

GOVERNANCE OPTIONS

There are three potential models that might be considered to provide animal services in Yolo County.

1. Joint Powers Authority (JPA): Yolo County and its five contract agencies form a JPA, which is responsible for hiring employees and providing animal services to the entire county.
2. JPA, Which Contracts with a Non-Profit for Services: Yolo County and its five contract agencies form a JPA, which then contracts with a non-profit or for-profit organization to provide animal services to Yolo County.
3. Hybrid Model: Yolo County and its five agencies form a JPA, which contracts with a non-profit or for-profit organization for the provision of animal sheltering services, and a public agency for field services.

LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

An important lesson is that cost effective and successful programs leverage every available partner. Any new proposed governance model should continue to leverage the contributions of all local resources, such as Yolo SPCA and UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine as well as the many rescues and animal support organizations.

To facilitate development of functional partnerships, discrete programmatic elements could be delivered under a variety of arrangements. This could range from all programs provided by a single government or JPA operated agency to services contracted out to a private, non-profit group. Bringing all services under one umbrella agency creates some economy of scale, organizational efficiency and helps ensure consistency of policy and procedures.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP AND POLICY

A consistent message from comparable agency interviews was the importance of leadership that was aware of emerging as well as existing best practices and committed to the overall mission of the organization. To succeed, leaders also required sufficient backing to implement policy as well as flexibility to adapt to evolving challenges and opportunities, and even the support to make occasional mistakes in the service of trying new practices. Within the overall policy framework of the organization, there was also a need for individual flexibility, such as adjustment of fees or waiving of policy to respond to a unique situation where an animal or member of the public might be at risk. Each governance structure offers potential strengths and weaknesses for fostering such flexible, empowered leadership.

A JPA board provides a greater voice for each member agency, but may create obstacles to flexibility and rapid evolution of policy and funding, if the process for approval is unwieldy.