

Washoe County Regional Animal Services - 2024 National Shelter Grants Initiative: 202411-32359: 2024 ASPCA National Shelter Grants Initiative-2024

Grant Amount Considering **\$115,000**

Grant Amount Requested \$95,000

Partial Funding Amount \$0

Application PDF Done

Acknowledgement: ✓

Organization Name

Washoe County Regional Animal Services

Organization

88-6000138

Organization Name

Organization Type

Washoe County Regi...

Governmental (Municipality/County)

Primary Contact

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Organization Signatory Name

Shyanne Schull

Organization Signatory Title

Director

Organization Signatory Email

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Organization Signatory Phone

(775) 353-8900

Street Address

–

City

Reno

Organization State

NV

Zipcode

89502

Current Fiscal Year Budget Revenue Amount

–

Current Fiscal Year Budget Expense Amount

–

What funding category are you applying for?

Animal Psychological Health

Grant Amount Requested

\$95,000

Partial Funding Amount

\$0

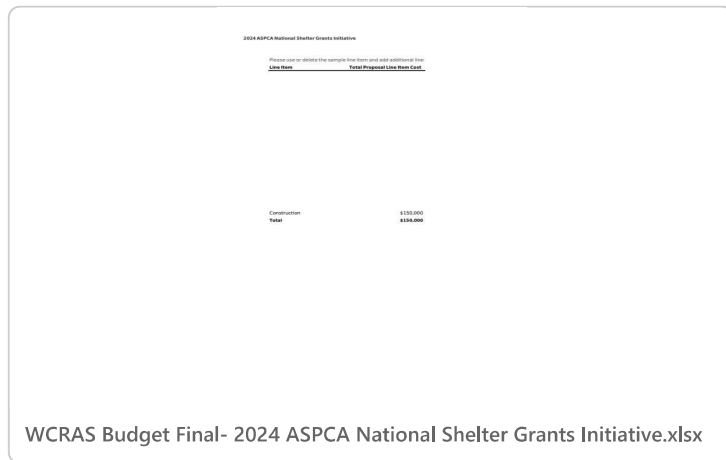
Proposal Title

Washoe County Regional Animal Services – Dog Enrichment Play Yard

Please describe how the grant funding would address the needs/challenges of your organization and/or community, including the specific activities to be implemented to address those challenges/needs.

The addition of an enrichment dog yard will allow us to prioritize programs that reduce stress and promote the physical and psychological well-being of animals in our care. Our current kennel sizes are inadequate for dogs to exercise, run, or engage their senses. In FY 2024, we took in 5,387 dogs, including 600 case dogs that required extended stays beyond the 5-day stray hold. Of these, 268 were held for longer than 5 days, with an average stay of 20.7 days and a maximum of 132 days. Prolonged stays without adequate enrichment can lead to increased stress and behavioral decline. A 2022 facility assessment by the ADISA group recommended creating a dedicated space for the exercise of longer-term dogs or finding alternative housing options. This project will directly address these recommendations, improving the overall welfare of the animals and helping them maintain adoptable behavior during their time in our care.

Grant funding budget and how each major line item supports your proposal



The information and/or measures you will use to know if the activities outlined in your proposal achieve the results you expect

We would like to improve the psychological wellbeing of dogs in our care, especially longer term case animals and animals with behavioral issues that create barriers to transferring to a rescue partner for adoption. Once complete we anticipate the play yard will have the following results:

1. Reduction in Stress-Related Behaviors particularly for those staying longer than 5 days.
2. Reduction in length of stay for long-term dogs
3. Increases in live outcomes for longer term dogs in our care
4. Positive volunteer and staff feedback on the dogs' engagement, mood, and behavior before and after using the enrichment yard.

If proposal includes a permanent staff position, how you will sustain it beyond the grant term

NA

National Shelter Initiative

Is your organization a physical facility that houses animals available for adoption?

Yes

Is your organization a nonprofit, governmental entity, or other?

Government animal services

If other, what type of organization are you?

–

Do you report data to Shelter Animals Count?

Yes

2023 Total Feline Intake

3,943

2023 Total Feline Adoptions

0

2024 Jan-Jul Feline Intake

2,001

2024 Jan-Jul Feline Adoptions

0

2023 Total Canine Intake

5,653

2023 Total Canine Adoptions

0

2024 Jan-Jul Canine Intake

3,210

2024 Jan-Jul Canine Adoptions

0

2023 Total Equine Intake

11

2023 Total Equine Adoptions

0

2024 Jan-Jul Equine Intake

4

2024 Jan-Jul Equine Adoptions

0

Approximate current length of stay (LOS) for Felines and how that is calculated

Cats: 6.5 Days

Using CY 2023 data: Calculated as the average difference between intake date and outcome date for live animals impounded (Stray, abandoned, quarantine, owner surrender, confiscates, safe holds, born shelter). Excludes animals transferred to rescue partner for foster due to being too young to be appropriately cared for at our facility (neonates that require specialized care that is outside of our current facility's scope) and excludes pets that were surrendered to our facility for euthanasia at the request of the owner.

Approximate current length of stay (LOS) for Canines and how that is calculated

Dogs: 11.2 days

§ Using CY 2023 data: Calculated as the average difference between intake date and outcome date for live animals impounded (Stray, abandoned, quarantine, owner surrender, confiscates, safe holds, born shelter). Excludes animals transferred to rescue partner for foster due to being too young to be appropriately cared for at our facility (neonates that require specialized care that is outside of our current facility's scope) and excludes pets that were surrendered to our facility for euthanasia at the request of the owner.

Approximate current length of stay (LOS) for Equines and how that is calculated

Equines: 60.7

Using CY 2023 data: Calculated as the average difference between intake date and outcome date for live animals impounded (Stray, abandoned, quarantine, owner surrender, confiscates, safe holds, born shelter). Excludes animals transferred to rescue partner for foster due to being too young to be appropriately cared for at our facility (neonates that require specialized care that is outside of our current facility's scope) and excludes pets that were surrendered to our facility for euthanasia at the request of the owner.

PH How would you assess your organization's current ability to effectively provide for animals' psychological health in your care?

Somewhat able

PH What is the biggest behavior challenge(s) your organization faces among animals you are serving?

Human-directed aggression/reactivity

Aggression/reactivity toward their own species

Aggression/reactivity toward another animal species

Unruly, lacking of manners or basic training

Separation anxiety behaviors

Anti-social but not aggressive

Fearful but not aggressive or reactive

Depressed, shut down

PH If other, please describe

PH Of those you selected, rank the top 3 most important in order. Why did you select the ones you did?

The biggest behavioral challenges we face with dogs in our care is managing the impact of the shelter environment, which can overwhelm their sensory systems with unfamiliar sights, smells, and sounds. This sensory overload often results in our top three behavioral issues:

1. **Anti-social Behavior:** Many dogs become withdrawn, making it difficult to assess their true personality in a high-stress environment.
2. **Fearfulness:** While not aggressive or reactive, fearful dogs struggle to build confidence and trust with humans when they are constantly exposed to overwhelming stimuli.
3. **Depression and Shut-Down:** Some dogs become depressed and shut down entirely, which reduces their ability to display natural behaviors and affects their chances of adoption.

Without a dedicated play yard to help them decompress and adjust, these behavioral challenges worsen, leading to poor kennel presentation and reducing their likelihood of being selected for adoption or transfer to partner organizations.

What are the most significant barriers that your organization faces to supporting the psychological health of the animals in your care?

Insufficient staffing

Lack of staff time

Behavior challenges limiting adoption interest

Lack of environmental enrichment

Lack of suitable space to provide for behavioral needs

Lack of volunteer/foster support

Long LOS exacerbating behavioral challenges

PH If other, please describe

PH Of those you selected, rank the top 3 most important in order. Why did you select the ones you did?

The most significant barriers we face in providing behavioral care for animals in our shelter are due to the lack of dedicated space for exercise, enrichment, and decompression, which are crucial for their well-being.

1. **Lack of Suitable Space:** We currently don't have an area where animals can experience enrichment and decompress outside of their kennels. A proposed outdoor yard would provide fresh air, space for exercise, and quiet time away from the stress of the shelter environment.
2. **Inadequate Enrichment Opportunities:** Dogs are assessed for adoptability based on their behavior, including their kennel presentation. Without regular exercise and human interaction, many dogs become more agitated and excitable. Consistent enrichment is essential to keep them calmer while in their kennels and more likely to be selected for transfer to one of our partnering adoption agencies.
3. **Extended Length of Stay (LOS):** The longer a dog remains in a kennel, the more their mental and physical health deteriorates. This is especially challenging for long-term stay animals. A play yard would greatly improve their overall care and help with pathway planning the best outcome for the animal and our community.

PH Generally, what proportion of your animal population experiences behavioral challenges that negatively impact their welfare? Please give your best estimate.

1-25%

PH Generally, what proportion of your animal population is humanely euthanized due to behavior challenges? Please give your best estimate.

1-25%

PH Please describe what types of behavior these animals displayed prior to humane euthanasia. Details about specific animals are welcome.

In 2023, 189 dogs were humanely euthanized due to behavioral issues. Of those:

12 were euthanized due to bite-related incidents

43 for animal aggression

134 for human aggression

In 41 cases, the dogs displayed no behavioral issues upon intake but developed concerning behaviors while at the shelter.

While some dogs posed a public safety risk, others only exhibited problematic behaviors in the kennel environment. Once removed from the stressful setting, our staff documented improvements; however, these dogs were still ultimately not selected for transfer by our adoption partners. We believe that providing dogs with consistent opportunities for exercise and decompression outside of the kennel could improve their behavior, especially their kennel presentation, increasing their chances of transfer and enhancing lifesaving outcomes.