



COUNTY OF YOLO

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September 8, 2026

Honorable Tom M. Dyer
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Yolo
1000 Main Street
Woodland, CA 95695

Yolo County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 2142
Woodland, CA 95776

Re: Response to Civil Grand Jury Report, “Yolo County Animal Services: Continuing Progress”

On behalf of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors (the “Board”) and the three County officials invited to respond, the County Administrative Officer, the Director of Community Services, and the Director of Animal Services, this document responds to the 2025–2026 Yolo County Civil Grand Jury (the “Grand Jury”) report, *Yolo County Animal Services: Continuing Progress*, released June 18, 2026 (the “Report”).

The Board and the invited County officials are collectively referred to as the “County respondents,” with each referenced individually as needed.

The Board appreciates the Grand Jury’s thoughtful review and its recognition of the continuing progress at Yolo County Animal Services (YCAS). The Report recognizes improvements to shelter operations, the volunteer program, training materials, public access, and veterinary capacity. It also identifies continuing challenges associated with the age and limitations of the existing facility, reliance on volunteers, staffing, training, public access, and community outreach.

The County recognizes that the existing Animal Services facility presents real physical and operational constraints. Much of the facility dates to the 1970s, and the County has continued

to make improvements within those constraints while also adding veterinary capacity, pursuing grant funding, strengthening volunteer programs, and evaluating longer-term service and governance options. The County remains committed to continued improvement, with the welfare of animals guiding operational and service-delivery decisions.

The Board also recognizes the important role played by YCAS staff, volunteers, partner organizations, the cities served by YCAS, UC Davis, and members of the community. The County agrees with the Grand Jury that continued work is needed in several areas and, where appropriate, is already taking steps consistent with the Report's recommendations.

In the attachments, the County respondents address each finding and recommendation applicable to them pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Response to Findings

B. Response to Recommendations

ATTACHMENT A. RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

The Report directs Findings F1–F8 to the Yolo County Board of Supervisors for response. The Grand Jury also invites the Director of Community Services and the Director of Animal Services to respond to Findings F1–F8 and the County Administrative Officer to respond to Findings F1–F2. The following responses are provided on behalf of the Board and the invited County respondents.

Finding F1. The failure to provide funding sufficient to keep pace with the increase in intake and service calls has resulted in inadequate housing for animals.

Response. The County disagrees partially with this finding.

The County recognizes that the existing YCAS facility has significant space and infrastructure constraints and that additional resources can support continued improvements. The County disagrees, however, that these constraints can be attributed simply to County funding failing to keep pace with animal intake and service calls.

Funding for YCAS has increased at a greater pace than population growth in recent years. Those resources have supported the hiring of a veterinarian and veterinary technicians and have funded improvements to the existing facility. The condition and capacity of the shelter also reflect the age and design of buildings constructed largely in the 1970s, changing animal care standards, the volume and needs of animals entering the shelter, and the services provided throughout the County.

The County will continue to evaluate facility and service needs and available resources through its budget process and through agreements with the jurisdictions served by YCAS, as discussed further in the response to Recommendation R1.

Finding F2. The YCAS facility places a great deal of reliance on volunteers for day-to-day operations. Volunteers are often trained by other volunteers. Staffing for the busiest operational days (Saturdays) is often facilitated through volunteers.

Response. The County agrees with this finding.

Volunteers play an important role in YCAS operations and support animal care, enrichment, adoption, and other shelter activities. Animal shelters throughout the country use volunteers to enhance and support the work of paid staff, and YCAS follows animal welfare industry practices in using trained volunteers to support shelter operations and animal adoptions.

YCAS will continue to support its volunteer program while maintaining appropriate paid

staffing for its shelter and field-service responsibilities.

Finding F3. YCAS's use of an outdated policy manual and lack of standard operating procedures had led to the lack of a formal hands-on training program has resulted in inadequate training for some volunteers.

Response. The County disagrees partially with this finding.

The County agrees that YCAS should complete and implement an updated Policy and Operations Manual and associated standard operating procedures. The County does not agree that the absence of a finalized new manual means that volunteer training has been inadequate.

Since YCAS transitioned from the Sheriff's Office to the Department of Community Services, staff and volunteer training has continued and has been updated as needed. New policies and procedures are currently under review and will be implemented as they are completed. The updated manual will provide additional structure and consistency for future staff and volunteer training.

Finding F4. The lack of weekday evening and Sunday availability is a disincentive to potential adopters who may have difficulty visiting on weekdays or during the limited Saturday hours. Although hours are being expanded on Tuesday evening, adoption hours have not been expanded based on the website.

Response. The County disagrees partially with this finding.

The County recognizes that broader evening and weekend availability may make adoption services more convenient for some members of the public. However, access to adoptable animals is not limited to the shelter's regular posted hours.

YCAS has expanded evening availability and increased after-hours and off-site adoption activities and events. These efforts provide additional opportunities for members of the public to meet animals available for adoption. YCAS is also testing new adoption appointment times to improve access while balancing shelter operations, field services, veterinary services, staff training, and other operational needs.

The County will continue evaluating ways to improve public access to adoption opportunities, as discussed further in the responses to Recommendations R4 and R5.

Finding F5. Staff have made progress in implementing some of the recommendations from last year's Grand Jury report, such as improvements to the website, highlighting volunteer opportunities, and receipt of the "Clinic in a Can" unit for medical activities,

however the unit is still not operational.

Response. The County agrees with this finding.

YCAS has continued implementing improvements identified in prior Grand Jury reports, including changes to its website and volunteer information and continued development of its volunteer program. The “Clinic in a Can” has been delivered and work is underway to complete the infrastructure and installation needed to make it operational.

The County expects the Clinic in a Can to be operational by December 31, 2026, subject to construction delays, extreme weather, or other circumstances outside the County’s control, as discussed further in the response to Recommendation R2.

Finding F6. YCAS’s emphasis on outreach to the cities of Woodland and Davis has resulted in nearly 40% of the county’s population being neglected when it comes to animal care education, adoption events, and spay/neuter and vaccine clinics.

Response. The County disagrees with this finding.

YCAS provides outreach and services throughout Yolo County and does not agree that West Sacramento and rural communities have been neglected. YCAS uses social media and County communications channels to reach residents throughout the County and has conducted vaccine and microchip clinics in West Sacramento and the community of Yolo.

YCAS has also participated in West Sacramento events and programs, including the Veterans Day Parade, Soggy Doggy, reading events in partnership with the Arthur F. Turner Community Library, pet food distribution, and adoption events through its Petco partnership. Rural outreach has included activities in Yolo, Esparto, Knights Landing, Clarksburg, and Winters.

The County agrees that outreach should continue to grow where opportunities and partnerships are available, as discussed further in the responses to Recommendations R9 and R10.

Finding F7. YCAS’s lack of a formal volunteer recognition program and their failure to foster and encourage staff-volunteer interaction has resulted in poor coordination of volunteer activities, inadequate training of volunteers, and poor volunteer morale.

Response. The County disagrees with this finding.

The County recognizes the importance of communication, coordination, and recognition within a volunteer program and agrees that these efforts should continue to improve.

The County does not agree, however, that YCAS has failed to recognize volunteers or foster staff-volunteer interaction.

Although the YCAS volunteer program does not have a dedicated budget, County and grant funds have supported volunteer recognition efforts, including T-shirts and discounted sweatshirts. YCAS has also implemented a new internal communication platform and continues to use the Better Impact system to support communication, volunteer-hour tracking, training, and recognition of volunteer achievements.

YCAS will continue building on these efforts, as discussed further in the responses to Recommendations R6 and R7.

Finding F8. YCAS's failure to verify County employment conflicts for volunteers may have violated the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Response. The County disagrees with this finding.

The Report does not establish that YCAS has violated the Fair Labor Standards Act. YCAS has maintained that volunteer duties performed at Animal Services are separate from the paid employment duties of County employees who may also volunteer at the shelter.

To ensure continued compliance, the County will review current employee-volunteer arrangements with Human Resources and County Counsel, as discussed further in the response to Recommendation R8.

ATTACHMENT B. RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Report directs Recommendations R1–R10 to the Yolo County Board of Supervisors for response. The Grand Jury also invites the Director of Community Services and the Director of Animal Services to respond to Recommendations R1–R10 and the County Administrative Officer to respond to Recommendations R1–R2. The following responses are provided on behalf of the Board and the invited County respondents.

Recommendation R1. The Yolo County Board of Supervisors should increase funding for YCAS to keep pace with Yolo County population growth and the number of animals received at the facility.

Response. This recommendation will not be implemented as written because it is not reasonable to establish YCAS funding levels based solely on population growth and the number of animals received at the facility.

The County agrees with the underlying principle that funding should reflect service needs and should be reviewed as those needs change. Funding for YCAS has increased at a greater pace than population growth in recent years, supporting the addition of a veterinarian and veterinary technicians as well as improvements to the existing facility.

Population growth and animal intake are not the only factors that determine Animal Services resource needs. YCAS provides a range of shelter, veterinary, field, enforcement, adoption, and other services. Most of the Animal Services funding is also provided through agreements with the cities and other jurisdictions served by YCAS. Those agreements define service levels and associated contract amounts.

The County will continue evaluating Animal Services funding through its regular budget process and through service agreements with its partner jurisdictions, taking into account service demand, animal welfare needs, staffing, facility conditions, available resources, and other operational factors.

Recommendation R2. The Department of Community Services should prioritize planning, expedite permitting coordination, and the completion of infrastructure for the “Clinic in a Can” to be operational to provide a more modern facility for spay/neuter operations by December 31, 2026.

Response. This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

The Clinic in a Can project is currently in the formal solicitation process for site work needed to install the unit and connect it to utilities, with bids due September 10, 2026.

The Department of Community Services and YCAS are coordinating the permitting and other work required to place the facility into operation.

The County expects the Clinic in a Can to be operational by December 31, 2026. This timeframe is subject to construction delays, extreme weather, or other circumstances outside the County's control.

Recommendation R3. YCAS staff should implement the new Policy and Operations Manual, currently the manual preparation is in progress and expected for completion in Mid-April. As of May 12, 2026, it has yet to be released. YCAS staff should implement comprehensive training of staff and volunteers on the manual by November 30, 2026.

Response. This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

Review of the new Policy and Operations Manual has taken longer than originally anticipated. Staff and volunteer training has continued during that review.

YCAS will begin implementation of the new Policy and Operations Manual no later than November 30, 2026. Comprehensive training of staff and volunteers on the updated manual will be completed by February 2027.

Recommendation R4. The YCAS facility should schedule an adequate number of paid employees working on the weekend, to serve the community for animal adoptions, increase adoptions, and reduce the length of stay for animals.

Response. This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

YCAS schedules paid shelter and field-services staff throughout the week based on operational needs. Staffing must provide coverage for animal care, field response, adoption services, veterinary services, special events, training, employee absences, and time off.

The County does not believe that establishing a separate weekend staffing requirement is necessary at this time. YCAS will continue to assess staffing schedules and adoption access as operational needs change and will use appointments, off-site events, and other approaches to provide additional adoption opportunities.

Recommendation R5. YCAS should expand weekend and evening hours, opening on Sunday, with appropriate YCAS staff, supported by volunteers, and expand some evening hours, as appropriate, particularly in the Summer, to increase the ability for adoptions to occur more quickly. The facility should consider closing to the public on a weekday, rather

than Sundays.

Response. This recommendation will not be implemented as written because the proposed change in operating days is not reasonable under current operational conditions.

The County agrees with the goal of making adoption services accessible to members of the public who may have difficulty visiting during regular business hours. YCAS has expanded evening availability, increased off-site and after-hours adoption activities, and is testing new adoption appointment times.

Opening the shelter to the public on Sunday while closing on a weekday would affect other YCAS operations, including veterinary procedures, field-service response, and staff and volunteer training. Sunday currently serves as a dedicated training day for staff and volunteers.

YCAS will continue evaluating appointment times, evening access, off-site events, and other options to improve adoption opportunities without disrupting other core services.

Recommendation R6. YCAS should develop better ways to foster interaction among volunteers and between volunteers and staff. Examples may include:

- **Providing a regular newsletter aimed at both staff and volunteers, that presents information about the shelter, staff and policy changes, and volunteer activities.**
- **Maintaining a suggestion box, paper or online, that can be used anonymously**
- **Conducting regular meetings of staff and volunteers who perform the same duties, e.g., dog walkers, kennel cleaners, kitten socializers. These may include a combination of general discussion and volunteer training.**
- **Encouraging use of the WhatsApp channel by both volunteers and staff to keep everyone updated on latest information.**

Response. This recommendation has been implemented and is ongoing.

YCAS has taken steps to improve communication and interaction among staff and volunteers, including implementation of a new internal communication platform and continued use of the Better Impact system for communication, volunteer-hour tracking, and training achievements.

YCAS will continue improving these and other internal processes to strengthen communication, coordination, and relationships among staff and volunteers.

Recommendation R7. YCAS should develop a program to formally recognize volunteers and their achievements. Examples based on efforts that have been successful for other

similar programs include:

- **Annual volunteer appreciation events.**
- **Recognition of volunteer milestones such as hours worked, years of volunteering, or becoming a Purple Paw. These could include a certificate, a pin, or mention in a newsletter or social media.**
- **Recognition of personal milestones such as birthdays, graduations, weddings, etc. Photo Identification, laminated badges with lanyards for those who work directly with the public.**
- **Showcasing individual volunteers on social media, in newsletter, or at adoption events.**
Providing volunteers with free or at-cost items such as T-shirts or caps.
- **Nominating volunteers for local volunteering awards, such as the Yolo Community Foundation's Philanthropy Awards.**
- **Having an on-site bulletin board for posting information for and about volunteers.**

Response. This recommendation has been implemented and is ongoing.

The County agrees that volunteers are integral to the success of YCAS. Existing recognition efforts include providing T-shirts to volunteers, offering discounted sweatshirts, tracking volunteer hours and training achievements, and other forms of recognition and communication.

YCAS will continue building on these efforts and will work with Friends of Yolo County Animal Services and other partners, as appropriate, to support volunteer appreciation, recognition, and morale.

Recommendation R8. YCAS should verify that employees who are also serving as volunteers are not in conflict with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Response. This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

YCAS has maintained that volunteer duties performed at Animal Services are separate from the paid employment duties of County employees who may also volunteer at the shelter. To verify continued compliance with applicable law, the County will review current employee-volunteer arrangements with Human Resources and County Counsel.

The County expects to complete this review within 60 days of the date of this response.

Recommendation R9. YCAS should work to include the city of West Sacramento in education and outreach programs. Suggestions include:

- **Work with the city and the private sector to hold spay/neuter and vaccination**

clinics in suitable locations in the city, e.g., Sutter Health Park parking lots, and local schools.

- **Work with local animal-related businesses, restaurants and outdoor venues to hold adoption events.**
- **Work with local schools and colleges to recruit volunteers.**
- **Have Animal Control officers participate in the Arthur Turner Library Trucktopia which showcases public & private sector vehicles.**
- **Develop outreach programs to recruit people willing to foster animals.**
- **Explore partnering with professional baseball teams, e.g., River Cats and/or Athletics on educational and other outreach events.**

Response. This recommendation has been implemented and is ongoing.

YCAS already conducts education, outreach, and service activities in West Sacramento. These efforts have included a free vaccine and microchip clinic; participation in community events such as the Veterans Day Parade and Soggy Doggy; kitten and dog reading events in partnership with the Arthur F. Turner Community Library; and weekly pet-food distribution coordinated with volunteers.

Petco is also an adoption-site partner with YCAS, with adoption events beginning in July 2026.

YCAS will continue working with the City of West Sacramento, local businesses, community organizations, and other partners to identify additional opportunities for animal care education, adoption, vaccination, volunteer recruitment, fostering, and other outreach.

Recommendation R10. Identify opportunities to do education and outreach in rural areas. This could include:

- **Identify local events where YCAS or volunteers could participate and provide educational materials.**
- **Identify local locations for posting educational materials, such as libraries or post offices.**

Response. This recommendation has been implemented and is ongoing.

YCAS conducts education and outreach activities in rural communities throughout Yolo County. These efforts have included a free vaccine and microchip clinic in the community of Yolo in partnership with the Yolo Branch Library, participation in National Night Out in Yolo, and community events in Esparto, Knights Landing, Clarksburg, and Winters.

YCAS will continue seeking partnerships with local businesses, libraries, community organizations, and other groups to expand public outreach, education, animal-care

services, and adoption opportunities in rural areas.