



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL | **redefining CARE**



Marcia Mayeda, Director

May 28, 2021

Mr. Joe Hoefgen
City Manager
City of Redondo Beach
415 Diamond Street
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Dear Mr. Hoefgen:

FISCAL YEAR 2021-22 SERVICE LEVELS AND BILLING RATES

Thank you for your ongoing partnership in protecting the residents and animals in your city and the County of Los Angeles (County). This is to notify you of the billing rates for animal care and control services that will take effect July 1, 2021.

The 2021-22 billing rates have been developed according to the new billing methodology first communicated to contract cities in 2018. As communicated over the past few years, the animal housing rate portion of the methodology will be incrementally increased via a six-year step-up plan. Several of the rates are mentioned in this letter and all are listed on the first page of the "City-County Municipal Services Billing Rates" document. A complete individual cost estimate for FY 2021-22 based on your city's prior service usage is also enclosed as Attachment D.

Background

The implementation of the new billing methodology is the culmination of many years of County Board of Supervisors (Board) action and communication with contract cities. Following a comprehensive study of the Department of Animal Care and Control's (Department) actual cost structure and current contract city billing rate methodology requested by the Board of Supervisors in 2015, and performed by MGT Consulting, the Department worked with the County Auditor-Controller to finalize a new billing methodology and presented it to all contract cities in 2018. Because many cities expressed concerns over the rates in the new methodology as being too high and not justified, the Board asked the County Chief Executive Office (CEO) to engage a consultant to conduct a review of

Agoura ACC
29525 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
(818) 991-0071

Baldwin Park ACC
4275 N. Elton Street
Baldwin Park, CA 91706
(626) 962-3577

Carson/Gardena ACC
216 W. Victoria Street
Gardena, CA 90248
(310) 523-9566

Castaic ACC
31044 N. Charlie Canyon Rd.
Castaic, CA 91384
(661) 257-3191

Downey ACC
11258 S. Garfield Ave.
Downey, CA 90242
(562) 940-6898

Lancaster ACC
5210 W. Avenue I
Lancaster, CA 93536
(661) 940-4191

Palmdale ACC
38550 Sierra Highway
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 575-2888

Administrative Office
5898 Cherry Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90805
(800) 253-3555

Department operations and suspend the implementation of the new methodology until its completion.

An assessment of the Department was conducted by Kashiwa Corporate Services to determine whether the Department was operating as effectively as possible, as well as if the new billing methodology was justified and equitable. Kashiwa shared a summary of its findings with all contract cities at a briefing on May 6, 2020. The assessment determined that the Department was operating as efficiently as funding allowed and recommended that the Department move forward with the new methodology.

However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and its economic impact to the County and its cities, the implementation of the new methodology was again deferred. On June 9, 2020, the CEO, in conjunction with the Department, presented Kashiwa's findings and recommendations to the Board. The Board then approved the new billing methodology to be implemented in Fiscal Year 2021-22.

New Flat Rate per Impound and Per Capita

To summarize the biggest changes in our billing, the step one rate for dog and cat housing in FY2021-22 will be a flat per impound rate of \$244.11, regardless of the number of days a dog or cat is housed by the Department, and all Full-Service housing cities will be charged \$1.00 per capita (Attachment C) to cover the otherwise uncaptured costs of Department services related to providing "Alternatives to Impoundment" (formerly referred to as "Public Service"). Also, under the new methodology, the disposal of dead animals from animal care centers and housing for animals other than dogs and cats are included in overhead costs and will not be additional charges for Full-Service cities. The \$244.11 is the equivalent of five days at a cost \$48.82 per day, which is slightly less than the current daily rate of \$50.16 per day (now capped at a maximum of five days, or \$250.80 per dog or cat). The six year step up plan starts by charging for five days in year one (FY2021-22) and adds one day per year through year six.

The Department's "Alternatives to Impoundment" services are activities that go beyond providing housing for dogs and cats and have the positive effect of keeping pets out of care centers and in loving homes and healthy environments. The Department has made many changes to its animal housing services over the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of Managed Intake (see Attachment E for more information on Managed intake). As a result, the number of dogs and cats impounded into Department animal care centers has decreased dramatically and is expected to continue. We attribute the decrease to our new focus on the "Alternatives to Impoundment" efforts of our staff (previously called "Public Services"), who individually advise pet owners wanting to relinquish their pets or residents who find stray pets and want to bring them to the Department. The goal is to more efficiently manage and reduce the flow of both owned pets

and homeless animals into our care centers by educating pet owners and using other resources such as willing foster volunteers and financial assistance for pet care to provide alternative solutions to pet relinquishment. We also now ask the public to leave healthy stray cats where they are found unless the cats appear to be injured or ill. These changes mean better outcomes for dogs and cats, increased engagement with and satisfaction for community members, and lower costs to your city. We are also working with Kashiwa to provide more education and information for pet owners on our website, because we believe that educating pet owners about how to care for their animals decreases the likelihood of them one day needing to relinquish their pets.

Limited Field Services

The new billing methodology also brings significant changes to cities that have opted to receive “limited” field services, meaning that they only request standby field services, Priority One call response, or field response after hours and at other times when their own officers are not available. The 2021-22 rate for such services scheduled at least two weeks in advance will be \$209.75 per hour, with overtime costs factored in. For services provided outside of scheduled hours or upon shorter notice, the same rate will apply with a minimum callout charge of four hours.

Beginning Fiscal Year 2021-22, Limited Field Services cities will be charged for the hours Critical Case Processing Unit (CCPU) officers spend on aggressive animal and dog bite investigations at the request of the city. Standard (non-overtime) hourly rates will apply.

Pet Licensing Efforts

The Department suspended in-person pet license canvassing services in neighborhoods at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March 2020. The Department is exploring other methods to increase compliance with pet licensing, such as having officers reach out by telephone and e-mail and promoting compliance with new campaigns such as the current license amnesty program. We updated our online licensing payment platform in June 2020, to be more user friendly and added electronic checks as an additional payment method. This has increased the use of the online platform for pet licensing payments. Improving pet licensing compliance was a major recommendation of the Kashiwa assessment, and we are working on a major update to our approach that we will be communicating to you about soon.

Working Together to Offset Costs

There are numerous strategies that cities can adopt or implement to help offset their costs for animal care and control. These include:

- increasing dog license fees
- mandating and enforcing cat licenses
- contracting separately with a waste management provider for dead animal pick-up and disposal services
- enforcing animal facility/business licensing
- mandating spay/neuter of owned pets to reduce the prevalence of pets running away or producing unwanted litters
- mandating microchipping of owned pets to increase their likelihood of quick return
- opting into low-cost vaccination, microchip, and/or spay/neuter clinics provided by the County

If you have any questions about these options, please contact Ms. Whitney Duong, Contracts and Grants Division Manager, via e-mail at wduong@animalcare.lacounty.gov or by telephone at (562) 379-9719.

The Department continues to partner with volunteers, communities, and non-profit agencies to develop new and further expand existing programs that keep pets out of our care centers. These programs include assistance with temporary animal boarding, reduced adoption fees, free pet food and supplies for pet owners in need, low-cost spay/neuter services, and low-cost veterinary care. The Department can provide these programs at no additional cost to our customer cities thanks to collaborative efforts with external groups and agencies.

By offering these services, which are especially crucial during this time of financial difficulty for many pet owners, the Department is able to save costs while increasing positive outcomes for animals and their owners. The Department is proud to offer these programs to the residents we serve and continues to pursue external funding resources, such as grants, to sustain and expand these services.

City-County Municipal Services Agreement and Service Level Request

The current contract for services, known as the City-County Municipal Services Agreement, was approved by the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors on April 30, 2019, and is effective through June 30, 2024. All contract cities have signed the agreement and submitted a Service Level Request (SLR) indicating their preferred services, but may make any changes to services, such as opting into low-cost vaccination, microchip, and/or spay/neuter clinics, by submitting a new SLR at any time. Note that otherwise, the annual submission of a Service Level Request (SLR) is no longer necessary.

For reference, we have also enclosed the most current SLR we have on file for your city. To submit a revised SLR, please complete the electronic form enclosed (Attachment B), obtain the signature of your authorized representative and e-mail it to Ms. Duong. Any additions or deletions to services will be scheduled for implementation upon agreement by both parties.

Contract Cities
May 28, 2021
Page 5

If you are unable to complete or sign the SLR electronically, you may use the enclosed blank SLR form. Hard copies should be submitted to:

County of Los Angeles
Department of Animal Care and Control
Attention: Contracts and Grants Division
5898 Cherry Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90805

A copy of the newly executed SLR will be provided to you following review and approval by the Director of the Department.

If you have any questions or concerns about the upcoming rates for FY 2021-22, or are interested in scheduling a conference call, please contact Ms. Duong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M Mayeda".

MARCIA MAYEDA
Director

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Enc.

c: City Staff