



Problem: New Mexico’s Animal Welfare & Animal Control Infrastructure is in Desperate Need of Sustainable Funding to Protect Public Safety, Public Health, and Animal Health.

Solution: The Animal Welfare Trust Fund Would Provide Sustainable Funding to Improve Animal Control Services, Save Taxpayer Dollars, and Improve Safety for Everyone.

New Mexico’s animal care infrastructure is at overcapacity and underfunded. According to NMCAN (the New Mexico Companion Animal Network, a coalition of 15+ nonprofit and government run animal shelters across New Mexico):

- Most of New Mexico’s 40+ shelters are chronically at overcapacity. For example, CABQ Animal Welfare Dept.’s (AWD) annual intake has consistently been over 15,000 for the last three years. “We have about 750 kennel spaces,” Director Carolyn Ortega told KRQE, “and when we’re over 750 that means that we’re doubling up our pets or we have them in our offices.”
- Many New Mexico shelters operate with inadequate infrastructure. For example, according to Director Misha Goodman, Bernalillo County Animal Resources Center has already outgrown the facility it moved into five years ago. And Crystal Trujillo, Animal Control Director for City of Santa Rosa, states, “Areas that need to be added/upgraded include HVAC, an isolation area, an outdoor play area, additional staff to care for the animals...basic upgrades to keep our animals safe...and give them the best opportunities at a second chance at life.”
- New Mexico requires government-contracted shelters to comply with minimum shelter standards. However, some smaller and/or rural shelters risk noncompliance due to lack of resources. This in turn can have negative impacts on both human and animal health.
- Although New Mexico has one of the highest numbers of family households with dogs, several counties and tribal communities lack adequate – or even any – animal care and control infrastructure. Five counties are considered no-service areas due to lack of shelters.
- The table below reflects stateside euthanasia rates for 2017. Updated numbers based on 2023 data will be forthcoming. (Graphic courtesy of APNM New Mexico Animal Shelter Survey 2018)

2017 Statewide Totals

| | Intake | Live Exit | Euthanasia | Euthanasia as a % of Intake | Human Population | Euthanasia Per 1,000 People |
|------------------------|---------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Totals Reported | 91,720 | 68,723 | 16,226 | 18% | 2,088,070 | 7.78 |
| Estimated Not Reported | 8,794 | 4,102 | 4,492 | | | |
| Estimated Grand Totals | 100,514 | 72,825 | 20,718 | 21% | 2,088,070 | 9.92 |

Notes: 40 facilities reported intakes; 36 of 40 facilities reported euthanasia.

- It costs taxpayers roughly \$28.50/day to house and care for an animal in the Bernalillo County shelter. At that rate, a 100-day stay costs nearly \$3,000 -- for just one animal. Humane sheltering care, something that New Mexicans want and expect in their communities, should be considered a matter of public health and safety, and should be supported by the state of NM.
- One dollar invested in spay/neuter programs has been shown to save three dollars on animal care and control.

Public Safety, Public Health, and Animal Health Concerns

- It is common for dogs and cats to deteriorate behaviorally the longer they stay in the stressful shelter environment. This is particularly true when the shelter is overcrowded, and/or lacks the resources and staff needed to adequately care for the animals. As a result, more animals can be harder to adopt out and are subject to euthanasia, and there are increased animal care costs.
- In 2022, the New Mexico Department of Transportation [reported 95 car crashes, including two fatal crashes](#), caused by “small domestic animals”, namely loose dogs, on New Mexico’s roadways. Loose dogs are the result of several factors, the most common being lack of animal control services to capture and house stray and abandoned dogs.
- In 2023, Taos County officers recorded 548 stray dogs and 70 animal bites. County officials discontinued trapping loose dogs as there was no space for them at the shelter.

Solution: Smart and Sustained Investment in Animal Welfare Infrastructure Will Save Lives & Taxpayer Dollars

- New Mexico needs an Animal Welfare Trust Fund, with earnings from the fund flowing to an Animal Welfare Grant Fund. The Animal Welfare Trust Fund, as currently conceived, would be seeded with \$30 million through a one-time appropriation. The investment corpus would not be spent down but instead would be allowed to grow over time, along with plans for sustainable annual distributions.
- The creation of an Animal Welfare Trust Fund would make funding available across the state to fund critical sheltering needs and targeted programs to tackle the toughest challenges in controlling animal overpopulation and improving animal and community health, safety, and welfare. It would deliver a steady stream of funding not reliant on legislative appropriations and independent of political considerations.
- The Grant Fund would cover diverse areas, including modest needs for animal shelter infrastructure, equipment, training, supplies, veterinary care, educational materials, and operational support. The Grant Fund would allow shelters to move from a warehousing model to an animal resource model, whose goal is to keep animals in families.
- The initial concept and introduction of the Animal Welfare Trust Fund to the Legislature was presented in House Bill 191, sponsored by Representatives Tara Luján, Joseph Sanchez, and Cynthia Borrego during the 2024 legislative session. The bill was passed by the House Consumer & Public Affairs Committee with a unanimous 4-0 vote.