



Dear Volunteers,

I am writing today to provide a quick update on actions we're taking at Pima Animal Care Center to prepare for any possible impacts of coronavirus on shelter or community pets.

For information about local impacts of coronavirus on humans and guidance for keeping yourself and other healthy, please follow the dedicated page on the Pima County Health Department website: [www.pima.gov/covid19](http://www.pima.gov/covid19)

If you are an older adult or in a high-risk group for contracting this illness, considering suspending or modifying your volunteer activities to avoid gatherings of crowds and follow guidelines recommended by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>

When it comes to pets in our shelter, we are working closely with our national animal sheltering community and are participating in daily discussions to stay up-to-date on possible animal shelter impacts. Animal Sheltering magazine recently released a coronavirus tool kit, which is a helpful read for those of us working and volunteering in the shelter: <https://www.animalsheltering.org/COVID19> Our main focus at this point is on reducing the overall number of animals housed at the shelter. The reason for this is that the most likely impact is that intakes will increase while outcomes will slow, which is a predictable pattern that occurs any time people feel uncertain. Because PACC operates at or near capacity, reducing intakes and maintaining outcomes is essential to avoid overcrowding in the shelter. Here are some of the things we are working on now:

- Foster placement: If you want to prepare to help if space becomes an issue, speak with the foster team and let them know you're available to help foster for two to six weeks if needed. We are creating a list of people who can be called on to foster if we reach critical capacity over the next 30 days. We provide crates, supplies and food and even help you get your pet adopted outside of the shelter. E-mail [pacc.foster@pima.gov](mailto:pacc.foster@pima.gov) with the subject line "foster ready" and let them know you can help save a life when we need you the most.
- Reducing non-urgent intake: About 40% of the pets who enter PACC are given up by their owners. We will be asking owners who are not facing an immediate crisis to hold their pets for up to four weeks, if they are able to surrender at a later date. For any pet owners who need to surrender immediately, we will still take their pets at their scheduled intake time.
- Asking stray finders to foster: We will continue to ask people bringing in strays if they are able to temporarily foster their found pet and try to get the pet back home. This is something we do now and it helps get pets home much more quickly, without having to endure the stress of the shelter.
- Adoption events: We will continue to hold reduced-fee adoption events to help reduce the population of pets in the shelter. The biggest thing that makes these events successful is YOU! Sign up to be an adoption counselor volunteer and help people find their new best friends!

- Transport: We are planning another Wings of Rescue flight transport for this Sunday and this organization has offered to do more regular flights to northern shelters as long as we need them. You can volunteer to get pets ready or even drive them to the airport. There is nothing better than seeing 100 or more PACC pets leaving for their new homes. The best part about this program is that almost every pet is adopted within a few days of landing in their destination!

Community preparedness: One thing you can do now is to make plans for your pets in case someone in your home falls ill. You can stock up on two extra weeks of pet supplies and identify a pet sitter who can help out if at any point, you need to be hospitalized. We should all be planning to shelter pets in place if needed.

Shelter preparedness: We have increased orders on all of our daily supplies and we are reviewing our continuity of operations plan in case we experience any operational disruptions. We are fortunate that controlling disease transmission is familiar to our staff and volunteers and our diligence in caring for ourselves by using good hygiene will also help our pets. There is currently no concern that animals can contract this illness. However, there is a possibility the live virus could live on the fur of a pet, just like it can on any object.

This makes it important to wash our hands between handling animals and to frequently clean the surfaces in the shelter, especially in the public areas.

Our team is working on a comprehensive contingency plan and I will update you as plans change and evolve. Remember, our team is well-versed in handling community challenges and disease control and when we collaborate and work together, we can handle almost anything that comes our way. Thanks you for all you do every day and especially in the weeks ahead as we work to maintain lifesaving during this tough moment.

Best,  
Kristen