

Best Friends supports community-based field services



Today's animal control field service departments have seen a significant change in how they can successfully serve their communities. After decades of trying to solve animal-related issues through strict enforcement of the laws, agencies have had greater success by using a community-based approach to these problems. This approach is proving to build better relationships with community residents and encourage higher cooperation and compliance rates, and is resulting in lower animal intake into shelters.

Best Friends Animal Society endorses a community-based model of field services, which can include:

- The discontinuation of impounding healthy community (aka stray and outdoor) cats
- The discretion to not issue citations when appropriate
- Tools and resources such as food and over-the-counter flea and tick treatment to provide free of charge to residents in need

A comprehensive field return-to-owner (F-RTO) program goes beyond simply scanning found dogs for microchips. It can include:

- Officers interacting with community members to identify who owns the pet
- Posting information about the pet on social media platforms before impounding the animal into the shelter
- Actively attempting to locate a dog's owner before leaving the scene



RESOURCES

Lifesaving Field Services: This online learning module helps animal services officers understand and implement a community-based approach to field operations.

Community Engagement: This free webinar introduces officers to the concept of community-based operations and gives steps for how to get started.

Field Return-to-Owner Playbook: This playbook gives an overview of how to improve or implement a comprehensive field return-to-owner program.

Lifesaving Field Services Playbook: This playbook introduces animal services officers to the concept of community-based operations and gives steps for how to get started.

Community Engagement Strategies: This appendix from the **Best Friends Humane Animal Control manual** describes how one community made the transition from enforcement-based to community-based field services and how an agency can make that switch.

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