

Historically, communities established Animal Services, often to mitigate nuisances and collect stray animals, as an additional service rather than a core city service. The ad-hoc nature in which Animal Services were established, and because Animal Services have significant cross-department work, caused a lack of uniformity in how Animal Services fit into the municipal department structure and too often left them inserted as a program within a department versus its own department. This has led to Animal Services programs set up in several ways as units within police, health, code enforcement or even sanitation or other divisions.

But Animal Services work reaches into every neighborhood and connects with nearly every core functional city department. Animal services will be involved in police activity, particularly when warrants are served, or evictions conducted, as well as partnering with police for dangerous dog and animal cruelty investigations. In the event Animal Services holds police powers, they will be serving warrants and making arrests for animal cruelty in close conjunction with local police departments. But they also will be involved in holding animals for health departments, managing bite quarantines or bite reports, and may be called upon to assist with zoonotic disease management or quarantine. Furthermore, Animal Services officers may issue code violations, respond with fire departments, participate in emergency management planning and operations, and other critical municipal functions. And such a department is encouraged to have strong community support programs to prevent animals from entering a shelter as well as adopting pets back into the community.

When Animal Services are relegated to work within a specific department, it can impede cross-department collaboration and efficiency with the needs of the department becoming the operational priority versus the needs of the community. For example, Animal Services within police departments may become enforcement-focused and minimize its role in disease management, community support and adoption programs. Whereas in a Health Department, budgeting often gets heavily allocated to activities related to rabies control and disease management, then fails to fully support the other duties animal control plays in public safety such as dangerous dog enforcement and animal cruelty investigations. Likewise, when located within code enforcement, resources are dedicated to ticketing and ordinance enforcement. And because pet adoptions are commonly not a key priority for any other municipal department, this important function that impacts public engagement and public trust, is not viewed as a priority. These departmental limitations are seen across the country in municipalities of various sizes.

The consequences are an imbalance in services to the community and important programs being neglected. An independent Animal Services department can thoughtfully allocate their limited resources, based on data and the needs of their community, to provide comprehensive and balanced services.

As such, Animal Services are recommended to be an independent municipal department to other core city functional departments within the municipal structure. Ideally, Animal Services should be established in a municipal structure where the department reports directly to a city manager or equivalent chief administration officer.

## Chapter 2

# Providing Animal Services a Seat at the Table

An increasing number of communities recognize that Animal Services, typically consisting of a combination of animal sheltering, animal control and humane law enforcement, broadly impact their citizens in every neighborhood. The role of today's animal services has greatly expanded over the years. Formerly acting in the capacity of mere "dogcatchers," animal services have transformed into a vital public safety and community service department.