



HASS supports the management of cats in their communities

What we know:

1. Cats lose their lives in US shelters each year.
2. Cats in shelters are reclaimed by owners less than 5% of the time¹.
3. Cats have medical and wellness needs specific to their species that make them particularly vulnerable to illness and disease when stressed or injured.

The HASS model of community-centered animal sheltering extends services to both animals and people, cultivating greater engagement with the communities. The old practice of removing cats from their homes and habitats is replaced with providing cats, and the people who care for them, effective and humane services. Community-centered HASS services that allow cats to remain in their communities in every case possible, reserving shelter intake for cats and kittens who truly need to enter the shelter to receive medical care or other lifesaving services.

HASS supports the following practices for community management of cats:

- Targeted, high-volume Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)
- Shelter-Neuter-Return (SNR, Return to Field/RTF, Return to Home/RTH) as the primary mechanism for achieving live outcome for all cats. Cats eligible for community return programs are those without identification who are found outdoors, regardless of temperament, who are evaluated and determined to be thriving.
- Evaluation of kittens to determine if they are healthy, thriving, and self reliant. Return of healthy, thriving, and self reliant kittens when necessary in organizations where intake, care, and placement are not viable due to financial, time, or other constraints.
- Return of friendly cats to the neighborhood where they were found which offers the greatest chance of reunification if the cat is owned, or to (often multiple) caretakers with deep bonds to the animal².
- Organizations operate within the confines of current local laws and contracts but work to make changes to support management of cats in the community

These practices respect the unique needs of cats, lead to the greatest opportunity for reunification with families, and keep pets and families together by ending the removal of outdoor pets from marginalized communities. With clear, supporting research illustrating these practices are in the best interest of cats, the below members of HASS stand in support of these data-driven, humane, community cat initiatives and the organizations across the world that embrace them.

¹ 2019 Shelter Animals Count: Animal Sheltering Statistics, 23.

² Lord, L.K., et al., Search and identification methods that owners use to find a lost cat. J Am Vet Med Assoc, 2007. 230(2): p. 217-20.