

Not Enough Adopters, or Not Enough Adoptions

Foot Traffic Tracking May Tell You It's the Latter





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What Does National Data Tell Us

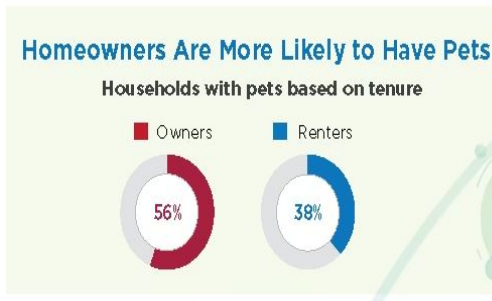
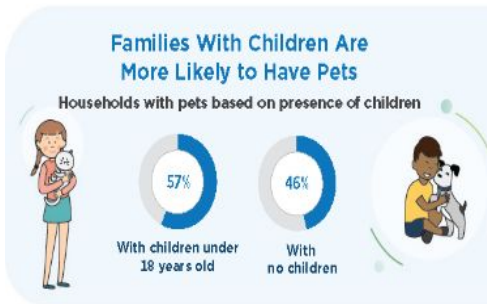
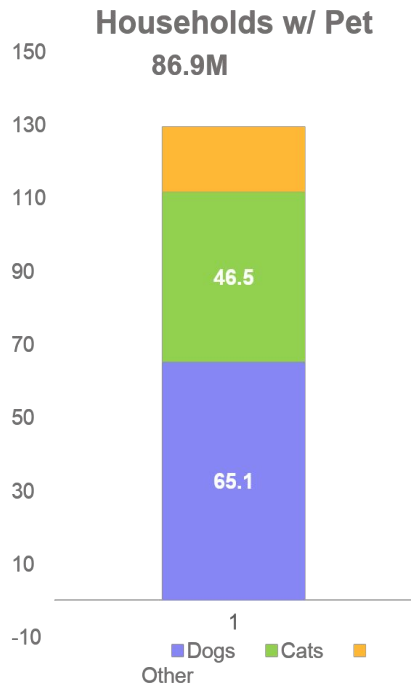


There has **NOT** been a wave of pandemic puppy surrenders
Shelter intake is **NOT** at “unprecedented” levels

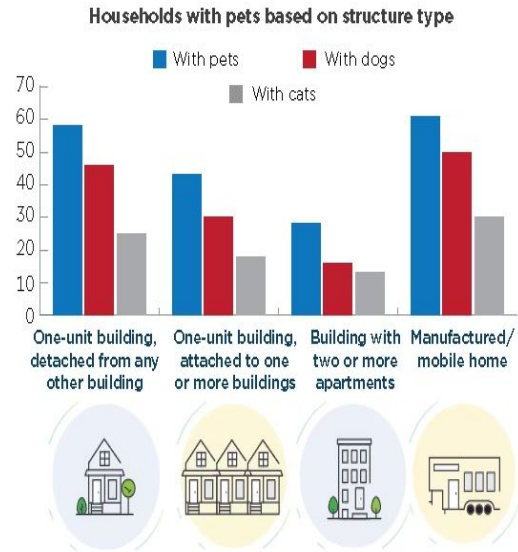


Shelters are **FULL** because pets are staying longer
Cats are winning and dogs are losing
Shelters can't meet the demand of pets entering U.S. households annually

Pet Ownership



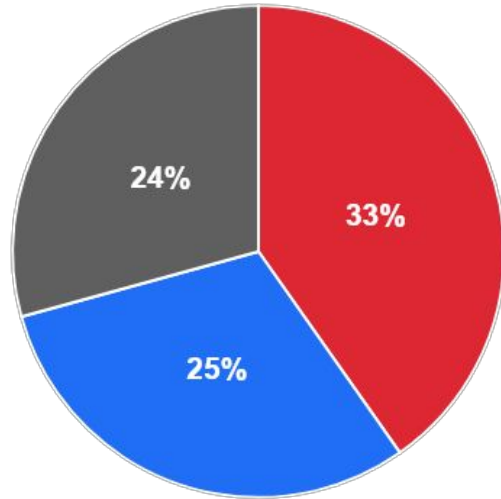
The Rate of Pet Ownership Is Highest Among Households Living In Mobile Homes at 61 Percent



Know Your Market + Your Competition



PET OWNERSHIP BY GENERATION



■ Millennial/Gen Z ■ Gen X ■ Boomers

SOURCES OF DOG ACQUISITION

	AVMA (2017-18)	APPA (2019-20)	HABRI (2021)	ASPCA (2021)
AWO	28%	36%	19%	22%
Peer to Peer	37%	36%	28%	24%
Breeder	22%	19%	30%	36%
Store	6%	9%	17%	14%

What We're Up Against

Over 3,330 available puppies! (June 2024)

3336 Available Puppies Sort by Featured

Filters Reset

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Either

Breed

Search for Breeds


- All Breeds
- Goldendoodle
- Cavapoo
- Poodle
- Bernedoodle
- Golden Retriever
- Cavalier King Charles

Characteristics


Age

Color

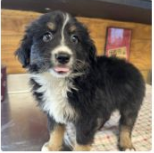
Ready to Travel




Ella
Cavalier King Charles Spa...
6 weeks




Ida
Cavapoo
8 weeks




Sammy
Australian Shepherd
9 weeks




Baker
Cavalier King Charles Spa...
4 weeks



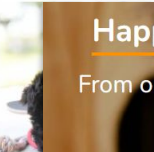
Tyson
Havanese
6 weeks





Lola
Yorkiepoo
7 weeks



Earl
Golden Retriever
7 weeks



Joan
Yorkiepoo
8 weeks

PuppySpot
The easiest & safest way to get a new puppy
★★★★★
Trusted Breeders:
 

Trusted by the Community

PuppySpot serves you best by putting the health and well-being of your puppy first. Don't take our word for it, [here's what real customers have to say about PuppySpot.](#)

✓ We've placed over 220,000 healthy puppies in happy homes.

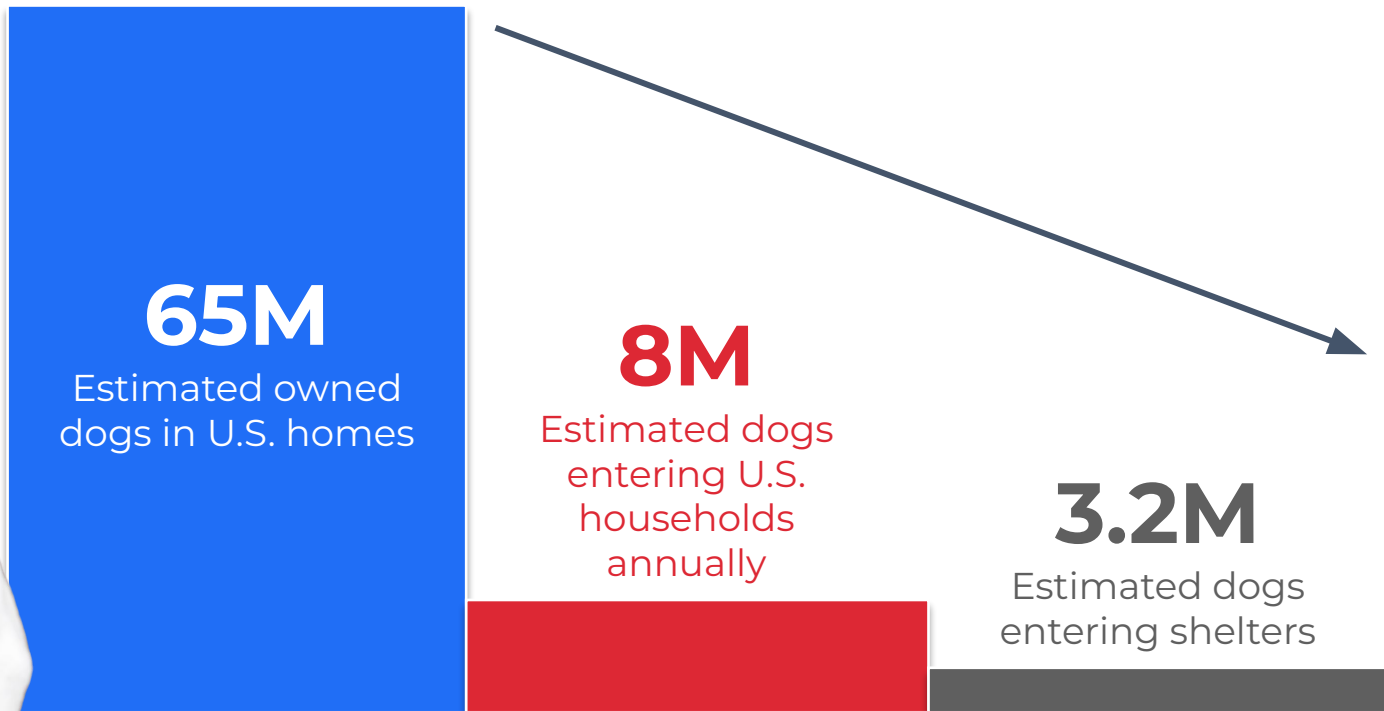
Happy, Healthy Puppies, Direct To You

From our nationwide network of responsible breeders

[Browse All Puppies](#)

- Concierge Service
- Puppy Delivery Packages
- Guaranteed “Approval”
- Fully online (+ Meet & Greet)
- Fast and Convenient

Zooming in on Dogs





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SUPPORT SERVICES

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Required visits from every human & animal family member

Do you live in a mobile home or on a farm?

We do NOT adopt to students

No history of ordinance violations, losing, giving away, selling, or having animals injured or killed by moving vehicles

\$350.00 adoption fee (cash only)

Must be 21 or older (under 65) with valid photo ID

Shelter is open for adoptions Tues-Thurs from 11am-3pm

We're located 30 miles off the interstate—follow signs for the jail (first left after the recycling center)

We are short-staffed, so please look around—we have hundreds of adoptable dogs & cats

Found the pet you want? Give us 2-3 weeks for vaccines and spay/neuter



CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG
**ANIMAL CARE
& CONTROL**



Competitive Pet Placement (CPP)

CPP's goal is to increase placement outcomes by eliminating internal barriers & creating an experience that potential adopters expect and enjoy!



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Participating Organizations

	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Care & Control	Cincinnati Animal CARE Shelter & Resource Center	LifeLine Animal Project: DeKalb County Animal Services	Riverside County Department of Animal Services <i>(Western Riverside)</i>	Wisconsin Humane Society <i>(Milwaukee Campus)</i>
State	North Carolina	Ohio	Georgia	California	Wisconsin
Organization Type	Government/ Municipal Shelter	Non-Profit with Government Contract	Non-Profit with Government Contract	Government/ Municipal Shelter	Non-Profit
Admission Type	Strays: Open O/S: Managed, some walk-ins	Strays: Open O/S: Managed, some walk-ins	Strays: Open O/S: Managed, some walk-ins	Strays: Open O/S: Managed, some walk-ins	Strays: N/A** O/S: Managed, some walk-ins
Annual Intake (2022)*	9,969	7,268	6,402	22,899	5,820



"our task must be to free ourselves
by widening our circle of compassion
to embrace all living things."
- Mahatma Gandhi

Breaking Down Barriers

Onsite Initiatives

Customized Implementation!

Foot traffic data tracking + adoption process improvement initiative

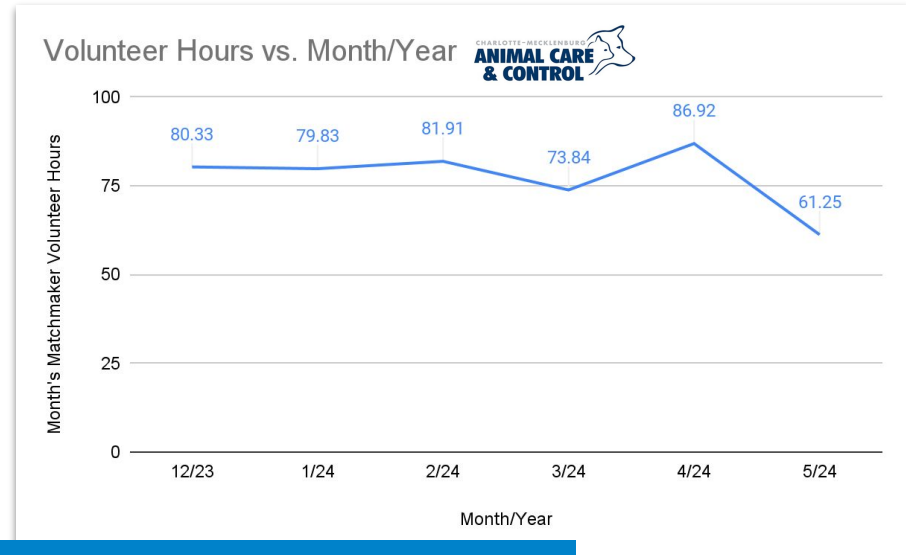
How to Improve the Adoption Process

- “Adoption Matchmaker” volunteer role
- Strategic in-person adoption event based on heatmap analysis
- Virtual adoption meet and greets for foster pets
- Matchmaking process improvements
- Streamlining adopter interest forms
- Evaluation of adoption field trip processes
- Matchmaking training

Volunteer Matchmaker Role

- Volunteers welcome and support visitors
 - Greeting visitors
 - Setting up adopters to visit with pets
 - Supporting the adoption process.
- Volunteer recruitment strategy and a volunteer support package of materials.

“Although the shelter was extremely busy, the volunteers were excellent with providing information and explaining wait time..” -Visitor on Feb. 4, 2024



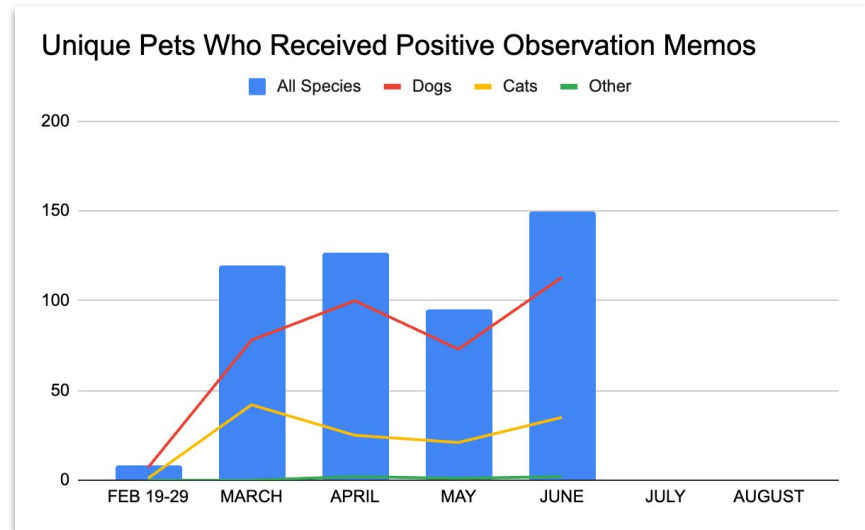
Over the course of 6 months, **volunteers filled 464 hours as a volunteer matchmaker.** That equates to having one part time position over the course of the 6 month period, covered solely by volunteers.

Matchmaking Process Improvements



What we're seeing so far..

- Interventions:
 - Positive pet observations
 - Adoption session flow
 - Improving adopter matchmaking
- Positive Observation memos = pet's positive characteristics/endearing qualities
- **“Matchmaking data/strategies were hugely helpful for creating pet bios, reducing barriers, and building relationships with adopters and pets” - Adoption Staff**



Matchmaking Process Improvements: Asana



- One centralized tool for ALL staff and volunteers
- Filter by characteristics of the pet for easier adoption counseling
- 37% of the animals with observations in Asana were adopted compared to 18% of pets without observations
- [Learn how to use Asana here](#)



Streamline Interest Form Process



*Shelter leadership shared that the **Interest Form Process Initiative** has been a great way of moving animals through the shelter!*

- Examined and analyzed the existing process for receiving adoption interest with emphasis on identifying opportunities to streamline client communication and align processes.
- Counselors have a dedicated shift where a team member is assigned to follow up on web interest forms.

Foster Field Trip: Fur-st Date

- Intervention: Evaluated the existing “Foster Field Trip” program to determine ways to modify, streamline, and improve the program as an avenue for adoption outcomes.
- Fur-st date uses foot traffic data, by allowing unaltered pets to leave the shelter prior to surgery, as the largest reason visitors did not leave with a pet was that the animal **was not ready** (still waiting for surgery) and was placed on hold
- Data shows 1551 placements into the Fur-st Date program from 1/1/24 - 6/30/24



FUR-st Dates

FUR-st comes love, then comes **ADOPTION!**

- ♥ **Take it slow!** Pets leaving the shelter often need time to unwind in a quiet space. Be patient and take your time with introductions to resident animals and new humans. You may find that your pet needs time to rest and recharge after leaving the stressful kennel environment before engaging in activities.
- ♥ **Are you ready to make things official and adopt?**
Please email to discuss next steps!
- ♥ **Have you decided this pet isn't the best fit for your home?**
Return the pet to the shelter during open hours. No appointment needed. You can continue advocating for this pet by helping them find a home. Become a foster parent by emailing our team.

Pet Behavior Resources

SCAN ME 

Are you new to the fur-st date dating scene???
If you need additional support or have questions, please email the shelter team.



FUR-st Dates

FUR-st comes love, then comes **ADOPTION!**

Adoption is a **BIG** decision!
See a pet that looks like a match, but need more time to decide?

TRY A FUR-ST DATE!

Get to know a pet better by taking it home for a trial period.

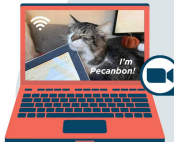


Virtual Foster Meets For Adoption

- Intervention: virtual adoption meets and processing for pets in foster care
- Supportive elements, such as virtual Q&A sessions, tip sheet (pictured) and FAQ documents, were created to set fosters up for success to carry out this process
- Data shows that adoptions from foster **increased 103%** in 2024 compared to the same period in 2023

Tips for Virtual Foster Meets

Follow these steps to ensure your foster pet's virtual meet is a paw-sitive success!



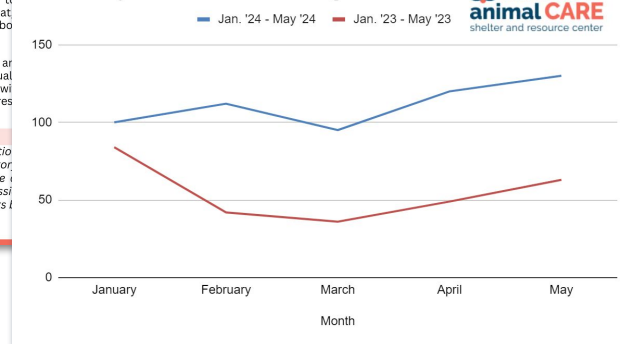
Step 1: Ensure your phone or computer has a strong and stable signal. *TIP!* Connect to Wi-Fi when possible and check that your device is fully charged. Test your microphone, speakers, and camera, and run all program updates. Avoid hosting virtual meets in cars—with the exception of ones that involve you and your foster pet doing some epic carpool karaoke.

Step 2: Choose a location that is quiet and has low background noise. Try to host your foster pet's favorite treat time. Avoid distractions, consider a treat-occupied while you gush about your pet.

Step 3: Keep your set-up area clean and organized. Avoid overboard with fancy virtual pet allows, accessorize with cute items, and make your foster pet's memorable first date impression.

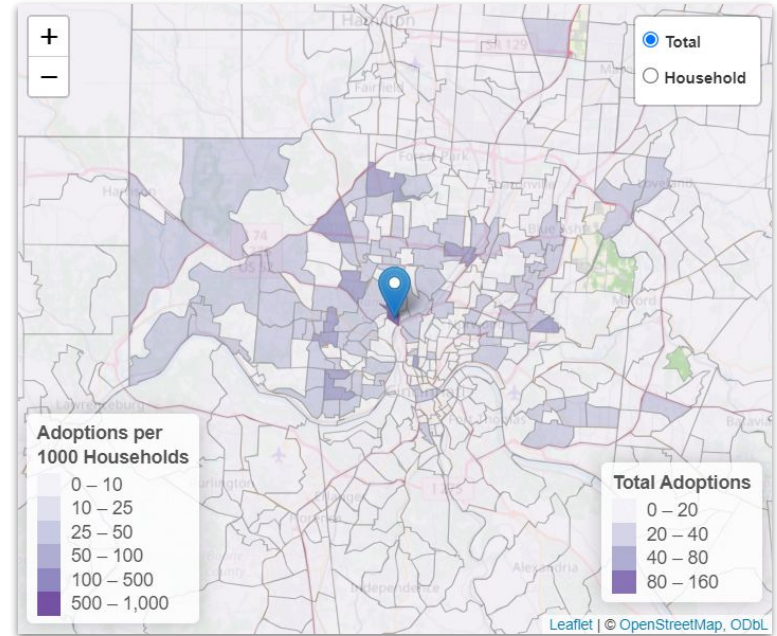
Lead with the positives!
Respond with positive descriptions about your foster pet's history and temperament. Think of it as the opportunity to make a great first date impression. Keep it bright while everyone gets to know each other.

CAC Adoptions From Foster Program



Strategic In-Person Adoption Events

- Intervention: Targeted marketing and offsite adoption events in area with less adoptions happening
- 3 tiered marketing strategy for adoption events
- 60% of adoptions that occurred at the event were to people who lived in the targeted area.



Strategic In-Person Adoption Events



The following is suggested criteria to follow when developing a plan for an off-site event. These considerations can help with strategic decision making such as budget, staff and volunteer delegation for all shelter events throughout the year.

See how to host successful and strategic off-site adoption events [here](#).

TIER 1 EVENT <i>No-to-Low Budget</i>	TIER 2 EVENT <i>Ave. Budget</i>	TIER 3 EVENT <i>Premium Budget</i>
		
Adoption Event Criteria	Adoption Event Criteria	Adoption Event Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Event goal & ROI considered important, but not vital• Budget for supplies or necessary equipment is low• Event expects less than 25 attendees• Often regularly occurring on more frequent basis such as monthly/weekly• No to limited extra marketing aside from usual channels required• No to limited partnerships required to host event• Volunteers utilized more frequently than onsite staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Event goal & ROI ties directly to daily organizational goals• Designated allocated budget aside from day-to-day needs• Event ranges 25-100 attendees• Often regularly occurring on more frequent basis such as monthly/weekly• Extra marketing initiatives including existing channels implemented• Partners usually included to host event• Volunteers AND staff utilized for event needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Event goal & ROI ties to mission critical initiative such as fund raising & community engagement• Significant budget allocated to specific initiative• Event includes 100+ attendees• Often annual and/or biannual event• Significant, all-channel marketing initiatives implemented specific to event only• Partners included to host event• Staff to lead initiatives with volunteer support where appropriate



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Thank you for visiting! Please check in using the QR code below.



Open the camera on your phone and point your phone camera at the QR code to scan and sign in virtually!

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Foot Traffic Data Tracking

-Goals-

Question 1: How often are people coming to shelters to adopt and not adopting?

Question 2: If someone came in intending to adopt and did not, why not?



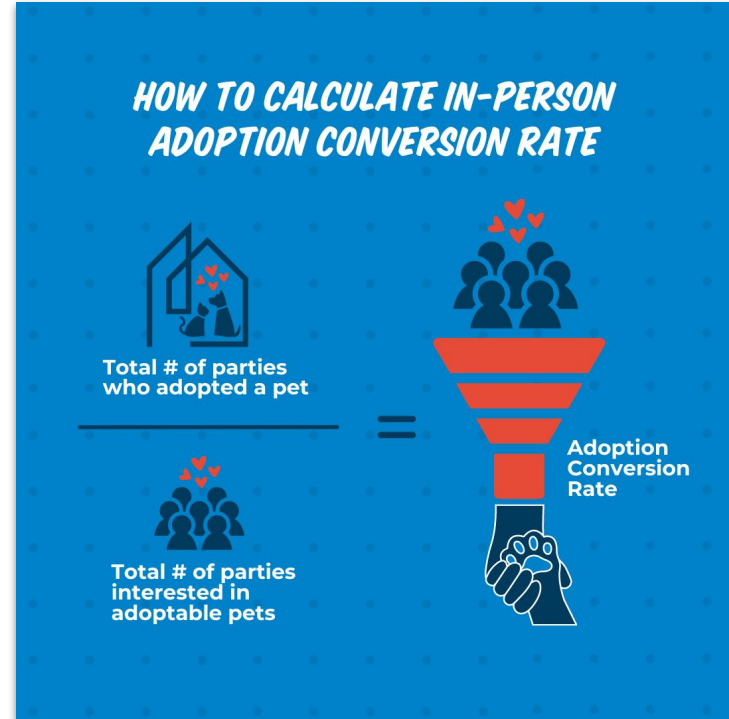
What is Adoption Conversion Rate

Adoption conversion rate is the rate that potential adopters coming into the organization are leaving with an adopted pet

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

In-person adoption conversion rate focuses on our success at adopting out pets to people who are already physically showing up at the shelter.

Note: does not include adoptions from foster, offsite events, etc.



Foot Traffic Implementation



- QR code client check-in process
- Queue for staff
- Staff answered questions at the end of client visit
- Client experience follow-up survey
- Dashboard to monitor adoption conversion rate

Sample Dashboard

Customer Check-In Responses

All Time

Total Unique Visits
10324

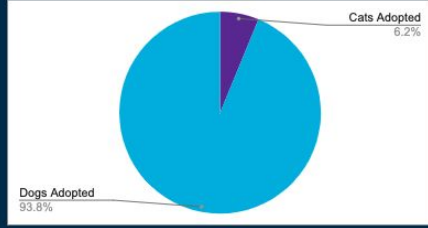
Total Number of Visitors
16366

Adoption Conversion Rate
8.1%

**ACR is computed using Number of Adoptions divided by those who selected "Interested in adopting" as an intake reason.

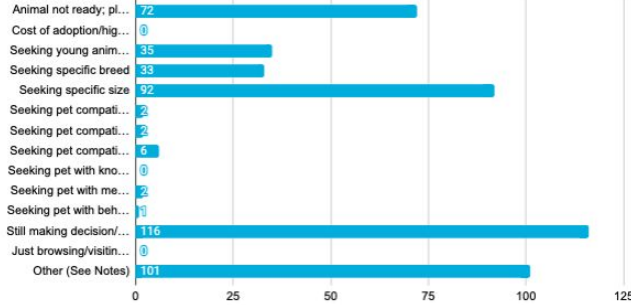
Where are visitors from?

Zip Code	Total
30341	494
30319	409
30032	368
30033	333
30084	331



Why did the visitor leave without a pet?

Only includes those who indicated an interest in adopting or fostering as their shelter visit reason.



Data Entry Completeness

How many of the below fields are filled out fully?

*Only for those interested in adoption

"Did this person physically leave with a pet today?"

33.73%

of applicable entries are complete.

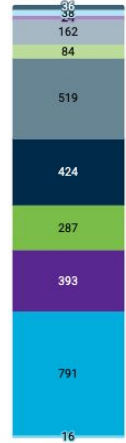
"If no, why not?"

80.56%

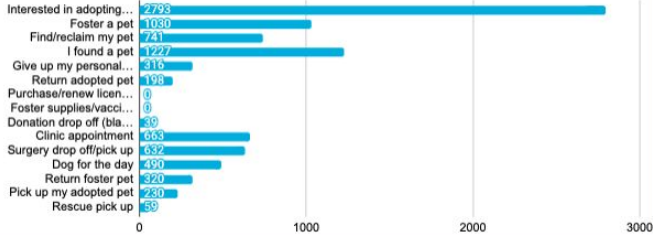
of applicable entries are complete.

How did you hear about the shelter?

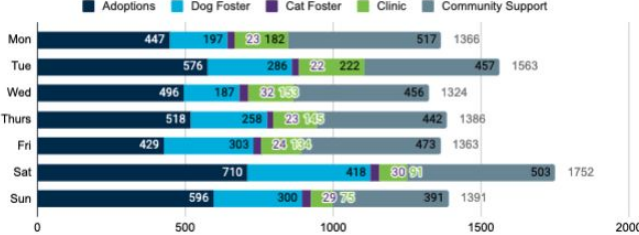
(hover over each box to see descriptions)



Reason for Shelter Visit



Busiest Day of the Week



Average Wait Times

Check In > In Progress
21 minutes

Total Time Visitors Spent at Shelter

53 minutes

Serve Time
In Progress > Complete
17 minutes

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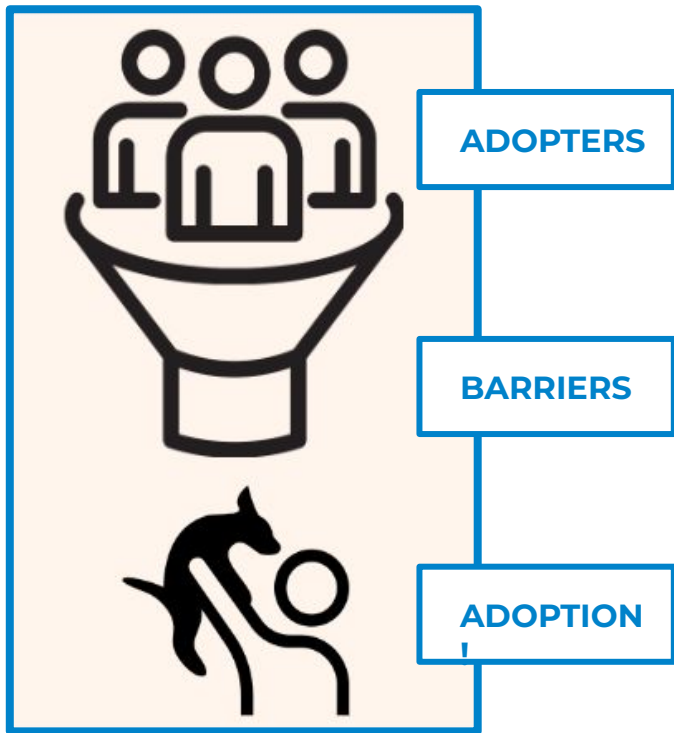
Foot Traffic Key Findings

What do you think



**What percentage of potential
adopters entering shelters
are leaving with a pet?**

Adoption Conversion Rates



***1 in 3 potential adopters
took a pet home same day!***

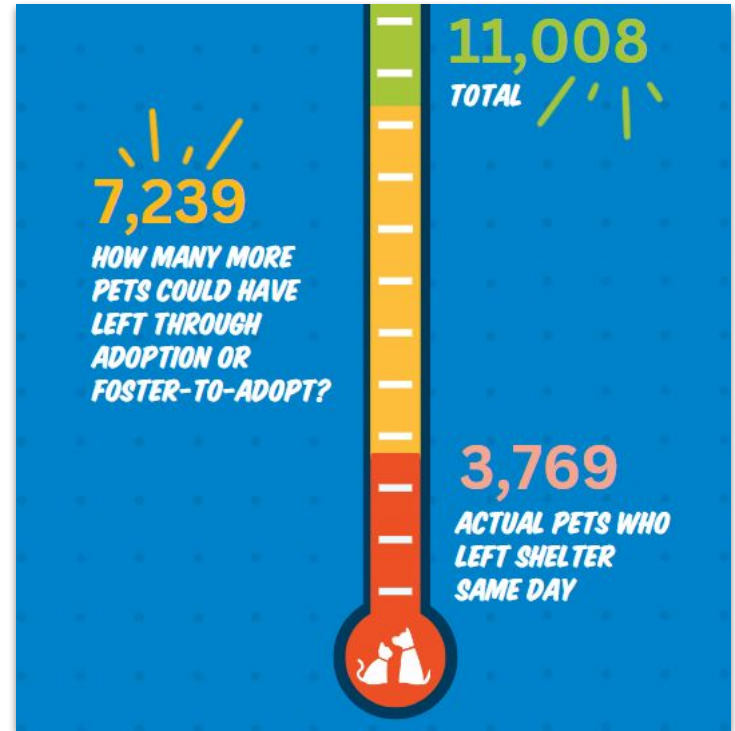
**Shelter with lowest
adoption conversion rate:
8%**

**Shelter with highest
adoption conversion rate:
51%**

Average: 31%

Missed Opportunity

How many pets would have left these organizations if every potential adopter who visited the shelter and did not adopt, had left with **ONE** pet?



What do you think



Top reasons why people are not leaving with a pet when they come in to adopt?

Top Reasons for Not Leaving with a Pet



STAFF REPORTED (n=4379):

1. Pet isn't ready to leave
2. Still making a decision
3. Didn't have the type of pet available (size, age, breed)
4. "Other"
5. Compatibility (unknown history, behavior/medical needs)
6. "Just browsing"
7. Adoption fees were too high

#1 The Pet Isn't Ready to Leave

The pet is unavailable for adoption or placed on a hold

ACTION! *Assess your holds.* Can these pets be placed as foster to adopt and go home with the interested adopter that day?



#2 Still Making a Decision

ACTION! Offer trial adoptions, foster to adopt, day trips/ sleepovers.

Follow up the next day see if they're still interested.



#3 Didn't Have What They Wanted

- Species
- Breed
- Size
- Age

ACTION! Capturing a list of people who are looking for a specific type of pet creates an [adopter-on-deck](#) list to follow up with when that type of pet comes in!



#4 What is “other”

- Wait times were too long
- Process to adopt was too long
- The pet the person was interested in was already adopted or sent to foster
- The person was not at the right location for the pet they were interested in
- The person left without being spoken to

ACTION! Better client support, communication, and operations efficiency

***Average wait time:
approximately 1 hour***



#5 Compatibility



- Seeking a pet that fits their **lifestyle**
- Seeking a pet compatible with **other pets**
- Seeking a pet compatible with **children**
- Seeking a pet with compatible **behavior** or training needs
- Seeking a pet with compatible **medical** or health needs
- Seeking a pet with a **known history**

ACTION! *Assess your matchmaking process. Are staff and volunteers able to collect and access the information they need to make recommendations for placement?*

#6 “Just browsing”

Visitors who are coming in “just browsing” are still potential adopters!

ACTION! *Treat them like potential adopters.* Browsers should be informed that someone is available to them if they are interested in a pet and where to find all adoptable pets (online, in person, foster board, rehoming sites, etc.)



#7 Adoption fees were too high

ACTION!

Reduce or waive adoption fees



What do you think



**Does staff-reported reasons
match client-reported
reasons?**

Top Reasons for Not Leaving with a Pet



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STAFF REPORTED:

CLIENT REPORTED:

Pet isn't ready to leave	Still making a decision
Still making a decision	Pet isn't ready to leave
Didn't have the type of pet available (size, age, breed)	"Other"
"Other"	Didn't have the type of pet available (size, age, breed)
Compatibility (unknown history, behavior/medical needs)	Compatibility (unknown history, behavior/medical needs)
"Just browsing"	Customer Service Experience
Adoption fees were too high	"Just Browsing"

Staff vs Visitor

Reasons for Leaving Without a Pet

- **43% had the same reason selected by staff and the client**
- The **most common misalignment** was **staff inserting "still deciding"** while the client was seeking a specific kind of pet (*compatibility, size, breed, etc.*)





Get Started Today!

Where to start



OFFER

Same day
adoption
and foster



ALLOW

Staff and
volunteers to
highlight
the good



INTEGRATE

Gen Z eyes
into your
process

Assess Barriers to Adoption



PART OF INTAKE TO PLACEMENT



Breaking Down Barriers to Positive Outcomes

[DOWNLOAD GUIDE >](#)



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[Breaking Down Barriers to Positive Outcomes Checklist](#)

Applications/Interest in Adoption or Foster

- The following requirements have been removed
 - Landlord calls
 - Home inspections
 - Income verification
 - Vet reference
 - Background check
 - Age restrictions (Ex: No college students, older adopters only adopt senior pets)
 - Military or frequent/long-term traveler restrictions
 - Application fees
 - Minimum time spent at home during the day
 - Vaccination status of resident pets
- Forms are accessible
 - Available in multiple languages
 - Paperless options available
 - Printed forms are not longer than one page
 - Mobile-friendly (if applicable)
 - There is an easy-to-find and easy-to-understand process for how to fill out an interest form available

Matchmaking

- Strict home environment requirements have been removed (Ex: Yard or fence required)
- Specific breed or general pet ownership experience is not required
- Shelter-facilitated pet introductions are offered as a service, not a requirement.
- Pets can go home the same day they are adopted
- Pets can go home without in-person meetings with all members of the household
- Fosters are not required to keep the animal for a minimum time to be considered for fostering. (Short-term and emergency fostering is available)
- Behavioral needs of pets are communicated positively. "Can't/Must go home with/without" language is not utilized. (Ex: "Frankie is looking for a relaxed furry friend about his size" instead of "Frankie can't go home with large high-energy dogs")

Marketing

- All available pets are viewable online
- All pets in care have a biography within 48 hours of arrival
- All pets in care have a clear photo taken and added to their file on the day of arrival
- Public marketing emphasizes and highlights the positive qualities of a pet.
- Breed labels are not public-facing

2 of 3

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Ask for Feedback

- Find trends in operational barriers to adoption
- Build a list of interested adopters
- Highlight star staff interactions
- Highlight success stories
- Follow-up on negative experiences

**Average Customer
Experience Rating**

(1-5 rating by guests)

4.7

**“How knowledgeable
are staff?”**

(1-5 rating by guests)

4.5

Make the Most of the First Visit



- **Non-adopters returned** at a later date only **17%** of the time
- Of those, **29%** adopted



Resources

- Barrier Busting Checklist: Low Hanging Fruit
- Assess Foot Traffic: Getting Started
- Barrier Busting: Advanced



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Breaking Down Barriers to Positive Outcomes

Why Focus on Breaking Down Barriers to Positive Outcomes?

Individuals can face a multitude of shelter-specific barriers when trying to adopt or foster pets. These barriers may range from overly-long applications, home visits, references, and other practices that are all too common in the animal welfare industry. When faced with at least 385,000 shelter pets being euthanized in 2022 alone ([Shelter Animals Count, full and partial data sets](#)), the necessity of creating inclusive, accessible, and supportive processes to help families bring pets home is an impactful solution.

What Is the Breaking Down Barriers to Positive Outcomes Toolkit?

This toolkit highlights low-lift, immediate, and actionable steps to removing barriers to adoption and fostering and best practices for sharing public-facing information to promote these initiatives. Interested in learning more? See more information on the 27 commonly identified barriers [here](#).

Potential Benefits

- Increase positive outcomes for pets in care
- Improve community engagement
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Save staff time
- Support diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Increase marketing and media engagement

Learn more about each shelter that collaborated with HASS for CPP & their high-level results by scanning this QR code!

humananimalsupportservices.org/Case Study CPP



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Shelter Takeaways

Foot traffic data used get approval for a new full time position focused on client services

Better external communication about what locations had what types of pets available

Queue system for foot traffic increased lobby efficiency and flow, allowing for better customer service

Community data was used to strategize offsite adoption event locations

Foot traffic data used to strategize team/volunteer scheduling and inspired new counseling role opportunities to meet demand/reduce wait times

Client experience survey provides opportunities for staff feedback and to connect directly with clients

Matchmaking data/strategies “hugely helpful” for creating pet bios, reducing barriers, and building relationships with adopters and pets



Thank You to Our Participating Pilot Shelters!

Q&A Session

*Want to know more? Get in touch with us at
hass-project@americanpetsalive.org*



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