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**Shelter Crisis**

**Talking Points**

**STAFFING SHORTAGES**

* [88% of shelters](https://bestfriends.org/about/media/shelter-crisis-2022) noted that they were short on staffing
* A [national shortage of veterinarians](https://www.marsveterinary.com/tackling-the-veterinary-professional-shortage/) is impacting access to vet care in shelters
* Due to understaffing, most organizations say staff are more stressed than usual
  + Many are unable to carry out regular operations such as:
    - Hosting major adoption events
    - Supplying enough veterinary support
    - Maintaining regular hours with public access
    - Providing as much sufficient adoption/foster support and animal care as they would like

**HOUSING INSTABILITY & COST OF CARE**

* [Pet ownership](https://pethelpful.com/pet-ownership/8-Top-Reasons-You-Should-Get-a-Pet) spiked to 70% in 2020 during the pandemic
* [72% of renters](https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/increasing-housing-options-renters-pets#:~:text=Did%20you%20know%20that%2072,have%20to%20be%20that%20way!) own at least one pet
* Problems finding and keeping rental housing lead to the [surrender of half a million pets](file:///Users/schlacb/Downloads/problems%20finding%20and%20keeping%20rental%20housing%20lead%20to%20the%20surrender%20of%20half%20a%20million%20pets%20to%20shelters%20each%20year) to shelters each year.
* Americans are facing are [facing record housing unaffordability](https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2023) and near-record housing shortages, which places pets at risk.
* Shelters are [reporting a record number of surrenders](https://www.npr.org/2023/09/07/1198067373/pets-are-being-sent-to-shelters-because-of-natural-disasters-housing-shortages#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20housing%20shortage%20affects,pets%20due%20to%20housing%20instability.) due to housing in 2023 over 2022.
* Pet services, including veterinary costs, have [increased more than 9%](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.t02.htm) in the last year.
* [42% of pet owners](https://www.forbes.com/advisor/pet-insurance/pet-cost-inflation/) said a vet bill of $999 or less would cause them to go into debt, and 44% said they used their credit card to pay for a vet bill.

**INCREASE IN ANIMAL INTAKES**, **LENGTH OF STAY & EUTHANASIA**

* Animal intakes at both public and private shelters across the country are expected to reach a [3-year high in 2023](https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Q2-Report.pdf), and adoptions or returns to owners are not keeping pace
* [Pets are waiting in shelters longer](https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/) to be adopted than any time in the past four years, which has contributed to the capacity crisis
* There has been a nearly [25% increase](https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/industry-trends-dashboard/) in euthanasia in 2023 over 2022 in organizations surveyed
* Stray dog intakes [continue to increase](https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/intake-and-outcome-data-analysis-q2-2023/) year over year since 2021
* The number of [pets relinquished by owners has increased](https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/intake-and-outcome-data-analysis-q2-2023/) in private shelters.