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Kern County Animal Services Covid-19 Worksite Specific Plan For Service Delivery

Kern County Animal Services prides itself on being an important piece of the local government structure. There are services the department provides that are essential to government compliance, others that are essential for the welfare of the animals in this community, and some that are discretionary in their nature, and yet vital to maintaining a life-saving approach that Kern County has embraced. In the face of Kern County's Covid-19 response, Kern County Animal Services is proposing the following procedures, precautions, and implementations to resume functions to support its goals responsibly, safely, and with an importance placed on the health and welfare of staff and volunteers. All staff who's primary functions involve public interaction or animal handling will be required to wear gloves, cloth or disposable paper face covering, and an apron **at all times** while on duty, in addition to practicing distancing from one another. Staff at public interaction areas will be required to disinfect areas as is needed, periodically, using disinfectants proven to kill Coronavirus. Additionally, members of the public will be required to wear a cloth or paper face covering upon entering the facilities. A paper, disposable type face covering will be provided upon request.

Individual Control Measures and Screening

- Kern County Animal Services will employ a "zero-tolerance" policy when dealing with the potential spread of Covid-19. Staff will have their temperatures gauged, using contactless thermometers, at the start of shift, along with symptoms being observed visually. Any staff presenting with fever, or symptoms of Covid-19, will be asked to leave the work site and seek medical care. Staff presenting with signs of illness will be required to receive a note from a physician authorizing them to return to work. A list of free Covid-19 testing sites will be provided in the case that an employee is asked to leave the work site as a result of symptomatic behavior.
 - Kern County Public Health can be contacted at (661)321-3000, or by email at publichealth@kerncounty.com. Additional information on Covid-19 testing sites can also be obtained through dialing 211 on your phone.
- Buildings "A", "B", "C", and the Administration Trailer will have single-point, clearly marked entrance and exits. The single-point entrance and exit for the publicly accessible areas will have staff designated to visually screen members of the public.

- Any members of the public exhibiting signs of Covid-19 will not be allowed entry to the facilities, and will be issued a list of free testing sites. Temperatures will *not* be taken of members of the public.
- Although situations that will require direct contact with the public will be limited to stray animal intake, and potentially animal licensing, there is potential for communicability via fomite transmission from an animal. It is for this purpose that staff will be required to wear provided gloves, apron, and cloth or disposable paper face covering **at all times** while on-site, and on duty. Members of the public will be required to wear a cloth or disposable paper face covering to enter facilities. Animal Services is confident that there exists sufficient supply for staff members to wear personal or department issued cloth or disposable paper face coverings for the foreseeable future. We have not been able to procure a sufficient supply of N95 type masks that would allow us to issue to all staff. Additionally, we are not confident in the ability to supply enough N95 type masks for the general public.. We have procured approximately 750 disposable paper face coverings for public use, and we estimate that this supply will last approximately 30 days. We will continue to engage vendors when the opportunity presents itself to procure additional face coverings.

Protecting High-Risk Employees

- Kern County Animal Services has identified approximately 5 employees that are potentially high-risk. These employees have either voluntarily advised so, or their individual age or previously disclosed health issues have informed us of the risk potential. We have provided forms to allow for an employee to request accommodation if they believe there has been a change in status for them, or someone in their household. Remote work cannot be afforded to all personnel, but where remote work is available, it will be afforded. The department will arrange for an Interactive Process meeting to determine alternate work options that might mitigate exposure, when remote work is not an option.

Physical Distancing

- Kern County Animal Services has arranged remote work for those employees that perform duties that *can* be done remotely. The nature of work in the animal shelter significantly restricts our ability to afford remote work to the majority of classifications within Animal Services, specifically the Animal Control Officer and Animal Care Worker classifications. Additionally, some of our fiscal staff that *could* conceivably perform all of their duties remotely, cannot do so due to technological restrictions. Those restrictions are entirely a result of an inability to obtain remote and unfettered access to Auditor.net. A recent request has been made to create VPN accounts for staff in need of virtual access. Staggering shifts of staff assigned to each facility will be implemented whenever applicable.
- Workstations will be accessed only when distancing between other workstations can be afforded. Workstations that place staff closer than 6 feet from each other will be decommissioned, or reconstructed to be in observance with distancing guidelines.

- 6 feet of physical distancing will be enforced in all areas of the facility, at all times, in both indoor and outdoor site areas.
- All indoor staff break areas will be closed for use, and all briefings or gatherings of staff members will be handled virtually moving forward.
- The Kern County Animal Shelter located in Lake Isabella, as well as the Kern County Animal Shelter located in Mojave, will remain closed at least until July 1, 2020. County staff assigned to both locations will be reassigned to the Kern County Animal Shelter in Bakersfield.
- Kern County Animal Services will refrain from welcoming back its volunteers indefinitely. It is hopeful that volunteers will once again be assisting with the needs of the community's animals after July 1, 2020.

Training and Communication of Supervisors and/or Employees

- Supervisors are educated on monitoring work and ensuring engagement through twice weekly Microsoft Teams meetings with the Director and Deputy Director. Additionally, daily briefings with line staff will occur, with distancing being observed during briefings.

Additional Measures to Limit Exposure to the Public

- Limiting measures are as follows
 - Closure of outlying facilities
 - Suspension of volunteer use
 - Suspension of adoption events
 - Suspension of vaccination clinics
 - Escorted shelter animal viewing only
 - Only 1 person escorted at a time

Facility Cleanliness

- Kern County Animal Services is confident that the practices are already in place that are needed to provide a clean and sanitary facility. An animal shelter inherently lends itself to the spread of disease from animal to animal, and at times, from animal to human. Therefore, consistent and frequent disinfection protocols are in-place to provide a safe environment for staff, the community, and animals.
- Stations throughout the facility have always been available with hand sanitizer for public and staff use, and a sufficient supply of sanitizer has been procured in the past 2 months to continue to make available.

Primary Functions-

- Rabies Control

- Kern County Animal Services will continue to accept stray dogs brought in by the public, or reported to Animal Services at large. Stray dog intake will be performed on an appointment basis, using a “text message” application adopted by the department previously for unrelated application. Essentially, members of the public that find a stray dog will, using their mobile device, text a keyword to a designated number. Animal Services staff will receive that information and direct the member of the public accordingly. If intake of an animal is to occur, temporary kennels will be provided on-site for the public to be directed to deposit the animal(s) safely, with staff present a safe distance away, after which an intake of the animal(s) will occur, with staff practicing established safety measures.
- Kern County Animal Services will continue to provide services in the community to respond to calls for animal related emergencies. Those services may include injured or ill stray animal calls, public safety calls, agency assistance calls, or calls that may require a Rabies quarantine for a domesticated animal. All field services staff will be required to wear applicable PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) including gloves, mask, apron, or boot covers, if applicable, during any interaction necessary with the public.

Ancillary Functions-

- Animal Licensing
 - Kern County Animal Services implemented online licensing several years ago, and will rely largely on that option for pet licensing needs. Alternately, staff will be able to accommodate animal owners that arrive at a facility with the intent, and documentation in hand, to license their pet(s). Staff tasked with processing in-person licensing requests will do so while practicing distancing measures, wearing proper PPE, and disinfecting contact surfaces between transactions. This includes the use of hand-sanitizer between transactions as well. Department administration will erect plexi-glass barriers to protect staff and volunteers at all transaction points, at all 3 County Animal Shelters.
- Spay and Neuter Assistance
 - Kern County Animal Services will continue to offer spay and neuter assistance through voucher distribution, and mobile clinic offerings. However, a large majority of the spay and neuter program is largely dependent on the participation and capacity of local veterinarian clinics.
- TNR/Stray Cat Intake
 - Kern County Animal Services will temporarily cease shelter intake of stray, healthy cats over the age of 8 weeks.
 - Stray, healthy cats that are candidates for the departments’ TNR program, will be accepted on a capacity basis. This capacity will be based on the availability of spay and neuter surgeries in the community, and within the department.
- Owned Animals Needing To Be Surrendered
 - Kern County Animal Services will temporarily cease intake of owned, surrendered animals.

- Foster Pet Needs
 - Pets currently in foster care will continue to be scheduled for physical exams as is needed, and as is directed by medical staff.
 - Animals in need of foster care will be arranged foster care, using a “drive-through” system when appropriate, that observes distancing measures to protect the public as well as staff.
- Pet Adoption
 - All pet adoptions will be performed virtually and/or on an appointment basis, when possible. Staff will make use of the “drive-through” type arrangement for delivery of adopted pets.
 - Community members coming to the animal shelter with the intent on viewing animals for adoption purposes will be allowed to do so on a limited basis, as distancing measures allow for.
 - Presentation of adoptable animals in the shelter will be made at additional locations throughout the County and the facilities that allow for virtual viewing, or viewing within safe distances.
- Redemption of Lost Animals
 - Animal owners looking for lost pets will be primarily directed to viewing shelter pets online, using previously established portals and programs.
 - As is necessary, animal owners will be escorted through facilities to potentially identify their pets, while observing distancing guidelines. Only one person will be escorted at a time to view pets for possible redemption.
- Rabies Vaccination Clinics
 - Kern County Animal Services will not hold any Rabies vaccination clinics for the foreseeable future.

Department Daily Functions-

- Euthanasia
 - Kern County Animal Services acknowledges that before, during and after Covid-19, animals will need to be humanely euthanized for various reasons. In some cases, namely euthanasia in the shelter setting, social distancing measures between staff during the procedure is difficult to maintain. As a result, all dog euthanasia will be performed with the animal sedated through the administration of an oral sedative. Said sedative will be recommended by a veterinarian to minimize the stress on the animal, as well as the staff. Sedating an animal orally will allow for the euthanasia, and sedation of the animal by a single staff member, with secondary staff nearby, but at a safe distance away.
- Dispatch
 - Kern County Animal Services’ call center will be operated remotely, as staff designated to perform dispatch tasks have been accommodated appropriately to do so already.
- Administrative Functions
 - Kern County Animal Services’ administrative staff will perform functions on a remote/on-site capacity. Those functions that can be performed

remotely will be performed so, those that cannot be performed remotely due to technological restrictions, will be performed on-site. For any administrative functions to be performed on-site, workstations will be arranged in observance of distancing, in addition to use of applicable PPE such as cloth or disposable face coverings.

- Animal Handling

- *Field Services*

- Animal Control Officers will wear mask, gloves, and apron whenever animals are being handled, with gloves and apron being changed between animals.
 - Mask will be worn with each public interaction where proper distancing cannot be observed.
 - Receiving daily assignments should be done remotely, when possible.
 - Field staff will only be on-site when offloading, cleaning vehicles, or for special assignment.

- *Shelter Personnel*

- Animal Care Workers will wear mask, gloves, and apron whenever animals are being handled, with gloves and aprons being changed between animals.
 - Mask will be worn with each public interaction where proper distancing cannot be observed.

The Director, or Deputy Director of Animal Services is responsible for implementation of this plan at each Animal Services site.

Nicholas Cullen

Director

Kern County Animal Services