

DATE: April 23, 2021
TO: Ms. Katie Campbell
FROM: Commission on Animal Care and Control
SUBJECT: Your letter sent to Commission for our regular 3-18-2021 meeting

Dear Ms. Campbell,

Thank you for your letter. The Commission very much appreciates your significant volunteer efforts for Chicago's animals. And we thank you for complimenting the Department's microchip research and getting owned pets home. This is demanding and necessary work, and your comments are much appreciated.

Following are comments on five areas of concern you expressed in your letter, which was read to the Commission at its March 18, 2021, regular meeting. These are intended to let you know what we are working on to address or respond to your questions as well as to provide interim Department responses (which are in blue font and indented). More information will be provided at our next regular Commission meeting scheduled for May 20, 2021:

1. We asked the Department to prepare a response to your paragraph about **intake operations**, as we all believe that we should celebrate and encourage the public to help lost animals, as you comment. The Commission does indeed review intake policies from time to time, and we have been apprised of national trends and best practices and will review them at our next meeting in May 2021. We will encourage visible posting and distribution of CACC procedures at the entrance / front desk/ intake locations, including who to contact when time is of the essence for the citizen. Following are the Department's comments about the current policy, which is expected to remain in place:

Our intake policy to ask residents to schedule an intake appointment was designed to make our operations more efficient and to keep our residents, staff, and the animals safe and healthy. This is a shelter management best practice used by many of the most reputable Municipal Animal Shelters to safely manage the shelter population. If a resident is unable to make an appointment, we do our best to accommodate them as soon as possible. We take walk-in strays without an appointment if the resident says they need to leave them at that time.

2. The Commission is concerned that we do not have a replacement liaison from the **Chicago Police Department (CPD)**, and we have reiterated our request for an appropriate individual to be appointed.

In the meantime, Commission members will contact or coordinate contacting CPD and discuss in the coming weeks how to ensure that every district has at least two operational microchip scanners and to ask for a list of their location and responsible parties along with a copy of their policy / orders for scanning animals brought to CPD facilities. We know specific instances of districts providing this service, for which we are grateful; and we will recommend that it be implemented as a best practice in every district.

Concerning your suggestion of slip-lead donations, Commission members will ask about the need for slip leads at each district when the microchip scanner inquiry is made. Of course, anyone can offer to donate them at their district, but we recognize that ensuring all districts are adequately equipped would be best. Would you or others you are aware of be willing to help fundraise to supply what is needed?

In addition, Commission members will coordinate outreach to all ward offices to determine their interest in and need for microchip scanners and the associated training.

Regarding your request about having **on-call CACC officers overnight**, we asked the Department to provide a statement of current policy:

CACC did have overnight officers at one time. However, after reviewing the data, it was clear that this was not the best use of resources for the department and the current schedule was designed to meet the most pressing needs of the residents of Chicago. We still work with CPD, CFD and other agencies to drop off stray animals that they find overnight, and we work with Friends of CACC to service sick and injured animals that come in overnight via the After-Hours Crisis Care Program.

3. We asked the Department to provide a response about documenting **Pet Wellness Checks**. We will ask for an update of their work on changes at the next regular Commission meeting scheduled for May 20, 2021:

We value the input on our Pet Wellness checks. CACC takes this work seriously and the Department is presently working to make changes to enhance our reporting system.

4. We asked the Department to provide a response about **assigning ACOs to specific areas**.

In the spirit of diversity, equity and inclusion, we find it's beneficial to have our officers take calls in every part of the city. Also, our current staffing levels do not allow for allocating specific ACOs to specific areas.

5. We asked the Department to provide a response to these questions about **cats brought to and leaving CACC**. While allocation of CACC resources is the purview of the Department, the Commission will be reviewing policies governing cats brought to CACC, medical

services for cats in their care, Homeward Bound partners, feral cat colonies and community or outdoor cats. Individual cases should be discussed with the Department, but the overall policy will be reviewed at the next regular Commission meeting scheduled for May 20, 2021. In the meantime, the department provided an interim response (attached) to some questions raised.

[Because of its length, the interim Department response is attached to this letter,]

We will post these responses on the CACC website at https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cacc/supp_info/public_notice.html, and we will provide an update when available on those matters where an update is noted, most probably following our May 2021 regular Commission meeting.

Thank you again for all your efforts, including preparing your comments, questions and suggestions for review.

Sincerely, on behalf of the Commission on Animal Care and Control,



Cynthia L Bathurst
Chair, Commission on Animal Care and Control

Attachment: Department Interim Response to Item #5 (see body of this letter)

**Attachment to Commission Letter regarding Item #5:
Department Interim Response to questions about cat intake and services at CACC**

CACC works with several partner organizations to assist with cat projects as an alternative to shelter intake. These projects originate either via a "nuisance" request for stray cats, from an Animal Control Officer who identifies the need for spay/neuter services for stray cats, from a ward office who requests service, or because a resident comes to CACC with an under-socialized cat or kittens and via a discussion with the resident we find out that they are feeding cats or a neighbor is feeding cats and they need assistance.

We depend on our partner organizations to follow-up with these residents to offer them assistance. When the cats are under-socialized and the residents agree to take them back, these organizations usually TNR the cats. CACC provides medical services for the cats as resources permit, just like we do for all of the animals that our partners transfer out.

We met with Dr. Wake and other officials from Cook County Animal and Rabies Control last year to discuss our work with partners to help manage the stray cat population and to ensure that what we were doing was in compliance with the ordinance. They are aware that CACC refers many stray cat service calls to partners and that many of them do provide assistance in the form of spay/neuter/TNR services. The following steps outline how the process works:

1. How We Receive Requests
 - a. A member of the public contacts CACC in one of the following ways about outdoor/stray cats
 - i. 311 – dispatchers forward Jenny and/or Angela the Service Request
 - ii. Over the Counter (OTC) – members of the public bring cats to CACC or mention outdoor cats to staff
 - iii. Calls or voicemails come in about outdoor cats
 - iv. ACOs bring to our attention from a call they were dispatched to
2. CACC makes contact with the resident gathers more information, determines which partner is most likely able to help given the zip code or neighborhood, and gets authorization from that person to have their information passed along to someone that could help
3. Lead is then dispersed out to organization based off zip code/territory map of coverage
 - a. If there is no direct contact or outreach for a lead, it is added to Chameleon to be sent in a daily digest email ("Community Cats List") which goes out to our community cat partners
 - b. In the meantime, our partners make contact with the resident, they get all necessary information, and work on getting them into surgery based on their options available through their own clinic capacity or services provided by other clinics
4. CACC Intake Process specific to FCACC
 - a. After discussing with medical, CACC sets up surgery for four cats on Tues, Wed, Thurs (the days we are scheduled to have both vets in shelter); this varies due to scheduling conflicts (ie, equipment or staffing issue)
 - b. Cats come in traps the morning of surgery. Their intake is created by Angela
 - c. Cats go directly into medical in their traps
 - d. Cats get vetted and recover in their traps in isolation to decrease stress.
 - e. At some point between intake and outcome, FCACC's foster coordinator (Jenny V) sends hold requests in and authorization to pick up the cats
 - f. Cats get picked up the following day by FCACC volunteers

5. CACC has partnerships with organizations including PAWS Chicago, Tree House Humane Society, Whiskers and Tails Foundation, and Friends of CACC
 - a. Though FCACC is not currently a Cook County TNR sponsor, they partner with Cats in Action, which is an approved sponsor, whose founders work closely with both CACC and FCACC

CACC is committed to exercising the duties and powers of the department as directed in the IL Animal Control Act (see below) to help humanely manage dog and cat overpopulation control and to ensure live outcomes of homeless dogs and cats.

510 ILCS 5/ Animal Control Act. (ilga.gov)

(510 ILCS 5/5) (from Ch. 8, par. 355)

Sec. 5. Duties and powers.

(a) It shall be the duty of the Administrator or the Deputy Administrator, through sterilization, humane education, rabies inoculation, stray control, impoundment, quarantine, and any other means deemed necessary, to control and prevent the spread of rabies and to exercise dog and cat overpopulation control. It shall also be the duty of the Administrator to investigate and substantiate all claims made under Section 19 of this Act. The duty may include return, adoption, transfer to rescues or other animal shelters, and any other means of ensuring live outcomes of homeless dogs and cats and through sterilization, community outreach, impoundment of pets at risk and any other humane means deemed necessary to address strays and ensure live outcomes for dogs and cats that are not a danger to the community or suffering irretrievably.

CACC is also committed to following national best practices in animal control and sheltering and appreciates the position of the National Animal Control Association on intake of free-roaming cats: [Animal-Control-Intake-of-Free-Roaming-Cats.pdf \(nacanet.org\)](#)