

# SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS ANIMAL SHELTERING




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The term "No-Kill" in the field of animal welfare has created a great deal of controversy for animals, animal welfare agencies, and concerned community members. Having the No-Kill label provides the public with a sense of comfort because most people want all animals to have positive outcomes. Consequences such as shelter overcrowding, refusal to accept animals in need, and release of dangerous dogs are just a few concerns that have resulted from using No-Kill operating principles.

Additionally, the term No-Kill can also lead to a number of misconceptions about organizations that do not adopt the term. With the high volume of animals that Los Angeles County Animal Care Centers admit each year, there is inevitably a number of animals that are considered non-adoptable due to medical issues, behavioral concerns, or other conditions. Ideally, all animals would receive the positive outcomes they deserve. The unfortunate truth is that this is not always possible for every animal.

For these reasons and others, the Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) has instead adopted a new way of expressing its philosophy, called "Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering." Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering strives to create the best outcome for all animals by treating them respectfully and alleviating their suffering. The mission is to maximize live outcomes for animals, while also balancing animal comfort and public safety. Fundamental goals of Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering are provided through DACC and its animal care centers to:

-  Ensure every unwanted or homeless pet has a safe place to go for shelter and care. DACC care centers will not turn away animals in need of assistance.
-  Making every healthy and safe animal available for adoption. DACC will not offer for adoption animals that are irremediably suffering or dangerous to the community.
-  Assess the medical and behavioral needs of homeless animals and ensure these needs are thoughtfully addressed. DACC, through its medical team and its animal behavior and enrichment team, provides a holistic approach to ensuring each animal's needs are properly addressed.

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-  Align DACC policy with the needs of the community. DACC recognizes its responsibility to the public trust, and ensures its programs and policies reflect and support this obligation.
  -  Alleviate suffering and make appropriate euthanasia decisions. DACC often accepts animals that are irremediably suffering and cannot live without experiencing severe, unremitting pain or other serious health challenges. In these situations, it is most humane to relieve an animal's suffering with compassionate euthanasia.
  -  Consider the health and wellness of animals for each community when transferring animals. DACC participates in many animal transport programs where animals are taken from DACC's care centers to areas of the country that are experiencing a shortage of shelter animals. These win-win programs save thousands of animal lives each year. However, it is also important that animals transported through these programs do not suffer from physical or behavioral defects that could endanger animals or people in their new communities.
  -  Enhance the human-animal bond through thoughtful placements and post-adoption support. DACC works with potential adopters to ensure animals they select are suitable matches for their lifestyles, the adopter is able to properly care for and handle the animal, and other factors to make certain the placement is successful. DACC provides post-adoption support to adopters to ensure the placement thrives.
  -  Foster a culture of transparency, ethical decision-making, mutual respect, continual learning, and collaboration. DACC remains committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in meeting its mission of protecting people and animals.

Socially Conscious Animal Sheltering is being adopted by many animal welfare organizations and animal welfare industry associations across the nation. DACC is proud to stand with these forward-thinking, responsible, and compassionate organizations and will continue to provide innovative solutions to making our communities safer and more humane for animals and residents.