

**LMAS**

**Louisville Metro Animal  
Shelter**

**or**

**Louisville Metro Animal  
Services?**

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# CREDENTIALS

## Animal Owner



Thor & Fjorgyn  
adopted from LMAS 6/20/2013  
+ 2 indoor only rescue cats

## Unofficial animal welfare volunteer



Serving the animals of our community  
when LMAS is unable to respond

## Keyboard Warrior

Working social media to support owners and finders with the goal of reuniting pets and owners while keeping owned pets out of the shelter



Update: Little Man is going home!!! Owner's granddaughter made a post looking for him ❤️ We knew his name but kept it secret to make sure he only went back to his owners.  
Dog found near Logan Street Market, anyone know where to find its humans?... See more



You guys really made our family happy today. My grandpa lost my grandma in October and their other dog Boo Boo passed away a few months later. So he has been having it pretty rough and then someone stole little man so we are truly so happy to have him back 😊 you guys made his Father's day wonderful

I would like to thank Metro Council for the opportunity to voice my opinion on the future direction of Louisville Metro Animal Services and the role our council representatives can take in shaping that future. I would also like to express my appreciation for my representative, Cassie Chambers-Armstrong, for encouraging me to take this step.

A broad segment of the public thinks of LMAS as the shelter, or in older vernacular, the pound, and as a shelter LMAS is at the top of the game. We have a world class facility, the ability to provide the highest quality care to the unowned animals of the community and of course, the crowning achievement of no-kill status. I have never hesitated to tell a member of the public that the dog they found would be safe in the care of LMAS.

That said, LMAS is not Louisville Metro Animal Shelter, it is Louisville Metro Animal Services. I believe the time has come to move beyond the walls of the shelter to truly become a no-kill community.

In this handout you will see that Best Friends, a large animal welfare group, makes a distinction between a no-kill shelter and a no-kill community, saying “two defining characteristics of a no-kill community are collaboration and collective responsibility”.

(source: <https://bestfriends.org/no-kill-2025>)

Louisville has a large community of unofficial, unrecognized and often vilified volunteers who care about animals. While the term Keyboard Warrior usually has negative connotations our lost and found Keyboard Warriors work social media day and night to help reunite lost pets with their owners and advise the public

#### **What it means to be a no-kill animal shelter**

While the 90% benchmark offers a meaningful, consistent way to gauge progress, it is neither a floor nor a ceiling. For many shelters, a true no-kill save rate may be closer to 95% (or higher). For some shelters, particularly those offering care and services such as neonatal kitten programs or compassionate end-of-life services for residents with pets in under-resourced communities, the no-kill benchmark may be slightly below 90%.

The goal is for every shelter, no matter what type of shelter it is, to make a clear commitment to lifesaving and transparency while working to achieve and sustain no-kill in philosophy and practice, rather than simply working to obtain a no-kill designation.

#### **What it means to be a no-kill community**

When every brick-and-mortar shelter serving and/or located within a particular county has reached a save rate of 90% or higher, we designate that community as no-kill. The ultimate goal for the community, as with individual shelters, is to save every animal who can be saved via mutually supportive systems that help the most vulnerable pets and their families.

Two defining characteristics of a no-kill community are collaboration and collective responsibility. For any community to be no-kill, all stakeholders in that community must work together to achieve and sustain that common goal. This means cooperation among animal shelters, animal rescue groups, government agencies, community members and other stakeholders, all committed to progressive lifesaving.

on the best steps to take to make that happen. This is a support system to LMAS. Every found dog that is reunited before being taken to the shelter is a win for all of us, and every time we can tell an owner that they can find their dog at the shelter it frees up resources for the next one while heading off another potential unclaimed dog (there really are people who don't know to look there). We have community members who have purchased their own chip scanners; people who carry leashes and treats just in case; the ones who drive the streets for hours searching for a stray dog; even those who track a fearful dog in survival mode for days until it can be humanely trapped and brought to safety.

In 2021 1,891 stray dogs were brought to the shelter by these unofficial volunteers. This is more than double the number brought in by Animal Control Officers. Through budget cuts, understaffing and the pandemic, this trend has grown over the past three years with the public responsible for the majority of stray dog services provided on the streets (see Attachment A, Table 1). Again, an unrecognized and undervalued support system for our official animal services.

I have seen many social media posts that say if you want to do something to help LMAS, volunteer at the shelter. This perpetuates the idea that animal services begins and ends inside the shelter walls while devaluing the vital support services provided by the community.

It's time to bring those two sides – what happens in the shelter and the activities of the community – together in a positive collaborative effort of input and action to improve the lives of pets in Louisville. Key word – action. We are not the enemy!

This starts by removing barriers to accessing services.

Open intake hours are limited to 22% of the hours in a week. This leaves the public to care for found pets outside of normal intake hours and at times creates



a real hardship. I respect the person who has pets or children and cannot bring a stray dog of unknown history into their home for overnight or 36 hours. Again, we are lucky to have a community of volunteers that helps to find temporary placement until the shelter opens, but hopefully with the support of Metro Council we can work toward improving that access.

Those that arrive at the shelter outside of 12 – 6 are greeted with this sign. A significant number of found pets are not injured, sick or aggressive. In cases that fall under one of these categories the system is not without flaws. As a final step we are told to contact LMPD. This has had mixed results and does not seem to follow an establish protocol.

### ***Social media post***

***Saturday, June 19, approx 11:30 pm***

Does anyone know if anyone is working at LMAS this time of night? Like for emergencies? We have a kitten that was bitten by a dog. My husband is on the way up there with it now but there's no one to call.

He just left there. Said there was 2 numbers to call but no one answered either and he couldn't leave a message. Did you take them to LMAS on Steedly?  
17h Like Reply

Steadly Drive? That is Kentucky Humane Society. LMAS is on Newburg which is where I went.  
17h Like Reply

You're right. I always get the 2 mixed up. He did go to LMAS.  
17h Like Reply

Is it your kitten or a stray?  
No one is at LMAS at this hour. To reach the on call ACO you have to call metrosafe for emergencies after hours-they have to send an officer/ dispatch LMAS.  
(502) 574-7111 option 5  
yes its a stray  
17h Like Reply  
I'll try the number real quick  
17h Like Reply

He said they can only contact LMAS if there is an incident involving a person in which a police officer has to respond to as well.  
17h Like Reply



Another barrier to accessing animal services is communication from LMAS regarding availability. As of two weeks ago, the last time I checked, the automatic message on Saturday says the shelter is closed. It is open 12 – 6. It's been like that for at least two years. There are no social media posts regarding holiday hours, only those of Animal House. The community of volunteers does our best to educate the public when published information is available but often it is not.

Those details are focused on what to do with the stray dogs that present in the community and that leads to another issue – the stray dogs in the community.

Ms. Book, the interim director of LMAS, was on a recent podcast and said they had around 1,700 unclaimed strays come into the shelter last year. I analyzed the public database and concluded that 1,700 is an understatement of the actual stray dog problem. Due to the decrease in services provided in the community there was a drastic decline in the number of dogs picked up from the community (in the "field") by animal control officers (see Attachment A, Table 2). One could surmise that there were an additional 400 – 500 stray dogs that did not receive any type of service each of the past two years. Far too many are hit by cars. Some are picked up by people for nefarious purposes. Some are kept or re-homed by the person who found them because of lack of public education that finders-keepers does not exist under the law or any clear instructions from LMAS on what to do if you find a stray dog, an issue I have personally tried to resolve. Wherever they are they should be considered in looking at our stray dog problem.

One of LMAS's core purposes is "Community Engagement - To educate and inform the public of all ages about animal-related issues including responsible pet ownership, the humane treatment of animals and adoption. Engage the community through education, collaboration and volunteerism to support animal welfare."

I understand how there is a catch 22 to addressing the societal issues that create unwanted dogs, whether the cause is irresponsible breeding, lack of pet friendly

housing, financial distress leaving the owner without resources for their pet's basic needs or vet care, inexperienced pet owners who are unable to assimilate their pet into family life or a hundred other reasons. Stray dogs are a problem faced many communities, and there are a myriad of solutions. The northeast has stronger anti-breeding laws that limit their population. Other localities are creating laws to prevent breed discrimination by insurance companies and as a result create more housing opportunities. San Antonio has a no questions asked owner surrender program (ours requires an appointment, a fee and available shelter space, a process that can take several weeks).

Unfortunately LMAS's limited resources are depleted by the results of not addressing the underlying problems – a shelter that is constantly full and a community plagued by at large dogs – leaving no funds or staff to establish a program to stop strays from being created in the first place.

We are starting to see a comeback in services to the community. The new low cost private clinic has opened on the LMAS campus providing spay / neuter, minor medical care, vaccinations and microchipping. LMAS has plans to hold two events this year to provide low cost rabies vaccines and microchips. Pets4Life, a non-profit, recently held a similar event for residents who do not have a vet in their zip code and Kentucky Humane Society is holding a number of these clinics using their mobile van providing not only vaccinations but also food and flea preventative. This week Councilwoman Amy Holton Stewart sponsored one of these KHS clinics in District 25. Available appointments were filled within 24 hours. The need is there!

We need to continue to examine the reasons why we have so many stray dogs and work on solutions to those problems. I am realistic about the challenges faces every time we try to change the laws – as an urban area in a primarily rural state there is fierce outcry against any new animal related ordinances. We have to work from a positive side. Education on spay and neuter is helpful but what are the barriers to getting the community on board with this? Transportation and time

are overlooked in this issue. Housing opportunities are limited across the metro. How can we create more pet friendly landlords? How can we reduce the number of stray dogs to create space for timely surrender options for owners who are in dire straits and no longer able to care for their pets? Over time the number coming in might not go down but at least they would be planned intakes with some type of history, making them easier to place for adoption or with a rescue.

I don't have the answers to these questions. That is not my area of expertise. What I do know is that if we don't address these issues, if we don't engage the public in preventative efforts, if we don't support the hundreds of unofficial volunteers who provide unpaid animal services, we are never going to get beyond the shelter and become a no-kill community.

I look to Metro Council, our leaders, for help creating an environment where LMAS can move outside the shelter walls, transitioning from the perception as Louisville Metro Animal Shelter and living up to the name of Louisville Metro Animal Services.

Thank you for listening to my opinion and I hope this is the year we see good things happen!



## Attachment A

*This information was extracted from the Louisville.gov Open Data website using the Animal Service Intake and Outcome Data. This was a sort of raw data for dogs only based on "intype" stray and "insubtype", designated as OTC (over the counter at the facility) vs FIELD (stray dogs retrieved by animal control officers) without further analysis and may contain a margin of error due to source data, sorting issues or human error on my part.*

Source:

<https://data.louisvilleky.gov/dataset/animal-service-intake-and-outcome>

### Table 1

2021 Stray dogs who entered the shelter via an animal control officer: 707

**2021 Stray dogs who were transported to the shelter by the public: 1,891**

2021 Stray dogs of unknown intake type: 5

### Table 2

2018 Stray dogs who entered the shelter via an animal control officer: 1,630

Stray dogs who were transported to the shelter by the public: 1,471

Stray dogs of unknown intake type: 0

**2018 total: 3,101**

2019 Stray dogs who entered the shelter via an animal control officer: 1,482

Stray dogs who were transported to the shelter by the public: 1,843

Stray dogs of unknown intake type: 9

**2019 total: 3,334**

2020 Stray dogs who entered the shelter via an animal control officer: 722

Stray dogs who were transported to the shelter by the public: 1,553

Stray dogs of unknown intake type: 1

**2020 total: 2,276**

2021 Stray dogs who entered the shelter via an animal control officer: 707

Stray dogs who were transported to the shelter by the public: 1,891

Stray dogs of unknown intake type: 5

**2021 total: 2,603**