DETERMINING HOUSING CAPACITY

Required housing capacity is the number of animal housing units a shelter will need, on average, in a given day. It can be determined by room, by section (e.g., adoption, holding) or by entire shelter depending on your needs. Knowing your housing capacity is key to operating within your humane housing capacity and can guide proactive population management strategies, such as population rounds.

So, how do you determine your required housing capacity?

Housing capacity =
Average # of animals housed per month
x
Holding period in days*
÷
30 days per month

*When calculating housing capacity for animals undergoing stray hold (i.e., holding capacity), use the required stray hold period; if there is no required holding period, or you are calculating the holding capacity for surrendered animals, multiply by 1.

*When calculating housing capacity for animals in other stages, use the average length of stay to the checkpoint of interest (e.g., spay/neuter, behavior modification, adoption, etc.)

Now what do I do?

1. Identify the average number of animals maintained in the housing area of interest each month.

2. Identify the time in days to the checkpoint of interest (e.g., required holding, average length of stay to adoption) for the housing area for the last month.

3. Multiply the numbers entered in Step 1 and Step 2. Divide by the number of days in the month of interest. This is the housing capacity for the area and species of interest.

4. Count the number of appropriate housing units for holding the species of interest.
**An appropriate housing unit is based on the number of animals that can be humanely housed in a single enclosure considering the Five Domains and positive welfare. For example, one cat colony room may contain multiple housing units.*

5. Compare the housing capacity with the number of appropriate housing units available for each species. *Did you come up short? **Click here** to learn about some creative ways to prevent crowding.*

Number of animals: _____

Number of days: _____

Housing capacity: _____

Housing units: _____

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