



## Frequently Asked Questions

*Updated March 18, 2022*

St. Louis County's Animal Care and Control Program has long provided animal services for the St. Louis region. County officials have embarked upon a process to award a contract for animal care to an outside service provider. The APA Adoption Center (APA) is pleased to have been chosen as the most qualified applicant to provide these services and looks forward to negotiating the details in the coming months.

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### **Q: Why did the APA get involved in negotiating for an animal care contract?**

A. When approached with the opportunity to take on animal care services, the APA was honored to be considered to take on this important work. The APA believes they are uniquely qualified to protect animals and serve as a safety net for pet families in St. Louis County. Extending the APA's work to take on this contract to provide care for an additional 5,000 animals is aligned with the organization's mission to place animals in loving homes.

The APA will enhance services for human and animal constituents of St. Louis County by employing the tenets of socially conscious sheltering which balances the commitment to animals with the needs of the community. To learn more about socially conscious sheltering at the APA, visit: <https://apamo.org/about/socially-conscious-animal-welfare/>

### **Q. What is an animal care contract?**

A. It is a contract between a governmental entity and an animal care agency charged with providing shelter and medical care to homeless, lost, or relinquished pets. It includes reunification of lost pets with their families or placing homeless or relinquished pets in new loving homes. Most importantly, it means supporting families and the community through spay and neuter operations, classroom initiatives, and many more programs that strengthen the human animal bond.

### **Q: What are the benefits for the animals if APA takes on the animal care contract for County?**

A: The APA is committed to placing every healthy and community-compatible animal in a home and ensuring every unwanted or homeless pet has a safe place to go for shelter and care. The APA is also committed to reducing the length of stay for animals who would previously have been under County care and ensuring medical and behavioral needs of homeless animals are thoroughly addressed.

The APA supports compassionate, responsible, and humane care for every animal in our community. They put these tenets into action in everything they do – through adoption programs that already help more than 4,500 pets find homes each year, wellness programs that help thousands of pets remain healthy, and through programs designed to help meet more specialized needs of our community, such as pets living in under-resourced communities or pets whose owners are survivors of domestic violence. The APA is grateful for the opportunity to expand these services to animals in need throughout St. Louis County.

**Q: Does the APA expect to provide services more economically and efficiently than the county?**

A: As a nonprofit organization, the APA's mission is to ensure that all healthy and treatable animals have a safe, loving home. Both St. Louis County and the APA are confident that through this contract, services for the animals will be improved, length of stay will decrease, and, because a number of duplications between the County and the APA will be eliminated, other economies of scale will result in long-term cost savings and increased efficiency.

**Q: What are APA's qualifications to provide animal care services to St. Louis County?**

A: For 100 years, the APA has been bringing people and pets together. Over the past century, the APA's adoption program has successfully created tens of thousands of new beginnings for pets, providing them a second chance in a new, loving, and forever home. The APA is known for high standards in animal care, innovative and solution-focused approach to animal welfare, and high-quality customer service.

**Q: Do APA's facilities have the space to house an additional 5,000 animals per year?**

A: The APA anticipates using the County's existing facilities, with adjustments to maximize space, flow, and animal and guest safety.

**Q. Where can someone access information about APA's community impact?**

A. The APA publishes all annual impact reports on [apamo.org](http://apamo.org). The reports include data on all animals cared for, as well as the impact of other programs. More information here >> [Our Impact](#)

**Q. What is the APA doing to reduce systemic reasons for animal homelessness?**

A. The vital services of the APA stretch beyond the traditional care of many shelters. The APA has evolved over 100 years to become a leader in the state of Missouri and beyond thanks to the development of innovative programs and services. By supporting pet-owning citizens with resources essential to keeping their pets, fewer animals end up in shelters, lessening the burden on taxpayers.

The APA offers impactful programs, such as: lost and found pet assistance; adoption services; pet relinquishment; pet training and behavior assistance; vaccination/microchip clinics; foster care programs for sick, injured, behaviorally challenged and under-aged animals; low-cost community spay/neuter surgeries; rescue group partnerships; resources for finding pet-friendly housing and crisis housing services; pet-loss support; as well as safety net programming. The APA also offers community engagement and education programs for youth and adults to increase the human-animal bond and promote responsible pet ownership.

**Q. How did this partnership come to be?**

A. On October 8th, 2019, the County Council authorized the Department of Public Health (DPH) to post a Request for Proposals (RFP) from eligible entities to operate the ACC shelter. This RFP was posted in the Fall 2021, and the APA was selected through this competitive process. Next steps include contract negotiation and a legislative process through the County Council.

**Q. Is St. Louis County privatizing the shelter?**

St. Louis County intentionally sought a non-profit partner with an extensive history to operate the ACC shelter. County was not interested in privatizing the shelter, but rather sought out an experienced non-profit partner who has a history of implementing and operationalizing national best practices for shelter operations.

**Q. What about current ACC staff?**

St. Louis County and the APA will coordinate with existing ACC staff for the best possible outcome for animals and employees. ACC employees will have the opportunity to apply to the APA for open positions, and if qualified, may be selected by the APA to complete the interview process. ACC employees will be supported by DPH and County Personnel leadership throughout this process.

This partnership does not include Animal Control Functions. However, the rest of the shelter operations (intake, adoptions, animal care, and veterinary medicine), are within the scope of this partnership and will be under the purview of the APA. Specific details of shared duties and transfer of animals between control functions and operation functions will be part of the discovery and review process.

**Q. Who will the APA report to?**

The APA, because they are a non-profit organization, will be governed by their Board of Directors, as they are currently. They will not fall within the reporting structure of St. Louis County government, but rather will be contracted to provide a service to the County as detailed in the agreed upon contract, once negotiated. All functions within the scope of the contract will be implemented according to APA procedures, policies, and decision-making. DPH staff conduct monitoring and compliance for all contracted services as a regular function of the department. DPH staff will regularly interface with the APA regarding the progress of the shelter.

**Q. What about the volunteer program?**

St. Louis County and the APA are committed to providing volunteer opportunities at the ACC shelter. Volunteers are a critical component of a successful shelter, and we will have more communication and meetings to ensure a smooth transition.