



Guiding Principles and Procedures for Assuring the Quality of Animal Care

Introduction

As part of its broad mission to instill respect, kindness, and compassion for animals as community values, the Champaign County Humane Society operates an open-admission animal shelter and pet adoption facility.

Ensuring that animals sheltered by the Society are properly cared for is a responsibility the Society's Board of Directors takes seriously. This document describes in general terms, the standards of animal care that shall be applied at the Shelter and the mechanism by which the Board will ensure that the standards are being met or exceeded.

Standards of Animal Care

Providing humane and appropriate care for animals is a constantly changing challenge as the animals and the conditions of their care are part of a very dynamic system. Various factors affect animal care including the number of animals in a given space, the general health of the population, the ages of the members of the population, the conditions and provisions of available housing, labor resources, and nutritional needs of the individuals, just to name a few.

The ability to maintain a consistent level of high quality animal care is dependent upon the organization's ability to respond quickly to changes with minimal disruption. The organization must have firm definitions of the factors that are critical to ensuring quality of animal care, and be willing to conduct honest and objective self-assessments of their continual performance in providing those critical elements.

New information is becoming available indicating the true needs of the animals based on scientific assessments of their well-being. Because "quality" is often judged from an individual's emotional and subjective perspective, the organization is challenged to address a variety of opinions regarding what is, and what is not, appropriate care for animals. Well-meaning, compassionate individuals with the best interest of the animals at heart, maintain widely different views of what is and what is not acceptable and appropriate care. Therefore, organizations who must assure their stakeholders of the quality of care they provide for the animals must bench-mark "quality" in objective, measurable terms. Having established a yardstick for quality, the organization must then maintain at least the minimal standards and strive to excel wherever possible within the consistent constraints of limited, and often cyclic, availability of resources.

Benchmarks for standards of care at the Champaign County Humane Society

1. The Champaign County Humane Society has adopted the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare as guiding principles for animal care:

Freedom from thirst and hunger
Freedom from discomfort
Freedom from pain, injury and disease
Freedom to express species typical behaviors
Freedom from fear and distress

2. The Champaign County Humane Society further recognizes the following five fundamental needs of shelter animals:

1. Adequate veterinary care:
 - a. Appropriate protection from communicable disease
 - b. Minimizing pain and suffering
2. Housing appropriate for the species, age, and health of the animal:
 - a. A dry place to rest
 - b. Adequate ventilation
 - c. Space necessary to assume normal postures such as lying, sitting, and standing
 - d. Protection from climatic extremes and/or provision for the animal to modify its behavior and adjust to the thermal requirements of the environment
3. Adequate nutrition:
 - a. Daily access to nutrients appropriate for the species, age, physiological state, and health of the animal
 - b. Daily access to fresh, clean water
 - c. Freedom from excessive competition with other animals for limited nutrients
4. Appropriate social grouping:
 - a. An ability to escape aggression from other animals
 - b. Opportunity to engage in normal social behaviors appropriate for the species, age, and health of the animal
5. Enrichment:
 - a. Access to toys and equipment for play and exercise
 - b. Sensory stimulation
 - c. Opportunities for human contact and interaction

3. The Champaign County Humane Society strives to meet the animal care standards outlined in the most recent edition of "Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters," by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians.

Board Oversight

1. The Animal Welfare Committee of the Board of Directors conducts an annual inspection of the shelter to assess animal welfare. The Committee's findings are shared with the full Board and the Executive Director.
2. The Committee will respond to the public's concerns regarding animal care at the CCHS shelter pursuant to the procedure set forth below.

Public Concerns

1. Members of the public are directed to address all complaints or concerns regarding shelter animal care and welfare to the Shelter Manager or Executive Director. Complaints will be investigated and a response will be given within 30 days.
2. If a complainant is not satisfied with the response received, the complainant may address, in writing, the Animal Welfare Committee. Written concerns addressed to the Committee must be received within 10 days following receipt of the response from the Shelter Manager or Executive Director. The Committee will investigate the complaint and respond with a written summary of its findings and actions being taken to the complainant within 30 days of receipt of the written complaint. The Committee's response to the complainant will also be circulated to the CCHS Board of Directors.

These Guiding Principles and Procedures for Assuring the Quality of Animal Care were adopted by the CCHS Board of Directors on February 11, 2015.