

# 2015 **IMPACT** REPORT



## OUR COMMUNITY EFFORT TO **CHANGE LIVES**

The Animal Rescue League of Iowa (ARL) is the state's largest non-profit shelter, serving thousands of animals through sheltering and community outreach. Below is our **Impact from January-December 2015** and where we are headed next. We will update this annually because our journey to **CHANGE LIVES** is ever-evolving, but it isn't our journey alone. With your help, we can and will **CHANGE LIVES**.

*Our mission is to promote animal welfare, strengthen the human-animal bond, and prevent the overpopulation of pets.*

**14,624 ANIMAL LIVES CHANGED**

*\* Includes intakes, outreach, and training classes.*

HOME

DOING MORE

INTAKES

CHALLENGES

OUTCOMES

"NO KILL" ..?

FUTURE



MORE THAN A  
**NUMBER**  
 .....  
 Click each photo to learn  
 more about how we help our  
 community's animals and  
 the people who  
 love them!



- HOME
- DOING MORE
- INTAKES
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**233**  
 .....  
**CRUELTY  
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 CONDUCTED**



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6,282  
ADOPTIONS



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2,720  
VOLUNTEERS



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**499**  
 OWNED PETS  
 RECEIVED TRAINING  
 ASSISTANCE



- HOME
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**1,955**  
 LOST PETS RETURNED  
 TO THEIR OWNER



- HOME
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**1,676**  
 PETS PLACED IN  
 FOSTER HOMES



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**4,023**  
 .....  
**ADOPTABLE PETS  
 SPAYED AND  
 NEUTERED**



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**6,417**  
 LOST PETS LISTED ON  
 IOWAPETALERT.COM



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**13,879**  
 ANIMAL CONTROL  
 CALLS RESPONDED TO  
 IN DES MOINES



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**263**  
 .....  
**LAW ENFORCEMENT  
 TRAINED ON CRUELTY  
 INVESTIGATION**



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**258**  
 .....  
**SHELTER PETS  
 TRANSFERRED  
 TO PARTNERS**



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**3,350**  
 OWNED PETS  
 SPAYED AND  
 NEUTERED



- HOME
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**104**  
 THERAPY VISITS  
 THROUGH  
 THERAPETS



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**8,084**  
 .....  
 PERSONALITY  
 PROFILES  
 CONDUCTED



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**1,139**  
 PETS RECEIVED  
 EXTENDED  
 VET CARE



- HOME
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# INTAKES

ACC stats included with permission from the city of Des Moines.

## Des Moines Animal Care and Control Jan.-Dec. 2015<sup>1</sup>

INTAKE	DOG	CAT	SMALL	BARN	TOTAL
Stray/Impound	2088	2041	75	139	4343
Owner Surrender	14	39	4	4	61
Transfers In	106	137	11	0	254
Other	0	6	0	0	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2208</b>	<b>2223</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>4664</b>

## Animal Rescue League of Iowa Jan.-Dec. 2015<sup>1</sup>

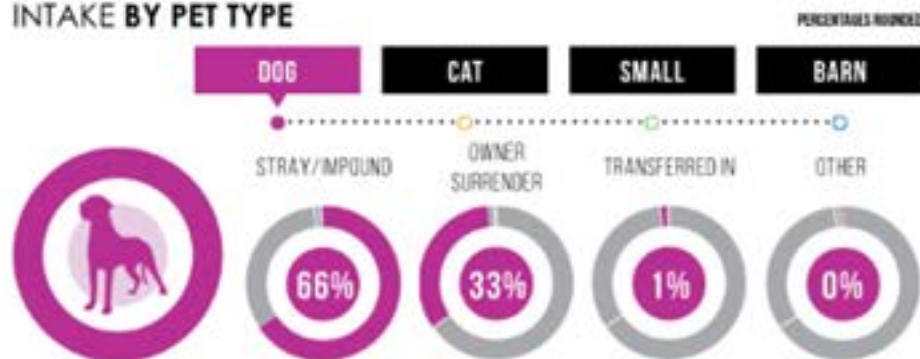
INTAKE	DOG	CAT	SMALL	BARN	TOTAL
Stray/Impound	778	1195	55	46	2074
Owner Surrender	1416	2244	397	41	4098
Transfers In <sup>2</sup>	994	1740	101	60	2895
Other	14	24	23	0	61
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3202</b>	<b>5203</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>9128</b>

<sup>1</sup>Does not include wildlife; we partner with several wildlife rehabilitation organizations to care for wild animals brought to us.

<sup>2</sup>Animals that are not reclaimed from ACC are transferred to ARL after their stray hold period ends.

[VIEW GRAPH](#)

### INTAKE BY PET TYPE



## TOP REASONS PETS ENTER OUR SHELTER

Click to learn about how we're addressing common intake circumstances.

[UNCLAIMED STRAYS](#)

[BEHAVIOR ISSUES](#)

[PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING](#)

[TOO MANY PETS](#)



[HOME](#)

[DOING MORE](#)

[INTAKES](#)

[CHALLENGES](#)

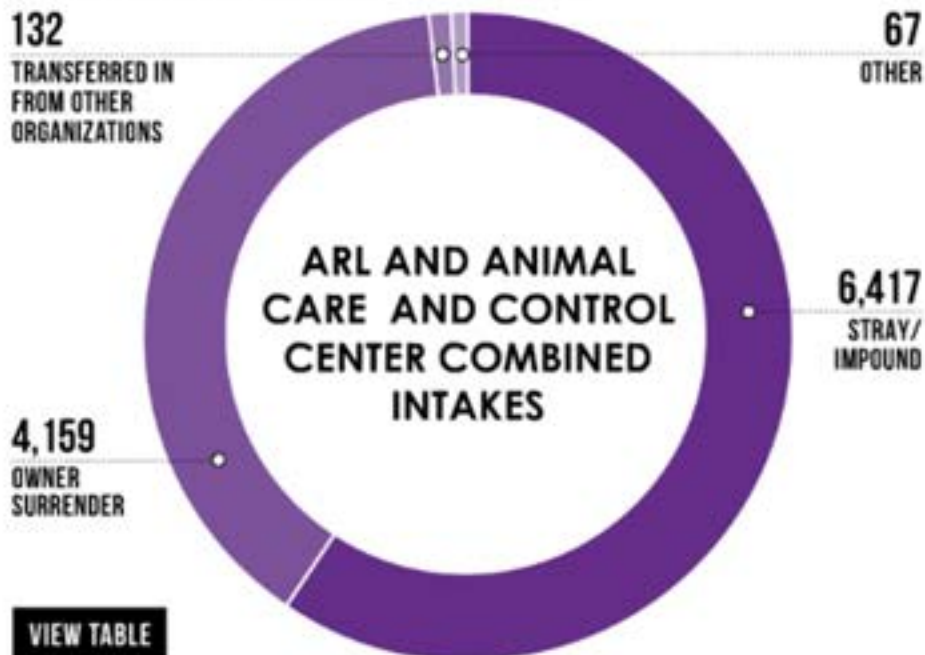
[OUTCOMES](#)

["NO KILL" ..?](#)

[FUTURE](#)

# INTAKES

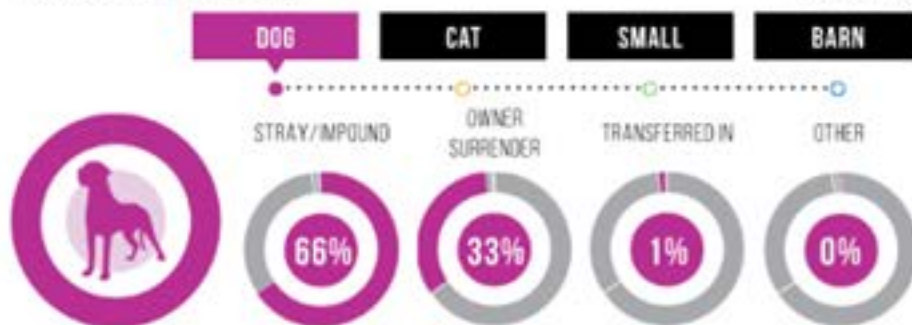
ACC stats included with permission from the city of Des Moines.



[VIEW TABLE](#)

## INTAKE BY PET TYPE

PERCENTAGES ROUNDED



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- [BEHAVIOR ISSUES](#)
- [PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING](#)
- [TOO MANY PETS](#)



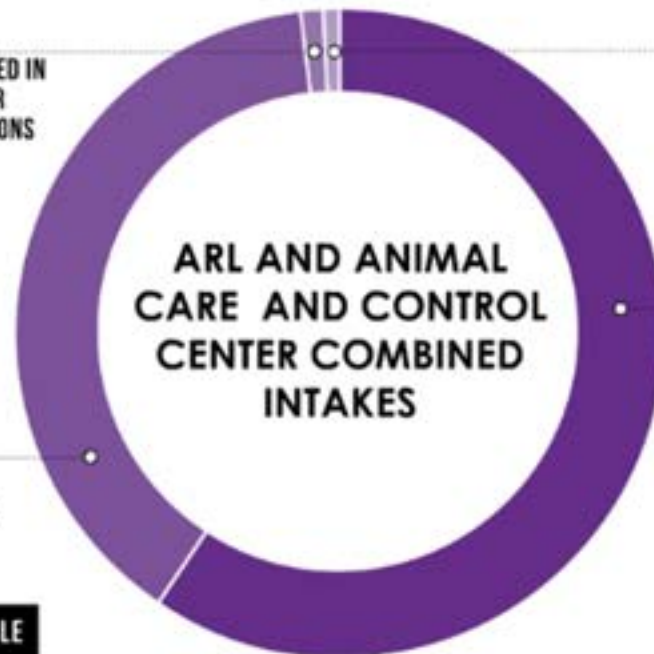
- [HOME](#)
- [DOING MORE](#)
- [INTAKES](#)
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# INTAKES

ACC stats included with permission from the city of Des Moines.

**132**  
TRANSFERRED IN  
FROM OTHER  
ORGANIZATIONS

**67**  
OTHER



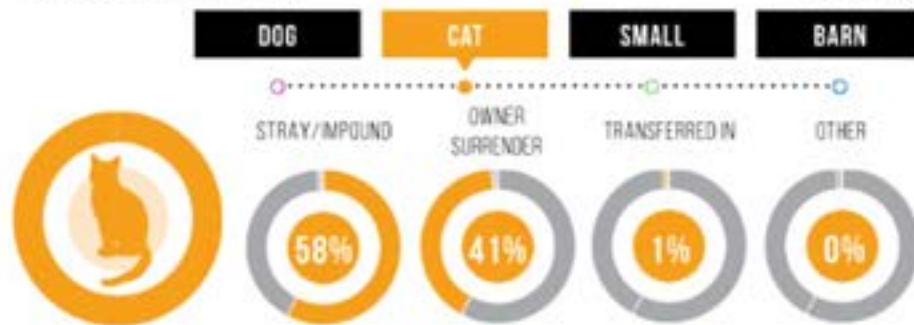
**4,159**  
OWNER  
SURRENDER

**6,417**  
STRAY/  
IMPOUND

[VIEW TABLE](#)

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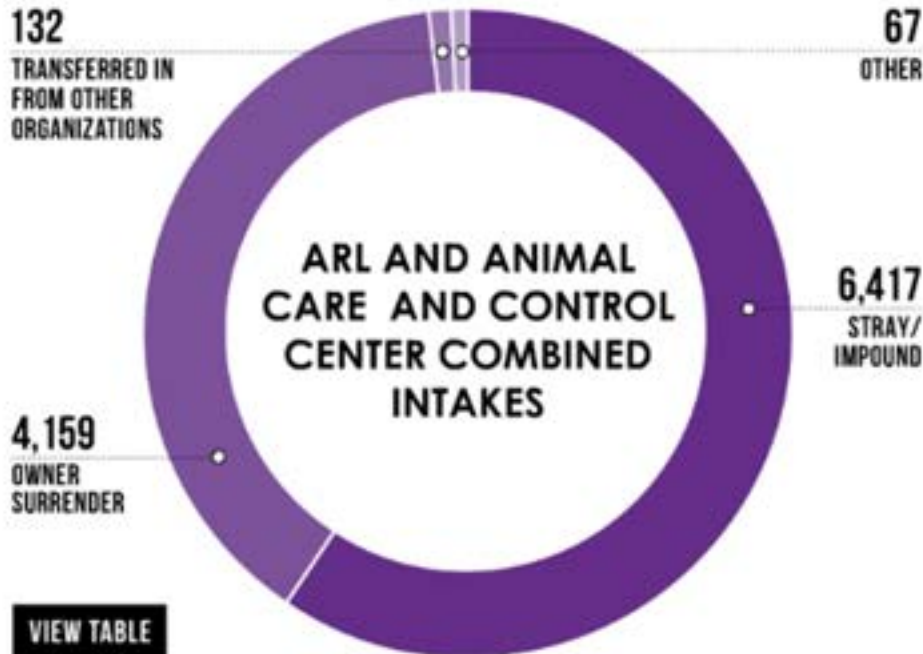
[OUTCOMES](#)

["NO KILL" ..?](#)

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# INTAKES

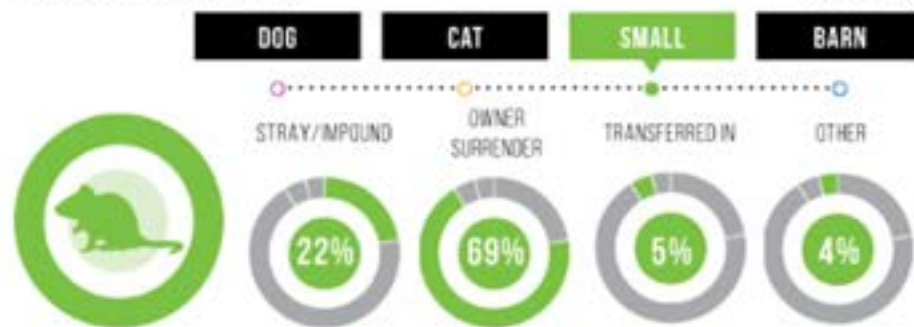
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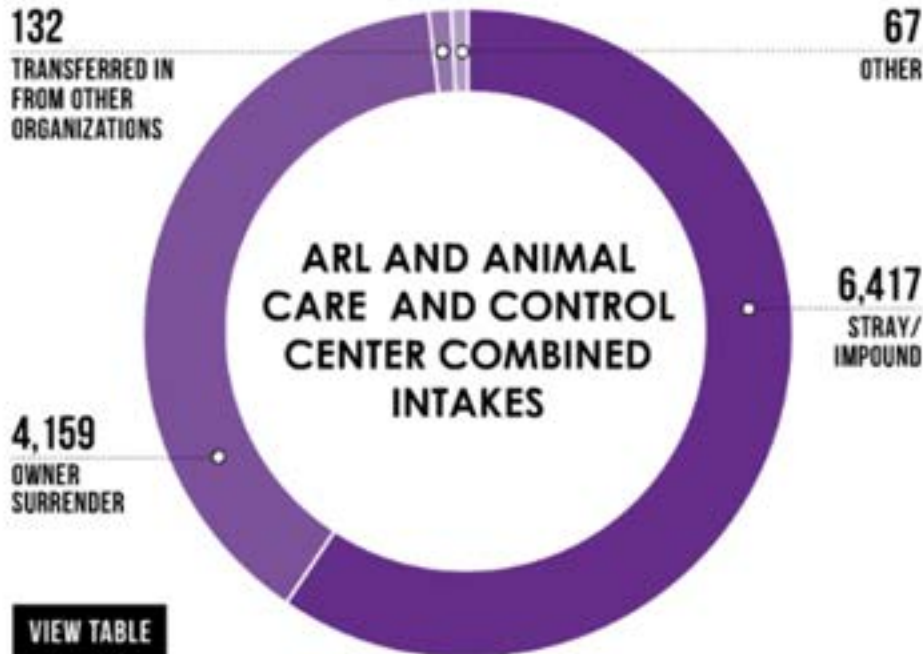
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- [PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING](#)
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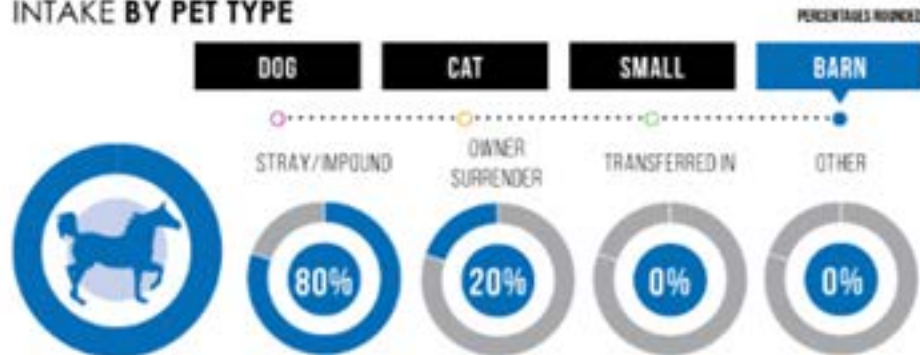
- [HOME](#)
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# INTAKES

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## UNCLAIMED STRAYS

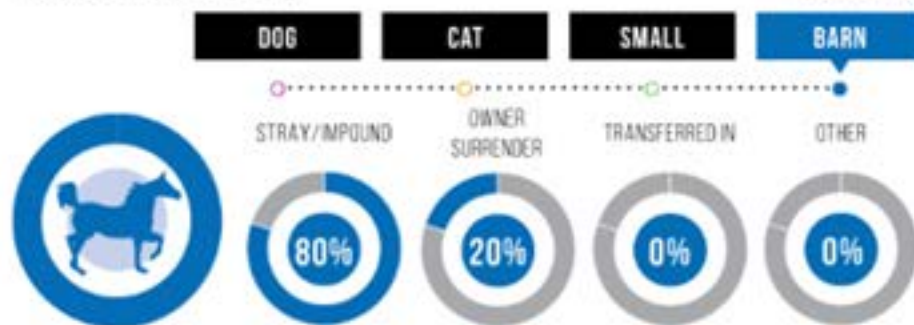
**In 2015, 56% of stray dogs were reclaimed by their owners, but only 9% of stray cats were reclaimed.**

Through our partnership with Iowa Pet Alert, every pet with an unknown owner is listed on IowaPetAlert.com within 24 hours of their arrival. This allows pet owners to search for their pet, without having to visit several different locations. We also offer discounted microchipping for owned pets six days a week and FREE microchipping to thousands of pets each year through our community

outreach programs. Once a pet is reclaimed, they leave with a free collar and ID tag so if they ever get out again, they can even more quickly be reunited with their family.



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BEHAVIOR ISSUES

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TOO MANY PETS



HOME

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# INTAKES

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## BEHAVIOR ISSUES

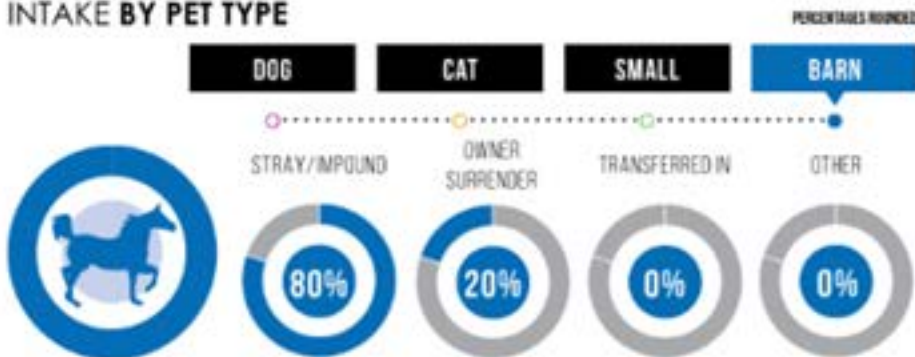
**Behavior issues that owners are unwilling or unable to work with is the number one reason for surrendering a pet.**

In addition to behavior issues covered extensively in the books we authored: *For Love of Dogs* and *For Love of Cats*, we also have behavior helplines for behavior questions about all species. For those who need more advanced help, we provide one-on-one consultations to help owners get on the path to success and in many cases, repair the broken bond. To prevent behavior issues before they start,

we offer dog training classes ranging from puppy socialization to advanced agility and host educational speakers on a variety of pet behavior topics.



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# INTAKES

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## PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING

**Weight, size, and breed restrictions contribute to the second most common reason family dogs are surrendered to us.**

In addition to promoting rental housing on our [website](#), separated by their different pet restrictions, we also offer FREE promotional posts on our social media pages for properties who do not require declawing for cats or limit dogs by weight or appearance. We have also begun conversations with property owners and management companies on how we can work together to make more affordable

pet-friendly housing available to good pets and responsible pet owners.



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TOO MANY PETS



HOME

DOING MORE

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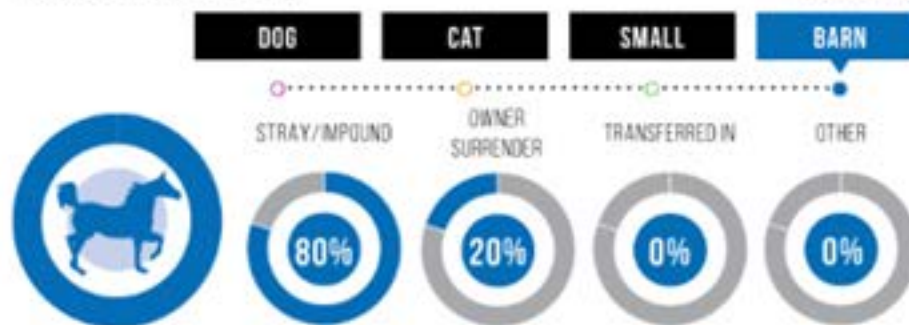
OUTCOMES

"NO KILL" ..?

FUTURE

## INTAKE BY PET TYPE

PERCENTAGES ROUNDED



# INTAKES

ACC stats included with permission from the city of Des Moines.

## TOO MANY PETS

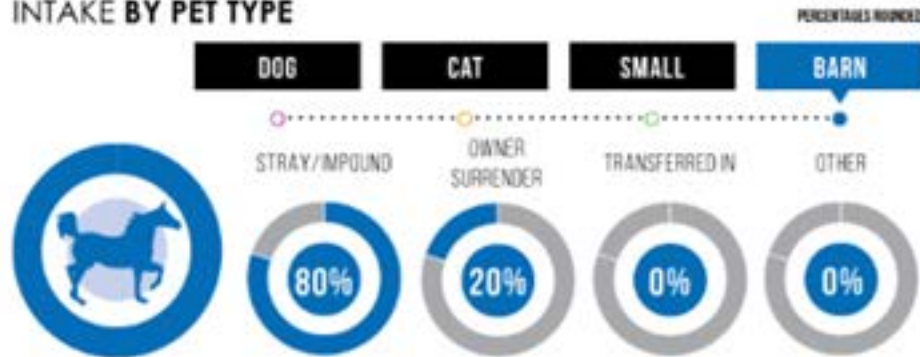
**The third most common reason we receive pets is because the owner has too many, often due to unplanned litters.**

We provide thousands of FREE and affordable [spay/neuter services](#) for owned pets each year. This has not only reduced the number of unwanted animals that arrive at our own

shelter (down 8,186 animals in the past five years), it's also reduced the impact on surrounding shelters.



### INTAKE BY PET TYPE



## TOP REASONS PETS ENTER OUR SHELTER

Click to learn about how we're addressing common intake circumstances.

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ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS

BREED REGULATIONS

HUMANE DISCOURSE



There are 7 primary challenges which are contributing to animal suffering in our community, and also contribute to why some animals are unnecessarily entering our shelter. Click on each issue to learn more about the challenges, what we are doing to overcome them, and how you can help.

**WAYS YOU CAN HELP** [Click to learn more about ways to get involved at the ARL.](#)

DONATE

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## TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN



*Many community cats (cats living in neighborhoods) have a better chance of living a meaningful life if left in the community that is caring for them.*

In order to maintain these cat colonies, programs to humanely trap the cats, spay/neuter them, and return them back to where they live is the most successful way to end animal suffering. Unfortunately, many communities prohibit caring for or re-releasing community cats so instead they are picked up as strays.

Since they are not anyone's family pet, no one comes to claim them, and after a life of roaming free, most of these cats cannot safely be placed into homes and they suffer greatly living in a cage. Additionally, surprisingly to some, some people do not want community cats in their neighborhoods – even if we were to spay/neuter and vaccinate them.

To help community cats, the ARL is building community cat housing in a separate building on our main campus. This housing allows the cats to live in

a more familiar environment, with the opportunity to go indoors or outdoors while we look for appropriate safe homes for them. Through this process we expect to learn that some that may have been thought to be feral, are not, so we will work with them to turn into wonderful house cats.



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## AFFORDABLE VETERINARY CARE



*Many people are able to afford the routine care of their pets, but when unexpected illness or injury happens, many owners are faced with the decision of paying their rent, putting food on their table, or paying the vet bill to save their pet's life.*

That's how many animals end up at the ARL.

Instead of separating pets from their families, we have sought grants and partnerships with local veterinarians to assist owners who need emergency veterinary care. Unfortunately the need for this program is greater than the funds available, so we continue to seek out other funding opportunities to help keep pets with their families.



### WAYS YOU CAN HELP

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## AFFORDABLE PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING



*Finding affordable pet-friendly housing in the Des Moines metro is tough – finding pet-friendly housing for a dog over 20 pounds is nearly impossible.*

The lack of affordable pet-friendly housing has remained the second most common reason pets are surrendered at the ARL (with the first most common being pet behavior issues that their owners are unable or unwilling to correct).

to the landlord. This partnership has resulted in providing landlords with good tenants while keeping families together in affordable housing. In 2016, we plan to focus more resources to tackle this issue that affects too many families.

In addition to listing rental properties on our [website](#) who allow pets (even with restrictions), we also promote properties without size, weight, or breed restrictions (and without declawing requirements) at no cost



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## ANIMALS TURNED AWAY FROM OTHER SHELTERS



*While we served 67 counties in 2015, our primary service area is Polk county and the other surrounding areas where we are the closest animal shelter.*

Since we do not close our doors when full – and do not euthanize animals for space – serving these animals is challenging enough. But added to that are animals that arrive from all over the state after their local shelter – or the shelter they adopted the pet from – said they are full. Sometimes these shelters turn them away and other times they tell them the waiting list is months long. This simply is not an option for families who are in need – or good Samaritans trying to do the right thing for the stray

they kindly picked up...and so they arrive at our doors. While we never turn away an animal in need, we do ask these people to go back to the shelter that turned them away and demand their help. Caring for 10,775 animals in our service area is challenging enough, but caring for animals who have been turned away from other shelters is not only passing the responsibility, it also creates an unfair burden on the ARL.



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## ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS

*Iowa ranks 49th in animal welfare laws across the country, according to the Animal Legal Defense Fund.*

This should be an embarrassment to Iowans and we work year-round for change. Through our countless meetings at the state capital with lawmakers and hearing from constituents like you, we have already changed many of the laws in Iowa to better protect animals but we still have a long way to go.

In 2016 we hope to strengthen animal cruelty laws, remove puppy mill loopholes, and defend the laws already established for animals – and we have already begun that work (Summer 2015). Click the “TAKE ACTION” button below to join our [Humane Action Network](#) to stay up to date on the progress and learn how you can help.



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**BREED REGULATIONS**

HUMANE DISCOURSE

## BREED DISCRIMINATORY REGULATIONS X

*Iowa is the second worst state in the country for breed discriminatory regulations (also known as breed specific language (BSL)), according to the National Canine Research Council.*

Cities with BSL choose to ban or regulate dogs based on appearance, not behaviors – causing many families to have to relocate or surrender their dog to a shelter.

While dogs with the label of “pit bull” are the most commonly discriminated against in Iowa, other dogs fall victim as well (husky, bulldog, chow, shepherd, akita, doberman, rottweiler, etc). Over the past several years, we have helped remove bans and regulations from several Iowa cities, have helped cities reject proposed regulations, and have helped cities re-write their ordinances to better protect the public while not punishing good dogs and responsible owners. Des Moines is the last city in the Metro to have BSL and we have been working to repeal those regulations, but we still have a lot of

work to do. Until then, we have created easy instructions to help dog owners navigate Des Moines’ requirements – and will help them along the way as well. Our work in this area has earned national recognition and countless dogs’ lives have been saved as a result.



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## HUMANE DISCOURSE



*One of the biggest issues plaguing animal welfare is conflict between shelter and rescue organizations.*

In 2012, the Humane Society of the United States issued a national challenge for animal advocates to support the Humane Discourse Pledge - and with the support from the ARL's board of directors the ARL and director, Tom Colvin, were among the first to sign it.

Here is the pledge:

*"We the undersigned individuals and organizations, reject and condemn verbal abuse, threats, and acts of violence directed against animal welfare personnel. There is no place in the humane movement for physical or verbal intimidation, violence, or acts of terrorism.*

*Such behavior is wholly inconsistent with a core ethic of promoting compassion and respect, and undermines the credibility of the entire*

*animal welfare movement. Our goal must be to affirm the value and integrity of all life, whether animal or human, and to encourage others to do likewise. Verbal attacks, threats, harassment, defamation, and acts of violence, moreover, do not ultimately help animals. Instead, they eliminate opportunities for dialogue, collaboration and cooperation, making our shared goals, including that of ending the euthanasia of healthy, adoptable animals, harder to achieve. A free and respectful exchange of views in the ongoing national conversation about animal welfare practices, including animal sheltering practices, is the standard to which humane organizations and communities should aspire and adhere."*



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# OUTCOMES

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## Des Moines Animal Care and Control Jan.-Dec. 2015<sup>1</sup>

OUTCOMES	DOG	CAT	SMALL	BARN	TOTAL
Adoptions	2	2	0	23	27
Transfers Out <sup>2</sup>	936	1709	78	62	2785
Return to Owner	1148	132	8	51	1339
Euthanized <sup>3</sup>	125	367	2	8	502
Died in Care	6	46	3	0	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2217</b>	<b>2256</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>4708</b>
<b>Live Release Rate</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>89%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Does not include wildlife; we partner with several wildlife rehabilitation organizations to care for wild animals brought to us.

<sup>2</sup>Animals that are not reclaimed from ACC are transferred to ARL after their stray hold period ends.

<sup>3</sup>We only euthanize animals that are dangerous or suffering, and then only after we have exhausted all other humane and responsible options. We do not euthanize for space. This number does not include owner requested euthanasia.

## Animal Rescue League of Iowa Jan.-Dec. 2015<sup>1</sup>

OUTCOMES	DOG	CAT	SMALL	BARN	TOTAL
Adoptions	2176	3556	454	69	6255
Transfers Out	211	176	33	69	489
Return to Owner	452	147	5	12	616
Euthanized <sup>3</sup>	341	876	38	3	1258
Died in Care	5	93	13	1	112
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3185</b>	<b>4848</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>8730</b>
<b>Live Release Rate</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>85%</b>

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## OUTCOMES BY PET TYPE

PERCENTAGES ROUNDED



## FIVE FREEDOMS

Every decision we make is based on the globally accepted five freedoms of animal welfare under human control. Ending suffering and enhancing public safety is a responsibility we take seriously.

### 1. FREEDOM FROM HUNGER & THIRST

by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.

### 2. FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT

by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

### 3. FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY & DISEASE

by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

### 4. FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOR

by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind.

### 5. FREEDOM FROM FEAR & DISTRESS

by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

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# OUTCOMES

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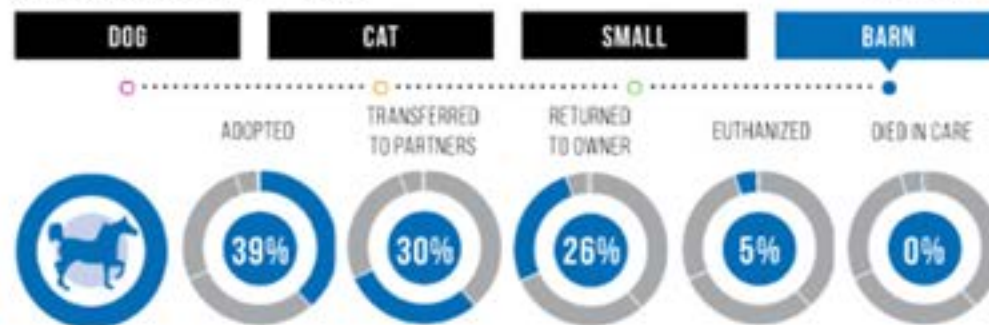
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## "NO KILL"..?

### WHAT IT MEANS... AND DOESN'T MEAN

**T**he term "no kill" is a frequently used, but poorly-understood term. It is a label that does not tell the full story – or much of a story at all – about the total positive impact an organization has on individual animals and the community.

#### DEFINING "NO KILL"

Some shelters and rescues label themselves as "no kill." "No kill" is sometimes defined by admission policies that are selective about the types and numbers of animals accepted, turning away animals with difficult issues or when the shelter is full. Others define "no kill" as not euthanizing any healthy or treatable animals, leading to disagreements over what healthy or treatable means. To avoid that, others define "no kill" as a specific percentage or "live release rate" (often 90%) of animals leaving the shelter alive. That definition is a "one size fits all" criteria that doesn't consider the unique makeup of animals needing help in a given community.

#### AVOIDING PITFALLS

While implementing progressive programs and achieving results that are comparable to a "no kill" shelter, the ARL has and continues to resist the use of the term.

We believe the term is inherently divisive as it implies other organizations are "kill shelters" no matter how hard-working and dedicated to their mission. The term and its usage frustrates our efforts to work cooperatively with all organizations in our shared mission to help animals.

Further, adopting the "no kill" label, especially one defined by an arbitrary live release rate, can create unintended consequences that actually work against the best interests of the animals. A shelter trying to reach or maintain a 90% live release

rate might hold animals in overcrowded or inhumane conditions, or rationalize admission policies that result in animals being denied help. They might be tempted to place an animal with known, unresolved aggression issues into an unsuspecting home. They might transfer animals "out of sight and out of mind" to other shelters or rescues, without ensuring that the animals will be well cared for and find a home. We see news stories like these from around the country almost daily.

Avoiding the "no kill" pitfalls ensures we have the freedom to always act in the best interests of each animal.

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## "NO KILL"..?

### "NO KILL"..? CONTINUED ►

#### MORE THAN A NUMBER

Rather than measure our success by a single, arbitrary number, we look at each animal as an individual and then do whatever is necessary to change the life of that animal. Every decision we make is based on what is best for the animal in front of us including, after we have tried everything we can, knowing when it is time to say goodbye.

---

"WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS THAT HELP KEEP ANIMALS IN THEIR HOMES, INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS ADOPTED, AND REDUCE THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS EUTHANIZED - WHILE ENSURING WE ARE NOT COMPROMISING THE ANIMAL'S WELL-BEING OR THE PUBLIC'S SAFETY."

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To be clear, the ARL does not euthanize for space. Animals in our care do not have time limits. We only humanely and peacefully euthanize animals that are dangerous or suffering, after

we have exhausted every other responsible option currently available to us.

Those who know us best know that everything we do is to improve the lives of the animals in our care and in our community, a responsibility we don't take lightly.

#### DOING MORE

In addition to animals that are brought to us by their owners who had nowhere else to turn, we also receive animals through several animal control contracts. We have had an animal control contract with the City of Des Moines since 2005. By employing compassionate and knowledgeable animal control and care staff and empowering them with the privately-funded program resources of the ARL, the results have been transformational.

Since 2011, through grants and private donations, the ARL has contributed over \$383,250 back into the Des Moines community in the form of spay/neuter surgeries,

rabies vaccinations, medical assistance, and pet supplies to under served pet owners.

#### COMMITMENT

We remain committed to our mission of promoting animal welfare, strengthening the human-animal bond, and preventing the overpopulation of pets. We will continue to provide programs that help keep animals in their homes, increase the number of animals adopted, and reduce the number of animals euthanized - while ensuring we are not compromising the animal's well-being or the public's safety. We invite you to join us in that effort.

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# FUTURE

## WHERE WE ARE HEADED



"I occasionally allow myself a glance backward at the road that has led us to this point, but mainly we look straight ahead at the continuing ways we are changing lives at the ARL and in the community.

Change takes time and resources and the ARL set into motion several years ago a plan to do just that - make change. In fact, the saying at the ARL is 'the only constant is change, because only change will make the difference for people and animals.'

Starting with organizational change - that led to facility change - that led to program change - that led to the improvements that mark the ARL of today. But what's next? Now that our programs are working and resulting in the decline of incoming pets for the first time in ARL history, we plan to continue their expansion of influence. Community outreach, humane education, and volunteerism will have an exponential effect on our community as the underserved and the youth are given the tools and education to help animals. City and county governments can be counseled in best practices to make communities safer for people and friendly to pets and responsible owners. The ARL will continue being the trusted leader in changing lives. We will continue encouraging all who care about pets and people to join our ARL family because although it is hard work, it can be done together, like it always has."

For the animals.

*Tom Z. Colvin*

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