Welcome to The Way Home, your guide to how LA County is helping people and communities affected by homelessness.

A special message from Animal Care and Control Director Marcia Mayeda

Pets are members of our families. We love them. We cherish them. We rely on them for comfort.

So imagine you are losing your home and are faced with the heart wrenching decision of whether to accept a temporary place to sleep — a shelter, a motel or a relative’s house — and give up your beloved dog or cat because they are not accepted there.

It’s a difficult choice many of our neighbors are forced to make daily. Often, people are not willing to part with their beloved companion and have no other choice than the streets or their car. The bond with a pet may be giving the person the strength to carry on during such a difficult time and another loss could be devastating. As part of Los Angeles County’s holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to helping people and communities experiencing homelessness, we at the Department of Animal Care and Control knew we had to do something to help people and their pets stay together.
Working closely with other departments to address the person’s needs, the Department of Animal Care and Control is able to focus on problem-solving for the pet’s needs. Our trained staff counsel pet owners experiencing homelessness about options for their pet. Sometimes all a person needs is a dog crate or grooming in order to be welcomed in a temporary living space. We make every effort to keep the pet and person together, but when no other options exist, we may temporarily house the pet while the family finds stable, pet-friendly housing.

Yvette Garcia was faced with this difficult decision when domestic violence caused her to experience homelessness. Her dogs helped get her through the crisis and she could not feel safe unless she had them with her. The temporary shelter she found for herself could not accommodate her dogs so she reached out to our department for help. The wonderful staff at the Lancaster Animal Care Center made arrangements to care for her dogs. Once she knew her dogs were safe and cared for, Yvette could focus on taking steps to rebuild her life. Our Lancaster team enjoyed being able to provide care to these beloved pets and the best part was being able to reunite Yvette with her dogs once she had secured housing for all of them.

Thanks to Los Angeles County’s commitment to helping people experiencing homelessness, Animal Care and Control has been able to help hundreds of pets and their owners.

Families belong together, and pets are a part of that. I am proud of the work our team does every day to help people and pets in LA County.

Thanks to you...
...pets and their owners have been helped as part of Los Angeles County’s commitment to helping people experiencing homelessness. In addition to providing supplies, minor medical care and, at times, temporary boarding, the Department of Animal Care and Control works closely with other departments to advocate for pet-friendly services and housing.

People helping people
VIDEO: Meet Yvette Garcia and hear her story of finding home with her four-legged friends.

In case you missed it

- LA County will add 500 critically needed Mental Health Treatment beds.
- LA County wants to create financial incentives to build transit-oriented affordable housing.

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