



FBC Shelter Assessment RESPONSE

Fort Bend County Animal Services

Agenda

- **Introduction**
- **Scope of Assessment**
- **9 Primary Areas**
 - Assessment
 - Recommendation
 - FBCAS Response
- **Conclusion**

FBCAS Shelter Assessment – March 2025

Requested By: **Fort Bend County Health & Human Services**

Conducted By: **Houston Pets Alive!**

Scope: Evaluation of daily operations in **9 Primary Areas**

Guiding Standards & Resources:

- Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) – **Minimum Standards of Care**
- *“The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters”* – Dr. Sara Pizano
- National guidance (e.g., Maddie’s Fund)

Assessment provided at **no cost to Fort Bend County**



Scope of Assessment



Evaluation of Daily Operations in 9 Primary Areas:

- Intake Policies
- Population Management
- Shelter Medicine & Surgery
- Length of Stay
- Behavior Support
- Enrichment
- Community Involvement
- Access to Services
- Equity Issues

1. Intake Policies



Assessment:

Fort Bend County Animal Services currently uses a managed intake model aligned with best practices, but lacks consistent procedures, timely data entry, and full integration of diversion tools—limiting efficiency and owner reunification efforts.

Recommendation:

Implement a structured, appointment-based intake system with clear SOPs, staff training, enhanced Chameleon data use, expanded community education, return-to-owner field efforts, and improved bilingual communication tools.

FBCAS Response

1. FBCAS utilizes an appointment-based system for any owner turn in requests and has begun to use appointments for other intake requests by priority.
2. We have identified a Chameleon super-user from the shelter staff.
3. We have a highly effective return-to-owner field process.
4. We are engaging HPA for highlighted issues, SOP development, and have been working with our HHS OCEE on bilingual materials.

2. Population Management



Assessment: Despite a strong live release rate, the absence of a formal capacity-for-care model has led to overcrowding and a reactive (vs. proactive) approach to population management that strains staff, resources and impacts animal adoptability.

Recommendation: Implement a defined capacity-for-care model, conduct daily interdisciplinary rounds, develop structured flow-through and pathway plans, optimize kennel usage by designation, leverage Chameleon reporting tools, and prioritize timely outcomes for all adoptable animals.

FBCAS Response

1. We are collaborating with shelters like ours and attending trainings to identify best pathway plan for our shelter
2. Develop, train and implement the pathway plan
3. Kennel is optimized by usage based on available space
4. Reporting tools are being developed – led by our veterinarian
5. Prioritization of timely outcomes for adoptable animals will occur as we implement the above

3. Shelter Medicine and Surgery



Assessment: FBCAS has a dedicated veterinarian, but limited medical staffing, inconsistent intake vaccination practices, and gaps in disease control protocols hinder timely care, disease containment and increase health risks adding to medical expenses.

Recommendation: Strengthen intake vaccination compliance, expand veterinary support staff, improve Chameleon medical recordkeeping, designate clear isolation spaces, develop treatment plans, and prioritize timely spay/neuter post-behavior evaluation.

FBCAS Response

1. Enhance compliance by creation of a comprehensive intake plan and written SOP
2. County budget does not have capacity for expanding staff currently
3. Chameleon record keeping is being improved by Vet submitting weekly vet eval reports
4. Isolation spaces are identified, and better signage has been posted
5. Veterinarian has treatment protocols that are available and will train staff
6. Behavior evaluation tools and trainings are being sought

4. Length of Stay (LOS)



Assessment: FBCAS faces prolonged length of stay due to delays in adoption processing (internal), limited foster/volunteer engagement, and bottlenecks in medical and behavioral pathways—affecting animal welfare and shelter efficiency.

Recommendation: Establish clear LOS goals, streamline adoption and foster internal processes, expand and train foster networks, reinforce consistent counseling and Chameleon communication, and normalize having internal discussions for all outcomes.

FBCAS Response

1. **Length of Stay** Goal - 14 days
2. Current Foster to Adopt is effective and Efficient for our community
3. FBCAS will create an FAQ for fosters as well as a video of the training staff provides
4. FBCAS will provide routine trainings and encourage adherence through policy training acknowledgement
5. FBCAS leadership will encourage staff interaction through routine team huddles and clinical rounds

5. Behavior Support



- **Assessment:** FBCAS lacks a structured behavior assessment and intervention program, leading to inconsistent evaluations and mental decline during extended shelter stays.
- **Recommendation:** Establish certified behavior protocols, train staff and volunteers, implement regular playgroups, create decompression spaces, and develop clear decision-making processes for animals that are unable to be rehabilitated, and therefore a public safety risk.

FBCAS Response

1. FBCAS does not have a qualified behavior-certified staff member to conduct evaluations and develop behavior plans
2. We are seeking opportunities to train staff on behavioral assessment
3. Regular playgroups are occurring using volunteers and staff
4. We have limited decompression space due to shelter size
5. Behavior assessment training and use of pathway planning to ensure public safety

6. Enrichment



Assessment: FBCAS's enrichment program shows potential but lacks consistency, staff buy-in, leadership oversight, and sustainable resources, limiting its long-term impact on animal well-being.

Recommendation: Assign enrichment oversight to the Kennel Manager, implement a daily enrichment calendar, hire a Community Coordinator to secure on going donation partnerships, recruit volunteers, and track inventory to ensure program continuity.

FBCAS Response

1. Enrichment oversight to animal technician supervisor has been implemented
2. Enrichment calendar has been created and is being implemented
3. Will request 2 part-time positions (Outreach Coordinator and Dispatch/TNR Coordinator) from the existing Field Services Supervisor and Administrative Supervisor open position at next budget season, to secure on going donation partnerships, recruit volunteers, and track inventory to ensure program continuity

7. Community Involvement



Assessment: FBCAS has made outreach progress but lacks dedicated volunteer coordination, bilingual accessibility, and a cohesive strategy for community engagement and communication.

Recommendation: Hire a bilingual Community Coordinator, implement digital volunteer tracking, modernize voicemail systems, enhance social media strategy, recategorize TNR cats for clarity, and expand community service opportunities for operational support.

FBCAS Response

1. Requesting that one of the new part-time positions to be requested in FY27 is bilingual
2. Volunteer tracking is being done
3. Voicemail systems are being evaluated by FBCIT
4. Social media strategy is underway with assistance of FBC HHS OCEE
5. Will not alter classification of TNR cats due to mandatory reporting
6. Engaging OCEE and community partners to enhance outreach

8. Access to Services



Assessment: FBCAS offers a variety of public services, but impact is limited by staffing shortages, procedural inefficiencies, and restricted resource control, affecting accessibility and service delivery across departments.

Recommendation: Strengthen field services with better data tracking and staff training; improve TNR processes; expand and streamline microchip/vaccine clinics with dedicated staffing; adjust adoption hours and staffing models to support live outcomes; and refine foster-to-adopt and finder-to-foster programs for efficiency and clarity.

FBCAS Response

1. Chameleon is being used to track field services
2. TNR services are optimized and are not priority currently
3. Support quarterly microchip events as available
4. Will not change current operating hours/staffing models – past attempts failed
5. Finder-to-Foster is effective, efficient and well received by the community. We will continue current process.

9. Equity Issues



Assessment: FBCAS faces challenges in equity and accessibility, including limited language access, physical accommodations for both staff and visitors, and competitive pay—all which impact community service and staff retention.

Recommendation: Improve language access with bilingual incentives, translated materials and voicemail system, provide wellness space for staff, evaluate and adjust salaries for competitiveness, and streamline hiring process to attract and retain qualified candidates.

FBCAS Response

1. Bilingual incentives are HR's purview, but we advocate
2. FBCHHS COMMS is translating all material into Spanish, voicemail is not set up in Spanish – IT request submitted
3. Nursing space/quiet space is available onsite
4. Hiring and compensation are HRs purview, but we advocate

Conclusion

Fort Bend County Animal Services is committed to more effectively meeting the public's needs, enhancing customer experience and improving the care and outcomes for the animals served.

Systemic improvements are essential to overcoming current challenges with **overcrowding**, **inconsistent operations**, **staff morale**, and **public engagement**.



Guiding Standards & Resources:

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Questions?

References for this presentation include:

Houston Pets Alive

REMINDER

The information provided in this presentation is current as of 08/22/25. As more information is provided by Houston Pets Alive, this presentation may include outdated information.



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