



## ANIMAL CARE SERVICES

# FY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT





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# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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The past fiscal year 2023 has seen enormous change at Animal Care Services and I am pleased to say the department has embraced the necessary transformation with strategic thoughtfulness. The creation of an updated ACS Strategic Plan framed this year of innovation which has ultimately resulted in future mapping that supports operational best practices, responsive enforcement, and augmented services.

There have been both opportunities and challenges to finding lifelong homes for pets, making San Antonio a safer place for residents, increasing owner accountability, and finding lifelong homes for more pets. The ACS Strategic Plan's inclusive tactics surmount those obstacles and engage possibilities while moving forward our key responsibilities as a unified community response.

Five key focus areas with measurable goals will work synergistically to increase responsible pet care and public safety in San Antonio. They include (1) Supporting a safe community for people in their neighborhoods, (2) Protecting the safety and humane treatment of pets, (3) Supporting the placement of pets for life, (4) Fostering positive connections with the community and (5) Empowering a healthy and thriving workforce.

Now, as we move into the plan's structured implementation phases, I believe it is the document's focus on resource development, tactical enforcement, and education that will rebuild San Antonio's animal welfare resources to its positive pre-pandemic levels. Ultimately, these core priorities speak to the root of the community safety concerns and resource needs that defined so much of FY2023; that is, the need to increase owner accountability and change the culture of pet ownership in San Antonio.

– Shannon Sims, ACS Director

## CHAIR'S CORNER

At this juncture, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges faced by municipal shelters nationwide, including our own, related to declining live release rate. While it's important to be transparent about our journey, it's equally vital to embrace the optimism that the future holds. Over the past year, like many shelters across the country, we've seen a decrease in our live release rate. This is a challenge that has kept us awake at night and pushed us to reevaluate our strategies. Despite these challenges, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the welfare of the animals in our care and the betterment of our community.

As we stand at the threshold of a new year, I am thrilled to announce the launch of our shelter's strategic plan. We believe that in the face of adversity, we can emerge stronger and more resilient. We are committed to creating an environment where every animal has the chance for a better life and where our community can experience the joy and love that pets bring to our lives.

The future is bright for our shelter and the San Antonio community.

– Rita Braeutigam, Advisory Board Chair





# SEVEN PUPPIES SAVED

Let's hear a round of 'appaws' for SAPD and ACS!

On September 12th, a concerned resident, Mr. X, noticed 7 tiny puppies at a nearby abandoned home. They were desperately searching for refuge and two of the pups were even on the verge of escaping under a fence. Mr. X wasted no time springing into action and he managed to rescue those two adventurous pups, preventing them from wandering further into danger.



The remaining five puppies, however, had retreated to the front deck of a neighboring abandoned home, out of reach and in desperate need of assistance. Uncertain about who to contact for help, Mr. X reached out to the San Antonio Police Department's non-emergency number for guidance.

SAPD Officer Zuniga swiftly responded and took the initiative to contact our team for assistance. Animal Care Officer Centeno and Cadet Brooks arrived at the scene shortly after and rolled up their sleeves, preparing to tackle the challenging task ahead.

For a full thirty minutes, the officers got down on all fours, delving deep into the muck and crawling beneath the deck, driven by a shared commitment to rescue the pups. One by one, each puppy was gently brought to safety.



**Thanks to the collective effort of SAPD, ACS, and the unwavering compassion of Mr. X, these puppies have been granted a second chance at life. They are now receiving the care, love, and attention they so rightfully deserve.**





# ADOPTION SUCCESS

## Pets find their furever home during Bissell adoption event!

The BISSELL Pet Foundation lends a lifesaving hand yet again! Thanks to the foundation and the efforts of Cathy Bissell herself, close to 2 hundred shelter pets are now in their furever homes! Last month, Animal Care Services participated in the latest Empty The Shelters adoption event. 155 dogs and 32 cats (187 total!) found families during the reduced adoption fee event.



SNAP is now offering spay and neuter services at the Brooks location. Call **210-673-7722** to schedule your appointment!

More information about spay and neuter services can be found at: [saacs.info/spayneuter](http://saacs.info/spayneuter)





# ACS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



**"The most rewarding part of this job is to help give an animal a second chance."**

**– Cici Hernandez**



# ACS STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

## Vet technician Cici is proud of her work!

For the past 11 years, Cici has been dedicating her time at ACS to helping the animals who come in injured, sick, and weak heal and rehabilitate so they can hopefully find homes!

**"When animals come in with severe injuries or sicknesses, and against the odds, we can help them get better and see them transform into healthy, happy pets!"**

Cici began her journey at ACS in 2012 as a volunteer. She knew she wanted to pursue a vet tech career path and enrolled in the Palo Alto Vet Tech program, which was challenging, time-consuming, and required many volunteer and internship hours.

Because of her connection to ACS, she transitioned from a clinic volunteer to a clinic intern. Through her internship, she affirmed her desire and passion for helping animals in need as a vet tech and after her program ended, she accepted a full-time position and has been with ACS since, gaining more responsibility in her evolving role.

Within the last two years, Cici has taken on more surgery tech responsibilities and assists our Veterinarians with spaying, neutering, and specialty surgeries. Her other daily duties include workups,

bandages, expressing bladder, etc. According to Cici, "The day goes by fast. Some days we have more than 50 pets that we spay, neuter, or do other necessary surgeries on. As a vet tech, we are always ensuring the animals are stable. It's essential to always pay attention to the details and signals of the pet you are treating, check for vitals, and ensure that pets receive the care they need. We are often considered extra eyes and ears to help our veterinarians determine which pets need additional care."



"I want to encourage our community to contribute to the change we all want to see, help lift ACS up and help take responsibility for the problem. At ACS, we do help, we do save, but we need our community to support us to solve this pet overpopulation issue," says Cici.

**A huge thank you to Cici and to all our vet technicians!**

## Meet Melanie, our incredible Live Release Program Coordinator!

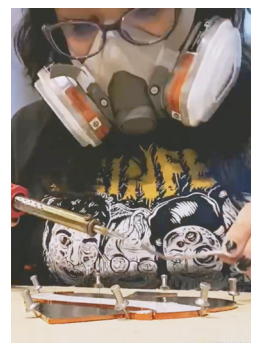
Melanie has been a vital part of our Animal Care Services family. Her journey started with a heart full of compassion 9 years ago as a personal caregiver, but in 2014, she decided to bring her love for animals and people to our team.



Her favorite part of the job? Helping people make a difference in the lives of our beloved animals.

When she's not making magic happen at work, Melanie can be found exploring the local food and beverage scene, championing small businesses in

our community. And did we mention her artistic side? She's a crafting guru, specializing in beautiful stained glass mosaics that add color to her world and ours.



Let's give a round of apPAWS to Melanie for her unwavering dedication and the love she brings to everything she does!





# LOW AND SLOW

## ACS helps rescue a tortoise!



A Texas-sized thank you to our partners at Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation, Inc. for stepping in to care for Torte, the Sulcata Tortoise, who found himself in an unfamiliar neighborhood on the west side of San Antonio over Labor Day Weekend.

Torte's story began when he was discovered roaming, and his presence raised concerns, as Sulcata Tortoises aren't native to our state. ACS cared for Torte for a week, with hopes to reach his family.

While a few individuals thought he might be their missing pet, further examination revealed otherwise.



Knowing that Animal Care Services isn't equipped to provide long-term care for exotic animals like Torte, we reached out to Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation.

They have the expertise, facilities, and resources to give Torte the care he needs.

This incredible organization has taken Torte under their wing, ensuring he receives proper care and attention. We're truly thankful for their dedication to wildlife and their willingness to provide a safe haven for animals like Torte. Let's continue to support their amazing work and do our part in preserving and protecting our diverse wildlife.

# KITTENS RESCUED

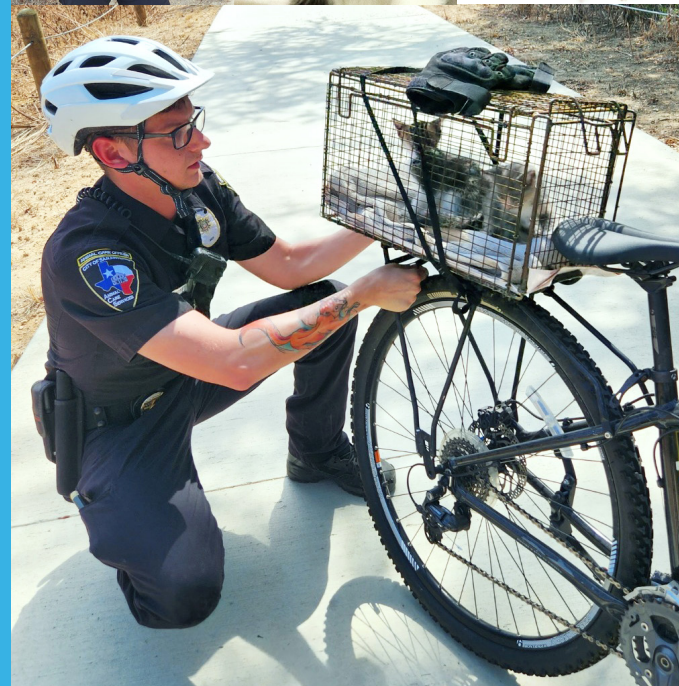
## Lucky kittens get a second chance at life!

In late August, a kind resident hiking on one of the San Antonio Salado Creek Greenway Trails found two very hot and thirsty kittens overwhelmed by the Texas heat. The resident kindly offered the kittens food and water from his packed lunch while he contacted 3-1-1 for assistance. Once at the entrance of the trail system, Animal Care Officers, Corporal Mccalister and Cadet Henrikson

made the two-mile-long trek to the site to find the two tired trial kitties. Exhausted by the heat, the weary kittens greeted the



officer, asking for head scratches and help. In order to get the kittens back to the cool AC of their transport vehicle, ACOs requested assistance from ACO Investigator Rial on his trusty bike. Investigator Rial swiftly transported the kittens to the safety of the ACS transport vehicle, and once Cpl. Mccalister and Cadet Henrikson had caught up; they brought the kittens to ACS for care from our clinic team!





# 9 PUPPIES RESCUED DURING HEAT ADVISORY

**The puppies were  
dumped at a local park**

Animal Care Officer Alvarado and Cadet Pusateri responded to a call from caring San Antonio residents who happened upon a crate of abandoned puppies in a local east side park. The residents noticed the puppies on their morning walk and waited with them until officers arrived. Once on the scene, ACO Alvarado and Cadet Pusateri found the nine 2-month-old pups in a flooded crate with urine, feces, and water. The crate was in an open field away from any shelter.



Luckily for the pups, it was still early in the morning when they were found. Leaving pets without shelter and water, especially during the intense summer heat, can be fatal.

## Sandy & her 8 Siblings

Litter ID: K23-466372



Though financial times are difficult for many, dumping your pets is never the answer and is dangerous for your pets and our community! ACS provides resources to help families keep their pets, such as free and reduced spay/neuter clinics and our weekly free vaccine and microchip clinics. In addition to the increase in vaccine clinics, the Brooks Clinic is now open and operated by our partners at Spay-Neuter Assistance Program, resulting in more availability for free and low-cost spay-neuter surgery appointments.

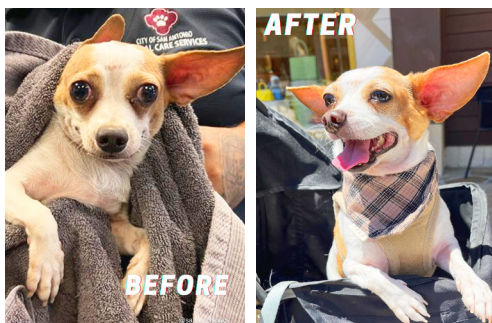
After being transported to ACS the pups settled into their kennel where they quickly scarfed up 4 big bowls of food. Animal defense league of Texas safely transferred the pups into their care. The next morning, Animal Defense League took the family into their care.





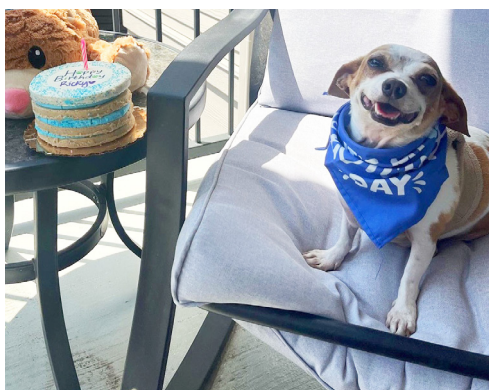
# ACS HAPPY TAILS

These stories are 'pawsitively' the best!



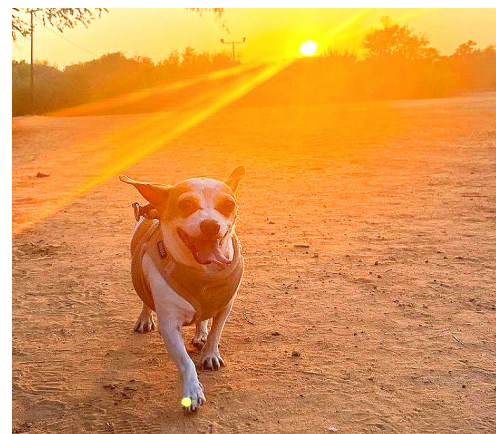
Ricky's journey began in September 2022 when he, along with 6 other Chihuahua pups and 5 cats, came into our care. Ricky, a tiny but resilient pup, had a difficult beginning. He was scared and anxious when he first arrived at our campus, but little did he know that his life was about to take a beautiful turn. Thanks to the help he received under the care of our ACS team and the fate of meeting Ms. L Ricky's transformation began.

Fast forward to today, and Ricky has become an amazing dog, bringing boundless joy to Ms. L. Ricky now spends his days taking outdoor strolls, dipping in the lake and enjoying beautiful sunset walks.



Ricky's story is a testament to the power of love, resilience, and the immeasurable happiness that a shelter can bring into your life! Let's celebrate Ricky's journey and the happy endings that are possible when we come together to support our furry friends.

**"He was so scared and anxious when we first got him," Ms. L shared with a beaming smile. "But he has grown so much and gained so much confidence since we first got him. It's truly been such an amazing year with him."**





# ACS HAPPY TAILS

## It's amazing what a little TLC can do!

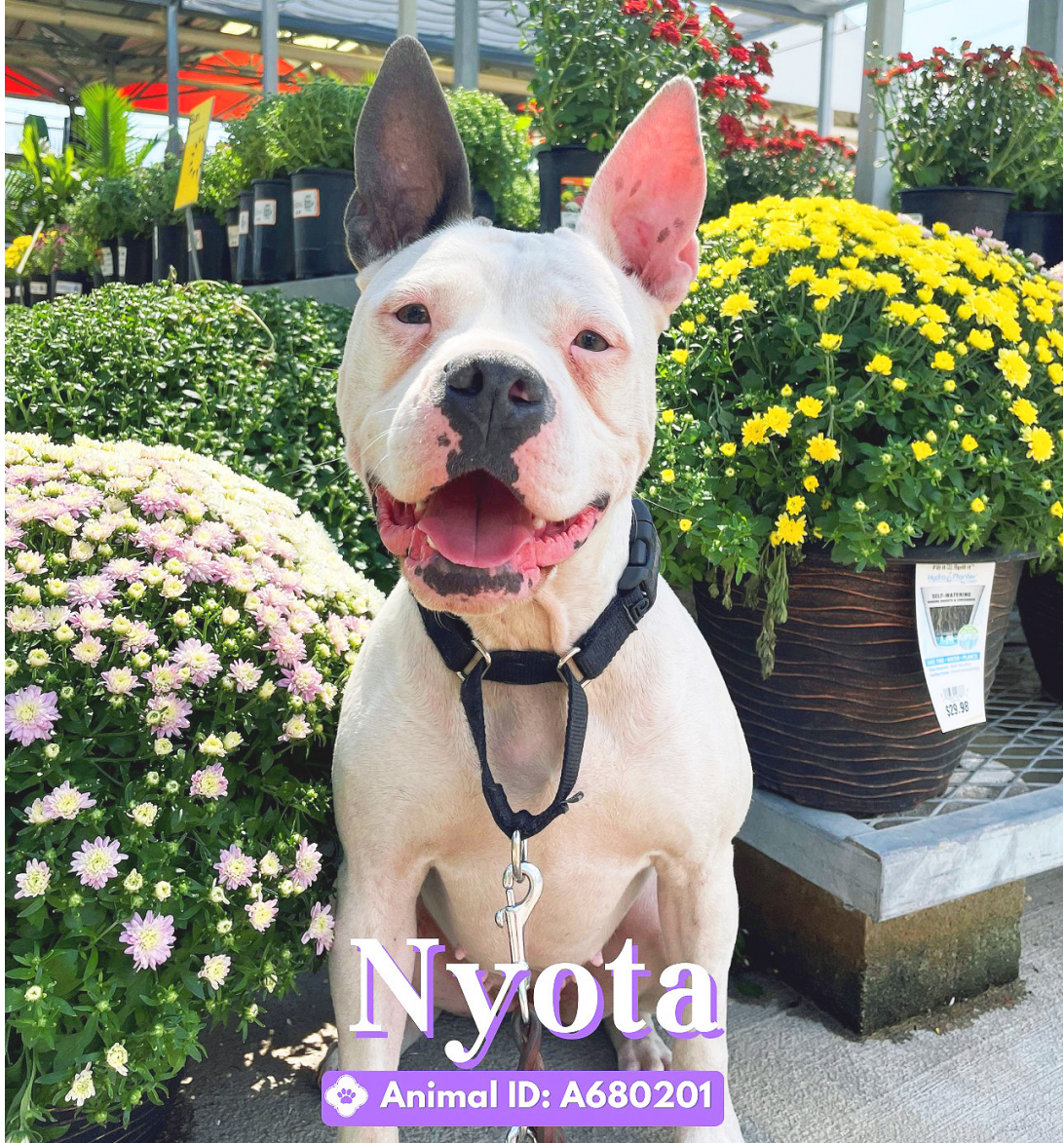
Thanks to a kind resident and the love a foster parent, Nyota is now looking and feeling much better and ready to find her furever family!

At the beginning of July, Ms. M spotted a severely emaciated Nyota, scavenging neighborhood trash just to survive. She promptly reached out to 3-1-1 and asked for help. Animal Care Officer Saavedra responded to the call, upon meeting Nyota, he saw her eyes reflecting the profound sadness she had endured and transported her to ACS for care.



Nyota's recovery was not going to be an easy road, but with the help of a guardian angel named Ms. O—who stepped up to foster her—turned Nyota's life for the best.

Ms. O's dedication and love have worked wonders for Nyota who embarked on a remarkable journey of healing, both physically and emotionally. As Ms. O candidly shares, "She is an adventurous girl with a heart full of love."



Nyota is not just an explorer of the world; she's also a certified cuddle enthusiast! When you're in need of a warm, furry companion to snuggle up with, Nyota is your girl! She also enjoys a good playtime or long walk so she'll be the perfect partner for those who enjoy an active lifestyle too.

Although Nyota has great house manners, she would thrive best in a cat-free environment, where she can bask in the spotlight and shower her humans with boundless affection and joy. Her favorite pastimes include showering you with kisses and snuggling up close for cuddles, making her the ideal companion for a lifetime of heartwarming memories. Her idea of a pawfect day involves car rides to new places and making new friends along the way.





# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

ACS is on the air and in the spotlight!



Last month, ACS trainer Annalise had the wonderful opportunity to be a guest on Hank and Emma Faye's KLRN Special "It's Cool to be Kind," which aired last week!

It's Cool to be Kind with Hank and Emma Faye is a 30-minute special that teaches children social-emotional intelligence, sign language, and how to interact with others who have disabilities.

At minute marker 17:17, ACS trainer Annalise joins Emma and Hank and helps answer questions about how we can be kind to animals! The questions included how to care for pets on hot days, how to respect service pups, and how to keep pets safe!



## ACS commercials hit the screens!

We are excited to reveal our "Dangers of Roaming Dogs" awareness commercials! These are now running on KSAT and Univision with a timely and important message. Explaining the dangers roaming dogs can have in a community—both to vulnerable populations and to the dog themselves. These commercials are now live in both English and Spanish!



As you'll see, the ads follow Bob, an everyday man who is generally a responsible pet guardian to his dog Scout until the day he is not. They emphasize that responsible pet care is a daily task and the devastating effects irresponsibility can have when it is not.



With the feature of these new commercials, in addition to a comprehensive radio campaign from this Spring, text message blasts, and on-hold ads, we hope to enhance awareness on responsible pet care to help keep our community safe. The television commercials represent the first video ads the Department has been able to place in a number of years.

With the help of our community's input in prioritizing ACS in the upcoming budget cycle, we hope to be able to focus more advertising efforts on positive shelter pet placement and encouraging and promoting spay-neuter services.









# FY 2023 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE

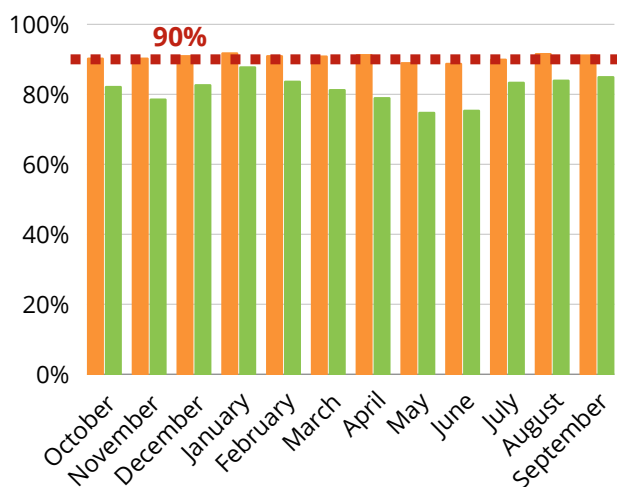
Analysis of the annual metrics for Fiscal Year 2023 will be a comparison of the results for Fiscal Year 2023 and the average of respective metric totals for the previous three years (Fiscal Year 2020, Fiscal Year 2021, and Fiscal Year 2022). Annual Fiscal Year 2023 targets are displayed to gauge the actual performance of each metric during the course of the recent fiscal year.

## INCREASING THE LIVE RELEASE RATE

Since FY 2017, Animal Care Services (ACS) has maintained an annual Live-Release rate of 90+%. While this is a monumental achievement for any open-admission municipal shelter, ACS is continuously striving to achieve greater heights. This is why the Live-Release Division is constantly developing new programs and enhancing existing programs. Some of the ways in which ACS is pushing to maintain and raise the Live Release rate: Free dog training for adopters helps ensure successful outcomes. Building partnerships with external agencies to take part in national events and grant opportunities. Continuing to support and be supported by committed rescue partners.

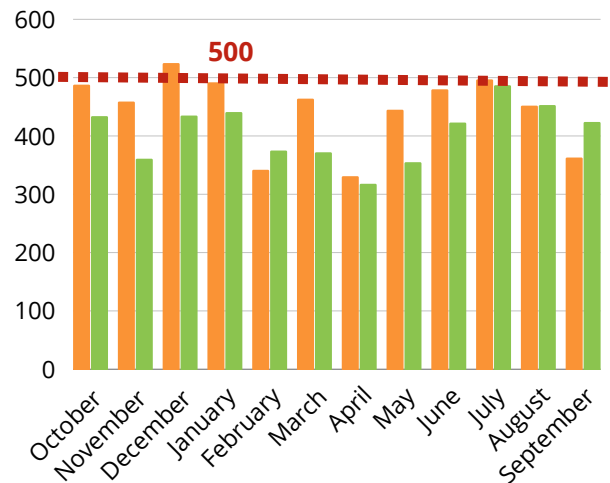


### LIVE RELEASE



FY20-FY22 Annual Live Release Avg. Results: 90.4%  
 FY23 Annual Live Release Goal: 90%  
 FY23 Annual Live Release Result: 81.7%

### ADOPTIONS



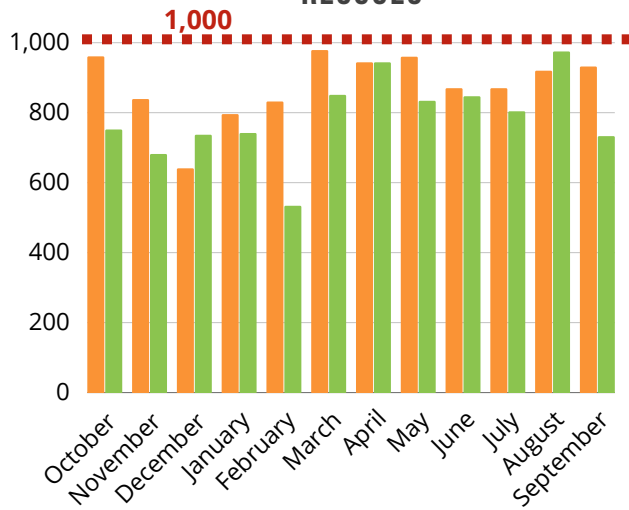
FY20-FY22 Annual Adoptions Results: 5,339  
 FY23 Annual Adoptions Goal: 6,000  
 FY23 Annual Adoptions Result: 4,878

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL



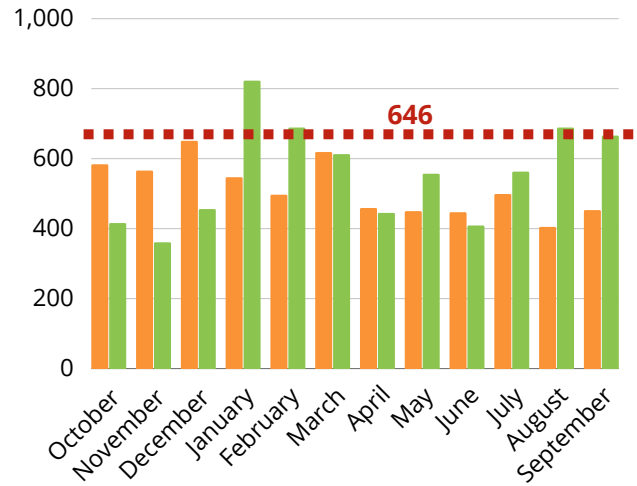
## INCREASING THE LIVE RELEASE RATE (CONT'D)

### RESCUES



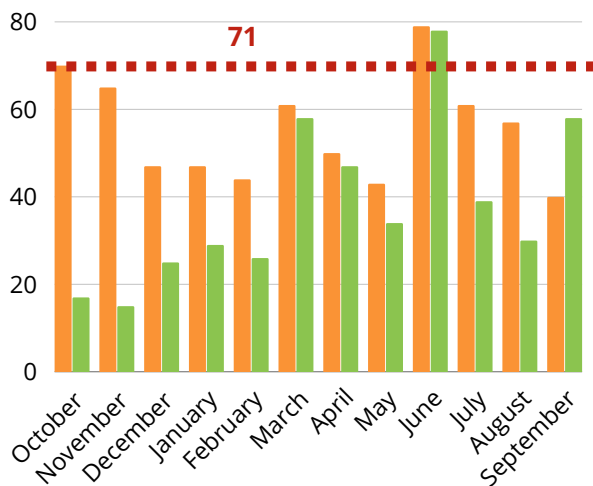
FY20-FY22 Annual Rescue Results: 10,544  
 FY23 Annual Rescue Goal: 12,000  
 FY23 Annual Rescue Result: 9,435

### RETURN TO OWNER



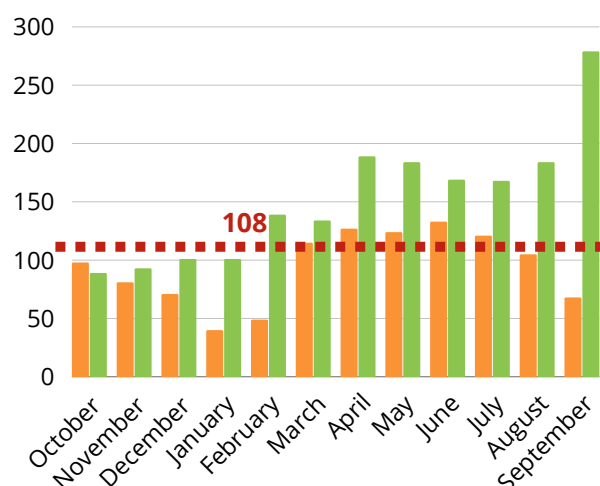
FY20-FY22 Annual RTO Results: 6,178  
 FY23 Annual RTO Goal: 7,750  
 FY23 Annual RTO Result: 6,687

### TRAP NEUTER RELEASE



FY20-FY22 Annual TNR Results: 663  
 FY23 Annual TNR Goal: 850  
 FY23 Annual TNR Result: 456

### PETS FOSTERED



FY20-FY22 Annual Fostered Results: 1,132  
 FY23 Annual Fostered Goal: 1,300  
 FY23 Annual Fostered Result: 1,830

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL

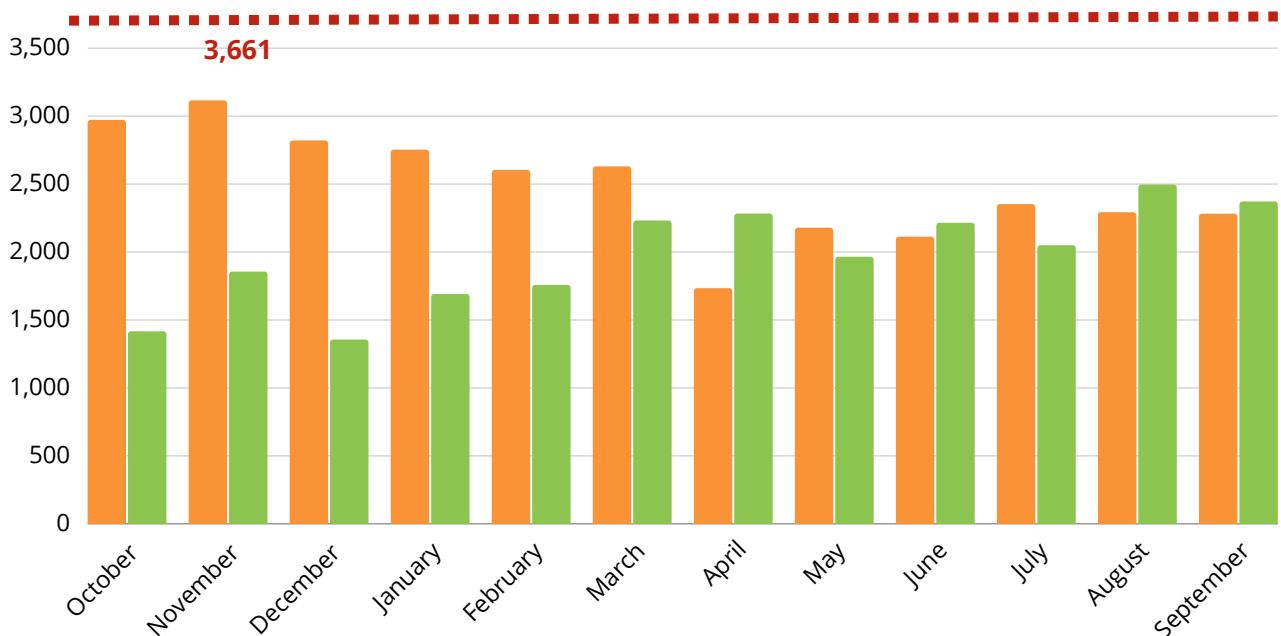




## CONTROLLING THE ROAMING ANIMAL POPULATION

Animal Care Services (ACS) strategic priority to control the animal population includes any program that reduces or manages the stray animal population. Spay and neuter surgeries performed in-house and by ACS partners help contribute to this strategic priority, as does microchipping, which allows ACS to reunite roaming pets with their owners, often without needing to bring the animal to the ACS campus. In addition, the metric of dead animal pickup is used as an additional indicator of the number of animals roaming free.

### TOTAL SPAY & NEUTER SURGERIES



FY20-FY22 Annual S/N Results: 29,846

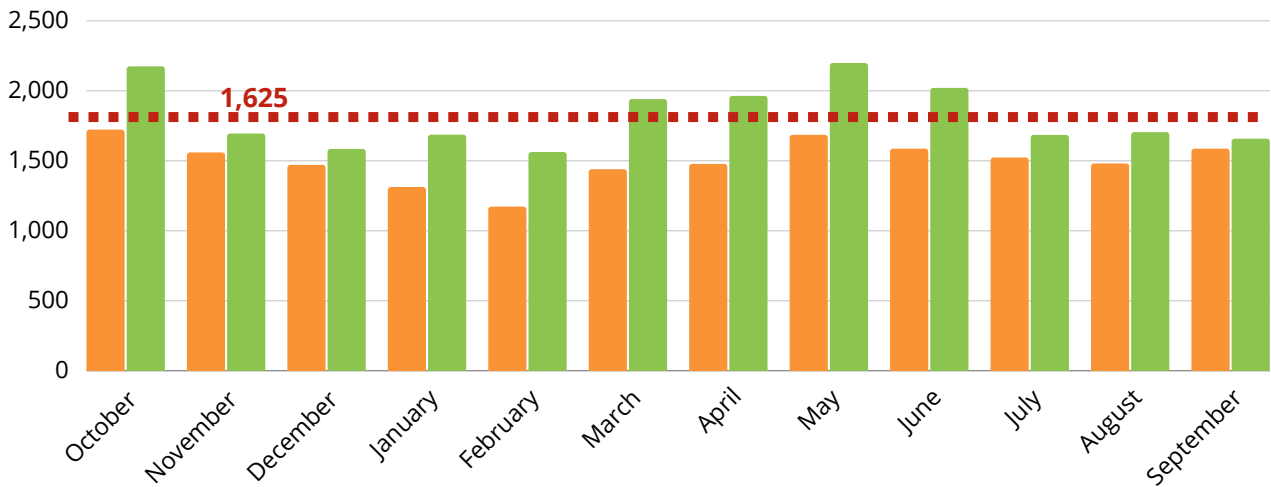
FY23 Annual S/N Goal: 43,936

FY23 Annual S/N Result: 23,692

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL



## DECEASED DOG/CAT PICK-UP

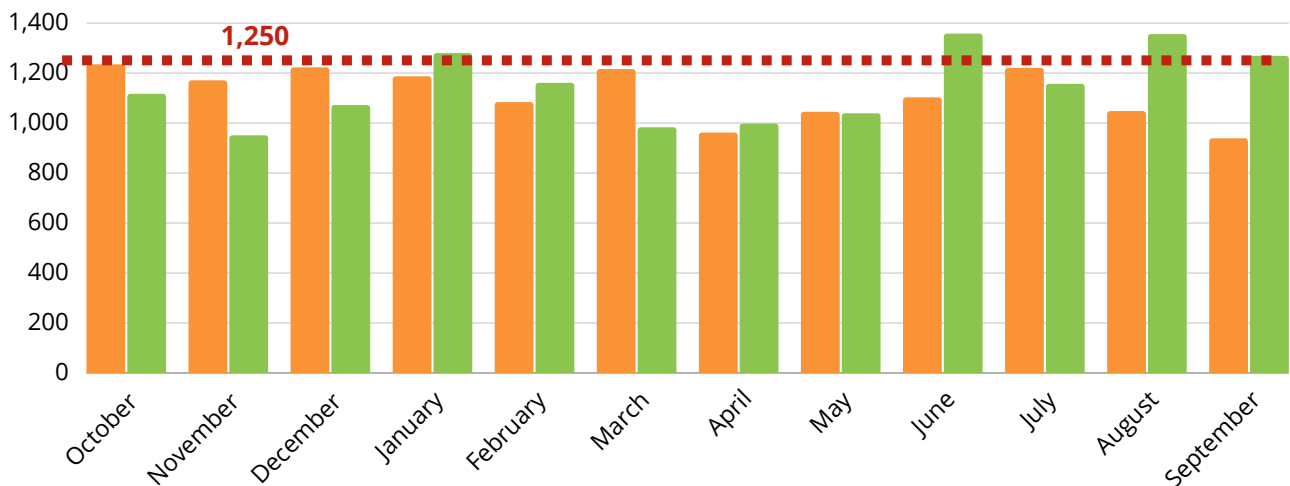


FY20-FY22 Annual Deceased Pet Results: 18,023

FY23 Annual Deceased Pet Goal: 19,500

FY23 Annual Deceased Pet Result: 21,878

## MICROCHIPS IMPLANTED



FY20-FY22 Annual Microchip Results: 13,433

FY23 Annual Microchip Goal: 15,000

FY23 Annual Microchip Result: 13,748

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL

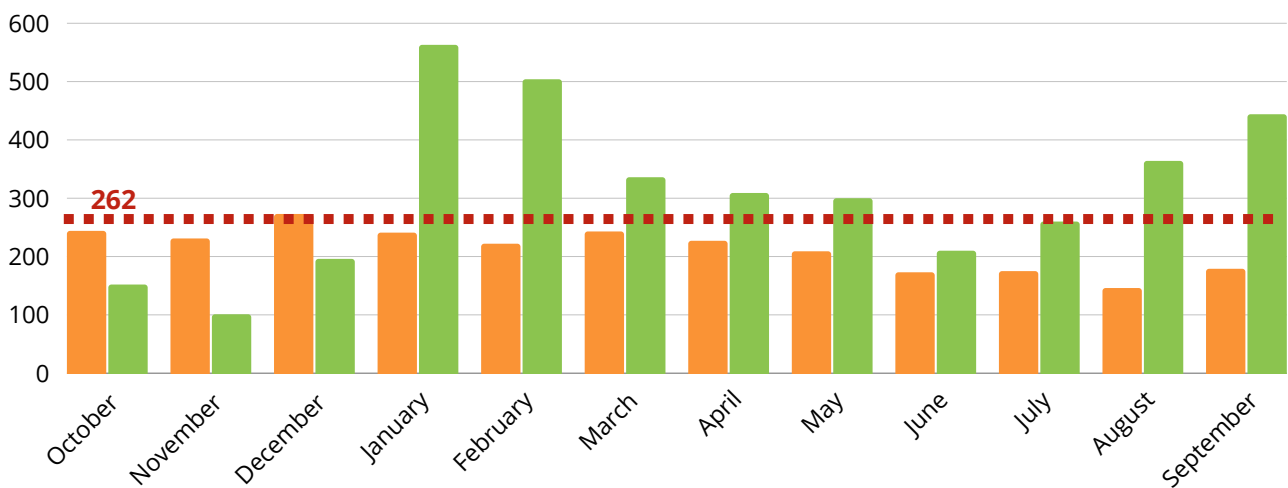


## ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT

Animal Care Services (ACS) strategic priority to control the animal population includes any program that reduces or manages the stray animal population. Spay and neuter surgeries performed in-house and by ACS partners help contribute to this strategic priority, as does microchipping, which allows ACS to reunite roaming pets with their owners, often without needing to bring the animal to the ACS campus. In addition, the metric of dead animal pickup is used as an additional indicator of the number of animals roaming free.



## PETS RETURNED TO OWNER-FIELD



FY20-FY22 Annual Field RTO Results: 2,563

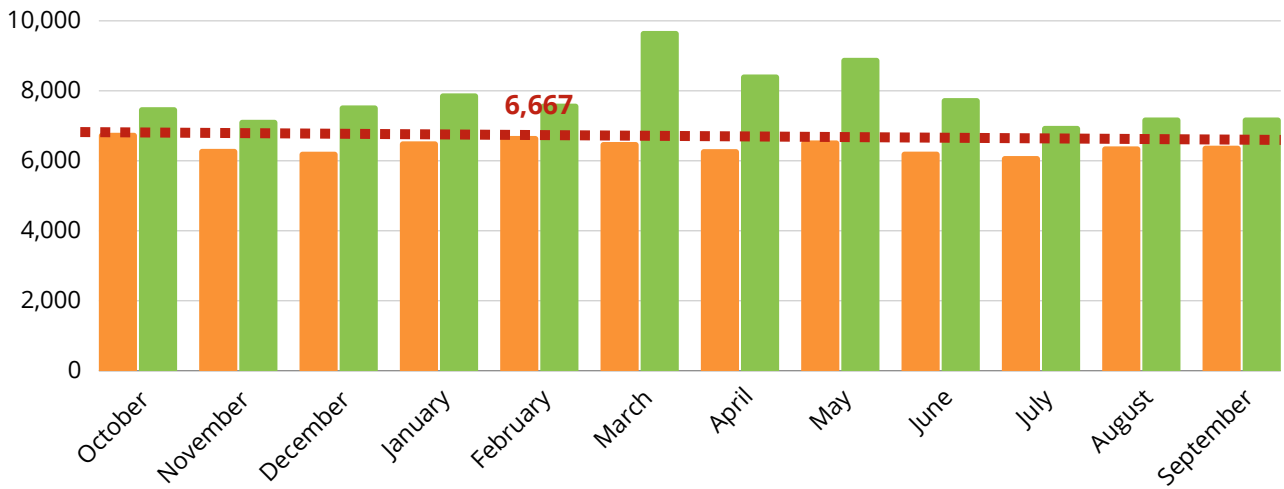
FY23 Annual Field RTO Goal: 3,145

FY23 Annual Field RTO Result: 3,739

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL



## CALLS FOR SERVICE REQUESTS (RESIDENT INITIATED)

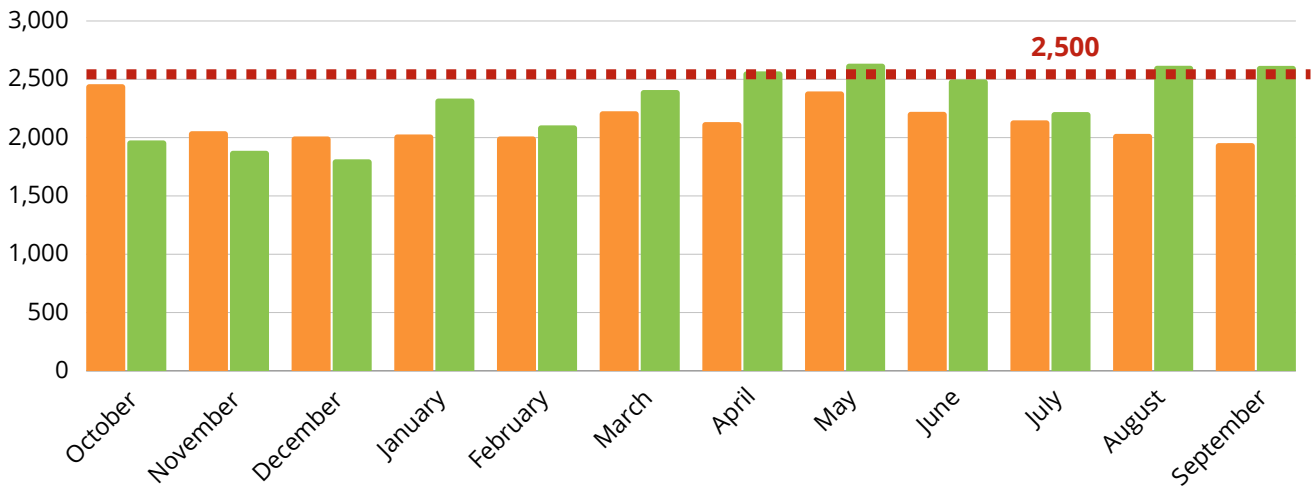


FY20-FY22 Annual CFS Results: 77,373

FY23 Annual CFS Goal: 80,000

FY23 Annual CFS Results: 94,247

## IMPOUNDMENTS



FY20-FY22 Annual Impound Results: 25,667

FY23 Annual Impound Goal: 30,000

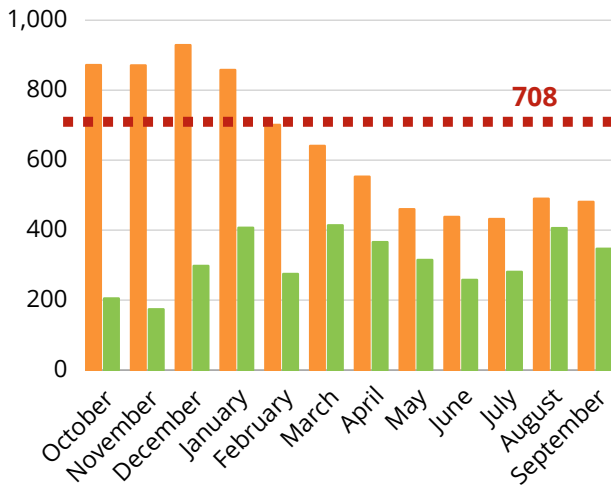
FY23 Annual Impound Result: 27,676

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL



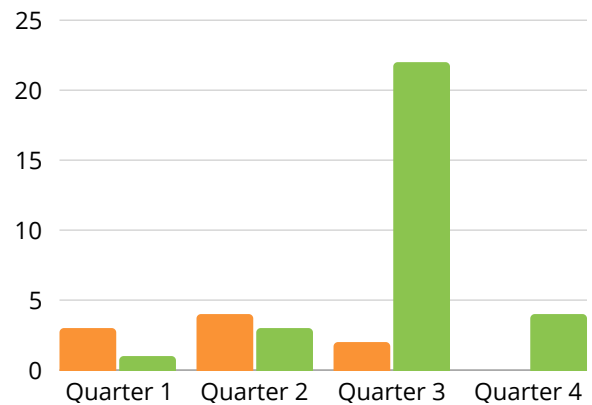
## ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT (CONT'D)

### CITATIONS WRITTEN



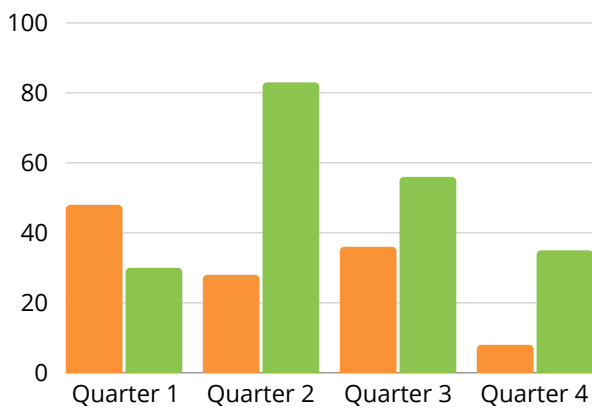
FY20-FY22 Annual Citations Results: 7,763  
 FY23 Annual Citations Goal: 8,500  
 FY23 Annual Citations Result: 3,782

### SERIOUS BODILY INJURIES



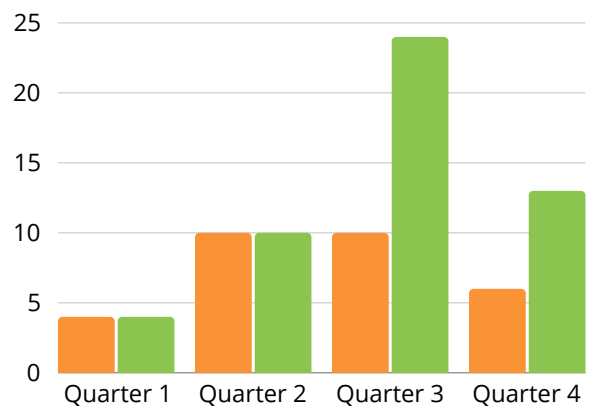
FY21-FY22 Annual SBI Results: 11  
 FY23 Annual SBI Result: 30

### AGGRESSIVE/DANGEROUS DESIGNATIONS



FY20-FY22 Annual Designation Results: 167  
 FY23 Annual Designation Result: 204

### CRUELTY CASES FILED



FY21-FY22 Annual Cruelty Cases Results: 39  
 FY23 Annual Cruelty Cases Result: 51

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL

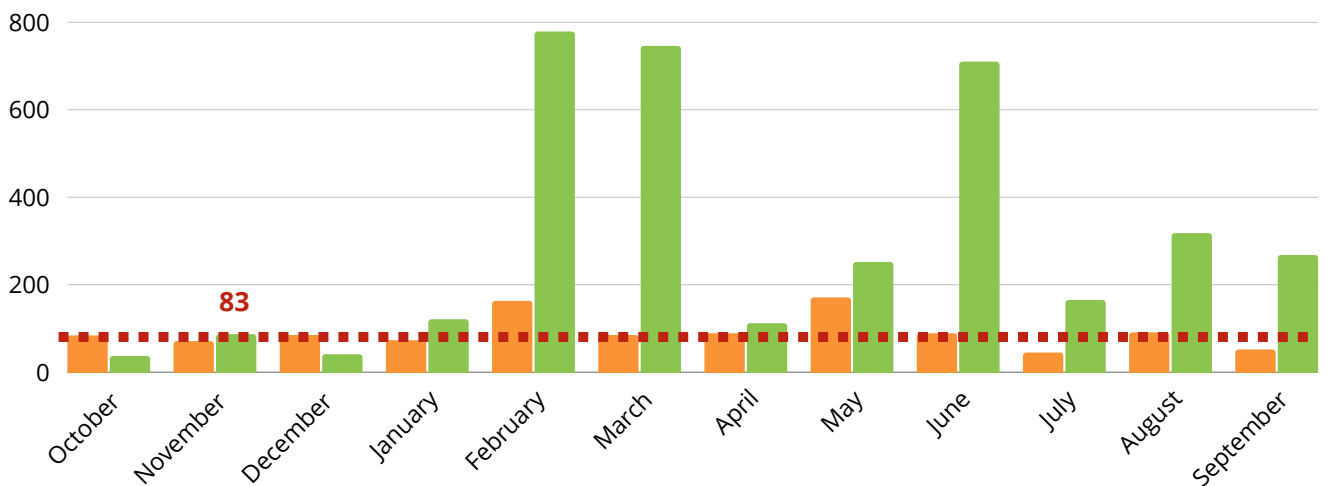




## ENGAGE AND EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY

The ACS strategic priority to engage and educate the community is the objective of the Education & Outreach Division. Through strategic outreach efforts including digital engagement and promotion, the Education and Outreach Division has provided support to all other Divisions at ACS. To broaden ACS' reach and better adapt to modern trends, the Education & Outreach Division enhanced its social media efforts. Their efforts have been met with great success and as such, their Homes Reached now includes digital outreach efforts as well (effective February 2020).

## MEDIA INTERACTIONS



FY20-FY22 Annual Media Interactions Results: 1,097

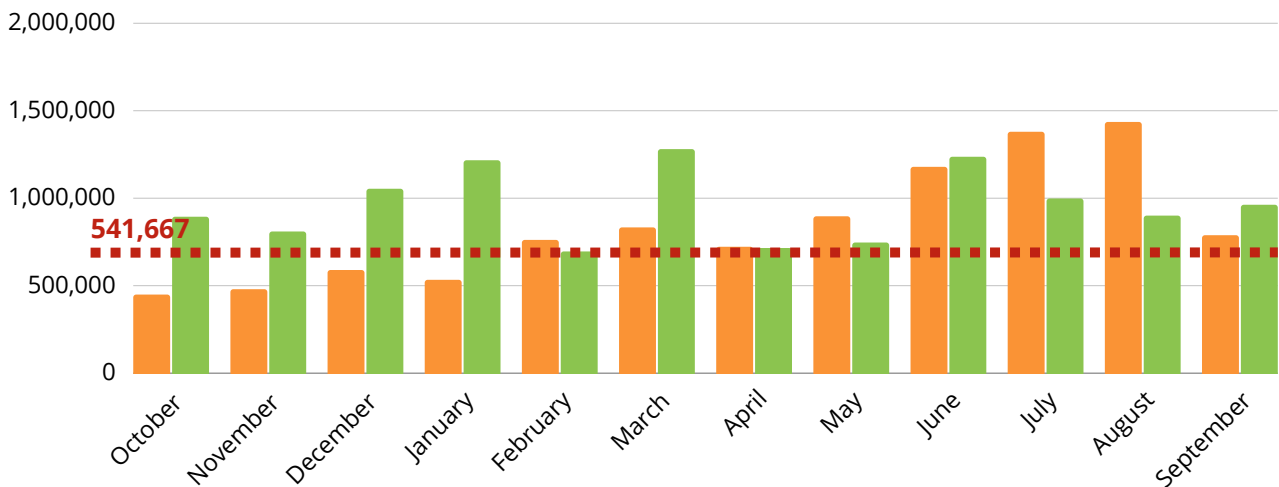
FY23 Annual Media Interaction Goal: 1,000

FY23 Annual Media Interaction Results: 3,636

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL



## DIGITAL REACH

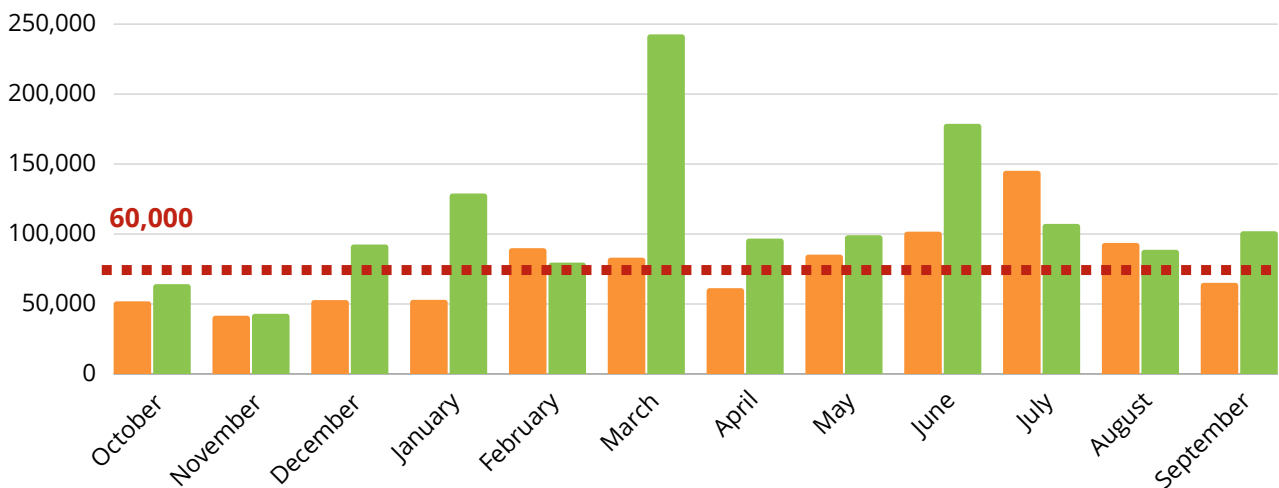


FY20-FY22 Annual Digital Reach Results: 10,049,712

FY23 Annual Digital Reach Goal: 6,500,000

FY23 Annual Digital Reach Results: 11,511,929

## DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT\*



\*Includes prior 2 year average

FY21-FY22 Annual Digital Engagement Results: 924,437

FY23 Annual Digital Engagement Goal: 720,000

FY23 Annual Digital Engagement Results: 1,323,342

--- FY 2023 TARGET    ■ PRIOR 3 YEAR AVERAGE    ■ FY 2023 ACTUAL