



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **LA City Controller Kenneth Mejia Announces Audit of LA Animal Services Department**

LOS ANGELES – LA City Controller Kenneth Mejia announced today that the Controller’s Office will be starting a performance audit of LA Animal Services (LAAS; also called Department of Animal Services). The primary goals of the audit are to determine whether the City is providing sheltered animals with humane care, whether the City’s animal intake and adoption programs maximize the department’s ability to save animals, and whether the department has the capacity to manage the current demand for shelter services.

The audit will focus on identifying practical and impactful strategies that LAAS can quickly implement to improve conditions in City shelters at current funding levels. The audit will also consider system improvements that require additional funding and opportunities to increase LAAS revenue.

Over the last several years, LAAS has alerted City officials that its funding and staffing levels fall significantly short of what is needed to effectively operate its six shelter facilities. A 2022 Council motion stated that the department only had enough funding to staff/operate four shelters.

Controller Mejia stated, “LA Animal Services has long been in an uphill battle trying to provide adequate care for the City’s animals while the City falls short on providing adequate resources to the department. LAAS operates six shelters and took in approximately 39,000 dogs and cats in 2023. Its mission is to provide care for LA’s animals, and it strives for a 90% save-rate, which are nearly impossible tasks given that the City recently reduced the department’s operating budget by \$1.4 million to \$30.3 million this fiscal year – a fraction of the \$5.9 billion total operating budget for all City departments.

“Our audit aims to give LA Animal Services, the public, and policymakers a detailed understanding of LAAS’ struggle to provide adequate care, and the audit will identify ways the system can be improved, both at current funding levels and with additional funding. We hope the City can use our audit’s findings to improve the lives of our City’s pets.”

A series of recent news stories and City documents indicate that the conditions in the City’s shelters are deteriorating and LAAS is not providing high quality care to sheltered animals:

- [A July 2022 LA Times article](#) highlighted shelter overcrowding, and City officials acknowledged that dogs could go weeks or months at a time without walks.
- In February 2024, the Department’s General Manager stated that City shelters were housing approximately 400-500 animals beyond capacity and did not have adequate staff to provide the minimum level of care.

- [A November 2024 LA Times article](#) highlighted that dogs and cats are being euthanized at significantly higher rates compared to previous years. For dogs, the department pointed to overcrowding and the lack of funding and resources to provide adequate care which can lead to behavioral challenges which then put them more at risk of being euthanized.

**The Controller's Office seeks to answer the following questions:**

- What are the **current conditions** at the City's animal shelter facilities (e.g., population, staffing, intake processes, provision of basic daily needs, enrichment/socialization, veterinary care, length of stay, save outcomes)? What are the conditions at City facilities operated by contracted animal care organizations?
- Are LAAS shelter operations **consistent with recognized animal shelter management and animal care guidelines**?
- Are the City's animal care **goals, policies, operations, and funding** effectively **aligned to promote the humane treatment of animals** within City shelters? Is the City **complying with key policies**, including euthanasia?
- How do the City's animal facilities **compare to facilities operated by other municipalities**? Are there opportunities to produce better outcomes?

The audit will be conducted by the civil service Audit Services Division of the Controller's Office with technical assistance provided by a consultant with expertise in animal shelter operations and veterinary care.

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*Audits and Assessments by City Controller Kenneth Mejia's Office*

*Completed:*

- [LAPD Military Equipment](#)
- [LAPD Helicopters](#)
- [Interim Housing](#)

*In progress:*

- *TAHO*
- *Unarmed Response*
- *Pathways to Permanent Housing*
- *Affordable Housing Efforts*
- *Inside Safe*