DOGS & DATA™

PEDIGREE FOUNDATION · OUTCOMES CONSULTING · Adopt a Pet · SHELTER ANIMALS COUNT (A PROGRAM OF THE ASPCA)



SEPTEMBER 2026

What everyone on your team needs to know about shelter data

HOSTED BY PEDIGREE FOUNDATION, OUTCOMES FOR PETS CONSULTING, ADOPT A PET AND SHELTER ANIMALS COUNT

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Part I: The problem

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They don’t know anything

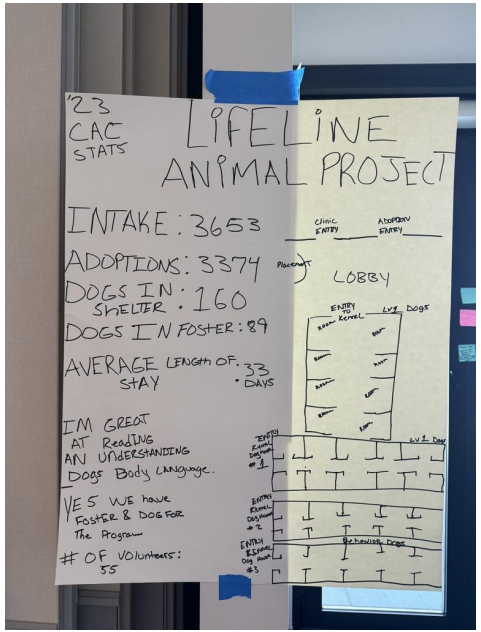
JULY 2026

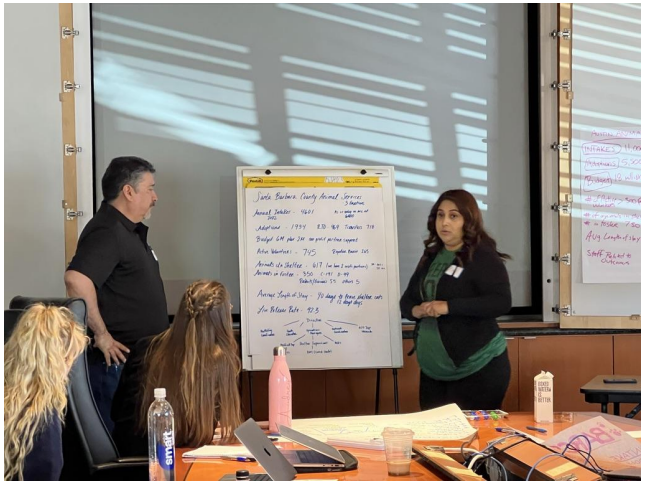
Animal Shelter Data Worksheet

Name_____

Shelter Name_____

2024 data points	
Intake	
Dog Intake Total	
Outcomes	
Dog adoptions	
Dog return-to-owner (RTO) outcomes	
Dog transfer outcomes	
Dog non-live outcomes (euthanasia + died + missing)	
Other dog outcomes (please specify)	
Dog Outcome Total	
Calculations	
Adoptions/Dog Intake Total	
RTO/Dog Intake Total	
Non-Live Outcomes/Dog Intake Total	
Non-Live Outcomes/Dog Intake Total	
Questions	
What is your average dog length of stay?	
What is your operating budget?	
How many full-time volunteers do you have? (Full-time = minimum of 6 hours per month commitment)	
How many active foster caregivers do you have?	
How many dogs do you have in your shelter(s) when you are at capacity?	





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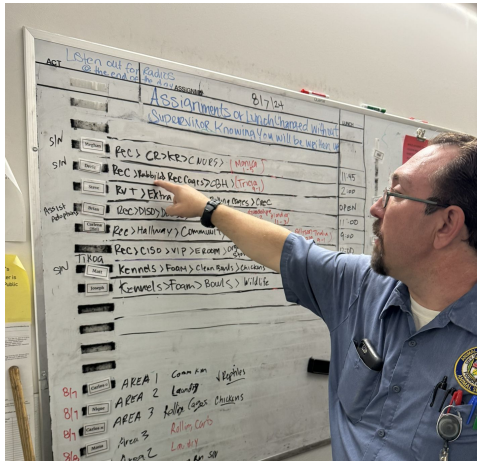
It's not an animal welfare problem

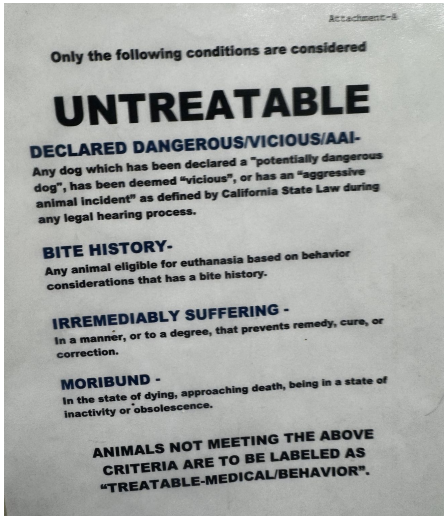
- Employees who self-identify as data literate are 50% more likely to feel empowered and trusted to make decisions.
- In 67% of nonprofits, fewer than 25% of staff can run their own reports.
- Only 13% of government employees report being able to use or having access to data tools for their job.



How do shelter workers learn?



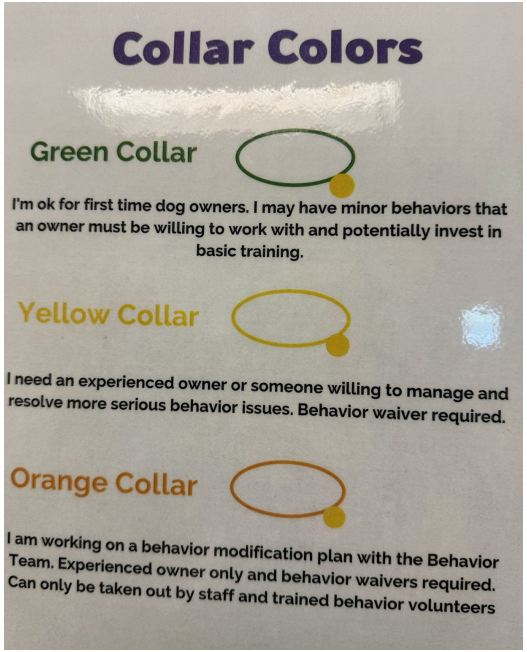




Become a fungus fighter! Foster a ringworm kitten for Pima Animal Care Center and help us make life a lot more fun for kittens while they finish their treatment. E-mail us at pacc.foster@pima.gov if you can help! **See less**







What training do they receive?

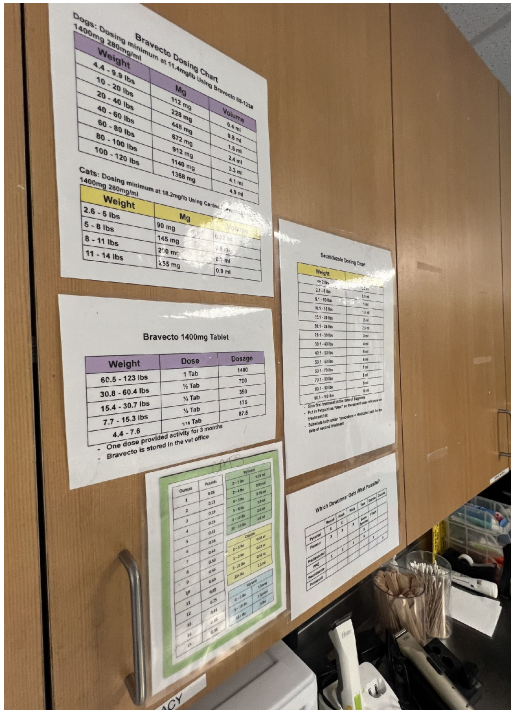
- How to use shelter software
- Intake and outcome types
- How to read a kennel card
- Safety and risk prevention
- HR policies
- Standard operating procedures
- On-the-job training



How are they trained?

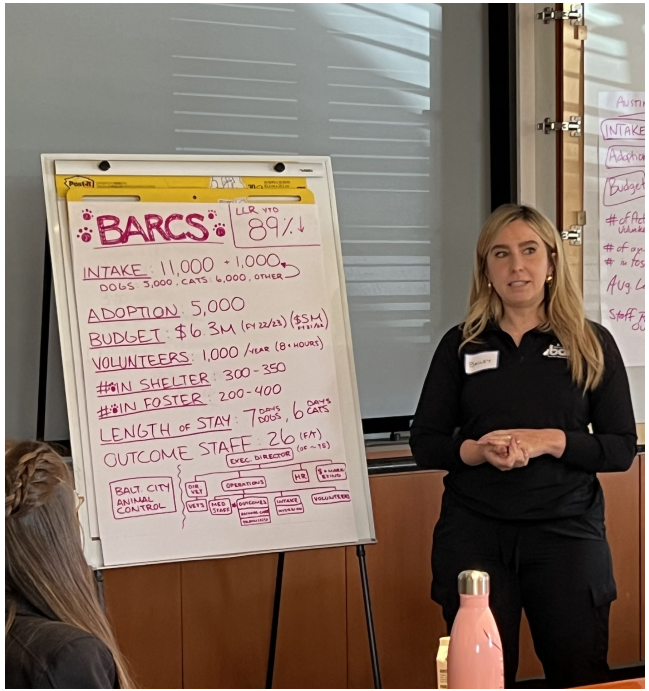






What don't they learn?

- ✘ How they compare to other shelters
- ✘ Length of stay and days in care
- ✘ Budget and how it's allocated
- ✘ Foster and volunteer metrics
- ✘ Intakes and outcomes by day/week/month
- ✘ What actions negatively and positive impact metrics
- ✘ How their role contributes to meeting goals
- ✘ How many people come into their org each day
- ✘ How to use data to build programs
- ✘ How to put data into context
- ✘ Critical thinking and problem-solving



What data do they see?

DOGS	Total	Blythe [8]	Coachella	Jurupa Valley	San Jacinto
Live Intake	**1,810**	**26**	**297**	**816**	**671**
Stray	1,437	25	243	611	558
Owner Surrender	244		29	140	75
Seizure/Confiscate	126	1	25	62	38
Other Intake	3			3	
Live Outcomes	**1,454**	**16**	**238**	**669**	**531**
Return to Owner (RTO)	289	6	49	130	104
Adoption	880	10	148	441	281
Transfer Out [1]	285		41	98	146
Non-Live Outcomes	**240**		**28**	**125**	**87**
Owner Intended Euthanasia [2]	76		6	57	13
Shelter/Foster/Other Euthanasia [3]	145		20	62	63
Died In Care [4]	15		2	5	8
Lost In Care [5]	4			1	3
Total Outcomes	**1,694**	**16**	**266**	**794**	**618**
Live Release Rate [6]	**85.8%**	**100%**	**89.5%**	**84.3%**	**85.9%**

Canine live release rate remains strong at

91.8%

indicating sustained positive outcomes.



Systemwide canine **population decreased substantially**, easing pressure on capacity and care.

Average length of stay to outcome (aLOS) dropped to

17 DAYS

systemwide (down 11 days YoY); South LA length of stay dropped (down 20 days YoY to 17 days).

Majority of dogs now exit within 30 days:

61%

systemwide; 55% at South LA—evidence of faster pathways and throughout.

What problems does this cause?

😞 Staff don't know what the goals are or how and when to achieve them.
😞 Arbitrary decision-making
😞 Feelings-based decision-making
😞 Workplace culture problems
😞 Wasted resources
😞 Disempowered and directionless staff

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Part II: Data literacy

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Data literacy is "the ability to consume for knowledge, produce coherently, and think critically about data."

1. Read and understand
2. Interpret and contextualize
3. React, act, and predict



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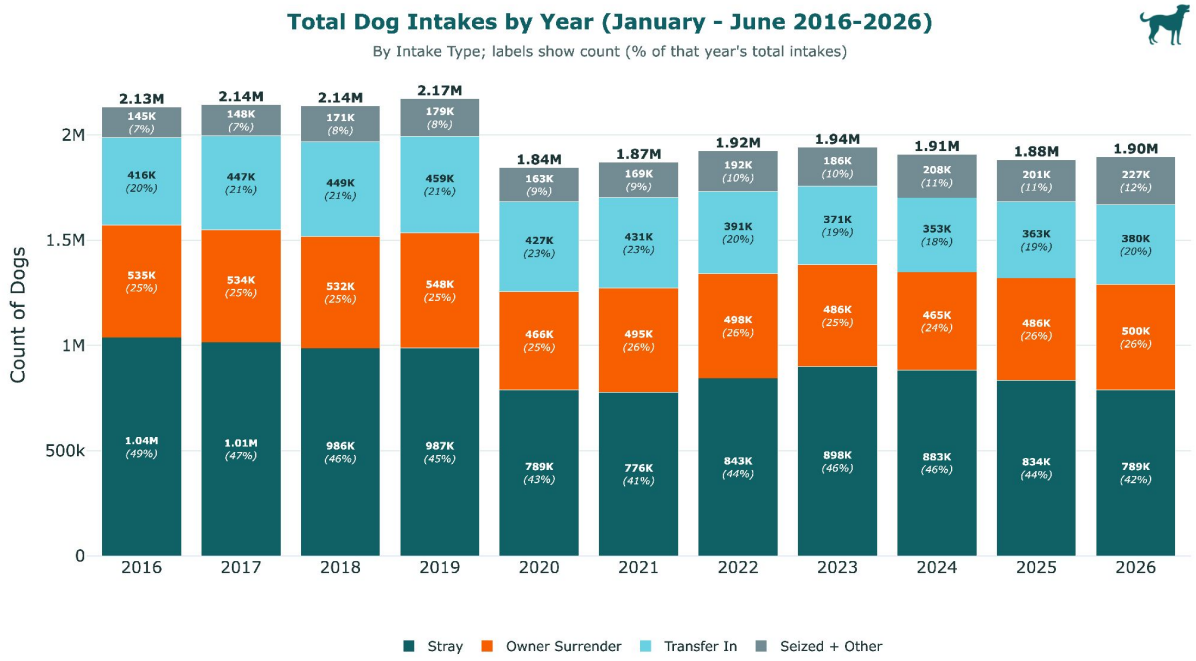
National Dog Total Intakes 2016-2026

JULY 2026



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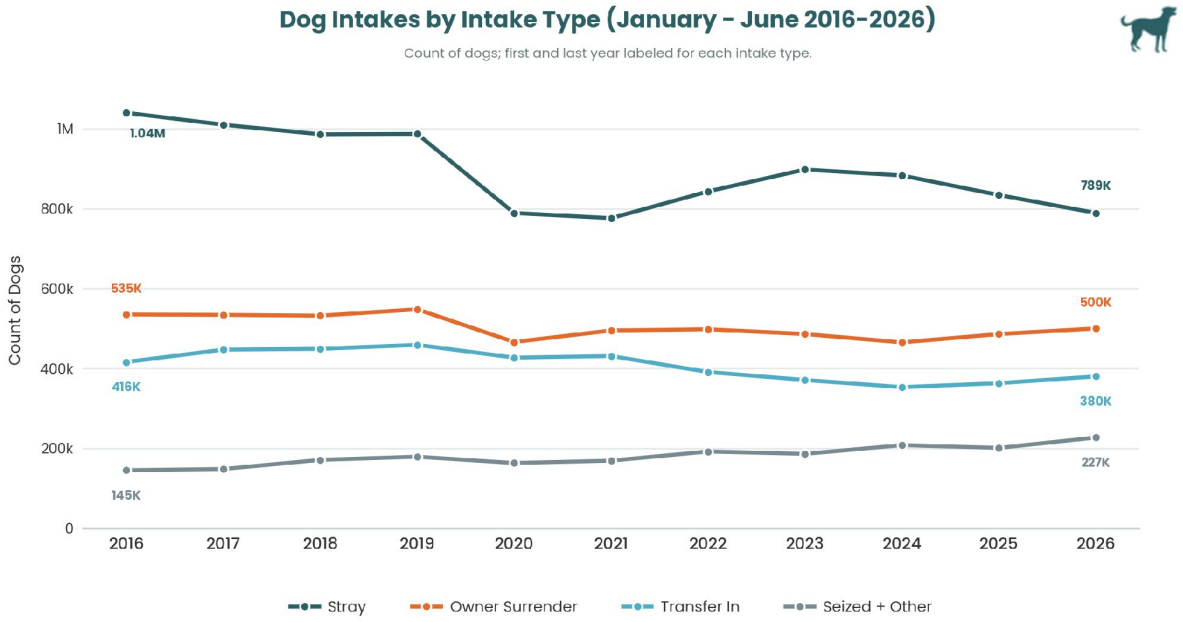
We can simplify the data so it's easier to understand.



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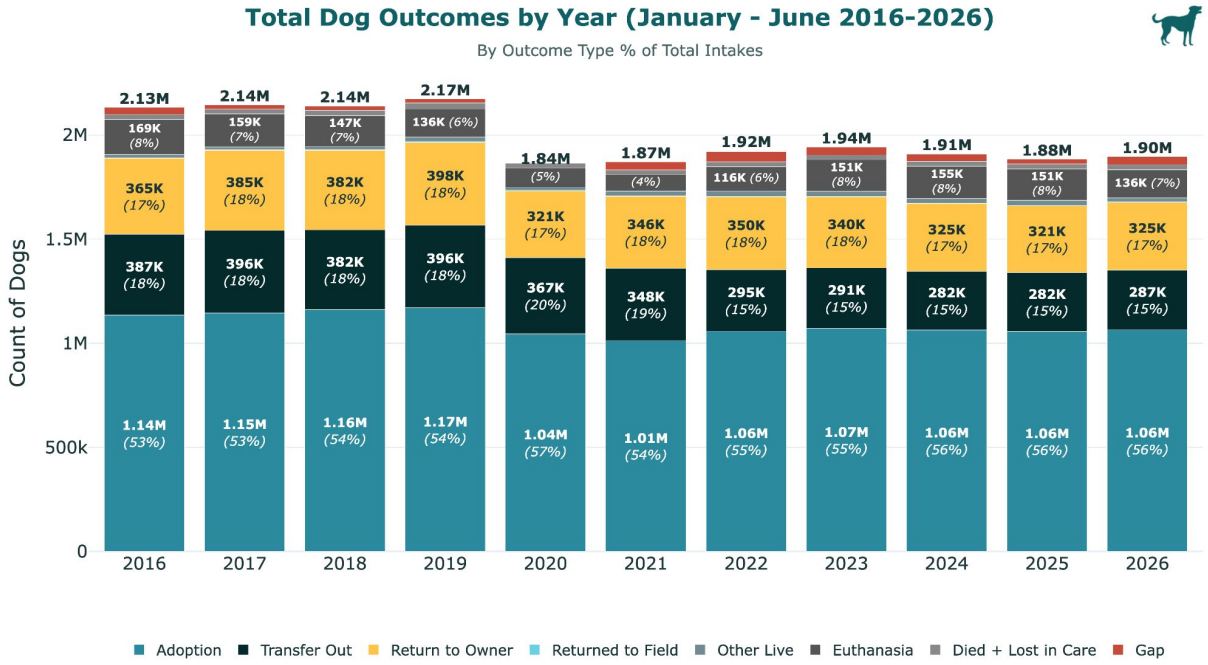
National Dog Total Outcomes 2016-2026

JULY 2026



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National Dog Mid-Year Euthanasia 2016-2026

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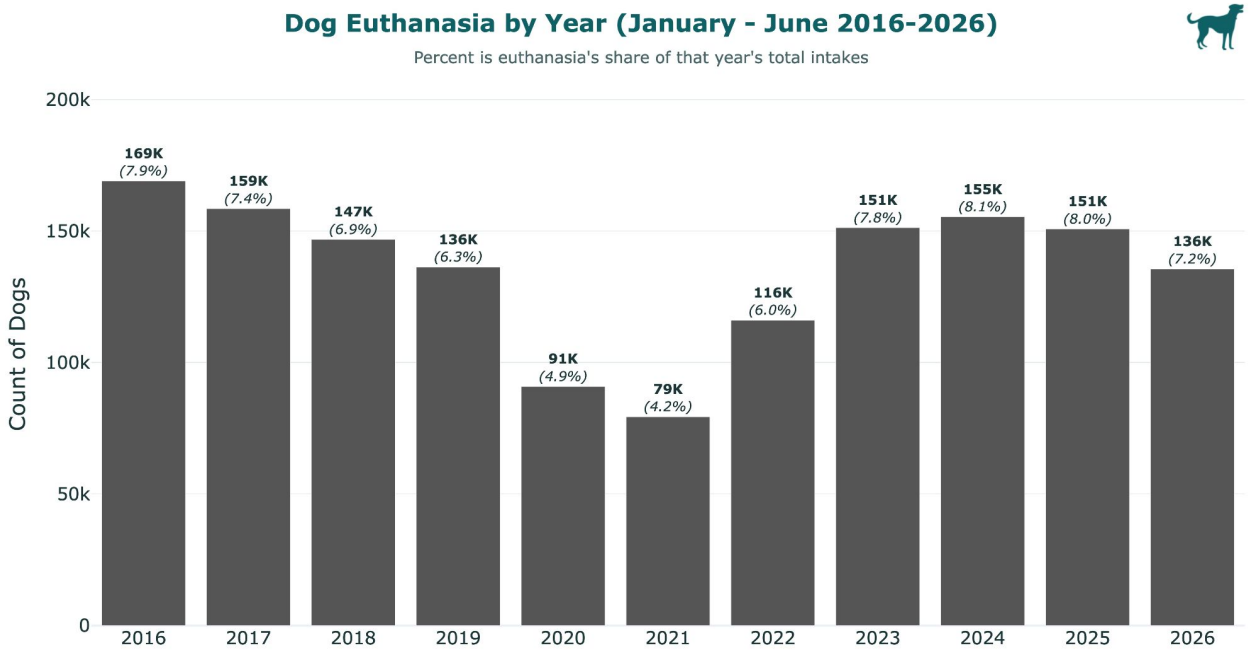

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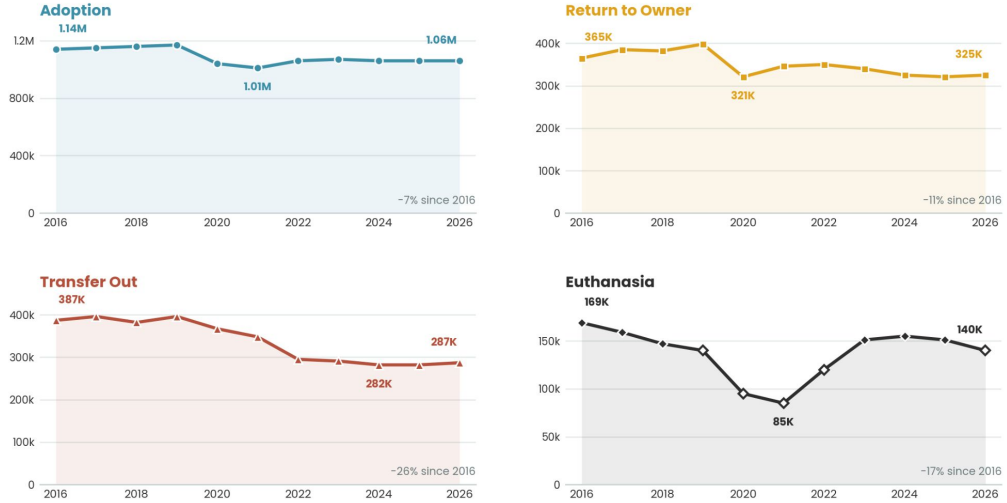
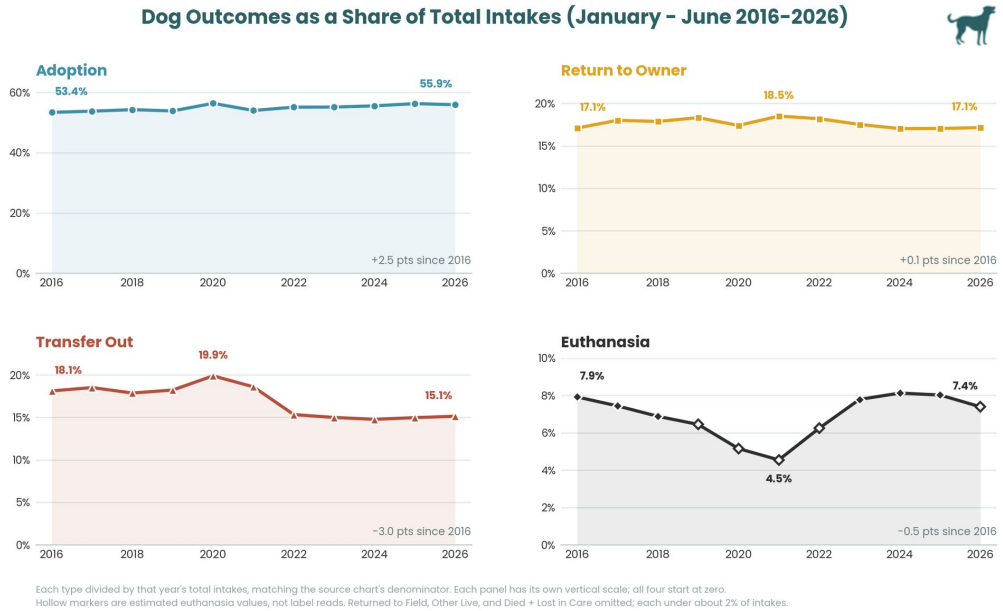
Dog Outcomes by Outcome Type (January - June 2016-2026)



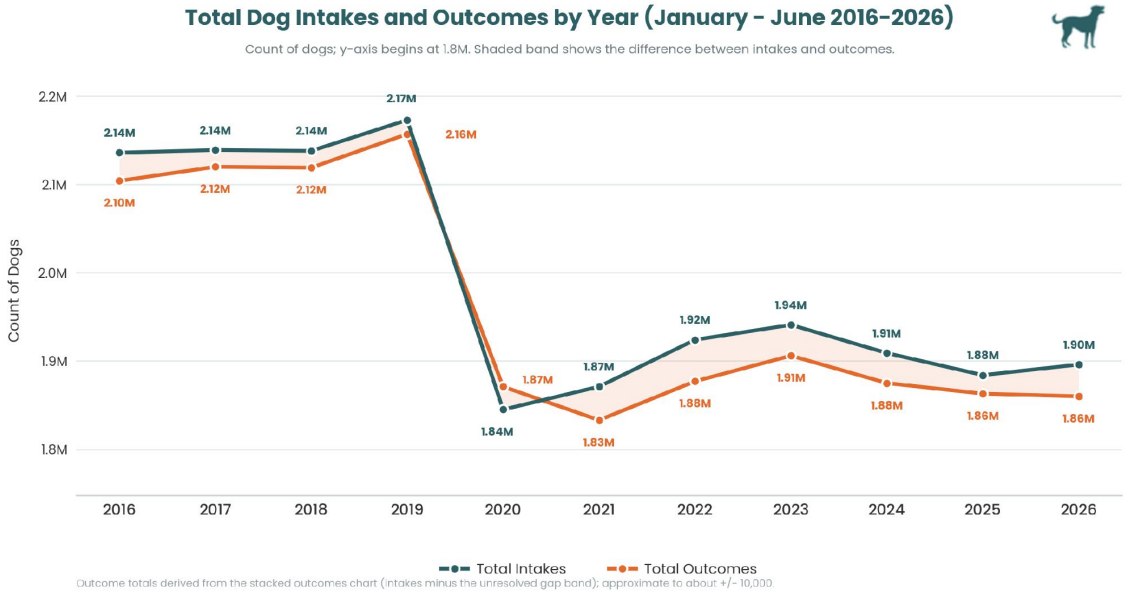
Each panel has its own vertical scale; all four start at zero. Hollow markers are estimated euthanasia values, not label reads.
Returned to Field, Other Live, and Died + Lost in Care omitted; each under about 40,000 a year.

Outcomes as a percentage of intake

1. How is this different than the last chart?
2. How does this chart add to our knowledge?
3. What else might we want to know?



1. What does each line represent?
2. What changes do you notice?
3. According to this chart, what problem is worse now than it was in 2016 to 2018?



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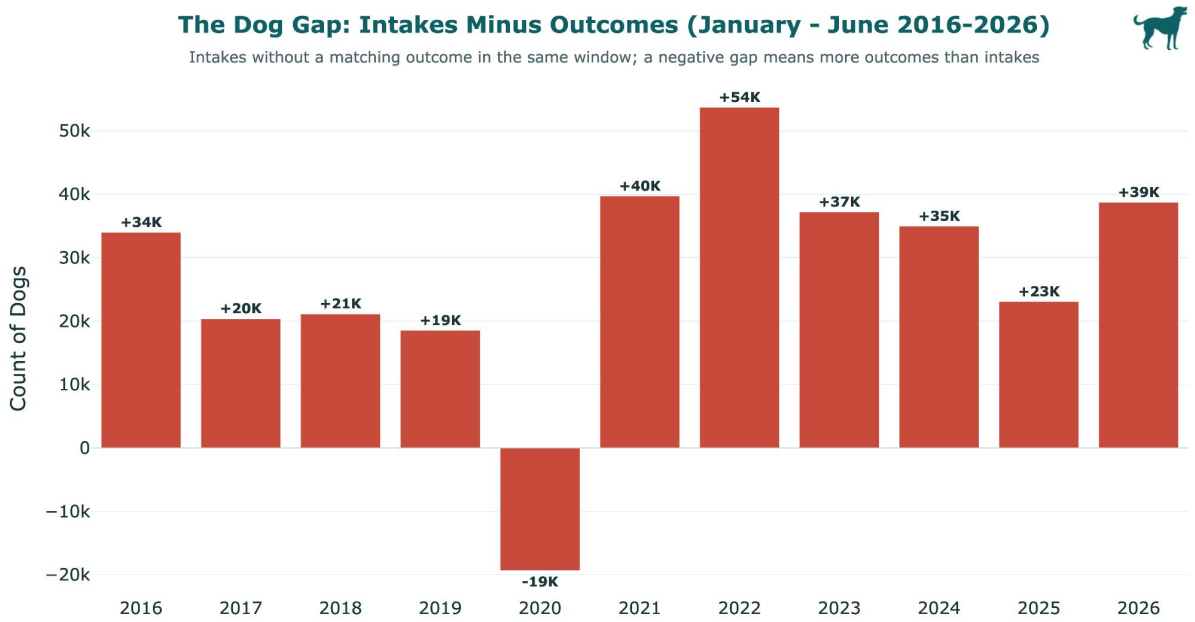
National Dog Mid-Year Gap 2016-2026

JULY 2026



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National Dog Mid-Year Adoptions 2016-2026

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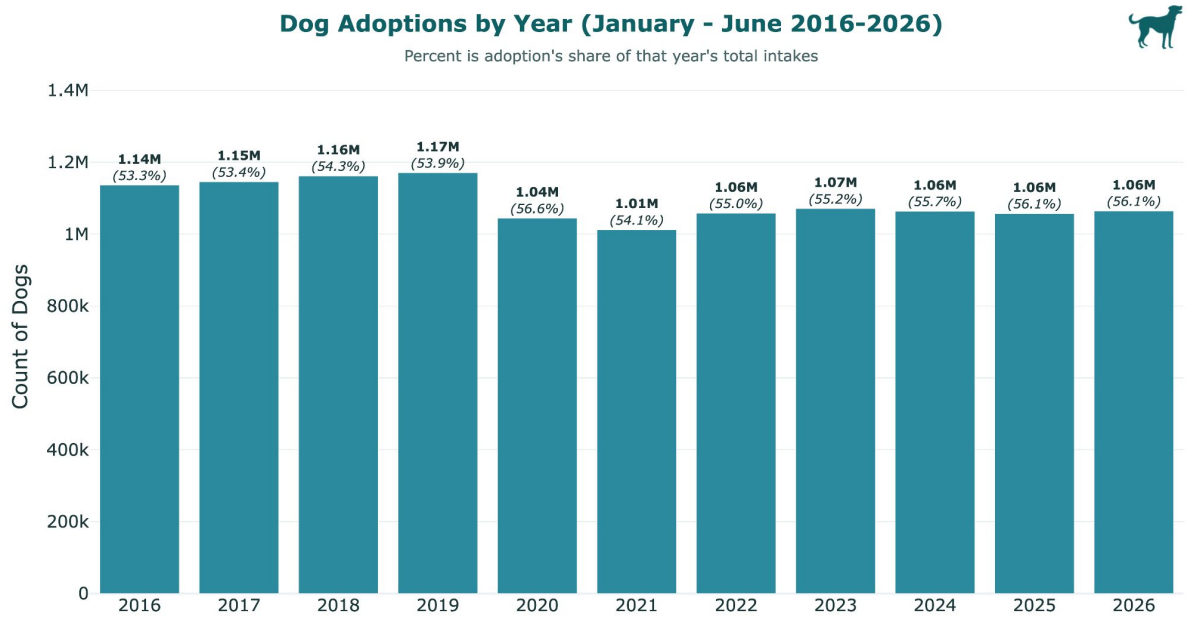

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How many dogs are waiting in care?

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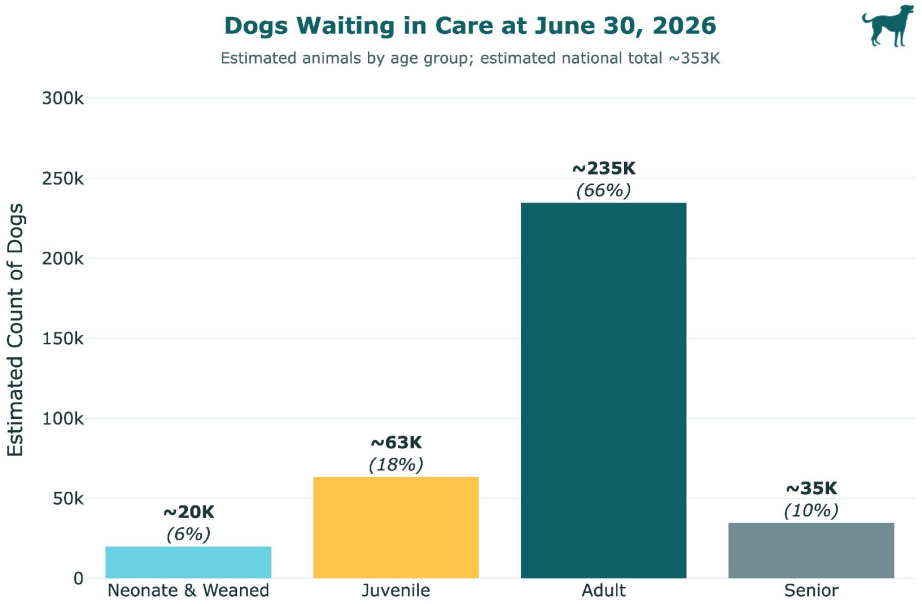
1. What does this chart tell us?
2. What don't we know from looking at this chart?
3. What other data points would give us more information?



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Part III: How to teach data

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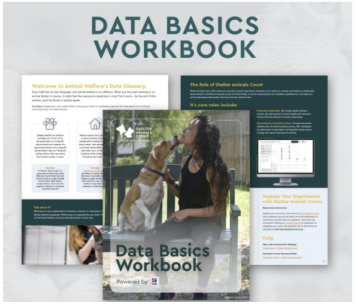
Why are we here?





1. What data do we care about and why?
2. How is our organization the same or different as others?
3. How do we measure success?
4. How does your role contribute to success?
5. How do we use data to make decisions?
6. How can you learn about our data?

What do we think vs. what we do we know?

Is this something we think/believe or something we know? If it's something we know, how do we know it?

"Kitten season came way earlier this year."

"We have seen a huge increase in bites in the shelter."

"We have a major increase in stray intake because people are bringing in owner surrenders and calling them strays."

"Whenever we do a free adoption event, our returns go way up."

"Everyone adopted during the pandemic and now those animals are getting dumped at shelters."

"Ever since we started fostering, no one is adopting because the dogs aren't here."

How do we make a logical argument?



Sample exercise: Identify the logical fallacies at work in these statements:

A. *"Our choice is to either euthanize more or warehouse animals indefinitely."*
B. *A shelter manager proposes implementing scheduled admissions and their colleague responds, "So you just want to turn animals away to die in the streets?"*
C. *"We tried a barn cat program last year and we only placed three cats so we proved barn cat programs don't work."*

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How do we think critically about data?

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KC PET PROJECT ❤

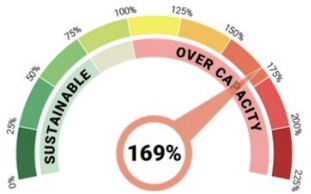
JUNE CAPACITY AND INTAKE UPDATE



DATE	NUMBER OF PETS IN
6/1	38
6/2	57
6/3	72
6/4	50
6/5	61
6/6	72
6/7	54
6/8	42
6/9	35
6/10	89
6/11	81
6/12	63
6/13	80
6/14	46
6/15	33
6/16	27
6/17	45
6/18	57

TOTAL PETS : 1,002

Dog Occupancy Meter



Current Population: **1249 dogs**

Capacity: **737 dogs**

Today's Population Change:

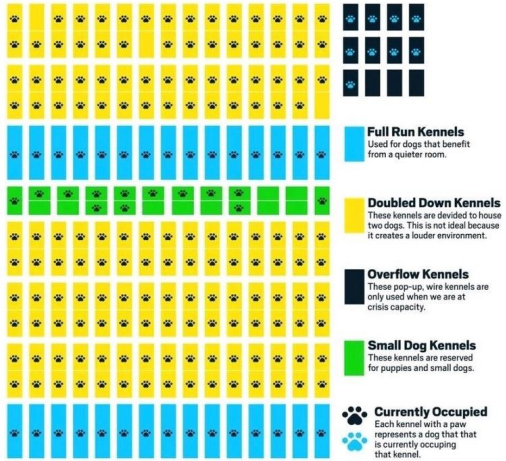
+11 dogs (47 in, 36 out)

Last Updated 10/17/2024 6:15 PM

"Each day now, JUST ONE MORE DOG stays in the shelter than leaves it..."

Click here to help just one more dog today

CRISIS CAPACITY AT KC PET PROJECT



KC PET PROJECT ❤

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What data matters to us right now?

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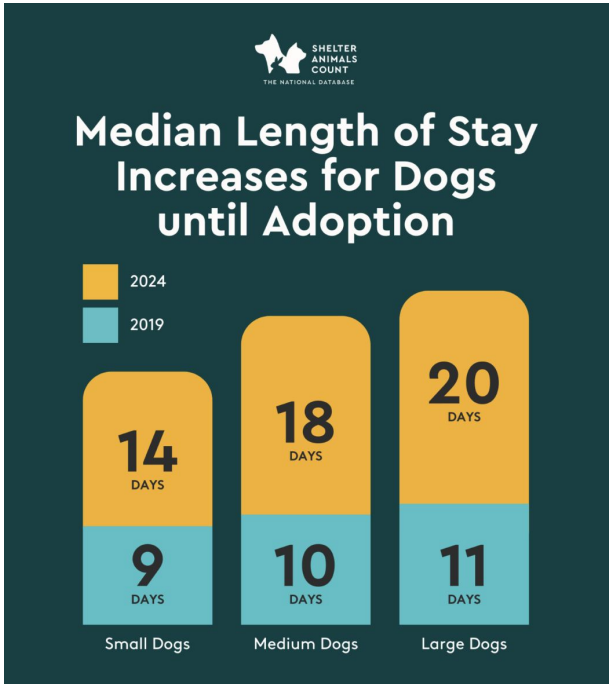

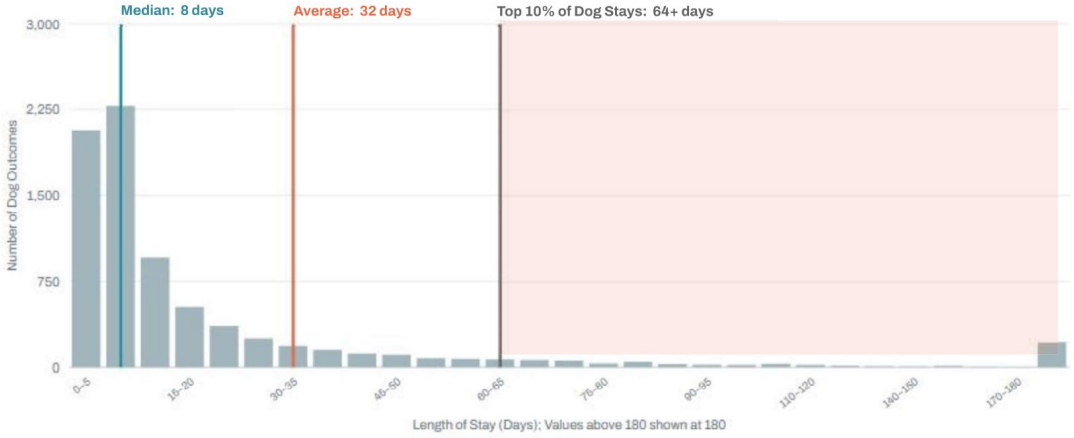

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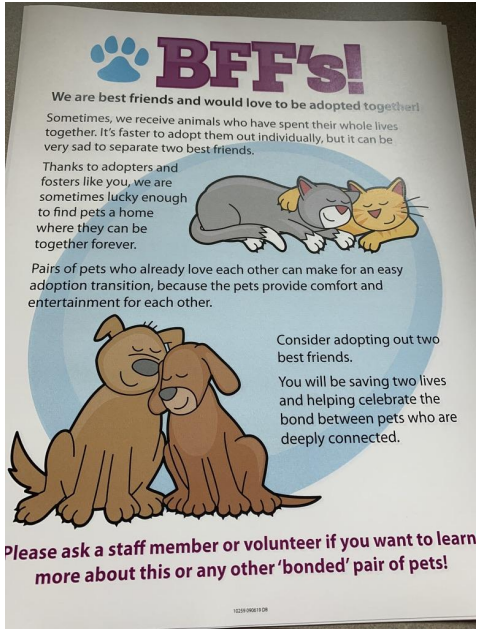
How to test a hypothesis



ANIMAL SHELTER OR RESCUE PROGRAM PILOT PROPOSAL WORKSHEET

***Instructions**: Complete this worksheet to outline your idea for a new shelter program or operational change.*

Program/Change Overview

Proposed Program Name:_____

Brief Description (What is it?):

Primary Goal (Why are we doing this?): **Key Details**

WHO (Who is involved?)

Who will lead this program? _____

Who needs to approve it? _____

Who will be impacted? (Staff, volunteers, adopters, animals, etc.)_____

WHAT (What will be required?)

What staff/volunteer teams will be needed to make this successful? What resources will be needed? (Staff time, materials, space, technology, funding, etc.)

- ☐ Staff Time
- ☐ Budget/Funding
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Supplies (List: extra sandwich boards may be needed_____)
- ☐ Other: _____

What challenges might arise? How will they be addressed? **WHERE** (Where will this take place?)

Will this happen in-shelter, in the community, online, or a combination? In-Shelter (Specify location: _____)

- ☐ Off-Site (Specify where: _____)
- ☐ Virtual/Online



What could be different if we started with data?

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1. Staff at all levels empowered to critically consider problems and solutions.
2. Everyone understands what success is and how their role contributes.
3. WHAT else?