



CALAVERAS COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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August 11, 2026

The David M. Sanders, Presiding Judge
Superior Court State of California
P.O. Box 850
San Andreas, CA 95249

RE: Board of Supervisors response to "Calaveras County Animal Services Roadmap to a Modern Shelter: Policies and Procedures" Grand Jury Report

Dear Honorable Judge Healy:

In accordance with California Penal Code sections §933 & §933.05, the County of Calaveras Board of Supervisors submits this response to the above referenced Grand Jury report dated June 9, 2026, which was received in the Office of the County Administrator on June 9, 2026. The Board wishes to thank the members of the Grand Jury for their professionalism and dedication to public service, which made this report possible.

GRAND JURY FINDINGS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Grand Jury Finding F1

Calaveras County Animal Services lacks any centralized, organized, and up-to-date policies and procedures to guide Animal Services Officers and shelter staff in the performance of their jobs, negatively affecting accountability among staff and leadership.

County Response to Finding F1

The County partially agrees with this finding. While having an up-to-date guide to policies and procedures will certainly help create consistent expectations, not having one does not negatively affect accountability. All staff regardless of their position are still expected to perform their duties as outlined in their respective job descriptions.

Grand Jury Recommendation R1a

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services update and organize their policies and procedures for Animal Services Officers and shelter staff to current standards and in accordance with State law by December 31, 2026.

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County Response to Recommendation R1a

This recommendation will be implemented by June 30, 2027. The December 31, 2026 timeline is unrealistic given that new policies need to be vetted by a number of County departments including Human Resources and County Counsel in order to ensure compliance with any regulatory requirements. In addition, the County has to meet and confer over any new policies with labor groups prior to implementation.

Grand Jury Recommendation R1b

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services distribute its updated policies and procedures to all paid Animal Services staff and obtain signed acknowledgement of receipt by December 31, 2026.

County Response to Recommendation R1b

This recommendation will be implemented by June 30, 2027. The December 31, 2026 timeline is unrealistic given that new policies need to be vetted by a number of County departments including Human Resources and County Counsel in order to ensure compliance with any regulatory requirements. In addition, the County has to meet and confer over any new policies with labor groups prior to implementation.

Grand Jury Finding F2

Calaveras County Animal Services job descriptions, with the exception of Animal Care Specialist, have not been updated in the last eight years, listing duties that are no longer relevant to the job or legally allowed, resulting in inconsistent and delayed resolution to problems as they occur.

County Response to Finding F2

The County partially agrees with this finding. Some job descriptions do need to be updated. However outdated job descriptions do not create inconsistent or delayed resolutions to problems.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services update the job descriptions for Animal Services Manager, Animal Services Officers I and II, and Office Technician II by December 31, 2026.

County Response to Recommendation R2

This recommendation will be implemented for job descriptions that are outdated.

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Grand Jury Finding F3

Calaveras County Animal Services management is not conducting annual performance reviews of its staff, denying staff members a crucial opportunity to receive and provide feedback on their job performance, as well as opportunities for advancement, and negatively affecting team cohesion and morale.

County Response to Finding F3

The County partially agrees with this finding. While the County recognizes annual performance reviews as a critical communication channel for individual employee feedback, it emphasizes that such evaluations are distinct from collective team dynamics. Accordingly, performance management practices are designed to provide necessary individual input without disrupting team cohesion or organizational morale.

Grand Jury Recommendation R3

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services management conduct performance reviews of hired staff, beginning no later than December 31, 2026, and annually thereafter.

County Response to Recommendation R3

This recommendation has been implemented.

Grand Jury Finding F4

Calaveras County Animal Services Officers are ill-equipped to fulfill their duties in the field, due to a lack of deescalation training, adequate protective gear and safety equipment, a Use of Force policy, and vehicles that are safe for Officers and the animals in their care.

County Response to Finding F4

The County partially agrees with this finding. All CCAS staff have been assigned training regiments focusing specifically on deescalation techniques.

ASOs are mandated to use the least amount of force necessary to safely mitigate a situation. Officers are authorized and obligated to use objectively reasonable force to control dangerous animals and execute lawful duties (e.g., executing warrants, impounding dangerous dogs, investigating cruelty).

ASO vehicles are equipped with the appropriate equipment and protective gear for officer safety and are no older than 2020 with the newest fully equipped vehicle being 2025.

Calaveras Sheriff's deputies are available to assist CCAS when animal related situations pose an immediate threat and danger to human and animal safety.

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Grand Jury Recommendation R4a

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services provide current Officers with deescalation and crisis training as part of their standard Officer training regimen by December 31, 2026, and as new Officers are onboarded.

County Response to Recommendation R4a

This recommendation has been implemented. The Shelter Manager has worked with Cal-Animals training site to enroll all CCAS staff in Deescalation and Crisis Training which is a two-part series. Staff training regiments will be staggered and coordinated accordingly.

Grand Jury Recommendation R4b

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services adopt a Use of Force policy and provide Animal Services Officers with the appropriate protective gear and safety equipment by December 31, 2026.

County Response to Recommendation R4b

This recommendation will be implemented as Animal Services Officers are already provided with appropriate protective gear and safety equipment to perform the duties they are tasked with. A use of Force Policy appropriate for non-law enforcement Animal Services Officers will be developed by June 30, 2027.

Grand Jury Recommendation R4c

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services repair the equipment on their Animal Services Officer vehicles and create a routine maintenance schedule to make sure safe, fully functioning equipment is always available, each by December 31, 2026.

County Response to Recommendation R4c

This recommendation has been implemented. CCAS maintains strict vehicle safety standards. Every operational vehicle undergoes routine checks, and any mechanical issues are immediately taken to the shop for repair. Our ASO fleet consists of recent models (2020–2025). Additionally, CCAS management was already working to formalize staff and vehicle inspection protocols.

Grand Jury Finding F5

Currently Calaveras County Animal Services spends a large portion of its budget on veterinary services and transportation to animal hospitals, and the time spent in transportation greatly decreases the amount of time Animal Services Officers have to address a growing backlog of complaints from the public.

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County Response to Finding F5

The County agrees with this finding. Current staffing for ASOs currently limits the department's capacity to respond to complaints restricting responses to life-threatening emergencies or aggressive animal complaints. Routine issues like barking dogs or loose strays experience delays.

Grand Jury Recommendation R5

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether taxpayer money and Animal Services Officer time could be saved by hiring or contracting for in-house veterinary services, by December 31, 2026.

County Response to Recommendation R5

This recommendation will be implemented, however, due to resource constraints, it cannot be completed by December 31, 2026. We project that this analysis could be completed by June 30, 2027.

Grand Jury Finding F6

Calaveras County Animal Services has not obtained grants for spay and neuter programs since 2022, despite such programs having proven to reduce the number of stray dogs and feral cats in the community as well as shelter intake.

County Response to Finding F6

The County disagrees with this finding. Animal Services aggressively pursues grant funding to support all aspects of shelter operations as well as spay and neuter programs. In 2024, Calaveras County Animal Services, in partnership with the Calaveras Humane Society, secured a \$175,000 grant from California for All Animals, a state-funded initiative designated by Governor Gavin Newsom to support animal shelters. This funding was specifically aimed at addressing the county's low spay/neuter rates and reducing unwanted pet births.

Over 1,000 animals were provided with vouchers for spay and neuter in Calaveras County between August 2024 and June 2025, plus rabies and/or microchips if needed. The purpose was to provide vouchers for low-income Calaveras County residents to have their dogs and cats spayed or neutered at little to no cost. The voucher program ended on June 20, 2025, as the \$175,000 was fully depleted.

In June 2026, Calaveras County applied to an ASPCA 2026 Grant for Shelters and Spay Neuter Clinics, Increasing Spay/Neuter Surgeries Application. This grant opportunity opened on June 1, 2026, and a grant request was submitted by Animal Services and County Administration on June 25, 2026, with a request for \$97,800 in grant funding to increase

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the number of spay/neuters for dogs and cats in targeted areas that have had repeated issues with fractious Dogs and Feral Cats.

If awarded, this grant would provide funding for the following:

- County Contract services veterinary clinics to spay/neuter and vaccinate an additional 100 dogs (\$55,000);
- County Contract services veterinary clinics to surgically alter and vaccinate an additional 100 cats (\$25,000);
- Community spay/neuter/vaccinate coordination and outreach to owners in targeted areas (\$9,600);
- Purchase dog traps and conduct trapping of fractious dogs in problem areas and purchase additional cat traps and conduct feral cat trapping or provide cat traps to organizations or the public (\$6,200); and,
- Offset the cost of transportation of the additional animals to the contracted veterinary clinics (\$2,000).

Grand Jury Recommendation R6

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services apply for new spay and neuter grants to offset the cost of these crucial services to the County by December 31, 2026.

County Response to Recommendation R6

This recommendation has been implemented. Animal Services is currently in the process of applying for ASPCA Grant for Shelters and Spay Neuter Clinics/Increasing Spay/Neuter Surgeries Grant.

Grand Jury Finding F7

The Calaveras County Animal Services shelter remains overcapacity for dogs despite staff and volunteers' dedicated struggle to increase adoption rates through community education and outreach to rescue organizations.

County Response to Finding F7

The County agrees with this finding.

Grand Jury Recommendation R7

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services adopt a policy to identify and list eligible rescue organizations in order to reduce the shelter population, beginning no later than December 31, 2026.

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County Response to Recommendation R7

This recommendation has been implemented. The Calaveras County Animal Shelter currently works with numerous rescue organizations to routinely reduce overpopulation at the shelter. CCAS maintains rigorous, proactive screening protocols for every rescue organization where animals are placed.

The vetting process ensures that all partners hold an excellent standing with peer rescues, surrounding municipal shelters, and our community network before any animal is placed in their care. CCAS maintains a list of approved rescue organizations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Stopper".

Ben Stopper
Chair

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