

Friends of Oakland Animal Services (FOAS) is working closely with Oakland Animal Services (OAS) to help preserve key services that are threatened by the budget cuts to OAS, cuts that have severely reduced key staffing, including for animal care.

Under the current Oakland Municipal Code (OMC), OAS is required to take in all owner surrenders (pets that people can no longer keep). Due to budget cuts that have decimated OAS staffing, proposed changes to the OMC would give OAS discretion to accept surrenders based on their capacity to provide adequate care. OAS intends to continue to take in animals as they have the resources to do so, and we are working together to help make that possible.

FOAS is partnering with OAS to add a FOAS funded full-time staff position to be the point of contact for any Oakland resident who may need to surrender their pet. The goal of this new program will be to:

- offer support to help people keep their pets when possible
- help people rehome their pets without coming to the shelter
- leverage the FOAS-funded Transfer Program to get surrendered pets directly to rescue and shelter partners without a shelter stay
- triage animals in urgent situations to ensure OAS can help those most in need

We are still working out the details and will be sharing a job announcement soon.

Joe DeVries, the Acting OAS Director, shared this: *“OAS is excited that our deep partnership with FOAS will be able to provide immediate case management support prior to an owner surrender in hopes of keeping the pet and their human companion together, or finding an alternative that avoids an extended stay in the shelter environment. We intend to maintain our commitment to the Oakland community to support and receive animals in their time of greatest need while providing enhanced services through our collaboration with FOAS.”*

With the support of this community, so much has already been possible. FOAS programs, including the foster, adoption, and transfer programs, have been transformational in increasing lifesaving at OAS. This new program is the next step toward growing a more robust infrastructure to help Oakland’s animals, as we continue to support the team at OAS during this very challenging period.