

Calculating staffing requirements

Staffing requirements based on average daily population

Average daily population defines many needs and requirements for animal care. This number can be calculated by averaging the daily population in monthly increments. Monthly increments are used in order to evaluate seasonal variations. For this report, daily population was estimated by spot-checking the daily population of animals in the shelter at intervals (every second Tuesday of each month). The term “inventory” is used in this report to describe daily population, as this is the term used to obtain the Chameleon report calculating this number.

Average daily population is an important component of calculating the housing and staffing needs for animal care. Average daily inventory data was not available to the UC Davis team at the time of our visit. Calculations were estimated by monthly spot checks. The National Animal Care Association has estimated staffing requirements for basic animal care (feeding and cleaning) at 10 min per animal. (Please see Table below.)

Formula for Determining Kennel Staffing Needs

Indicator	Value	Formula	Value	Indicator
Incoming Animals per Year	A	÷ by 365 days =	AA	Incoming Animals per Day
Incoming Animals per Day	AA	x B Day Average Hold Period =	BB	Animals in Shelter per Day
Animals in Shelter Per Day	BB	x 10 Minutes per Animal =	CC	Number of Minutes Needed
Minutes Needed	CC	÷ 60 minutes =	DD	Number of Hours Needed
Number of Hours Needed	DD	÷ 3 hours =	EE	Staff Needed per Day

Copyright © 2006 National Animal Control Association

Staffing requirements for basic animal care can be calculated by multiplying the daily average inventory each month by 10 minutes per animal (Monthly Daily Average Inventory * 10 min./animal). Since the shelter is planning on moving forward with more appropriate number of animals relative to the actual humane housing capacity of the shelter, minimum animal care staffing for the future may be estimated through a combination of RSHC and AD capacity for each species. The staffing level for dogs is likely to be relatively consistent since daily average canine intake has been relatively steady throughout the year. Feline intake, however, has historically doubled in the warmer months. This is a trend that is expected because most cats tend to breed seasonally. Staffing should be planned accordingly unless some control is to be put on intake and the resulting daily inventory. If 10 minutes per animal does not seem to be an accurate time estimate for cleaning and feeding, then an average staff member should be timed while following safe, adequate cleaning and feeding protocols and the time should be adjusted to fit. Additional time should be allocated for caring for sick animals.

As an example, using the NACA time estimates:

If 83 dogs were housed in the shelter (or estimated based on RSHC and AD capacity)

83 dogs * 10 min/ dog = 830 minutes

830 minutes / (60 minutes/hour) = 13.8 care hours for just cleaning and feeding dogs according to NACA guidelines

If staff are to finish the tasks in a three hour period 13.8 staff hours / 3 hours = 4.6 staff members need to be assigned to clean and feed dogs each day

If 161 cats were housed in the shelter

161 * 10 minutes / cat = 1,610 minutes

1,610 minutes / (60 min. / hour) = 26.8 care hours for just cleaning and feeding of cats

If staff are to finish the tasks in a three hour period 26.8 staff hours / 3 hours = 8.9 staff members need to be assigned to clean and feed cats each day

**These population numbers are only used here as examples*

If the shelter does not need to be open to the public it may be that more than three hours can be allowed for cleaning and feeding, allowing fewer staff members to accomplish this over a longer time span. Recognize, however, that length of time that passes equates to animals who are waiting for food, water, care and attention until limited staff has time to get to them. The absolute number of hours required will remain the same.

Staffing for Animal Flow-Through

Animal flow-through describes the time and processes designed to ensure a safe and optimally efficient passage through the shelter system. Common flow-through points for most shelters include intake, release to owner, behavioral evaluation, initiation/completion of treatment with associated moves in and out of isolation, release to and return from foster care, move from holding to adoption, spay / neuter pre- or post-adoption, adoption, transfer to rescue, and euthanasia. Flow-through points are junctions where an animal needs something from us or decisions need to be made for what to do next. Each flow-through point requires an investment of staff time in addition to that required for basic care and feeding.

Insufficient time to carry out procedures for any of these essential flow through points will have a detrimental effect on animal health by increasing time animals spend waiting in the shelter which, in turn, contributes to further crowding, risk of exposure to infectious disease, stress for animals and animal caretakers, and reduced welfare. It seems likely these delays also contribute to a decreased live release rate; specific examples were observed during the time of the site visit where this appeared to be the case. For example, lack of time to accomplish spay/neuter led to a reduced number of cats available for transfer to off-site adoption facilities, in spite of presence of a volunteer willing to transport any available cats. This resulted in offsite adoption kennels sitting empty while severe crowding persisted at the Kent shelter.

Similar estimated staffing requirement calculations can be made for animal flow through procedures for each point described above (and any additional flow through points identified by shelter staff) by using the daily averages from the prior year.

For example:

If on average, in 2007 canine intake was relatively consistent throughout the year at about 14 dogs per day. If performing a quick intake exam, administering intake treatments and vaccines, finding appropriate housing and documenting animal information in the computer is a 10 minutes process:

$10 \text{ minutes} * 14 \text{ dogs} / \text{day} = 140 \text{ minutes}$ or 2.3 hours of staff time per day must be available to provide essential intake procedures for dogs.

If in addition, depending on the time of year, between 11 and 25 cats per day are admitted to the shelter system.

In August: $10 \text{ minutes} * 25 \text{ cats} = 250 \text{ minutes}$ or 4.2 hours for feline intake

In January: $10 \text{ minutes} * 11 \text{ cats} = 110 \text{ minutes}$ or just less than 2 hours of feline intake

Estimated total hours for cat and dog intake would range from 4.3 hours per day to 6.5 hours per day. To ensure efficiency and safety for humans and animals, it is recommended that admitting procedures be carried out by a team of two.

Daily average inventory or RSHC numbers can be used to estimate time needed for other essential flow through procedures such as daily rounds.

Outcome numbers may help estimate other flow through processes such as MTA exams.

Move to adoption checks used as an example:

If 8 dogs per day on average are adopted from the shelter, and approximately 90% of all dogs examined as candidates for adoption move to the adoption area then, on average, 9 dogs per day will need MTA exams.

Outcome processing needs can also be calculated using daily averages for adoptions, returns to owner, transfers and euthanasia. Average daily adoptions impact not only adoption processing but also spay neuter needs.

If specialized staff are required for certain flow-through points, ensure sufficient hours specific to these categories. For example, only selected trained or certified staff may be permitted to perform behavioral evaluations, assess whether animals under treatment are sufficiently recovered to move back into the general population, perform euthanasia or other specialized procedures. Spay/neuter services are one critical component of moving animals successfully through the shelter to adoption, and will be described separately.