

Chicago Animal Care and Control (CACC))
2018 Budget Statement to the City Council Committee
on Budget and Government Operations
Susan Russell, Executive Director
October 27, 2017

Madame Chairman Austin, Vice-Chairman Ervin and the honorable members of the City Council. I am honored to be here with you today, and want to thank you and Mayor Rahm Emanuel for your ongoing support as the Department of Chicago Animal Care and Control (CACC) works to promote the humane care of animals through sheltering, pet placement, education, and animal law enforcement.

Shelter Operations

CACC is the city's only municipally run, open-admission animal control and sheltering facility. We accept all animals that come through our doors, including the stray, owner-surrendered, injured, abused, neglected, and dangerous. CACC's in-shelter operations include many functions such as placement services, lost pet care, medical treatment, animal care, and customer service to name a few. To date in 2017, CACC has accepted more than **12,500 animals into our shelter**.

I am proud to report, that thanks to the steadfast efforts of our employees, volunteers, rescue groups, partners, supportive aldermen, and other invested community stakeholders, **in 2017, CACC has had the highest total live release rate in the history of CACC**. This year, CACC's live release rate for dogs is at 86 percent and for cats is at 90 percent, up from 66 percent for dogs and 74 percent for cats in 2014.

Other notable achievements within CACC's Shelter Operations include:

- Our partnership with Safe Humane Chicago expanded to include more programming within the shelter for the dogs, significantly increasing CACC's capacity for care in the back pavilions.
- CACC coordinated an automatic upload of its lost pet data to the large lost pet database, Helping Lost Pets, and partnered more closely with Lost Dogs Illinois to return more pets to their owners.
- Major renovations at the shelter were completed in June 2017, and all seven dog pavilions became operational.
- The Chicago Wolves organization donated Canine Influenza and Bordetella vaccines to the City shelter. As a result of this generous gift, CACC has been vaccinating all dogs on intake and better supporting the health and wellbeing of these animals while in our care.
- CACC also continued to provide the community with the monthly low-cost vaccinations and microchip clinics at the shelter.

- CACC euthanized the fewest number of dogs and cats as compared with any other year during the same time period in CACC's history.

Chicago Pets Alive!

To build on our success, CACC will be presenting our continual improvement plan **Chicago Pets Alive!** in the coming weeks. Chicago Pets Alive emphasizes CACC's commitment to saving all healthy and treatable animals as our resources and capacity for care permit, and to engaging with Chicago communities to support Chicago's pets. The plan was informed by roundtable discussions with key stakeholders from City Council, rescue groups volunteers, animal welfare partners, community organizations, and businesses, as well as town hall meetings with residents. I look forward to sharing more information about our plan and related efforts soon.

CACC Field Operations

CACC prides itself in serving as a community resource in every neighborhood in the city. Through September, CACC's animal control officers responded to nearly **28,000 requests for service**. These calls ranged from stray and injured animals, well-being checks, animal bites, animal pick-up for seniors or the disabled, vicious animal calls, and agency assists.

Also included in these calls were over **1,000 calls for assistance with wildlife**, a 11 percent reduction compared with 2016. Our team responds to calls regarding wildlife that pose a risk to public safety, wildlife in a trap or injured wildlife, or wildlife within the living quarters of a home, not including areas like an attic or the walls. CACC also works with other departments, such as Department of Public Health and Department of Buildings, when wildlife have taken up residence in abandoned buildings and are causing concerns for public safety. For all other wildlife-related calls, CACC directs the public to consult private companies that deal with wildlife nuisances or the Illinois Department of Natural Resources

In the coming year, and as part of our Chicago Pets Alive strategic plan, we will focus on improving efficiencies in the field with the addition of technology, and other strategies to inspire professional excellence in all CACC employees.

Pet Adoption Outreach and Community Partnerships

Through our ongoing engagement with aldermen, animal care partners and businesses, CACC is able to bring many of our animal care and adoption services to residents in their neighborhoods.

CACC is proud to partner with Friends of Chicago Animal Care and Control, Humane Chicago, the Chicagoland Rescue Intervention and Support Program (CRISP), PAWS Chicago, Lost Dogs Illinois, and roughly 200 Homeward Bound Approved Rescue groups, which transfer many of the animals that enter the shelter to community rescue groups. I'm also thrilled to announce that

CACC recently became a network partner of the nationally recognized **Best Friends Animal Society**.

Finding forever homes for shelter animals continues to be one of our highest priorities, and we are constantly exploring new strategies that will allow us to engage potential pet owners. To that end, I'd like to thank the City Council for approving the amendment to CACC's management ordinance last November, and enabling CACC to waive adoption fees for certain events. Our ability to waive fees and participate in clear the shelters events has allowed CACC to **adopt out 115 more dogs thus far in 2017 (562 dogs total)** than in 2016 (447 dogs); and **190 more cats thus far in 2017 (620 cats)** than in 2016 (430 cats). CACC also hosted 11 adoption events in 2017, through which more than 100 animals were adopted.

Engaging and connecting with residents is essential to the health and welfare of animals both in the shelter and out. A critical component of our outreach is to share information about responsible pet ownership and adoption opportunities with residents of Chicago. CACC started its first official Facebook page in summer 2016, which now has more than 7,800 followers. CACC also began distributing a monthly newsletter in September 2016 and hosts periodic events at the shelter.

Also, earlier this year, CACC partnered with Alderman Villegas (36th), Alderman Santiago (31st), Alderman Reboyras (30th), Alderman Dowell (3rd), Alderman Moreno (1st), Alderman Zalewski (23rd), Alderman Rosa (35th), Alderman Garza (10th), Alderman Curtis (18th), Alderman Sawyer (6th), Alderman Joe Moore (49th), Alderman O'Shea (19th) in 2017 to bring city dog licensing and **low-cost vaccinations and microchip clinics** to residents within these 12 wards. CACC estimates that \$50,000 in revenue was generated from providing 2,852 low-cost vaccines, implanting 508 microchips and processing payments for 927 City dog license applications.

Other 2017 highlights include:

- In 2017, CACC participated in more in-house and community vaccine/microchip clinics than ever before, servicing more than 1500 residents' pets.
- CACC held three City Council days, inviting aldermen to CACC to discuss our services, and how 50 wards can create 50 opportunities for enhanced pet services to Chicago residents.
- CACC's partner, the Chicagoland Rescue Intervention and Support Program (CRISP), helped provide Chicago residents with veterinary services or diversion for unwanted pets to just under 1,000 animals since the program began at the shelter in May 2016.
- In 2017, Safe Humane Chicago marked the 1,000th Court Case Dog saved since their dog enrichment programs began at the City shelter in January 2010.

In closing, I want to reiterate CACC's commitment to promoting the humane care of animals through sheltering, pet placement, education, and animal law enforcement. We will continue to work with you and your constituents to identify and implement improvements in our services to better support pets and the residents who love them in the city of Chicago

Thank you.