



Pet Support Services Field Services and Community Events

Overview

Field services most often complete reactionary requests from community members. Integrating a process of participating in proactive community outreach efforts can not only better support people but also builds trust within your community. Community outreach may include offering pet support services and/or best practices for lost and found pets, pet support, rehoming, surrender requests, and more.

Getting Started

Whether you are hosting, sponsoring, or tabling at a community event, consider the following examples that can make an impact. You can be creative on what type of event to attend in your community!

Examples of Community Events

- Public Library events
- Civic Association events
- City cross-departmental events
- “Back-to-school” nights
- Job fairs
- Neighborhood Association events

Examples of Event Set-up

- **Provide one-pager printed resources** on best practices for field service requests, basic pet care, free and low-cost pet support services (consider focusing on the most commonly requested ones!), behavior support options, and emergency vet service numbers.
- **Create a short presentation** on what to do if a pet gets lost or a pet is found, where to access pet support, how to self-rehome a pet, or what to do if you can no longer care for your pet. You can display presentations/videos on a monitor or offer a QR code to allow visitors to access the content after the event.
 - *Tip: You can utilize free tools like [Google Slides](#), [ChatGPT](#), [Canva](#), and [Grammarly](#) to help you get started.*
- **Host a workshop** to share field services offerings, the best way to get in touch, and the basics of pet support, lost pet reunification, supported self-rehoming, and relinquishment.
- **Recommend free or low-cost local services to pet owners** by providing contact and service information or facilitating a direct referral.

Additional Consideration

Consider integrating materials that are child-friendly when attending or hosting community events. These samples may be printed or used as inspiration:

- [Maddie's Tail Wag - An Activity Book for Ages 7-10](#) - Maddie's Fund ©
- [Maddie's Tail Wag - An Activity Book for Young Children - English Version](#) - Maddie's Fund ©
- [Maddie's Tail Wag - An Activity Book for Young Children - Spanish Version](#) - Maddie's Fund ©
- [Sample Coloring Book Pages](#) - National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA)

Supporting Research and Resources

- [Animal Control and Field Services Officers' Perspectives on Community Engagement: A Qualitative Phenomenology Study](#) (Moss et al., 2023)
 - “The definitions of community engagement varied greatly across this sample of U.S. officers. However, most officers agreed that strategies such as **relationship-building, providing assistance or information, and allowing time for compliance** were among the most effective community engagement strategies.”
 - “To empower communities to prevent and respond to animal cruelty and neglect, animal control and field services organizations **must employ effective and culturally responsive community engagement strategies** [6]. These strategies include efforts to address systemic and sociocultural barriers to accessing pet support services (e.g., veterinary care, behavior care, and basic supplies) [7,8].”
 - “When we return an animal that was running at large instead of taking it to the shelter, I think that’s building trust (Participant 9). **Many officers described return-to-field (RTF) practices in the field as community engagement.** Rather than impounding the animal, citing the owner, or charging fees, officers simply returned the animal to the owner while in the field. Officers expressed that trying to figure out where a lost dog belongs in a neighborhood before bringing it to the shelter, such as walking door to door or checking for a microchip, positively impacts trust with the community. **Similarly, many officers shared that the community can help get lost pets home and believed this leads to effective community engagement.** Officers explained that when community members find dogs, it is an opportunity for the animal control and field services officer to develop a relationship. Situations such as this allow officers to build upon existing community strengths.”
- [Punishment to Support: The Need to Align Animal Control Enforcement with the Human Social Justice Movement](#) (Hawes et al., 2020)
 - *This paper finds that supporting pet owners is more cost-effective than taking animals into shelter custody.*
 - “**Reallocating the resources that have historically gone towards enforcement** in communities to efforts that provide support in addressing the root causes of animal welfare concerns is needed to **improve outcomes for pets** in historically underserved communities.”

- **“This approach can also be more cost-effective than a punitive approach.** For example, Rochester Animal Services (Rochester, NY, USA) spends an average of \$160 per animal served through Pets for Life, compared to an average cost of \$300 per cat and \$375 per dog if that animal were to be taken into the custody of the shelter [40]. Salt Lake County Animal Services (Salt Lake City, UT, USA) spends an average of \$400 per animal to implement an enforcement approach that includes officer response, veterinary needs, in-shelter care, overhead, supplies, and pet placement. In contrast, the average cost per pet served through the Pets for Life model in Salt Lake County is \$116 [36].”
- [The Impact of Incorporating Multiple Best Practices on Live Outcomes for a Municipal Animal Shelter in Memphis, TN](#) (Kreisler et al., 2022)
 - “In 2017, the municipal animal shelter in Memphis, TN (Memphis Animal Services) implemented five new strategies and analyzed their resultant life-saving data. The interventions included managed strategic shelter intake, pet owner safety net, community cat return to field, **transition of field services from punitive to assistive**, and streamlined adoption and transfer protocols.”
 - “Implementation of these best practices accelerated Memphis Animal Services' progress toward a live release rate of at least 90%, particularly for cats, dramatically decreased kitten euthanasia, increased the RTO rate for dogs and severed the historical correlation between euthanasia and intake.”