelter.

Defining Owner Intended Euthanasia

Some shelters offer pet euthanasia to the public as a service whose cost may be subsidized and therefore more affordable than local veterinary clinics, thus ensuring access to this service. Defining when euthanasia should be recorded as “at the request of the owner”, or not, is the subject of much discussion. For the purposes of this document, we are choosing to define owner INTENDED euthanasia as the euthanasia of a pet whose owner brought the pet to the shelter for that service. In other words, the owner brought the pet in specifically for that service – it was their intent before arriving. Any other definition of “owner requested” euthanasia leaves much up to interpretation and therefore a great deal of variation among organizations and their reporting. We believe the simplicity of this definition helps to ensure consistent application and record keeping. Owner-Intended Euthanasia provided as a service outside of intake is not counted in this Basic Data Matrix but is counted in Community Services Matrix.

RTF vs TNR

Return to Field (RTF) programs involve community cats who have been admitted to an animal shelter, brought in by animal control personnel or by members of the public. Trap Neuter Return (TNR) programs involve the management of community cats by trapping, sterilizing and returning cats to where they originated. While the programs function in similar ways, the key difference is that RTF cats are admitted for sheltering and are therefore part of the animal sheltering function. TNR cats are NOT admitted for sheltering, only for a service or services (sterilization and/or vaccination). Both programs are lifesaving, but the admission for sheltering, or not, is an important distinction. TNR cats can be counted using the Community Services Matrix.

What is Possession?

“Adoption” and “Transferred to another agency” both make reference to possession. The primary concept here is one of ownership. For example, in foster care, the agency still has possession or ownership. If adopted or transferred to another agency, possession is now with the new owner, or with another agency.

LIVE INTAKES	ADULT	UP TO 5 MONTHS	AGE UNKNOWN	TOTAL	DEFINITIONS
Stray/At Large					Stated to be unowned or free-roaming.
Relinquished by Owner					Admitted by owner, including adoption returns. All returns should be tracked as owner relinquishment.
Owner Intended Euthanasia					Intake of pets whose owner brought the pet to the shelter with the INTENT of requesting euthanasia. OIE provided as a service outside of intake is not counted here.
Transferred in from agency (in state)					Admission from another agency within the same state, for adoption, large scale seizure support, etc.
Transferred in from agency (out of state)					Admission from another agency in a different state, for adoption, large scale seizure support, etc.
Transferred in from agency (international)					Admission from another agency outside the US, for adoption, large scale seizure support, etc.
Impound/Seizure					Impounds for pets seized during cruelty cases or for protective custody. This does not include pets relinquished by their owners.
Other Intakes					Pets born while in care and other types of admission not captured above.
TOTAL LIVE INTAKES					

LIVE OUTCOMES	ADULT	UP TO 5 MONTHS	AGE UNKNOWN	TOTAL	DEFINITIONS
Adoption					Final adoptions, having permanently left the agency's possession, including barn cat programs resulting in adoption. It does NOT include animals in foster care or 'trial' stays.
Returned to Owner (RTO)					Stray or Owner Relinquished animals returned to their owner.
Transferred out to agency (in state)					Transferred out of the agency's possession to another entity within the same state or territory.
Transferred out to agency (out of state)					Transferred out of the agency's possession to another entity in a different state or territory.
Transferred out to agency (international)					Transferred out of the agency's possession to another entity outside the US.
Returned to Field (RTF)					Animals included in intake, already altered or altered after intake, and returned to stray capture location to be released (often referred to as SNR). This is not TNR, see definitions.
Other live outcomes					Other types of live outcome not captured above.
TOTAL LIVE OUTCOMES					

OTHER OUTCOMES	ADULT	UP TO 5 MONTHS	AGE UNKNOWN	TOTAL	DEFINITIONS
Died in Care					Animals who die, unassisted, while sheltered or fostered.
Lost in Care					Animals outcome is unknown (escaped the shelter, outcome not recorded and unknown).
Shelter Euthanasia					All euthanasia other than that performed by the definition below as owner intended euthanasia.
Owner Intended Euthanasia					Animals included in intake whose owner brought the pet to the shelter with the INTENT of requesting euthanasia. OIE provided as a service outside of intake is not counted here
TOTAL OTHER OUTCOMES					
TOTAL LIVE	TOTAL OTHER		TOTAL OUTCOMES		

ANIMAL COUNTS	TOTAL IN CARE Number of animals at the shelter, offsite locations, and in foster care on the first and last day of the month.	IN FOSTER CARE Number of animals in foster care on the first and last day of the month.	TOTAL
Beginning Count			
Ending Count			