



# OC Animal Care

## OC Animal Care Fact Checker – 2025

Providing general information and answering frequently asked questions about the OC Animal Care Shelter.

### General Questions

- Is OCAC responsible for every animal in Orange County?
  - No, OC Animal Care is fortunate to be part of a vibrant and caring network of municipal animal shelters, non-profit organizations, and animal rescues that meet the needs of the un-homed animals in Orange County.
  - OC Animal Care serves 14 cities and the unincorporated areas, sharing the responsibility of caring for Orange County animals with 20 other jurisdictions.
  - For a list of cities served by OC Animal Care, please visit [ocpetinfo.com/about-us](http://ocpetinfo.com/about-us).
- How many dogs and cats were successfully placed out of the shelter in 2024?
  - In 2024, over 9,000 dogs and cats found positive outcomes through adoptions, being returned to their families, or sent to a rescue.
- Do all shelters have the same operational model?
  - No. Just like each animal has its own story, each shelter has its own pathway to success. The operational model at OC Animal Care is based on a compilation of industry best practices and the efficacy of this model is reflected in our metrics and the dedicated work of our staff.
  - OC Animal Care chooses to be open to the community 7 days a week.
- What does staff do at OC Animal Care?
  - In addition to the kennel team that clean each kennel and feed the animals, there is a veterinary team, including 4 full time veterinarians, our staff who work hard daily to assist animals in our intake department, our foster team who also provide on-site care for bottle-baby kittens, our rescue/transfer team, and our field team who work 24/7 responding to calls to assist animals in distress among other responsibilities. In addition to dedicated staff, there are over 200 active volunteers who help in a variety of tasks, including care and enrichment for animals onsite.
- Do animals in the shelter receive any in-kennel or out-of-kennel enrichment programming?
  - All animals receive responsible and individualized care
  - OC Animal Care provides in-kennel enrichment daily for dogs and strives to have every eligible dog receive out-of-kennel time.
  - OC Animal Care staff and volunteers provide a variety of enrichment including, but not limited to, high value Kongs, lick-mats, slow feeders, assorted toys, walks, playtime in yards, games, playgroups, nose/scent work, water/pool fun, and more!

- Our Shelter Services Manager is professionally experienced in animal behavior and training and is a CPDT-KA, and shelter staff is experienced in safely and appropriately handling a variety of species. Every effort is made to enhance an animal's stay at the shelter and place it quickly into an adoptive home.
- Does OC Animal Care only help dogs and cats?
  - OC Animal Care helps a variety of animals throughout the year, including rabbits, reptiles, mini mammals like guinea pigs and hamsters, birds, chickens, ducks, geese, and a variety of livestock and wildlife.
  - For a full list of animals that are currently available for adoption, visit [OCpetinfo.com](http://OCpetinfo.com) under the adopt tab.
- Why isn't there a TNR program implemented in Orange County?
  - TNR is a leading discussion topic in animal care agencies across the nation. Locally, OC Animal Care has been advised by counsel that the release of unowned cats into the community is prohibited by law. Since not all municipalities share this same understanding, we continue to monitor litigation processes happening around the state for rulings that may impact the penal code. It is widely acknowledged that TNR plays an important role in animal welfare, and we, like the local community, look forward to clear direction on this issue, whether it be through resolution of the pending litigation or a legislative fix at the state level.
- Does OC Animal Care have a pet foster program?
  - Yes, foster families provide their foster animals with a loving, caring, and supportive temporary home until their foster animals are eligible for adoption
  - OC Animal Care provides foster caretakers with pet supplies, guidance, and veterinary care
  - In 2024, foster caregivers helped provide care for nearly 3,000 animals!
- Does OC Animal Care have a Foster-to-Adopt program?
  - Yes, families can take select dogs home for up two weeks, before deciding if the relationship is meant to be.
  - Potential adopters will have guidance and support from the OC Animal Care Foster Team to ensure the fostering process results in a meaningful and successful adoption match.
  - In 2024, 160 dogs participated and 86 were adopted through the program.

### **Shelter Hours and Adoption System**

- Is the shelter open?
  - Yes, the shelter is open seven days a week for redemptions, license renewal, intake, and adoptions
  - Meet-and-greet adoption visits and viewing hours are offered daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Why did the shelter start using an appointment system?
  - The meet-and-greet adoption system:
    - Features over 400 appointments per week plus walk-ins
    - Provides a concierge-level of customer service to adopters
    - Minimizes wait times and promotes a positive adoption experience
    - Increases chances of matching the right pet to the right adopter
    - Minimizes stress on animals and let's staff observe the animal's true personality
    - Avoids in-shelter altercations
    - Has reduced the in-shelter bite rate which protects the safety of our adopters, volunteers, and staff
- Are walk-in appointments available?
  - Yes. The doors are open at OC Animal Care. While scheduled appointments are available for the convenience of potential adopters, the public is welcome to visit the shelter and sign-up for a walk-in appointment during our hours of operation, seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
  - The community is invited to walk through kennel areas during daily visiting hours from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Why is an animal only scheduled for three meet-and-greet visits in a row?
  - Our meet-and-greet adoption system is based on a first-come, first-served basis to provide a fair opportunity for everyone in the community to adopt, and preference is given to those who can visit at the next available meet-and-greet appointment time.
  - Once an animal has an appointment for a meet-and-greet, we will accept up to two backup appointments.
  - Typically, highly desirable pets are adopted by the first family visiting with them. Highly desirable dogs like small breeds and young puppies can frequently have dozens of people wanting to adopt.
  - Once we have up to three appointments for the animal, staff assist in helping the interested party find another animal to visit with who is still in need of a family.
- What are Adoption Visits?
  - Dogs: Adoption Visits for dogs include one-on-one meet-and-greet visits with the specific pet(s) you are interested in adopting. Visitors may spend time with multiple dogs and each time slot includes up to 30 minutes of dedicated time with an Animal Care Team Member.
  - Cats, Rabbits, and Others: Adoption Visits for cats, rabbits, and other animals are not based on a particular pet, but rather include staff assisted walk-throughs of pets who are available and ready-to-go-home the same day. If the visitor has a specific pet in mind, then staff will prioritize the visiting area based on that pet's location.

- What are Viewing Hours?
  - Dogs: During Viewing Hours, the community is invited to the shelter to walk through the external side of dog kennels. Dogs featured in these viewing areas are available for adoption with no major behavior or medical concerns, and ready-to-go-home the same day. Ready-to-go-home dogs have completed all legal hold times, have been spayed or neutered, microchipped, received a general health exam, vaccinated, and received general anti-parasitic treatment as needed. To assist visitors in getting to know the animals as they walk through, each dog will have a kennel card that includes their name, age, sex, assigned breed, and mini bio.
  - Cats: During Viewing Hours, the community is invited to the shelter to walk through our large viewing Cat Rooms, 6 and 7. Cats featured in these areas are available for adoption with no major behavior or medical concerns, and ready-to-go-home the same day. Ready-to-go-home cats have completed all legal hold times, have been spayed or neutered, microchipped, received a general health exam, vaccinated, and received general anti-parasitic treatment as needed. To assist visitors in getting to know the animals as they walk through, each cat will have a kennel card that includes their name, age, sex, assigned breed, and mini bio.
  
- What if I am walking through the kennels and see a dog or cat I want to adopt?
  - Great! We aren't surprised because we have a lot of amazing animals at the shelter. Please make a note of the animal's name and Animal ID number and check in at the front desk. The next step will be a meet-and-greet with the pet(s) you are interested in adopting.
  
- What is a meet-and-greet and why do I have to have one?
  - A meet-and-greet at OC Animal Care is dedicated one-on-one time with you, your family, and the individual animal you are interested in adopting. Meet-and-greets are facilitated by an OC Animal Care Team Member. For dogs, these meet-and-greets will take place in a play yard where you can spend time getting acquainted with your new potential furry friend. For cats, rabbits, and other small animals, these meet-and-greets often take place kennel-side to allow the cat time to get to know you before you pick them up.
  - Animals can react differently to new people. Some are better with men vs. women, or some are shy and even nervous around children. They also have varying energy levels, play styles, and personalities. It's important to make a good match, not just for you, but for the animal in our care. Meet-and-greets give everyone, including the animal, a chance to get to know each other and bond.
  - In addition, this is your dedicated time to ask our team member any questions you may have. Keep in mind, many of our pets come to us as strays, so we don't always have a lot of background information. However, staff are able to share with you everything we've learned about the pet while they have been in our care.

- Do I have to fill out a lengthy application?
  - No, an adoption application is not required. Our process is based off individual meet-and-greets where we help you determine if you and your family are a good match with the pet you are interested in adopting. If it isn't a match made in heaven, no worries. We have many amazing animals. Staff can help recommend some of our shelter residents who may be a good fit based on your lifestyle, you can meet-and-greet with the next animal already on your list, or you can continue to walk through during Visiting Hours to view more adoptable pets.
- You close at 5 p.m., why is the last meet-and-greet at 4:30 p.m.?
  - Great question. We know that it takes time for you and your family to visit with a potential pet to see if they are the right match. It also takes time for staff to process an adoption. We start our final meet-and-greets of the day at 4:30 p.m. to provide enough time for visiting and paperwork to be completed before we close at 5 p.m.
  - Don't worry, you are able to walk through the kennels up until 5 p.m. Just be sure to check-in at the front desk before 5 p.m. if you want to set up a meet-and-greet with a particular pet at a later time.
- What about the dogs in Buildings 1?
  - OC Animal Care is tasked with providing care to dogs from a variety of situations, many of which are not available for public adoption. The animals not available for public adoption include dogs who are part of an investigation or court hold, legal retention holds (stray or owner surrender wait times dictated by law), awaiting further evaluation or TLC program dogs who staff/volunteers are working with daily, rabies quarantine holds as determined by law, extended time allowed for owner arrest holds, owner in hospital holds, and deceased owner holds. If you see an animal on our website, but don't see them when visiting during Viewing Hours, please check in at the front desk. Staff can provide more information as appropriate.

### **Save Rate/Euthanasia**

- Why does OC Animal Care euthanize dogs?
  - OC Animal Care strives to find positive outcomes when appropriate to do so for the animals in its care. However, the shelter is tasked with taking in the most at-risk animals in the community, including those who are irremediably suffering or a threat to public safety.
  - Public safety is a top priority at OC Animal Care. As such, the shelter does not turn away any behaviorally challenged animal, even if another shelter has. Our intent is to find responsible placement for the animals in our care. To do this, we have a consistent behavior evaluation process in place to help find the most successful placement possible for the animals in our care.

- What is the save rate of OC Animal Care?
  - The save rate for the shelter continues to be well above 90% for dogs which is an industry benchmark and the goal the Board of Supervisors has set for the shelter.
  - In 2024, the Dog Save Rate was 94.26%
- Why is the cat save rate lower compared to dogs?
  - OC Animal Care is currently not accepting healthy stray cats. We accept ill or injured animals, aggressive animals, underage orphaned kittens and puppies, and stray dogs. Because we focus on taking in the most vulnerable cats, such as those who are ill, injured, underage, or nursing moms, sometimes due to the severity of their condition, recovery is not possible, and they are humanely euthanized. It is important to note that humane euthanasia is always a last resort, and our agency evaluates each case individually. Since there is no intake of healthy cats to compare the data, the euthanasia rates appear higher.
  - Our cat programming includes a robust onsite veterinary program, including a staff veterinarian on campus daily, an in-house nursery for kittens old enough to eat on their own and nursing moms with babies, a foster network made up of hundreds of volunteer fosters who cared for nearly 3,000 animals last year (the bulk of which were underage kittens, including bottle babies too young to eat on their own), and a growing transfer program where our agency partners with sister-shelters and 501(c)3 rescue partners to place at-risk kittens and cats in programs across California and even out of state.
- Are healthy pets euthanized in secret?
  - No. Animals at risk due to behavioral or medical issues are posted on our rescue website, Rescue Track, and given every chance to be placed with a rescue organization when appropriate
- Are healthy pets euthanized to make room at the shelter?
  - No. Humane euthanasia is always a last resort, and our agency evaluates each case individually.
  - OC Animal Care is committed to finding responsible, life-saving outcomes that benefit the community and pets we serve whenever possible. We focus on balancing safety in the community with programming that assists some of our most vulnerable and at-risk animals with finding a positive path out of the shelter. Programming includes our Rescue Adoption Partner program, Foster Caretaker program, daily enrichment initiatives, and so much more.
  - The reality is, it is going to take all of us working together to help animals in our community. Visit [OCpetinfo.com](http://OCpetinfo.com) to find out more about how you can help through volunteers, fostering, rescuing, promoting, adopting, and more.

### **Volunteer and Donation Management**

- Is OC Animal Care currently taking volunteers?

- Yes. OC Animal Care welcomes anyone interested in becoming a volunteer to apply. Much like the OC Zoo, volunteers at OC Animal Care must go through an application process, background check, and specialized training as we care for live animals with a variety of temperaments, behaviors, and medical concerns. Currently, we focus our onboarding to fill specific volunteer opportunities based on our needs for the animals that require some experience and availability for certain time slots – cleaning, grooming, kitten nursery, and enrichment for large dogs, etc.
- Are volunteer asked to “scoop the poop” and do other messy tasks?
  - Yes. Our animals are adorable but sometimes in a messy way. Volunteers assist with a variety of tasks and are asked to pick up after any pet when they are walking them or visiting with them in play yards. We also have volunteers who help groom or bathe our visiting pets to make them ready for adoption.
  - The primary responsibility of shelter cleaning is accomplished by paid staff. While volunteers may assist with light cleaning or picking up feces when walking a dog, OC Animal Care staff is proud to care for the shelter and its pets, cleaning to a level consistent with industry standards.
- Are donations being accepted?
  - Yes. We are currently accepting donations by mail, in-person, and through our Amazon Wish List.

#### **Collaboration with Municipal Shelters and Rescue Organizations**

- Does OC Animal Care network with other shelters and rescue groups?
  - Yes. OC Animal Care staff have experience in networking and know who to call – this can be based on breed, size, behavior, medical needs, etc.
  - Rescues are a critical component to helping animals in our community.
  - OC Animal Care does extensive research and develops a relationship with each organization before entering into a partnership.
- How does OC Animal Care release animals to rescue organizations?
  - OC Animal Care follows all applicable laws when it comes to transfers for rescue groups.
  - OC Animal Care releases animals to rescues based on their 501(c)(3) status. For example, if a breed-specific dog adoption partner decides to rescue a different breed or species, OC Animal Care would be required to release the animal prior to euthanasia under the Hayden Bill (Food and Agricultural Code secs. 31108, 31752, 31752.5, 31753, 31754).
  - The California Food and Agricultural Code § 31753 states that “A rabbit, guinea pig, hamster, potbellied pig, bird, lizard, snake, turtle, or tortoise that is legally allowed as personal property and that is impounded in a public or private shelter shall be held for the same period of time, under the same requirements of care, and with the same opportunities for redemption and adoption by new owners or nonprofit, as defined in

Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, animal rescue or adoption organizations as provided for cats and dogs.”

- OCAC reviews all claims of animal cruelty and/or abandonment and has the option and retains the right not to do business with rescues who have been convicted of an animal crime.
- Does OC Animal Care track where the pets are going after being given to rescue organizations?
  - Whether it’s a dog, cat, or rabbit, there are no specific legal mandates for rescue partners to provide documentation of further transports or adoptions, as they become the legal owners of the animal
  - Because of our relationships, we maintain ongoing communications with our adoption partners and regularly receive updates on animal placements
- How does OC Animal Care ensure a placement is a good fit for an animal with special needs?
  - We rely on our trained OC Animal Care staff who have years of experience in finding positive placements for our special needs animals
  - We provide written documentation, pictures, and videos to anyone interested in pulling an animal from our shelter with special needs. This occurs through OC Animal Care’s networking program called Rescue Track, which you can find [here](#). Rescue Track is well-known in the shelter world and is considered to be an excellent networking system facilitating communication between the shelter and adoption potential partners.

### **Resources for Pet Owners**

- What should I do if I lost my pet or found a stray animal?
  - Call OC Animal Care at (714) 935-6848 to report your missing pet or if you have found a stray animal in your neighborhood
- Did you find a lost pet?
  - Check for an ID/scan for a microchip at a local vet clinic or pet supply store
  - Ask your neighbors if they have seen the found pet before
  - Post flyers in your neighborhood and on social media platforms
- How Can I report a lost pet?
  - Check with your neighbors if they have seen your pet
  - Post lost flyers in your neighborhood and on social media platforms
  - Contact your local vet offices to see if someone has brought in your pet to be scanned for a microchip
  - Owners in search of their pets are welcomed at OC Animal Care seven days a week, during regular operating hours
- Where can I find additional information about how to care for my pet?
  - Check out [OCpetinfo.com/lets-paws](http://OCpetinfo.com/lets-paws) for a fact-based, information series designed to address common topics of interest in animal care