

Chicago Animal Care and Control (CACC)

2024 Budget Statement to the City Council Committee on Budget and Government Operations

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Chairman Ervin, Vice-Chairman Lee, and the Honorable Members of the City Council. I want to thank Mayor Johnson for the opportunity to serve the residents of Chicago as the Acting Executive Director of Chicago Animal Care and Control (CACC). I am honored to be here today to highlight and discuss our budget, review our goals and our progress towards those goals, and present our initiatives for the upcoming year.

CACC's mission is to protect the public safety and to promote the humane care of animals. We enforce animal-related laws, and we provide a safe environment and medical treatment for sick, stray, abused, and neglected animals. As you know, the shelter is responsible for caring for all of the stray and abandoned animals in our city. The shelter also provides adoption services and helps to reunite lost pets with their owners. This past year gave us the opportunity to work even more closely with our community to provide resources for Chicago's pet owners, seek innovative ways to continue to return more animals to their owners, and with our partners, strive towards as many live outcomes as possible through adoption and rescue.

Every day, CACC takes in animals of all kinds, including wild and domestic, strays, and those confiscated for cruelty and neglect. Chicago's municipal animal shelter is one of the highest-performing municipal animal care and control facilities where most animals leave alive.

Shelters nationwide are currently facing a number of challenges, including CACC. The number of animals that the shelter takes in has increased significantly in recent years. This is due to a number of factors, including the economic downturn. CACC is also facing rising costs. The cost of food, veterinary care, and other supplies has increased significantly in recent years. CACC has evolved to meet these challenges, operating more effectively and efficiently in this challenging operating environment to ensure that we continue to provide high quality, essential services to the City of Chicago.

CACC is the only organization within the city that is responsible for controlling the animal population, and this aspect of our mission is not only large but crucial. One of the most important impacts of CACC's operation is to continue to manage certain aspects of animal intake by appointment with an emphasis on prioritizing sick or injured animals. CACC has taken in 9,949 animals as of August 31st, including 5,032 dogs, 3,705 cats, and 712 other animals including chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs, livestock, and all kinds of wildlife. CACC welcomed over 13,024 visitors in the facility through August 31st this year and CACC is open to the public from noon to 7 p.m. to look for their lost pet or adopt a new pet without an appointment.

Of course, most people think about finding animals good homes when they think of CACC, and we are proud to report that, as of August 31st, 5,897 animals were adopted or transferred out of the shelter to start their new lives.

Our animal control officers are in the field daily to help with sick and injured animals, stray pets, dangerous animals, and wildlife. By August 31st, we had already closed over 20,000 animal-related service requests. We

are committed to working with aldermen, other City departments, and communities to support the safety of residents and animals through an effective field response with a focus in diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that all residents receive quality, efficient service.

CACC also works hard to get animals back home via various return-to-owner strategies in the shelter and in the field as well. So far this year, 898 animals have been returned to their families. CACC's Animal Control Officers have reunited 61 animals back to their families without ever having to come into the facility; which is an increase of 84% since last year. Let us take this opportunity to encourage Chicago residents to ensure that their pets are microchipped and registered.

CACC has also been focusing on providing services to residents and their pets. One of our most successful programs is our vaccine and microchip clinics. Through August 31st, these clinics served over 1,900 pets with vaccines and microchips. There were 1,497 rabies vaccines to both dogs and cats, 1,726 core vaccines to both dogs and cats, and 1,057 microchips to both dogs and cats. CACC partnered with Cook County Animal and Rabies Control and others to provide these services for FREE. We look forward to increasing the number of clinics we perform throughout the city. If you are interested in hosting a clinic in your ward, please reach out to us.

The City of Chicago is proud of our partnership with Friends of Chicago Animal Care and Control for our after-hours program which has provided critical care to many animals. We graciously thank Friends and Med Vet Animal Hospital for their life-saving work for our city's critically ill and injured animals. Through August 31st, this partnership provided urgent medical care to 26 animals at no cost to the City.

A big part of preparing animals for adoption or transfer is the veterinary care our medical team provides to the animals. Through August 31st, our medical team spayed and neutered 1,875 animals, provided 3,069 microchips, and administered 4,734 rabies vaccines. Additionally, over 6,200 exams, procedures, and other life-saving treatments were performed for sick and injured animals. Beginning on August 2nd, PAWS Chicago has offered weekly spots for spay and neuter surgeries for dogs at CACC. 57 additional dogs were altered from this partnership.

CACC relies heavily on dedicated volunteers to find adoptive and foster homes for the animals and to provide care, exercise, and attention to the animals while they are in the shelter. We have 198 volunteers trained at this time and are open to inviting more residents to join as a volunteer.

Moving forward, CACC will continue to strive 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. We will continue to work with you and your constituents to identify and implement improvements to continue to support Chicago pets and the residents who love them as well as continuing efforts to keep animals with the people who care for them by working with pet owners to empower them to take an active role in determining the best outcome for their pets.

The heart of our shelter is the hard-working staff who pride themselves on providing good care to the animals and quality service to Chicago residents. Chairman, please allow us to thank our staff at Chicago Animal Care and Control, as well as the volunteers, rescue partners, and other community organizations who help at the shelter.

Chairman, I would also like to take this time to thank Mayor Johnson, his Administration, and the entire City Council for your continued support of CACC. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.