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Mayor Joe Hogsett Highlights Commitment to IACS

Multi-pronged approach focuses on regional partnerships, staffing capacity, and innovative adoption practices

INDIANAPOLIS – Today Mayor Joe Hogsett highlighted measures to enhance services and care at Indianapolis Animal Care Services (IACS). Steps include increased collaboration with local and regional partners to address issues at multiple points in the pipeline, increasing staff capacity, and continuing to expand innovative adoption practices.

Through September 30, the live release rate for IACS in 2023 was 85%. From 2016 to 2022, the live release rate averaged 88%, a 26% increase over the average of 62% from 2010 to 2015. IACS achieved a 90% live release rate in 2018, 2020, and 2021.

“Through this comprehensive approach, we’re aiming to address the most acute challenges at the shelter in the short-term, while setting up IACS for sustained success in the years to come,” said Mayor Joe Hogsett. “Over the past seven and a half years, we’ve made progress, but we are committed to accelerating it even further.”

Collaboration with Partners

Later today, IACS, FACE Low-Cost Animal Clinic, Friends of Indianapolis Dogs Outside (FIDO), IndyHumane, and Indy Neighborhood Cats will kick off a strategic evaluation of the Central Indiana animal welfare ecosystem, designed to comprehensively address the issues that precipitate crisis conditions at IACS and other area shelters.

IACS and partners will be working with Indianapolis-based Hedges, using funding from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, to produce a community-wide audit report, an action plan with strategic recommendations and implementation guide, as well as a benchmark dashboard.

Increased Staff Capacity

Mayor Hogsett has authorized a market analysis to compare job descriptions and compensation against peer cities across the country. This focus on salary increases builds upon the 50% growth in the IACS budget since 2016.

Earlier this year, two new strategic positions—one filled, and one forthcoming—were designed to make the most efficient use of the shelter’s limited workforce. A policy and planning administrator was hired in July 2023 and is now evaluating current shelter processes, identifying improvement areas, and implementing new procedures. To



complement that role, a new shelter placement manager position is currently in the works to provide training, improve customer service, and decrease the length of stay for animals in the shelter's care. The City plans to fill that position before the end of 2023.

IACS has also engaged Best Friends Animal Society for assistance through its [Embed Program](#). If approved, the nonprofit would provide two staff members to help guide systematic improvements and support the shelter's goal of achieving and maintaining a no-kill status.

Community-Focused Strategies

In an effort to lower intake and increase diversion, IACS is launching a new community-supported sheltering program utilizing the "adopt-a-block" concept. As demonstrated in [a 2019 study](#), researchers found 70% of lost pets who are returned to their owners roam at most one mile away from home. The new program will provide community members with the supplies they need—crates, food, leashes, etc.—to be able to hold a stray animal in the neighborhood where the animal was found for 48 hours as they try to locate its owner. If the animal's owner isn't identified after the 48-hour time period, the animal can be relinquished to the shelter.

In 2018, IACS launched the Indy CARES (Companion Animal Resources, Education, and Support) program, which focuses on keeping animals out of the shelter. Indy CARES provides resources to pet owners who feel they have no other choice but to surrender their pet to the shelter. This includes access to food and assistance with medical costs, as well as coordination for temporary foster homes. Since its inception, Indy CARES has diverted 5,000 animals from the shelter and provided free vaccinations for an additional 2,000 owned pets. In 2021 Mayor Hogsett made Indy CARES a permanent program of IACS by providing funding for two full-time program coordinators and a monthly budget to support pet owners.

Last week, IACS formed a new partnership with [Nine Lives Cat Café](#) to provide the local business with as many as 16 available shelter cats and kittens at a time. Already, four of the eight kittens have been adopted and a portion of those fees have been donated to the [Friends of Indy Animals](#).

New Shelter

IACS is continuing its ongoing efforts to build a new animal care facility and evaluate its role in the central Indiana animal welfare ecosystem. Funding for the facility is on track, with the \$19 million bond approved by the City-County Council and work with charitable partners to address any gap not covered by public funding.

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