

## Attachment C

### Industry Standards and Terminology

#### ***Information provided from Bissell Pet Foundation:***

##### **What's the Difference Between Municipal and Private Shelters?**

Municipal shelters are operated by city or county governments or contracted by them to serve the public. These shelters are legally required to take in every animal that comes through their doors—no matter how full they are, how sick or injured the pet may be, or how many pets arrive in a single day. They don't get to choose who they help. They serve every animal, and every person, in their community.

Private shelters, on the other hand, are typically run by nonprofit organizations and can often choose which animals to take in, when, and how many. Some private shelters also hold municipal contracts, meaning they agree to take in stray or surrendered animals on behalf of a city or county. These organizations, while privately managed, function as municipal shelters because they're legally obligated to accept animals under contract requirements. The distinction may not be visible to the public, but the responsibilities are very real.

##### **Why It Matters**

Municipal shelters are on the front lines of the pet overpopulation crisis. Because they have no control over intake, their teams are forced to make impossible choices—often with limited resources and staff. When space runs out, and more animals continue to arrive, euthanasia for space can become a heartbreaking reality.

Labeling these shelters as “kill shelters” only deepens the burden. It places blame on the very people who are showing up every day to do the hardest work in animal welfare. These are not people who have failed animals—they are people who need support, not blame.

#### ***Information provided from Best Friends website:***

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

A no-kill community is one that acts on the belief that every healthy or treatable dog and cat should be saved. Its focus should be on saving as many lives as possible through pet adoption, spay/neuter, trap-neuter-vaccinate-return and other community support programs rather than achieving a specific numerical outcome.

With that said, we understand the importance of having a quantitative benchmark that communities can use as a goal. Saving 90% or more of the animals who enter shelters is the [current benchmark for no-kill](#). This means that for a community to be considered no-kill, all of its shelters and animal services facilities must be saving 90% or more, collectively, of the animals who enter its facilities.

## **What 'no-kill' doesn't mean**

"No-kill" has become an emotionally and politically charged term for many people, which is why it's imperative that, as a no-kill advocate, you understand what no-kill doesn't mean.

No-kill **does not** mean:

1. Shelters that haven't reached no-kill, and their employees, are willing killers.
2. Dangerous or sick animals will be released into the community.
3. Shelters will start warehousing animals indefinitely.

Each community is collectively responsible for its decisions regarding homeless animals and for creating safe, humane environments for the people and pets who live in them.

## **Key terms**

Before you can properly assess operations in a particular shelter, you need to know how certain terms are defined and used.

**Healthy or treatable animals:** This segment of the animal population includes those who are fully healthy and behaviorally sound around people and other animals. It also includes animals with behavioral and medical issues that can be addressed and/or managed, such as (but not limited to) animals with ringworm, upper respiratory infections, mange, a need for limb amputation, heartworm disease, ear infections, dental disease, urinary tract infections, resource guarding, leash and barrier reactivity, and anxiety.

**Unhealthy/untreatable animals:** This category includes dogs with severe behavioral challenges or dogs and cats with medical issues who are irremediably suffering with no possibility of a positive outcome.

**Euthanasia:** Defined purely as an act of mercy, euthanasia should be reserved for dogs and cats who have irredeemable medical situations and are experiencing serious and irreversible reduction in quality of life or dogs whose behavior obstacles make them unsuitable for rehabilitation.