

Commission on Animal Care and Control (ACC)

**2017 Budget Statement to the City Council Committee
on Budget and Government Operations**

Susan Russell, Executive Director

Chairman Austin, Vice-Chairman Ervin and the honorable members of the City Council. I want to thank the Mayor for this opportunity to serve the residents of Chicago as Executive Director of Chicago Animal Care and Control (CACC). I am privileged to be here today to highlight and discuss our budget, review our goals and progress toward those goals, and present our continual improvement plan.

CACC's mission is to protect public safety and to promote the humane care of animals through sheltering, pet placement, education, and animal law enforcement. The department has a control function that humanely enforces animal-related laws. CACC also has a sheltering function that provides a safe environment and medical treatment for unwanted, stray, abused, and neglected animals.

CACC is an open-admission city shelter. Unlike shelters that may select which animals will receive assistance, CACC turns no animal away, irrespective of health or behavioral condition. In 2015, 17,500 animals came through CACC's doors: these animals included strays, owner-surrendered pets, dangerous animals, court case animals (those that are confiscated for abuse, neglect or other violation of the law), wildlife, farm animals, and exotic pets. CACC's dog and cat live outcomes have improved each year.

I have worked diligently over the past couple of months to work with the CACC team to improve operations and services across the board. Our goals moving forward are to better manage intake to and increase CACC's capacity of care; reduce length of stay; and increase live outcomes. We will be continuing to review our field service operations, and enforce and review humane responses to wildlife in the city—prioritizing calls that promote public safety in Chicago communities. We will also strive to provide value-added services to the public, such as vaccine clinics, informational resources, pet adoption, lost pet services, euthanasia services, and animal control services. We will be reaching out to every alderman to provide information about responsible pet stewardship, and will continue to communicate through our new monthly newsletter. CACC will also be providing information that will better enable Chicagoans to obtain the assistance they need to keep their pets healthy, spay/neutered, microchipped and

vaccinated; to reunite with lost pets; or to help them rehome unwanted animals prior to surrendering to the City shelter.

We have presented a budget for 2017 which will allow us to efficiently and effectively carry out our mission with the \$6,340,736 recommended appropriation provided through the City's Corporate Fund.

Strengthening Partnerships

In an effort to improve public safety and services to our residents and animals, CACC continues to forge partnerships with nongovernmental and other governmental organizations, private donors, volunteers, and businesses in the Chicagoland areas. CACC partners with over 150 public and private partners to carry out our services. These partnerships create operational and economic efficiencies. CACC attended multiple community events, including vaccine and microchip clinics, in various wards to engage residents and aldermen on the pressing issues in their neighborhoods. CACC will continue to attend community meetings, and provide support and enforcement throughout the City, with particular focus on areas with high incidences of priority service requests. CACC will also continue to proactively reach out to alderman to provide informational resources for animal services that can be posted on Ward websites and distributed in hard copy in Ward offices.

Government partners -- To deliver on our mission, CACC works closely with legislators and several city and state agencies like the Chicago Police Department (CPD), the Chicago Department of Law (DOL), the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS), the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).

- To protect the public from rabies, the City works with CDPH and IDPH to monitor incidents of bat rabies. As of September 29, 2016, CACC has submitted 455 specimens to the health department for rabies testing, including 195 bats with 14 confirmed rabies positive bats. CACC has engaged in communications with communities to ensure they are aware of risks.
- CACC also assists CPD's Animal Crimes Unit to respond to reports of dog fighting and animal cruelty. Since 2012, CACC has been providing animal handling training to CPD's SWAT units. In 2015, CACC collaborated with CPD and OEMC to develop an active database of declared dangerous animals in Chicago. Now when a police officer, fireman,

or other emergency responder visits an address where a dangerous animal is believed to reside, they will receive a notification from their dispatcher.

- Since 2010, CACC has offered Low Cost Vaccination/Microchip Clinics to the public once a month. CACC's Vaccine/Microchip Clinics both in shelter and in the communities have raised \$33,554.00 thus far in 2016. Although CACC does not offer spay/neuter services to the public, we partner with other community agencies to provide information regarding low cost spay/neuter services and other services available in communities.
- This year we have initiated a public awareness campaign to communicate with aldermen about the services CACC provides. We developed a monthly e-newsletter communication to each Ward, and began visiting with alderman and inviting alderman to tour the shelter. CACC firmly believes that more live outcomes for Chicago's homeless companion animal population will be achieved in Chicago by partnering closely with Chicago's 50 Wards, and by providing Wards with valuable animal services information – including low cost spay neuter, microchip, veterinary service, and pet rehoming services, pet-friendly housing information, lost pet services, and adoption services – that can be disseminated through the Ward networks. These strategies for getting Chicagoans the information they need to make informed decisions about their pets will assist in getting at the root of the many reasons why animals are surrendered to or brought in as stray to the City shelter.

Animal Care Advocate Partners -- CACC has expanded the work with the more than 170 organizations including 167 rescues to increase adoptions and placements, offer residents options to keep their pets, offer care at reduced cost with the goal to improve live outcomes.

- In an effort to place more animals on a live outcome track, CACC continued in 2016 to expand its Homeward Bound Approved Partner program. In 2015, 8,920 animals were transferred to these partners. As of the end of September 2016, 6,208 animals have been transferred to these partners.
- CACC initiated partnerships with a consortium of Homeward Bound Approved Partners called the Chicagoland Rescue Intervention Support Program (CRISP) in an effort to save more lives, help people keep their pets, better manage intake, and reduce exposure of animals to disease which is common in shelters. CRISP offers pet owners support in the

form of financial support or veterinary assistance, whether the pet owner is surrendering or keeping their pets but cannot afford the care.

- Through our partnership with Safe Humane Chicago CACC is able to expand capacity of care for dogs at the shelter by including dog-interaction programming for dogs confiscated for abuse or neglect. Safe Humane's VALOR (Veterans Advancing the Lives of Rescues) program pairs veterans with CACC dogs for training and companionship.
- The reentry program provides opportunities to inmates who clean the dog kennels training skills during their break, and the playgroup team gets dogs out for dog-on-dog socialization.

Volunteers -- CACC has increased trainings for volunteers who are essential to carry out tasks not provided by our employees.

- CACC's Guest Volunteer Program enabled us to bring in volunteer groups from a number of corporations. Since August 2016, three general orientations have been conducted, and more than 60 volunteers are now in the process of completing background checks. Volunteers perform tasks at the City shelter that are not performed by unionized employees, including dog walking and enrichment, and volunteering at vaccine clinics and adoption events.

Employee Productivity, Operations, and Service Delivery

Employee efficiency and productivity -- It is a top priority to continue to improve work efficiency, improve service delivery and customer service provided by CACC employees. Our goal is to have employees carry out their jobs with professionalism and compassion. Services include field control services, in-shelter customer service, cleaning, feeding, and veterinary care. We hold ongoing CACC employees training on best practices, some of which have been developed in partnership with shelter medicine and animal control experts. Employee trainings this year include Chicago Emergency Planning Training, AFSCME PSP Workshop, Animal Farm Foundation, and the National Animal Control Association. CACC continues to review shelter practices and standard operating procedures in an effort to ensure quality customer service.

Investigations, Inspections and Enforcement -- So far in 2016, CACC has received more than 37,000 requests for animal-related services from Chicago residents. By the end of 2016, CACC will have received more than 50,000 requests for animal-related services. We respond to a variety of different types of service requests made through 311, including animal bite attacks,

stray and vicious animals, injured animal assistance, inhumane treatment complaints, animal business complaints, wellness checks, dangerous dogs, wildlife in living quarters, and animal fighting complaints.

In the first three quarters of 2016, we experienced a 4 percent decrease in animal bites from the same time period in 2015. Each animal bite report received is investigated by Animal Control personnel. Animal Control Inspectors initiate Dangerous Dog Investigations addressing the most serious animal incidents pursuant to the Chicago Municipal Code. In 2016, CACC has issued 1714 Municipal Code violations across the city. Enforcement actions include everything from verifying animal business licensure, response to animal bite, dangerous dog, vicious animal, or any other field engagements.

As of the end of September 2016, CACC had received and serviced 1,129 requests for wildlife assistance. Using state law as a guide, CACC has adopted a comprehensive policy for humanely addressing issues with coyotes, foxes, and deer, and will be further reviewing this policy in 2017. CACC will service and impound all injured wildlife, and depending on injury and species, these animals will be transferred, relocated, or euthanized. CACC partners with Flint Creek Wildlife to rehabilitate and relocate some wildlife.

Facility Operations

CACC continues to leverage private support in all areas of departmental operations. The shelter is going through the first upgrade in several years which will improve sanitation, and animal housing in all dog pavilions – this is the first full scale renovation to the City shelter since it was built more than 30 years ago. This construction will be completed in the Spring 2017 and will bring a new HVAC system and will provide five new dog pavilions, with redesigned cages to increase living space for CACC dogs, and provide access to natural light. The project also includes an improved waste drainage system in key animal housing areas, improving sanitation and quality of life for the animals at the shelter, while making the facility a more inviting and welcoming place for area residents searching for their lost pets, potential pet adopters, and all other visitors.

Additionally, through our partnership with Friends of CACC, they are donating a digital x-ray machine to CACC in 2016. This significant donation is desperately needed as CACC's existing x-ray machine is film based, and constantly requiring repair, disrupting operations.

Communication and Transparency

CACC is working to increase the visibility of our programs in the community. We are working with city agencies and partners to bring more resources to city residents. CACC is striving to improve our ability to communicate with stakeholders, and the public. We place monthly statistics, including euthanasia, died in care, and live outcome statistics on our Web site, as well as historical data. We will continue to identify information being requested by the public to further improve online transparency.

CACC also launched its official Facebook page in September 2016, which will help promote our adoptable animals and events, thank our partners and those who donate items for the comfort of the animals, and communicate other useful information. CACC's transfer teams also heavily promote animals available to rescues using social media.

Conclusion

CACC is striving to bring animal service improvements to Chicago. Our goals for increasing live outcomes and improving animal services to the public are aligned with best practices and humane approaches to animal welfare nationwide.