Stray Dogs and Homeless Pets

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Center on Legislative Strengthening
Denver’s Solution to Stray Animals
State Solutions

- Preventing Cruelty
- Animals in Shelters
- Transporting Animals To Shelters
State Responses to Animal Cruelty

- All 50 States Penalize Animal Cruelty
- Penalties range from a fine up to a felony
- Majority of states increase penalties for multiple violations
- Two most relevant cruelty issues:
  - Abandonment
  - Improper Shelter
Animal Abandonment

- Abandoning an Animal is a Crime
  - Usually considered general “animal cruelty”
  - Sometimes specifically enumerated
- Why Do People Abandon?
- Some Shelters Charge Fees For Putting an Animal Up For Adoption
Improper Shelter
(Penalties for First Offense)

- Civil or Uncategorized Offense: 6
- Misdemeanor: 20
- Felony: 2
- No Law: 23
Shelters By The Numbers

• Over 150 Million Households With Pets
• Impossible to State the Number of Stray Animals (Cats alone are estimated at 70 Million)
• 7.6 Million Animals Enter Shelters Yearly
• 2.7 Million Are Adopted (35%)
Shelter Types

- Municipal Shelters
  - Funded By Cities and Counties
- Private Shelters
  - 501(c)(3) Organizations
- Rescues
  - Private organizations that usually focus on a specific breed/type of animal
- Foster Programs
  - Temporary Housing By Private Citizens
Shelter Estimates

- 52,000 dogs in shelters in the region, of which over 23,000 are strays
  - 5,900 in Georgia
  - 5,700 in Alabama
  - **4,200 in South Carolina**
  - 3,970 in Tennessee
  - 3,660 in North Carolina

(all data provided by the Shelter Animals Count)
Shelter Outcomes

Of the 52,000 total in the region
- 24,000 are adopted
- 14,800 are transferred to another agency
- 5,500 are euthanized
- 450 died in shelter care

(all data provided by the Shelter Animals Count)
More Statistics

• 151,000 stray dogs nationally
• California and Texas house largest populations
• Largest Stray Intake in South Carolina is in Greenville County
• Data Collection is still a struggle, but is improved by using the “Basic Data Matrix”
  – The matrix contains the minimum data points an organization should collect, including summary counts by species, age breaks, intake type and outcome type
Legislative Options to Reduce Stray Populations

• Mandatory Spay/Neuter Laws
• Improving Animal Transport
Spay/Neuter Laws

- Controversial
- Effective
- No state laws require all animals to be sterilized
- 30 states (including SC) make it a requirement for adoption
Improving Animal Transportation

• Transportation Can Improve Chances for Adoption
• Can Spread Disease
• Effective?
Questions?

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